language competence as well as communicative competence.

VI. Conclusion

We have shown that the traditional English teaching approach and the communicative approach have their respective advantages and disadvantages. It is expected that these two approaches can co-exist and influence each other in the present English teaching. But, methodology is never something fixed, a set of rigid principles and procedure that the teacher must conform to. Rather it is a dynamic, creative, and exploratory process. An appropriate and better teaching approach is found only when it is designed to optimize student's learning processes and integrate the advantages of other approaches. The hybrid approach presented in this paper is expected to be more effective in the subsequent practices.

References

(... continued from p. 77)


(... continued from p. 80)

Appendix

No. 9 Letter from Class One

Dear Editor,

I am a college student majoring in English. I like your programs very much. Every day I listen to them.

Since I want to arrange my time better and I don't know your arrangement of your programs quite well, I'd like to ask for a timetable of all your programs. Would you like to give me your permission?

I'm looking for your timetable.

Sincerely,

Jack

No. 9 Letter from Class Two

Dear Editor,

I want a timetable of VOA to listen to the English program. I'm a college student in China. I major in English. In order to improve my listening, I listen to the VOA program every day. But I don't know the exact time of the program. Sometimes I miss the program. So I hope you can send a timetable to me.

Yours sincerely,

Jane

73
CULTURE AWARENESS IN AN EFL WRITING CLASS

Tian Hailong
Tianjin University of Commerce

Abstract

This paper reports a classroom experiment that aims at solving the cultural problem of EFL writing. The problem is defined as the Chinese way of thinking that is realized in the schematic structure of a piece of English writing. Based on Swales' move structure analysis, the experiment provides solutions to the problem. They are: 1) enhancing students' awareness of the cultural problem in their writing, and 2) arranging the moves in an English rather than Chinese way. The implication is that developing students' cultural awareness is equally important as developing their language skills.

I. The cultural problem of EFL writing

Chinese students are likely to write English as a foreign language (EFL) in a way that is different from that of native speakers. This happens even after they have an average command of the English language. Kirkpatrick (1992), for example, notices in his study that thirty-seven out of forty Chinese, when they write letters of request in English, follow an information sequence of "facwork-reason of request-need." Their way of writing is linguistically structured as a pattern of BECAUSE-THEREFORE. This Chinese way of writing English request-letters, considered normal and polite by most Chinese native speakers, is different from that of the Anglo-Americans who, when making a request in a letter form, are likely to "ask first and explain later" (Scollon et al., 2000:8).

Kong (1998) also notices this kind of difference between Chinese and English business request letters. The English request-letters by Chinese writers, as is found in his research, show patterns similar to those found in the Chinese request-letters, such as the preferred pattern of justification followed by request, greater emphasis on interpersonal or rapport-building strategies, and an absence of face-threatening moves. He argues that the difference is due to the inherently different discoursal patterns of the two languages and different expectations regarding making a request in the two cultures.

II. Possible solution to the problem: An experiment

A classroom experiment is conducted to testify a possible solution to the cultural problem described above. It emphasizes developing Chinese students' cultural awareness by involving them in writing tasks that are designed in the way in which the moves (Swales' term) are properly arranged in the English way. The following is the description of the experiment.

Subjects

Two classes of English-majors in a Chinese university are involved in the experiment. Each class has 27 sophomores of the same grade. According to the program syllabus, the students have their writing class at the beginning of the first term of their second year tertiary study. This experiment is conducted respectively with each class on the first day they have their writing classes.

Tools

Swales' move structure framework (Swales, 1990) is taken as the analytical tool for the corpus of the sample letters collected. The samples from both classes have their "communicative purpose" in common, that is, to request a timetable of VOA broadcasts. This communicative purpose is realized in the schematic structure of the letters, and the sample letters are examined and analyzed here in terms of move structure. In analyzing an introduction of an academic writing,
Swales applies move analysis to the analysis of the structure (Swales, 1990:143). He examines how the introduction moves on from the perspective of the structure framework. In the context of the corpus concerned with the request letters in this experiment, a four-move structure has been identified:

Move 1: Introduction (I)
Move 2: Attitude towards VOA and English (A)
Move 3: Problems (P)
Move 4: Request (R)

The different arrangement of the four moves constitutes the different move structures of the sample letters written by the subjects in the two classes.

Procedures

Class One

1. At the very beginning of their first writing class, the 27 students of Class One are required to write letters to the VOA editor asking for a program schedule. The teacher does not prepare them with any knowledge of writing such an English request letter before they actually set to write. The letters having been submitted, the move structure of each letter is examined in terms of four moves, namely, introduction, attitude of VOA, problem, and request. It is found that nearly 70% of the sample letters have the move of “request” at the end of the request-letter, following a move structure of “I-A-P-R” (see Table 1).

Class Two

2. Two tasks are designed to involve the 27 students of Class Two in classroom activities. The purpose is to help the Chinese students recognize the different orderings of the moves in Chinese and English request-letters.

Prepare students with samples of typical Chinese and English request-letters. Discuss how they are structured.

The Chinese one is a letter written by a Chinese college student who asks money from his parents. In his letter, he inquires about every member of his family and talks about every detail of his school life before he asks his parents to send him some money.

The English one is a letter of request written by an English native speaker. It is so structured that the letter begins with expression of request followed by reasons and background for the request.

The two letters are analyzed in terms of move structure. Through this task, students of Class Two, unlike students of Class One, become aware of the different ways in which Chinese and English order the moves in their request-letters.

Prepare students with the same samples of Chinese and English request-letters. Discuss which is more polite and which appeals to them, and why?

A. To illustrate to the students the different ways of expressing request between Chinese and English people. This illustration is made from a cultural perspective in terms of politeness. When asked which move structure is more polite, students respond that it is more polite to put “request” after presenting all the reasons for the request. This kind of belief, unfortunately, results in the fact that the English request letters written by Chinese students follow a BECAUSE-THEREFORE pattern, which is a different move structure from that of the English native speakers.

B. To present to the students the contrastive structures of expressing request between Chinese and English people. This presentation is made from a discourse perspective in terms of move structure. An English letter is likely to follow a structure of R-I-A-P, while a Chinese letter is likely to follow a structure of I-A-P-R.

3. After the two tasks, the students of Class Two are asked to do the same writing task as the students of Class One. The submitted letters are also examined in terms of move structure. The result is shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Move structure of samples from Class One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move structure</th>
<th>Number of students (total number: 27)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-A-P-R</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-P-A-R</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-P-R-A</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-R-A-P</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I: Introduction; F: Attitude towards English and VOA; P: Problem; R: Request

Table 2. Move structure of samples from Class Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move structure</th>
<th>Number of students (total number: 27)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R-I-A-P-Ra</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-R-A-P-(P)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-A-P-R</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I: Introduction; F: Attitude towards English and VOA; P: Problem; R: Request; Ra: Request again

Results

It is found that, in terms of move structure, students of Class Two demonstrate a more English-culture orientated way
of expressing request in a letter form. Of the 27 students in Class Two, 22 followed the "ask-first-and-explain-later" way of writing an English request-letter (move structure of R-I-A-P-Ra), though the Chinese students cannot immediately dismiss the Chinese way of writing (they still ask again at the end of the request letter).

In contrast, students of Class One, who have not been trained to familiarize themselves with the cultural difference in writing request letters, all begin with self-introduction. Only two students put REQUEST at the second move, writing roughly in an English way.

Results of this experiment reveal that the teaching methods conducted in Class Two do work to a great extent. By enhancing students’ cultural awareness through the ordering of moves, English teachers may help their students write English in an English way.

Discussion

1. Culture awareness is vital to the English form of writing.

Of the 27 subjects in Class One, who wrote the request letter without knowing the culture difference between the English and Chinese way of expressing request in a letter form, 19 subjects follow a move structure of I-A-P-R. They first introduce themselves to a stranger; then they say they like VOA. After that, they state their problem. Finally, they make the request. This move structure is realized as follows (also see Appendix in detail):

I am a Chinese college student. (Introduction) I like English and I like to listen to VOA. (Attitude towards VOA) But I don’t have a timetable and I often miss my favorite programs. (Problem) So I ask for a timetable. (Request)

The result is quite different in Class Two, who have been aware of the cultural differences embodied in the request-letters. Of the same number of subjects, as many as 22 put the move of "request" at the beginning of the letter, roughly following the way the English do (in a move structure of R-I-A-P-Ra), which is realized as follows (also see Appendix in detail):

I want a timetable of VOA. (Request) I'm a college student in China. (Introduction) I listen to VOA every day. (Attitude towards VOA) But I don’t know the exact time of the program. (Problem) So I hope you could send me a timetable. (Request again)

With the same number of subjects in each class, 22 from Class Two ask first and explain later, while in Class One there were only two students who wrote roughly in this way. We attribute this significant change to the classroom tasks that make students aware of the culture difference in writing a letter of request.

2. The English form of writing is shaped through the ordering of moves.

In his work to analyze the schematic structure of a particular genre, Swales adopts the conception of discourse community, which he sets different from a debated notion of speech community. The conventions of a certain discourse community, which tends to be a Special Interest Group (Swales, 1990:24), contributes to the schematic structure of a particular genre. Thus the different schematic structures of English and Chinese request-letters derive from the fact that the two groups of people are different. When making a request in a letter form, the English think that they should ask first and explain later. On the contrary, the Chinese tend to think that it is polite to state the reasons before actually making the request.

In this sense, the problem of EFL writing is of a culture, or, in other words, of way of thinking. The problem of EFL writing as exemplified in this experiment is mainly one that involves different ways of thinking in English and Chinese, which inevitably leads to different move structures of the subjects’ writing.

To solve the cultural problem of EFL writing, it is not helpful to give students overall or general suggestions. Instead, the teachers are encouraged to design specific tasks to develop students’ English way of writing. As is the case in this experiment, we take practical measures to help students arrange the move structures of the request letter. For example, we design classroom tasks to help them put the move of "request" at the beginning of the request letter. Hence, by arranging the moves in the English way, the students may easily follow an English way of writing, and then develop an English way of thinking. The way of ordering moves thus serves as a function of shaping the English way of writing.

III. Implications for ELT writing class

The implication this experiment provides for English teachers is that developing students cultural awareness in a writing class is equally important as developing students’ language skills. As long as a teacher views writing as communication, s/he has to help his/her students reinforce their cultural awareness as well as their language competence.

References


(Continued on p. 73...)

80
各种问题及应对策略，针对学生在两年学完英语课程后无明显进步的状况，作者分析了造成英语水平在医科学院较难提高的几条重要原因——时间紧，学习科目多，任务重，提出了几种可行办法并应用于实践中，收到较好效果；体现于英语四，六级考试，研究生考试和各种英语比赛中，现学生英语水平有较大提高。

论英语教学中的文化教育

河北师范大学外国语学院 任 强 ........................................... 51

英语教学中的文化教育是提高学生跨文化交际能力的主要因素。本文作者认为，英语学习必须重视对华文文化的研究，提高学生文化素养。文章介绍了汉语在英语教学中的重要性及学生在跨文化交际中所遇到的困难。

跨文化语境下的英语教学

得克萨斯大学马里兰分校语言学系 金文华 ................................ 55

人们普遍认为，英语教学应以提高学生的跨文化交际能力为主要目的。本文作者对此进行了深入的研究，指出了培养英语学生的跨文化交际能力的关键在于提高学生的文化素养，并对此提出了具体建议。

如何避免语言性别歧视

华中科技大学外国语学院 吴志涛 ........................................ 59

对于中国女学生来说，英语学习中常见的性别歧视问题非常严重。本文作者通过研究，提出了一些避免性别歧视的方法。

边远地区英语教师素质研究

云南大理弥渡县 张海华 .................................................. 62

本文研究了边远地区英语教师的素质问题，提出了提高英语教师素质的几点建议。

创造积极有效的适合儿童的二语学习环境

吉林师范学院师范学院 孙艳红 ........................................... 66

本文就儿童语言学习中的一些问题，特别是与成人二语学习者不同的儿童语言学习特点，进行了深入的研究。文章提出了创造积极有效的儿童二语学习环境的理论和方法。

高中英语教学方法的研究

武汉市第一中学 于 馨 ................................................... 69

本文研究了高中英语教学方法，指出了教学中存在的问题，并提出了相应的改进措施。

过程与结果——论中国英语专业学生写作教学的变革

苏州大学 李 涛 ......................................................... 74

本文研究了中国英语专业学生写作教学中存在的问题，提出了改进的策略。

英语写作教学中的文化教育

天津大学外语系 田海龙 .................................................. 78

本文研究了英语写作教学中的文化教育，提出了提高写作教学效果的策略。

大学生英语写作中的错误分析及其应对策略

上海对外贸易学院外文系 严立东 ....................................... 81

本文对大学生英语写作中常见的错误进行了分析，并提出了相应的应对策略。

对学生语言学习中所犯错误的分析及教师的应对策略

长安大学 李民权 ......................................................... 95

本文研究了学生在语言学习中所犯错误的类型，并提出了相应的应对策略。

输入假设在大学英语阅读教学中的应用

华东师范大学文学院 李 青 ............................................. 98

本文研究了输入假设在大学英语阅读教学中的应用，提出了相应的教学方法。