

The Application of the Pigai System in the Teaching of College English

Writing

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Abstract: The development of the technology brings a lot of convenience to the society and meanwhile promotes the development of education. We can stimulate students' interests in English study if we make use of the modern network technology properly and combine the English study with Information Technology. This essay provides a basic description of the Pigai System and analyzes the advantages and inadequacies of this system and gets to a conclusion that only by combining the system correcting with manual correcting can we maximize the efficiency of the network resources.

Keywords: College English Teaching, English Writing, Pigai System

1. INTRODUCTION

The correcting and feedback of a composition is one of the most important parts in the teaching of English writing. The purpose of this process is to provide some necessary corrections to the writer in order to make the writer see that there are some defects in his composition such as “not well-organized”, “the development of the content is not smoothly”, or “mistakes in the usage of the words or grammars” and so on. The Pigai System is a kind of automatic corrective feedback about the writer's surface errors for example the word's spellings or grammar mistakes, and some of that information is the feedback about the whole structure or the main content of the composition. Comments and ratings are also the important aspects of the correcting and feedback. Some studies have shown that the second English writing process made by the students according to the feedback information weighs a lot in improving the students' language competence. The feedback information is mainly presented in paper form. Since many teachers have heavy teaching tasks, they give limited feedback information to the students in the composition correcting process. In that case, many students cannot see their problems which exist in their compositions completely and comprehensively from the teachers' correcting feedback, and this of course will affect their progress in the second writing process. The use of Pigai System provides more opportunities for students to practice, and the frequency and students' writing competence has been obviously improved. Thus, it has a positive influence on the teaching of College English Writing.

2. THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE TEACHING OF COLLEGE ENGLISH WRITING

As one of the most important parts of English comprehensive application abilities in English study, the English writing ability has long not been paid enough attention to in the College English Teaching in China. There is no relatively independent teaching time and systematic teaching arrangement in the teaching of English writing. Most of the time, it is attached to the English comprehensive course. That is to say, the teaching of English writing is not enough and well-organized, and it is not conducive to digestion and absorption of the students. Besides that, for the College English class is limited and teachers are busy fulfilling their teaching tasks, the teaching of English writing is only at the level of teaching materials. It will cost the teacher a lot of time and effort in correcting those compositions after he assigns one writing assignment. But meanwhile, the students only care about their scores. Very few students really read the teacher's revision and comments carefully, let alone the second writing process. Generally speaking, there are very few chances for students to practice their writing ability, and to them, those practices are dull. Students are lack of the opportunity for them to reorganize and rewrite. So the students' competence in English writing is growing very slow. As the reform of College English teaching mode goes further, multimedia technology and network teaching platform have been applied more and more. The network teaching platform like Pigai System can stimulate students' enthusiasm and interest in study and let them carry out autonomous learning actively, and therefore improve their writing ability effectively.

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION ABOUT THE PIGAI SYSTEM

The Pigai System (<http://www.pigai.org>) which is set up by Beijing Word Network Technology Co., Ltd is a kind of intelligent correcting system providing composition correcting services online based on corpus and cloud computing technology. Each composition submitted to the system will be compared with the standard corpus from 192 sub dimensions, and the system will put forward related information such as the score, comments, and suggestions and so on. In this way, it greatly stimulates students' enthusiasm to revise their compositions and improve the quality of their compositions.

4. THE APPLICATION OF THE PIGAI SYSTEM IN THE TEACHING OF COLLEGE ENGLISH WRITING

Since 2013, the Pigai System has been widely applied in Leshan Normal University. During this process, both teachers and students find some advantages as well as inadequacies of the Pigai System. Therefore, this paper lists some views and analyzes its suitability and limitation in the teaching of College English Writing for teachers and students to use this tool more scientifically and reasonably.

4.1 The advantages of the Pigai System

Firstly, it is quite easy to use. The teacher logs on the Pigai System, states requirements, and assigns the composition task. Then there will be a writing number generated by the system. After that, students can search for the teacher assigned composition task by typing the composition number into the relate webpage. Then, students can write the required composition and submit it to the system after finishing it. Secondly, there is always a quick feedback. In less than a minute, the system will be able to analyze the composition of the students, automatically identify common mistakes such as vocabulary, collocation, grammar, etc. Meanwhile, it will give suggestion and score. Thirdly, the system will give comments sentence by sentence. The system shows the mistakes existing in each sentence, such as spelling, writing grammar, vocabulary, collocation errors, and it also analyzes the error types, and provides some extended training, and meanwhile, it provides specific knowledge points for student users to study. It also provides students with comprehensive writing guidance to help them study independently. Fourthly, it puts forward progress reports. The progress report records the development of a school, a class, or a specific student's writing ability. The report is conducive to schools and teachers to grasp the overall weakness of the school as well as the students' weak points. Thus, we can get a better understanding about the students' mastering degree of the knowledge points. Meanwhile, it provides data support for the school and teacher's English teaching arrangement. Finally, it gets good feedback from students. Most of the students revise their compositions again and again. They are confident that they can improve their English writing ability by using this network platform.

4.2 The inadequacies of the Pigai System

After a detailed analysis of some sample compositions, we find that there are some inadequacies. Firstly, the feedback information given by the Pigai System is more suggestive, and the content is broad and not specific enough. While the feedback information provided by teachers is more intuitive and clear. Most of the teachers not only mark out the mistakes in composition, but also give suggestions for modification, or modify the error points directly. Secondly, the Pigai System does not change the sentence structure of the students' compositions, while the teacher's feedback is more flexible. Finally, the evaluation of the students' compositions made by this system is mainly focused on the lexical level and provides some more mature grammatical analysis so far. Therefore, the evaluation of the score is only a general assessment of the language used in the composition, and it cannot accurately assess the intrinsic quality of the composition, for example, the fluency of the writing, the complexity of the sentence structure, the wording of the article, the internal logic and so on. It is impossible to evaluate students' English writing proficiency overall.

5. CONCLUSION

English writing ability is an important part of the comprehensive application ability of English language, and it should be paid more attention to. The online correcting and quick feedback effectively stimulate the enthusiasm of the students in English writing, and meanwhile greatly reduce the workload of the teachers' manual marking. It improves the frequency of composition writing training and assists teachers in the teaching of College English Writing. However, due to the technical characteristics of the system itself, the students can only benefit greatly from the vocabulary and grammar level, but in the structure and logic of the article, it is still unable to do the intelligent identification, which needs further improvement. Therefore, in the current teaching environment, we can use the Pigai System to carry out vocabulary, grammar correcting, and teachers mainly explain some of the organizational structure of the composition, the organization of the composition and so forth. In short, it would be the best for the teachers to combine the Pigai System with manual correcting in the teaching of College English Writing.

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