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Research on the Application Path of English Songs in College English Listening and Speaking Teaching

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Abstract: This study analyzes the current situation of college English listening and speaking teaching, points out the limitations of traditional classrooms in listening training and oral expression, and proposes innovative strategies for integrating English songs into listening and speaking teaching based on specific teaching cases. The study found that English songs, with the melody, cultural and interesting nature, can significantly improve students' pronunciation accuracy, listening sensitivity and speaking fluency, as well as enhance their interest in learning and cross-cultural understanding. The study suggests that teachers should take into account students' interests and teaching goals when choosing songs, and design a variety of classroom activities to give full play to the language teaching value of English songs and provide practical reference for the reform of college English teaching.

Keywords: English songs; College English; Listening and speaking teaching

1. Introduction

With the popularization of the Internet in today's society, more and more network resources are gradually covering various fields, forming a powerful knowledge network. It is a huge challenge for education, especially for higher education. College students are the ones who have finished elementary education and secondary education, so learning is no longer a route with a fixed track for them, but a road to self-improvement with more choices and freedom. The abundance of learning resources available online provides college students with strong support to choose what they want to learn based on their interests. Therefore, higher education must fundamentally consider the needs and interests of students, and combine the content of textbook with Internet hotspots to keep teaching up to date and full of fun.

2. Significance of study

English songs are a special form of language, with well-conceived lyrics and melodic melodies. Compared to other forms of English, it is more flexible and interesting. Learning to sing English songs is very helpful for improving English language learners' listening and speaking. When singing English songs, many words in the lyrics need to be read and skimmed, and learners can master many pronunciation skills by learning an English song. In addition, learning English songs requires repeated listening, which is very helpful for the improvement of learners' listening level, and learners will have a strong adaptability to some faster listening materials in the process of daily listening after being familiar with the continuous reading and skimming in English songs.^[1] Learning English songs is also a process of imitation, learners by imitating the singer's pronunciation and intonation, which is very helpful for correcting their pronunciation, especially for some learners who have no foundation in pronunciation learning. Imitating the pronunciation of professional singers is like face to face correction practice with foreign teachers. In addition, learners need to digest the lyrics first, that is, to understand the meaning of many English words in the lyrics, and then to clarify the meaning of the whole song, and to take into account the expression of emotions when singing. Performing an English song in its entirety will also bring a strong sense of accomplishment to learners, enhance their self-confidence in learning English, and make them more courageous to express themselves in English.^[2]

Before most students enter the university, the learning of English is more around the test-taking. The relevance of English learning and test-taking has been greatly reduced in higher education, so it is beneficial to introduce a flexible teaching method such as English song teaching into college English teaching, especially listening and speaking teaching. This method can not only shorten the distance between teachers and students, but also make learning English less boring. At the same time, it is also more in line with the psychological expectations of college students for English learning.^[3]

To sum up, it is of great positive significance to apply English songs to college English listening and speaking teaching, which can highlight the applicability of English, and also allow students to understand the culture of English-spoken countries through learning the content

of songs, improve students' English aesthetics and music literacy, and let students feel the fun of English learning, free themselves from the utilitarian learning mode, and experience the joy of language learning.

3. Analysis of the current situation of college English listening and speaking teaching

At present, the teaching of English listening and speaking in college is still based on task-based teaching. Taking the listening teaching as an example, the listening teaching is still mainly based on listening exercises mostly, the teacher plays audio or video, and the students listen or watch to answer the questions set by the teacher in advance. Due to the different English level of the students, the difficulty of the listening materials and the number of playbacks are uncertain factors in the class, which can easily lead to dullness or boredom in the class. The listening material is too easy, which will cause some students who are good at listening to feel that the task is not challenging and lose interest in the class, while for students whose English is poor, such listening materials still need to be listened repeatedly. If the listening material is difficult, students need to listen repeatedly to find the answer to the question, and listening repeatedly means that a lot of class time is occupied, and the class efficiency will be greatly reduced.^[3] Speaking classes are a shortcoming of college English teaching. Many students are afraid or reluctant to speak English, so they will avoid speaking tasks. Due to the large size of the class, only a small number of students have the opportunity to demonstrate their oral language and receive guidance from the teacher after the speaking tasks are distributed to the whole class, and in this process, it is difficult for the teacher to take care of the overall situation, which virtually gives those students who do not want to participate in the speaking class themselves an opportunity to be silent or say a few words casually. At the same time, due to the limited class time, teachers are unable to reserve too much time for students to demonstrate oral English, which makes the speaking classroom inefficient.

4. Application path analysis

4.1 Application of English songs in listening teaching

Listening is the most important part of daily communication, so listening practice is indispensable in college English teaching, and introducing English song teaching into listening teaching requires teachers to spend time on the selection of songs and the way of teaching. First of all, be sure to consider the student's preference in the choice of songs. Foreign singers favored by college students are usually young and energetic, such as Taylor Swift, Maroon 5, Kanye, Charlie Puth, etc., so teachers can deliberately choose the songs of such singers to teach and sing, which is more likely to arouse students' interest and curiosity. Secondly, the best song to choose is the well-known ones. Students are familiar with the melody of the song, and have heard the song many times on different occasions, so the difficulty of learning is relatively small. In addition, the theme of the song can be fully integrated with the teaching content of the unit, which can help students understand the theme more deeply and shape students' correct values.^[4]

Taking the new version of the Advanced English Course for Universities as an example, the theme of Unit 2 of the textbook is "Tales of True Love", in the introduction part of this unit, students can learn about some ancient Chinese folk love legends from the books, such as "The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl", "Meng Jiangnv", "Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai" and "The Legend of the White Snake", through which students can gain a certain understanding of the ancient Chinese concept of love and the meaning of true love. In order to give students a more comprehensive understanding of love and expand their cross-cultural knowledge, classic Western love stories can also be introduced as a supplement to this unit, such as "Romeo and Juliet", which may be lacking in freshness for students to simply tell this story, and the English song "Love Story" is based on the love story between Romeo and Juliet, which can be used as a listening and cultural material for this unit. "Love Story" is one of the masterpieces of the famous singer Taylor Swift, and the melody of this song is light-hearted and catchy, and many students are familiar with it. First of all, the teacher can lead the students to listen to the song and display the lyrics at the same time, so that the students can have a preliminary understanding of the lyrics. The teacher can then start with the easier chorus part, with the following lyrics:

Romeo take me somewhere we can be alone
I'll be waiting all there's left to do is run
You'll be the prince and I'll be the princess
It's a love story
Baby just say yes

In order to train students' listening, teachers can take the singing once or twice, hide the lyrics, take the form of sentence by sentence playback, let students sing along, will exercise the student's instantaneous memory and ability to listen to the sound, for students who can not sing along directly, let them listen to it several times, write down while listening to the lyrics, and finally the teacher will show the correct lyrics to the students, let the students sing along.

Then there is the main part of the song. The lyrics of this part are a little more complex, and the lyrics are as follows:

We were both young when I first saw you
I closed my eyes and the flashback starts
I'm standing there
On a balcony in summer air

See the lights see the party the ball gowns
I see you make your way through the crowd
And say hello
Little did I know

That you were Romeo you were throwing pebbles
And my daddy said stay away from Juliet
And I was crying on the staircase
Begging you please don't go

First of all, the teacher can hollow out the key words, such as flashback, balcony, ball gown, pebbles, staircase, etc., and let the students write these words while listening, and then restore these words to the lyrics, so that students can guess the meaning of the words according to the context, and the teacher will explain these words one by one, so that students can better understand the lyrics. The teacher can then divide the students into small groups and divide the lyrics into different groups for them to listen to on their own, identify the parts of each section that are conjunctive, omitted and skimmed, and have the students come on stage to demonstrate them to the class. In this process, students listen and imitate to find out some pronunciation rules, such as all the d at the end of "and" can be omitted, and the "t" at the end of "first" in "I first saw you" can be omitted from pronunciation, etc. Finally, the group singing session can take the form of pick-up, with one group taking the lead in singing the song, the group can stop anywhere, and then the next group will pick up the song, which requires each group to listen carefully to the other groups' singing, and in the process to strengthen the memory of the lyrics, and continue to be familiar with it.

Compared with repeated listening exercises, listening to songs is more acceptable to students, and songs with beautiful melodies are not easy to make people feel disgusted even if they are played repeatedly, and repeatedly listening to a corpus, that is, intensive listening, by strengthening the input will have a reverse promotion effect on students' English output ability, which is very worthy of promotion in college English teaching.^[5]

4.2 Application of English songs in speaking teaching

College English speaking teaching mainly include pronunciation correction and oral practice. First of all, for college students who have developed fixed pronunciation habits, correcting their pronunciation needs to be reinforced repeatedly, otherwise it is difficult to have an effect. This is very much in line with song learning.^[6]

Take the English song "Rhythm of the Rain" as an example, this song is a classic old song by The Cascades, which belongs to American country music, with a cheerful rhythm, and has also been selected as an advertising song for Green Arrow chewing gum. The lyrics of the first two lines are as follows:

Listen to the rhythm of the falling rain,
Telling me just what a fool I've been.
I wish that it would go and let me cry in vain,
And let me be alone again.

Among them, the pronunciation of the word rhythm in the first sentence is ['rɪðəm], where the pronunciation of [ð] is more likely for students to make mistakes. The teacher can put "rhythm" and other words with similar pronunciation, let students sing the first sentence, bring different words into it, and let them experience the difference through repeated chanting. In addition, the phrase "in vain" in the second sentence expresses the meaning of "being useless", in which the pronunciation of [v] is ignored by many students, when teaching and singing this part, the teacher can strengthen the pronunciation of this fricative, so that students can listen and learn while singing, so that learning pronunciation is no longer a boring thing.

Applying English songs for oral training can help students break through the "speaking barrier". In oral practice, teachers can organize students to role-play, lyrics adaptation or solitaire games to gradually build students' confidence in speaking.^[6] In addition, teachers can organ-

ise regular “English Song Performances” to encourage students to sing on stage individually or in groups and share their learning experiences. These presentations not only develop public speaking skills, but also promote self-reflection and improvement through peer assessment.

5. Conclusion

As a combination of language and art, English songs have injected vitality and innovation into the teaching of English listening and speaking in colleges. Through theoretical analysis and practical cases, this study verifies its multi-dimensional value in listening input enhancement, speech deviation correction, oral output promotion and cultural cognition expansion. However, its effective application still requires teachers to accurately select materials, scientifically design activities, and balance interest and teaching objectives. Future research can further explore the combination of digital tools (such as AI speech scoring system) and song teaching, or quantify the impact of song teaching on students’ language ability through empirical research, so as to promote the continuous optimization of college English teaching mode.

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