

Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies in Research on Effectiveness of Teaching English to Young Learners

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Submission date: 17-Dec-2020 12:14AM (UTC+0000)

Submission ID: 139949588

File name:

20851_Xueyan_He_Combining_Qualitative_and_Quantitative_Methodologies_in_Research_on_Effectiveness_of_Teaching_English__302035710.docx
(25.81K)

Word count: 4107

Character count: 24380

Module 7004

Assignment 3

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In 2001, the Ministry of Education in China issued the Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standard (experimental draft), which marks that children should learn English from primary school. Actually, English teaching classes are carried out even in Kindergartens, therefore, teaching English is very common in China. Due to the universality of teaching English in society, many previous linguistic scholars have studied the qualitative and quantitative methodology in teaching English and obtained convincing conclusions through case studies. It can be said that English Teaching in China has a complete research foundation. However, the research on the effectiveness of teaching English to learners remains to be discussed. According to the current research results, there are few research reports on the feasibility of Teaching English in China, especially the lack of theoretical guidance books. At the same time, throughout the research literature, the content is also relatively empty which shows two forms. One is the accumulation of huge amounts of data, which lacks the rigorous use and evaluation of methodology. The other is a simple summary of experience, which lacks scientific methodology to guide. Through combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies, this essay reveals the limitations and benefits of the two methodologies, to prove their effectiveness in teaching English to learners.

1 Methodology

In scientific research, appropriate research methods can draw more effective conclusions, which can be applied to practice, to get better products. These research methods are usually divided into three kinds of categories: analytical methodology, experimental methodology, and statistical methodology. When applied to linguistics, different branches often adopt different methodologies. For instance, phonology, syntax, and semantics use analytical methodology, phonetics and psycholinguistics use experimental methodology, while language teaching and pragmatics use statistics methodology. This paper mainly discusses the combination

methodology which includes qualitative research and quantitative research, which can how to promote the effectiveness of teaching English through the interaction between teachers and students in communication activities. Among them, effectiveness refers to how to define validity, how to test the effectiveness of learning English with different ages, different genders, and different experiences, and also which factors can promote the effectiveness of English teaching, the effectiveness of individual differences among teachers, etc.

1.1 Qualitative methodology

Here is a brief introduction to the qualitative methodology, which includes the definition and the specific methods.

1.1.1 Definition

Qualitative is a science research methodology, exactly speaking, it is multimethod. it means that qualitative researchers study objects in natural settings, and according to the significance of human beings, researchers try to understand or explain some phenomenon in society. Qualitative research pays attention to the study individual's understanding of social reality, it relies on the data mainly from the first-hand resources, such as direct observing, questionnaire investigation, interview, recording and document in the natural environment, focus groups, participant observation, artificial data and so on. Actually, these data are usually nonnumerical and it applied to political science, pedagogy research, psychology, sociology, anthropology, etc.

1.1.2 Specific methods

Due to the essay mainly discuss the research on the effectiveness of teaching English to learners, here mainly introduces the main methods to it. Firstly, questionnaire investigation. The questionnaire is a research method that consists of a series of relative questions to get gathering information from participants. It often has two forms which are verbal surveys or telephone surveys and the content includes preferences, behaviors, facts, attitudes, and so on. The earliest questionnaires are usually thought of as Dean Milles' in 1753. The advantages of this method are cheap, convenient, and often have standardized answers to collect. While the disadvantage is that the answer is limited by the investigator, it's difficult to get further information and so on. Secondly, the interview. An interview is a question and answers conversation between an

interviewer and an interviewee. According to the research subject, one participant designs several questions and the other one provides the corresponding answers through forms of face to face, video conferencing, and telephone interviews. And at last, the researcher collects the information from the answers. The advantages of the interview are saving time and convenience, but it is easy to produce bias in the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. That's because both of the sides have different backgrounds which can lead to various perceptions, and get the answer out of expectation. Thirdly, focus groups. Compared with the personal interview, it seems that the focus group is a group interview. The participants are demographically similar people. At first, the researchers design the questions they want, then all the participants put forward their corresponding views to the contents followed by the presenter. The discussions between the participants can be guided or open. The researchers not only get the information from their answers but can observe the interviewees' individual and integral reactions as well. It is good to get valuable information since the discussed result is more useful, but there exists several people who do not want to express their views in the public.

1.2 Quantitative methodology

Here is a brief introduction to quantitative methodology, which includes the definition and the specific methods.

1.2.1 Definition

Similar to qualitative research, quantitative is also a science research methodology and involves many methods. While it focuses on collecting the quantifying data and then analyze them in scientific methods. Quantitative is formed from a deductive methodology and shaped by empiricist and positivist philosophies. The aim of the quantitative is collecting the information intended, but this information has been reduced the researcher's influence on the process of the research object. The methodology of quantitative research is mainly based on data, according to the statistics, the researchers analyze the data and hope to generate some larger population. Its specific methods are survey method, correlation method, and experimentation. Currently, quantitative research is widely used in economics, sociology, gender studies, psychology, and other research fields.

1.2.2 Specific methods

As the qualitative specific methods, due to the essay mainly discuss the research on the effectiveness of teaching English to learners, here mainly introduces the main methods to it. Firstly, the survey method. This research method has some common places with a qualitative method which can get the information from participants through a questionnaire, personal case, interview, etc. But the main difference between them is that quantitative research puts the emphasis on results from analyzing data, instead of the direct conclusion. The advantages are that can get the amount of information in a short time, it is convenient for quantitative processing, saving time, and economy. While the apparent drawback is that due to various causes, the interviewees often give fault answers or tell a lie to corresponding questions. The second method is the correlation method. It mainly explores the relationship between things through measurement. The meaning of correlation is a consistent and orderly relationship which exists in two measurements, two variables, or two events. The objects are usually expressed with intensity and direction of correlation, which are divided into positive correlation, negative correlation, and no correlation. Its advantages show that it can indicate the correlation and independence existence, predict the future direction and it can be used in natural research, laboratory, clinical, and another status. While the disadvantages are that it is difficult to control the process, and the correlation maybe just a coincidence which can not be proved the causal relationship. Thirdly, quantitative experiment method. This kind of scientific method is developed on the basis of qualitative methodology. It mainly relies on certain scientific equipment and instruments to analyze data, which can intervene and control the research process and get the results from data. In this research, only described the research objects with various attributes quantitatively, can accurately control the law of the objects' movement and change. The advantages are that it can strictly control different factors conveniently, and due to the test and record are from professional instruments, which can lead to high reliability. However, in the study of personal psychology and other complex psychological phenomena, it is not suited to them.

1.3 Relationship on teaching English between qualitative and quantitative research

Qualitative research and quantitative research are widely used in the process of teaching English research. There is no insurmountable gap between them. Qualitative research and quantitative research are influenced by empiricism in theory and usually rely on experience rather than the subjective emotions of researchers to judge the results. Qualitative research is direct and simple,

while quantitative research is objective and accurate. Also, Qualitative research emphasizes observation in natural situations, while quantitative research focuses on the results obtained after controlling conditions by scientific equipment and instruments. It should be noted that in the research process, in order to ensure the objectivity of the data, quantitative research requires researchers not to involve in any subjective factors. Therefore, when researchers lack an indepth understanding of the social and cultural background of the research object, the questionnaire involved will be biased. This disadvantage of quantitative research contributes to the advantages of qualitative research, which makes the combination of qualitative research and quantitative research possible. Generally speaking, qualitative research is the precondition of quantitative research, and quantitative research is the further exploration result of qualitative research. Therefore, the two complement each other.

In the process of English teaching, qualitative research and quantitative research are two basic methods, which can not be separated. Although these two scientific methodologies are based on different philosophical theories, and it is difficult to combine together. But in the actual operation process, they can complement and perfect each other. For example, in English teaching research, according to the previous teaching results and feedback from teachers and students, researchers can sum up effective experiences and lessons. Then, they can select a part of the sample, do some experiments, and write down the relative records, which leads to the corresponding data. On the basis of the research data, the researchers can find ways to improve the effectiveness of English teaching and draw more favorable conclusions.

2 Previous research on teaching English to young learners

Over the previous 30 years, the main research on teaching English to young learners is reading disabilities. 10 years later, it has turned to the federal special education law. In fact, During the whole English teaching process, the most important thing is that the students' response, especially whether they have enhanced linguistic ability. RTI refers to the response to intervention, which is a model that tests the achievement level of students and academic growth. This model is very effective to consider the reading ability of students from 2002. Due to the overrepresentation of English young learners, some hypothesis thinks that lacks effective instruction, which shows the aim of RTI has eliminated. Therefore, there is so little effective instructional research on teaching English to young learners. Although many elementary schools

have practiced effective teaching English activities positively in China, the relative instructive researches are so few then. In recent years, there are some investigations existed, some researchers have paid attention to interventions for English young learners. Early reading interventions are studied to help young learners increase linguistic abilities. During the past 20 years, there are some researches on students' characteristics and test the students who have not responded to the intervention and the most common apparent factors are poor, including phonology, orthography, spelling, phonological memory, and so on. However, traditional experimental research focuses on the intervention study. Individual students are investigated in response to the instruction, including the performance in the whole intervention, result effectiveness, and so forth. Specifically, the research on teaching English is very common, and there are a number of studies, but still so few teaching English on young learners, and the research methodologies are very limited. In the contemporary scientific field, qualitative and quantitative are very common, and they complement each other, which can enhance the effectiveness of teaching English to young learners.

3 Design on combining qualitative and quantitative research

This study is trying to design systematic and comprehensive research by combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies, with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness of teaching English to young learners. Due to the learners are young learners, especially the kids in the kindergarten, the interviewees should be teachers, parents, and students since the quality and comprehensive education should include school and family. Therefore, the design of qualitative data collection has both sides.

3.1 Qualitative data collection

As mentioned above, qualitative research main includes three methods to collect data, including questionnaire survey, interview, and focus group. Firstly, the questionnaire. On the one hand, teacher questionnaire. The basic contents have age, gender, the age range of students taught. And the main contents should include the content of the teaching, the difficulty of the teaching, the way to control the young learners' classroom, the curriculum design of young learners teaching, how to carry out effective interaction between teachers and students in the classroom, students' linguistic feedback in the classroom, young learners acceptance of English learning,

teachers' learning and further study in teaching young learners, and how to carry out effective interaction with families education communication and so on. On the other hand, the family questionnaire. This kind of questionnaire can involve the education situation of both parents and the importance of parents to young learner's English learning, and whether there is additional English teaching at home, whether there is a language environment for foreign language learning at home, whether parents are willing to reinvest in young learner's English education, young learner's feedback on language learning at home, whether young learners are willing to share teacher's English Teaching in the classroom, whether young learners have a strong interest in learning English, etc.

Secondly, the interview. The most important part of the interview is to pay attention to the skills of questioning and the relaxation and comfort of the environment setting so that the interviewees can accurately give the answers that are helpful to the effectiveness of teaching English to young learners. Interviews can be conducted by telephone or face-to-face interview, different times can be set for teacher interviews and family interviews, and the teacher interview time can be longer. At the same time, the researchers choose some samples from teachers and parents from different age groups of young learners for comparative analysis. For teachers' interviews, the researchers should understand the actual needs of teachers for the classroom, ask them to review their career history and perceive the key impact of the effectiveness of teaching English, then sort it out. The researchers also should understand teachers' demands on family education and can test teachers' professional level and teaching style. For a teacher interview. Communication can be taken when parents pick up their children from school since they can answer effective information at this time. The other information should include understanding the actual needs of parents, understanding parents' education on young learners' English learning at home, and to observe young learners' feedback on language learning. In the family interview, young learners of different ages were randomly tested and recorded.

Thirdly, focus group. Focus group is an effective way to understand the realistic requirement of teachers and parents since there are many people that they can put forward their thoughts together. But the host should control the scene that guides all the interviewees to give out effective results. For teachers focus groups, the researchers may organize teachers of the same age group or different age groups to express their opinions freely according to the theme of

improving the effectiveness of young learners' English teaching. The meeting from peers can inspire each other to solve the problems encountered in the teaching process. At the same time, it can also stimulate each other to say more ideas, so that researchers can collect more useful information. For family focus group, Just like the teachers, researchers can also organize parents of the same age group or different age groups, or even teachers and parents together to express their opinions on improving the effectiveness of English Teaching for young learners, so as to facilitate researchers to collect and sort out useful information. Actually, so many parents would like to express their opinions, but it always lacks effective opportunities to express.

3.2 Quantitative data collection

Quantitative research main includes three methods to collect data, including survey methods, correlation, and experiment method. Firstly, survey methods. Survey methods in quantitative data collection include three specific ones, which are questionnaire, personal case, and interview. Compared with qualitative data collection, these methods focus on the analyze the data. For teacher interviewees, researchers must be clear about how many teachers are interviewed, what grades are being interviewed, and how many schools, classes, and students are interviewed in these grades. Researchers can compare the effects of different subjects, such as mathematics and English, Chinese and English, etc. And at the same time, the researchers must record from reading, writing, listening, speaking, and other aspects from the English study from young learners. The researchers can also compare the typical teaching styles of different schools and different teachers of teaching styles, as well as the feedback of young learners. Through the change of data, which can be analyzed the effectiveness of learning English of young learners. In terms of parents, make sure how many parents are interviewed. According to the information answered by parents, the data were classified and analyzed. To judge the situation of young learners learning English at home, and whether the combination of school education and family education can better promote the effectiveness of young learners' English learning.

Secondly, the correlation method. Using this method, the researchers can calculate the existing consistent and orderly relationship between two measurements or two variables. In the research of young learners' English teaching, the interaction between teachers and young learners in the classroom is related to the effectiveness of young learners' English learning, the change of teachers' classroom style is related to young learners' feedback, and the teachers' personality is

also related to young learners' performance. At the same time, for family education, parents' attention to young learners' English education is also related to the effectiveness of young learners' English learning. The intensity and direction of these factors can be expressed by the correlation coefficient, and then described, analyzed, and explained by positive correlation, negative correlation, and non-correlation. This method can be combined with the laboratory method, from the teachers' classroom experiments, the existence of the key points of scientific analysis and comparison. From the accurate data to find out the existence of relevance, draw valuable research conclusions, which in turn guide the actual teaching of English to young learners.

Thirdly, experimental method. To compare the data, the researchers can select the same grade classes in several schools, or select several different grades of a school. Then the experimental method is carried out in the teaching activities. In the whole process, the selected teachers can have different teaching styles or teaching methods, as well as a certain number of young learners. The researchers can videotape the whole teaching process. In the information record, according to the interaction between teachers and young learners in the class, as well as the feedback of young learners. It can be refined to the pronunciation of a word, whether young learners can remember a word effectively. These words can also be classified into different categories, such as vegetables, fruits, toys, sports, daily necessities, etc. Then, these videos are sorted out to record a teaching activity of the teacher and the number of young learners' feedback, so as to obtain quantitative information results.

4 Discussion

Like any other scientific method, combining qualitative methodology and quantitative methodology also has its advantages and disadvantages. This part will discuss the limitations and benefits of combining researches in teaching English to young learners.

4.1 Limitations of combining researches

The most apparent limitation of combining qualitative methodology and quantitative methodology is how to design the factors. First of all, the quantitative and qualitative elements of research need to be designed separately, which will require researchers to spend more time and energy on the design. In the process of research activities, the two also need to be carried out

separately. For example, in the survey of teachers' teaching English activities, the researchers need to ask the interviewees to collect more useful information, which is qualitative research. And then, the researchers need to analyze the data and get some rules from it, so as to draw some valuable conclusions. This part is qualitative research. That is to say, in the whole research process, only in the stage of studying results can we combine qualitative research and quantitative research. In fact, in the early preparation and analysis stage, the two research methods need to be carried out separately. Due to the need to add different data in different stages, the research will inevitably lead to the phenomenon of time delay in the analysis of these data, which will lead to the possibility of deviation in the final research results. For instance, when teachers teach young learners English, young learners are different from older students, there will exist a time lag in their feedback to teachers' teaching activities through the teaching process. If the content of feedback is analyzed, the time will be further extended. Therefore, in the process of combining research, the overall analysis and interpretation of the research data should be carried out as far as possible, so as to reduce the possibility of error as much as possible. Only in this way can we ensure the feasibility and value of the study.

4.2 Benefits of combining researches

However, combining qualitative and quantitative research has its limitations, we could not ignore the benefit from it. The combination of the two methods requires the unity and cooperation of the group, which must include qualitative researchers, quantitative researchers, as well as professional knowledge researchers, and experienced researchers. During the project seminar, there will be a multi-dimensional discussion and common understanding of the design, analysis, interpretation, and conclusion of the research data, which is bound to be more scientific and valuable. In this process, researchers and participating schools, teachers, young learners, and their parents will also establish cooperation and mutual trust relationships in different periods to ensure the delay and reliability of the data. The hybrid method combines qualitative data and quantitative feedback results of young learners' English learning, which can effectively improve teachers' teaching integration and collaborative understanding in preschool and primary school English teaching. At the same time, in the collision of different research methods, researchers can also get more comprehensive, more detailed, and more uniform research processes and results

than before. Therefore, the effectiveness of teaching English to young learners is really realized in practice, and this is the value of the whole research.

5 Conclusion

Based on the combination of qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis, this essay analyzes whether this method is effective for teachers in young learners' teaching English. At first, this essay briefly describes the qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis, including their concepts, specific methodologies, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of these methods. Then, it puts forward the contents of the combined study of the effectiveness of teaching English to young learners, analyzes the limitations and benefits of combining methodology, objectively analyzes the research method. The conclusion is that although to some extent, this methodology takes time and energy, it is a valuable research method.

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