

Applying "reading-to-write" teaching model to English writing teaching in junior middle school

Dan LUO*

Chongqing Three Gorges University, Chongqing 400000, China

*Corresponding author.

Email address: 2660210280@qq.com

Abstract: In English language teaching, developing students' writing ability is one of the most important tasks to improve their English core competence. There exist some phenomena in junior middle school English writing teaching, such as the separation of reading from writing, insufficient language input before writing and low quality of writing output, which lead to the inapparent effect of English writing teaching. Some relevant studies have shown that "reading-to-write" teaching model can facilitate the solutions of the relevant problems. This model refers to a specific writing process integrating reading and writing in English teaching and the ultimate purpose of involving reading (input of relevant information and knowledge) is to initiate the output, namely to accomplish the task of writing, thus enhancing their confidence in writing. Based on Krashen's "input hypothesis theory" and Swain's "output hypothesis theory", the study briefly analyzes the relationship between reading and writing in English writing teaching. Combined with the teaching experience in Shuangfu middle school in Jiangjin, the author talks about how to apply this model in English writing teaching in junior middle school so that teachers can get some inspiration from them and improve the efficiency of English writing teaching.

Key words: "reading-to-write" teaching model; English writing teaching; junior middle school

1 Introduction

1.1 Research background

Writing is an indispensable part of English language teaching. For students, it is a comprehensive language proficiency, reflecting their ability of comprehensive language knowledge and their integrating skills of using English language. Based on Krashen's input hypothesis and Swain's output hypothesis, reading and writing are abound to be intrinsically connected, which indicates reading and writing are inseparable. Reading is not only the support and supplement to writing, but also a enrichment and expansion of learners' original knowledge [1]. However, reading and writing have been taught separately for many years. Reading are regarded more crucial than writing in traditional English teaching by some teachers. Although some English teachers realize the importance of writing and try to call learners' attention to writing, they adopt traditional writing teaching model, where the close relation between reading and writing are ignored. This model to some extent demotivates students and fails to arouse their writing enthusiasm and innovation. Therefore, based on previous studies and the requirements of the English curriculum standard for compulsory education, English writing teaching should be connected with reading teaching. "Reading-to-write" teaching model can meet such

requirements and this model is a good way to improve the current situation in English writing teaching.

1.2 Research objectives and significance

Generally speaking, there exist some phenomena in English writing teaching and learning, such as the separation of reading from writing, insufficient language input before writing and low quality of writing output. Due to insufficient language input, students find English writing is difficult so they are unwilling to write, and even afraid of writing. Although teachers understand the significance of writing in English teaching, in reality they do not apply a complete writing teaching model to writing practice. Most teachers neglect the relationship between reading and writing so they teach the two parts separately. They fail to use the integrated method to teach reading and writing. To address this situation, it is necessary to improve English teachers' writing teaching method. One of the possible solution is the application of "reading-to-write" teaching model. Based on the knowledge embedded in reading materials, students can imitate the texts to write their own compositions gradually.

The purpose of this thesis is to improve the efficiency of English writing teaching at junior middle school and stimulate students' interest in writing based on the combination of reading and writing. With interest, students will like English writing much more, and they are willing to strive to write better compositions.

2 Literature review

2.1 Definition of "reading-to-write"

Just as its name implies, "reading-to-write" teaching model is a teaching method to facilitate writing through reading. Different scholars and experts give different definitions with regard to "reading-to-write" teaching model. Doolan and Fitzsimmons put emphasis on the effective integration of reading source into language learners' writing. Reading source is a basis of writing [2]. In this thesis, the author tries to give a concise definition of "reading-to-write" teaching model. This model can be interpreted from two aspects: pedagogical aspect and theoretical aspect. From the perspective of pedagogy, it refers to a specific writing process which combines reading and writing in English teaching; from the perspective of theory, it refers to learners' hidden ability in the whole writing process [3].

2.2 Theoretical basis on "reading-to-write" teaching model

In 1985, Krashen put forward "input hypothesis theory". He has pointed that comprehensible language input is an indispensable prerequisite for second language learning. He says comprehensible input has four basic features: the information must be sufficient, understandable, interesting, and correlated. If learners want to acquire effective language knowledge, the language input must conform to the following conditions: (1) The information is easy to understand (2) Language input should be somewhat higher than the learner's existing knowledge level and it requires effort to attain. According to the "input hypothesis theory", it can be seen that comprehensible input is the key to language acquisition. Therefore, in English teaching, teachers should try their best to provide students with enough comprehensible input. When students absorb enough comprehensible language input, the output of language will naturally happen. In the late 1980s, Swain has put forward a new concept: "output hypothesis". Compared with the process of learners receiving language input, they have laid more emphasis on how to use the language correctly in the process of output, which will exert positive effect on language learning.

2.3 Previous studies on "reading-to-write" teaching model

In recent years, there are an ever-growing number of researches concerning the application of "reading-to-write" teaching model in English writing teaching. Among the researches abroad, Carson and Leki argue that reading plays an important role in English writing, especially for those who take English as a second or foreign language. As a typical type of this kind of people, Chinese students have to pay more attention to reading for their writing in English. Lyutaya

compared two classes, one of which utilized traditional writing teaching methods and mainly focused on writing practice and grammar teaching, while the other class adopted the writing teaching method, which combined reading and writing. In the latter class, students read extensively in and out of class, and completed the writing tasks related to their reading materials. The research showed that while students' writing scores improved in both classes after a period of time, students who received more input from extensive reading had significantly higher overall scores. Among domestic researches, Wang Qiang proposed that reading can be used as a template for writing. Reading information is considered to be the basis of writing activities and it can help students divide structures and organize language more clearly. Students should use reading to lay a solid language foundation for writing.

3 Advantages of "reading-to-write" teaching model

Based on previous studies and the author's teaching experiences, the author points out some advantages of "reading-to-write" teaching model. This model shows its unique advantages from the perspective of both students and teachers.

3.1 Increasing students' confidence and interest in writing

It is known that the most prominent characteristic of "reading-to-write" teaching model is that it connects reading and writing together, which is quite different from the isolated writing teaching. Through "reading-to-write" teaching model, students become more interested in English writing, because writing with reading is not as oppressive as pure writing. This model helps junior middle school students a lot in writing ideas, organization, grammar, vocabulary, content and coherence and so on. To be specific, students can imitate the frame structure of the reading article or a model essay. They can refer to the previous reading articles and use the words, phrases, sentence patterns and the cohesion embedded in the reading materials when writing their compositions.

3.2 Cultivating students' comprehensive language ability

This model also exerts a positive impact on cultivating students' comprehensive language ability. First of all, students may encounter new grammar structures while reading. In order to understand the reading materials and be well prepared for the writing task, they tend to learn these grammar knowledge actively, thus increasing their interests in the study of grammar. Besides new grammar knowledge in the reading material, students are also able to consolidate some grammar structures they have learned before in the reading and writing tasks. This is also conducive to cultivating their ability to associate the previous knowledge with new knowledge to serve future learning.

3.3 Helping to maximize the utilization of teaching resources

The actual teaching condition in China is that educational resources are limited and unevenly distributed. "Reading-to-write" teaching model contributes to integrating and utilizing the limited resources. In terms of teaching schedule, this model integrates reading and writing, coordinates the different modules within the same unit, saves the holistic teaching time and improves class teaching efficiency.

4 The application of "reading-to-write" teaching model

Considering the advantages of "reading-to-write" teaching model, the author talks about the application of "reading-to-write" teaching model in English writing teaching in junior middle school according to some ideas in previous researches and the author's teaching practice.

4.1 Selecting appropriate reading materials

The selection of reading materials has a big influence on students' learning effect, so the teacher should collect reading materials according to the actual situation of the students. Firstly, junior middle school students are not fully mature mentally and intellectually, so the difficulty of reading materials should be appropriate for junior middle school students' cognitive level. If the contents of reading materials are too easy, students will not accurately assess their ability

and their reading and writing abilities can not be well-trained. Likewise, if the contents of that are too difficult, students will feel frustrated, even lose their interests in reading and writing. The final purpose of reading is to serve writing, so it is unnecessary to make reading too difficult as it is in pure reading class.

4.2 Leading students to understand the texts deeply

Before writing, it is of great benefit to guide students to understand the reading materials selected by the teacher because the effect of English writing teaching in the class under "reading-to-write" teaching model is largely based on students' understanding of the texts. First of all, the teacher should guide students to get the main idea and master the overall structure of the texts. To achieve this, the teacher needs to design some corresponding reading tasks to prepare students for writing. For example, students can be encouraged to get the author's writing ideas straight through completing the mind map of the text. The teacher can offer some questions to students so that they can understand the attitude and feeling expressed by the author. In the process of analyzing the reading texts, students should be asked to learn the words, phrases, sentence structures, the cohesion in the reading texts, laying good foundation for the writing task followed.

4.3 Adopting diversified approaches to assessment

In the process of students' English composition assessment, students' self-assessment, peer evaluation and teacher's comments are mainly adopted. As soon as they finished their writings, students were asked to modify their own compositions at first. Then, the author invited some students to present their compositions before the whole class and led students to modify the compositions from these aspects: the content, the accuracy of sentences, the grammar, word expressions, logical structure, and so on. Finally, the author gave some specific suggestions and immediately corrected the mistakes which most students made. Appropriate imitation of the language expressions and layout of the passage in the article learned before should be praised.

5 Conclusion

This research analyzes advantages of "reading-to-write" teaching model, but this model has some shortcomings. For example, teachers encourage students to read authentic English materials after class, but most students cannot insist on reading due to the lack of supervision and guidance from their teachers. In addition, it is difficult for students to search for plenty of high-quality original English articles by themselves. Thus, many students still think it is hard to efficiently organize a composition and learn to write through reading materials. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt teaching methods according to teacher's teaching practice.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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