

Learning Chinese in a Role as News Broadcaster: Is This a Worth-Trying Teaching Method?

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ABSTRACT

This study was based on the vicarious learning theory, and the teaching model included learning, practice, self-assessment, and peer-assessment. The authors conducted the study in a spiral manner. There are three research questions in this study: 1) Can learners' achievement be elevated by news video production teaching model? 2) Can learners' oral presentation be elevated by the news video production teaching model? 3) Will the learning outcomes be affected by self-assessment and peer-assessment? The teaching period was 18 weeks, and the study objects were six foreign learners from the current Chinese course in one university. The study results revealed 1) the whole semester teaching model promoted students attaining learning outcomes, 2) the whole semester teaching model enhanced the learners' oral presentation abilities, 3) self-evaluation and peer-evaluation affected the learners' learning achievement. In future studies, the authors suggest caring for the learners' learning bottlenecks in any moment and infusing real material into Chinese teaching.

KEYWORDS

Chinese Language, Chinese News, Chinese Teaching, Media Materials, Peer-Evaluation

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past, Chen (2014) mentioned teaching Chinese belongs to the education sector. In recent years, from the perspective of economic development and international influence, teaching Chinese has been defined as an industry (Chen, 2014). Chen (2014) proposed that different customers (Chinese language learners) should receive different services and products (Chinese language courses) so that learners can cope with the needs of their own daily life. Course developers should customize and modularize learning themes. Learning a language should be needs-oriented, and it is not necessary to start from easy to hard. In this view, service providers (teachers) should provide customized services/products (Chinese language courses) that fit the needs of learners with more practical exam methods.

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In this information explosion era, it is extremely important to cultivate information literacy. News is one of the main sources to obtain information. News also has social and cultural significance. If the service recipients (learners) learn the Chinese that is used in the news, they are supposed to be able to understand society and culture more deeply. Therefore, service providers (teachers) should provide themed services and products. Learners can absorb each theme as a building block, then assemble their own language. For example, after learning topics about entrepreneurship, religion, occupation, and so on, when discussing environmental issues, learners can reorganize those small building blocks that are topics they learned before to deepen their discussion. How should learners reorganize the building blocks? This requires the guidance of teachers and company from peers.

In terms of language teaching methods, previous research results showed that cross-cultural communication teaching methods, which are constructed based on the theory of social interaction approach, drive learners to use language skills to express their opinions (Xin, 2012). After introducing Chinese culture and customs, teachers can allow learners to conduct cross-cultural discussions in which learners from countries with different cultures discuss with each other, so that learners can compare differences and similarities in Chinese culture and customs with learners' local ones. As learners express their thinking, they can gain language skills at the same time (Xin, 2012). Based on the research results cited above, the researchers believe that in addition to the full guidance and inspiration in the process of providing services (teaching), learners should have space to learn by themselves. This study provides learners with self-learning space to make broadcast news videos, which are played in the classroom in front of all learners afterwards. In addition, with the mechanism of peer, teacher and self-assessment, learners have the opportunity to observe their peers' products (news videos) and to trigger creativity and reflections on the flaws of their own products. This is a learner-centered teaching approach in which learners can learn more from their peers than teachers in terms of recording and broadcasting technique, and pronunciations and grammatical mistakes that other peers make in their videos.

Bandura (1977) introduced vicarious learning theory, which is also known as observational learning or learning through modeling. Adapting this theory, this study explored whether news video production integrated into the teaching process can replace the typical teaching-learning model and improve learners' understanding of Chinese news. To be more specific, in the teaching process, researchers assign tasks for Chinese language learners to shoot Chinese news videos, in which learners are broadcasters themselves. Researchers define this as "news video production teaching model".

In short, this study investigated the following research questions:

- First, can this teaching model, which lasts for the whole semester, significantly improve learning outcomes of learners?
- Second, can this teaching model significantly improve the speaking skills of learners?
- Third, can this teaching model significantly improve the writing skills of learners?
- Fourth, do peer and teacher assessment affect learning outcomes?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Information Literacy and the Specificity of Broadcast News

Literacy is applied to information technology, learners can view information literacy as the ability to interpret and produce information (Breivik & Gee, 1989). Literacy is the ability to understand and communicate meaningfully with the outside world, meanwhile information literacy is effectively discovering information needs, finding, judging, presenting and using information (Wu, 1996). According to Rader and Coons (1992), those who have information literacy can effectively learn in an information and technology environment. Therefore, information literacy can help apply daily Chinese into cross-media. The use of the news as a teaching tool to integrate into teaching Chinese

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