

Study on Task Repetition in Senior English Writing Teaching

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Abstract: General Senior High School Curriculum Standards (2017) specifies that the Core Competence is not only the concentrated embodiment of the value of subject education, but also the correct values, essential characters and key abilities that students gradually form through subject learning. And writing, as the essential output ability in language competence, is the key to cultivating students' English Subject Core Competence. However, in actual teaching, writing teaching has not been paid enough attention to, and students' writing competence has not been effectively improved. And some studies have been testified that task repetition is conducive to improving students' writing performance. Therefore, this paper intends to apply task repetition to senior English writing teaching, so as to promote the improvement of students' writing competence, and finally improve students' English Subject Core Competence.

Keywords: Task Repetition; Senior English; Writing Teaching.

1. Introduction

General Senior High School Curriculum Standards (2017) specifies that the Core Competence is not only the concentrated embodiment of the value of subject education, but also the correct values, essential characters and key abilities that students gradually form through subject learning. And writing, as the essential output ability in language competence, is the key to cultivating students' English Subject Core Competence. In addition, writing is an important question type in the college entrance examination. Therefore, developing the performance of students' writing is crucial in the examination. However, in actual teaching, writing teaching has not been paid enough attention to. A series of processes, like the teacher explains writing examples, students imitate, and the teacher corrects, has become the templates of writing classes. There's no doubt that it is not enough to improve students' writing performance, and may even make them feel bored and resistant to writing. Therefore, the key for front-line teachers to think about is what methods can effectively improve students' writing performance.

And in recent years, task-based language teaching has been highly valued in China due to its emphasis on language use, among which task repetition has attracted the attention of many teachers. However, task repetition is often used to improve learners' oral output, and there is relatively little research combining task repetition with writing. In view of this, this paper aims to elaborate task repetition in detail, including its definition, types, and theoretical basis. Furthermore, it will apply task repetition to senior English writing teaching, so as to promote the improvement of students' writing performance, and finally improve students' English Subject Core Competence.

2. The Definition and Types of Task Repetition

2.1. The Definition

Task repetition is an important construct of task-based language teaching, which has attracted a lot of attention of many domestic and foreign scholars. Paulston & Bruder

(1976) classify different types of repetitive training and define it as "simple repetition of prompts". And according to Bygate & Samuda (2005), task repetition refers to the teaching method in which learners repeatedly perform the same or slightly changed tasks at certain time intervals. Moreover, Bygate denies that such repetition is a word for word repetition, but rather a repetition of learners' familiar forms and content. In addition, Ellis (2005) believes that task repetition or task practice is to give learners more opportunities to repeat tasks, and it belongs to the pre-task preparation process. In other words, completing the task for the first time is to prepare for completing the same task for the second time.

2.2. The Types

According to the researches of Patanasorn (2010) and Hunter (2017), the types of task repetition can be divided into the following four: (1) Identity Task Repetition; (2) Procedural Task Repetition; (3) Content Task Repetition; (4) Ecological Task Repetition. Among them, the first three are proposed by Patanasorn, and then Hunter added Ecological Task Repetition on this basis.

Identity Task Repetition refers to repeating identical task without any changes in content, process and task type. Procedural Task Repetition refers to the repetition of the process or task type of the same task, but with changes in content or materials. Content Task Repetition refers to the repetition of tasks with the same content or materials, but with changes in the process or task type. And Ecological Task Repetition refers to repeating identical task without any changes in content, process and task type, but requiring new learners to participate in the task.

3. Theoretical Basis of Task Repetition

3.1. Information Processing Theory

Information processing theory is the basic theory of cognitive psychology. It compares the human brain with the computer, regards the human brain as an information processing system similar to the computer, considers that the human cognitive process is the process of information

processing, and tries to establish a computer model of psychological activities.

The process of reading is the process of students' information processing on the reading text. Therefore, when teaching reading, teachers can design activities based on information processing theory to stimulate students' motivation to read and promote students to master reading strategies.

3.2. The Output Hypothesis

Swain, after investigating in Canada in the late 1960s, found that the French level of Canadian students receiving immersion teaching was not ideal. Although they reached a high level in listening and reading comprehension, their oral and writing scores were far lower than those of their peers who took French as mother tongue. Therefore, Swain believes that the acquisition of second language only depends on comprehensible language input can not guarantee the learners to use the language accurately and fluently to achieve the ideal communicative purpose. In a word, a successful second language learner not only need to be exposed to a large number of comprehensible input, but also he or she has to produce comprehensible output, which enables the learner to control and internalize the language.

3.3. Skehan's Trade-off Hypothesis

In 1998, Skehan proposed the Trade-off Hypothesis, which suggests that human attention is limited, and therefore, the ability to process information is also limited. As for language, which also serves as information, when learners first encounter language information, they cannot achieve balanced processing of all aspects of the information, which leads to imbalanced development of language acquisition and ultimately results in imbalanced development of language production in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity. According to Skehan's Trade-off Hypothesis, it is difficult for learners to balance the allocation of attention between content and form in writing. That is, if learners consciously allocate limited attention resources to conceptual content, they may overlook language form or transmission methods, and vice versa.

4. Application of Task Repetition

4.1. Reading Material and Writing Task

This paper uses reading for writing selection of Unit 3 Sports and Fitness in compulsory book 1 of new senior English by People's Education Press as reading material, with imitating a composition that describes changes in one's own health as writing task, so that application of task repetition can be explored.

4.2. Teaching Procedures

(1)The teacher teaches reading material and guide students in completing post-class exercises. During this process, teacher needs to pay attention to sorting out the structure and content of the article;

(2)The teacher assigns the writing task, that is, imitating a composition that describes changes in one's own health;

(3)The teacher collects the first imitating writings and provides feedback after correcting them;

(4)One week later, students repeat the same writing task;

(5)The teacher collects the second imitating writings and compares them with the first ones;

(6)One week later, the students repeated the same writing task again;

(7)The teacher collects the third imitating writings and compares them with the second ones.

According to the above teaching procedures, it can be seen that the task repetitions in this paper is three times.

4.3. Function in Writing

According to the above theoretical analysis, task repetition can play a significant role in senior high school English writing teaching, mainly reflected in the following aspects.

4.3.1. Improving the Grammatical Accuracy, Lexical Richness, and Syntactic Complexity of Senior High School English Writing

According to Skehan's Trade-off Hypothesis, it is difficult for students to achieve a balanced distribution of attention between writing content and form, especially when completing the first writing task. This can be reflected in some students placing too much emphasis on the expression of writing content, while others place too much emphasis on accuracy in grammar and syntax. By repeating task, students will consciously make up for the shortcomings in the previous writing task. Therefore, task repetition helps improve the grammatical accuracy, lexical richness, and syntactic complexity of senior high school English writing.

4.3.2. Promote Student-centered

In the overall teaching process of repetitive task, firstly, teachers are student-centered, which is mainly reflected in the need for teachers to provide specific and targeted feedback based on students' writing. Secondly, students themselves will also promote their central position, which is mainly reflected in the repetition of task. Students will repeatedly come into contact with reading material and imitating it to write, thereby continuously practicing and consciously improving their writing skills and quality. Therefore, task repetition helps promote student-centered.

4.3.3. Stimulating Students' Initiative and Enthusiasm for Learning

It should be acknowledged that the premise for task repetition to stimulate students' learning initiative and enthusiasm is that the teachers' feedback is targeted and actionable. Only in this way can students modify their writings based on feedback from teachers, which undoubtedly helps to cultivate their independent and autonomous writing ability, and even independent and autonomous learning ability. Additionally, it should be noted that teachers must control the frequency of task repetition. According to Zhou Dandan's research, the optimal number of task repetition is three. If it exceeds three times, students are likely to develop a sense of boredom towards repetitive task writing. Therefore, as long as the teachers' feedback is targeted and the teacher can control the frequency of task repetition, task repetition can help stimulate students' learning initiative and enthusiasm.

5. Conclusion

So far, this paper has elaborated task repetition in detail, including its definition, types and theoretical basis. Meanwhile, the application of task repetition in senior high school English writing has been explored. According to the above analysis, it can be seen that task repetition can indeed play a significant role in high school English writing teaching. It can not only improve students' writing accuracy, lexical richness and syntactic complexity, but also promote student-

centered learning to stimulate students' initiative and enthusiasm of learning English writing.

In a word, based on the above discussion, this paper aims to enhance the high school teachers' awareness of task repetition, and make them try to apply it to practical writing teaching according to the specific learning situation, so that promoting the development of students' writing performance and core competence.

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