On the Application of Experiential Teaching in Cooking English

Min TANG, Cai-Xia LIAO and Teng-Juan LI
Chongqing Business Vocational College, Chongqing, China

Keyword: Cooking English, Traditional Teaching, Experimental Teaching

Abstract. Cooking English is a professional English course for the major of Cooking Technology and Nutrition in Higher Vocational colleges. It is a compulsory course for sophomores in college. The learning of this course requires students to have some listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities in advance. However, the college entrance examination scores of students in higher vocational colleges are generally low, and there are not a few students whose English is not well. Such current situation of the college student leads to the dilemma of English study. Experiential teaching is widely used in English learning. It is mainly applied to the study of College English, rarely applied to the professional Cooking English. This paper tries to find a suitable learning method for culinary majors by learning the existing research results and experience, so as to improve the teaching level of professional cooking English in Higher Vocational colleges and then enhance teaching effectiveness and improving the professional English teaching ability.

1. Introduction of Experiential Teaching
1.1 The Concept of Experiential Teaching

Experiential teaching, as its name implies, is to let students immerse themselves in a completely natural learning activity through experience, to acquire the required knowledge in the way of acquisition, rather than traditional teacher-student or professor-student, that is, “Duck-stuffing” type of teaching mode. In such situation, the students should be involved in the classroom activity actively and voluntary, then they acquire the knowledge naturally. So this is a more natural and profound way of learning professional English. Experiential teaching requires teachers to set up scenarios according to the knowledge points and learning content of the course so that students can integrate into it and learn naturally. Experiential teaching method reduces the students’ fear of learning, and improves the students’ active participation at the same time, which is conducive to the true mastery of knowledge and effective output.

Experience is a kind of activity, and it is also the result of an activity. In activities, students should participate actively and experience the whole learning process. From the experience of activities, students get a kind of summary and reflection on what they have learned in such class, as well as correct application, which is the effect of activities.

For teachers, it is necessary to simulate or create real situations and opportunities to represent and restore all the knowledge in the course of teaching, according to the students’ cognitive characteristics and their knowledge level, on the basis on students’ certain English input and output capacity. The students can understand what they have learn in the classroom and form correct English knowledge construction in the process of experience, so as to develop their own language competence and communicative competence, and generate their own meaningful language output.

Experiential teaching is a comprehensive improvement of traditional teaching methods on the basis of drawing lessons from and absorbing situational teaching methods and psychological cognitive theory. It not only highlights the students’ subjective characteristics and real practicality in situational teaching, but also strengthens the cognitive subject characteristics and emotional individualization on the basis of cognitive psychology theory, which makes the students individualized. With the strong support of teaching theory, experimental teaching has formed its own unique style and characteristics. Experiential teaching, which is a teaching method of significance, means that on the basis of understanding students’ cognitive characteristics and cognitive rules, through creating actual or repetitive situations and opportunities, textbook
knowledge can be presented or restored in the classroom situation, so that students can experience the situation or opportunities personally, understand textbook knowledge, enhance cognitive ability in the process, strengthen the emotional expression.

Experiential teaching comes from experiential learning. Mentioning about experiential learning theory, it comes from a wide range of sources, involving pedagogy, psychology and cognitive science. Dewey, an American educator, first puts forward the concept of experiential education. He believed that the way people perceive the world is to contact the world directly and all real education comes from personal experience. His "learning by doing" theory outlines the common characteristics of the theoretical sources of experiential learning.

For the first time, in 1984, the concept of experiential learning was formally proposed by David Kolb, professor of obstruction at the Widham School of Management, Casey Reserve University. In 1984, David Cooper published Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of learning and development, which fully expounds the theory of experiential learning. He interpreted experiential learning as a process of experiential cycle: concrete experience—reflection on experience—forming abstract concept—action experiment—concrete experience. Such a cycle forms a penetrating learning experience, in which learners automatically complete feedback and adjustment, undergo a learning process and enhance cognitive ability in learning experience. He constructed this experiential learning model, namely "experiential learning circle". He proposed that effective learning should start from experience, then express his opinions, then reflect on it, then summarize and form a theory, and finally apply the theory to practice, that is, it forms a complete study circle.

Experiential teaching requires students to fully mobilize their learning enthusiasm, enhance their initiative, respond to teachers' requirement, participate in every classroom activities and every teaching stage. Through such activity participation the students can conduct self-reflection and self-observation in these consciously designed teaching links, so as to continuously enhance their learning ability.

Among them, the form of teaching is mainly the activities and games designed by teachers according to the content of textbooks. As far as English subjects are concerned, they are mainly English dialogues and simulating the language behavior of foreigners. This process emphasizes that on the premise of students' active participation in activities, they constantly think, observe, correct themselves again through the experience of various learning situations and then get rich learning insights.

1.2 Basic Characteristics of Experiential Teaching

Compared with situational teaching, experiential teaching has more remarkable characteristics. Firstly, experiential teaching abandons the traditional teaching concept of teachers as the main body, advocates the return of learning subjects, that is, the students themselves. Such teaching method strengthens the characteristics of learning subjectivity, that is, to give full play to students' subjective initiative in learning. Secondly, in the experiential teaching, the teacher carefully prepares the interactive activities between teachers and students. In the English class, the students learn and reflect on themselves by means of situational dialogue and behavior imitation, find out the problems in the learning process, and make self-correction, and achieve self-improvement through classroom activities again. Thirdly, the experiential teaching method evaluates students' achievements from many angles and in all directions. On the one hand, it reflects students' learning effect through examination papers. On the other hand, it reflects students' mastery of knowledge through their performance in the daily teaching process. Through the result of evaluation, the teacher then adjusts the difficulty and progress of teaching in time.

2. The Present Situation of Professional Cooking English Teaching in Higher Vocational Colleges

Foreign research on Bilingual Teaching of professional courses originated earlier and has gained mature experience. The bilingual teaching research of specialized courses in China is relatively late under the background of China's accession to the WTO, economic globalization imperatively.
Professional cooking English teaching of Culinary Specialty Course is another way of English study besides English class. It can improve students' English level and make them gradually form the ability and habit of thinking in English of Culinary Specialty subject. It will lay the preliminary foundation for advanced bilingual talents who can work in both Chinese and English in the future.

The students in Higher Vocational Colleges consist of two parts. One is from the general college entrance examination. The other is from the individual enrollment. The students who enter higher vocational colleges generally do not achieve satisfactory achievement in the college entrance examination, especially their English performance is not well, which is a common phenomenon.

In the process of teaching, the author found that many students from remote mountainous areas seldom learn English. Because they do not understand what the professors teach for a long time, they give up learning English. Some students come from secondary vocational schools and have never taken English classes at all. Any English learning cannot be separated from long-term listening, speaking, reading and writing practice and persistence, let alone professional cooking English. In the teaching process of cooking English, the author found that only a few students can communicate simply.

In the process of learning cooking English, students of Culinary Specialty cannot correctly express the events and instruments they want to describe, thus communicate accurately with the partner is becoming a big difficult in the classroom practical activities. The main reasons are lacking of vocabulary and the unclear grammatical structure of English.

Examination-oriented education in senior high schools emphasizes reading and writing teaching neglecting listening and speaking practice in English classroom. Vocational college students lack listening and speaking practice, in the classroom oral teaching cannot conduct in the whole 40 minutes, which is the another reason due to failure of communication. How to change this dilemma in English study in the vocational college, the author thinks it is a long-term process and is also an urgent problem to be solved.

Although there are many new and complex words in English for culinary specialty, especially utensils, vegetables and production techniques, our communication is relatively simple. For the students of this major, they are familiar with such utensils, vegetables and production techniques, and cooking English is a language which they can learn use in their future work. It is special difficult for them, as long as they study hard, they will surely improve and master the accurate way of communication in the actual cooking experience and in kitchen, hotel and other working environment. There is an old saying in China: Nothing is difficult in the world, just for those who are willing to do it. Just do it, you can achieve.

3. The Application of Experiential Teaching in English Teaching for Cuisine Majors

The emphases of experiential teaching are students’ conscious experience, acquiring a kind of natural knowledge through immersion, repeating it constantly, so as to improve their knowledge level. As cooking English is a professional course and practical course for students majoring in cooking, so the author considers the teachers should find some way to enhance students’ classroom participation and let them open their mouth to speak English out. Only good communication and interaction in classroom can improve their actual performance in English. The author will analyze how to improve students' practical learning ability and learning effect in cooking English class from three aspects.

3.1 Make Students Recognize the Importance of Studying English

First, in international star-rated chain hotels, everyone can only use their own English names, not Chinese names. If you don't learn English, you will not read your own English name, nor will you read other colleagues' English names which will place you in embarrassing situation. Secondly, the facilities, equipment and raw materials in the western kitchen of international star hotel are all labeled in English. If you don't learn English, you will not even know the condiments, and you will make many jokes, such as, vinegar is mistaken for soy sauce. Third, soldiers who do not want to be generals are not good soldiers. The chief executive of the kitchen is mostly a Western cook. Because
Western chefs not only take into account both Chinese and Western cooking skills, but also have a good command of English. They can communicate freely with hotel executives and subordinates from all over the world in English. Therefore, if you want to be an executive chef, you must learn English.

3.2 Application of Experiential Teaching in English Classroom Teaching

Traditional cooking English courses are mainly taught by teachers and listened to by students. The learning effect is not good. The author believes that the teaching of professional cooking English should break away from the traditional teaching mode around teaching materials and teachers, make bold innovations, integrate theory with practice. English teaching should closely focus on the professional courses of Western food, bind cooking English and professional courses together and complement each other, so that students can get in touch with the actual food materials and operation in professional courses. The vocabulary and language points learned in the course are the objects and situations that we have personally touched and experienced. This is also a preliminary attempt of experiential teaching mode in professional English classroom teaching.

This paper takes Western food as an example. Teachers of Western cuisine specialty and English teachers need to communicate repeatedly. According to the class time and knowledge system, practical and reasonable teaching plan and content should be formulated, which not only meets the teaching content requirements of Western cuisine production, but also conforms to the language teaching rules of English class and guarantees the complete knowledge system. In this way, when teaching English classes, it is convenient for English teachers to arrange courses systematically, and better introduce the cultural background of Western food and related common sense. The Western food teachers and English teachers should communicate the teaching plan and PPT with each other in time, comment on each other, perfect their deficiencies and finalize their individual teaching plan and contents. Teachers' mutual consultation is a very important step in the teaching mode. It breaks the situation that teachers prepare their lessons separately and their resources are closed. It avoids the serious disconnection between the professional courses of Western food and the professional English teaching.

Before cooking English major class, students participate in Western food production in the professional culinary class. For English classes, this is a pre-class experience and preparation. English teachers also attend classes with students throughout the course and make detailed records. This process is an experiential learning for both students and teachers. After watching the operation demonstration of professional teachers, students should record and reproduce the raw materials, condiments, kitchen utensils and operation methods needed in the dishes taught by teachers. In the process, the sensory stimulation of vision, hearing and taste is very strong. The greatest advantage of English teachers' attendance in class is to make up for their own professional deficiencies, and also to have a very intuitive access to the physical and operational content of the course they are going to teach. It avoids the phenomenon that the content taught by teachers in the past has not been experienced by themselves and avoids propagating the subject according to the text. English teachers revise and improve the pre-made teaching plan and PPT according to the content of professional classroom listening, so as to enrich the content and integrate it with practice more closely.

On the basis of teachers' pre-class preparation and students' and teachers' pre-class experience, English teachers design various classroom activities according to the teaching content and adopt a variety of teaching methods, such as task-based approach, simulation situational approach and role-playing approach, to encourage students to participate in the classroom. Because of the vivid experience before, students are very interested in what they want to learn in English class. They are very enthusiastic. Moreover, the input and output of language is a relatively complete process in the English class of experiential teaching mode.

In English class, English teachers lead students to review the main ingredients, accessories and kitchen utensils needed for the dish making in the form of pictures and videos, so that students can clearly reproduce the process of making the salad in their minds, and transfer this part from memory...
to prepare for the next learning. This is the first step of experience in class. The second step, that is, language input, teachers use pictures and vocabulary to give students intuitive feelings, so that students do not have an empty understanding of the memory of words. Because of the limitations of space and real classroom situations, the teachers can not completely take the material objects for teaching, but pictures and images can also make up for this deficiency. Thirdly, after the students have touched a lot of vocabulary and done corresponding phonetic exercises, the teachers divide the students into several different groups, assign tasks to each group, create scenes, simulate the production of fruit salad in groups, give a simple explanation in English, let the students act as fruits or tools, and mobilize everyone to participate actively. The vocabulary of each group is different, but it is the vocabulary learned in class and before. At last, according to performance the students have done in the required limited time, the evaluation will be taken by different group and from the teacher. At last, the teacher should give a proper classroom activity conclusion to encourage students’ participation and point out what they will progress in the next time, even assign further task after class to strengthen the knowledge in the class.

3.3 Enhancing the Interest of Classroom Teaching

Interest is the best teacher to learn. The basic stages of learning are acquisition, maintenance and application, and acquisition is the first step. How to enable students to acquire what they should learn with a more positive attitude, rather than teacher-inculcated teaching, requires a good classroom "lead" to stimulate students' desire and enthusiasm for learning and attract their attention. Students majoring in cooking are interested in food, cooking and the study of food. Therefore, when learning English words or sentence grammar, it is advisable to put the content background and focus on food, so as to stimulate students' interest in learning. If the content is far apart, the teacher can also design some interesting imported language to show the humorous and clever side of English.

Combining the characteristics of culinary specialty, the work scene can be reconstructed as an English learning scene in the English classroom. For example, learning how to greet and communicate at work, and how to communicate with customers, etc. Imagine that in the future, when foreigners taste the dishes they cook and discuss with themselves, they will be embarrassed if they do not have a high level of English communication. Or teachers can recommend some cooking-related American dramas for students to watch after class, and then simulate or adapt performances in class.

Watching foreign cooking videos, learning English words, designing and displaying conversations in hotel professional English, and word games are popular classroom activities for students. In addition, although the popularity of video recording of simulated interviews is not high, it can exercise students' oral English ability, on-stage expression ability and improve their self-confidence.

The author believes that in the teaching of cooking English, we should combine the teaching materials and contents of specialized English with the actual production of students' dishes. One is to improve students' interest; the other is that students are more prepared to express their thoughts. This kind of long-term repetitive simulation exercises, the author believes that it is bound to improve students' professional communicative competence. In the process of communication, students will realize their lack of vocabulary and actively memorize it. This is also the only way to improve English.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, professional English learning in higher vocational colleges has a long way to go. It requires the unremitting efforts of teachers and students in their growing period to achieve good achievement. With the introduction of interest and the participation of experiential immersion learning method, students will continuously improve their professional communicative ability and English level in the process of independent learning.
Acknowledgement

This paper is one of the staged achievements of the scientific research project of Chongqing Business Vocational College 2017 (No.25). Name of project: Research and Practice of Experiential Teaching Model of Ideological and Political Course in Higher Vocational Colleges (Project No. SWJWJG201707).

References

