

Research on Application of Metacognitive Strategies in College English Learning

Li Wan

Department of College English Teaching
Zaozhuang University
Zaozhuang, China 277100

Abstract—After the issuing and implementation of the "Teaching Requirements for College English Courses", College English teaching has undergone great changes. The teaching focus has been shifted from teachers to college students. It is no longer a matter of imparting simple language knowledge and skills, but need to pay attention to cultivating college students' language ability and self-learning ability. In combination with the actual English learning status of college students, this paper introduces the role of metacognitive strategies in College English learning.

Keywords—college English; learning; metacognitive strategy

I. INTRODUCTION

Metacognitive strategy was an advanced management skills firstly put forward by an American psychologist Flavell in 1970s, playing an important role in improving learning effect. Metacognitive strategy is to first let college students know about their cognitive abilities, namely let college students understand which part of learning (in writing ability or spatial ability) they are good at, and second let college students have accurate judgment on the learning tasks and requirements, spend different effort in different difficulties of learning tasks and use suitable method to achieve the best effect. How to use metacognitive strategies to improve the learning effect of College English has become an urgent problem to be solved at present.

II. STATUS QUO OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' ENGLISH LEARNING

For colleges and universities in China, English is a compulsory course whether it is a college or university, in English major or a non-English major. The objectives, orientation, means and mode of College English teaching has also been changed a lot. Through English learning, the English level of college students has been greatly improved. Especially, the use of English has been greatly strengthened. However, throughout the current English education in universities, there are still many shortcomings and problems as follows:

A. The Learning Objectives Are Not Clear Enough so That There Is No Strong Motivation to Learn

As college life is comfortable, with less restrictions, many college students become doing things at will, lose the strong energy to learn as in high school, do not have definite learning objective and consequently lose the strong motivation to learn. In particular, some college students with poor English foundations are easier to lose interest and confidence in English learning when they encounter setbacks and difficulties in learning English. Some students learn English just for passing the CET4 and getting more opportunities for employment in the future. This motivation is obviously utilitarian and may be available to maintain learning enthusiasm for a short term, but this utilitarian learning goal and motivation are often unbearable for long term for many college students. In the process of College English learning, few students can treat English learning as a necessary way to improve their cultural literacy and even few people can regard English learning as a pleasure. This causes that college students lack the necessary self-consciousness, persistence and initiative in ordinary learning of English. So, it is surely quite difficult for them to obtain good effect in learning English.

B. The Learning Style Is Lagging so That the Learning Effect Is Not Obvious

Many college students' English learning is not effective. This is because of their lagged learning method and bad self-learning ability in addition to their indefinite objective, less learning motivation and weak English foundation.

English is a very practical subject. In the study of this subject, the study of listening, speaking, reading and writing is very important. But in order to cultivate those four abilities, it is not only needed to spend a lot of time on it but also need to have a set of effective learning methods for it. However in actual study, many college students still use the old set of learning methods in English learning and are blind and random in selecting such method. Some college students even do not have any learning methods at all but mechanically listen to the teacher's lectures in the classroom and then memorize them without thinking outside the classroom. They neither know that it is needed to spend certain time on extracurricular reading and writing to enhance their sense of English at all nor even know how to

memorize and accumulate English vocabularies in composition method, conversion method, association method, classification methods, inference methods, etc. Some college students even usually refuse to accumulate language knowledge step by step but learn hardly before taking examination. This learning method cannot really help improving their English level.

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS' ENGLISH LEARNING

The metacognitive strategy and teaching combined training has stimulated the motivation of college students and optimized their learning style. Therefore, it has positive enlightenment meaning for teaching English listening course in an environment lacking the language context.

In the specific application, metacognitive strategy refers to the self-reflection, self-control and self-evaluation that a person makes in the process of self-thinking. By using metacognitive strategies, college students can learn to make rational planning, correct evaluation and scientific management on their studies. Once college student masters the metacognitive strategy, incorporating metacognitive theory into the cultivation of various abilities such as listening, speaking, reading and writing will be greatly helpful to achieve such abilities.

Teachers can get the cultivation of college students' metacognitive awareness integrated into the teaching in English listening classroom, and combine the training of metacognitive strategies with the training of strategies for cultivating various abilities. In the process of learning English, college students can be guided to improve their metacognitive learning strategies and actively use metacognitive strategies to improve their various abilities in English as well as effectively stimulate college students' initiative and motivation to learn English.

IV. APPLICATION OF METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES IN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ENGLISH LEARNING

Since 1980s, metacognitive strategies have already been incorporated into English learning. On the basis of the research achievements of many researchers for many years, it has been attempted to actively get the cultivation of metacognitive strategies integrated into English learning of college students and make efforts to cultivate students' consciousness of metacognitive strategies so as to stimulate students' learning initiative and motivation and further enhance their English learning ability and English listening score and level. The following text will make a deep discussion on the application strategy for integrating metacognitive strategies into college students' English learning.

A. Cultivation of Metacognitive Consciousness

Metacognitive awareness includes good attitude towards learning, self-confidence in learning, and self-learning motivation. The possession of metacognitive consciousness is the first step made in integrating metacognitive strategies

into college students' English learning. Teachers should firstly adjust and change the learning concepts and strategies of college students. They can grasp the learning strategies and learning characteristics of college students through questionnaires, interviews, or other forms, and then adjust the learning concepts and strategies of college students according to various problems. The most important point in adjusting the learning concept is to let college students realize that learning English is not for coping with examination. In English learning, listening, speaking, reading and writing are all important and are available to be fully mastered by college students by using certain strategies and methods. By using metacognitive strategies in English learning, it is available to make effective management, test, evaluation and adjustment on the learning process of college students so that college students can achieve their learning goals very well. After the students have a preliminary understanding of the knowledge of metacognition, it is also available to further consider letting students make a systematic introduction of metacognitive strategies, including the objectives, planning, learning monitoring and learning assessment and other related contents, so that college students can constantly deepen their understanding of metacognitive consciousness and form a set of effective learning mechanism.

B. Helping College Students Establishing Learning Objectives and Making Learning Plans

After college students have a certain understanding of metacognitive strategies, the learning objectives of English learning will become clearer. A clear learning objective can help strengthening the learning motivation as well as English learning. In this process, teachers should play a leading role in making interview and individualized counseling one by one to clarify the weaknesses and shortcomings of each college student in English learning, and provide them with feasible solutions and methods, then provide specific strengthened training based on the shortcomings of college students and consult with and help students to make such learning objectives and plans as suitable for their individual characteristics, including weekly, monthly and semester learning objectives and plans, and urge students to practice as planned. For example, the plan can be as follows: memorize 100 vocabularies per week, publish an English newspaper every week, take a few hours a week to conduct listening training, participate in an English Corner activity every week, write a few English essays every month, as well as passing the CET4 and CET6 exams in the semester. In addition to helping college students establishing learning goals and plans, it is also needed to guide students having the initiative to learn in the classroom, and set classroom goals for college students. Before starting a new course, teachers should point out the key points, difficulties and learning requirements of this course so that college students can more easily make appropriate classroom learning goals.

C. Helping College Students Improving Their Self-control Ability

Self-control is the core of metacognitive strategy. Many college students have poor English proficiency because of

lacking self-control ability. They may have set learning goals and plans, but they do not have the ability to control themselves. After losing the enthusiasm for learning, they may set aside the English learning plan and eventually lost the interest in learning English. The function of self-control is to timely detect problems and timely adjust route and change the learning method to solve the problems. In the process of learning English, college students should undergo a process of transformation from external control to internal self-control. In this process, teachers need to guide, assist and urge college students to create learning objective and plan, and then frequently ask students to know about their progress. If students encounter any difficulty in implementing this plan, teacher should timely help the student to improving the learning method and strategy so that student can regain the confidence in learning.

D. Helping College Students Enhancing Their Self-evaluation Ability

Evaluation strategy is an important part of the metacognitive strategies. Self-evaluation is to verify the integrity and accuracy of the knowledge acquired by college students after students complete the learning tasks. This evaluation can help college students making an in-depth reflection and summarization on their learning process, and thus is a very important process to improve college students' English learning ability. Excellent English learners can successfully manage their entire English learning process, and then make self-check on their own learning status by using the evaluation strategy to know about their weaknesses in English learning and whether the learning plans and methods are scientific, etc. In the process of making such evaluation, the following evaluation methods can be used: first, designing an evaluation form for each unit to evaluate the English proficiency of college students so as to improve the evaluation ability of college students; second, making mutual evaluation among students, wherein this method shall have a uniform evaluation criteria to improve the objectivity of the evaluation; third, teacher makes evaluation on college students in form of interviews and other means to find out the problems of college students in learning; fourth, teachers regularly conduct questionnaire survey to understand the learning status of college students and make appropriate adjustments to the evaluation method.

V. CONCLUSION

Getting metacognitive strategies successfully incorporated into English learning of college students can help them learning English knowledge very well. Moreover, metacognitive strategies can also be adopted in the learning of various courses in universities. At the same time, it can help students laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning. Through metacognitive strategies, they can even learn more in life independently.

REFERENCES

- [1] Qiao Honghao. Metacognitive Strategy Training for College English Learning[J]. Journal of Yulin College, 2009, (05). (in Chinese)
- [2] Yang Jinxia. Metacognitive Strategies and the Training of Autonomous Learning Ability in Network Environment [J]. Journal of Changchun Finance College, 2011, (03). (in Chinese)
- [3] Su Xiuyun. Analysis of the relationship between metacognitive strategies and college English autonomous learning ability in the network multimedia environment[J]. Bridge of Century, 2010, (07). (in Chinese)
- [4] Li Shikui. College Students' Autonomous Learning and Metacognitive Strategy in the Multimedia Network Environment[J]. Journal of Harbin University, 2011, (09). (in Chinese)