

A Study on the Improvement of Students' English Application Ability in Sino-foreign Cooperative Education Program in Higher Vocational Colleges

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Abstract: In recent years, Sino-foreign cooperative education has developed into an important form of international cooperation and exchange in higher vocational education. Through this way, more students with higher international professional level are cultivated and exported, which has a positive effect on education reform. However, there are still some shortcomings and problems in English teaching in Sino-foreign cooperative education. This paper discusses the problems existing in English teaching under Sino-foreign cooperative education in higher vocational colleges, and then aims to seek ways to improve students English application ability.

Keywords: Sino-foreign Cooperative Education ; Higher Vocational Colleges; English Application Ability; Improvement

1. Introduction of Sino-foreign cooperative education

In the context of globalization and internationalization, more and more international educational cooperation and exchange is encouraged by the educational authorities, so Sino-foreign cooperative education projects have also been developing rapidly, which play an important role in introducing foreign high-quality educational resources and improving the quality of personnel training.

With the continuous promotion of the “the Belt and Road” education and the implementation of relevant national policies, China encourages Sino-foreign cooperative education in the fields of higher education and vocational education. Especially in recent years, with the development of vocational education, Sino-foreign cooperative education at the higher vocational level has also received strong policy support. Sino-foreign cooperative education plays an important role in promoting the curriculum and teaching reform of vocational colleges, serving the needs of national development strategies and “going out” enterprises, cultivating technical talents with international perspectives and international rules, improving the quality of education, expanding international influence, and promoting modern development.

The mode of Sino-foreign cooperative education is a new mode which is promoted by Chinese higher education, which is also an important symbol of the development of education towards internationalization. Compared with domestic general higher education, it is characterized by its main educational goal of cultivating international competitive talents and its development for international teaching (Zhangye, 2017)^[1]. Sino-foreign cooperative education involves teaching management, student management, teacher training and other aspects, among which English teaching is the most basic and the most important part. This paper discusses the problems related to English teaching in Sino-foreign cooperative education program in higher vocational colleges.

2. Problems in English teaching in Sino-foreign cooperative education in higher vocational colleges

2.1 Analysis of the current situation of Sino-foreign cooperative students in higher vocational colleges

According to the current situation of our country, most of the students enrolled in higher vocational colleges are those with poor academic performance or choose higher vocational colleges due to various internal and external factors. The learning ability of the students is relatively weak, and they lack the ability of autonomous learning. To some degree, they are not interested in college English learning. Therefore the English proficiency of vocational college students is relatively weak.

2.2 The English curriculum needs to be updated

Reasonable curriculum design is an important task in promoting the smooth development of English teaching. Currently, there is a common situation of unreasonable curriculum design in Sino-foreign cooperative education projects. The main problem lies in the fact that the public English course cannot be effectively connected with the professional English course, which will have a great impact on the subsequent study of students.

2.3 The competence of Chinese English teachers needs to be improved

In Sino-foreign cooperative education, the English teaching requires teachers to break traditional teaching ways, absorb different teaching concepts at home and abroad, and gradually form a unique set of English teaching methods that adapt to international education. However, most Chinese English teachers have followed the traditional Chinese teaching concepts, and the teaching methods may be not flexible and innovative.

2.4 Chinese and foreign teachers lack of communication

Sino-foreign cooperative education programs in higher vocational colleges not only have their own Chinese teachers, but also employ a large number of foreign teachers. In the practical teaching, foreign teachers emphasize on letting students raise, analyze and solve problems independently. However, Chinese teachers pay more attention to basic and theoretical teaching that can make students lay a more solid foundation in English learning. The teaching differences between Chinese and foreign teachers are an important factor leading to students' learning difficulties. The lack of communication between Chinese and foreign teachers will make it difficult for students to adapt to the different teaching methods, thus affecting their learning effect. Therefore, Chinese and foreign teachers should cooperate, exchange and learn from each other, and give full play to the advantages of the two teaching methods.

3. Methods to improve students' English application ability

3.1 Optimize the curriculum system of English teaching in higher vocational colleges

The English curriculum of Sino-foreign cooperative colleges should be different from that in ordinary colleges, and should be carried out based on the national English teaching standard. Therefore, to update the English teaching curriculum system which is the basic content to improve the quality of English teaching (Wangyong, 2014)^[2].

The Sino-foreign cooperative education program should consider the students' foundation and future English development before starting the full English teaching by foreign teachers, and implement the combination of basic and intensive English language teaching. In the teaching plan, vocational colleges should increase the credits and hours of English teaching, while offering specialized English courses and basic English courses in different semesters to ensure the gradient of English learning and help students achieve the goal of transitional English learning. After the update of the curriculum system, teachers should focus on guiding students, teach them some useful tips in learning English, and comprehensively improve their abilities in listening, speaking, reading, writing, as well as other aspects.

3.2 Improve teachers' all-round quality for teaching

English teachers should achieve effective integration between English and professional knowledge. Firstly, it is necessary to improve one's professional knowledge and professional English proficiency. English teachers can regularly conduct teaching and research activities with specialized-course teachers to promptly solve professional problems. What's more, regularly select outstanding English teachers to study and training abroad, update teaching concepts, and improve English teaching level. Finally, make full use of the higher vocational colleges' English teaching resources, regard English teachers and foreign teachers as an English teaching team, and carry out teaching discussion activities on teaching concepts, evaluation methods and other aspects together to inspire and help students improve their English proficiency.

3.3 Creating a comprehensive English learning environment

It is necessary for Sino-foreign cooperative higher vocational colleges to improve the quality of English teaching and provide better learning environment for students.

Firstly, Actively carry out extracurricular activities, such as English morning reading, English salon, English oral competition, so that students can apply what they have learned outside of class and integrate English learning into various occasions such as their learning, life, and entertainment. At the same time, we aim to broaden students' international perspectives, create conditions for understanding multiculturalism, and enhance their interest in learning English.

Secondly, make full use of the multi-functional, modern language classroom, equipped with English language learning system,

which can improve students' English autonomous learning ability. Little (1990:7) considers learner autonomy as “essentially a matter of the learner's psychological relation to the process and content of learning”^[3]. By doing this , it can improve students learner autonomy as well as their English proficiency.

Thirdly, organize students to participate in English-related skills competitions (such as oral English, writing, etc.) , achieve the goal of promoting learning and teaching , and finally enhance the teaching level of teachers and improve students' English ability.

Fourthly, optimize educational conditions and create a relaxed and harmonious teaching environment. Actively creating an atmosphere similar to foreign classrooms and adopting an open classroom layout, which can bring face-to-face communication, alleviate students' tension, and achieve the harmony and contradiction between Chinese and foreign cultures.

3.4 Strengthen English teaching cooperation between Chinese and foreign teachers

The advantage of English education in Sino-foreign cooperative higher vocational colleges lies in the ability to integrate the resources from both sides and further strengthen the quality of education and improve the utilization of educational resources. We should constantly integrate foreign educational concepts, update teaching methods, effectively improve students' learning efficiency in classroom teaching, so that students can master the skills and methods of learning English. After communicating and exchanging ideas with foreign teachers, our Chinese teachers do not necessarily need to fully follow the educational methods of foreign teachers, but should learn from the essence of them and explore local teaching methods that are conducive to students' learning (Jiangyong, 2014)^[4]. In the process of teaching, teachers should continuously integrate excellent English education resources both domestically and internationally that are beneficial to the students' learning, and fully integrate these favorable educational resources into English education courses, so that students can have access to learn more knowledge.

4. Conclusion

Sino-foreign cooperative education program in higher vocational colleges is a new type of education mode for international cooperation and exchange in China. It is also an important symbol of education internationalization and professionalization, and also presents new challenges and opportunities for vocational English teaching. This paper discusses the problems and countermeasures related to English teaching in Sino-foreign cooperative education projects in higher vocational colleges. It is hoped that English teaching in higher vocational colleges under the Sino-foreign cooperative education mode can achieve rapid development.

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