

An English Lesson Study Based on ZPD Theory

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Abstract

Taking BB College Practical English teaching as a research example which shows that the key role of teachers lies in optimizing classroom atmosphere, supporting and encouraging the students to become independent learners. If the teacher can induce the students to build their own scaffolding independently, the role of the teacher as a teacher is truly successful and comforting, which is the true meaning of the ZPD theory. It was of important practical value to and promote teachers' professional development.

Keywords

ZPD theory; Lesson Study; English Teaching and Learning.

1. Introduction

Based on lesson study model, an application of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory in enhancing teachers' professional competence is explored. And the teaching text of New Practical English published by the FLTRP is selected as the teaching textbook.

2. A Lesson Study of Practical English Teaching

The Practical English Teaching (PET) has always been regarded as the most boring content by students, and the complicated exercises often cause students' tiredness and disgust. Take an example to see how the words filling tasks can be taught brightly.

Without guilt one enjoys his own accomplishments, without envy one enjoys

others' _____.(achieve) (1)

This task is not difficult for most students who know "achievement" is the correct answer. But the students put forward a new question and introduced the boring vocabulary training to an unknown field: "what does this sentence mean, teacher?" This means students can fill in the blank with the correct word but do not understand the meaning of the sentence. So the question of word filling is transformed into a translation.

Without guilt one enjoys his own accomplishments, without envy one others'

achievement. (2)

The BBC Teacher noticed the double negation of the sentence so he didn't answer the question immediately, vice versa, he asked all the students to discuss. The atmosphere of the class was very fast turned into an active thinking and passion release state. Ss began to modify the

sentence into a complete sentence pattern. Then the clear understanding gradually emerged with some intensification, perplexity and a little bit uncertainty.

Without sin, one likes his own accomplishments; without jealousy, one likes

other people's achievements. (3)

When translation 1 appeared, a voice immediately came to question: "What is it that is not guilty to like one's own achievements?" The teacher followed up to the students with a smile: "Yes, if it is some achievements with guilty, will he like it very much?" The students who seemed to understand the meaning of the sentence at once and responded with "Wow wow...", but how to produce it? How to express it smoothly seems not easy to him. The teacher waited patiently. After a positive silence for a moment, understanding 2 appeared.

A pure man can enjoy his own achievements, and a non-jealous man can

enjoy others' achievements. (4)

"Ohooo...Yeah!" A lot of applause responded to this wonderful expression. In the atmosphere of the joyful study, the teacher plugged in: "Is it possible for the sentence more neat, more elegant?" Immediately a student called out his understanding:

Understanding and translation 3: With virtue, people can enjoy their achievements; without jealousy, people can appreciate others' success.

Many students were shouting and cheering with lots of applause and laughter. After a moment of discussion, the more refined and elegant translation appeared in the teacher's approval.

The clear Understanding and last translation: Be proud of yourself without guilt, be appreciated to the others without jealousy.

The whole class was clear about the sentence meaning now: "Without hatred one can have a happy life."

3. The Application of ZPD Theory

3.1. Three Leaps in The Students' ZPD

In the above lesson study, there are three leaps in the students' ZPD as shown in Figure 1.

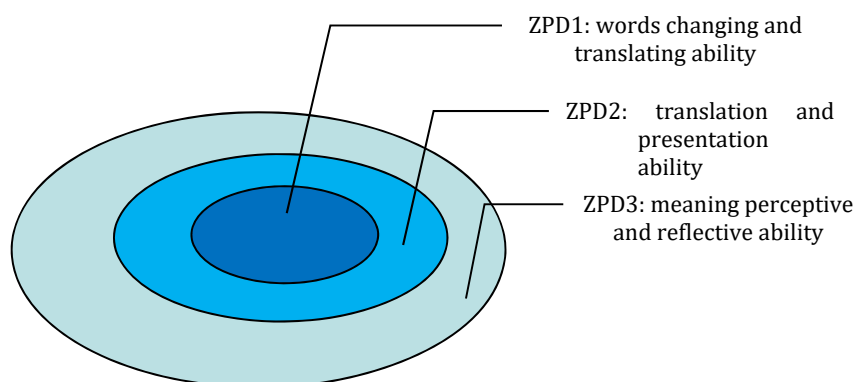


Figure 1. The diagram of three ZPD

As shown in Figure 1, zone of proximal development 1 (ZPD1) is basically in the level of the students' ability level, because the students in the class institute are basically able to complete the corresponding learning tasks, the level of academic difficulty and the knowledge level of the vocabulary are equal to the level that the students have, but the students' are eager to know the sentence meaning which they have insufficient ability to understand. Zone of proximal development 2 (ZPD2) is the level that the students can achieve in the process of teacher help and students' mutual assistance. This level of task difficulty is higher than most of the students, but most students can complete the phase by the assistance of each other in the presence of each other. The task, however, is still difficult for precise expressing, and it is impossible for the Ss to produce satisfactory translation texts. Zone of proximal development 3 (ZPD3) is Ss' expected development level. Ss' potential in ZPD3 shows a different growth state, and some students who learn eugenics and positive reflection will get a higher level of development.

3.2. The Implication of ZPD Theory

In Vygotsky's ZPD theory, there is an important point that "games create children". Vygotsky believes that children always have behavior that transcends his current age and daily life in games. Therefore, compared with ZPD in the context of games and teaching, ZPD in the context of games has remarkable characteristics: it is not adults but the game itself creates ZPD. The ZPD created by the game itself exists in the multi role system, and is more concerned with the process of finding and creating problems. The continuous emergence and solution of ZPD in the game make the individual's all fields of development change dynamically, which leads to the qualitative change of the whole personality structure of children.

3.3. The Stretched Diagram of Students' ZPD

In the above lesson study, the students' proximal development zone can be stretched and magnified as much as possible, using game means to expand the zone, as shown in Figure 2.

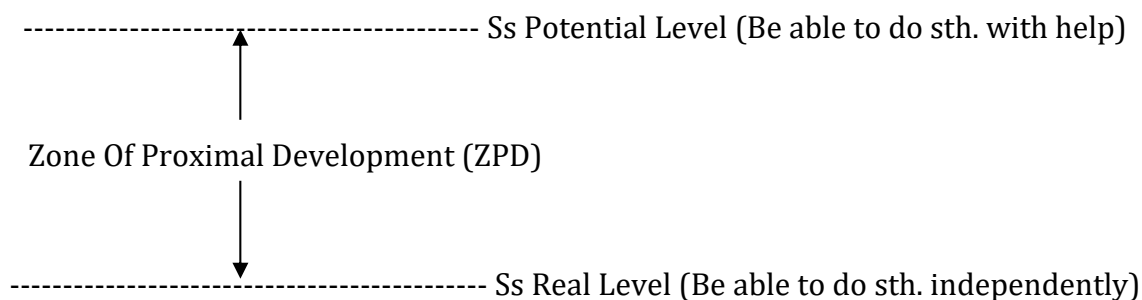


Figure 2. The diagram of stretched ZPD

As shown in Figure 2, the students forgot the previous goal of word filling, the grammar rules and the deformation of vocabulary in a relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere, which could effectively eliminate the distance between the students' real level and the potential level, and made the students in a broader context and a more democratic atmosphere to understand the problem, and then develop their potential. The existing level of students will grow higher with the cooperation, and the potential of cooperation will further promote the qualitative change of individuals.

4. Conclusion

In the course of teaching, question-and-answer is a purposeful process of interaction between teachers and students. It exists in the process of communication rather than in the process of teaching. Cognition is obtained in the process of self-discovery and self-development. In sharing of experience, the students get the formation of a healthy and rich personality. So the process

of exchanging views is often as important as the result. As long as there is an opportunity for free exchange of opposites, the truth is more likely to be found.

The value of Lesson Study is becoming a well-known teaching research method in BBCollege of Anhui China. The study examined how the teacher challenged students to go further based on their already know and to deepen the students' understanding of sentence meaning. Through the tasks transfer, the teacher changed the instruction and helped the students triggering shifts in their thinking, which is exactly right the key point of ZPD theory.

Emphasizing the significance of communication in the teaching will also help to update the teachers' ideas: For teachers, class will be communicative, not simply the work; it is the way of life and self fulfillment, not the unnecessary sacrifice and the cost of time; it is self discovery and exploration. The process of truth finding is not simply a conclusion, it is a benefit communication. And communication is the essential element of any effective teaching. The reason why no advanced media can replace teachers is that teachers can create a rich emotional atmosphere, and there is a symbiotic relationship between the emotional atmosphere and the communication between teachers and students.

Because only when we do communicate with each other, can we put ourselves in the others' shoes and truly understand and respect each other. As Morris Big, an American educator, said, "At the possible time, the task of a teacher is to help the students to get involved through the influence of the democratic atmosphere in the classroom."

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