

Research on the Needs for English Proficiency of College Students

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Abstract. For a long time, College English education in China has been in a serious imbalance with great investment and limited output, the level of students' English ability is still low and it cannot match the social needs of the employer. Therefore, the problem of the demand and structure of College students' English ability has become a hot social topic. Through the investigation and research on the situation of college students, this paper tries to built college students' English ability system, emphasize college English culture and tool combination, and highlight the importance of English in terms of tool properties. The purpose is to meet the needs of the society. The paper finally puts forward some methods to improve students' English ability, the improvement of the teaching plan and some special supplements on English learning, timely grasp the needs of the society in order to provide a new perspective for the cultivation of English ability of College students.

Introduction

Since the reform and opening up, China's educational level has made great progress, but English education has been criticized for a long time. It invested a lot of time and financial resources, but it has little effect, and has not been widely promoted. Compulsory education students begin to contact English from primary school, and enter the university to pass CET 4 & CET 6. For decades English learning they still cannot communicate and make dialogs fluently. This is an unavoidable problem. There are many reasons for this problem. Among them, examination, as an important part, it must bear the necessary responsibility. Therefore, this leads to the discussion and reflection on the English ability of college students. It is necessary to explore the needs of College Students' English proficiency [1].

The Present Situation of College Students' English Proficiency in China.

College Students' English proficiency is not optimistic. At the beginning of the implementation of English CET 4, our country required freshmen to master 1600 vocabularies. Compared with the requirements of CET 4 & CET 6, this is generally low. Students can be inspired by this to study English hard. With the gradual improvement of China's educational conditions and the environment, many students in high school have learned more than 3500 words. They have reached the level which college students should reach. They basically meet the requirements of College English. Students' overall language proficiency also has a relatively large increase. The ultimate goal of China's current college English textbooks is the exam itself. So a lot of English textbooks have repeated contents and the system of learning is similar to what was in middle school. The familiar contents decrease passion and enthusiasm, and students need power to regenerate themselves. Given that the apparent gap between eastern and western teaching facilities and quality in China, it leads common colleges to have several batches of admission. And the student level is different. If the same way is used to treat all freshmen, the students' English ability won't be investigated. Using the same standard, it will bring difficulties to teaching. It is not great for teaching consequence. It also makes each college difficult to personalize the

syllabus according to the actual situation on learning. According to the relevant survey, more than 1200 college students in June, 2010, 16 universities, 25.5% of the students thought that their English “had not improved significantly” since they entered universities. 35.1% of the students thought that their English ability was inferior to be in high school.

Compared with the 1980s of the last century, today’s college freshmen have generally improved their English proficiency, but compared with other periods of history, such as the Republic of China period, it will be somewhat backward. The data shows that high school students in the period of the Republic of China were required to master 8000 English vocabularies in 1932. It included 5300 multiplexing vocabulary. At that time, China’s college students’ English proficiency were maintained at the advanced level in the world. Compared horizontally, it was better than Japan and Russia and it had high standards. Different requirements in different periods have explained why freshmen’s English ability is different at the time of admission.

From the English requirement of College English at current stage, some scholars have pointed out that College English is still considered as a basic course in our country. It is mainly in the integrated use of language skills and practice with the tool properties in the process of teaching which emphasize skill training. In English contents teaching, there are more humanistic themes and less specialized subjects. The irrational structure of English textbooks restricts the overall and balanced development of College Students’ comprehensive competence to a large extent [2].

Through the above contents, we can see that the current English proficiency of college students in China is weak and unbalanced, and the situation is worrying.

There is lack of scientific and rational evaluation system for college students’ English ability.

At present, many universities still think the exam is the main line. The results of CET 4 and CET 6 are to be seen as the evaluation in our country which can show the university is good. This makes the teaching purpose so single. Some universities only focus on the results of CET 4 and CET 6, and the pass rate of them. Some leaders even put the pass rate into their own achievements to show off. Paying too much attention to the results of CET 4 and CET 6 caused teaching resource and finance out of balance. Teaching resources and teaching time of other subjects are squeezed severely. Some universities are called “a fake foreign language university” with heavy sarcasm. It shows that this phenomenon has reached a very serious degree.

The homogenization problem of China’s English education has been very serious. It means the input and output of education is relatively low. “Time-consuming and inefficiency” is a very common situation. English teaching in many universities is only the “rawish meal” of the middle school. To some extent, the teaching contents of college English is the repetition which was taught in middle school, including basic grammars and figures of speech, etc.. Some scholars have made a sharp criticism on this phenomenon. They said that “College English teaching can only improve test scores. There is no effect to improve students’ spoken English”; “Every year many college students take CET 4 and CET 6. Although many of them can pass the exam, they are unable to speak English fluently or write causally. It’s ordinary in actual use, which fully exposed the defects of our teaching system”; “The popular CET 4 and CET 6 cannot show students’ comprehensive ability. Even though they have reached the pass line, it doesn’t mean they have really mastered English very well” [3].

The survey results also confirmed this view. 56.9% of respondents held negative attitudes towards CET 4 and CET 6. 44.5% of them held the positive view. Only 9.2% of them thought this CET was completely reasonable and they approved of it totally. Another survey showed that 90% of the respondents were trained in foreign language education. 70% of them even learned English for six years while up to 64.4% of the respondents were unable to communicate in English completely or only spoke a few words reluctantly. The people who could make themselves master of English only accounted for 5%. It demonstrated our English teaching goal is low at the present stage. It cannot meet the requirements of economic and social development [4].

To sum up, our country has not set up a unified system to measure the English language ability.

There is lack of uniform standards for English teaching. This is not good for the actual teaching goal. It is no beneficial to deepen the relevant courses. This problem should arouse the attentions of colleges and universities and the society[5].

The Training System of College Students' English Ability should be Probed in China.

Aiming at the worrying situation of the college English and the urgent needs for college students' English proficiency, the standards to measure students' English ability should be made into different patterns. It should reflect its diversity and different needs. Recently some scholars have put forward relevant theories, of which the most important thing is to turn general English teaching into academic English teaching. They try to establish different grades of academic English ability. But according to the current situation of our country, the research universities are minority. Coupled with the expansion of university enrollment, undergraduate education is also showing the popular trend of the future. A large number of university graduates engaged in academic work of the proportion will gradually smaller. The social demand for tourism English, business English and other administrative English will be more intense, so the change from the general to the professional type is relatively one-sided.

Therefore, in our country, we should be based on the actual situation of colleges and universities, professional areas, and individuals and so on, to make different ability standards. Students themselves should decide whether to reach a certain standard There have been some attempts on it. At present, the popular English for special purpose has already shown the attempt in this aspect. English for special purpose pays more attention to its instrumentality and practicability. It enables students to determine their own ability standards. The purpose and contents of special purpose English courses will not be determined by the regular general education, but determined by utilitarian, practical, and demanding learning requirements. The prevalence of Special English indicates that college English, besides its humanistic characteristics, can not be ignored, and has become an important part of meeting the needs of society.

In addition, some scholars believe that, China has become one of the big countries in English learning. The ultimate goal of our English learning includes two types: "self oriented" and "oriented". The first type refers to learn foreign advanced technology and management experience through English learning; The second type is a service for other more extensive languages. With the continuous development of our economic society, and the improvement of international status, the second type tends to become more and more important in the future.

Theoretical research must be tested by practice, which is also true in English learning. The relevant interview and survey data shows that employers and the students themselves have a clear understanding on English cultural attributes and tool properties. Both of the two are the important part of English ability. Employers demand more instrumental ability than humanistic ability. We hope that students after graduation will be able to use English; and the students themselves should request more humanities than the employers. The root is that college students finish their education system. They have an urge to have the comprehensive development in all aspects, not just become a tool for existence. When they pursue humanistic ability, it can make students get better and stronger. The survey on whether graduates can take the responsibility for work needs showed that more than half of the employers held negative views. They thought that college students were "aiming high but lacking skills". College students also show dissatisfaction of their own poor English. This kind of employers' concerns can be understood. According to the survey of College English teaching, it suggests that employers and students should make an agreement on matching the contents and practical application. It is more sensible that we should be based on the occupation development to make teaching plans and to develop more targeted teaching plan. We should pay attention to English teaching for special purpose [6].

Research on the Needs for English Proficiency of College Students in China.

At present, college students' English ability is mainly composed of two parts: humanistic ability and instrumental ability. They are indispensable. The new revised English curriculum requirements for College English characters describe and explain that "College English is not only a basic language course, it is also to expand students' horizons. Students can understand that the English curriculum is a window to understand the world. It has both humanities and tools". Students can cultivate the basic qualities and characteristics to adjust to the modern society. Along with the rapid development of social economy, a lot of people in society will mainly focus on money to pursue material benefits and relax on their own spiritual requirements. Their moral level decreases significantly, which is a direct result of the reduction of students' humanistic quality etc. The lack of humanistic competence of college students will eventually affect its tool attributes. Rich and perfect human attributes should be an important feature of language subject, which plays an important role in improving the level of students' moral, humanistic literacy. It is one of the important contents language teaching.

Compared with human ability, instrumental ability should also become an important part of college students' ability to their future development. English is a widely developing discipline, but its training objectives should be targeted. College students should choose English for specific purposes according to their own professional needs and other practical conditions. Students cultivating their English tool ability can not only meet the individual needs of their own, but also provide a good guarantee for the future development of their own.

Now, the present situation of College Students' English ability and social needs can reflect on following three aspects:

First, although the period of English learning is very long, the actual application is still not to meet the needs of society. Listening and speaking, reading and writing in all aspects, the individual is not good enough obviously, especially oral English ability. Many students even speak "dumb English" or only a simple routine to greet. This situation can not meet the social demand. Therefore, the demand of enhancing the ability of college students' English is relatively strong.

Second, students themselves improve English application ability and they know it is very urgent. Many college students are able to realize their ability defects which are exposed. They are eager to change the current situation. They want to improve the abilities of English listening and speaking. The desire to communicate in English is very strong. It should be closely integrated with social needs, following the development of the times.

Third, the social demand for College English should not be isolated. It should fully respond to the demand on college students' English learning, including training plan, curriculum setting, professional direction etc.. College students should also define the needs of society as soon as possible [7].

Summary

Any language movement includes two aspects of usage and application. The main solution is to grasp abstract knowledge. It refers to the successful use of the opportunity to learn the language in communication. The help of usage application is limited, and the application can greatly strengthen the usage. From this perspective, college students' English ability training is of great significance. This paper mainly analyzes the present situation of college students' English ability. We discussed and deepened the research on the system of the cultivation of college students' English ability. It demonstrated that college students need to strengthen the ability to use English in order to meet the social demand and to promote China's rapid economic and social development[8].

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