

Reform and Innovation of Tourism English Teaching

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Abstract: Nowadays, tourism industry has become one of the most important and most promising industries in China and around the world. With the great development of tourism industry in China, the condition of the industry and the tourism market is changing rapidly. Under this circumstance, college education is facing new challenges. Tourism English is one of the compulsory courses for students who major in tourism management and some other related majors. Tourism English teaching needs to be reformed so as to meet the needs of the new age. This paper mainly analyzes the current condition of tourism English teaching from different aspects and points out the major problems. The paper then puts forward several suggestions to solve the problems and improve Tourism English teaching.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of China's economy and Chinese government's implementation of "One Belt One Road" program, the cultural and economic relationships between China and other countries have been closer than before. China is playing an increasingly important role in the world. Tourism industry is one of the most important bridges for China's communications with other countries around the world.

In past decades, tourism industry has boomed all over the world. During recent years, because of the great improvement of China's economic situation and Chinese people's living standards, China's tourism industry has been developing fast. According to the statistics, the number of both inbound and outbound travelers in China has exploded, creating billions of economic revenues.

For example, in the year of 2018, 141.2 million trips have been made by overseas travelers in China, creating an economic income of 127.1 billion US dollars to the country. Meanwhile, the number of outbound tourist trips is 149.72 million, which is a 14.7% rise as compared with the number of 2017. The number of domestic tourism trips has reached 5.54 billion, and the domestic tourism revenue is 5.13 trillion Chinese Yuan, which is a 12.3% rise over 2017. It is believed that the numbers in 2019 will still increase.

It is said that China has become the world's largest domestic tourism market, the world's largest international tourism consumer, and the world's fourth largest tourist destination. China's tourism industry has a bright future. Because of this social and cultural background, it is quite necessary and essential for China to cultivate more talented students who are able to serve in tourism industry. Tourism English is one of the compulsory courses for students who major in tourism management and other related majors. It aims to cultivate the basic language skills and language abilities of the students. English is the most widely used language in the world. It is an important tool for us to communicate with people from all over the world. English ability appears much more important for students who will work in tourism industry in the future.

However, there are a lot of problems in tourism English teaching in universities and colleges. With the rapid development of tourism industry and the great changes in tourism market, it is extremely important and urgent to reform the traditional teaching methods and teaching modes.

2. Current situation and problems of tourism English teaching

In order to discuss the ways and methods to reform tourism English teaching in college, it is essential to analyze the current situation and the existent problems. This part will make an analysis of those problems and try to find out the reasons of those problems.

2.1 The analysis of textbooks and teaching materials

At present, there are various versions of textbooks for tourism English, hotel English, tour guide English and other related English courses. There is no unified teaching material in colleges and universities. These commonly used textbooks vary in degree of difficulty and cover different aspects of knowledge. Through the analysis of various types of tourism English textbooks, we can see that the teaching ideas of most commonly used textbooks are still quite traditional. The contents of those textbooks are mainly composed of vocabulary, dialogue, passages, and exercises. As a result, teachers have to use traditional teaching methods in class. By the teachers' explanation of vocabulary, dialogues and passages, the students will learn the basic language points in detail. They will then be able to finish all the related exercises in textbooks. This is the traditional teacher-centered class, in which teachers lead the entire class. Under this circumstance, all the students are in a passive state in class. They don't have enough time and opportunities to think and practice actively all by themselves. This teaching method is not very effective for English learning.

In addition, because the publication of textbooks is usually relatively lagging, the content of the textbook itself is too old. Some textbooks take many years to reprint or update the content. The content of the textbooks is naturally difficult to improve in time. This is a big obstacle for the teaching of tourism English courses, which may cause a negative effect.

2.2 The analysis of teaching methods

As it is mentioned above, influenced by the contents of the textbooks, teachers often use a relatively traditional teaching method in class. In addition, the lack of open and flexible teaching ideas is also one of the important reasons why teachers choose to use the traditional teaching method.

In a teacher-centered class, students don't have enough opportunities to do some exercises and practices actively, especially oral English exercises. As we all know, in tourism industry and other related industries, the ability to communicate with people from other countries is an important factor in improving the quality of service.

In addition, the traditional placement of students also has some disadvantages. Since there are usually a large number of students in a class, students don't have the opportunities to work in small groups or do some discussions so as to learn how to solve the problems all by themselves. This is not a good way to improve the students' communication skills either.

Another point is that tourism English teaching in colleges and universities has paid little attention to the development of the international tourism market, and the teaching materials are usually outdated. Because of the lack of practice in class, students may not have proper professional skills to meet the needs of the tourism market.

2.3 The analysis of teachers

At present, the teachers of tourism English courses can mainly be divided into two types. The first one includes the teachers who are English majors. The second one includes the teachers who major in tourism management. It can be seen that teachers who graduated from English majors generally have good language abilities and a comprehensive and systematic studying background. Their experiences of language learning can help students to improve their basic language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. But those teachers don't have enough experiences in tourism industry. As a result, they are not able to provide more proper background knowledge within tourism industry.

For teachers who major in tourism management, they usually have a lot of knowledge about tourism, which can help them to grasp the development. But they don't have enough English teaching experiences.

That is to say, the current faculty of English tourism teaching is not good enough. To cultivate comprehensive English tourism students, teachers need good language abilities and English teaching experiences, as well as enough professional knowledge.

3. The reform and innovation of tourism English teaching

3.1 The reform of teaching materials

According to what we have discussed in the previous part, there are some problems of the textbooks and teaching materials. Colleges and universities can organize specialized personnel to compile unified textbooks, try to improve and update the content of the textbooks to meet the needs of the developing tourism market.

At the same time, the professionalism of the textbooks should not be ignored. The knowledge of English language and tourism should be further combined so as to achieve the purpose of cultivating comprehensive talents in tourism industry. In the selection of teaching materials, the universities' education targets and the characteristics of the local region should not be neglected. The teaching materials should be suitable for students' basic language ability and status of the development of tourism in local regions.

In addition, since the writings and publications of textbooks is relatively lagging, teachers should take corresponding measures in the process of teaching. They can add some new materials according to the latest condition of tourism industry. Those materials should be updated and market-oriented, so that the students are able to keep in touch with what's happening within the industry.

3.2 The reform of teaching methods

Most college teachers are still using the traditional teacher-centered teaching method, which cannot ensure the active participation of students in class. In order to solve the problems and meet the needs of the new age, the teaching methods should be reformed. According to the features of tourism English course, except for using the teacher-centered teaching method, here are three other methods which are worth trying.

The first one is the task-oriented teaching method. By using this method, the teacher arranges the topic or task first, then the students complete the task assigned by the teacher and make a report to the teacher. Finally, the teacher and the students analyze and evaluate the task respectively. In this process, students are the center of teaching activities in class. Through the planning, implementation and reporting of tasks, students can practice their English skills actively and autonomously. While evaluating the students' report, the teacher can make some comments which will be helpful for the students. Through this way, students can learn English much more effectively.

The second one is the situational teaching methods. In the process of teaching, the teacher intentionally introduces or creates some vivid and specific scenes to help the students understand and acquire knowledge or skills in a more intuitive way. In tourism English class, the teacher can use different scenes including the scenes in hotels, scenic spots, travel agencies, etc. In situational training, the teacher can help students to communicate with each other in real situations, so that students can fully use the knowledge they have learned.

The last one is group discussion. In addition to the task-oriented method and situational method, teachers can also ask the students to do some group discussions so that they can analyze and solve a certain problem all by themselves. Through the cooperation between the team members, the students' can be stimulated.

3.3 The improvement of teachers' training program

Colleges and universities should strengthen the vocational training for teachers and try to strengthen the construction of the routine training programs for tourism English teachers.

First of all, for teachers who are English majors, colleges and universities should do something to strengthen the vocational training for them so that they can have more opportunities and channels to contact with different tourism companies. Through this way, the teachers' understanding of the

tourism industry can be improved and their professional knowledge and skills can be enhanced. Meanwhile, colleges and universities should encourage and support teachers to learn in tourism enterprises, participate in skill trainings which are related to the tourism industry, and learn more professional knowledge and skills.

Secondly, for teachers who major in tourism management and other related majors, colleges and universities should also provide more opportunities for their further study, encouraging the teachers to improve their English ability. This will be quite significant in tourism English teaching.

4. Summary

With the development of China's economy and tourism industry, tourism English course is becoming more and more important for students who major in tourism management. By the analysis of the current situation of tourism English teaching, it can be seen that there are some problems in textbooks, teaching methods and the teachers' knowledge background. Therefore, to further reform and innovate tourism English teaching from those aspects are quite significant and essential.

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