

Relative Study of the Immersion Teaching and the SLA

Xiaqing Li

Department of Minority Languages and Literatures, Minzu University of China, Beijing, China

Abstract

Immersion teaching is the teaching of a foreign language as the medium of instruction (Davies, 1999). It is a category within bilingual education (Citation, 2010). This teaching method originated in Canada in 1960s. The thesis reviews on some scholar's study in immersion teaching and second language acquisition so as to make us have a more full understanding to immersion teaching. This study is good for us English majors but also good for children to learn language.

Keywords: Immersion teaching; Education; Instruction; Second language acquisition.



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1. Introduction

Professor Mihaly (1990) has shown through his extensive research that when people are engaged even absorbed in challenging but controllable tasks that are normally intrinsically motivating, they can experience a unique, enjoyable and worth-while psychological state, referred to as flow. In his seminal work, *Flow: The psychology of Optimal Experience*, he outlines his theory that people are most happy when they are in a state of flow a state of concentration or complete absorption with the activity at hand and the situation. The idea of flow is identical to the feeling of being in the zone or in the groove. This is a feeling everyone has at times, characterized by a feeling of great absorption, engagement, fulfillment, and skill and during which temporal concerns (time, food, ego-self, etc.) are typically ignored. Flow situations have been mainly noticed and studied in play or artistic creation and are defined as states of happiness and satisfaction that arise when carried by an automatic and spontaneous activity. Other researchers (Egbert, 2003; Larson, 1988; Shiefele, 1996) have also found that people can forget themselves and the surroundings when they are totally involved in the tasks. To experience flow, the performer must have a good chance of completing the task he or she is engaged in. There must be clear goals and immediate feedback. Goals are essential in moving students towards their best proficiency. After reviewing many years of goal-setting research, Locke *et al.* (1981) concluded that: 1) goal setting and performance are related; 2) goals affect task performance by focusing attention and action, mobilizing energy, prolonging persistence, and motivating the development of relevant strategies for goal attainment; 3) hard, specific goals produce higher performance levels than no goals, easy goals, or vague "do your best goals".

1.1. The Importance of Feedback

Feedback is a process of control, which refers to the process of transforming information. Ilgen (1998) claim that feedback is essential for learning and satisfaction. Feedback acts both to inform the recipient of expected behaviors and to provide satisfaction through information about rewards from behavior. From their perspective, specific goals and specific feedback that are directly applicable to future performance lead to higher level of performance, both in terms of learning and satisfaction. Without goals, feedback is meaningless; without feedback, the person doesn't have a clear assessment of progress toward goals. For flow experiences to occur, a balance must be struck between the challenge of the task and the skill of the performer. If the task is too easy or too difficult, flow can not occur. Both skill level and challenge level must be matched and high; if skill and challenge are low and matched, then apathy results (Csikszentmihalyi, 1998).

1.2. The Importance of Flow State

The flow state also implies a kind of focused attention. Flow could be described as a state where attention, motivation, and the situation meet, resulting in a kind of productive harmony or feedback. According to Csikszentmihalyi, flow is completely focused motivation. The flow state is an optimal state of intrinsic motivation, where the person is fully immersed in what he or she is doing. It is a single-minded immersion and represents perhaps the ultimate in harnessing the emotions in the service of performing and learning. In flow the emotions are not just contained and channeled, but positive, energized, and aligned with the task at hand. To be caught in the ennui of depression or the agitation of anxiety is to be barred from flow.

1.3. Brief Summary

In short, immersion theory (or flow theory) is very much linked to goals, feedback, motivation, and the balance between challenge and skills. Flow leads people to an optimal state, where they can enjoy themselves in work or study. Therefore, we must make efforts to promote flow experience.

2. Literature Review on Some Scholar's Study in Immersion Teaching and Second Language Acquisition

Yu xi introduced the Canadian teaching method from the aspect of distinction between the Canadian teaching method and traditional teaching method, and the main mode of the Canadian immersion teaching in *The Enlightenment of Canadian Teaching Method of Immersion in English towards High School English Teaching*. It is a new and effective mode of the second language teaching. By combining the status of middle school English teaching of our country, Yu xi points out that this kind of teaching method is beneficial for our high school English teaching. Canada immersion teaching in the second language teaching not only has made a success for the second language teaching and has added vitality to the second language acquisition, but also it has a tremendous influence in the world. I believe that this teaching method is worth learning for our high school English teaching to improve the capacity and effectiveness of high school English teaching.

2.1. English Immersion Teaching: A Revolutionary Reform in Children's English Learning

In *Establishment of Stimulating Environment in English Immersion Teaching* Feng xia thinks that English immersion teaching is a revolutionary reform in children's English learning and the early English immersion environment. It is the best pattern in children's English learning. In teaching suitable environment it should be established to stimulate child's language potentials enabling them to utilize English directly in English way and to lay good foundation for young children's lifelong development. With China's opening-up reform English has become one of the necessary conditions of personal daily work and life, but in the traditional English teaching students lack the ability of English application and communication so as to form a "dumb English" bottleneck. Through eleven years of continuous research English immersion teaching initiated in Xi'an in 1997 has been showed that English immersion teaching is a revolutionary reform of English teaching. Early English immersion teaching is the best mode of learning English for Chinese children.

2.2. The Explanation of the Emphasize on Teacher's Language

In *How to Enhance the Effectiveness of Teacher's Language Input in Immersion English Teaching* Cai xiaodan thinks that English immersion teaching emphasizes that the kids should be immersed in the second language environment and learn the language naturally. Teacher is the creator and instructor of the environment, and teacher's language plays an important role in kid's second language acquisition. With the help of relevant English teaching references and the author's rich experience of pre-school English teaching she arrived at the conclusion that accuracy, comprehensibility and repetition of teacher's language can help enhance the effectiveness of the input and promote the output of students' language. In English immersion teaching children are immersed in an English environment, and teachers face children only in English. The quality and quantity of language input directly affect the quality and quantity of output. A sufficient amount of input can promote language output. Effective input is to ensure the output of language. A large number of input and valid input are two prerequisites of immersion English Acquisition. Teachers are the most direct English input source of children, the main exchange object in children's immersion time, the source of English intuition and English language experience of children, and the creator and leader of children's English language environment. Improving the effectiveness of language of teachers is good for improving the effectiveness of language input, thus contributing to improving efficient output of children's language.

2.3. The Necessity of Constructing Immersion Teaching Experimental Environment

In *Discussion on Constructing Immersion Teaching Experimental Environment* Fu qian sheng and Zhu hai rong points out that construction of an economics and management laboratory has become a common understanding of the economics and management subject in higher education development of our country, but constructing immersion teaching experimental environment dose not go in-depth study. This thesis started with the necessity of constructing immersion teaching experimental environment and then put forward the content of immersion teaching experimental environment. In this thesis the author analyzes the immersion teaching experimental environment from two aspects: the necessity of constructing immersion teaching experimental environment and construction of immersion teaching experimental environment. The author believes that immersion teaching is a student-centered teaching method, and in a particular teaching environment students can give full play to their imagination and initiative ability in the learning process, so that students fully commit to their studies and make learning a proactive exploration process.

3. Literature Review on Some Scholar's Study on Application of Immersion Teaching on Second Language Acquisition

In *Immersion English Teaching Practice of the "Nanotechnology" Cause* Zhen ji hong and Hou wen mei introduce the Immersion English Teaching Practice of the "Nanotechnology" Cause from three aspects: teaching methods and techniques, the existing problems and the work plan in the next step, and packaging and distribution of program. The pedagogical process using the English immersion teaching method is summarized, including text selection, preparation for the cause, teaching process etc. Variable measurements and methods are taken to help students not only obtain the academic knowledge, but also enhance their communication abilities in English at the same time. The author believes that the construction of English immersion curriculum should be pragmatic. Starting from the actual situation of students the target of construction of the curriculum should be not too high, nor too low. It is not only further than the bilingual teaching, but not separating from the students' practical ability to receive

language. For undergraduates the training goal is to enable students to express their views on the professional aspects clearly and smoothly and expand their professional vocabulary based on English of life so as to make them have ability to learn to use English communication and expression in the professional field. So in the English immersion teaching, teachers should pay more attention to improve their ability to use standard pronunciation, correct expression, positive dialogue to encourage and guide students to ensure that students master the knowledge and English skills. At the same time their ability to express English, especially English listening and speaking ability are improved effectively. English immersion teaching is an attempt, and an inevitable trend in the development of the country and society. We believe that only if doing careful research, and striving to do every aspect of teaching, students' professional knowledge and ability to communicate in English will be effectively improved.

3.1. The lack of Immersion in the Maintenance Training System

Yu guo zhao in *Establishment Virtual Maintenance Environment Based on VIRTOOLS to Effectively Enhance the Sense of Immersion of Teaching Equipment* thinks that there is the lack of immersion in the maintenance training system based on the virtual reality technology, which leads to the learners can't understand and grasp the learning content accurately and comprehensively, influencing the effect of teaching. In the thesis the author discuss how to improve the immersion of virtual maintenance training system. This thesis presents research teaching based on VIRTOOLS of equipment maintenance virtual training systems. Which will bring the equipment maintenance training teaching effectively solve the number of quality venues, training efficiency and other prominent contradictions in teaching mounting equipment and maintenance training equipment. This thesis mainly from the virtual, hearing, touch, expression and language of behavior system of perception system discussing to enhance the virtual maintenance training system in immersion. VIRTOOLS is a new interactive system between person and machine. and technology with its characteristics of powerful interactive design capabilities visualization and easy operation so that in the development of virtual experiment in equipment maintenance greatly enhanced interactivity and immersion, improved the efficiency and quality of virtual construction of vocational educational equipment maintenance the reality. Virtual reality platform based on VIRTOOLS software provides a useful supplement for practical equipment teaching. Currently it has been designed and developed the initial realization of the basic functions, with good effect. As a teaching visual simulation technology. It provides virtual equipment environment with immersion and interaction, simulates the students for professional experimental initiative and dynamism.

3.2. A Good Way for an Immersion Teaching Style

In *The Research of Immersion Teaching Style in Chinese Teaching* Xi qiu ping thinks that although listening is as important as other skills, it seldom gets students and teacher's recognition. As a result, it is really a good way to develop an "immersion" teaching style in Chinese teaching. In other words, teachers should try to practice students' visual and auditory competence. In this way, students will be absorbed in the atmosphere the teacher created and they can improve their Chinese attainment. This paper discusses "immersion" teaching style according to modern teaching theory, teaching principle, teaching psychology, students' cognitive level and so on. This paper is divided into three parts. First the teachers should make preparation about their concept and their own attainment while students should make preparation before they have visual and auditory training. Second this paper talks about the content and strategies of "immersion" teaching style. Third the author talks about the aims that we look forward to in "immersion" teaching style. Though being inexperienced, we will try our best to make some contribution about the combination of listening training and "immersion" teaching style.

3.3. International Trend: Improvement of Immersion Education

Yang yong in *Comparative Study of Immersion Education* thinks that with the progress of science and technology and the rapid development of knowledge-based economy, international exchanges increase quickly; China integrates into the world economy in the process after entering into the "WTO", China's international contacts and exchanges have become more frequent. Therefore, English becomes increasingly important as an international language; at the current situation we need the inter-disciplinary talents who are not only just good at English, but also skillful in their specialized field. Under these circumstances, some areas and cities of China are implementing immersion education in which Chinese and English are the main instructional language, this experiment adapts to international and domestic trends, and it has also become the requirement of social development. Bilingual education experiment has made great achievement after carrying out in China. But not all of the schools can implement bilingual education smoothly and effectively because it restricts by certain conditions. In consideration of our country's Chinese-English bilingual education is still at the preliminary stage, one of the efficient shortcuts is that we can borrow ideas from other countries experience. Some countries' immersion education has lots of similarity with our country's current bilingual education experiment, so other countries' immersion education experiments can guide China's practice of bilingual education from different angles. The dissertation introduces Canada French-immersion education at first, the author begins with the background of Canada bilingual education, then gives full description of St. Lambert experiment from the aspects of the origin of the experiment, students selection, the selection of teachers, curriculum and effective result, after that the author discusses the spread of immersion education in Canada and the results of the immersion students' evaluation. Secondly, the dissertation goes on to discuss Germany's CLIT bilingual education model, the author explains CILT model from the aspects of the current development of bilingual education in Germany, the purpose of bilingual education, bilingual curriculum arrangement, the selection of students. teaching methods, choice of materials and teachers training. Japan is chosen for this case as one of examples in Asia, Japan is putting the immersion education into practice where they bring in

Canada experience, the author first gives macro description about the situation of Japan's immersion education, and then the author focuses on a typical immersion education case of Katoh Gakuen school, the author makes full description of this school's immersion experience from the school's educational policy and model, the selection of students, the curriculum, the teachers, teaching methods and the student evaluation. In the second part, combining with China's current bilingual education practice, the author compares four countries bilingual education after giving overview of bilingual education implementation of Canada, Germany and Japan, the author compares these four countries bilingual education from the aspects of the type of bilingual education, the attribute of bilingual education, the purpose of bilingual education, bilingual teachers, teaching methods, bilingual curriculum and the bilingual policy. We can understand China's current bilingual education better by comparing all the similarities and differences in the implementation of bilingual education of these countries. In the third part, the author makes simple descriptions of the development of bilingual education in China, and then points out the implications for China's practice of the current bilingual education by other countries experience. Considering the facts of our country's bilingual education, the author gives discussion from the aspects of the diversification of foreign language education, teaching methods, bilingual teachers, bilingual courses, bilingual studies, bilingual evaluation and the national policy.

4. Immersion Teaching as an Effective Second Language Teaching Method

In *An Analysis of 4-5-Year-Old Children's Pragmatic Development Characteristics in the English Immersion Environment* Li gui yun points out that by the sixties of 20th century, many psychologists and linguists had been interested in children's naturally and easily get acquainted with the mother language; using this mother-language acquisition theory is a major trend in our country's language teaching, and our English teaching and directions are also focus on it. The English immersion teaching mode with Canada as its origin can be regarded as a responsive, innovative and a good way to meet the challenges. At present, the immersion teaching as an effective second language teaching methods have been adopted, accepted and used by many countries in the world. The English immersion teaching on children is the start-up phase and foundation stage, when children in the kindergarten, let them full or half time immersed in the second language environment. In China the English immersion teaching is performed in this way: English as a medium of instruction and maximum applied to teaching, a variety of teaching activities used for native Chinese-speaking children, This "immersion" is not random and blind, but a teaching process of both target and exert an imperceptible step-by-step influence, in respect of the Physical and mental characters of children developing children's capacity of the second language, among which the development of pragmatic is supposed to be the power and source to develop the children's language ability. The advance of children's ability in voice, meaning and grammar can't go without the occasions when children use the language and communicate with it. Only the piles of words and sentence patterns but no chances to use them will only make the language study senseless and boring, and in this way the study will become dummy English or make the children run away from the English study. The Guide Compendium for kindergarten education, issued by the Education Ministry of China in 2001, emphasized the importance of children's pragmatic for the first time. Under the guidance of this theory, the idea of children's language education has greatly changed. Different from the focus on teaching children voice, grammar and meaning, people now are thinking more about children's pragmatic ability. Nowadays, the study of children's pragmatic use are mainly on the relations between children's pragmatic development and their mothers' language, while the research on children's second language pragmatic has not yet really started. As a branch research of Children English Immersion research program, this essay is a study of 4-5-year-old children's development characteristics in developing the second language using ability in English immersion environment. It's also an analysis of 4-5-year-old children's pragmatic development characteristics in the first year English Immersion environment by means of the combination of quality research and quantity research. The purpose is to see children's pragmatic development in the English immersion environment. In order to know the characteristics of different children language pragmatic development in different periods as well as to show the process of children's pragmatic development, this essay cut the whole research year into 6 stages. According to the CHILDES, the quantity research codes the language data gathered in different periods with the famous three indexes, with the purpose of grasping the stage characteristics and general characteristics of pragmatic development. The quantity research discusses the influence factors and the common ways of children's pragmatic development by means of watching, video and talk together with the language data, in order to know more detailed information about the development of children's pragmatic ability.

5. Conclusion

English immersion education is also drawing attention from school administrations in Japan as an effective method for teaching English. Instead of learning the target language in English camps, Japanese students are educated in immersion programs in school systems. All classes other than Japanese are taught in English. Some students have very little English ability, so the use of Japanese is not prohibited during school hours. But students are strongly encouraged to use only English in the classroom. In the United States, and since the 1980s, immersion programs have grown. Language immersion classes can now be found throughout the U.S., in urban and suburban areas, in dual-immersion and single language immersion, and in an array of languages. Language immersion programs can be an effective way of learning a new language and culture. Firstly, because only the L2 is spoken, students are forced to make communication attempts. Similarly, using or overusing the L1 in the classroom decreases exposure to the L2. Secondly, through language immersion, students learn in the most natural way possible and see the different ways in which similar concepts can be expressed, thus exposing them to different

cultures. However, immersion programs have been shown to be ineffective, in contrast to the effectiveness of French Immersion. There are many reasons that could explain this ineffectiveness, but the main issue is that it is easy for a student to get lost because he or she does not comprehend the language, and when teachers do not speak the students' native language, those problems are only amplified. Therefore, students need to have at least some instruction, or even clarification, in the language they understand in order to grasp academic information. Simply using common sense tells us that immersion can not be very effective because it does not make sense to expect a student to learn academic material via a language he or she does not understand. It is important to remember that different people have different learning styles, and someone with little or no knowledge of the L2 may struggle in an immersion environment. The structure of immersion programs should be revamped due to the negative research findings in an attempt to increase its effectiveness. In China, due to an increasing awareness of the importance of English, many language teaching approaches have been applied to English teaching, including immersion programs. The goal of an English immersion program is to provide children with an all-encompassing English-speaking environment where their English ability can be fully developed.

Many scholars and teachers in China have investigated this field (Liu, 2005; Lu, 2002; Mao, 1990; Qiang and Zhao, 2000; Yu, 2009) and found although it is applied in bilingual schools and proved effective, it is too costly and limited by the lack of bilingual teachers and English-only environment. Proponents believe immersion study in a language foreign to the country of instruction doesn't produce as effective results as separated language learning and may, in fact, hinder education effectiveness and learning in other subject areas.

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