

A Literature Review of the Impact of English Levelled Reading on Senior High School Students' English Reading Literacy

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Abstract

The status of reading in English teaching cannot be ignored, and it is the key to the cultivation of English core literacy in English subjects. However, the current reading situation is worrying, so the cultivation of reading literacy has also received widespread attention. The positive role of leveled reading in English learning has been confirmed by scholars at home and abroad. However, there are few domestic studies on the impact of leveled reading on English reading literacy. This article uses the literature review method, collects some domestic and foreign related literature, combs and analyzes the impact of leveled reading on the English reading literacy of senior high school students. The study selected two classes of students as the objects and tried to get effective methods on analyzing learners' reading proficiency, reading habits and experience.

Keywords

Leveled reading, reading literacy, literature review.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Research

The New English Curriculum Standards for senior high school clearly requires students to have a total of no less than 45,000 words in the compulsory stage and no less than 100,000 words in the optional compulsory stage of extracurricular reading. More and more English teachers realize the advantages and importance of reading.(Jiao Yubu, 2018)However, at present, most of the texts that students read in their usual classroom teaching and extracurricular exercises are short passages of about 300 words. These isolated articles are just exercises that teachers use to train students' problem-solving skills in high school exams, which is not real reading. How to create conditions for teachers to organize students to carry out extracurricular learning activities, and to build a teaching model and curriculum system aiming at cultivating students' reading literacy, has become a big problem for English teachers in high schools.(Wang Qiang, 2017)

Therefore, how to improve students' reading literacy has become a hot topic in recent years. Many scholars and experts suggest that leveled English reading is an effective supplement to the textbooks and leveled English reading can provide students with effective language input. In addition, English leveled reading materials are rich in content and wide in subject matter, emphasizing students' active reading experience. Although leveled reading is a hot topic in English reading teaching in China, it is still in the stage of exploration in senior middle school students. There is confusion about what to read, when to read and how to evaluate the reading effect.

1.2. Significance of the Research

English reading contains rich cultural elements, cross-cultural communication customs and values behind the world. However, in traditional language teaching, reading teaching task focuses on students' reading ability to obtain and construct content and meaning from the text,

but lacks the thinking of exploring the emotional value in the context of the topic. The reform and development of English education in China in the new era promotes the transformation from traditional reading ability to reading literacy. Therefore, the author starts from the perspective of English reading literacy and combines it with leveled reading. This study can be demonstrated by its theoretical value and practical value.

At the theoretical level, the author can help teachers and parents to choose suitable English leveled reading materials for students by sorting out the main English leveled reading materials and English leveled reading standards at home and abroad. Through searching the literature of leveled English reading materials, it is found that the domestic research focuses on how to apply leveled English reading materials to classroom teaching.

At the practical level, the purpose of this study is to improve the reading literacy of senior high school students, design leveled reading teaching plan, and provide reference for English teachers. In addition, the purpose of this study is to explore the impact of leveled reading on senior high school students' English reading literacy. In other words, it is to explore effective ways to improve students' English reading literacy, and to provide enlightenment for frontline English teachers in reading teaching.

2. Literature review

2.1. The definition of English reading literacy

The concept of reading literacy originated from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) organized and initiated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1997. Reading literacy is one of the main testing areas. PISA defines reading literacy as individuals can develop their ability to understand, apply and reflect on the text content, and finally achieve their personal development goals by learning knowledge and actively participating in social activities. With the updating of educational concepts, the definition of reading literacy in PISA keeps pace with the times. It does not only refer to the reading ability that teachers and students pay attention to, but the ability that students develop through the combination of increasing knowledge, skills and strategies under the influence of various reading materials they contact with and the interaction with peers (OECD, 2013). With the continuous exploration and improvement of foreign language teaching, the scope of investigation and application of reading ability is becoming more and more limited, while English reading literacy is a new concept which is put forward in the era of English teaching. In 2015, Professor Wang Qiang proposed the concept of English reading literacy based on the PISA and related theoretical studies. Wang Qiang (2015) believed that English reading literacy is not only the ability to learn and apply English language knowledge, obtain information and construct meaning, but also the ability to build cultural awareness, multi-thinking ability, positive values, good reading attitude and reading habits. On this basis, combining with the background and characteristics of Chinese students' English reading, she proposed that the English reading quality of Chinese primary and middle school students includes English reading ability and English reading character. English reading ability includes decoding ability, language knowledge, reading comprehension and cultural awareness. English reading character is composed of reading habit and reading experience. In summary, this study defines English reading literacy as the ability to decode and understand different types of written English texts with the help of good reading habits. The purpose is to take advantage of information, cultivate thinking ability, establish the correct cultural awareness, and realize the comprehensive and comprehensive development of the individual.

2.2. The definition of English leveled reading

Leveled reading originated from the West. In the 1920s, many developed countries formed a variety of leveled reading systems based on the analysis of children's physiological and psychological development characteristics, which made people realize the importance of reading grading. (Li Yunfei, 2019) With the deepening of research, different researchers have different views on the connotation of leveled reading. According to Amran (2009), leveled reading is a form of literature that was built through a staged process to enable a pupil to master reading fluently in a short period of time. Leveled reading materials are increasingly popular in the classroom. These materials are suitable for use in pre-school classes, the mainstream classes, remedial education classes and special needs education classes. Glasswell et al. (2010) believed that leveled reading refers to the concepts and methods that readers choose suitable ladder-type series of reading materials for reading based on their language level, cognitive characteristics, reading interest, etc. During recent several years, leveled reading attracted Chinese scholars' attention in English language teaching. Bai Bing(2009) argued that English leveled reading is to provide scientific reading methods and reading plans for children of different ages according to their intelligence and psychological development, and to provide scientific and targeted reading materials. At present, there are four main reading grading standards commonly used in European and American countries: Grade Rating System, A-Z Grading System, Developing Reading Assessment System and Lexile Grading System. These grading standards not only provide a quantitative reference for readers' reading ability, but also provide a basis for grading publications, making the concept of "leveled reading" for primary and middle school students at different stages of psychological and cognitive development and different reading levels gradually recognized and popularized in the world. (Fan Haixiang, 2016)

2.3. Studies on reading literacy at home and abroad

2.3.1 Studies on reading literacy abroad

The innovation and development of English reading literacy has promoted endless research in the field of reading teaching. The integrated analysis of foreign related research mainly focuses on the following aspects: In terms of reading teaching, Salataci(2002)used interviews, observations, questionnaires and tests to find that the implementation of reading strategy teaching has a positive impact on Turkish and English reading literacy. Manis (2006) investigated the word decoding and reading comprehension ability of 261 Spanish-speaking English learners through testing methods, and found that the reading comprehension ability of the participants showed a secondary increase in the English reading course, proving that effective guidance on English reading literacy is helpful to improve reading ability. In addition, different teaching evaluation methods have different effects on the development of English reading literacy. Naeini(2012)found that the dynamic evaluation method is more effective than the static evaluation method in cultivating English reading literacy through the pre-test and post-test of the periodic experiment. Based on previous research foundations, foreign scholars have begun to explore research on strategy training, and have done a lot of work on how to improve the reading literacy of English learners by improving reading comprehension. Leider(2013)conducted English reading comprehension research on 123 native Spanish learners, and found that learners' mastery of vocabulary depth and the bilingual ability of the mutual development of native reading and English reading thinking are effective strategies for cultivating English reading literacy. With the in-depth development of research, researchers have also discovered in the objective factor of reading environment. Tamasova(2016) conducted a study through interviews and found that the family environment, including family reading resources played an important role in the cultivation of children's English reading literacy.

To sum up, foreign research on English reading literacy is mainly based on the experiments and surveys to provide guidance and suggestions for English reading literacy in teaching. At the same time, it has been found that objective factors such as a good family environment and language environment have a positive effect on the cultivation of English reading literacy.

2.3.2 Studies on reading literacy at home

Wang Qiang (2015) explained for the first time in the research that reading literacy, on the one hand, enhances students' language cognition and social abilities in reading, on the other hand, it can subtly promote the basic literacy required for students' comprehensive development. This development goal is also applicable to foreign language teaching. The research also emphasizes that foreign language teaching should achieve dynamic development of reading skills and reading literacy. With the increasing discussion of foreign language reading literacy, China's strategic research on English reading literacy has begun to focus. Deng Lili (2017) emphasized the reconstruction of the reading teaching paradigm, and pointed out that today's English reading teaching should realize the transformation from reading ability to reading literacy. It should not only pay attention to the learning of language knowledge, but also pay attention to the comprehensive development of students' ability, thinking, emotional value and cultural quality. From the perspective of changing the classroom mode of reading teaching, Luo Honglian(2017) also constructs the 3D English reading teaching paradigm by combining the teaching and learning situations of the school, aiming at cultivating reading literacy, making students feel the power of English reading, creating an efficient classroom and realizing the educational value. The new reading teaching paradigm promotes the evolution of different reading styles and opens up a new research field for the research and development of English reading literacy in primary and secondary schools. The study on how to cultivate students' reading literacy by reading English picture books is also highly favored. Li Bingjie (2018) and Hu Juan(2018) found that the feature of English picture books conforms to the law of psychological development and language cognition of pupils and is easy to stimulate pupils' interest and motivation in reading and guide pupils' innovative thinking and imagination to develop. Besides, Lv Changqun(2019) discussed effective strategies such as using electronic picture books, micro-class videos and wechat platform to carry out guided learning plan in the digital environment, so as to cultivate English reading literacy.

By reviewing the research situation at home and abroad, foreign research focuses on the discussion and analysis of the factors affecting the development of English reading literacy and teaching methods to improve the development of English reading literacy. Domestic research focuses on the innovation and exploration of the new reading teaching paradigm for the cultivation of English reading literacy.

2.4. Studies on leveled reading at home and abroad

2.4.1 Studies on leveled reading abroad

Leveled reading has a history of more than 100 years in foreign countries. Researchers have not only proved the positive effect of leveled reading on improving students' English reading literacy through practice, but also established a systematic and flexible leveled reading system for this purpose. Amran(2009) argued that leveled reading can help students gradually improve their reading fluency in a short period of time through some experiments. Zainiah(2010) suggested that choosing books according to children's ability can effectively improve children's reading ability. Dzaldov and Peterson(2005) found that some researchers and teachers believe that leveled readings have limitations because of consuming the amount of effort and money, and that there is little flexibility in using leveled readings in reading or in cross-reading programs. While Glasswell(2010) believed that the classification of reading materials should be more flexible and reasonable, so as to improve readers' reading strategies and skills, and

enhance their confidence. He also listed three commonly used classification systems for detailed introduction.

2.4.2 Studies on leveled reading at home

Since the promotion of the leveled reading in China, a variety of leveled reading materials have emerged on the market. Faced with various reading materials with rich content, vivid pictures, and brilliant colors, students may not choose the most suitable reading materials. In many cases, reading materials are randomly selected by parents for their children, and there is no certain criterion for judgment.

Huang Xinyan(2013) argued that domestic promotion of leveled reading lacks authoritative, scientific, and local grading standards, which will seriously affect the fundamental interests of child readers. In order to make scientific matching between reading materials and readers, Professor Wang Qiang organized and led a number of educational institutions to successfully apply for national projects. After years of joint efforts by the research group, the leveled reading standards for Chinese primary and middle school students were published in 2015. Since then, China has had its first set of leveled reading standards. Besides, Wang hewei(2016) pointed out that leveled reading materials with pictures can effectively improve primary school readers' interest in reading and promote the acquisition of good English reading literacy. Cai Wen(2020) believed that leveled reading is not only an effective way to improve students' English reading ability, but also an effective way to respect students' inherent needs and the development of reading ability. Therefore, teachers should closely combine leveled reading teaching and English reading teaching to cultivate students' good reading character and enrich their reading experience.

2.5. Studies of reading literacy in English leveled reading

There are lots of existing studies about the the effects of leveled reading on reading ability and readers' interest and so on. However, the effects of leveled reading on reading literacy are rarely confirmed. But there are still some scholars to explore the effectiveness of leveled reading in improving students' reading literacy.

Wang Qiang(2016) argued that the cultivation of reading literacy is difficult to achieve by relying on textbooks because textbooks generally focus on language knowledge and language skills, lacking real context, language and content so as to provide students with limited space for thinking and imagination. While English leveled reading materials have their uniqueness in cultivating students' reading literacy. Leveled English reading materials are closely related to life and conform to the level of students' cognitive development. They are beneficial to students' understanding of foreign culture, expanding their thinking, and especially conducive to cultivating their imagination and problem-solving skills.

Zhang Jinxiu(2018) used a leveled reading system to conduct an empirical study on 428 junior high school students from different schools to cultivate their English reading literacy. The research results show that leveled reading is beneficial to the cultivation of English reading literacy of junior high school students. In terms of reading ability development, the overall reading ability of students has improved, but there are big differences between different schools. In terms of reading character development, leveled reading has a significant effect on promoting the development of students' English reading character. At the same time, he also mentioned that the effective reading volume, reading frequency and teacher guidance of students in leveled reading are related to the development of students' reading literacy.

2.6. Research questions

This research aimed to study the effects of leveled reading on senior high students' English reading literacy. As is mentioned in the previous literature, reading literacy is divided into reading ability and reading character. English reading ability includes decoding ability,

language knowledge, reading comprehension and cultural awareness while English reading character includes reading habit and reading experience. Therefore, to investigate leveled reading's effects on reading literacy, we can get effective methods on analyzing learners' reading proficiency, reading habits and experience. The three research questions can be described in details as following.

- 1) What are the effects of leveled reading on students' English reading proficiency?
- 2) What are the effects of leveled reading on students' English reading habits?
- 3) What are the effects of leveled reading on students' English reading experience?

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