

A Study on the Value and Supplementary Measures of Applying Multimedia Technology to College English Listening Teaching

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Abstract: Listening has always been a difficulty in college English teaching, and it is very common to introduce multimedia technology into listening classes. This article aims to explain the value of multimedia technology in college English listening teaching, respectively stimulating students' interest, timely conveying information and creating a real language environment. However, there are some problems resulting from excessive and improper application of multimedia. It is recommended to have students participate in preparing multimedia courseware, require teachers to follow teaching goals and increase the interaction between teachers and students. In this way multimedia technology can better serve college English listening teaching.

Keywords: Multimedia; College English; Listening

1. Introduction

Based on the scores of Chinese College English Test Band 4 and Band 6, listening is regarded as the most difficult part of English learning among college students. Jiang Tianping pointed out in his "Survey and Analysis of the Current Situation of College English Teaching" that 42% of college students believe that listening is the biggest challenge in learning and exams.^[1] In the era of the Internet, the information that college students are exposed to is constantly changing. The traditional listening teaching mode can no longer meet the learning needs of contemporary college students. Therefore, it is imperative to put multimedia technologies into use to improve English listening teaching. "Multimedia technology is a technology that utilizes computers to comprehensively process various information such as text, graphics, images, sound, animation, videos, etc., to establish logical relationships and interact with humans."^[2]

The application of multimedia in the classroom can change the language environment that previously lacks driving force. When intuitive information is conveyed to learners, multimedia provides multiple ways of communication, allowing language learners to explore, search and give feedback. It can be said that multimedia technology is a breakthrough in computer-aided teaching technology. With the deepening of quality education the teaching philosophy has shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered, and the use of multimedia is also constantly improving.

2. Value of Multimedia Technology Applied in College English Listening Teaching

Multimedia technology has been widely used college English teaching, and teacher benefit from its feasibility, creativity and efficiency. The addition of multimedia in college English teaching has brought tremendous changes to teaching strategies and textbook selection. It not only provides students with opportunities to interact with real English but also promotes their understanding of the culture in the English world. In this way, the application of multimedia technology can fully mobilize students' enthusiasm, transmit current affairs news and effectively provide a real English environment.

2.1 To Stimulate Students' Interest

In traditional listening classes, the teaching tools are only chalk, blackboard and audiotapes. A teacher acts as an intermediary to connect the recording materials with the students. If a teacher plays a famous speech as a listening practice material, students can only listen to it but can not see the speaker. Compared with traditional tools, multimedia technology combines sound, images, text and video, making the listening environment more diverse, vivid and interesting. This makes it easier to attract students' attention and immerse themselves in the context. For example, if a US presidential campaign speech is presented in video format, which includes cheers and applause from the audience, students can easily put them in the exciting moment. "The use of multimedia for auxiliary teaching is to stimulate students' interest, transcend the limitations of traditional media, transform abstraction into images and transform complexity into

simplicity.”^[3] For contemporary college students who are accustomed to receiving information through the internet, this visual and direct teaching material form is more likely to stimulate their interest and promote their active participation.

2.2 To Timely Output Information

The writing of college listening textbooks is generally earlier than classroom teaching, and the content of the textbooks is easily outdated. In the research on the problems and countermeasures in the teaching of college English listening courses, Sun Ruixia found that the reason why college students do not like listening classes lies in the lack of understanding, poor teaching environment, monotonous content and improper teaching time arrangement. ^[4] For contemporary college students living in a society full of new things and information, they are more concerned about what happened today or what will happen in the future rather than what happened a few years ago. So monotonous and outdated content is one of the reasons why students cannot interest themselves in listening. For example, the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics arouse wide concern on college campus. Although students can talk about Olympic events in Chinese, they may not be familiar with relevant English expressions. If multimedia is used to assist teaching, students can listen to real-time English reports of the Winter Olympics. This is more closely related to the daily lives of college students than listening to traditional tapes.

2.3 To Create a Realistic Language Environment

With the trend of globalization, communication with people from different countries in English is becoming increasingly common, and encountering "foreigners" who speak English with non-standard speeds and pronunciations is also becoming more usual. Contemporary college students are able to recognize the traces of accents when interacting with foreigners or watching foreign language programs. Most students find it difficult to adapt to similar listening materials. Multimedia technology provides college students with different language accents, thus can help them get used to English expressions with accents from different places. For example, the videos of a famous speech platform TED have gathered many speakers from non-native English speaking countries. Some have more serious accent problems than students, but their ideas and values are worthwhile to be conveyed. The playback of videos can help students focus on the information and adapt to these unfamiliar accents, thus they can welcome the arrival of globalization with an open mind.

3. Supplementary Measures to Better Multimedia Application

Multimedia technology cannot replace traditional English listening teaching content and methods but should complement textbooks and relative materials. They two cannot be viewed in opposition. Here some suggestions are proposed to help teachers reduce the pressure of lesson preparation, clarify teaching objectives, enhance classroom interaction and achieve the goal of improving teaching efficiency and quality.

3.1 Students Participate in Courseware Preparation

As an important component of teaching-oriented education, students mainly participate in classroom activities and after-school exercises, thus they have fewer opportunities to participate in lesson preparation. If students and teachers work together to prepare multimedia resources, teachers can understand students' interests and focus more on teaching methods and classroom activity design. Moreover, it can enhance students' abilities like collecting, selecting and summarizing information. For example, to prepare a theme about natural disasters, the teacher can allow students to collect videos, pictures and news reports related to various natural disasters. Teachers can offer advice and guidance, and students will also gain the ability to prepare for group activities. Students can also use these materials as resources for classroom presentations or group discussions, which is equivalent to completing the collection of materials for speaking in classes. This can effectively improve classroom learning efficiency and put listening content into the use of oral output.

3.2 Select Materials Based on Teaching Objectives

“There are two forms of multimedia teaching: computer-based teaching and computer-assisted teaching.” ^[5] The use of multimedia in English teaching aims to assist and optimize classroom teaching, but some teachers overemphasize the fun and attractiveness of materials and neglect the original intention. Therefore, when multimedia courseware is involved in the teaching process, attention should be paid to how and what to choose as listening materials. Multimedia courseware should be closely related to the teaching content. If listening materials hinder the achievement of teaching objectives, it is important to reduce unnecessary parts and make the listening texts consistent with the teaching objectives. For example, in order to cater to students, some teachers play some funny English cartoons, movies and entertainment programs during classes. In this way, multimedia courseware becomes the main teaching content, and listening classes become a “relaxing moment” with entertainment as the main focus and learning as the auxiliary. So teachers are supposed to choose more serious listening materials, such as original news broadcasts, current affairs columns and speech programs.

3.3 Increase Teacher-student Interaction

In listening classes, college students and teachers often sit in front of computers. This may reduce classroom interaction, especially eye contact. Therefore, appropriately increasing the time and intensity of interaction can liven up the classroom atmosphere, effectively encourage or supervise students to complete learning tasks. Generally speaking, students are more likely to be highly focused when asked to answer questions immediately after listening to listening materials, and this kind of attention needs to be maintained in listening practice. The impact of interaction has shown effectiveness in many courses, including having students to ask the teacher questions about listening content. Yan Wenpei proposed in a study that intermittent use of multimedia should follow the principle of teacher-led instruction. [6] It is not wise to completely separate the application of multimedia from the teacher's explanation. Excessive use of multimedia is not advocated as a new teaching form, but teacher-student interaction is highly encouraged.

4. Conclusion

The increasing popularity of multimedia technology in college English teaching has shown obvious advantages in stimulating student' enthusiasm, transmitting information and creating a vivid language environment. With the passage of time, the development of multimedia technology will undoubtedly better serve the teaching of college English listening. To make the use of multimedia more convenient, it is suggested that college English teachers should make full use of multimedia technology and find more ways to reform the listening classes. Firstly, the active participation of students and the improvement of their computer skills can alleviate the work pressure of teachers, which is also a new requirement for new English teachers. Secondly, the correct selection of multimedia materials helps to clarify the purpose of listening training, and listening exercises cannot be downgraded to entertainment activities. Thirdly, increasing interaction can maintain high concentration of students' attention, highlight their dominant position and prevent multimedia to replace the dominant role of teachers. In summary, the college English listening classroom and multimedia technology have achieved mutually, and multimedia courseware specifically designed for English listening teaching needs to be deeply developed.

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