

# A Study on the Influence of Ability Cultivation for English Listening and Speaking at the Fundamental Stage in Regional Social ESL Institutions

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**Abstract**—The cultivation of listening and speaking ability is important for communication in English learning. The test-oriented education in fundamental stage make teachers pay little attention to the practice of listening and speaking, but reading, writing and grammatical points. Therefore many social ESL institutions, with their foreign teachers, advanced teaching principles, proficiency system and marketing, cater to the need of improvement of oral and listening ability for students. By survey the teachers online in regional area Anshan, the researchers find the influence of those social ESL institutions and try to provide suggestions for the innovation on English learning and teaching, exploring the feasibility of specific implementation methods.

**Keywords**—listening and speaking; cultivation; ESL institution; fundamental stage

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Research Background

With the implementation of "the Belt and Road" policy in China and the advent of economic globalization, international exchanges are increasingly frequent. English language as one of the most important information carriers, English education has become an important part of civic education. Companies and enterprises in the assessment of English listening and speaking ability requirements are constantly improving. However, in China's fundamental English education system, students have long been exposed to the atmosphere of language learning in non-mother tongue environment, supplemented by long-term "test-oriented education", resulting in students' fear and aversion to English learning. Teachers are afraid that their oral proficiency is not enough to complete the whole teaching work or pay less attention to the practice of students' listening and speaking ability, Tending to impart knowledge, English teaching has been paying attention to the improvement of written language knowledge, ignoring the training of listening and speaking ability. Students' English language learning presents "high scores but low abilities", "deaf" and "dumb" phenomenon with loss of communication function, which leads to the difficult realization of language learning expression and communication goals.

According to the requirements of the national new curriculum standards (2011), the overall goal of English curriculum in the fundamental education stage is to cultivate students' comprehensive language use ability. On the basis of students' language skills, knowledge, emotional attitude, learning strategies and cultural awareness, they need to achieve the goal of comprehensive language ability. The communicative function of listening and speaking is very important. In order to supplement the shortcomings brought about by the test-driven English learning in the elementary education stage, parents focus on recharging and expanding their children's listening and speaking learning content in their spare time to improve their children' language communication ability.

Since the 1970s, a large number of English training institutions have emerged, and many Chinese English education institutions in big cities for children, such as New Oriental, Galen, Jiayin and Big Thumb have been flooded in. At the same time, some local English learning institutions for children such as Tianchen Foreign Languages and Ti Ying Foreign Languages have been set up in Anshan. These institutions, with their unique educational principles, educational models and marketing methods, meet the enthusiastic needs of children and their parents for English learning and make up for the need of school education for children to improve their extracurricular learning ability. This study will focus on analyzing the current situation and characteristics of English training institutions for children, analyzing the key factors of children's English learning, hoping to provide some suggestions for the teaching reform of children's English learning in fundamental education management system, and propose to strengthen supervisions for all kinds of training institutions, so that parents can form a rational understanding of extracurricular training and recognize the complementing function.

### B. Theoretical Basis

In the 1970s, W.M. Rivers and M.S. Tamperly investigated communicative activities of English-speaking adults in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The results show that listening section accounts for 45% of the total verbal communication activities, and it is the most important way to understand and absorb information. Speaking

accounts for 30%, it is the main way to exchange knowledge and information among people; only 6% were able to read and 9% were able to write. In our international exchanges, the researchers have also conducted our activities mainly in listening and speaking. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is guided by theories of linguistics, pedagogy and educational psychology. Studies made by psychologists show that listening and reading are the process of comprehending and understanding the ideas expressed by others, and the process of transformation from external speech to internal speech. Speaking and writing are the process of expressing ideas in words, and transforming from internal language to external language. Listening and reading are the basis of speaking and writing. Listening and speaking are in leading position.

However, at different stages of English teaching, people have found that the initial and optimal stage of students' English ability germination should precisely be in the fundamental education stage, and the correct direction of education affects directly the students' English learning ability in junior high school, senior high school and even university stage. Therefore, this topic mainly studies the importance of social training institutions for listening and speaking training to the early learning stage, and explores the feasibility of specific implementation methods at schools.

## II. OBJECT AND CONTENT

### A. Object and Content

The subjects of this study are English teachers in primary and secondary schools and teachers in training institutions in Anshan. Among them, 350 copies questionnaires were distributed to teachers in primary and secondary schools, 100 valid questionnaires copies (paper) were collected and 251 online questionnaires sheets were collected. Training institutions distributed 100 copies and recovered 50 copies to investigate the teachers' cognition and improvement strategies of cultivating students' listening and speaking ability as the main executor of the teaching process, and to guide parents to have a rational study of social training institutions. This paper explores the strategies suitable for the development of English listening and speaking ability at the fundamental education stage, strives to adapt to the effective ways and methods of learning and training of regional English education, promotes the formation of supervision consciousness of education leading institutions over social training institutions, and provides some references for children's English teaching reform.

### B. Methods

Online questionnaire survey and data analysis induction method are adopted. The questionnaires are subjective and objective questions about teaching state of teachers, teaching environment, influence of teachers on students, the structure of teaching materials, English language learning environment for students and so on, covering interest-centered teaching content, teaching methods, teaching methods, teaching evaluation and extracurricular learning resources. Teachers participating in the questionnaire are mainly from Tiedong District, Tiexi District, Lishan District,

Qianshan District, High-tech Zone and so on. Combined with the feedback data of different problems in the same direction, the causes of the problems are summarized and analyzed.

## III. RESULTS AND CAUSES

### A. Contradictory Feedback from Primary and Secondary School Teachers

1) *Teachers' subjective understanding is correct, but the practice is reversal:* Among the teachers who participated in the questionnaire, only 10.4% had less than 5-year teaching experience, 36.8% had 6-15 years of teaching experience, and 52.8% had more than 16-year teaching experience. 137 primary school teacher, accounting for 54.8%, 113 secondary school teacher, accounting for 45.2%.

The results of the questionnaire showed that 96% of the teachers believed that listening and speaking was important in language learning. 83.2% thought it necessary to teach them in daily English study. 92.4% thought that both listening and speaking should be trained simultaneously and listening and speaking should be combined.

93.9% of the respondents thought that students' listening and speaking ability were weak, and 96% of the teachers thought that it was necessary to train students' listening and speaking ability. However, in the process of listening and speaking teaching, only 64.4% of teachers will guide students to pay attention to pronunciation and intonation correction. Only 57.2% of the teachers will focus on cultivating students' ability of prediction and logical reasoning in the process of training.

2) *The construction of a language-assisted learning environment runs counter to expectations:* 62.4% of the teachers thought that using multimedia and other related visual and auditory materials can improve their comprehension ability in listening and speaking teaching. 62% of teachers believed that the use of the Internet to increase the amount of extracurricular listening and speaking training benefits, and foreign teachers who participate in the teaching process can promote students' listening and speaking ability up to 82%. However, the reality of teaching is that teachers still highlight grammatical points in the classroom activities, and students have to do a lot of homework on grammatical knowledge points after class. The communicative purpose of language cannot be embodied.

3) *Lack of phonetic knowledge and enough imitation:* Students lack the necessary knowledge of pronunciation and intonation, and do not understand sound-linking \continuous and weak reading. 78.8% of the teachers suggested teachers should pay attention to the training of pronunciation and intonation, and 78.4% of the teachers thought it necessary to the enlarge vocabulary. Students read aloud in stiff tone, and lack of emphasis on the formation of the tone of at early stage, lack of adequate practice and related imitation. This is closely resulted from the importance of teachers' guidance.

4) *Defects of listening and speaking activity design and picture book:* In the survey results about textbooks, most teachers think that the distribution of exercises and design items for improving speaking in textbooks is obviously less than that of other grammatical points. 65.6% of the teachers thought it necessary to add English songs and 66.8% suggested to add movie segments. These can give students the opportunity to imitate the real language background in context, and promote the improvement of listening and speaking ability. However, the survey found that only 31.6% of the teachers carried out the training in improving oral English, including storytelling and morning reports. The training activities were limited to listening and imitating, accounting for 82.8%. Other activities, such as teacher-student question-and-answer, performance and group discussion, were distributed sporadically. 97.2% of the subjects only focused on daily life and study, and the students' knowledge range and cultural quality was not expanded enough.

#### *B. Positive Feedback from Teachers in Training Institutions*

1) *Individual promotion driven by livelihood and competition:* The results of questionnaires collected from teachers in English training institutions were analyzed, It is concluded that the reason why most teachers, accounting for 80%, choose these institutions for employment is to earn a living, moreover, the competitive situation in institutional management drives teachers to study actively, observe lessons, get training and make full use of the advanced educational ideas encouraged by investment of capital. They always pay attention to training and improving their personal capability to adapt to the survival situation in the society.

2) *Management and marketing advantages for institution survival:* English training institutions are administered in the form of companies rather than schools. They try to set up the consciousness of brand, such as "New Oriental", "Gallen", "Good News", "Tianchen", "Ti Ying" and so on, by means of marketing, advertising promotion direction, enrollment strategies to the recruitment of teachers, they are conducive to the survival and development of the institution as the key element. Telemarketing specialists, learning consultants, academic planners and supporting job counselors are set up to enable everyone in the institutions to participate in all kinds of activities for work. Every day, they will be enriched with new tasks and objectives, so that they can make the best use of their talents and learn something, thereby enhancing the viability of the institution.

3) *Frequent renewal of teaching information and internationalized teaching materials:* English training institutions constantly update their concepts. They have their own brands and characteristics, strict competition and selection system for outstanding teachers, curriculum

planning. Chinese and foreign teachers complement each other to finish their teaching, Institutions also introduce synchronized international textbooks, adopt "immersion" English teaching style, and adopt online and offline training methods. For example, Akasso Foreign Teacher Network, was established in 2011, it has become one of the earliest global "Internet +" education enterprises, striving to enlarge international horizons for children in the local teaching situations.

#### *C. Cause Analysis*

1) *Psychological factors:* According to the survey, one of the reasons for the above contradictions among primary and secondary school teachers lies in psychological factors. Teachers' own language proficiency has been weakened by prolonged lack of practice and lack of self-confidence. Most English teachers worry that their oral proficiency is not perfect, which affects students' comprehension of specific grammar points when expressing ideas for communication. 90% of the classes are taught in Chinese, with occasional interruptions in English, and over time, students' oral and listening proficiency declined significantly, and their desire for listening and speaking practice has weakened.

2) *Social factors:* The evaluation goal is to highlight the test results. The main factor that teachers ignore the training of students' listening and speaking is the deviation of written assessment resulted from parents and schools. Scores are regarded as the reflection of teachers' work and students' learning result, which leads to class competition, teachers' tension and students' comparison. However, the direct result of ignoring the development of listening and speaking ability in the process of language learning in the fundamental education stage is "dumb" and "deaf" language learning methods, which can not achieve the purpose of communication which will continue to affect high school and college English language learning.

3) *Capital factors:* Social training institutions are trying to make up for some of the shortcomings in fundamental education system, so that it can survive and participate in the main process for competition. With the support of capital, it introduces the international advanced teaching materials, teaching methods and foreign courses, occupies a position in the language teaching market with their unique marketing methods and competitive management mechanism, and constantly renewing teaching ideas.

### IV. STRATEGIES AND EXPECTATIONS

#### *A. Suggestions on English Listening and Speaking Teaching in Fundamental Education*

In Chinese fundamental education system, the key to find the solution for the poor level of students' listening and speaking lies in adjusting the assessment mechanism. Aiming at the assessment of academic ability, the school authority should strengthen the implementation of daily assessment items and highlight the construction of multi-assessment contents. On the other hand, teachers should

enhance the oral English training for English teachers at the early stage, the importance of phonetic and intonation learning at the initial stage will affect the students' life to some extent. Teachers' oral proficiency has a direct impact on students' pronunciation. Therefore, teachers' training should be highly valued. But the most important thing for improving students' listening and speaking ability rely on teachers' daily training methods for listening and speaking.

### 1) Oral training methods

*a) Elimination of psychological barriers for oral teaching:* Teachers try their best to insist on using oral English in a planned way so as to make students more exposed to English-speaking situation and make it a more effective and persistent way to train their listening comprehension. In order for English teaching to proceed smoothly, teachers must carefully design the classroom language (especially at the beginning stage) according to the actual situation of the students by slowing down and adding appropriate context, gestures, and Chinese explanations at the beginning. Before teaching grammar, teachers can give relevant terminology to the students, and the terms must be concise and practical, choose the vocabulary students learned and it should be in simple language, so that students can understand easily. In classroom teaching, teachers should create a more authentic language environment, so that students can learn to express their ideas in a accustomed situation, learn to choose the appropriate language, and at the same time, spend more time in the language communication between teachers and students, students and students, in this way they can constantly consolidate, correct, use English knowledge learned flexible.

Teachers should encourage students to talk more in the classroom, and try to eliminate psychological barriers. Teachers should utilize different methods according to students' different personality traits, such as "fault-finding method" for extroverted students, while protecting their enthusiasm, with strict and high requirements, so that they can speak correctly and perfectly; For introverted students, people should take the "incentive method" to cultivate their good habits of daring and willingness to speak, encourage them to speak and ask questions, and give them confidence and support instead of correcting their speeches on their spot. Teachers also can encourage students to make use of the vocabulary they learned, use simple sentences to express some complicated things, such as explaining the preferences and reasons for sports and food, or comparing some simple cultural phenomena. Teachers should understand and familiarize themselves with students' knowledge level, check and ask more questions, guide them to concentrate at any time, and gradually develop the habit of expressing themselves independently and completely.

*b) Rotation discussion in groups:* Under the circumstances of small scale and small number of students, the cooperative group ensures the full opportunity for each student to speak, which is conducive to the cautious and timid students to play and express their spoken language normally, emphasizing the combination of individual

behavior and collective activities, while learning to accomplish the task together. Students in the process of questioning and communication at any time to achieve information exchange, it is a real process of communication. In teaching practice, with the development of classroom communication activities, teachers learn to design and assign tasks adequately and effectively, so as to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of students' oral English.

*2) Listening and speaking twin promotion:* As we all know, listening and speaking can not be separated. The relationship between the two is complementary. If a person speaks well, his listening will not be too bad. If he listens well, his speaking ability will not be too poor. The two aspects are complementary. Therefore, people should emphasize the combination of the two in teaching. The specific training methods are as follows:

*a) Situation construction for listening and speaking:* Some students are good at listening, but their oral English is not so perfect, because what they listened to are the written contents rather than spoken ones. In daily life, what people hear is always spoken language, so people should choose the listening section in the textbook which is spoken quite often in life. Moreover, the repeated reading of the sentences and the recreation of the sentences based on the given parts of the sentences are helpful to the improvement of their oral English. Recording of imitation reading can be used to study or review the text. Students can be asked not to look at the text, but listen to the sentence in the tape, imitate to read the sentence, according to their memory and sound to catch the complete sentences heard. At the beginning, students encounter some difficulties, for often remembering some words only. Teachers must tell students, in order to improve listening, first of all, to adjust their psychology state. The gradual and slow improvement of listening IS basic step for a full understanding,

Spoken English is a living language. The introduction of English movies into the classroom is welcomed for improving students' spoken English. It can provide students with a special life-style scene, but also a breath of life. Movies build a bridge between students' language and content comprehension. Furthermore, the introduction of foreign teachers to accompany the learning process encourages students to find foreigners on the Internet to chat directly in English. These not only practice listening, but also improve oral ability.

*b) Consolidation methods in daily listening and speaking activities:* First of all, five-minute-a-day English report or storytelling; questions between teachers and students on the content, not only make students listen to the key points attentively, but also improve their enthusiasm to learn English better. Secondly, teachers can use new lessons for listening training by playing tape recordings or teachers telling stories. But students are required to preview words and phrases before class. Students need to understand the main content of the text in advance for listening training. Thirdly, teachers can organize students to compose English mini-drama based on the information in text they learned.

Teachers and students choose the story together and adapt them into a small play for class performance. Students often have a strong interest in this activity, through which they can improve their listening and speaking skills, which will be unforgettable for their lifetime. Fourthly, Students do gap-filling exercises of a paragraph for English songs by listening to them. Students like to listen to English pop songs, according to this phenomenon, and teachers may encourage them to listen to English songs, and then do "Cloze" exercises for lyrics. The desire for study can be enlightened only when the teaching content is combined with the students' interest. Only in this way can our English teaching be more scientific and more in line with the law of students' psychological development in learning English.

#### *B. Suggestions for the Development of Social Training Institutions*

1) *Promoting the development of fundamental education by referring to international advanced educational ideas and methods:* In the social training institutions, teachers can easily learn from the various English teaching methods all over the world and put them into teaching practice. For example, "the Immersion Teaching Mode", which has been popular in Europe and America for 40 years, and has been widely recognized. It originated from that in Quebec, Canada, and emphasizes that all activities should be completed in English, which is conducive to the formation and development of English thinking, especially in the golden period of language learning of fundamental education.

2) *Strengthening supervision and management and promoting competition:* Education authority should regulate the rules and acts, standardize the setting conditions of social training institutions, market order, teacher training, stability of team construction, prohibit over-program and ahead-of-time training and teaching, avoiding competition with schools, increasing students' homework burden, and strive to form a benign situation of coordinated development of education inside and outside the school. Competition is the necessity for social development. Encouraging competition can greatly mobilize the staff in the institutions to improve their education quality, and adopt advanced teaching methods, marketing means, excellent teachers and management mode, to achieve the goal of complementing and improving English learning in fundamental education period.

The process of language learning is that learners follow the correct acquisition method, teachers carry out outstanding methods, quality training, achieve communication, and use effective methods to complete language teaching and learning. It is always in the process of constant pursuit of improvement.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The process of language learning is for learners to follow the correct way of acquisition, teachers to carry out outstanding methods to cultivate ability, quality training, and

use effective ways to complete language teaching and learning, in order to achieve the purpose of communication. This process is always on the road for continuous improvement and innovation. In the survey, the researchers find that in the fundamental education stage, the school should instruct the teachers to pay attention to the language development of the learners in the sensitive period for English listening and speaking ability, and strengthen the training of their listening and speaking ability, instead of determining students' learning result on the basis of the written examination paper. At the same time, the educational supervision authority should strengthen the supervision for the courses provided by the out-of-school English training institutions in order to promote the training of listening and speaking language ability, making up for the lack of school teaching, and realize the purpose of using language communication interaction. In addition, parents should also change their original understanding of language learning and realize the communicative function of language, rather than high-scoring dumb English learning. Only with the participation of people in the whole society, school authority taking effective measures, making them fully mobilizing with social training institutions and students, to organize coordinate and supervise, can language learning achieve twice the result with half the effort.

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