

A Study on the Teaching Reform of Dialogue Teaching in English Classrooms of Vocational Schools-Based on David Bohm's Dialogue Theory

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Abstract

In David Bohm's view, open-mindedness and democratic thought are the central ideas of dialogue theory, the principles of freedom and restraint are the important principles of dialogue theory, and dialogue itself is the reconstructing of the meaning of various information. There are many problems in English classrooms in vocational schools nowadays, such as disharmonious teacher-student relationship, serious disproportion between teachers and students, and utilitarian evaluation system, etc. These factors have seriously affected the efficiency of classroom teaching. So reconciling teacher-student relationship, optimizing teacher-student ratio and establishing a new evaluation system are the main goals of English classroom teaching reform in vocational schools.

Key words: Dialogue teaching; Vocational schools; David Bohm

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As a public course, college English plays an irreplaceable role in the vocational education system. In 2007, the General Office of the Ministry of Education issued the "Requirements for Teaching English Courses". In the Requirements, it is clearly pointed out that college English education is an important part of higher education,

and the English course is a compulsory public course for every student to study. College English should be guided by advanced teaching theories, and its main content of teaching is to cultivate students' intercultural communication and skills application as well as relevant learning strategies. The objectives of college English education are also clearly defined in the Requirements, both to cultivate students' comprehensive application of English skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and to have students be able to use English effectively in their future work, study and life, especially the ability to listen and speak, with the ultimate goal of cultivating high quality talents for China's rapidly developing economy.

Compared with primary vocational education and secondary vocational education, higher vocational education is for high school graduates, and higher vocational education is the highest level of vocational education in China, and plays an irreplaceable role in China's higher education system. There are many differences between general higher education institutions and higher vocational institutions, but the main difference is that general higher education institutions cultivate theoretical talents, while higher vocational institutions cultivate skillful talents. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate the idea of skill cultivation into English teaching in higher vocational colleges. However, in today's English teaching of higher education institutions, teachers repeat what the book says, students play with cell phones in class, and the whole classroom atmosphere is dead and dull, not to mention the integration of the idea of skill development into daily teaching, so it is imperative to reform English teaching in higher vocational schools. The idea of dialogue proposed by David Bohm, a famous British thinker and sociologist, provides a new research angle for English teaching reform in vocational schools.

1. THE CORE IDEAS OF DAVID BOHM'S DIALOGUE THEORY AND ITS EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

In David Bohm's book "On Dialogue", the author elaborates on his dialogue ideas, and see the following analysis.

1.1 Dialogue Is the Fusion of Democracy and Openness

In the book "Communication and Development", Bohm points out that with the rapid development of science and technology and the continuous updating of modern communication technology, a global village will emerge. In other words, through modern means of communication technology you can keep in touch with people in any corner of the world. However, behind this connection is a deep helplessness. The connection between people is only through the exchange of information by means of language, and the emotional communication between people is almost zero in this process. As far as society is concerned, communication barriers are inevitable when people who are from different social classes communicate with each other due to the differences in lifestyles and values of each social class. Up to the national level, each country has different historical and cultural backgrounds as well as political systems, so when it comes to communication between countries, it is also normal to have poor communication. Based on the above discussion, Böhm believes that the communication barriers that exist between groups or people have not been eliminated by the development of modern communication technology, but have become more and more serious. Bohm points out that openness and democracy are the necessary factors for building the foundation of dialogue. In the case of an open dialogue, the space in which the dialogue takes place is open, either physically (e.g., a large classroom or a square) or conceptually (e.g., a dialogue that is not limited to a particular topic). In the case of democratic dialogue, participants in the dialogue have equal rights to speak, and no one is allowed to oppress another party behaviorally or emotionally. In his book, Bohm points out that in the process of dialogue there are no special classes, everyone is equal in status, and if the concept of rights is applied to the act of dialogue, then the dialogue would have no meaning, and the space in which the interlocutors live is open, and there are no shackles to restrict them. Dialogue can only be meaningful in an open space, where people can listen to each other's words and enjoy the pleasure that is brought by dialogue, and finally realize the value of dialogue.

It is a cliché to make a democratic atmosphere permeate the whole teaching process. In the opinion of most experts and scholars, the democratic relationship in the classroom mainly refers to the relationship between the teacher and the students. Then what kind of teacher-

student relationship in the classroom is considered democratic, some people think that the teacher should dominate the teacher-student relationship, while others think that the students should dominate the teacher-student relationship. Some people in our educational community have proposed the idea of teacher dominance and student dominance. This idea aims to deal with the relationship between teachers and students in a vague way, which is not substantially helpful to the solution of the problem. Zhang Yuehua, a famous Chinese scholar, has pointed out that this assertion has never detached from the issue of the desire of control. As far as the students are concerned, the teacher's right to speak in the classroom is replaced by the students' right to speak, and the final result is that the students' slavishness is transformed into an arrogant and domineering authoritarian character. According to the famous Norwegian educator Fleiss, the relationship of "I and you" is the main relationship in dialogue practice. When the "I" in the dialogue is treated as another "you", that is, the relationship of "you and you" exists in the dialogue practice, the dialogue will become meaningless, not to mention the teaching of dialogue. In teaching practice, there is no point in arguing about who is the dominant teacher and who is the dominant student, because no matter who is the dominant party, the true meaning of education cannot be realized. As far as the teacher is concerned, if the teacher is the main party, then the students are bound to submit to the teacher and dare not challenge the teacher's authority in any way. And vice versa.

It is imperative to introduce the act of dialogue into teaching practice and to build a relationship that is different from the traditional teaching relationship. In other words, only in the dialogue can teachers and students break out of the strange circle of "who is the subject and who is the object" and realize the desire to build an equal teacher-student relationship. Equal teacher-student relationship plays a vital role in creating a harmonious teaching atmosphere, because the effective two-way flow of knowledge can be achieved in a harmonious teaching atmosphere, that is, knowledge can flow not only from teachers to students, but also from students to teachers. In the traditional Chinese teaching philosophy, this is called "teaching with each other".

1.2 Dialogue is the Generation of New Meaning

The word "meaning" plays a crucial role in Bohm's dialogue theory. In Bohm's view, it is the exchange of meaning between people that gives dialogue a soul. In the practice of dialogue, we exchange information with each other, and in the exchange of information, we construct the same meaning together, and the same meaning will be renewed as the dialogue goes on. The world is universally connected, of course, there is also a connection between sociality and "meaning", this connection does not arise out of thin air, but needs a "bridge", at this time the means

of dialogue is this “bridge “The means of dialogue is the bridge. Dialogue is like the blood flowing in people’s bodies, and the continuous circulation of blood in people’s bodies is like the dialogue can make people constantly update their knowledge base, and eventually promote the continuous development of human civilization. But the renewal of human knowledge base does not exist until meaningful dialogue takes place. The renewal of people’s knowledge base is not only owned by one person, but also can be shared by all with the exchange of dialogue between people, which is a bridge, a bridge that can connect people and society. Bohm also points out that the sharing of meaning is based on social development, and the sharing of meaning constitutes social culture.

In Bohm’s view, the word “meaning” is equivalent to the construction of knowledge, and the process of accumulating “meaning” is the process of constructing knowledge. One’s life is finite, but the renewal of knowledge is infinite. When facing the renewal of knowledge, people want to use a more revolutionary and inclusive knowledge to construct a knowledge system instead of limiting themselves to the previous gradual knowledge construction system. Knowledge is constantly updated, inclusive, and of course contingent, and the accumulation of knowledge requires a subjective willingness of learners. In daily teaching practice, this process of active construction of knowledge is the process of continuous updating and accumulation of knowledge. This process needs to be done by teachers and students together; if only one of them does it, then the construction of knowledge will become meaningless.

1.3 Dialogue Is a Blend of Freedom and Systems

In Bohm’s view, a free atmosphere is a necessary guarantee for the effective implementation of dialogue. The free atmosphere mainly includes the following elements: 1) Dialogue between each other is not purposeful, we speak freely, there is no subject party, there is no so-called authority, and there is no utilitarianism in the dialogue. 2) In the process of dialogue, everyone dares to tell the truth, that is, to reveal the inner most true ideas, although the most true ideas between each other may be different, but it is the collision of these different ideas that brings the truth to the surface. 3) In the process of dialogue practice, Bohm advocates “round-table” dialogue, that is to say, let everyone sit around a round table to have a dialogue, so that it is also for the convenience of dialogue communication. However, in Bohm’s view, the freedom explained above is not freedom in the full sense of the word, because absolute freedom does not exist, and the end of freedom is restraint. To sum up, the free dialogue atmosphere for dialogue participants is a must, but the behavioral restraint for dialogue participants is also a must.

It is necessary to have an atmosphere of freedom in the teaching practice. The scholar Xu Qikai points out

that relative freedom has a positive impact on the teaching effect. In the case of preschool children, if they are not guaranteed for enough physical and psychological space to move freely, and if they are only taught in a spoon-feed way, their creative talent will be ruthlessly stifled and they will eventually become learning machines. The scholar O’Reilly points out that educational practice should be unrestrained, but this unrestrainedness should be controlled within certain limits, and educational practice should not be a process in which the dominant party manipulates the behavior of others. By the same token, the system also has certain value in educational practice. At present, China’s education system has obvious regional characteristics, which is inseparably related to the local economic development. Although the education system varies, these education systems have a common feature, that is, students’ daily life and study should be in accordance with the rules and regulations specified by the school, and students, as a vulnerable group, dare not violate the school system in the slightest. Although students’ behavior and living habits are well restrained, students’ autonomy and creativity are also ruthlessly stifled. To sum up, the relationship between freedom and the system is dialectical, you include me and I include you. In the actual teaching, teachers and students enjoy equal status and mutual respect, which is an important condition to ensure the effective implementation of the system.

2. THE MAIN PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC ENGLISH TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOOLS

Taking Bohm’s dialogue theory as the basis of research, the author finds that the main problems of public English teaching in higher education schools in daily teaching practice include sharp conflicts between teachers and students, imperfect framework of teachers’ and students’ knowledge systems and crowded teaching sites.

2.1 Sharp Conflicts Between Teachers and Students

The famous British scholar Noynoy pointed out in the book “Education of Slavery” that the teachers’ teaching ideas have also undergone a radical change with the popularity of the system of one test for life, and the score on the test paper is the only purpose for the teachers, so the teachers began to gradually oppress the students so as to let them get high marks, and the students were unable to bear such oppression, as a result, the conflicts between students and the teachers began to become acute. Although the conflict between teachers and students becomes more acute every year as well as students have taken relevant measures to improve the relationship between students and teachers, the effect is very little. Teachers in higher

vocational schools still have the absolute right to speak in the classroom order, and students still dare not challenge the dominant position of teachers in the classroom. The teacher's dominance in the classroom is mainly manifested by the teacher using PPT to lecture or repeating what the book says, while the students are playing with their cell phones or sleeping. Of course, some teachers do interact with students, but this interaction is just a formality, and students are still very resistant to it because they feel that the teacher is just trying to complete the teaching task, not really wanting to communicate.

2.2 Perception of Outdated Knowledge

At present, the vast majority of English teachers in higher vocational schools have old knowledge systems. In the face of the continuous updating of English knowledge and the new requirements of students, the old knowledge that teachers have certainly can not meet. There are three main characteristics of teachers' outdated knowledge. The first is closedness, the teachers keep the old knowledge and are not willing or have no time to accept new knowledge. The second is backwardness, the teachers' obsolete knowledge will become backward as the times move forward, the knowledge is the experience that is summed up by the previous practice, the experience can not guide the current practice. Thirdly, it is fixed. What the teacher says is the truth, it is fixedness, and students cannot question such fixed knowledge. Whether learning English or another language, familiarity with words and the use of grammar are the first steps in the initial mastery of a language. If one needs to be proficient in the use of the language, the students need to combine what has learned with practice, eventually forming an empirical perception. In the daily English teaching process, the English classroom is a lonely place where teachers do not combine teaching with students' majors, nor with their future career plans, let alone with their growth practices. The teacher as the main party of teaching also does not update his teaching ideas in time. The teacher thinks that the quality of higher vocational students is poorer compared with undergraduate students, so there is no need to teach with heart. At the same time, in the teaching process, the teacher will take himself as the main body of teaching, and the students cannot have any challenge to his authority. To sum up, the teachers' obsolete knowledge perception will have a negative impact on the teaching effect.

2.3 Crowded Teaching Space

In the 1890s, the total number of higher vocational students in China was 12,600,000. In the 21st century, the total number of students is 11.334 million. However, during this period, the total number of teachers increased by 22,000, so it is obvious that the growth of teachers is far less than the growth of students. This huge gap in teacher-student ratios has led to many problems, one of which is that teachers have to teach in large class.

The advantage of large class is that they meet the needs of all students in English classes in the face of a severe teacher shortage, thus increasing teaching efficiency. However, the disadvantage is that the physical and psychological spaces of teachers and students are severely compressed. In the compressed space, everything the teacher does is to serve the established teaching goals, and the free discussion between the teacher and the students has to yield to the teaching objectives. The result is that the gap between the teacher and the students becomes bigger and bigger, and the teachers and students distrust each other more and more, which eventually makes it difficult to carry out dialogue teaching. Since the quality of higher vocational students is generally poor, it is manifested in the ability of self-control, their enhancement of English ability needs more help from teachers, but the number of students is so large that it is difficult for each student to have the opportunity to communicate with teachers in dialogue.

3. THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF BOHM'S DIALOGUE TEACHING THEORY TO THE ENGLISH TEACHING IN HIGHER VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS NOWADAYS

Based on Bohm's dialogue theory, and taking the problems in English teaching in higher vocational schools into consideration, the following analysis is proposed.

3.1 Balancing the Relationship Between Teachers and Students

To establish a new teacher-student relationship based on Bohm's dialogue theory, we must first break the previous solidified relationship between teachers and students. The previous teacher-student relationship mainly has two states, one is the teacher as the main body, the whole classroom order is controlled by the teacher, students do not have any right to say. The other state is that students dominate the whole classroom and the teacher can only play an assisted role. In either of these states, the relationship between teacher and students in the classroom is asymmetrical. In such an asymmetrical relationship, there is no way to establish free space between teachers and students, which also has a direct impact on the harmonious dialogue between teachers and students. Therefore, it is very important to balance the relationship between teachers and students in classroom teaching. A harmonious teacher-student relationship is a necessary guarantee for an effective teacher-student dialogue. Specifically for each teaching session, for example, when teachers make teaching plans, they can consult with students, combine the characteristics of each student, and do their best to make a teaching plan that meets the development of the characteristics of the whole class, so that the teacher will not work behind closed doors and will

no longer be detached from the students, and the students will be integrated into the teacher's world. As a teacher, you can also mingle with students and integrate into them, such as participating in their after-school exercises, discussing with them about the knowledge points of the lesson, or guiding them to develop a study plan. Balancing the relationship between teachers and students, thus promoting two-way interaction between teachers and students, ultimately promoting effective teaching.

3.2 Innovative Classroom Model

According to data, the current teacher-student ratio in Chinese classrooms is 1:50, which is far from the ideal teacher-student ratio of 1:20. In this situation, it is imperative to innovate the classroom model; dialogue teaching has become one of the main tools of today's teaching mode, outperforming other teaching methods with unparalleled advantages. In dialogue teaching, discussions can be conducted in the form of round tables or in small groups. In the case of round table, teachers and students can sit around a round table according to the number of students, and there is no central point in this round table, so the status between teachers and students is equal, and the dialogue and communication between teachers and students is equal. At the same time, teachers and students are open to each other, which means that the communication between teachers and students is open and without any obstacles. No one has the right to speak over others, and it is not possible to impose one's own views on others. Such group discussions are up-to-date, innovative and in line with the development characteristics of teachers and students, students are free to express their views and emotions in an equal dialogue environment, and eventually improve their English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in the dialogue practice.

3.3 Update the Knowledge Base

In most vocational schools, teachers' academic structure is basically bachelor's degree, while teachers' educational ideas are old, and they often read PPT to students in daily classes, and some of them even do not even know how to do PPT, but read directly from textbooks. As a result, the teachers' knowledge base has not been updated. As a teacher in the new era, it is important for teachers to constantly reinvent themselves and update their knowledge system. In addition, the textbooks used by students are mostly from the Higher Education Press. Although this textbook takes into account the characteristics of each higher education institution as much as possible, each edition of the textbook is not updated to meet the needs of

each higher education institution, nor is it possible to meet the needs of each student. Although the textbook provides punctilious knowledge, teachers can transform the punctilious knowledge into "living" knowledge, such as combining the relevant content or knowledge points in the textbook with the characteristics of students' majors, so as to learn professional knowledge in English knowledge with fun. This kind of dialogue is not only a linguistic exchange, but also an integration of knowledge between teachers and students. This integration of knowledge is in line with the students' teaching objectives, but also with their own characteristics. In the process of dialogue exchange, dialogue teaching has transcended its instrumental value, as students not only improve their English skills, but also experience the deeper connotation of dialogue.

4. CONCLUSION

David Bohm's dialogue theory is in line with the requirements of the times and has profound inspirations for English teaching in higher education schools, providing theoretical support in solving the problems that arise in teaching, and has certain reference significance for the subsequent research on dialogue teaching.

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