Research for the New Model in Rhetoric Teaching

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Abstract. As people are getting further research about English, they put more emphasis on rhetoric, so the new model of rhetoric teaching is extremely urgent. The core of reform is that the teacher should have new teaching ideas, new teaching means and new teaching methods, which can be used in an extensive, targeted and practical way. If teachers make good use of the resource of the model multi-media, and students become the center of the class, students can get plenty of information about rhetorical devices from the different contexts, and then they will better master and improve the ability of applications of language uses.

Introduction

Rhetoric is an art to express languages effectively. It can guide people to use and create variety of rhetoric means to convey what they want properly. It is closely associated with esthetics, literature, linguistic, lexicology, pragmatics and writing. Rhetoric mainly makes a study of rhetoric devices, rhetoric activities in speech (related to context and style), language tone etc. When people communicate each other, they just want to transmit some information. So we must learn rhetoric to get better effect on communication and information input. Without rhetoric, we can’t take good advantage of the function of the language system; we can’t express our feelings and ideas in a better way; we can’t make innovations to adapt ourselves to proper language circumstances; we can’t make language expression perfect.

Rhetoric is one of the important selected courses for English majors among the third-year students in colleges and universities with only two periods a week. In less time, it is hard for us to give the whole system about rhetoric. And another reason is that the courses of English writing, lexicology, pragmatics, stylistics are set up during the first three years, so we will focus mainly on the practical usages of the rhetoric devices. We’ll try to explain, analyze, appreciate them and really understand and master them. Rhetoric devices are the most important part in rhetoric. “Figures of speech are rhetorical devices of deviations from the ordinary or literal way of expression, with a view to producing greater impressiveness and effect.”[1] Whether in literature works or in daily life, we do our best to show our thoughts and feelings in lovely, vivid, bright, accurate language, so it is necessary to study and make a research about the rhetoric devices. In this way, we can read and appreciate literature works very well so that we will lift our cultural accomplishment in language.

The Problems in Rhetoric Teaching

Rhetoric is one of the main means to communicate each other. But students usually don’t take it seriously. They think it easy, or think only students who want to get further study should learn it. In fact, language learning cannot exist in isolation. After the basic language learning and related major courses in colleges or universities, students are eager to improve their ability to speak or write, and even to enjoy literature works. Learning rhetoric devices can help you express appropriately and come to the point, which can achieve maximum results with little effort.

In addition, teachers’ ideas, teaching methods and teaching means are obsolete, and teachers only infuse the rules of knowledge to students. It will come to such a situation that teachers are always
talking while students are silent and listening passively. It’s so dull, and there is no interaction between the teacher and students. Therefore, students aren’t active, and it’s hard to cheer them up. As a result, it will cause students to have narrow range of knowledge and lack chances to develop their language ability. This kind of traditional teaching model hasn’t met the demand of modern teaching, so it’s extremely urgent to research a new model for rhetoric teaching. [2]

The student-centered method is effective way to change the teaching. The viewpoint of “student-centered” was first put forward in Harvard University institute of education by Carl Rodgers, famous psychologist, in 1952. The seminar was about “How classroom teaching influence people's behavior.” And it was also clear that new perspective and new model of education was clearly needed for students in the 21st century, which was clearly required in the world conference of higher education held by UNESCO. Generally speaking, now most of the teachers employ “student-centered” form to have classes, but how they can do it effectively depends on both the teacher and students. It is essential and necessary to combine the professional knowledge with a good way of classroom teaching.

The New Model of Rhetoric Teaching

As teachers, we should arrange the classroom activity very well, and can’t ignore any link in class. What is the new model is that students can effectively learn what they should do, and put the theory and practice together, and lift their language and cultural qualities.

Knowledge from Theory—Based on the Textbook, Outstanding of Language Points

The study of any subject must be based on the theory. We can master its nature with the guidance of the theory and combining with the reality. The theory is usually dull. We have to know the definition, classification, use and the effect and even have necessary illustration. In order to make the uninteresting theatrical knowledge clear and easy to understand, the teacher must adopt the multi-media as an aid to teaching means and have agile teaching methods. The teacher can present charts, video etc. to students and bring the audio-visual effect to them. Meanwhile, the teacher should give them some supplements of related, leading information to widen their view and knowledge range. Then the students can digest well but don’t feel boring.

The Extensive Application—Stimulating Students’ Interest

One saying from the educationalist: interest is the best teacher. Obviously, we design the teaching activities based on students’ interests. With the development of rhetorical theory, rhetorical methods and rhetorical scientific system, people have extended the research to different kinds of fields such as spoken one, written one, social intercourse, lecture, literature works, film and television. The students must know the language skills and rhetorical devices(figures of speech) to elevate the ability to express the language and achieve the good effect of understanding language. In this way, the rhetorical devices(figures of speech) can be used widely. If we put the interests and the theory together, we will have a quite different kind of class.

Grasping the Typical Examples—Assimilating the Textbook

On the base of understanding the rhetorical theory, we must put it into practice. Whether we know the theory depends on understanding the real implied meaning about the rhetorical devices. At first, understand the typical examples in the textbook carefully. Those wonderful, choice sentences fully embody the uses of the rhetorical devices and are helpful to beginners to understand and grasp. While teaching, teachers can make good use of the multi-media to show the examples with the pictures and music, which adds colour to the words, and at the same time to supply much space to study and assimilate the textbook.
Analyzing and Appreciating Some Excellent Articles—Arousing Students’ Initiative Enthusiasm

Teachers try their best to provide language circumstances for students to get further understanding and application of the rhetorical devices (figures of speech). The same words, phrases, sentences that appear in the different situations and different contexts will produce different meanings and rhetorical effects. When students understand and get the enjoyment from the excellent articles, they will have the initiative enthusiasm. Then they like to participate in the classroom activities. In such specific language circumstances to analyze the rhetorical effects, students can have chances to practice what they learn and realize the essence. [3]

The Form of Words

Excellent speeches, proses, advertisements etc. are good examples to show the glamour of the rhetorical devices (figures of speech) in the works. The wonderful passages and some sentences can be spread forever just because they are splendid expressions, of which some rhetorical devices (figures of speech) are used, so the articles are vivid, thought-provoking, then they have expressive force and appeal. Therefore, Firstly, teachers can present the examples as words on the screen. Secondly, students try to find what kind of the rhetorical devices (figures of speech) are used by reading carefully, then attempt to understand their functions and effects, and share respective ideas. Lastly, teachers give the right analysis and guidance, from which students can be trained from easy to difficult, from simple to complicated. Such a student-centered teaching offer students a good way to imbibe knowledge fully, which gives much training of their ability, then increases their study efficiency.

The Form of Sound

For junior and senior students in colleges and universities, they have already had basic, solid foundation for language and ability to apply the language. After training students by reading and further understanding the rhetorical devices (figures of speech), teachers should get to another higher level for them. Teachers will supply the carefully-chosen works with original pronunciation, so students can enjoy a feast for the ears from the rhetorical devices (figures of speech). They can know them in the works well gradually by several times of listening. Then teachers will give them directions with words, and at this moment, students can better and accurately realize the valid application of the rhetorical devices (figures of speech). Melodious stereos make students develop the co-function between sensorium and mind. In this way, this kind of teaching can not only train students’ listening, but also change the dull knowledge in books into audial, vivid, attractive reflect. Of course, teachers should change the materials continually to arouse students’ enthusiasm.

The Form of Film and Television

Dudley Andrew, the American film theoretician, said that rhetoric played a prime important role in all aspects of the film theory from every angle. A large number of rhetorical devices (figures of speech) are in the film and television, which not only enriches characters’ expressions but increases the appeal to the plot. Proper devices really bring students beautiful enjoyment, stimulate their imagination and have resonance. Teachers pick out pieces of visual extracts with outstanding features. Once teachers put such audio-visual materials before students, students will go into the situations with heart and soul. Then they can put all language knowledge, language skill and rhetorical devices (figures of speech) into use here, which is called studying in enjoying. It can help students consolidate and deepen the master of the rhetorical devices (figures of speech); it can give them more opportunities to practice, in the meantime, what they have learned can be tested in class. A lesson of rhetoric becomes the presentation of overall knowledge. Teachers fulfill their teaching tasks very well and reach the teaching goals. This kind of colourful teaching form must be arousing students’ studying interests and stimulating their enthusiasm, which attain teachers’ objective.
Targeted and Practical Application

For many years, discrimination of rhetorical devices (figures of speech) have been one item in the entrance examination to postgraduate. Students hope to complete this item better than others, so it’s necessary for teachers to collect the exam papers in recent years, make an analysis, and train students with targets.

In addition, we pay attention to developing individual characters. Teachers ask students to dissect some works as proper homework. They should develop a good habit of collecting sentences, passages. And everyone should hand in his own works of appreciating, in which rhetorical devices (figures of speech) can be better used. So students can apply what they learn to reading, to enjoying, to writing. They will have chances to share their feelings and understanding.

Implications and Conclusion

The new model of rhetoric teaching is under innovation though we search and study and absorb in experts’ achievements. We try our best “to have a course with knowledge, pleasure, novelty, foresight.”[4] The teaching soul is teachers’ variety and flexibility of teaching methods and teaching means. The teaching essence of teaching reformation is teaching contents with richness, extensiveness, target and practicability. In the new teaching model, teachers utilize the modern teaching means to create a new, better studying conditions for students. The rhetoric studying is not just a course, but it’s a complementation between teachers’ imparting language knowledge and students’ improving ability. It’s collection of teaching, learning, practicing, and provides students with the training of comprehensive ability in English, which adapt them to the need of the society.

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