

Analysis and Suggestions on Bilingual Teaching in Colleges and Universities

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ABSTRACT

Bilingual teaching has received tremendous interest in China over the past two decades in view of the requirements for social informatization and economic globalization, and meanwhile it satisfies cultivating high-quality innovative and high-level compound talents. Graduates with solid professional knowledge and proficient use of English are particularly favoured, and consequently students who accept bilingual teaching are highly competitive. However, there are still a series of challenges in bilingual teaching, such as declining interest in learning of students, outdated teaching methods. In this regard, there is an inevitable trend in the reform and development of bilingual teaching. Here, we firstly emphasize the necessity of launching bilingual course, and then summarize problems existing in the bilingual teaching. At last, we present a series of suggestions from various perspectives. Combined with comprehensive analysis and suggestions on bilingual teaching, we provide a reference for bilingual teaching to better cultivate high-quality compound talents.

Keywords: *Bilingual Teaching, Teaching Method, Teaching Reform*

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades, bilingual teaching has received tremendous interest in China in view of the imperious demands for social informatization and economic globalization [1-4]. In 2001, the Ministry of Education of China issued *Several Opinions on Strengthening Undergraduate Teaching Work and Improving Teaching Quality in Colleges and Universities*, which put forward that the bilingual teaching of common and professional courses in colleges and universities plays an essential role in teaching reform and is required to be carried out in the major which is in urgent need. In 2005, *Several Opinions on Further Strengthening Undergraduate Teaching Work in Colleges and Universities* was released by the Ministry of Education of China. Thereinto, it proposed to take bilingual teaching reform as a breakthrough to improve college students' comprehensive application ability in utilizing English, especially their listening and speaking skills, to improve their international communication and cooperation ability. Meanwhile, it requested to improve the quality of bilingual teaching courses and to expand the number of bilingual teaching courses. Therefore, accompanying the requirements for increasing quantity

of bilingual courses and bilingual teachers, as well as improving teaching quality, bilingual teaching has been increasingly valued in colleges and universities since the Ministry of Education of China proposed to carry out bilingual courses [5-6]. Recently, graduates with solid professional knowledge and proficient use of English are particularly favoured, and consequently students who accept bilingual teaching are highly competitive.

The basic goal of bilingual teaching is to realize subject teaching, among which the course content is the first, and infiltrate language teaching into subject teaching at the same time. Many college students begin to learn English from junior high school, but they still cannot skilfully use English for listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating. For senior college students, reading English textbooks or consulting English literature is still difficult. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the cultivation of students' English ability and carry out English bilingual teaching.

2. PROBLEMS IN BILINGUAL TEACHING

2.1. Students with Declining Interest in Learning

College Students' learning attitude will also greatly affect the effect of bilingual teaching. In high school, Chinese teachers often indoctrinate students with the idea of "hard high school, easy university". This leads to students' unclear learning objectives, declining interest in learning, lack of learning motivation, self-slack, holding a "60 points lucky" attitude towards the course, which makes it more difficult for teachers to teach. In addition, most parents in China implement "open" education for their children during college. In contrast to the strict discipline in senior high school, the sudden relaxation is easier to weaken students' learning consciousness, lose the focus of learning, and put most of their time in "enjoying" college life.

Additionally, most Chinese college students have studied English for at least six years. However, the final effect of English study is not satisfying, especially the severely poor English listening and speaking ability. As a consequence, a large number of college students cannot catch up with the teaching progress in bilingual teaching. In order to ensure that most students master professional knowledge, teachers have to slow down the teaching progress, which seriously disrupts the normal teaching plan. Taking the bilingual course of *Luminescent Materials and Applications* as an example, this course includes 48 class hours for 3 credits, and should be finished up in a semester. In this case, the regulations of class hours are very strict, and the teaching content is also concise and explicit. Thus, slowing down the teaching schedule is not an effective and feasible way to guarantee the quality of teaching.

2.2. Teachers with Outdated Teaching Methods

Many teachers still use the old teaching methods in the bilingual teaching, namely the teaching-oriented teaching method which simply inculcate knowledge to students, and consequently this one-way indoctrination seriously ignores the subjectivity of students. In addition, teachers are easy to enter some misunderstandings in the process of teaching, such as cramming teaching, in which students are in the position of passive acceptance of knowledge; tired of teaching, in which teachers pay more attention to scientific research than teaching, and the lack of investment in teaching content eventually leads to boredom; the sea of questions teaching, in which teachers give students lots of homework after the end of each chapter, ignore students' practical ability, lack of extra-curricular knowledge, resulting in the decline of students' interest in learning; sheep herding teaching: after the examination, the teacher does not analyse the test questions timely and comprehensively, only publishes

the answers, and does not care about the students' mastery of knowledge, which also reduces the students' interest in learning.

Moreover, it is very important to choose suitable textbooks for bilingual courses. However, many teachers still choose the Chinese version of teaching materials, only adding English in teaching, which seriously affects the teaching effect. Therefore, teachers should choose appropriate English teaching materials as far as possible after evaluating students' English ability, which can strengthen students' English reading ability, enable students to master more English professional terms, lay a solid foundation for students to learn professional courses, understand cutting-edge science and technology, and provide more opportunities for students to further study in the future.

3. SUGGESTIONS ON BILINGUAL TEACHING

Bilingual teaching is a systematic talent training project, and also a hot spot of teaching reform in colleges and universities, which has a very important exemplary role and influence. However, there are still many problems worthy of exploration and discussion, although some achievements and experience have been made. Education departments, colleges and universities and teachers should have a scientific understanding of the development of bilingual teaching, and give full support and help. In particular, teachers have a great influence on the final teaching effect of bilingual teaching. They must persevere in exploration and practice, so that teaching research and teaching practice can promote each other, and strive to make breakthroughs in educational ideas, educational means and educational models. In this way, with the deepening of bilingual teaching reform in colleges and universities and the continuous improvement of bilingual teaching level, its role in cultivating innovative talents can be truly reflected. Based on the above-mentioned problems of students and teachers, it is necessary to reform the bilingual course. Herein, we put forward some countermeasures to promote the bilingual teaching reform from various perspectives.

3.1. Inspiring Students' Initiative

Students are the masters of learning, and the student-centered teaching should be adopted in bilingual teaching. In addition, students should constantly improve their comprehensive ability to use English, such as reading English literature and watching English videos, to lay a good foundation for the study. Meanwhile, students should have a clear learning goal, actively participate in learning, gradually become interested in bilingual courses, understand the employment situation, and take the initiative to approach the compound talent training mode.

Students' mastery of the course content determines the success or failure of teaching, and exercises and discussions can well test whether students are proficient in what they have learned. Therefore, in bilingual teaching, teachers should select examples to explain properly, guide and demonstrate well, so that students can have a basic idea of solving problems. Then, students can complete several exercises independently from the simple to the deep. Among them, teachers can give appropriate guidance to individual students with difficulties. For the problems that most students feel difficult, teachers should comment in time and point out the key to solve the problems. Exercises and discussions can be added appropriately in class to make a free classroom atmosphere. Meanwhile, exercises and discussions can help students master, consolidate and deepen the course content, and cultivate students' ability to discover, analyse and solve problems. Exercise class can be composed of many parts, such as questioning, review, typical example analysis, drawing inferences from one instance, students' practice and teachers' summary. The discussion class should be combined with the content of the course, and the content of the discussion should be carefully selected, focusing on the inspiration and guidance of students, creating a lively atmosphere to better inspiring students' initiative.

3.2. Teachers' Self-Development

Bilingual teaching should not merely ensure students to master the basic concepts, theories and methods, but also improve students' ability to use English to consult literature and integrate different knowledge with each other. Teachers should pay attention to the question answering and communication after class, to better understand the students' learning situation. Teachers can provide students with some readable English materials and put forward clear requirements for extracurricular reading content. After class, teachers organize the question-answering platform in the form of face-to-face or online communication, one-to-one or one to many, or group discussion, written communication or oral discussion. In all forms of activities, students are encouraged to use English, not only to improve their reading, writing and oral English skills, but also to enhance their ability to express professional knowledge in English.

With the rapid development of information technology, teaching methods become more colorful. According to the characteristics of specific courses, teachers can make full use of modern technology in bilingual teaching process to improve teaching effect and teaching quality. Based on multimedia and network resources, teachers can use slides, English CD-ROM, demonstration experiments and other means in classroom teaching, and strive to make the teaching content vivid. It is also helpful for teachers to describe and explain

relevant knowledge in English, help students to observe, think and understand, so as to improve students' learning enthusiasm. Especially for some abstract concepts which are difficult for students to understand, the advantages of multimedia teaching are more obvious. It can be more intuitive, more vivid and faster to impart knowledge to students through sound, video, graphics and animation. In addition, if students have a good English foundation, teachers can increase the proportion of English in bilingual teaching, so that students can have a deeper understanding of English thinking and enhance their English expression ability.

Furthermore, teachers should consider all aspects of bilingual course assessment, namely process assessment and final examination. The design of test questions can be diversified, from simple professional vocabulary to the derivation of formulas and the explanation of phenomena, gradually increasing the difficulty. The purpose of assessment is to help students review and consolidate what they have learned, and the purpose of gradually deepening the difficulty is to test students' ability to understand and analyse problems, and to test the teaching effect. Besides the examination, we should also join the practical assessment. Students are required to use their professional knowledge, carry out extracurricular design and activities to acquire more relevant knowledge, and meanwhile practice and evaluate their ability to communicate and cooperate with others.

3.3. Construction of Bilingual Teaching by Colleges and Universities

Colleges and universities should encourage teachers to carry out bilingual teaching, vigorously organize teachers to participate in bilingual teaching training and further study, so as to learn and improve bilingual teaching ability. Meanwhile, colleges and universities can formulate some incentive policies for bilingual teaching, for example, to calculate the workload of bilingual teaching by 1.5 times or twice. In addition, colleges and universities can also actively build a network teaching platform to support teachers to apply modern educational technology to carry out bilingual teaching.

Besides, colleges and universities should attach importance to and strengthen the construction of bilingual teachers. For bilingual courses, when introducing personnel, we can focus on introducing teachers with overseas study experience, strengthen the training of bilingual teachers, organize teachers' further study, and fully grasp the research status and development trends of the courses at home and abroad; secondly, we can regularly organize teachers to carry out bilingual teaching exchange activities to promote the construction of bilingual teachers. At the same time, by training bilingual teachers, colleges and universities can first carry out bilingual teaching in basic subjects, such as physics, chemistry and mathematics, and gradually expand to

professional courses, such as electronic science and technology, optoelectronic devices and luminescent materials and applications. Therefore, the construction of bilingual teaching staff is conducive to cultivating students' international vision, strengthening the integration with internationalization, and cultivating international talents.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on bilingual teaching, we analysed its importance, summarized the existing problems, and put forward countermeasures from the perspective of students, teachers and universities. First, bilingual teaching is of great importance, and graduates with solid professional knowledge and proficient use of English are particularly favoured by the society, and students who accept bilingual teaching are highly competitive. Meanwhile, the Ministry of education of China actively encourages colleges and universities to carry out bilingual courses and vigorously supports the construction of bilingual courses. Secondly, there are still a series of challenges in bilingual teaching, such as students' weak foundation in English, declining interest in learning, outdated teaching methods and textbooks. Finally, we put forward some strategies to deal with these challenges. Students should conform to the trend of social development, actively participate in the study of bilingual courses, and strive to become high-quality interdisciplinary talents. Teachers should study modern educational ideas, optimize teaching skills, adopt modern teaching technology, stimulate students' enthusiasm and cultivate students' initiative. Colleges and universities should take advantage of this opportunity to keep up with the pace of internationalization of higher education, strengthen the construction of bilingual courses and modern education platform, vigorously cultivate bilingual teachers. Through the analysis of bilingual teaching, we provide a reference for bilingual teaching to cultivate compound talents who are not only proficient in professional knowledge but also in line with international standards.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

J. Li conceived the whole study and wrote the manuscript. Q. Guo provided lots of constructive discussions, and Y. Yao contributed significantly to the analysis and manuscript preparation.

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