

The Strategies on the Chinese College Student's English Listening and Speaking Ability Based on MOOC

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English is now, as a universal language, the main tool for communication among people all over the world. The English listening and speaking ability is the key to it. But the status-quo of Chinese student's English listening and speaking ability is disappointing. This paper tries to analyze the necessity of improving their English listening and speaking ability and put forward some strategies on it based on MOOC which includes teaching online and teaching offline.

Keywords: strategies, Chinese college student, English listening and speaking, MOOC

Introduction

In 2008, Stephen Downes and George Siemens first put forward the concept of MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) and in 2012 it was widely spread in the world. The Edx created by MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), the Coursera by Stanford University and Udacity present different kinds of MOOC, which are well-known among the public. They aim to provide the learners with the high-quality and massive online courses. No matter where the learners are and no matter what education background they have, they can have access to the resources through the Internet. Therefore, they make it possible for millions of people around the world to choose the same course, carry out the learning activities, and evaluate each other according to their own learning styles and learning arrangements. It changes the traditional teaching style and becomes the focus of attention among the Chinese English teachers in the higher education who want to take advantage of MOOC to improve the college student's English speaking and listening ability because it has become urgent to do so for the reasons that follow.

The Necessity of Improving Chinese College Student's English Listening and Speaking Ability

The Teaching Aims of College English Course

College English course is an important and indispensable part of higher education in China. It is a compulsive and basic course for the non-English majors in colleges and universities. It aims to develop the students' comprehensive English abilities, especially the listening and speaking ability so that they can communicate with others effectively in their work, life, and social interactions after graduation, along with the goals to enhance their self-learning abilities and the cultural quality overall to adjust themselves to the social development and the international communication. We can clearly see that College English course, particularly

the listening and speaking ability in English plays a vital role in the modern society because of the globalization brought about by the development of the IT (Information Technology), mass media, and Internet. All the people need to communicate with people from other parts of the world in order to know them better, to do business, or even to work in other countries. Without the English listening and speaking ability, as for the country, we cannot get involved in the common issues that concern the entire world and solve problems so that it can benefit the whole world, such as hunger, disease, climate change, etc. As for the individuals, we cannot keep up with the latest development in our fields. Sometimes our work cannot go smoothly due to the lack of effective communication with foreign experts or bosses in the joint-ventures or the multinational companies. All the above mentioned rely on the English listening and speaking ability.

The Status-quo of Chinese College Student's English Listening and Speaking Ability

Chinese students tend to pay much attention to the writing and reading in the primary and intermediate phase of English learning due to the Chinese examination system. For example, sometimes listening and speaking test are not included in GaoKao (the college entrance examination) in which the English score will take up one quarter. So during this time, students are inclined to ignore the English listening and speaking. When they go to college, the exams change in the objectives. The importance is attached to the communicative function of the English language, which makes the English listening and writing more important abruptly. But most students cannot speak out their mind with English due to the lack of oral practice, which is called "Dumb English". Many other reasons account for the phenomenon: (1) psychological factor. It tops the list of factors that hinder the student's English listening and speaking ability. Unlike Canada and Singapore which are bilingual countries, only mandarin is spoken here in China, though there are some dialects in different parts of the country. Under this circumstance, it is easy for students to lose the confidence in English learning in the end when they believe it is hard to do so; (2) poor phonetics foundation. Because of the influence from the native language and dialects, besides the impact from their English teachers in the primary schools and secondary schools in rural areas, most of whom cannot pronounce the vowels and consonants correctly, most of the college students cannot pronounce the English words well, let alone the standard English. As a result, the English listening ability is affected; and (3) shortage of vocabulary. Without vocabulary, people cannot express anything. A person's communicative ability is directly associated with the vocabulary he masters, his understanding and the application of the words. The English listening and speaking ability is based on the vocabulary. It is impossible to improve the English listening and speaking ability without it or due to lack of it.

The Advantages of MOOC

The Interactive Teaching Mode

MOOC is different from other online courses in which teachers usually record the teaching procedures in the classroom and post them on the Internet. Thus, the teaching in the classroom is converted into the videos online. Although many students can watch them, the teaching is not different from the traditional classroom teaching in essence. The students watch them without the interaction with teachers, lacking the sense of participation. As for MOOC, in addition to the videos, there are also the test, the exercise, and the discussion sections. The learners can watch the difficult parts in the video repeatedly. Helps are available through the communication with teachers in the discussion sections. Even you and other students from other parts of the world can become partners during this new kind of learning. The professional experts will give an explanation

of the common problems the students have met by means of videos according to their needs. So MOOC is the combination of teaching, exercises, questions, explanations, and discussions. In the learning process, students can test themselves and finish the exercises teachers have assigned. Meanwhile the server will record it. The feedback will be provided for the administrators to further the improvement of the online courses, which fully represents the interaction between the users and the network by the means of the interactive teaching mode.

The Realization of the Individual Learning

It is possible for students to develop the individual learning style in view of the teaching characteristics of MOOC. Students can choose whatever courses he likes regardless of the limitation of time, the place where he stays. The teaching videos in MOOC, different from those traditional online ones, are divided into several short videos in which one or two teaching points are explained. This kind of teaching takes the individual learning demand into consideration and it is a very positive measure as a result of analyzing the learner's thoughts and taking advantage of the scientific teaching concepts. The short and effective teaching videos can make students learn the course, using their fragmented time and adjust themselves to this kind of learning style.

The Strategies on Chinese College Students' English Speaking and Listening Ability Based on MOOC

Since MOOC can provide the college students with a lot of learning materials to improve their English speaking and listening ability, we need to adopt the appropriate strategies on it.

To Trigger the Student's Inner Motivation for Learning in the Teaching

It is a very crucial problem to trigger the student's inner motivation for learning and turn passive learning into active learning during the MOOC study because it is the inner motivation that pushes the students to set up the study goals by themselves and complete the study process on their own. Interest and curiosity are two kinds of symbols of inner motivation. So how to arouse their strong interest in learning becomes the key to the problem. We can solve the problem by creating a cloud learning environment in which students learn a variety of courses by themselves under the support from the computer technology. Students can choose the learning materials they want totally and freely. In this kind of learning environment, in addition to MOOC, foreign websites, E-libraries, Microblogs, Forums, etc. also become the learning platforms which can be accessed by the terminals such as PC (personal computer), PAD, cell phones, TV, etc., to look for, browse online, and download different kinds of learning resources. So this kind of learning environment has the characteristics of convenience, free choice, and team work. It reduces the learning cost for MOOC and offers massive high-quality course resources. Meanwhile it can arouse the students' inner motivation for learning by catering to their different learning habits.

To Establish the Student's Awareness of Self-learning in the Teaching

In order to survive in the rapidly developing world, the students need to develop the habit of self-learning which is also required by MOOC. It supplies the chance for the college students to learn on their own. Having the ability to make a plan of their learning process can make them arrange the study reasonably, set up the study goals, and carry out the study plan. During the MOOC study, the teachers should play the guiding role, making them find their own effective learning methods, set up the definite goals, and arouse their interest and curiosity in study. Meanwhile the teacher will improve their ability to apply the learning strategies to the study process effectively and eventually help them establish the awareness of self-learning.

To Provide Students With a Variety of Learning Materials in the Teaching Online

Besides what has been mentioned above, in order to improve the student's English listening and speaking ability, in the teaching online, the teacher can record some videos and audios for the students to watch in their spare time and put forward some questions for them to discuss. The teaching videos can be sent to the student's cell phones which can be installed with some certain apps. The videos and audios can include the English news such as VOA (Voice of America), BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation); the audios about the materials in the textbook such as *New Concept English*, *Oxford English*, etc.; English phonetics; English movies, TV series and songs. Students can have access to these teaching materials at any time through cell phones. Most importantly, the teacher must assign some tasks for them to prepare, such as, the replay of the movie clips, the discussion of the movie morals or the presentation of the news, etc. It must be ensured that everyone gets involved in these activities. When they come to the classroom to make their performances, the teacher focuses on the student's English pronunciation and intonation. The teacher does not need to correct them the minute mistakes take place in order to keep the students going smoothly. After they finish the performance, the teacher can point out the mistakes. The teacher can also have some other drills and practice to make them have deep impression.

To Attach Great Importance to the Recitation and Retelling in the Teaching Offline

All the common people start with the oral part when they learn the mother tongue. Then they move to the written part. When Chinese students learn the English language, in the occasion of the lack of language surroundings, they start with the written part. The oral English is a brand-new start from zero. During this process, "accumulation" is the major task, the key to which is the recitation. During the reading and recitation, listening stimulus strengthens the memory of the knowledge, which makes the learners accumulate plenty of English words, phrases, and sentence patterns. In the language output afterwards, the learner can search out the proper words, phrases, even paragraphs in their memory they have accumulated and melt them into their own oral expressions. Retelling is another effective way to improve the learners' speaking ability. In contrast to recitation, it is more advanced and complicated. If we see recitation as a way to strengthen the language stimulus by means of repetitive drills, retelling combines the drills with the positive thinking. In the process of retelling, the learner should mix and refine what he has heard, seen, and read and convey his thoughts, using the language knowledge he has mastered.

To Establish the Harmonious Relationship Between Teachers and Students in the Teaching

As a help for the student's learning, teachers can only play the role when they set up the relationship of mutual trust and respect with students. Therefore, in the teaching process, teachers should communicate with the students when necessary, take advantage of the humorous teaching style, arouse their learning initiatives, and cope with the errors they have made appropriately. Above all, teachers should create a relaxing and authentic environment in which students can practise their listening and speaking freely and effectively. The language acquisition is a long and gradual process. In the beginning, the students may feel uncomfortable, even nervous and uneasy, so what they speak may be the broken English—incomplete sentences, even just a few words. Furthermore, most students' pronunciation is incorrect with weird intonation and local accent. It does not matter. Teacher should not be eager to correct them. Instead they should make a demonstration for the students to imitate repetitively, which can make students dare to speak in the relaxing and natural English-learning surroundings. As time goes by, they can master more and more sentences and get more

chances to express their mind. With the teacher's instruction and classmate's encouragement, all the students can establish the self-confidence, getting rid of the fear when they speak English. Only in this kind of learning environment can students improve their English listening and speaking ability.

Conclusion

With regard to the status-quo of Chinese college student's English listening and speaking ability, it is time to take measures to improve it in order to have a wider communication with the people from other countries. On the basis of MOOC, we can find some useful strategies from two aspects: teaching online and teaching offline. In the former, the teacher can provide the students with some learning audios and videos to make them imitate, or have a discussion, etc. In the latter, the teacher first can trigger their learning interest and develop the habit of self-learning, and then should pay much attention to the means of recitation and retelling. All these can work on the premise that there is the harmonious relationship between teachers and students. If these strategies can be effectively adopted, the student's English listening and speaking ability can be improved a lot.

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