

The Application of English Films in College English Teaching

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Abstract. An English film is the information combination of English subtitle, voice, image and so on. This paper analyzes the benefits of English film appreciation applied to college English teaching, including stimulating students' learning interest, improving English listening and speaking ability and cross-cultural communication ability. Moreover, it puts forward some concrete methods for how to apply English film appreciation to college English teaching.

In China we have always paid much attention to the teaching of language knowledge as for traditional English teaching, while the students' ability of comprehensive use of language has been in a state of lag for a long time. In today's society, the primary goal of college English teaching is to cultivate students' ability of comprehensive use of English. In college English teaching, it is the issue explored for a long time that how to restore the real context and the appropriate language and culture atmosphere to make it visualized and real. With the popularization of modern teaching technology and the wide application of multimedia, English films have been increasingly applied in college English teaching with its unique advantages.

Being the information combination of English subtitle, voice and image, English movies have characteristics and advantages which other audio-visual materials do not have. [1] They can realistically reproduce the situation for communication, which provide a large number of natural language for learners as well as provide almost real cultural background for related language practice. In order to create a good language environment, stimulate interest in learning and improve students' ability of comprehensive language application, it is so significant that we apply English movies into college English teaching using modern information technology rationally.

The Positive Effect of English Film on English Teaching

To Stimulate the Learners' Interest in Learning. Learning interest and motivation is a kind of psychological state that individuals actively contact and understand cognitive objects in order to meet their needs. Film is an art form which combines sound and picture organically, creating a feeling of immersive experience for the audience. As a combination of sound and image, language and situation, visual stimulation and auditory stimulation, English films can be used to stimulate the learner's interest in the process of teaching. With the beautiful pictures, the wonderful music, the absorbing plot and the rich philosophical language, movies bring the spiritual happiness experience and the pleasure enjoyment to the learners. A good movie leads the audience to a spiritual journey through a touching story, a philosophical revelation, a thrilling plot or a grand scene. By mobilizing their visual organs, they consciously accept the large amount of information in the film and the interest of learning and imitation is stimulated.

Thus, English movies provide learners with a learning method of treating English as an interest, which creates a relaxed learning environment and reduces their English learning anxiety so as to stimulate their interest and enthusiasm to learn English.

To Create a Real Language Environment and Improve Students' Listening Ability. Traditional English teaching can only attract students' attention from hearing, which often does not work well. If English teachers consistently use traditional methods of teaching, it will no doubt result in students' dislike of English listening classes. Although students have learned a lot of pronunciation rules in the classroom, the combination of theory and practice also requires a lot of practice in a specific language environment to achieve proficiency and nature. English movies are

rich in language information, in which social skills, business strategies and cultural knowledge are shown vividly through the image and sound realistic representation of real life. This helps students understand the tone and other implied meaning of language in order to master the language gradually, acquire pure pronunciation so as to get language skills naturally.

To Help Students to Understand Cultural Differences and Improve Cross-Cultural Communication Skills. Language is the carrier of culture. Language learning is also culture learning. [2] They are closely related, so we should pay equal attention to language teaching and culture teaching. Moreover, learning English is not only about learning vocabulary and grammar, it also includes learning about the history and culture of western countries. Being a kind of mass cultural carrier, English films are enrichment and sublimation of real life. It is the most intuitive and vivid embodiment of the social culture, lifestyle and customs of a country. The theme of English films involves social etiquette, local customs, politics, history and so on. It shows the culture of English-speaking countries in a multi-angle, multi-level and very intuitive way.

Learners can understand the cultural differences between the East and the West by original English movies, feeling the differences on values and the resulting different way of thinking. [3] Also, they can compare the differences between Chinese and western culture, and then cross-cultural communication skills can be improved.

The Application of English Films in College English Teaching

Selection of English Films for Teaching. 1.1 The themes of the films should be positive. Such films are helpful for students to form healthy world view, outlook on life and values. Encouraging students to have a positive attitude to life and diligent learning spirit, they also make them understand British and American culture and modern life in the right perspective and attitude.

The selected films should be suitable for Chinese college students' language learning with medium-speed dialogues and clear normative pronunciation. The films that are more suitable for students are classic inspirational films, comedies, science fiction films, and cartoons, rather than battle films, gangsters, or horror films.

To follow the principle of from easy to difficult. One can go from simple and wonderful movie clips to the appreciation of the whole movie. At beginning, the teacher could choose English movies with simple plots and clear language. After being familiar with the film language step by step, films which are more difficult with more complex plots and faster speed can be used to promote the students' progress. [4]

The Organization form and Contents of Teaching Activities are Shown in Figure 1. 2.1 The preparation before class. Before the film is shown, the teacher should prepare sufficient background information for the students to understand better. For example, when preparing to show the students *The Pursuit of Happiness*, the teacher gathers information about the real story behind the movie and the introduction of Will Smith and his son before class. Find as many background information as you can and give a brief introduction to the students before showing them. In addition, the teacher can design some questions appropriately to let the students watch the movie while thinking over the questions. As for *The Pursuit of Happiness*, the question may be like this: what social phenomenon does this film reflect? Why can the protagonist succeed?

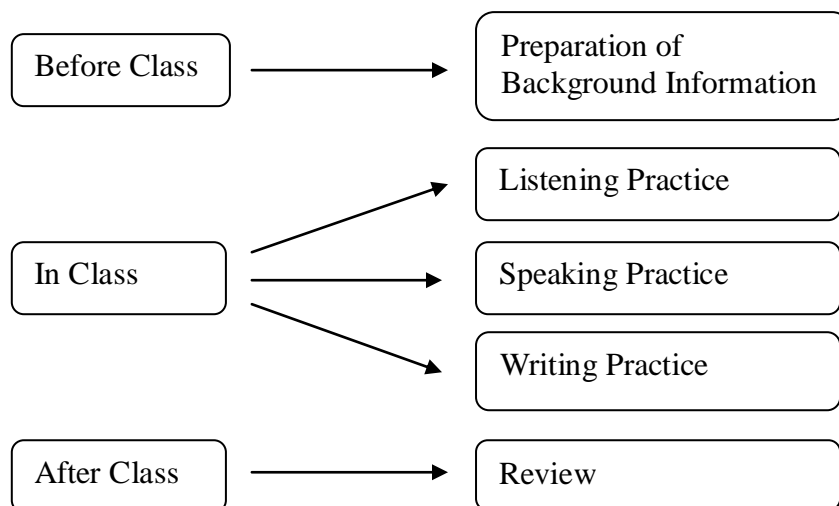


Figure 1. Contents of teaching activities

2.2 The design of teaching activities in class

2.2.1 Listening practice

Cutting out a wonderful dialogue and hiding the image, ask the students to guess the content according to what they hear after listening repeatedly. This motivates the students to use effective listening strategies actively. Film dialogues can also be designed as "compound dictation". Students are required to fill in the blanks with key words they heard, which are useful for students to attain listening strategies of capturing key information. [5]

2.2.2 Spoken practice

Divide the students into groups to have role play about some representative section of the film to improve the students' spoken ability. Students are encouraged to imitate the sounds, intonations and emotions of the characters in the film by replaying excerpts from the film.

The following is the classic dialogues between the father and the son in *The Pursuit of Happiness*:

Chris Gardner: Hey. Don't ever let somebody tell you... ...you can't do something. Not even me. All right?

Christopher :All right.

Chris Gardner: You got a dream... you gotta protect it. People can't do something themselves... they wanna tell you you can't do it. If you want something, go get it. Period. Let's go.

The positive perseverant spirit contained in these classic dialogues and discourses is worth studying by the students. Recitation is an effective means of learning English, and if you can recite some of the splendid lines of the movie accurately and fluently, you will be able to communicate in English with high proficiency. Let the students imitate the pronunciation, intonation, rhythm and speed of the characters in selected movies, practicing again and again until they can imitate exactly the same or almost the same. This kind of oral training can help students to speak accurately and fluently.

2.2.3 Writing practice

English movies are not only suitable for listening and speaking practice, but also for writing practice. Writing activities can be used as a feedback of listening and speaking. After memorizing and reciting a lot of words and dialogues, students need writing practice to improve their ability of changing the dialogues into their own language.

In order to improve the students' English writing ability, it is a good way to ask the students to write their feeling about the film on the basis of the material provided by the film. In the process of writing, students' analysis of the characters make them understand deeply the way of thinking, cultural habits and value orientation of English people, which strengthen their word processing ability about cultural differences between China and western countries.

Review of the film.

After watching the film, we will discuss the topic based on the theme and make a comprehensive summary at the end of the discussion, giving students timely help. First, let the students retell the film content. Students are required to use the words and expressions appeared in the film and they are allowed to refer to the reference material given by the teacher during the preparation phase, which strengthen the effect of film appreciation. [6]Second, let students describe the most attractive scenes, fragments characters, images or dialogues to enhance the perceptual knowledge of the film.

Third, organize a discussion about the theme of the film and the cultural differences reflected in the film. Encourage the students to give their personal opinions actively while listening to other person's opinions. [7] At the same time, students are inspired to dig into the deep meaning of the film compared to the collected materials of comment on the film.

Conclusion

As good helper of foreign language teaching, English films appreciation is an effective way for students to learn language knowledge and cultural knowledge. Being applied to teaching, English films help students not only learn the language but also understand the history and culture of English-speaking countries.

This kind of effective teaching method also raises the high demand to the teacher, because a good movie contains abundant knowledge. The teacher's class preparation work also is time-consuming and laborious. But as long as the English movie appreciation class is well-designed, students will benefit from it and improve their English gradually.

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