

Application of Project-Based Research-Oriented Learning to Introduction to Linguistics Teaching: A Case Study of X University

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Abstract

The course Introduction to Linguistics aims at fostering students' rational understanding of human languages, fortifying students' linguistic and cultural awareness and critical thinking ability, and developing students' language research awareness and interest. The article analyzes the status quo of Introduction to Linguistics teaching in some local colleges and universities in China, elaborates the application of project-based research-oriented learning to Introduction to Linguistics teaching in X University from the aspects of teaching design, teaching implementation and teaching assessment, examines its teaching effects through a case study involving students' cognition and experience of the learning mode, the impact on students' knowledge acquisition and ability development, and students' evaluations about the teaching mode. The paper provides some pedagogical implications from the perspectives of teachers and students.

Keywords: project-based research-oriented learning, introduction to linguistics teaching, effects

1. Introduction

According to *Teaching Guide for Undergraduate Foreign Language and Literature Majors in Colleges and Universities (Part I) - Teaching Guide for English Majors (2020)* in China, the course Introduction to Linguistics is one of the professional core curriculum and a compulsory course for undergraduate English majors. However, the teaching effects of this course are far from satisfaction for it is recognized as the most difficult and boring course for undergraduate English majors because of its theoretical, professional and logical nature. Current research on Introduction to Linguistics teaching in China is mainly confined to theoretical discussion and sharing of good practices, with few empirical studies on the teaching effects.

Research-oriented teaching is a teaching mode integrating learning, research and practice while project-based learning is a dynamic classroom approach in which students actively explore real-world problems and challenges, and acquire knowledge. Applying project-based research-oriented learning (PRL) to Introduction to Linguistics teaching helps students to be positive meaning negotiators rather than passive receivers by taking learning projects as the carrier and solving problems in the form of cooperative inquiry in the created situation. Simultaneously, it is beneficial for linguistics teachers to improve their classroom instruction quality and teaching innovation ability.

Course is one of the key elements of talents cultivation and the quality of talents cultivation is directly determined by the quality of curriculum. The article analyzes the status quo of Introduction of Linguistics teaching in local colleges and universities in China, reviews studies on teaching Introduction of Linguistics in China, and examines the teaching effects of project-based research-oriented learning (PRL) based on the teaching practice and questionnaire survey in X University in the hope of providing some pedagogical implications for raising the teaching efficiency of Introduction to Linguistics teaching, deepening the teaching reform of undergraduate English majors and improving the quality of talent cultivation in local colleges and universities in China.

2. Teaching Dilemma

Teaching Introduction to Linguistics in many local colleges and universities in China is often confronted with a dilemma: a bulk of students weary of learning while the linguistics teacher tired of teaching.

Students' low interest in learning the course can be accounted for objectively and subjectively. Objectively speaking, it is the first time for students to attend such a theoretical, professional and logical course taught completely in English, to be exposed to so many linguistic terminology and theoretical knowledge that they seem to understand in class but fail to use correctly after class, and to discover that so many open questions for some linguistic phenomena. Meanwhile, a linguistics teacher's improper teaching might also severely inhibit students' learning interest if he or she just undertakes his/her classroom instruction in a stereotyped and mechanical way with a monologue teaching mode without taking students' learning situation into consideration, if he/she merely attaches importance to knowledge input but neglects the connection between theory and current practice, value guidance and soul shaping.

Subjectively speaking, the number of students who are really interested in linguistics learning is virtually limited. The difficulty in learning linguistics well arouses some students' misgivings and fear, poses a challenge to their stereotyped linear way of thinking, and even constitutes a heavy blow to some students' learning interest and confidence. Under the drive of instrumental motive, many students' learning attitudes is of prominent utilitarian nature, deeming that the course is worthless in helping them pass Test for English Majors Grade Eight (TEM-8), get some job qualification certificates such as Teacher's Qualification Certification, China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters (CATTI) and Business English Certificate (BEC), let alone their future career development. Consequently, few students tend to drop out of class or just be absent-minded in class; and a few students just pin the hope of passing the final examination with rote memory. Many students' shortage of proper learning strategies, scaffolding learning environment, and exploratory, cooperative and reflective practices in linguistics learning leads to their deficiency in applying linguistic theories to discover, analyze and solve problems in their English learning.

Meanwhile, some linguistics teachers are fed up with teaching Introduction to Linguistics for the challenges of the module, students' unfair evaluation and their own enormous pressure of career development. Admittedly, it is of great challenge to present abundant teaching contents such as language and linguistics, basic branches of linguistics and interdisciplinary linguistic research within limited credit hours in one semester according to the standard of constructing high-quality courses of being profound, innovative and challenging in China, and it is of great difficulty for the teacher to cultivate students' rational understanding of human languages, enhance their linguistic and cultural awareness and critical thinking ability promptly. On the other hand, their industrious efforts in building effective class and teaching reform might be misunderstood by students who are turned off learning and even deflated by students' dislike of the module and arbitrary, unfair teaching appraisal. Meanwhile, some linguistics teachers are suffering from heavy teaching loads, immense pressure of academic research and the fierce competition of professional promotions. Consequently, few teachers would devote to their own academic research rather than futile teaching from which they could gain nothing.

3. Overview of Introduction to Linguistics Teaching in China

Teachers and researchers in China have endeavored to improve the teaching efficiency of linguistics teaching, and relevant studies have mainly revolved around teaching methodology, teaching content, teaching philosophy and curriculum reform.

Teaching methodology, especially research-oriented teaching, has triggered widest concern among the research focus. CHEN Xinren (2007) proposed introducing the research-based teaching concept to change one-way knowledge indoctrination into multi-dimensional interactive communication, and change passive receptive learning into cooperative discovery learning. ZHANG Xiaorui et al. (2017) proposed that English teachers should create interesting research situations, encourage students to make collaborative research and practical experience, implement the incentive evaluation and the research-oriented teaching in the course of English linguistics. YU Shengming (2014) raised a Knowledge-Quality-Practice Model (KQP) for the knowledge-based courses for English majors, on the basis of a case study of Introduction to Linguistics. Using the example of an English linguistics lesson. FENG Dezheng (2017) elaborated the steps of multiliteracies method, and discussed the implication for teaching linguistics based on the process and effect of the multiliteracies teaching. LIU Xiaojing et al. (2018) pointed out that with the help of network, introduction of the task-based teaching and the research-based teaching into the dull learning process could guide students to explore so as to deepen the research on English linguistics teaching.

Recent years have witnessed English teachers' efforts in digging out the moral and ideological education elements in the curriculum teaching in China. WEN Xu (2021) illustrated how to undertake ideological-political teaching in linguistics courses to accomplish the fundamental task of moral education from the perspectives of the ideological-political elements in linguistics textbooks, the education ideas, awareness, and competence of linguistics teachers, the aesthetic education function of language and the implementation of ideological-political instruction in linguistics teaching.

It is all agreed that linguistics teachers should change their teaching philosophy but scholars diverge in their interpretation of teaching concepts: some sought inspiration from the philosophical and cognitive levels and proposed that constructivism should be taken as the teaching concept to cultivate students' creative thinking ability and critical thinking ability; some deemed research-based teaching model as teaching concepts. New teaching philosophy such as Production-Oriented Approach (POA), Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and Curriculum Ideological and Political Education concept have emerged in foreign language teaching and research in China, with no exception for linguistics teaching. However, no hard evidence shows which teaching concept has outdone up to now.

Most studies believe that stimulating students' learning interest and improving the teaching quality of linguistic modules should start from changing teaching mode and teaching philosophy while some researchers argue that the teaching effect can be improved by making full use of multimedia technology. JV Yumei (2007) introduced a research-oriented approach to linguistics teaching with multimedia aid. The popularity of Flipped Classroom, micro-lectures and MOOCs in recent years have greatly enriched teaching devices and increased the teaching efficiency. Based on SPOC, ZHANG Mang (2021) integrated flipped classroom and blended teaching in the course of English Linguistics and analyzed its effects as well as students' satisfaction by means of comparative experiment and questionnaire survey. SHANG Jinbing & YU Li (2019) held the opinion that applying flipped classroom model to English linguistics class can help students achieve flexibility in learning, enrich the teaching content and improve the teaching efficiency of the module, which sets higher standards for the English teachers' comprehensive qualities.

From the perspective of curriculum construction, TANG Ruiliang and WEN Xu (2020) explored how to add "gold" to classroom teaching and how to build a first-class national course in terms of course team, course content and resources, course teaching mode and method, and course performance evaluation.

4. Teaching Practice of PRL in Introduction to Linguistics Teaching in X University

The program of English majors in X University, a local college in Guangdong Province, aims at training future middle school English teachers who can serve the basic education of Guangdong with noble teaching ethics, profound educational feelings, solid core competency of English subject, proficient teaching skills, strong comprehensive education ability, good humanistic quality, innovative thinking, international vision, and lifelong learning awareness. Applying PRL to linguistics teaching in X University starts from teaching design, implementation and assessment.

4.1 Teaching Design

Following Bloom-Anderson's Cognitive Skills Model of remembering, understanding, analyzing, applying, evaluating and creating, the effective teaching design of PRL in linguistics teaching lies in combining knowledge principles and knowledge value of English linguistics and combining instrumental knowledge and ethical knowledge in classroom instruction, classroom activities and extracurricular activities, and striving to pay equal attention to knowledge, practicality and the times, and to integrate profundity, innovation and challenge in the PRL design.

Before the teaching design, the teacher should determine how to optimize the abundant teaching content given the limited credit hours, how to design projects with practical value and strong sense of substitution, how to create interesting research situations, what kind of social roles students can play in the PRL, how to divide students into learning groups and help them to finish the PRL in cooperation so as to stimulate students' learning interest, research awareness and participation enthusiasm in research-based learning. Before the students begin to do a project, the teacher may lead them to master key points and difficult points in each chapter through Q & A. For example, in Chapter One An Invitation to Linguistics, the teacher may ask students the significance of studying language in the current complicated international context, then he or she may require the students to do a project after class about the significance of constructing human language community in the new era and clarify the specific requirements for the project from the perspectives of content, accuracy, fluency and logic. After the students present their projects, the teacher may ask the students to conduct peer assessment through

Wenjuanxing, a professional platform for data collection and give the students timely corrective feedback for the further improvement of their projects.

4.2 Teaching Implementation

PRL in linguistics teaching in X University is composed of classroom activities, extracurricular activities and term paper, with focus on core linguistic issues and features of being problem-driven, learner autonomy and authenticity. The learning model concentrates on content learning rather than merely achieving a certain goal of linguistics learning. And the ultimate goal of PRL is that students can complete a project in collaboration or share it with other classmates. The value of the model is not only the completion of the project, but also the process of completion.

PRL in classroom instruction is mainly in the form of presentation, group discussion and debate. The students are divided into different groups in free combination with one student as the team leader who is in charge of organizing the group to select the topic of the project, make a research plan, organize interactive inquiry learning, make their presentations, display, exchange and evaluate their products and their peers' projects as well. Students are required to adopt certain research methods like observation, questionnaire, interview, and comparative analysis to observe, analyze, interpret the linguistic phenomena, and make correct judgement with the linguistics knowledge and linguistic theory in their projects.

In addition to classroom activities, PRL in extracurricular activities manifest themselves in online quiz of each unit on SuperStar Learning Platform and various kinds of discipline competition such as speech contest, reading contest, writing contest, vocabulary contest, teaching skill contest and video contest. Online quiz in each unit timely examines students' ability to apply the acquired linguistic knowledge to analyze linguistic phenomena and solve problems and their mastery of the linguistic theories. And it is through the participation of such competitions that students can apply the linguistic knowledge and linguistic theories that they have acquired to practice, learn by doing, achieve academic success, improve their English proficiency and experience success in the process of doing the project.

Apart from classroom activities and extracurricular activities, term paper aims to improve students' academic writing ability, develop their academic literacy and their team work spirit. In X University, the teacher of Introduction to Linguistics gives students 25 module-related research topics for group assignment, e.g. A Survey about Hakka Dialect Users' Attitudes from the Perspective of Sociolinguistics, clarifies the project requirements for the projects and assessment standard, and stipulates the number of references, asks the students to hand in their reading list and agenda of finishing the assignment; namely, their schedule for literature review, outline, first draft and product presentation. The students can choose a topic according to their own learning interest and knowledge reserve. Those students choosing the same topic may form a research group. Later, the teacher interacts with the students after class by means of Wechat, Superstar Learning Platform or face-to-face talk and timely solve students' problems in their assignments. In this process, the teacher should pay attention to whether students can accurately understand the topic, guide the students to demonstrate their solutions after finding problems. Last but not the least, the teacher may judge the writing quality of the term paper from the angles of structure, content and language: whether the framework of the paper is complete and reasonable, whether the paper has original ideas, whether the students know the status quo of the research topic and understand the theoretical concepts, whether the discourse is closely related to the theoretical perspective, whether the arguments are sufficient and supportive, whether the references and citations are appropriate and closely related to the topic, and whether the group assignment conforms to academic writing norm.

4.3 Teaching Assessment

In X University, PRL in linguistics teaching is composed of formative assessment (50%) and summative assessment (50%), involving students' performance in classroom activities, extracurricular activities, online quizzes of each unit, term paper and final examination. As far as the formative evaluation is concerned, the evaluation target is not only for the learning group, but also for the individual students. The former can be evaluated from the perspectives of the quality and display of the final product, team cooperation and team communication while the latter can be assessed in terms of their personal contributions, their English proficiency, presentation skills, attitudes, collaboration and communication skills.

Moreover, the evaluation subjects of PRL in linguistics teaching combine the teacher's comments, peer assessment, the students' self-evaluation with AI automatic scoring of the students' term paper so as to give a full play of students' roles as the master of learning.

5. A Case Study of the PRL Effects in Introduction to Linguistics Teaching in X University

Though research-oriented teaching is widely recommended in linguistics teaching, few empirical studies have been conducted to examine its teaching effects. Hence, conducting an empirical case study on the PRL effects in linguistics teaching in X University may provide some potential implications for the further teaching reform.

5.1 Purposes

The survey aims to understand the impact of PRL on students' learning attitudes and learning interest, examine whether such practice is conducive to improving students' learning performance and developing their research interest and research awareness, and find out whether students are satisfied with such teaching reform through questionnaire survey.

5.2 Participants

160 junior and senior English major students in X University attended the questionnaire survey.

5.3 Research Methodology

The study adopts classroom observation and questionnaire survey. The author observed and recorded the teaching design and implementation of applying PRL in Introduction to Linguistics teaching. Meanwhile, on the basis of literature review, the author designed the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 30 questions, involving students' cognition and experience of project-based research-oriented learning (Questions 1-5, 17-19, 22-23, 29-30), the impact of PRL on students' mastery of linguistic knowledge (Question 6, 14, 15, 16), effects of PRL on students' ability development (Questions 7-13, 20-21) and students' evaluation about the learning mode (Question 24-28).

5.4 Results Analysis and Discussion

160 questionnaires were collected through the WenJuanXing, 147 of which were valid, and the recovery rate of the questionnaire was 91.9%. The reliability of the questionnaire is very good with the Cronbach α is 0.89.

5.4.1 Students' Cognition and Experience

The survey results showed that among the students participating in the survey, 109 students (74.15%) knew well, 25 students (17.01%) were uncertain and 13 students (8.84%) knew nothing about PRL; 109 students (74.15%) participated in PRL whereas 38 (25.85%) claimed that they had never had such experience. As for the willingness to acquire linguistic knowledge and linguistic theories with the PRL mode, 14 students (9.52%) expressed their strong desire, 90 students (61.22%) showed their likeness whereas 41 students (27.89%) took a cavalier attitude and 2 students (1.36%) declared their dislike of PRL. In terms of the application of PRL in linguistics teaching, 20 students (13.61%) completely accepted, 119 (80.95%) accepted, and 8 (5.44%) failed to accept the learning mode. Moreover, 17 students (11.56%) aspired and 80 students (54.42%) hoped to continue such practice, 48 (32.65%) were indifferent, and 2 (1.36%) did not want to go on with PRL in linguistics teaching. These data is consistent with the current situation of linguistics teaching in X university and indicates that a majority of the students accept PRL, but significant individual differences in learning enthusiasm and active participation exist in different classes: some students are very active and cooperative while some are very passive and indifferent, and few students even uncooperative.

As for the students' PRL experience, the data reflected the frequency divergence of PRL in teachers and classes. According to 102 students, they had PRL 2 or 3 times a month while 44 students claimed that they had PRL once a month. Meanwhile, significant individual differences can be found in the time that students spent in PRL, indicating their different learning attitudes. 15 students (10.2%) spent more than 2 weeks, 50 students (34.01%) one or two weeks, 47 students (31.97%) 4 or 6 days and 35 students (23.81%) just 1 to 3 days.

In terms of interpersonal relationship in PRL, 85.72% students gave the feedback that the teacher-student relationship was harmonious, 12.93% students regarded it as normal while 1.36% considered it disharmonious. 87.07% students thought that they could get along well with the group members whereas only 0.68% student held the opinion that unfriendliness existed in the learning group. Such data suggested that a majority of the students recognized that PRL could improve the teacher-student relationship and student-student relationship.

For the impact of PRL on students' learning interest and confidence, 6 students (4.08%) and 116 students (78.91%) agreed that PRL could stimulate or enhance their linguistics learning interest while 23 students (15.65%) believed that PRL was ineffective in raising their linguistics learning interest, and 2 students (1.36%) claimed that their learning interest had even decreased. 81.63% of the students thought that PRL contributed to strengthening their confidence in learning linguistics, but 17.01% and 1.36% maintained that PRL did not improve or even weakened their learning confidence. 4.08% and 83.67% of the students considered that PRL

could transform their linguistics learning attitudes, but 12.24% insisted that PRL failed to change their linguistics learning attitude.

The data show that PRL in Introduction to Linguistics teaching has won most of the students' recognition and PRL plays a positive role boosting students' learning interest and confidence and improving the teacher-student relationship and student-student relationship. However, few students' responses ring the speculative alarm why few students' learning interest tended to decrease. Was it because of the improper arrangement of project, excessive academic pressure on students, the students' low English proficiency or merely their dislike and weariness of learning linguistics?

5.4.2 Impact on Students' Knowledge Acquisition

Most students agreed that PRL could promote their acquisition of value knowledge, linguistics knowledge, research methodology knowledge and cultural knowledge. 7 students (4.76%) agreed that PRL greatly improved their mastery of value knowledge, 125 students (85.03%) recognized the improvement effect of PRL and 15 students (10.2%) denied it. 3 students (2%) thought that they could master most of the linguistics knowledge and theories through the PRL mode, 92 students (64.5%) deemed that they could reaped some benefits from it while 48 students (32.7%) admitted that they could master a small proportion of the knowledge and 4 students (2.7%) was of the opinion that they reaped nothing from the mode. As for grasping the research methodology knowledge, 129 students (87.8%) recognized the improvement effect of PRL while 18 students (12.24%) considered the PRL mode as fruitless. Concerning cultural knowledge acquisition, 120 students (81.6%) believed that PRL mode facilitated enriching their cultural knowledge while 27 students (18.37%) claimed that their cultural knowledge did not change.

Application of PRL to Introduction of Linguistics teaching in X University is based on comparative studies on English and Chinese languages in lecturing professional knowledge of English linguistics with the focus on training students' research awareness, research ability and innovation spirit. The teaching mode integrates the education of ideals and beliefs so as to guide students to establish a scientific view of language, correct views on the world, life and values, mobilizes students' autonomy and practicality in finding and solving problems in projects. Consequently, most of the students have better access to value knowledge, linguistics knowledge and research methodology knowledge. However, mastering the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western culture can never be accomplished within one stroke, which could account for why 27 students thought their cultural knowledge had not been enriched.

5.4.3 Effects on Students' Ability Development

The ability improvement in this survey involves English writing ability, Oral English ability, cross-cultural communication awareness, cooperative inquiry ability, critical thinking ability, information collection ability, and problem-solving ability. The students who participated in the survey agreed that PRL could boost their ability improvement. Among them, identifying the improvement of critical thinking ability (93.19%) ranked first, followed by the problem-solving ability (92.52%), information collection ability (92.51%) and cooperative inquiry ability (90.47%), the identification of English writing ability and oral English ability (88.43%), cross-cultural communication ability (87.07%) and interpersonal communication ability (86.39%) ranked comparatively lower.

These data accord with the characteristics of PRL and features of current college students who were born after 2000. Integrating learning and practice with a project, PRL attaches importance to key concepts, basic knowledge and theories in linguistics learning, emphasizes developing students' ability to explore, analyze linguistic phenomena and propose a solution in the project to the complexities in the real life and focuses on students' subjectivity and learning autonomy. On the other hand, current college students possess high comprehensive qualities, strong learning ability, active thinking and strong ability to accept new things. Therefore, their critical thinking ability, problem-solving ability, information collection ability and cooperative inquiry ability can be improved in PRL. However, foreign language learning and the enhancement of cross-cultural communication awareness calls for time and continuous practice. The relatively low recognition of interpersonal communication ability is related to the ideological characteristics of Post-00 college students. Quite a number of students have strong individualism, often self-centered, emphasizing their personal feelings but having weak sense of cooperation.

5.4.4 Students' Evaluation

Students' evaluation about PRL in Introduction to Linguistics teaching involves time arrangement, the process, difficulties and shortcomings.

9.52% of the students thought that they had a good schedule for the project and could finish the project on time, 80.95% thought that their time arrangement was basically sound for them to complete the project and 9.52% complained they could not finish the project as scheduled for the improper time arrangement. 5.44% and 85.03% of the students respectively regarded the procedure of PRL was acceptable or basically acceptable while 9.52% viewed it as unacceptable. These reflect that most of the students could finish the project as scheduled and acquainted themselves with the procedure of PRL but few students failed to manage their time properly.

According to the data, deficiencies of PRL lie in lack of systematization and coherence (62.59% of the students,) unclear division of labor (46.94%), lack of diversity in the evaluation subjects (42.86%), lack of challenging topics to stimulate students' learning interest (33.01%) and the deviation of topics from reality and with great difficulty in actual operation (33.33%).

As for insufficient application of the PRL model in linguistics learning, 59.86% of the students claimed that they wholeheartedly could afford time and energy to complete the PRL under great academic pressure; 54.42% of the students blamed the university for the shortage of conditions for implementing PRL; and 50.34% students complained about the over-busy teaching schedule. 58.5% of the students admitted that their main obstacles in completing PRL are the difficulty in writing term paper with originality and 56.46% confessed lack of imagination and creativity.

To summarize, a majority of the students can accept and adopt PRL in their linguistics learning, but their learning interest and participation willingness vary from person to person and from class to class. Through PRL, the students' knowledge acquisition and ability improvement can be strengthened to varying degrees. However, problems with PRL such as lack of systematic and coherent planning, enormous academic pressure, insufficient time and energy to complete the project, tight teaching schedule cannot be ignored.

6. Pedagogical Implications

The teaching practice and case study of PRL in teaching Introduction to Linguistics in X University indicate that further improvement calls for the joint efforts of the linguistics teacher and the students.

6.1 For Students

PRL mode in linguistics teaching guides students to do the project by experiencing, intuitive perception and active exploration in the real context, which is much easier for the students to strengthen their understanding, acceptance and identification of the linguistics knowledge. As participants and practitioners of PRL in linguistics teaching, students should first of all possess good moral characters, strong will and correct views on the world, life and values. Secondly, English major students should transform their knowledge view and learning view, clarify the learning objectives in linguistics learning and change passive learning into active learning. They should be not afraid of failure but be indomitable in overcoming difficulties in their life and learning so as to demonstrate the enterprising spirit of Chinese youth of the new era. In the third place, it is better for English majors to read extensively to broaden their horizon, strengthen their question awareness and develop research awareness. Meanwhile, they should think independently, learn and explore actively rather than blindly rely on teachers or the textbook so as to develop their innovation awareness and innovation spirit. Fourthly, they should strengthen their cooperative learning ability, team work spirit and interpersonal communication ability. PRL is by no means a project finished single-handed. Just as a going says, if you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together. Through PRL, students can learn from thinking, learn from doing and learn from sharing. They can learn how to allocate task among team members in a reasonable way, how to discover and analyze problems from different perspectives and in different dimensions and solve problems flexibly with different approaches, and how to communicate with others with an open and tolerant mind. Most important of all, college students should develop lifelong learning awareness, strengthen their autonomous learning ability and knowledge innovation ability, actively adjust their PRL strategies to raise the linguistics learning efficiency. By internalizing external knowledge into their own knowledge system and creating new knowledge system through sharing with the group and with others, students can foster independent, open and experiential and knowledge innovation spirit.

6.2 For Teachers

The findings of the case study reveal that implementing PRL in Introduction of Linguistics teaching requires the linguistics teacher take students' knowledge creation and innovation spirit cultivation as the teaching soul, fully mobilize students' participation enthusiasm in class activities, extracurricular activities and module construction. Secondly, the linguistics teacher should focus on developing students' knowledge innovation thinking, whether at the stage of demonstrating new knowledge and stimulating students' learning interest to complete static

knowledge accumulation or at the stage of guiding students to process prior knowledge, realize positive knowledge transfer and accomplish dynamic knowledge accumulation or at the stage of examining and evaluating students' problem-solving process to help students finish the internalization of knowledge. Hence, it is advisable for the teacher to encourage students to conduct inquiry learning, research-oriented learning and collaborative learning to stimulate their research interest in exploring language and their ability to analyze linguistic phenomena and fortify their team work spirit. Meanwhile, the linguistics teacher should strive to help students have a command of academic research methods and academic norms. Thirdly, the linguistics teacher should create a teaching situation rooted in life so as to foster students' independent thinking ability and criticism spirit, help them have an insight into knowledge innovation spirit and develop knowledge innovation ability. For instance, students will know much better about the significance of enhancing China's international publicity power after finishing the project of interpreting the remarks of the spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China from the perspectives of Politeness Principle and Cooperative Principle. Moreover, the linguistics teacher should create an equal and harmonious teaching atmosphere. On the one hand, the linguistics teacher is supposed to cultivate the students' consciousness of being the master of their own learning. On the other hand, the teacher is required to help students realize that in project-based research-oriented linguistics learning, each individual should hold an open and tolerant attitude towards each other so as to promote smooth communication. Simultaneously, the teacher should pay attention to the frequency of PRL in linguistics teaching, help students to manage their time effectively to guarantee the smoothness of their projects and timely solve students' learning problems. In addition, the linguistics teacher can take some relevant measures to prevent few lazy students from fishing in troubled waters.

Above all, the linguistics teacher should change his/her teaching philosophy from textbook-centered to question-oriented, from taking classroom theory lecturing as the center to emphasizing both blended teaching and practical teaching, from teacher-centered to teacher-guided and student-centered.

7. Conclusion

The findings of the case study of applying PRL to Introduction to Linguistics teaching in X University reveals that such a teaching reform contributes to stimulating students' learning interest and building up their confidence, improving students' learning performance and developing their research interest and research awareness, and the teaching practice has been favored by most of the students.

In the process of project-based research-oriented linguistics teaching, students demonstrate the learner autonomy and cooperation ability, improve their English proficiency and innovation ability, which highlights the student-centered teaching concept. Hence, giving full play to students' learning initiatives is the essential characteristic of implementing PRL to Introduction of Linguistics teaching. As the process of PRL is open, not confined to textbooks and homework, a good mindset is the precondition for both linguistics teachers and students to improve the teaching effects. Teachers who act as a guide, a promoter and a scaffold in the classroom instruction are the key to implementing PRL in teaching linguistics. Only by internalizing lifelong learning into actions can linguistics teachers enrich themselves, have profound insight and make education and academic research a happy journey by constantly absorbing new ideas, new knowledge and new skills and actively infiltrating them into their own teaching practice; only with a broad mind can the teachers learn from feedback and learn from reflection. Moreover, PRL in linguistics teaching evaluates students' learning ability and knowledge innovation ability rather than students' mastery of knowledge points, which contributes to stimulating students' learning initiatives.

Undeniably, improving the teaching efficiency of linguistics courses should never be confined to the unique application of PRL. More flexible and proper teaching methods or approaches await further exploration and joint efforts.

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