

# On Encouraging Higher Order Thinking in English Class of Junior Middle School in China

Ying Xu

University of Aberdeen, Britain AB25 3TN

**Abstract:** Thinking ability is one of the basic abilities that talents should have, and the cultivation of students' thinking ability is a particularly important issue in English teaching. Reasonable teaching plays an important part in the development of thinking. Therefore, it is necessary in order to develop students' thinking ability in English teaching. English teaching has a decisive influence on students' thinking ability. It is not only conducive to improving students' English knowledge reserve, but also to improve students' thinking ability. In this dissertation, the author on the basis of the revised version of the bloom target classification, studies how junior middle school English teaching affects Chinese junior middle school students' cognitive level of thinking development, as well as the current problems in the process of education, and in the process of English teaching provides an effective way to promote to cultivate the students' thinking level.

**Keywords:** Chinese junior middle school students; Thinking level; English teaching; Thinking ability

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

In the "Suggestions on comprehensively promoting curriculum reform and implementing the basic tasks of cultivating moral integrity" issued by the education department, it is clearly pointed out that the mechanism of constructing the comprehensive development of students' core literacy should be analyzed. In this context, China has officially released the overall framework of "Chinese students' development of core literacy". The curriculum reform of English teaching based on core literacy mainly includes four aspects: language skills, cultural quality, thinking quality and learning ability. The cultivation of thinking quality is one of the effective ways to improve students' core literacy. Therefore, how to effectively promote the thinking level of the majority of students in English teaching is the key issue to be considered in current English teaching.

### 1.2 Research purpose and significance

**Purpose:** The purpose of this thesis is to make in-depth study about the current situation of thinking quality of junior middle school students with Bloom's Taxonomy, and how English teaching promote middle school students' thinking level, to reach the goal of providing suggestions and advice for the teachers to optimize their teaching, especially in cultivating students' thinking development.<sup>[1]</sup>

#### 1.2.1 Theoretical significance

The thesis mainly focuses on how to improve junior middle school students' thinking level with the application of Bloom's Taxonomy in English class. Thus it will help to enrich the theoretical research on the specific application of teaching methods.

#### 1.2.2 Practical significance

This thesis will study the junior middle school English teaching based on the revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy of cognitive domain, and explore how junior high school English teaching promotes the development of students' cognitive thinking level, which will help teachers to combine students' cognitive level characteristics when making teaching design, which can promote effective teaching and student cognitive development in the English classroom.

## 1.3 Research content and research methods

### 1.3.1 Research content

This paper collects research literature on thinking development at home and abroad from various aspects, sorts, analyzes, compares and summarizes them, and constructs the theoretical basis of this research. The characteristic of this paper is that Bloom's educational goal classification theory is the theoretical basis of this paper, focusing on the classification of cognitive thinking levels. In the process of writing the thesis, I read some relevant information about the development of thinking ability in junior high school English teaching, tracked the latest research trends, and borrowed relevant research results.

### 1.3.2 Research methods

**Questionnaire:** In this research, 30 teachers are treated as subjects, who are from 3 grades, junior 1, junior 2 and junior 3, 10 teachers from each. The questionnaire is composed of 10 items, which aimed to collect information of teachers' opinions about the

cultivation of students' order thinking through English teaching. To help the teachers understand the meaning of the questionnaire well, all the questions are written in Chinese and designed as multiple-choice.

Case study: It makes research about the English text books of junior middle school and try to find some cases to make in-depth research.

## **2 Literature review**

### **2.1 The definition of thinking**

Thinking ability is one of the basic abilities that talents should possess. It refers to the ability of people to comprehensively and deeply understand things through analysis, synthesis, judgment, and reasoning through the brain. Thinking skills include questioning ability, analysis and comprehensive ability and imagination. The youth stage is an important stage in the development of thinking ability. All courses in the basic education stage should be conducive to the development of students' thinking ability, and the English major is no exception. Language and thinking are very closely related, learning languages other than mother tongue promotes brain and mind. The development has an important role. In view of this, it is especially important for Chinese students to further developing their thinking ability by learning English.<sup>[2]</sup>

### **2.2 The six levels of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy**

Remember: mainly refers to the knowledge of memory, which can be recognized and reproduced by the learned knowledge and related materials. This goal requires students to: confirm, define, choose, dictate, recite, etc.

Understand: Constructing or interpret meaning from instructional message, including oral, written and graphic communication long term memory.

Apply: Knowing when to apply or use a procedure in a given situation, recognizing patterns to transfer to situations that are new.

Analyze: Breaking down material into parts and determine how they relate.

Evaluate: Making judgments based on criteria or standard.

Create: Combining elements together to form a coherent or functional whole: We organize elements into a new pattern or structure.

The above six levels of learning are a process from shallow to deep and from low to high. The cognitive level of shallow learning stays at the first and second levels, while the cognitive level of deep learning corresponds to the next four layers. Therefore, deep learning means that on the basis of understanding learning, learners can critically learn new ideas and facts, integrate them into the original cognitive structure, be able to connect among many ideas, and Some knowledge migrates to new situations, making decisions and solving problems (Ye Lian, Lin Shuping, 1992).

### **2.3 The current situation home and aboard**

#### **2.3.1 Studies on English Teaching and Thinking**

It is not uncommon to discuss the development of English learning and thinking skills.<sup>[3]</sup> Some researchers have theoretically explored the necessity and possibility of promoting the development of students' thinking ability through English learning. Some first-line English teachers have explored how to develop students' thinking ability in English classroom teaching in combination with teaching practice. Some studies focus on how to develop students' thinking ability, especially critical thinking ability, in English reading and writing teaching. Some studies explore how to develop students' thinking skills in language practice activities such as English speeches and debates. Some studies have introduced how to develop students' thinking ability in class discussion activities and game activities. These discussions are mainly about learning from English (such as analysis and discussion of reading material content), learning activities (such as group discussions, debates), classroom teaching methods (such as question types and methods) to examine how to be in English. Promote the development of students' thinking ability in teaching. Some researchers also explore how to cultivate Chinese and foreign cultural differences and English-Chinese language differences in English teaching from the perspective of cultural differences between Chinese and foreign cultures. It should be acknowledged that these studies and discussions are valuable.

#### **2.3.2 Studies on Blooming's Education Target Taxonomy in English Teaching**

According to the requirements of the syllabus and Bloom's point of view, junior middle school English courses should cultivate junior high school students' ability to understand and apply knowledge based on textbook contents, and cultivate their ability to analyze and solve problems on this basis, so as to guide students to conduct critical evaluation of textbook contents. Junior middle school English teaching is faced with the learning stage with weak English foundation, and it is more shallow learning. The cognitive level should be focused on the first and second level, and then gradually enter the cognitive level of deep learning after it is consolidated, continuing to the latter four levels. Therefore, deep learning refers to the learning that, on the basis of understanding learning, learners can critically learn new ideas and facts, integrate them into the original cognitive structure, transfer existing knowledge to new situations, make decisions and solve problems. In this process, learners promote the development of thinking level and improve their thinking ability.

### **2.4 Comments**

To sum up the above research, there are researches on elementary school, high school and college students at home and abroad. How to improve students' thinking ability, the questioning strategies of English classroom teachers and the development of students' thinking ability, effective teaching design to promote thinking ability and student thinking The impact of development is dominant. The research on Bloom's educational target taxonomy in English teaching, the research of domestic and foreign scholars generally focuses on the educational teaching objectives and English test, and there are also some researches on the cognitive thinking level of English teaching to promote junior high school students. However, the research on English teacher teaching and student cognition development can be further studied. Based on the above research, this paper will analyze the cognitive level and different backgrounds of junior middle school English and teaching focus from the classification of Bloom's cognitive domain. The influence of factors on

the development of thinking ability of junior high school students.

### **3 Body**

#### **3.1 The difficulties needs to overcome**

##### **3.1.1 Teacher's thinking habits**

In the process of teaching, the teacher's thinking habit is just to stay on the Knowledgeable and Comprehension, these two low-order goals. They directly tell the students the general idea of the article and some reading skills, grammar knowledge, do not let students subjective to independently ponder and think, ignoring the cultivation of students higher level appreciation and evaluation ability. This kind of thinking habit that only stays on the imparting and explanation of knowledge points leads to the difficulty in improving students' thinking level. This habit of thinking is particularly prominent in junior high school English classes. In response to this problem, teachers first reflect on their own inherent habits of thinking, and then let students also reflect on their own learning methods, and then strive to build a harmonious teaching environment.

##### **3.1.2 Students' English language ability**

Many students mistakenly learn English for learning by rote. It is wrong to learn and remember what the teacher says in class without thinking. English learning also need to think, English is a language, language is a communicative tool, if you want to use English to elaborate their views, do not think first, how to speak English conversation, do English exercises, learning the basic knowledge of English need to think.<sup>[4]</sup> In the study of a student is willing to use the brain, like to think actively, is his thinking ability to develop the primary conditions. Besides these, students have a weak English foundation, lack of enthusiasm in class, do not speak actively in class, and do not have a firm grasp of knowledge points. Many words and sentences are only at the superficial level of understanding, and in the face of deeper problems that need to be considered, they rely too much on the teaching of teachers.

##### **3.1.3 Evaluation mechanism**

The cognition and mastery of knowledge points is an important part of junior middle school learning. If we only focus on these two lower-order thinking, students' thinking level stagnates only in this stage. At present, knowledge indoctrination, grammatical analysis, test-taking tactics and rote memorization still exist in English classroom teaching to varying degrees. These practices are beneficial and helpful for the inheritance of basic knowledge and the cultivation of exam-taking ability, but from another perspective, they seriously inhibit the improvement of students' thinking level. Therefore, English classroom teaching should first establish a democratic, equal and harmonious teacher-student relationship, create a relaxed and harmonious education environment, so that students can take the initiative to explore and think in the classroom teaching, so that students can fully participate in and take the initiative to develop, and spark innovative thinking in the process of active learning. Therefore, it is necessary and necessary to properly guide students to develop higher-order thinking like analyzing, appreciating and putting forward their personal views on the views of the article.

To do this, we should pay special attention to understand students with a tolerant attitude, respect students, trust students, and positive motivation students. Allow students to be extreme and even wrong in their explorations. In a word, teachers first reflect on their own inherent habits of thinking, then students also reflect on their own learning methods and attitude, and then strive to build a harmonious teaching environment.

#### **3.2 Strategies on Promoting Students' Order Thinking**

##### **3.2.1 Strategies on promoting low-order thinking**

**Based on teaching materials:** Text textbook and PPT are the main teaching materials in the learning process. Therefore, We should use the textbook reasonably and efficiently. First, The content of the textbook should be appropriately supplemented or deleted to highlight key and difficult points. In teaching practice, teachers should distinguish between primary and secondary, grasp the key points, and appropriately cut or supplement the content of teaching materials. Abridging requires teachers to change the past practice of focusing on one eyebrow and beard, strengthen ability training, dilute knowledge point training, and reduce the teaching and training time of contextual words and sentences. The supplement is according to the teaching goal increases the related content suitably the study and the practice time. Second, Scatter the language knowledge and improve the reproduction rate. In view of the problems that the teaching content of the first unit in some modules is too much and the knowledge is difficult, teachers can first disperse the language knowledge points, and then present the language knowledge repeatedly in a timely manner. Teachers do not require students to fully master certain knowledge after one explanation and one activity, but they should let students master this knowledge in the process of repeated and circular explanation and practice. At the same time, the teacher is not necessary to a unit of all the language points are comprehensive and in-depth explanation, and should be appropriate to disperse the focus and difficulties. For the language points that have appeared many times before and need to be summarized in this lesson, we can properly focus on explanation and training. For the newly emerged language points, students are only required to understand their most basic semantic functions in this course and be able to use them preliminarily.

In addition, in view of the high starting point of language knowledge, teachers should grasp an important principle is: early penetration, heavy accumulation. Early penetration refers to that before the formal teaching of some words or a certain grammar, students should consciously appear in the previous text in a small number and repeatedly, so as to make students have some contact and understanding of it and pave the way for future learning. Re-accumulation is to combine the learned words or grammar with the new teaching content, so as to bring the old with the new, review the old, gradually accumulate, step by step.

Based on task design: First, be real. Both from the students' cognitive level and actual life, but also closely linked with social life. Second, be achievable. If the design of the task can not be completed to a large extent will hinder the students to play the level of the main body. Thirdly, tasks should be from simple to complex, from easy to difficult, and layer by layer, I construct a cycle from primary task to advanced task and from advanced task to cover primary task, so as to make the teaching hierarchy layer by layer. Forth

,be cooperative. The completion of the task must rely on the cooperation between learners, each learner in the process of performing the task, play their own different roles, all need to provide their own information, in the process of completing the task together to cultivate the spirit of cooperation.

### 3.3 Strategies on promoting high-order thinking

#### 3.3.1 Based on questioning

Through the ingenious design of the problem to improve the thinking level of students. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to design questions according to the progress of teaching and the different links in teaching. By using the characteristics of English and on the basis of mastering textbooks, teachers can improve students' learning enthusiasm and innovative thinking ability, encourage students to think actively and solve problems, and thus cultivate students' ability of inquiry and thinking. If the teacher raises the question in the teaching the dry law, not only is not advantageous to the student to grasp and the understanding to the knowledge, also is not advantageous to stimulates the student to study the English interest, does not use the student to enhance the independent inquiry and the innovation ability. Besides this, The teacher's classroom question must face all students, should grasp the difficulty "the degree". If the problem is too simple, it will be unattractive; if the problem is too partial, it will lose the key point; if the problem is too deep, it will be out of reach; Space is not the answer. Only on the basis of students' cognitive development level and existing knowledge and experience can teachers' questions be wonderful. Experienced teachers do not offer the truth directly to their students, but tempt them to seek it. Those who can grasp the characteristics of the teaching materials, from different aspects or perspectives of the proposed inspirational, ideological questions, will help stimulate students' curiosity, improve students' thinking ability, and thus improve students' thinking level.

#### 3.3.2 Based on a variety of activities

Rich and open classroom activities can enable students to display their personality in the activities, flash smart thinking sparks, fly the wings of the ideal, stimulate the potential of thinking. Of course, there is no fixed mode to cultivate students' thinking ability in classroom teaching activities. The most appropriate method should be selected comprehensively according to students' age characteristics, knowledge level and learning content, not to mention mechanical operation according to the designed teaching plan. Teachers should always pay attention to students' thinking state, according to the feedback information in the interaction between teachers and students, students and students, and intelligently grasp the learning process, adjust the learning method, so that students can get the knowledge at the same time, get the development of thinking level.<sup>[5]</sup>

#### 3.3.3 Based on teaching methods

With the continuous reform of modern education, the development of future students' education must be based on selected textbooks and scientific teaching methods. In order to realize the creative education of classroom teaching, teachers should do everything possible to broaden students' knowledge and stimulate students' curiosity with a large number of vivid and interesting subjects, so as to stimulate students' creative thinking. However, to stimulate students' interest and improve the teaching rate, we should start with the reform of teaching methods. Start with creative retelling. The process of retelling is actually the process of thinking with the brain, which can train students' various thinking abilities. Therefore, the author on the text teaching to let students for creative retelling, students in grasping the original theme, story development daring and reasonable, on the basis of the content and form of the original after processing, sorting, induction, rewrite to repeat, in so doing, can promote the students' language knowledge ability of rapid transformation is beneficial to develop students' intelligence, cultivating students' rich imagination, to develop their creative thinking. Creative retelling can be divided into three kinds: (1) change retelling: let students change person tense voice or article type retelling. (2) The following retelling: according to the changes that may occur in the story, use the original knowledge to play the imagination, to tell the story may appear in the end, this retelling is conducive to the development of students' imagination and creative consciousness. (3) summary retelling; Analyze, summarize and reason according to the content of the material. This is a higher level of retelling, students need a strong inductive ability. Then sleep on your speech. In the listening and speaking class, give up the class time to the students as much as possible, so that they can fully show themselves and get the chance to speak. For example, in the debate, the students' enthusiasm was very high and the scene was warm, which fully demonstrated their language ability and thinking and imagination ability, and pushed the students' thinking level to higher.

## 4. Conclusion

The classroom is the main front of junior middle school English teaching. The use of bloom's educational goal classification theory in teaching to cultivate students, such an effective thinking method, is not only conducive to mobilize the enthusiasm and initiative of students thinking, but also conducive to the improvement of students' thinking level, and can promote the improvement of junior middle school English teaching efficiency

## References:

- 
- [1] Anderson, L. D. (2001). *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. U.S.: Addison WesleyLongman, Inc.
  - [2] Joanhinho X. H. Thinking Skills in the 12th Grade English Course book in Timor Leste. THINKING SKILLS IN THE ENGLISH COURSE BOOK, 32-44.
  - [3] Waters A. Thinking and Language Learning [J]. *ELT Journal*, 2006(4): 319-328.
  - [4] Cheng Xiaotang, Yue Ying. Language as a tool for mental development-and on the significance of foreign language learning [J]. *China Foreign Languages*, 2011 (1): 51-57.
  - [5] Han Baocheng. Reflections on English education in primary and secondary schools in my country [J]. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 2010 (4): 300-302.