The Construction of Foreign Language Learning Ecological Environment Based on Computer Network

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Keywords: Teaching reform, Computer technology, Ecological environment of foreign language learning

Abstract: State Education Ministry has started a reform in college English teaching in order to improve students' English application capability since 2007. However, most of English teachers still perform an approach of computer-assisted teaching. The purpose of this article is to integrate computer technology and foreign language learning deeply, and listening speaking leads the foreign language teaching in the sense of interdependent, harmonious and coordinated development of ecological environment of foreign language learning.

1. Introduction

For many years, College English education in China has been in the exam-oriented situation with the purpose of passing CET-4 and CET-6. There are rare opportunities to practise their listening and speaking. As a result, students have high scores and low abilities, lack of communicative competence, 'deaf English' and 'dumb English' have become serious disadvantage. In order to solve the above problems, Ministry of Education has published *College English curriculum* Requirements in 2007 which is a framework document of college English reform. The core is "English multimedia teaching modal based on computer and internet". This teaching reform have been implemented for more than 10 years. The author of this paper, a college English teacher, has observed for a long time and found most teachers only use computers and multimedia as AIDS to foreign language teaching. Teachers still stay at the superficial understanding and simple imitation for English courses multimedia teaching modal. It has not really constructed effective foreign language ecological environment. This paper attempts to solve the above problems combining our school's teaching innovation and rethink. The author tries to construct a comprehensive organic integration ecological environment between foreign language learning and computer network, exploring the path and method of constructing technology and language "I am in you, you are in me" foreign language teaching ecological environment, which is the main innovation point and the purpose of writing this paper.

2. The Necessity of Foreign Teaching Innovation

There are both historical and practical reasons for students' high scores and low abilities and lack of communicative competence.

2.1 Lack Foreign Learning Surroundings

"Why Chinese students have learned English for more than ten years, the phenomena of 'deaf English" and 'dumb English' are very common? The result is the limitation of language surroundings: there are few opportunities to practise listening and speaking, and furthermore there are few opportunities and surroundings to use foreign language to communicate." [1] That is to say, the main reason is limited by surroundings. Chinese students' communicative competence isn't so good as those of European countries or those of Japan, India, Pakistan, Singapore, Hongkong and other countries and regions. Because English for them is the second language after their mother tongue. The second language refers to it is as important as mother tongue and are wildly used in people's common daily work and life, learners can acquire language in real surroundings. But

English for Chinese students is foreign language, the position of foreign language is lower than native language, and its application scope is limited in travelling abroad, communicating with foreign people, reading foreign literature and so on [2]. Chinese students have few opportunities to use English, mainly from textbooks and classes, so the time and opportunities to use English is very limited, and the effect is poor.

2.2 Limited Class Time

Language is a strong practical course, language is not taught well, language is learned and practised well. English teachers cannot teach language directly just like imparting knowledge, language is learned in context through participating activities and communication, students learn foreign language by practice, experience and internalization. Dewey said: "education is not 'telling' and "being told", but a process of initiative construction." [3] College English faces quite different situation and condition. Firstly, class hour is limited. Recently, class hour in most colleges and universities have been reduced from 4 class hours to 2 class hours per week, the total class hours in one semester have been reduced from 80-64 class hours to 48-32 class hours, so class time is limited. Secondly, the number of students in one class of most colleges and universities is 40-60, too many students in a class lead to the time and opportunities are very limited for individuals to practise English.

2.3 Teaching Model is Unification

Especially since 2003, colleges and universities have increased enrollment year after year. Every class use the same textbooks and the number of students is more than before. The disadvantage is that the unified model teaching is difficulty to meet students' individual needs with different English level, profession and interest. It is hard to teach students in accordance of their aptitude. Furthermore, we intend to pursuit the passing rate of CET 4 and CET 6, which narrows students' interest, and attention and thought.

2.4 Language is One Part of Culture

Language learning is more than language skills. Language is one part of culture and language is the carrier of culture. Anyone who wants to master a foreign language must understand the deep foundation of language--culture. Including the historical and cultural setting in target language countries, such as social system, historic evolution, religious belief, national psychology, manners, customs and so on. Only when foreign language learning is combined with culture can we understand the real meaning of language and decently communicate with foreign people. However, it is difficult for learners to know target language's deep culture only through the limited learning from textbook and class.

3. Investigation of the Current College English Teaching and the Existing Problems

It has been more than ten years since the release of *College English curriculum Requirements* in 2007 and implementation of college English innovation. The author investigated, visited and listened to open classes in three universities (Xi'an University of Technology, Shaanxi University of Science and Technology, Xi'an Peihua University) in order to know the current situation of college English teaching. There are the two typical teaching modals are shown in the following table 1 and 2.

The essence of table 1 is the learning and passing on knowledge based on traditional cognitivism. The essence of table 2 is the practice and reinforcement based on traditional behaviorism. The above two typical modals add computer and CDs, due to the contents of CDs only the electronic edition of textbook, students' attentions are not concentrated. And computer is only used to play recording, video and PPT. There is not essential different from traditional blackboard+chalk+recording modal. These two modals are very common in college English teaching. It fails to solve the problem of the decrease of public college English class hour and lack of foreign language environment. It fails to solve problems of enhancing language sense, cultivating

students' communicative competence and autonomous abilities required by the syllabus.

Table 1 Typical Teaching Modal 1

Students	Sophomores, about 50 students
Curriculum	College English reading and writing
Textbook	New Horizon College English: Reading and Writing, the third volume, editor-in-chief: Zheng Shutang, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
Content	Unit 4 Five famous symbols of American culture
Process	Firstly, the teacher played a recording, ask some questions according to the pre-reading activities, the purpose is to introduce the topic. Then the teacher presents some pictures by PPT in order to make students understand the main idea about the reading comprehension. Then using the courseware in CD which is made by the press to explain sentence by sentence, especial the key words, grammar and drills. Finally, homework is assigned according to after-class exercises.

Table 2 Typical Teaching Modal 2

Students	the second junior college students, more than 40 students
Course	college English listening and speaking
Textbook	Communication English Speaking Course Editor-in-chief: Liu Chen Shanghai Jiao Tong University Press
Contents	Unit 5 Going to the bank
Process	The teacher uses the courseware in CD which is made by the press to play some videos, the contexts include: in restaurant, in airport, in a bank, in shopping, in office, in hospital and so on. Take the topic of banking business for example. Firstly, watch videos about some contexts which people do some banking business. Then learn some words related with banking business: saving account, check account, interest, exchange rate and so on. Then practise with the important drill. For example: ① I would like to open an account? ② What's the exchange rate today? ③ How would you want your cash? ④ I want to convert some Canadian dollars into American dollars. The next step, to design some different context to make a new dialogue using the relative words and drills. Ask some groups to present their dialogues in public. At last, homework is assigned according to after-class exercises. The purpose is to make students learn how to do banking business in English and cultivate their communicative ability.

4. The Construction of Foreign Language Ecological Surroundings Based on Computer and Internet

By making use of the huge functions of computer network, it deeply integrates with foreign language learning, interacts with and depends on each other, guides foreign language teaching by listening and speaking, and forms a dynamic, harmonious and coordinated ecological environment in the sense of ecology.

4.1 Task-Based Classroom Teaching with Full Use of Computer Network

Thanks to the computer network, teachers needn't teach new words, grammar, sentence patterns and analyze texts in class like before. Because students can obtain knowledge independently by looking up dictionaries, watching teaching CD and searching the Internet, teachers can be liberated from language teaching and adopt task-based teaching method. For example, assign some tasks based on the contents of the textbook, ask students to form learning groups to make PPT which will be related with theme of the textbook, and learn relevant cultural background knowledge through English stories, English songs, English clips and other forms. Students present their making PPT and share their own fruits of labor. Or 3-6 people a group, perform English programs such as scene play, music drama, poetry reading, or dubbing for cartoons and classic movies. The class teaching mode has changed from the traditional cognitivism teaching of language knowledge and the behaviorism training and strengthening to the computer& internet-oriented task learning. In the process of accomplishing teachers' task, students learn and use foreign language and cultivate their autonomic learning ability.

4.2 Make Full Use of the Teaching Materials Network Platform

Take *New Progressive College English* (Shanghai Foreign Education Press) for example, the characters of the platform both on smart phone and computer are shown as following: to provide teachers and students with a large number of high-quality resources as the carrier of

human-computer interaction teaching content, and provide multi-level interaction as a means of community space, achieve automatic evaluation based on artificial intelligence. Realize automatic analysis and feedback based on big data technology and realize multi-terminal and situational teaching mode supported by cloud computing technology, which integrates teaching, learning, practice, measurement and evaluation. Students can not only find new words preview, text reading, language point explanation, listening and speaking training, but also interact online with each other. For example, homework assignment, answering students' questions, group learning, group activities, teachers can also choose tests from the test database according to their needs and organize simultaneous tests in multiple classrooms using smart phone or on LAN.

4.3 Make Full Use of Smart Phone

With the development of science and technology, the function of smart phone is more and more powerful, smart phone has become indispensable in our life. Compared to computer, smart phone is small, easy to portable, so smart phone can be used anywhere and anytime. It is more convenient and flexible. Learners can download English songs and English movies, make full use of spare time to watch them. In the relaxed atmosphere of leisure and entertainment, students' language of sense has been improved imperceptibly. Smart phone can download a large number of foreign language learning apps and meet different learners' needs. For example, learners who have poor pronunciation can download "Ya Mu English phonetic symbol learning app"; learners who need to practise oral English can download "You Dao spoken English master", "Oral English", "Basic spoken English", "Spoken English 700 sentences", "Fluent English" and so on. Learners who need to practise listening can download "VOA normal English", "Hu Jiang listening cool", "Zhi Mi listening", or improve listening by watching movies and videos.

5. Conclusion

The construction of foreign language ecological environment based on computer and internet is not only an opportunity to liberate from traditional teaching but also a challenge. Teachers have changed from "pre-service" learning to lifelong learning. With the development of science and technology, it is not enough to rely on past knowledge. Teachers should not only make their knowledge to the depth of development, but also pay attention to interdisciplinary, constantly improve and optimize their knowledge structure.

Acknowledgment

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