

Study on the Application of Fusion of Horizons in English Teaching

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Abstract

Based on the core essence of fusion of horizons, this paper analyzes the internal relations between fusion of horizons theory and English teaching effectiveness and discusses the value of the fusion of horizons theory in English teaching as a second language in depth via an empirical study on English teaching in Flight Academy of Binzhou University. For English teaching, this study not only provides theoretical teaching skills and methods, but also points out how to construct students' knowledge frame in teaching. It is hoped that this empirical study can throw a new light to English teaching method and can moreover bring a revolutionary change for English teaching in China.

Key words: Fusion of horizons; English teaching; Effectiveness; China

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INTRODUCTION

Fusion of horizons theory is Gadamer's key point in language learning and teaching. It is a dialectical concept that results from the rejection of two alternatives: Objectivism (the objectification of the other is premised

on the forgetting of oneself) and absolute knowledge (universal history can be connected within a single horizon). Thus, this theory believes that we exist neither in closed horizons nor unique horizons. Instead, different horizons can be fused and connected in the vision and learning and teaching.

Nowadays, this theory is widely applied in the teaching field and has achieved great success. The Flight Academy of Binzhou University has been working hard on the application of this theory in English teaching and has greatly improved the English teaching efficiency. This empirical study will definitely bring great benefits to English teaching in China. More importantly, it will surely make English learning and teaching much easier in the perspective of foreign language acquisition.

1. AN INTERPRETATION OF THE CORE ESSENCE OF FUSION OF HORIZONS

1.1 Objectivism Theory

Objectivism theory is one of the core theories of fusion of horizons; it considers the interactive relationship between teachers and students as the essence of modern teaching in which the two-way or multi-way interaction between teachers and students is the key to modern educational process. Objectivism theory mainly concentrates on the projected interaction as well as the interactive relationship between teachers and students, aiming to implement the effective fusion of the students-students, students-texts, teachers-texts, teachers-students as the nature of teaching. This theory gives priority to the practice and considers the interactional teaching as the inner meaning of education. On the one hand, it integrates the current vision and its expansion to reach a consensus and eliminates partial understanding. On the other hand, it combines the different horizons to improve understanding and cohesion so as to achieve a kind of teaching effectiveness.

1.2 Unity Theory of Finite and Infinite

The unity theory of finite and infinite is another important category in the theory of horizontal fusion and it believes that the horizontal fusion includes three main sections: watching, listening and speaking. And it states that these three parts are cross-related and can't be departed. In language learning perspective, the horizons are not closed but flexible. Learning is not only limited in the range of observation, but also it probes the analysis of history, present and future. In the teaching field, horizons are not limited in the vision of teachers and students. Moreover, the horizons are widely spread in the context of teaching materials and educational background. When all the concerning horizons are integrated and connected, the teaching can be considered as a complete one. In conclusion, both learning and teaching combine finite and infinite aspects and involve unlimited extension of combination.

2. RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH TEACHING UNDER OBJECTIVISM THEORY

2.1 Achieve the Full Range of Horizon Fusion of Students and Text Via Information Block Matching and Activation

Fusion of horizons is understood in the form of dialogue, through the dynamical and continuous interaction between the text and students. Only in this way can be the learning and teaching become harmonious and a deep understanding of the text can be achieved. It believes that the students' understanding towards the text is not purely to accept, but to find information block matching which have similarity with text words in the information storage, and then grasp the meaning of the text after activation.

Based on this, teachers of Flight Academy of Binzhou University focus on the understanding the entire text in English Teaching. Students are encouraged to have their own opinion independently and creatively. And there is no definite standard for understanding. Taking English reading class for example, students are encouraged to make good preview, knowing the main content of the passage and figure out the new words, which doesn't require a common understand of the whole passage, but highlight the integration of students' subjective initiative and the objective text. In class, students are given the full freedom to understand the passage in an original and creative way within the basic meaning of the text, achieving a deep integration of free discussion and objective implication. After class, students are encouraged to accomplish the self-correction of the understanding of the passage, deepening the information block matching and activation and improving the full

range of initiative and text integration. The adoption of this teaching method considerably improved students' master level of English acquisition. In a 2015 U.S. Flight Training English test, the average test scores of students from Binzhou University are 5 percentage points higher than other aviation colleges in China. Students' cognitive ability, expansion ability and analytical ability are highly prized by the U.S. pilot school. Studies have shown that the effective implementation of these teaching methods can dramatically improve the grades of the College English teaching, improving the student's ability to control the text information as well as enhancing the core competitiveness of students in understanding English text.

2.2 Realize Fusion of Horizons Between Teachers and Text by Taking Text as the Basis

Fusion of Horizons believes that text is an objective existence, there is no heterogeneous, yet students sharing the text have different cultural background, different intelligence, different learning methods and habits, hence when explaining the text teachers cannot rely entirely on the fixed way, and they can try to make innovations based on the traditional education method to combine the teacher and the text effectively and to maximize the effectiveness of teaching.

While fully understanding the text and forming their own opinion, the school teachers try to explore a complete set of teaching methods for certain student groups. Taking CET-4 (College English Test Band Four) English teaching as an example, in order to improve the students' passing rate, the school teachers not only select English review materials carefully, but also carefully combine all kinds of teaching content. When preparing for class, teachers carefully classify all kinds of materials, and analyze the problems exposed in the model test, screen all concerning files according to the need of different students, careful classify different listening materials, writing materials, reading essays and translation training sector. By carrying out unified teaching theory, more rational guidance for outstanding students are proposed, and more basic knowledge for relatively weak students are classified. Based on the combination of unique insights and classification of teachers to the text, each student gets exercise and improvement to some degrees and the formulation of different teaching methods also effectively improve the passing rate of CET-4, making the school's CET-4 passing rate become the best among all the aviation college in China. The following table (Table 1) is the table of the CET-4 passing rate from 2007-2016 to Flight Academy of Binzhou University.

The research shows that the comprehensive analysis and effective integration of the teachers and the text have greatly improved the teaching efficiency, not only making the CET-4 passing rate increase year by year, but also

effectively improving the students' English comprehensive capability.

Table 1
CET-4 English Test Results

Year	Time	Attendance number	Passing number	Passing rate
2007	2008.06	44	24	54.55%
2008	2009.06	83	58	69.88%
2009	2010.06	64	48	76.24%
2010	2011.06	115	90	78.26%
2011	2012.06	128	101	78.91%
2012	2013.06	130	106	81.53%
2013	2014.06	130	109	83.84%
2014	2015.06	138	116	84.05%
2015	2016.06	140	126	90.00%

2.3 Realize the Fusion of Horizons Between Teachers and Students Via Participation in Depth While Taking Text as the Intermediary

Hermeneutics believes that the teaching process is a process to incorporate their own insights into the vision of the other side, and it is a kind of experience sharing rather than the existence of one side and ablation of the other side. This convergence is the collision and resonance of different horizons, rather than a fixed answer. Teachers should adjust the teaching design and program in teaching on the basis of the actual teaching situation. Meanwhile, teachers should achieve the integration of ideas by taking the text as the intermediary, rather than simply provide the inherent mode and the answer.

In daily teaching, the school teachers pay attention to the integration between teachers and students. The teachers not only reflect their own value of teaching, but also fully respect the students' subjective initiative. The understanding of the text and the teaching content are actively included in the scope of the interpretation of the students' in order to achieve a valuable teaching and learning. The school teachers' practice is reflected in the following aspects: First is the role reorientation between teachers and students. Surprisingly, teachers treat students as friends. While realizing the teaching of English, it also realizes the transmission and exchange of feelings and thoughts. The second is the reconstruction of the students' English learning motivation. Teachers accomplish the transfer and the transmit of English learning experience and teaching knowledge points from both outside and inside, paying attention to the cultivation and stimulation of students' English learning motivation, teaching content and method in order to find value strategies for organic fusion. The third is the emphasize on the formation of the evaluation of students and judgment of students' learning process dynamically in the teaching process instead of an over all performance evaluation at the end of the term, focusing on the teaching process of students' independent understanding of the passage structure. It can be found through classroom lectures that the classroom teaching shows a free and creative atmosphere. Teachers

respect students' personal reflections and students in return also fully respect the teachers, displaying a high teaching effect and harmonious atmosphere in classroom interaction. This undoubtedly constructs a classroom with full vigor and vitality. Moreover, it potentially improves the effectiveness of English teaching and realizes the depth communication between teachers and students.

3. RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH TEACHING UNDER THE UNITY THEORY OF FINITE AND INFINITE

3.1 Improve the Penetration of Audio and Video Horizons and Form the New Teaching Perspective

In hermeneutics, watching, listening and speaking are defined as three different perspectives and mutually projected. If these three horizons are combined, new teaching perspectives will be definitely brought into being. Not only can it help build a teaching culture, but also help in the interactive generation of advanced concept of teaching value, and then comprehensively promote the teaching activities from the perspective of generation, update and creation.

On the basis of the traditional way of English teaching, the school teachers apply a new audio-visual concept into teaching activities. And they put the teaching maximum principle and audio-visual fusion mode to English teaching, not only do they focus on the multisensory participation, but also pay attention to the language input and output and emphasize the training of students' ability. Taking pilots' radiotelephony communication as an example, the school teachers pay great attention to the audio-visual integration interpretation and carry out CBT (Computer Based Teaching) special training, simulation training and flight simulator radio communicating training. In the initial stage, they make students fully understand the particularity and uniqueness of the flight environment and radiotelephony communication through software based audio, video and other materials, and then through the simulator training to strengthen students' visual impact on the actual operation of the control surfaces, flight procedures, and to make the students experience the actual operation in the context of English language; Finally, based on the CBT training and simulator training, teachers create radiotelephony communication learning environment for students in accordance with the standard of radiotelephony communication controller and pilot simulation, encouraging students to accurately grasp the effective information of radiotelephony communication. Through the audio-visual integration, the students not only are familiar with the different phases of flight English dialogue, improving operational skills and the language skills, but also lay a good theoretical basis for

foreign aviation flight training. The following table (Table 2) shows the students' passing rate in Air Cadets' English radiotelephony communication test for Cargair Flight Academy in Canada and Aerosim Flight Academy in America in the years between 2010 and 2015:

Table 2
Test Results of Flight Academy

Flight school	Year	Air cadets number	Passing number	Passing rate
Cargair Flight Academy	2010	18	15	83.33%
	2011	24	20	87.50%
	2012	18	16	88.89%
	2013	22	20	90.90%
	2014	25	23	92.00%
Aerosim Flight Academy	2015	28	27	96.42%
	2010	32	31	93.75%
	2011	20	19	95.00%
	2012	40	38	95%
	2013	45	43	95.55%
	2014	48	46	95.83%
2015	52	51	98.07%	

The research shows that the effective integration of watching, listening and speaking can not only effectively stimulate students' sensory and improve the quality of teaching, but also help students improve their ability of using language, completing practical training task with sound theoretical and technical support.

3.2 Enhance the Integration of Different Time Horizons

According to Gadamer, understanding and learning are not a subjective act, but is a kind of effect of historical events or relations. So learning and teaching are time-related items. Thus, in the process of realizing the fusion of horizon, the effect of history is an important factor that can't be ignored. When the effective integration of different time horizons are realized, the learning process forms the unity of finite and infinite.

Due to the spatial characteristic of the concerning major, the school teachers combine senior high school basics, university learning, and flight school training together and integrate the three time horizons effectively, focusing on improving the students' learning method essentially. Taking the Advanced English for Civil Pilots as an example, in the first phase of teaching, teachers start with fundamental English skills and topics, improving students' pronunciation, intonation and grammar. Meanwhile, they improve students' tone, omissions and stress by asking questions, such as "Why do you want to be a pilot? What qualities should outstanding pilots possess?"

After that, professional characteristics will be emphasized, classroom training mainly focus on the expression of aviation expertise, gradually integrate professional features into oral language training, and gradually move closer to the professional direction, such as "What will you do if your airplane is too close to the

preceding airplane?" Finally, knowledge required by abroad flight training will be penetrated into the final stage of spoken language training, mainly through aviation theoretical knowledge and aviation special circumstances training to improve students' practical ability, such as "What are the two basic laws of physics that can help explain the phenomenon of flight? What are the four variables that influence the aerodynamic forces on an airplane?" As the teaching is progressively integrated, students' English speaking ability improved constantly. And at the same time, the integration of different time horizons connects students' different learning stages. On the one hand, through a series of progressive training, 85% of students can pass the TOEFL or IELTS exam and other authoritative oral test and after going abroad most students can easily deal with daily communication and ATC radio communication. The research shows that the application of progressive teaching method can not only realize the effective penetration of educational resources, but also promote the students' continuous progression in English learning.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the application of fusion of horizons in English teaching in the Flight Academy of Binzhou University can significantly improve the effectiveness of English teaching. For English teaching, fusion of horizons not only provides a kind of teaching skills and methods, but also it points out the significance of students' knowledge framework construction. The teaching result proves that the effective application of fusion of horizons in English teaching will bring positive effect to second language teaching in China and can promote the continuous deepening of the current English teaching reform.

In the field of language teaching, the fusion of horizons definitely will improve the teaching efficiency and the research result can be transformed to other fields of learning and teaching, making language learning and teaching more diversified.

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