

Problems and Countermeasures of Students' English-Study Strategies in Higher Vocational Schools in Leshan, Sichuan, China

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Abstract—Against the background of globalization, English has become one of the most fundamental vocational skills. Nearly all vocations involve English. For the students in vocational schools, their English is far from satisfaction. Mastering correct study strategies is an effective way to solve the problem. By analyzing the students' English study in a higher vocational school in Leshan of Sichuan Province in China, this paper points out the existing problems and puts forward the countermeasures.

Keywords—students in higher vocational schools; English-study strategies; problems; countermeasures

I. INTRODUCTION

As an important part of vocational education, higher vocational education undertakes the task of developing and training labor resources for the society and directly delivering high-level skilled talents to the society. This determines that higher vocational education has special requirements for higher vocational students, requiring students not only to have systematic and solid professional theoretical knowledge, but also to have rich practical experience and operation skills. English is one of the basic skills that vocational and technical college students should master. In order to meet the needs of society, it is urgent to popularize efficient English education in vocational and technical colleges. However, the current situation of vocational college students' English learning is not ideal, and the most prominent one is "dumb English". The employers are generally dissatisfied with the comprehensive English ability of the graduates in recent years.

One of the reasons is that the overall English level of students in higher vocational colleges is not high, such as the graduates of ordinary high schools (though they have some basic knowledge of English after formal college entrance examination and enrollment, but they are not suitable for the current learning) and the students who have been promoted from secondary technical schools and vocational high schools to higher vocational colleges (these students have only learned English for a few years in junior high school, and their English foundation is very poor). In the face of students of with uneven levels and poor foundation in English, our original teaching methods cannot work, and we

must explore new and effective teaching methods in order to achieve good results.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR HIGHER VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

Generally speaking, the meaning of learning strategy is what we usually call "learning method". Among them, what is important is not the teachers' admonition or instruction, but the students' own practical experience; what is important is not the general introduction of "learning methods" by the teacher, but the training with actual contents and indicators that the students receive.

Learning strategy is an activity way that students design, organize, monitor, respond and select the whole learning process purposefully. It is the application of skills, methods and means. In teaching, teachers must consider not only knowledge and skills, but also learning strategies. In the process of learning, we must combine accepting knowledge, understanding knowledge, consolidating knowledge and using knowledge. In order to make learners learn effectively, it is necessary to combine with the study of learning strategies.

Oxford (1992-1993) believes that learning strategies are "the actions, behaviors, steps and methods that students consciously take to improve their second language skills." These strategies can promote the internalization, storage and use of new languages. Learning strategies are the methods and means adopted by learners to improve their second language learning. It is found that learners' learning strategy is an important factor that affects their learning effect. The author believes that learning strategies refer to the procedures, rules, methods, skills and control methods of effective learning in learning activities. The choice and use of learning strategies directly affect the effect of English learning.

III. PROBLEMS IN ENGLISH LEARNING STRATEGIES OF VOCATIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS IN LESHAN, SICHUAN, CHINA

In May 2019, the author conducted a survey on English learning strategies among 240 students (120 boys and 120

girls) in a vocational college in Leshan. The purpose is to understand the students' English learning strategies, and put forward the methods of training students' learning strategies according to the problems exposed in the survey. Among all the subjects, 60 of whom are excellent students, 48 have passed CET-4, and 160 have failed English test frequently.

Through this survey, the author learned that many students have the following problems in English learning strategies:

Learning objectives are not clear. 55% of the students don't have an English learning plan, only passively completing the task assigned by the teacher. 78% of the students seldom reflect on their own learning and accurately evaluate their English learning, failing to find out their weak points and improvement measures, such as "How am I doing now? What are the problems?" 56% of the students are not good at creating and grasping the opportunity of learning English.

The students are equipped with poor knowledge of learning strategies. Many students have no concept of the basic knowledge of learning strategies, and are not aware of training their own learning strategies.

The consciousness of learning process management is weak, and the consciousness of passive acceptance is quite serious. According to the survey, nearly 80% or more students will not use resource books, mobile apps and Internet to assist learning; they will not link the new knowledge with the old. What they use in their spare time is related to the English examination. When asked if they would take the initiative to read English newspapers and magazines after class, 75% of the students read them occasionally; 78% of the students never leave a message, write a letter or write a diary in English. In the aspect of classroom teaching, 63% students don't preview before class and don't review after class. 50% of the students don't know the way and importance of taking notes.

Learning efficiency is low. 35% of the students are able to stick to the autonomous learning of English after class, but the general response is inefficient, thus losing confidence.

Cognitive means are single and the students lack the language environment for input and output. There are few opportunities to use visual images and other real materials in and out of the classroom, which makes English an abstract language mode of memorization separated from the use environment.

There is serious imbalance between formal training and functional training. For English, both form practice and function practice are very important. Form practice is an analytical strategy, which focuses on the form of language itself. In this kind of practice, students are only external observers, focusing on abstract language forms and functions, lacking real communicative intention. On the contrary, functional practice is a practical strategy, aiming at the use of language. Students are active participants, focusing on the language meaning presented in the real context, rather than the specific code. However, it is found in the survey that formal practice is still dominant, which only emphasizes the

accumulation of language knowledge and despises the expression of content.

The students lack social strategies and negative emotional strategies hinder their English learning. Language is a tool of communication. Only in the real use of language can we really master it. In order to master language well, we must be able to control our emotions and overcome negative emotional elements, such as shyness and fear of making mistakes.

Leshan, as a 4-tier city in China, fails to provide a good environment to learn English. Unlike the first tier or the second tier cities in China where there are many English-speakers, there are few English speakers, nor English corners. English has not become one part of people's life. So, the students learn English just to pass the test, rather than communicate.

IV. STRATEGIES FOR ENGLISH LEARNING OF VOCATIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS IN LESHAN

For the above survey, how to teach and train English learning strategies is very important. In light of the actual situation, the author believes that both the teachers and the students should do the right thing from the following aspects:

First, the students need to clarify the training objectives of learning strategies. The cultivation of learning strategies and autonomous learning is a relationship between means and aims. The training goal of learning strategies is not only to make students master the strategies, but also to improve their awareness of strategies, and to cultivate their comprehensive ability of choosing, judging and evaluating strategies. Specifically speaking, it is necessary to cultivate effective strategies so that students can establish their own learning objectives, decide their own learning content and use appropriate learning methods, control their learning time, place and progress, and evaluate their learning achievements.

Second, the teachers should strengthen the study and research of the theory of learning strategies, and use them in practice, and constantly summarize and improve them. Teachers should understand the research results of second language learning strategies at home and abroad, and at the same time, combine with the actual situation, boldly carry out practical activities of teaching and training English learning strategies in teaching activities, so as to improve their teaching and training ability of students' learning strategies in practice.

Third, the students need to pay attention to making learning plans. When making learning plans, students should first analyze the learning situations related to learning tasks. For example, analyzing and thinking about learning materials, learning time, learning environment and learning objectives, analyzing their own learning characteristics, and then answering questions about what, when, where, why and how to learn. These will be the basis for the development of learning plans. After finishing the task of analyzing the learning situation, students can make a learning plan: determining the learning steps, arranging the learning schedule and listing the learning strategies that can be used. The specific implementation has the following suggestions:

Interest is the best teacher. So, the teachers should guide the students to stay on track not just in class but also out of class. For example, taking advantage of mobile apps is a good way to arouse the students' interest to learn English. Tik Tok is very popular in China, now. The students can learn English on it and also have fun in it. Some online communication with English-speakers can work as well.

Meta-cognitive strategy, cognitive strategy and social / emotional strategy are integrated. Students who lack meta-cognitive strategies only pay attention to the accumulation of language knowledge and despise the expression of content. Students who lack social / emotional strategy pay more attention to listening, passive acceptance and inner communication in class than active participation, and pay more attention to books and recording outside class than interaction and communication. They dare not actively participate in class activities and communicate with others, and lack of functional training. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to the combination of the three in the teaching and training of English learning strategies, so as to achieve good results.

The teachers should combine direct teaching method with indirect teaching method, and combine centralized training with comprehensive training. Teachers can start from the existing teaching materials and integrate all kinds of strategies into the teaching materials on the basis of analyzing the teaching materials; they can also start from English learning strategies and design classroom activities around specific strategies; they can also properly insert strategies into the text explanation to help students use them.

The teachers should pay attention to the feedback and evaluation of strategy teaching effect. Teachers should understand students' evaluation of their own learning and strategic teaching through various ways, and constantly enhance students' strategic awareness. Teachers should also study their own teaching methods and the teaching style to see if their teaching plans provide students with opportunities to use various strategies.

The schools should offer the second classroom and improve the comprehensive application ability of students' learning strategies. Rich and colorful English extracurricular activities are conducive to creating a good learning environment and providing an excellent place for the comprehensive use of students' learning strategies, especially for students with poor foundation.

Leshan government should work together with the schools to create a good atmosphere of speaking English, such as inviting more English-speakers to visit Leshan, inviting more foreign entrepreneurs to do business in Leshan, organizing English corners so as to provide more opportunities for students to communicate with English-speakers.

V. CONCLUSION

The above is a brief discussion of English learning strategies and a brief introduction of several aspects of strategy training combined with the characteristics of higher vocational students in Leshan. In a word, through the correct

teaching and training of English learning strategies for vocational college students, they can not only master the strategies themselves, but also improve their awareness of strategies, summarize and generate new strategies, and become implementers and practitioners in learning activities, so as to improve their comprehensive learning ability while acquiring the language. It can be seen that in the English teaching of vocational and technical colleges, the teaching and training of learning strategies is particularly important. By guiding students to consciously develop and constantly adjust their own learning strategies, we can not only improve learning efficiency, but also further enhance learning confidence, so that classroom teaching and extracurricular self-study can be organically combined to form a virtuous cycle of teaching and learning.

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