The Implication of “Teaching and Coaching” Pedagogy in College English Teaching for Non-English Major Students

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Abstract. In Chinese undergraduate education, College English is a general mandatory course for most majors. At present, College English teaching generally adopts an unilateral pedagogy that one teacher is responsible for the whole teaching and learning procedure which is neither efficient nor engaging. Yet, language learning is closely related to life. To help non-English major students to learn and use English well, building a multilateral pedagogy that involves not only the teacher but also the teaching assistant could be a valuable alternative.

Introduction

Wang Shouren, who is professor in Nanjing University and the Chairman of University English Language Teaching Advisory Board under the Ministry of Education of China, pointed out in the 11th English Language Forum of the Six Provinces and One City of East China that China sees English as an important part of cross-cultural communication. It is an essential method to safeguard the national interests and a significant expression of China’s soft power. It is considered a crucial ingredient to realize the Chinese dream. Li (2014) contends that English language teaching is very critical in the development of China. Non-English major students are also important audiences for English language teaching [1]. The reality is that students specialized in English language majors have relatively strong motivation as well as better language learning skills. In contrast, students who are not English language majors are not. College English is only a general mandatory course for them. The purpose of their language course study is to pass the exams and College Entrance Examination (CET) 4/6, etc. In addition, most students do not have a set of systematic language learning skills. Studies have shown that how college students perceive English learning is closely related to globalization and the professional level of the learning environment. As an international language, English is the most important communicative tool for human beings [2]. Therefore, in English teaching, teachers should focus on engaging students, help them understand the usage of language tool, and build an immersive environment for them to improve English [3].

Present Situation of English Teaching for Non-English Major Students

In non-English majors, as the name implies, students’ majors are not English, and English is only a general mandatory course of their undergraduate study. Teachers generally only teach the knowledge in the textbook. The widely used textbooks nowadays are “New Concept English” and “New Vision English”. In terms of the textbook itself, “New Concept English” contains short passages while the passage length in “New Vision English” is much longer. In the teaching process, teachers can refine the content and key points based on the teaching materials. However, the student assessment is often oversimplified - written and listening exams are the most popular evaluation methods. Such solidified test method limits how teachers prepare and deliver the course. Therefore, students are not well-engaged and motivated during the learning process. Students’ focuses are no longer on absorbing knowledge but rather on dealing with exams and earn credits.

In the long run, under the ideological framework of the traditional education, the school and the instructors can only grasp the exams and classrooms, and the exams are often not validated. Even if the teachers want to improve the students’ English learning ability, they do not have enough
autonomy to improve the situation. In terms of the assessment, many schools blindly lower the graduation standard of English language as their students cannot meet the requirement. Although this method objectively improves the graduation rate, it directly leads to the decline of the teaching psychology expectations of the instructors, thus affecting teaching quality. For students, due to the reduced difficulty level of English in graduation conditions, the study of English language may also be ignored. This directly reduces the teachers’ teaching expectations and thus affects the quality of teaching. For students, due to the reduced graduation standard, the motivation to learning English well may also be affected to a large extent. In interviews with some non-English major students, many students said that English course is a general mandatory, and their goal is to pass the school examinations and the CET. Therefore, they do not pay enough attention to improve their language skills.

Factors Affecting the English Teaching Efficiency for Non-English Major Students

In the teaching process, a lot of factors can affect the teaching efficiency and teaching outcome. The shift in learning focus caused by learning inertia also directly affects the overall education plan of the school. The social environment has a positive impact on the shaping of English talents. On the other hand, some social trends can also have some negative impacts on students, such as inertia and learning focus shift. This also directly affects the overall education plan of the school.

The Disruptive Influence of Social Thoughts on Students’ English Learning

Reform and opening up are getting deeper and deeper. Under the background of globalization, various social trends in the world have spread in Chinese society. In this complex social environment, conflicts of interest are frequent, social contradictions are prominent, and social consciousness are also diversified, which leads to the mutual agitation of domestic and overseas social trends. For non-English major students, they have their own subject required courses to learn. When they are struggling in learning those core courses, they may be resentful about the College English classes that seem to have little to do with the major itself [4]. Taking the New Liberalism as an example, the new liberalism promotes the idea of individual freedom, self-realization, free competition, and opposes external intervention. It is easy for students to attribute their frustrations or failures in English studies to the Chinese educational system. This will aggravate the spread of the nonsense theory that English language is useless and will ultimately affect students’ confidence in English learning [5].

The Impact of School’s Academic Planning on English Teaching

At the school level, the academic plan for each major often ignores the college English course. After the class is scheduled for the College English at the beginning of the semester, the school no longer pays attention to the students’ English learning. Although each school has an English language requirement for the graduation of non-English major students, when the number of students who can meet this standard is small, the school will actively lower the standard, instead of trying to improve the teaching and learning of College English. Chinese universities generally require students to pass the in-school College English test and CET-4. However, when the most students could not meet the standard, the school lowers the score requirement from 425 to 385. In fact, this practice is irresponsible and is against the idea of college English education.

The Impact of Students’ Learning Pressure and Extracurricular Activities on English Learning

At present, under the general direction of National Applied University Reform and Applied Talent Training, many schools encourage students to participate in extracurricular clubs and encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities. The original intention of this practice is to improve the students’ practical ability, improve students’ comprehensive quality, and cultivate students’ adaptability to society. However, weakly guided extracurricular activities have made some students with poor academic performance and unhealthy learning habits spend their time on the
extracurricular activities, while the normal academic courses and English learning are out of their sight. Though students have a lot of academic pressures, they continue to invest more time in extracurricular activities. Hence, it is the general mandatory courses, especially College English course, where the student can find the time.

**The Construction of “Teaching and Coaching” Pedagogy**

English teaching is transforming from the previous unilateral teaching model to a multilateral teaching model that combines with modern information technology. Zhang (2018) asserts that with such context, educators should innovate English teaching pedagogy to better help non-English major students to improve their English level [6]. “Teaching and Coaching” could be an alternative way to refine the current English teaching methods. It is a waste of educational resources if the teacher has to undertake both the teaching and the evaluation task.

The head teacher and the counselor should take the responsibility to arrange the review sessions and evaluate students’ assignments which will save plenty of time. In the assessment of the English teacher, the head teacher, as well as the counselor, the CET 4/6 should be an evaluation criterion. The comprehensive cultivation of English listening, speaking, reading, and writing should also be put on the education plan. On the other hand, the school can increase the weight of English course credits and encourage students to allocate more time in English study. In the process of building campus culture, English elements should be involved to create an English learning atmosphere.

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**Figure 1. Pattern Diagram of “Teaching and Coaching” Pedagogy in College English Teaching for Non-English Major Students.**

- **Class time**
  - Person in charge: Instructor
  - Primary mission: Organize class activities & complete the guiding task

- **Extracurricular time**
  - Person in charge: Head teacher & counselor
  - Primary mission: Organize English learning and after-class supervision, ensure students’ English study time

- **Instructor and auxiliary teaching staff**
  - Communicate and cooperate with each other, making full use of teaching environment to improve students English study interest and learning ability

- **Institutional guarantee**
  - English performance and English level test should be included in the evaluation and graduation assessment.
  - Teaching English should be conducted in listening, speaking, reading and writing aspects.
  - There should be extensive extracurricular activities aimed at improving English.
The school can establish a communication channel among the English teacher, the head teacher, and the counselor to help them understand the students’ learning status, and then facilitate to find out the problems and jointly explore the corresponding countermeasures. This can provide educators with a comprehensive understanding of the student’s learning status to better organize English self-study and to improve classroom teaching efficiency. School can make rational use of students’ study time in colleges and increase the frequency of quizzes to motivate students improving their English proficiency. All these factors will form a multilateral pedagogy which will boost non-English major students’ English proficiency.

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References


