

Teaching Practice of Spoken English Training Course Based on the Cultivation of Practical Capability

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ABSTRACT. According to the requirements of the latest version of College English teaching guide issued by the Ministry of Education in China, colleges and universities across the country are carrying out targeted reforms. Taking Heilongjiang Bayi Agricultural University in China as an example, the number of hours in the general education stage of the university has been reduced from 280 periods (four semesters) to 160 (three semesters). The rest of the hours are allocated to students' professional courses or to cultivate college students' English various practical abilities, that is to say, to offer a variety of English elective courses for students to learn. The design of Spoken English Training Course is to cultivate students' spoken English ability, and then to meet students' short-term (passing CET-4 and CET-6) and long-term (social interactive communication, survival and development) goals.

KEYWORDS: Teaching practice, Spoken english, Practical capability

1. Introduction

Practical Spoken English is one of the following elective courses of general English education in Heilongjiang Bayi Agricultural University, which belongs to the category of ESP courses. The main content of the course is divided into two sessions. The first session is language input, mainly about common expressions under office background, the second session is discussions of topics ranging from ones in CET-4 and CET-6 formerly to currently social (both national and international) hot topics. The purpose of the course is, on the one hand, to train students to convey opinions about topics in the office, so as to offer assistance for students to prepare for the future employment; on the other hand, it aims to train students to make simple statement on general events and express their opinions on familiar expectations, specifically know about the detailed process of the Spoken English test of CET-4 and CET-6. Furthermore, through the learning of the course, students can have a brief discussion on the topics related to their majors respectively, and cultivate students' interest to learn the professional English courses required in each major.

The minimum requirement of the course is that the students can overcome the psychological barriers of oral communication, and communicate with people smoothly on daily topics or topics in their respective professional fields. All in all students should be trained to be brave enough to "Open their mouth". The relatively higher requirement is that the students should pass the Spoken English Test in CET-4 and CET-6, with the score above Level C (qualified).

2. Reasons and Solutions of Psychological Obstacles in Oral Communication

Currently, all the Chinese college students are post-90s, more than 90% of whom have learned English at different levels beginning in primary school. It can be concluded that whether they are active or passive in learning English, the input of language knowledge has reached a certain level, but the performance in language output, especially in the aspect of spoken communication ability, can not be complimented. After many years of spoken English instruction practice, the author finds that the biggest obstacle for today's college students to communicate fluently in English does not lie in language ability, even though this might be a minor cause, but from learners' psychology. Psychological obstacles are invisible in essence, but there are external manifestations. For example, many students have to write before they "speak" English in the classroom. Although both writing and speaking are forms of language output, nevertheless, through many years of language learning, students have developed a habit of output dominated by "Writing", they are not accustomed to "Speaking".

In the process of instruction, the author generalizes the main causes of this psychological obstacles which are listed as follows:

- 1) Fear of Communication in English, English is Not the Mother Tongue
- 2) Fear of Misunderstanding Others, Learners Lack the Confidence about Their Own Language Abilities.
- 3) Fear of Making Mistakes or Errors, Learners Are Ashamed of Making Mistakes in the Presence of Others
- 4) Fear of Being Perceived Stupid, the Use of English in the Utterance May Be Too Essential or Easy
- 5) Fear of Peer Pressure. Other Learners May Speak Better Than “You”.

The cause of the above psychological obstacles is just like an English idiom: *The past often creeps into perceptions about the future*. Intentionally or unintentionally, the past English learning experience has caused great obstacles to students, including not only the preparation for the National Entrance Examination in senior high school, but also the popular educational form in general education of College English, as well as the long-standing teacher-centered education mode. Students get too little about spoken English practice, that is to say, spoken interactive communication ability has not been well realized.

How can we tackle the psychological obstacles? There is no doubt that psychological problems can not be solved overnight. There is no real panacea to cure the “fear” of spoken English communication. It can not be achieved overnight and once and for all, which requires time. Based on many years of spoken English instruction experience, the following suggestions are made:

- 1) When speaking English, we should not stick to grammar rigidly. We should flexibly learn and use existing knowledge, including body language. Remember that smoothness is the first essence of spoken English communication;

- 2) Finding Fun, Entertaining Yourself, Cultivating Personal Interest in the Process of English Learning, We Should Note That Interest is Always the Best Teacher;

- 3) Objectively speaking, the main difficulty encountered for students in interaction is time pressure, which requires the fastest completion of language output in a short time. Also, mother tongue will bring negative influence on the utterance while speaking the second language. To achieve this, teachers are obliged to carry out a well-organized classroom organization. For example, one-to-one teaching, group learning is particularly important. This has higher requirements for teachers' scientific and reasonable curriculum design.

3. Curriculum Design of Practical Spoken English Course

After eight semesters teaching practice, the curriculum design of practical spoken English practice has become mature. The course has 32 meeting times (16 for face-to-face classes and 16 for online teaching), and the whole teaching week is from week 1 to week 16. Small classes, that is to say, 30-40 students are admitted and registered in each class. The combination of online teaching and face-to-face teaching is adopted.

Language input and output is the basic teaching concept in meeting courses.

1) Language Input Process

Each class, students are required to focus on common topics in office English, beforehand the teacher will provide students with certain background language knowledge of given topics, mainly in the form of dialogue happened in real circumstances. For example: coffee time. The teacher will provide students with 10 to 15 dialogues occurred in real scenes among office staff during the coffee time.

2) Language Output Process

This process is divided into two sessions. In the first stage, students read the given dialogue of specific topics in pairs. The setting of this stage includes the consideration of students' speech correction, which helps teachers understand students' basic spoken English level, and has the most direct grasp of students' progress with the deepening of the course. The second stage is the actual performance, that is, role play. For example, two or three of the students perform their roles in coffee time, and start a dialogue with language input as a reference. The students can give full play to it, and the teachers can participate in the performance appropriately to ensure the fluency of classroom teaching.

3) Spoken English Simulation Test of CET-4 and CET-6

The last 20 minutes of each meeting class is the simulation stage of CET-4 and CET-6 spoken English test. The teacher is the examiner and the software “WeChat” is used to select two examinees in a group, which not only increases the interest of learning, but also pattern drills the students' spoken English test. This link is the stage that students are most interested in, the classroom effect is obvious, and students can get great

improvement. With the deepening of the classroom, students will also play the role of examiners to improve students' participation and teaching efficiency in the classroom.

4) Network Teaching Stage (Virtual Classroom)

The teacher set up a WeChat public number group, required all the students in the class to participate and communicated with all the students during 8:30 to 9:30 online in the evening of the meeting class. All students are required to participate the activity which will be conducted online assessment for students. The standard of assessment depends on students' participation degree. Right or wrong in grammar usage is by no means a necessary criterion of assessment. At the end of the meeting class, the teacher arranges one topic to be discussed in the online class, and the students are given sufficient time to prepare. Teachers and students jointly express their opinions about the concrete topic. Students should leave voice messages in the Wechat group. Written forms of expression are strictly forbidden. Boldly speaking is the most significant. Those who do not participate in the communication without any reason will be given points deduction, or even not allowed to take part in the final examination, the purpose of which is to ensure the participation of students and gradually cultivate the habit of English communication. In the stage of online teaching, students are the main speakers. Teachers just timely express their opinions, master the whole process, make records of students' speeches, and give feedback in time in the next meeting class.

4. Feedback of Curriculum Practice Results

Since the second half semester in 2014, the course has been offered for 10 semesters and more than 1000 students have reaped the benefit of the course. The teaching mode has been constantly improved, the course materials have been greatly enriched, the topics discussed in classroom teaching can take into account the times and professionalism, and the students' spoken English ability has been significantly improved. First of all, through the online and offline teaching practice of 32 meeting times in each semester, students have overcome the psychological obstacles to the maximum extent; secondly, teachers require all students who choose this course to apply for spoken English test in CET-4 r CET-6, which is the first requirement for passing the course. After high-intensity oral practice, students' overall passing rate is high enough, obviously higher than ever before. At last, the research of flipped classroom teaching mode based on WeChat public platform has been further deepened.

5. Conclusion

With the continuous progress of science and technology, spoken English teaching is no longer confined to classroom teaching. Moreover, due to the multiple limitations of classroom teaching time and space, teachers need the assistance of other teaching methods (such as WeChat public platform) to get the best teaching effect. The teaching design of this course is only for the reference of the majority of oral English teachers. More scientific and effective teaching design still needs constant curriculum practice. The majority of English teachers need to take the cultivation of students' application ability as their own lifelong responsibility and obligation. Do not teach "dead books", and do not follow stereotype or rigid dogma. Instructors should constantly improve their teaching capabilities to cultivate the composite application talents needed by the society.

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