

On the Strategies of Improving Oral English Skills in Sea-Related Majors

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Abstract: With the rapid development of economic globalization, it has greatly promoted the large demand for marine students. In this context, because of the flexible employment location of sea-related students, it is necessary to have close communication and cooperation with many countries. The spoken English problem is particularly important. The purpose of this paper is to find out the problems and causes of spoken English in students of sea-related majors, and to analyze and explore strategies to solve these problems, and then to provide some suggestions for sea-related English teaching. In this paper, it has been found that there are some problems and causes of spoken English in students of sea-related majors. The oral skills are generally low, students are short of goals, teaching methods are limited, and the class hours are limited. In such conditions, there are some strategies put forward in this paper. There are some useful suggestions. We can improve oral skills training, help students establish goals, develop creative teaching methods, and add more class hours.

Research Background and Significance

With the globalization of the economy and the development of the world market, China's trade with the rest of the world is getting closer and closer. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the training of a large number of sea-related students. When cultivating students of this professional background, due to the special nature of their future employment, it is necessary to conduct oral English instruction and training, which is not only conducive to the career development and comprehensive development of sea-related students, but it can also promote China's shipping as a whole. The health of the industry can be developed steadily.

The purpose of this paper is to study the problems of oral English that students in the sea-related majors can encounter, and to analyze the deep-seated reasons, finally to find out the solutions to these problems, and to provide strategic guidance for college-related professional English teaching.

Problems

In general, the spoken English majors of the sea-related majors have the following problems:

1. Oral skills are generally low.

Since the college entrance examination is only conducted in the paper mode, many students only focus on the written English and do not pay attention to the application of oral English. The consequence of this is that the students do not develop the habits to speak or to think in English. Due to the large number of students in the classroom, many students have fewer opportunities to speak English. In addition, the number of extracurricular activities that can take the initiative to participate in the English Corner and other oral English-related activities does not allow students to have the opportunity to practice speaking every day. Secondly, the English language courses set by the school are limited, generally limited to college English, spoken English, nautical English, and marine English. The English course hours are not enough in every semester, and the oral English course is relatively open, whether it is the number of semesters or school hours. It is even rarer.

2. Students lack goals.

Most of the students during the school period only target at college English for the fourth or sixth grade. There are many students who take the four or six written exams each year, but there are very few students who take the CET4 and CET-6 spoken English tests. The reason is that on the one hand, students lack goals. They usually lack oral practice, and they do not have the confidence to take oral exams. On the other hand, the school does not pay much attention to the students' oral skills, and there are fewer schools that encourage students to take oral exams. Therefore, under the general environment that the school lacks sufficient attentions to the importance of oral English, students do not pay enough attention to spoken English.

3. Teaching methods are limited.

In a number of colleges and universities, for many English teachers, their teaching methods are still quite limited. For many teachers, their teaching methods are still quite like those of middle schools. During the class time, they are used to speaking, giving lectures all the time and instilling packed knowledge to their students. It seems that they are the masters of class and students. By using this method, teachers ignore the participating and practice of students. A lot of students tend to fall asleep in class.

In addition, for many college English teachers, their teaching materials are out of date, which cannot attract the interest of their students. We should try to analyze the psychological characteristics of modern college students and use fashionable materials to gain their interest and enable them to have something to say during the class time. As teachers, we should keep up with the students and be familiar with their ideas. In this way, students may be more willing to take part in the class.

Furthermore, many English teachers have not mastered the reasonable steps to teach spoken English. Generally speaking, teachers tend to teach their students how to pronounce some words, to pay attention to the word stress and the tone. However, there is not a set of fixed and efficient ways to teach spoken English. Teachers can give reference about pronunciation rules, but that is not enough. They are supposed to create certain conditions and topics to ensure that most students can stand up to speak English.

4. The class hours are limited.

For a start, the semesters that students have English class are not enough. For many sea-related universities, there are some training classes, so the English teaching is not paid much attention. Most university students have English class only for four terms, which means that they do not have to study English for the last two years in university. As a result, quite a number of students give up learning English any more since there is no final exam. Consequently, their English standard begins to decline, whether it is the written English or Spoken English. Especially for spoken English, many of them don't speak a word for the following years.

Secondly, the class hours in each term are also very limited. For this course, there are only classes for twice or three times per week. At the same time, the course contents are abundant which takes up much of the class time. Most of the English courses focus on grammar and vocabulary instead of oral standard. Due to the intensive courses of the sea-related majors, there is also much stress for the other subjects since they are quite complex as well and needs much time and energy.

Coping strategies

1. Improve oral skills training

The school should carry out a variety of oral courses, such as oral English, professional English listening and conversation, and special lectures on the CET-4 and CET-6 oral examinations so that the English oral course runs through multiple semesters, and strengthens the guidance and training for the students' oral English.

Besides, universities should also create a kind of atmosphere paying attention to the importance of spoken English. For example, they can establish some English corners and organize students to join in them in under the leading of arranged teachers. English corners can be held for twice or three times per week, which can also invite some foreigners to take part in some activities together. Another example is that English movie clubs can be set up, which can feature some classic English

movies. In this way, students are able to learn some native English expressions because speaking and listening are closely related. This kind of recessive courses are very helpful.

Lastly, teachers can give some guidance about spoken English tests after class. For example, they can use the Internet to give some systematic suggestions. Through the Internet, teachers can build some platforms or apply the online recourses to train their students to finish some oral practice after class.

2. Help students establish goals

Since lots of students lack goals, schools and teachers can help them to establish certain goals.

To begin with, schools are supposed to get their students of sea-related majors aware that spoken English is of vital importance especially for their profession. If the university and teachers let them know this, then students will also get to realize the importance of spoken English to their future. In this way, the studying motivation, behaviors and habits will be improved to a large extent.

Then, schools can encourage students to participate in some spoken English tests such as CET-4, CET-6 spoken test, IELTS and some oral contests. If students get good results, they can be given certain quality bonus or more academic credits. For teachers, if their students get good marks, they can be given more points in the title evolution. In this way, both students and teachers will become very concerned with the speaking ability.

Additionally, schools can open some elective courses that are connected with spoken English. Through the elective courses, students can get systematic speaking rules and more practice in class or after class in pairs. There can also be role plays among partners to play out some fairy tales, movie clips and so on. In this way, the elective class will be much more interesting and attractive.

3. Develop creative teaching methods

In order to develop the speaking capacity of students, teachers should pay more attention to their teaching methods. Firstly, teachers should set students as the class centre. Unlike the traditional lecturing mode, teachers should give students some time to enable them to speak and practice both in class and after class. In the classroom, teachers should be the organizer instead of the center. They can give some questions before lectures and throughout them, offering some opportunities for students to give their own answers.

Besides, teachers should also offer extra guidance for studying after class. For example, they can give some homework for students after class to carry out some dialogues, speeches, role plays and so on. When the class begins, the teacher can choose one to two groups to act it out.

What is most important, teachers should use more vivid and distinctive pictures, questions, situations, as well as topics to gain the attention and interest of their students. If they meet some interesting materials, students will become much more active and absorbed.

4. Add more class hours

In order to improve the spoken English quality, there should be more hours both for the class semesters and hours in each term. For studying semesters, there should be more semesters such as five or six terms during the whole university years. In this way, students can have more time to study English and will not forget it totally before they graduate. They can have more chances to practice listening and speaking.

Moreover, there should be more class hours. Students can have different English courses for at least four times a week. Only in this way can students be exposed to enough English conditions and have more opportunities and time to study, listening and speaking, which is also very helpful to shape their critical way of thinking in English. This can help to improve their speaking capacity in turn.

However, the class schedule cannot be too intensive. For example, if there are too many classes every week, but the terms are too short, the studying efficiency will not be very satisfying. Instead, the studying process should be prolonged to more semesters and the class hours in each term should be well planned.

Conclusion

In this paper, it can be found out that there are some problems and causes of spoken English in students of sea-related majors, including the facts that the oral skills are generally low, students lack goals, teaching methods are limited, and the class hours are limited. Under such conditions, there are some strategies put forward in this paper. There are some useful suggestions. We can improve oral skills training, help students establish goals, develop creative teaching methods, and add more class hours. In this way, the speaking ability of many students can be improved.

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