

## **Implications of Research-based Teaching Studies Abroad for Pedagogy of English Linguistics Course in China**

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*Abstract: The promotion of research-based teaching for course of English linguistics has its practical significance against the background of an urgent need to reform English Major. First of all, this paper overviews the studies of research-based teaching abroad from the perspectives of teaching and learning; Secondly, the paper introduces the related practices in linguistic courses and discusses the objectivity as well as the systemacity of the practices. Finally, it concludes with the discussion of three implications for the pedagogy of English Linguistics course in China.*

*Keywords: course of English linguistics, research-based teaching, abroad, implications*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The development of domestic English major is facing challenges: English Major Graduates' employment is low and enrollment is not optimistic. There is a frequently discussed but still need to solve the problem of the development of English majors: how to convert the theory of regarding English as a tool and identify the professional development orientation [1-2]. In the dilemma of the development of English majors, it is urgent to reform the curriculum and explore the methods of teaching to promote the reform of English majors.

As one of the required courses for English Majors in China, the present teaching situation of English linguistics course in China is not optimistic. According to Pan Zhixin's survey of English major graduate students of the 26 universities in the country's 16 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, the percentage of students who like this course very much is 0% and 13.3% for liking the course, , compared to the percentage of those who feel just so so: 66.7% and those who don't like and hate it: 13.3% and 6.7%. [3] According to the author's observation, an important reason for the poor teaching effect of this course is that most of the students still learn English as a communicative tool, which leads to their despising of the professional connotation to a great extent in this course.

The research teaching mode is comprehensive teaching mode based on the construction of the theory of cognitive development, [4] which are promoted to be used greatly in the United

States and Germany universities [5], the starting point is "the higher education is to cultivate and train the students' attitude towards learning based on study". [6] In this paper, in retrospect of the research of foreign research teaching, it introduces the practice of foreign language teaching and research, and finally discusses the enlightenment of foreign related research to the development of linguistics in China.

## **2. A SURVEY OF RESEARCH TEACHING IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

Research Teaching in foreign countries can be divided into two parts: the first one is about the relationship between the ability of scientific research and the teaching effect of teachers. To this problem, different researchers have different views: Some believe that there is a positive correlation between the two, but the correlation not significant; [7] others contend that there is no relationship between each other, and the reason lies in the fact that the quality of teaching is often interfered by the research. [8] another study shows that there is a positive correlation between the two in the school and the department level, but there is no positive correlation in the individual level. [9] in addition to the above research, survey results for college teachers of Norway Smeby showed that more than half of the art teachers think that the research will promote the teaching (53%), and less than half of the science teachers agree with this view (47%). [10] overall, there is no empirical study of the relationship between the two to support the exact conclusions [11-12]. One reason is that there is a controversy on different definitions of "research", "teaching" and "learning"; another reason is the nature of the subject: which belongs to the research subject or which is a practical discipline. The different disciplines will produce different relationships between research and teaching. [13] What we need to point out is that this research is concerned about the teachers, rather than what the students can harvest from the study.

Research oriented teaching can also be carried out on the students' "learning", mainly to discuss how to carry out research teaching and how to benefit from the subject based research. The research on this topic includes [14] Griffiths and Healey, etc.. Griffiths [13] divided teaching into three types: research-led teaching, research-oriented teaching and research-based teaching. [14] research-led teaching refers to the teaching and curriculum which is led by scientific research interest, whose teaching content is to research and discover, and whose teaching methods is to impart information; research-oriented teaching refers to the process of students' learning and doing research, and they are in the equally important position; research-based teaching is that students explore like a researcher, where the difference between teachers and students is minimized. In addition to these three forms of teaching, Healey [13] proposed research-tutored teaching as a supplement, in which teachers guide students to learn to read papers and write papers as the main content. Each of the above four teaching forms can be subdivided into different types.

### **3. PRACTICE OF LINGUISTICS COURSE IN RESEARCH TEACHING IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

The study of linguistics courses in research related teaching includes Hess & [15] Zeschel, [6] Carstensen and Kong[16], etc..Carstensen & Hess [15] introduce TIP, the teaching methods used in the course: the introduction to computational linguistics at the University of Zurich in Switzerland. The TIP refers to Text-centred, Individual-oriented, Problem-based computer assisted learning which is based on the text as the center, and the individual is oriented and assist the students to solve the problem. The main content of this course is presented in the form of hyperlink text in the network. Because of the complexity of the course content, which is different from the traditional problem oriented research learning, TIP no longer emphasizes cooperative learning, instead it emphasizes exploring through the way of the individual's completing the task.

Zeschel introduces the design of the research teaching of language and gender course. The instructional design is divided into five aspects: learning objectives, teaching methods, teaching resources, student research activities and student feedback. We will focus on main contents of the following three parts: the learning objectives, teaching methods and student activities.

Learning objectives include conceptual objectives, methodological objectives and empirical objectives. The conceptual objectives include: to make students understand the dialectical relationship between gender and language and main concepts and theory in the research field; methodological objectives refer to the method to help the students grasp the methods of doing the empirical research, such as learning the use of corpus software; empirical objectives include tracking students' difference in understanding problems in this field at the beginning of the course and at the end of the course, and doing evaluation of the research in this field from the empirical perspective.

The teaching method of this course includes not only research-led teaching, also contains research-oriented teaching. For instance, in the concept teaching, the teaching methods is research-led teaching, while when the teachers organize and guide the students to research activities, the teaching method is the research oriented such as students' self organization, including inquiry activities, and asking the students to write a log at least once a week, and post on the course website.

Zeschel introduced five research activities based on the curriculum design, which is the core content of this course research teaching. These five activities are: gender awareness in popular culture; gender and language attitude; gender difference in language use; the gender asymmetry in language structure; and the gender and conceptualization. Students carry out research in groups, construct or make use of the existing corpus to do the observation of the relevant language phenomenon, and make empirical analysis. [6]

In terms of teaching resources, the teaching of the course needs related corpus, software and network classroom. At the end of the course, the researchers collected feedback from students

on the course, which include positive feedback and negative feedback. the negative feedback reflects that students think course are difficult, they have no enough time to catch up, and regular writing research diary makes them under the pressure.

Kong[16] uses the problem based teaching method in teaching cognitive communication disorder course. By tracking analysis of students' feedback on the teaching method, Kong found that the students on the whole took positive attitude to this teaching method. The students think that this teaching method can train their critical thinking ability and the ability of using knowledge. However, this approach also has shortcomings: the implementation of this approach requires a lot of human resources, and a group of seven to eight students needs a mentor. In addition, the related empirical studies have proved that, compared with the traditional teaching method, this method requires 3-4 times of time and energy more than traditional method teachers in counseling students and 4-5 times of time and energy more than traditional method teachers in preparing courses. [14]

The above study explore the research-based teaching in linguistics course from two aspects: qualitative and quantitative: (1) these studies not only emphasized the advantages of research-based learning, but also objectively evaluates the research teaching problems. In addition to the drawback pointed out by Kong (2014)that the study on the teaching need to invest more manpower and time outside, [16] the study of Carstensen & Hess (2003) pointed out that the research based teaching method does not apply to teaching some complex theory, method and operation, therefore research based teaching method can not replace the traditional teaching method; [15] (2) the research of teaching design in the study is systematic and specific, which can be used for reference; (3) these studies also show that the well-known research universities abroad also attaches great importance to teaching and teaching research, such as the study of Carstensen & Hess is the teaching research project of University of Zurich. [15]

#### **4. THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF OVERSEAS RELATED RESEARCH**

(1) the domestic English linguistics course should carry out research teaching

The nature of the subject is the first factor to be considered in the development of research teaching. Subjects can be divided into hard disciplines such as mathematics and soft subjects, such as literature. The former emphasizes the accumulation of knowledge, while the latter is easy to integrate into the latest research results and discoveries (such as the latest research results and discoveries in History). But in teaching methods, a lot of undergraduate students of hard subjects participate in the research of the laboratory as a senior, while the students of soft subjects lacked the opportunity to participate in the study. The nature of the subject will affect the teaching attitude of the teachers and students to carrying out research: teachers and students of hard discipline generally hold positive view, and teachers and students of soft subject hold conflicting views. [17]

The study of linguistics can be carried out from the perspective of social culture and the combination with statistics, such as corpus study in research and computational linguistics is to

use the method of quantitative research on the use of language, so the study of linguistics can enable students to participate in the research process, experience, which has been fully demonstrated in Zeschel's research. Take the domestic "linguistics" course as an example, in the use of research-led teaching methods to teach the basic concepts in this course, at the same time, we can design one or two research question in each chapter for the students' analysis and research. For example, in the first chapter of "Introduction", the question can be "what is the difference between traffic lights symbol system the language symbol system?" The third chapter of the teaching of word formation can ask students to use the knowledge to explore the word formation of the native language. The sixth chapter is the teaching of pragmatics, which allows students to collect their daily conversations, and to analyze the meaning of the conversation. In the case of sufficient class time, teachers can teach students the basic methods of quantitative study of linguistics, so as to guide students to carry out a more in-depth study.

In addition to the nature of the subject, dilemma of Chinese English major department is in the urgent need of professional courses for English majors to carry out research-based teaching. Chinese English major graduates is criticized due to the lack of ability, who can only do the mouthpiece, [18] and carrying out research-based teaching can cultivate and train students' learning attitude, at the same time, it also can cultivate students' cooperative spirit, strategic thinking ability and skills, comprehensive quality and help to improve the ability of English majors.

(2) the research on the research teaching of Chinese linguistics should be systematic and network

The domestic English linguistics course teaching has been widely discussed, such as Chen Xinren [19] and [20] XiongXueliang; Juyumei [21]. These studies suggest that linguistic teaching should not only teach the basic knowledge, but also cultivate students' research ability; some specific methods introduced in these studies provide a useful reference for Chinese teachers to develop the research teaching courses in linguistics. But compared with foreign research, domestic related research needs to be further systematic and networking. For example, we will not see a study of research in teaching design of linguistics courses in domestic research is described in detail from the 5 aspects as Zeschel did, nor can be seen the research such as Carstensen & Hess, who make full use of computer network teaching research. Carstensen & Hess combines features of computational linguistics curriculum design with the method of research teaching and create related software, whose specialization and teaching spirit is worth us learning and reference.

(3) the corresponding software and hardware conditions are required to carry out the research teaching of linguistics.

Foreign linguistics research teaching is generally carried out on the network teaching platform. In addition to the hardware conditions, linguistics research teaching should also equip their own teachers with solid research basis, teachers who are engaged in linguistics, can provide the related research methods and resources to students. To a certain extent, it is one of the prerequisites for teachers to carry out research on their own.

In addition, the research teaching method needs the active participation of students. Zeschel's research shows that students do not entirely take positive attitude to research teaching, and students lack the necessary research foundation. Compared with literature and other courses, students lack of interest in the study of linguistics to a certain extent. Considering these factors, it not only needs to consider how to mobilize the initiative of students to carry out research-based teaching courses in linguistics, but also to teach basic method before students' independent study.

## 5. THE CONCLUSION

On the basis of introducing the related research of overseas research teaching and linguistics research teaching, this paper puts forward the enlightenment of foreign related research to the domestic linguistic research teaching. From the macro perspective, on the one hand, higher education gradually focuses on the connotation, and to improve the quality of teaching obviously needs students to more actively participate in the teaching and study; on the other hand, under the background of the network popularization, learning is more convenient and the students can learn the network course in the foreign universities through network. It can be predicted that the teaching of arts majors will be affected by the impact and influence of open courses in the network. In the context of the above background, the development of the research teaching of linguistics course not only helps to enrich the professional connotation of English majors, but also it is an inevitable requirement to improve the quality of English major talents training.

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