

The Applications of Phonics in Primary School English Teaching in China

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Abstract: With the development of globalization and diversification, more and more people attach importance to English, and a great number of primary schools in China begin to attach importance to English teaching. As an international mainstream English teaching method, phonics has gradually been used in primary school education in China. Phonics guides students to match letters or letter combinations in the words with sounds, and read or spell words through these pronunciation rules, so that students can learn the vocabulary in a relaxed and pleasant way. It will also reduce obstacles to reading and writing words, and improve students' learning efficiency. However, there are still some problems in primary school English teaching in China, such as lack of systematic teaching, neglect of phonetic symbol learning and neglect of word meaning, which need to be further improved so that phonics can better assist primary school English teaching.

Keywords: Phonics; Primary School; English Teaching; China

Introduction

As a required course of compulsory education, English teaching has been gradually paid high attention to in primary education. For primary school students who are initially exposed to English, it is important to find the correct learning methods. Wrong learning methods will make students' learning become complex or difficult to understand, and may lead them resist this course or even this language. In order to make it easier for students to learn English, phonics is gradually used in primary school English teaching. Phonics focuses on the spelling of words by the corresponding between sounds and shapes, which can simplify students' learning, stimulate their interest in learning and better master the knowledge they have learned.

1. The background of phonics in primary school English teaching in China

With the development of globalization and diversification, more and more people attach importance to English. Good early literacy is crucial for the long-term development of language ^[1], so that primary school has also become the main stage of language learning. A great number of primary schools begin to attach importance to English teaching. Research shows that 16% of children have lower English reading skills than the average age, and 5% have serious English reading problems ^[2]. In our country, many students learn by rote, which is not only inefficient, but also easy to forget. This learning habit is unable for students to form a stable long-term memory. As an international mainstream English teaching method, phonics, with its interesting, simple and efficient advantages, was first introduced, promoted and popularized in Hong Kong and Taiwan in 2000 ^[3], and gradually began to be used in primary school English teaching in China. At the beginning of the 21st century, the introduction of phonics textbooks also promoted the application of phonics in English teaching in China ^[4].

2. Concept of phonics

Phonics is a relatively popular new method of education and teaching abroad in the early 20th century ^[5]. The core of this method is to master the corresponding relationship between the sounds and shapes of different letters or letter combinations and their pronunciation rules in words. Phonics guides students to match letters or letter combinations in the words with sounds, and read or

spell words through these pronunciation rules ^[6], so that students can learn the vocabulary in a relaxed and pleasant way. It will also reduce obstacles to reading and writing words, and improve students' learning efficiency.

For example, when learning to read the word 'ship', students first need to identify each letter ('i' and 'p') and letter combination ('sh') in the word, convert them into their corresponding sounds, and combine these sounds into the pronunciation of the word 'ship' ^[2]. On the contrary, spelling is also the same. When students hear the pronunciation of the word 'ship', they can convert it into 'sh', 'i' and 'p' according to the pronunciation, and spell it into the word 'ship'.

The integration of phonics into primary school English teaching can not only prevent student from learning by rote, but also stimulate their interest, improve their thinking ability and strengthen their memory. Early literacy can also help students develop their later reading and writing abilities ^[7].

3. The Applications Of Phonics In Primary School English Teaching In China

3.1 Applications in oral speaking.

There are some similarities between English letters and Chinese Pinyin in appearance and pronunciation, so many teachers introduce Chinese Pinyin to phonics. First, the pronunciation of letters that is similar to Chinese Pinyin will be learned by the students. Second, the students are taught the different pronunciations of the 26 letters, and they are gradually guided to find the rules about different pronunciations of the same letter in different words. Then, teachers will teach students the pronunciations of letter combinations. Finally, students will be asked to convert letters and letter combinations of the words into corresponding syllables, combine them to get the pronunciation of the words, and review the pronunciations constantly to strengthen their memory. Help students learn English beginning with their more familiar Chinese Pinyin at the initial stage can greatly lighten the burden of students' learning. Students can master the words in a relaxed, pleasant and efficient way, and their interest and confidence of English learning has been increased. The accuracy and fluency of students' spelling of words are also guaranteed.

3.2 Applications in spelling.

Phonics can effectively combine the sounds and shapes of words, and it is easier to remember the spelling of the words by remembering the pronunciation of words. During classroom teaching, separate different syllables of the words and make them into cards. Then, let the students find the corresponding pronunciation cards and put them together to make the whole word. So that the process of spelling words can be shown in the form of cards. The use of cards is easy for students to remember, and can clearly separate the syllables of the word, so it is conducive to the accuracy of students' word reading. After students can spell the words accurately, corresponding copying exercises are arranged to students to improve their writing ability of the words. It can strengthen students' memory, and ensure that students can accurately match pronunciations to letters. In vocabulary teaching, effective use of phonics can improve students' spelling ability.

3.3 Applications in reading and memory.

Picture books and animations can explain words in a vivid and easy form, and also can help students understand the use of words in a subtle way. After teaching a group of words, phonics is introduced into picture books and animations related to the learning content, which can deepen the students' impression of vocabulary, improve their reading ability and exercise their logical thinking. Besides improving reading ability, phonics has also been proved to improve students' reading related brain activities. The functional neuroimaging research report shows that the activation of multiple left hemisphere regions of the reading network has increased ^[8], and students' thinking ability has been improved.

4. Problems and suggestions of phonics in english teaching in china

4.1 Lack of systematic teaching.

Li Qi's research found that only 15% of the teachers learned about phonics through formal school training and professional books, and the frequency of phonics training organized by the school is also very low. Most teachers learn phonics by watching other teachers' open classes ^[9]. It can be seen that teachers themselves cannot truly grasp phonics, so that various problems will naturally arise when teaching students. In addition, each teacher will have certain differences in the methods and contents since their learning approaches

are different. The best way to improve this phenomenon is to introduce or compile unified textbooks, carry out formal training for teachers regularly. Only by standardizing teachers' teaching methods and contents, can students accept systematic and standardized teaching. Received unified training, teachers can better understand phonics. It can also enhance teachers' self-efficacy, thus facilitating the teaching of students^[10].

4.2 Neglect of phonetic symbol learning.

There are hundreds of rules of phonics. It will take a long time to understand them, but these rules are only suitable for 80% of English words^[3]. Relatively speaking, there are only 48 international phonetic symbols, which saves more time and covers all words. In addition, although phonics can help students learn the pronunciation of each syllable of the word, it can't help confirm the stress of the word. Students can only clearly understand where the word needs to be stressed by looking at the international phonetic symbols. We should combine phonics with the International Phonetic symbol, and take phonics as the transitional stage from Chinese Pinyin to the international phonetic symbol. In the early stage of English learning, students can learn most of the pronunciation through phonics. In the middle and higher grades of primary school, teachers should gradually change phonics to the international phonetic symbol. Because at this stage, students have mastered most of the English pronunciation, and it will not be difficult and boring for them to learn phonetic symbol anymore, besides, it will be more conducive to mastering the international phonetic symbol.

4.3 Neglect of word meaning.

To learn a word, it is necessary to learn its pronunciation, spelling and meaning. Phonics mainly focuses on the spelling and spelling of the word. Students can quickly understand the pronunciation and spelling of the word, but they cannot know the meaning of the word through phonics. The meaning of the word still needs to be memorized later. It is a wrong thought that you don't need to memorize the word meaning after learning it by phonics. It can be seen that when teaching students words, teachers should not only let students accurately read words, but also let students memorize the word meaning. They can help students avoid mechanical memory by associative memory, affixation or synonym classification, which can get twofold results with half the effort.

5. Summary

At the moment when English teaching is paid high attention to, phonics has been gradually applied in English teaching in China, which has had a lot of positive effects on students' English learning. It has improved the fluency, accuracy, spelling accuracy and the ability to read and understand words in the later period. Students' thinking ability has also been improved to a certain extent. Although phonics has obvious advantages, there are still many problems in primary school English teaching in China, such as lack of systematic teaching, neglect of phonetic symbol learning and neglect of word meaning. The application of phonics in primary school English teaching in China still needs to be further improved so as to better assist primary school English teaching in the future.

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