

Analysis of English Writing Teaching Strategies in High School from the Perspective of Chunk Theory

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Abstract

Writing is a process from language input, internalization to output, which plays a key role in English learning. The most direct way to improve students' writing skill is to improve their English performance, and writing is also very helpful to train the logical thinking of a language. Under the influence of the traditional teaching mode in China, English writing has been a difficult part of teaching for a long time. Through investigating and analyzing the writing part of high school students' English test papers, the author found that inaccurate word choice, confusing logic and poor grammar often occur in English writing. How to improve the English writing level of high school students is an urgent problem. In order to improve the current English writing level of high school students, this paper analyzes the relevant empirical research experiments, analyzes the combination of the chunk teaching method and the corpus and mind mapping teaching method, understands its advantages and disadvantages for students' English writing level, and provides theoretical references for the comprehensive writing teaching based on the chunk teaching method.

Keywords

Chunk theory; mind mapping; corpus; high school English; English writing; foreign language teaching.

1. Introduction

According to the high school English curriculum standards issued by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2020, in order to reform the high school English curriculum system, it specifies the following contents, including thematic contexts, discourse types, cultural knowledge, language skills and learning strategies. As an output skill among the four basic language skills, writing ability is a medium of information transmission, a bridge of cultural exchange, and an important carrier of thinking and culture. A good level of English writing can reflect the overall English level of language learners. As one of the four major skills of English, writing occupies an important position in high school English learning. In the field of English teaching and learning, writing, as the main way of language output, comprehensively reflects students' ability to accurately use language in specific contexts.

It can be seen that the high school curriculum standard guides teachers to gradually improve students' English writing level through daily teaching activities by setting different levels of goals for students at different stages, so that they can achieve the ultimate goal of socializing with writing. Therefore, in daily writing teaching, teachers should pay more attention to students' logical thinking ability, language organization ability and language use ability, etc., to provide students with a good context and sense of language for writing. Teachers should organize teaching activities according to the teaching objectives in a gradual manner to maximize students' writing level.

From the students' point of view, they lack motivation for writing and have a more negative coping attitude towards writing themselves. Usually, they often carry out mechanical memorization and tend to write according to a fixed pattern. At the same time, the current high school students' writing lacks the accumulation of vocabulary and the use of language. Under the traditional teaching mode of focusing on academic achievement, the English proficiency of high school students is unevenly developed, their grammar level is high, while the coherence and fluency of sentences are insufficient. Due to the negative transfer of Chinese language and the fact that students are out of context, learning vocabulary has a greater impact on students' writing, for example, students like to translate English-Chinese vocabulary into reciprocal translations, which is related to the tradition of teaching vocabulary and phrases in isolation rather than putting words in context. In addition, some teachers lack the knowledge of articulation theory, and sometimes they just emphasize more on contextualization in writing teaching without practical ways to strengthen students' ability of contextualization. The problems of high school students' English writing are mainly the problems of vocabulary and pragmatics. In analyzing the common errors of high school students' English writing based on the corpus, among them, verb phrase error, noun phrase error and collocation error are the three more frequent errors, which happen to be avoided by using the chunk theory teaching.

From the teachers' point of view, most of them have traditional teaching concepts and are unable to combine writing teaching with chunk teaching, reading teaching, corpus utilization and so on. There are relatively few teaching methods for writing, and teachers tend to focus only on the results of writing, but seldom guide students in the process, and even the way of correction is relatively old-fashioned, mainly limited to the correction of vocabulary spelling, grammar and so on. And high school English teachers pay uneven attention to writing, often in the third year of high school, and the amount of vocabulary and chunks of speech needed for writing can not be acquired through short-term learning.

English Writing is an important test type in the college entrance examination, and writing is designed to test high school students' ability to use the English language and their understanding of English cultural knowledge. In English teaching, English teachers pay more attention to students' writing performance and ignore their writing errors. Teachers usually correct students' compositions only according to their grammar and spelling, etc. They lack a systematic approach to teaching writing and do not emphasize memorizing chunks of language in context so as to form a strong long-term memory.

Through literature research and analysis, this paper has sorted out the current new English writing teaching methods that synthesize the chunk theory. The main questions of the study are: can the new writing teaching method with the chunk theory effectively improve the writing level of high school students? What are the specific strategies of the new writing teaching methods? Do these strategies need to be adapted?

The current English writing teaching puts more emphasis on teacher-centeredness, and the teaching activities are mainly carried out through input-based and output-based theories, which generally have the disadvantages of conceptualization and abstraction. By analyzing the research on the integration of the chunk theory into actual teaching, the teaching methods and strategies dominated by the chunk theory are clarified. This study provides teaching ideas for high school English writing teaching by analyzing writing teaching methods based on the chunk theory.

The chunk theory focuses on the coherence and fluency of utterances, which can precisely solve the problem of emphasizing grammar over coherence in the current high school English teaching. The teaching method based on the chunk theory can improve the lexical complexity, syntactic complexity, accuracy and fluency of compositions.

2. Literature Review

The concept of Lexical Approach was introduced by Michael Lewis (1993), who advocated a lexical approach that takes the chunk as the basic unit of language teaching and learning. According to Lewis, language is not composed of traditional grammar and vocabulary, but of multi-word prefabricated chunks. The chunk theory is an important part of the vocabulary teaching method. Chunks of speech, or word chunks, are commonly used combinations of multiple words. Language is not made up of lexicalized grammar but of grammaticalized vocabulary, and it is made up of multi-word prefabricated chunks. These chunks of words are distributed on a generative continuum and are the raw data from which one understands patterns. An important part of language acquisition is developing the ability to understand and produce chunks of words as unanalyzable wholes. Chunks are mostly units of language that are generated according to certain grammatical rules and are used without conscious attention to grammatical structure, which shortens the time from comprehension to output of language and thus greatly improves correctness and fluency in language use. Chunks can make language output easy, fast and fluent.

In the process of second language acquisition, the linguistic phenomenon to which the chunks in the native speaker's external perspective and the chunks in the internal perspective refer is almost the same, and the chunks are the regularized expressions that have achieved strong chunking. Because a regularized expression is tacitly recognized by native speakers as an appropriate expression to describe something, it is repeated. Through repetition, the regularized expression is consolidated into a cognitively strong chunk, and when it enters the memory processing, the internal small units can be incorporated or directly processed as a large unit. In this way, the strong chunks are reduced to a single space, which reduces the storage pressure on working memory. Coupled with the fact that little or no attention and cognitive resources are consumed between the chunk units, the processing burden on working memory is reduced, so that the limited working memory resources can be allocated to other tasks. In the process of language information generation, the limited resources can be invested in monitoring and adjusting the content and rhythmic intonation of the words, paying attention to the listener's expected response and other tasks, so as to guarantee the "native-like fluency" (native speaker fluency).

Unlike native speakers, learners are exposed to statistically defined expressions that many times cannot be internalized into units of processing, leading to difficulties in memorization as the chunks in their internal perspective differ greatly from the chunks in their external perspective, and the chunks in their native language do not always have corresponding second language chunks that correspond to them.

The characteristics of chunk acquisition are caused by the second language teaching environment on the one hand, and determined by the cognitive processing characteristics of learners on the other. In the second language teaching environment, both learners and teachers attach great importance to rules, and invest a lot of time and energy in rules in order to get the best learning effect in a shorter period of time, while less importance is attached to statuteability, especially at the level of phrases and above. In fact, the low level of regularity easily leads to the formation of cognitive and usage bias of chunks in the process of learners' memorization. In addition, working memory invests too much in low-level processing sessions, leaving them too late to understand other aspects of communication such as propositional content, affective attitudes, and constructing discourse macrostructures. In this manner, learners do not have enough statistically polysemic units available for ready automated or holistic recall. As a result, in the process of encoding linguistic information, they have to search for suitable words online and put them together on an ad-hoc basis, which not only makes their expressions unorthodox and not sound like those of native speakers, but also results in a series

of tasks such as organizing communicative intent, semantic, phonological and grammatical encoding, monitoring and adapting the outputs, etc., which collectively occupy working memory space and lead to problems of delayed expression, lagging, and unnatural rhythms.

Therefore, the teaching of second language chunks should focus on learners' cognitive processing, and guide learners to project their attention to the statutorily defined multi-word units and process them in chunks, so as to internalize the statutorily defined units into automated and holistic processing units, which will internally improve learners' working memory capacity and avoid possible distraction of analytical processing and cognitive resources affecting the effect of input, and externally Enhance learners' authenticity and fluency of expression.

From a linguistic point of view, the teaching of chunks, which is designed to help learners develop their habitual expressive skills, should be based on two basic principles. The first is to focus on the idiomaticity of chunks, and the second is to focus on the relevance of language components. The classic model of chunk teaching is that teachers apply the theory of chunks in the process of teaching, increase the teaching of fixed collocations and usage in the language, make students form the awareness of chunks, and then teach and practice the chunks over and over again, so as to improve students' comprehensive utilization ability with the help of the linguistic knowledge they have learned.

A lexical approach in language teaching refers to one derived from the belief that the building blocks of language learning and communication are not grammar, functions, notions, or some other unit of planning and teaching but lexis, that is, words and particularly multi-word combinations. The Lexical Approach reflects a belief in the centrality of the lexicon to language structure, the second language structure, and the need for the lexical approach. Lexical Approach reflects a belief in the centrality of the lexicon to language structure, second language learning, and language use, and in particular to multi-word lexical units or to multi-word lexical units. The Lexical Approach reflects a belief in the centrality of the lexicon to language structure, second language learning, and language use, and in particular to multi-word lexical units or "chunks" that are learned and used as single items. While early discussions of the Lexical Approach (e.g., Lewis 1993) emphasized the important role of vocabulary in general in language learning, subsequent discussion of this approach has focused mainly on the role of multi-word units, or "chunks".

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A lexical approach in language teaching thus seeks to develop proposals for syllabus design and language teaching founded on a view of language in which multi-word units, or chunks, play the central role.

Domestic research on chunking started relatively late, mostly based on foreign cognitive theories and research paradigms, and basically set in the scope of second language acquisition and take English language as the research object. A comprehensive search shows that around 2000, there were occasional articles on the "chunking effect", and the research on a slightly larger scale started from 2002, and the number of articles on chunking increased steadily from 2002 to 2007, and the number of research papers has increased rapidly from 2009 to the present. These studies can be categorized as follows: a) scientific and cognitive aspects of chunking; b) studies on the positive correlation between chunking and language proficiency; c)

investigations and analyses on the characteristics of chunking among L2 learners; d) theories of chunking and teaching practices; and e) corpus chunking studies.

Because of the late start of domestic research, there are differences in time, depth and breadth between domestic and foreign research. The difference in time is reflected by the fact that most of the similar fields involved in domestic research are lagging behind foreign research; the difference in depth is reflected by the fact that many researches are still confined to the theoretical level of "facilitating the processing" of chunks, and seldom involve the combination of "dual system" with other theoretical methods; the difference in breadth is reflected by the lack of systematic research on chunks themselves and cross-disciplinary research. The difference in depth is reflected in the fact that many researches are still confined to the theoretical level of "facilitated processing" of chunks, but seldom involve the "dual system" which combines with other theoretical methods.

In recent years, the research on the memory of speech chunks has gradually warmed up. Overseas researchers have mainly studied the role of etymology and phonological features on chunk memory (Boers & Lindstromberg 2005). In China, the research focuses on the effect of text memorization on the acquisition of chunks (Ding Yiren, Qi Yan 2001; Zhao Jizheng 2008), and the results show that memorization has a positive effect on the acquisition of chunks, but the size of the effect is affected by the characteristics of the chunks themselves.

Other studies have focused on the mechanisms of idiomatic comprehension (Wu Xudong et al. 2006; Xie Hua 2007). By adopting research methods such as audio-visual thinking and experiments, these studies have found that L2 learners are not good at recognizing unfamiliar chunks of text, and that both the category of chunks and the learners' L2 proficiency level have an effect on the recognition of chunks (Zuo Hongshan 2009); comprehension of English idioms is a dynamic process, and the context plays a significant role in facilitating the comprehension of English idioms (Lin Weiyan 2006).

The research on chunk teaching conducted in our academic circles so far has a significant implication for English teaching. However, compared with similar studies in foreign countries, there are still obvious gaps: the scope of research is narrower, there is a lack of exploration of the variables and interrelationships affecting the acquisition of chunks, and there are very few tracking studies and case studies. Therefore, there is much room for improvement in both topic selection and methodology of future studies.

The current application of the chunk theory is relatively small, while in fact the chunk teaching method coincides with the fluency of utterance needed for high school English teaching in China. The combination of the chunk teaching method on the basis of corpus and mind mapping and other means can not only improve the teaching efficiency, but also achieve teaching effect

Among the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in English, writing is the most difficult to grasp for both teachers and students. As a language output skill, writing must be based on sufficient language input. But what is the most helpful input for language output? Is it individual vocabulary, grammatical rules, syntactical rules or writing skills? What forms of input are quickly accepted by learners and can be accurately extracted and used when they need to express themselves? Is it the memorization of vocabulary lists, the memorization of grammatical rules, or the memorization of paragraphs and chapters? How to effectively teach English writing in high school is a difficult problem in front of English educators, especially front-line English teachers. China's traditional English writing teaching focuses on the appropriateness of words, grammatical correctness and other superficial phenomena, focusing only on the results and ignoring the process of how to let students organize their thoughts into the English language so as to express their ideas correctly, so that the students' writing is often presented in Chinese-style English. In this regard, the author believes that the key to solving this problem is the chunks of speech. A chunk is a lexical-grammatical combination that exists

in large quantities in natural language, which has a certain structure and can express a certain meaning; it is memorized and stored as a whole, and extracted as a whole when it is needed for communication, without the need of grammatical generation and analysis. As fixed or semi-fixed word strings, chunks solve the problems of memorization during language input and extraction during language output, shorten the process of language processing, and effectively reduce the problems of vocabulary selection, grammatical rules and collocations that may be brought about by word-by-word translation in accordance with the Chinese thinking of the learner, which is of great help in the accuracy and fluency of language expression and reduction of the negative transfer of mother tongue. Therefore, the author tries to explore the role of the chunk teaching method on the cultivation of high school students' English writing ability by taking the chunk as an entry point and by strengthening students' awareness of using the chunk, aiming at solving the following two questions: (1) Whether the chunk teaching method is helpful for the improvement of high school students' English writing ability; (2) How to use the chunk teaching method to improve the students' English writing ability. Through teaching experiments, this paper verifies the role of the chunk teaching method in the improvement of high school students' English writing, and points out that by cultivating students' awareness of chunks, strengthening the drilling of chunks, and accumulating and correctly guiding students' pragmatic use of chunks, it can not only significantly improve students' English writing scores, i.e., it can help students to improve their English writing level, but also improve the acquisition rate of vocabulary, reduce negative transfer of the native language, and mobilize The authors believe that the students' learning of English writing can not only significantly improve their English writing scores, that is to say, it can help them improve their English writing skills, but also improve their vocabulary acquisition, reduce the negative transfer of native language and mobilize their motivation and initiative. Therefore, the authors believe that the chunking method is a practical and effective way of language teaching and is worth trying.

3. Corpus-based Strategies for Teaching Language Chunks

Research on chunks and corpora has been emphasized by a large number of scholars in the field of foreign language learning. It is known that scholars have laid a certain foundation for the application of chunks in English language teaching through the discussions on chunks by linguists and educators at home and abroad, and the areas of research are related to the different aspects of chunks in enhancing language proficiency. The teaching of chunks helps to improve the fluency and precision of learners' language output during English writing. And the use of corpus is conducive to improving learners' use of chunks in the English writing process and making the writing output more natural. However, at present, corpus is only used as an auxiliary tool, and the research on the combination of corpus application and chunking pedagogy is not sufficient. Based on the important roles of the chunk teaching method and corpus linguistics in second language acquisition, the author tries to analyze this new model which is beneficial to the teaching of English writing in high school, and to promote the development and improvement of its theoretical level.

Knowledge of chunks and corpora should be introduced to students before teaching chunks. In the traditional teaching mode, students' learning resources are mainly textbooks, and they basically have no contact with chunks and corpora, so the introduction of such knowledge is a prerequisite. In this process, it is necessary to cultivate students' awareness of chunks, make them realize the importance of chunks, and gradually cultivate their ability to recognize chunks in the process of learning, followed by classifying chunks and enhancing their long-term memory of chunks. For the corpus, the American COCA, lexical tutor, British national corpus and other corpora are mainly used to teach students the basic usage and improve the convenience of subsequent learning. The main steps of corpus-based English writing teaching

in high school are input, internalization and output of chunks of language. The first step is to input the chunks of language. Students are asked to underline the chunks in reading, then refer to the chunks in the corpus that are in different contexts to understand different expressions of the same chunk, and expand more chunks by utilizing the similarity of chunks or contexts in the corpus. The second step is to internalize the chunks, and students can learn or consolidate the chunks independently through extracurricular reading or the corpus. The last step is the output of the chunks. Teachers can promote students' absorption, use and consolidation of the chunks through writing training and model text presentation. In the process of demonstrating model texts, teachers can further enhance students' internalization of the chunks by explaining the chunks that appear in the model texts and asking students to recite them.

4. Thinking Maps as a Strategy for Teaching Language Chunks

The method of teaching chunks of language based on mind mapping is mainly based on information processing theory, knowledge visualization theory and constructivism.

It is still important to input the knowledge of chunks of speech to the students before teaching writing to develop their awareness of chunks of speech and their ability to recognize chunks of speech. Recognition of chunks involves identifying and categorizing chunks in reading, classifying chunks into aggregates, collocations, idioms, and sentence frames or quotations. In the process of learning about chunks of speech, the internalization of chunks of speech is reinforced by using the context of the chunks in the reading to create sentences. Then the teacher should guide students to draw a mind map based on the reading, by sorting out the theme and sub-themes of the text and drawing a mind map centered on the theme and branched off by the sub-themes. This process is to cultivate students' ability of mind mapping and improve the logic of thinking. In the next writing training, the teacher first determines the theme for the writing, students draw the overall framework according to the theme, determine the sub-themes that is related to the argument, can use the chunk to indicate the main content of the argument. In this process, the teacher can provide chunks with articulation for students' reference and use.

Learning in the context of mind mapping stimulates independent learning behaviors. Teachers are mainly to help students before they have fully mastered the use of mind maps, providing examples of imitation. After mastering the mind map, students can use divergent thinking to grasp the overall pulse of the essay by associating the central words.

5. Teaching Strategies of Chunk Theory in High School English Writing

The chunk theory is independently used in English teaching mainly for identifying and memorizing chunks in the process of reading, and this process is the input and internalization process of chunks, and the chunks acquired by the students cannot be externalized and output for use, so the chunk teaching method should be combined with other teaching methods or use other teaching tools to enhance the comprehensiveness of the teaching and enhance the efficiency of the teaching to achieve the teaching effect.

The corpus-based English writing teaching strategy in high school can improve students' independent learning ability to a certain extent, as the learning resources are not only limited to textbooks, students can independently index the chunks and expand related chunks through the corpus, forming a more holistic rather than an isolated chunks memorization system, which also enhances their ability to memorize the English chunks and to use the language. After the experiment (Zhao Xue 2021), the students' accurate use of language was greatly improved, which solved their main problems in writing.

As far as the teaching environment in China is concerned, this teaching mode also has certain disadvantages. Due to the large scope of the corpus, there may be individual differences in teachers' teaching content, and the degree of expansion of the chunks can not be grasped, which may lead to unbalanced teaching content for students, and too much teaching content in limited teaching time, which enhances the teaching burden of teachers. In the corpus-based chunk teaching method, a unified teaching content and design should be gradually formed to provide efficient and convenient teaching strategies for high school English writing teaching.

In conclusion, the advantages of corpus-based chunk teaching method in high school English writing teaching outweigh the disadvantages, and according to the chunk theory, high school students have a certain language foundation, in the teaching process can be less through the direct stimulation of students to contact with the chunk of language, more in the context of reading to identify and memorize the chunk of language, and to enhance the durability of memory.

In addition, the thinking map-based chunk teaching method also has a more significant promotion effect on the writing level of high school students. According to the experiment (Ma Yurong 2022), first, under the mind map-based chunk teaching method, students' overall writing performance was significantly improved; from the point of view of specific writing performance, the errors of vocabulary and grammatical structure and the phenomenon of Chinese English in the composition were significantly reduced, and the number of advanced vocabulary and articulation components used was greatly increased; second, from the point of view of lexical complexity, the total number of chunks used in the composition Second, from the point of view of lexical complexity, the total number of chunks used in compositions increased significantly, and the use of all types of chunks increased significantly, of which the use of collocations and aggregates increased more than situational phrases and sentence-framing phrases, and the lexical complexity increased significantly; third, from the point of view of syntactic complexity, the teaching mode had no significant effect on the syntactic complexity; from the point of view of accuracy, the students' accuracy in writing was significantly improved; from the point of view of fluency, the students' fluency was significantly improved. fluency was significantly improved.

As far as China's current high school English teaching environment is concerned, the thinking map-based chunk teaching method is more time-consuming, while the time for teaching English writing is limited, and the imbalance of students' English proficiency also makes the development of teaching activities have certain limitations, and this method of teaching can not be universally implemented.

In conclusion, the chunk teaching method based on the Thinking Map can make use of the visualization and logic of the Thinking Map to make up for the shortcomings of the chunk ignoring logic and holistic thinking, and at the same time make use of the advantages of contextual memory in the theory of the chunk to lay the foundation of the English language for the students, and to deepen their long term memory. In the teaching process, teachers should pay attention to whether the students' language level is basically the same, and stimulate students' independent learning consciousness through teaching to improve teaching efficiency.

6. Conclusion

The chunk teaching method based on other theories are all based on reading as the basic way of recognizing and memorizing the chunks, which is determined by the characteristics of the chunk theory. Chunks need to be in a certain context in order to play its role better, and at the same time, high school students have a certain English language foundation, do not need to input chunks through direct stimulation to the students, reading as a way to deepen students' memory of chunks to enhance the effectiveness of teaching.

The role of using the chunk teaching method alone is limited, in the process of chunk learning, students can't connect the chunks with each other, which leads to the isolation of the memory chunks, and this isolation can't make the students keep the long term memory of the language, and can't gradually improve the students' language ability and writing level, and can't achieve the expected teaching goals.

Therefore, in the process of teaching writing to high school students, teachers should gradually cultivate students' awareness of chunks of language, cultivate students' comprehensive ability, combine knowledge of chunks of language with corpus and mind mapping, and make reasonable use of the characteristics of these methods to maximize students' internalization and output of language.

As current English teaching in high school is mainly a traditional teacher-centered teaching mode, the student-centered chunk theory cannot be fully applied in the process of high school English teaching in a short time. Teachers should gradually play a leading role in teaching to form a student-centered teaching mode. In future teaching research, teachers should focus on stimulating and cultivating students' sense of independent learning, so that students can use the chunk theory to improve their ability to use the English language. In addition, this paper only explores the English writing teaching strategy that combines the chunk theory with other thinking maps and chunks, and its application in listening, speaking and reading needs to be further researched.

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