

Approaches to the Improvement of Oral English Teaching in Tibetan Middle Schools

Bkra-shis-bzng-mo

School of Qinghai Nationalities University, Qinghai 810000, China

Abstract

Nowadays, great importance is attached to the cultivation of English teaching in junior middle school. However, by means of a correlation questionnaire survey of 170 students who are from Number One Junior Middle School in Tongde County, a problem with oral English education has been identified, and this makes students incompetent in English communication. The problem that the middle school students have difficulty learning oral English needs to be addressed as soon as possible. Based on the new curriculum standards and spoken English teaching, this paper analyzes the current situation of oral English teaching in middle schools and puts forward some effective ways that can effectively improve the students speaking ability.

Keywords

Oral English Teaching; English Speaking Skills; Junior Middle School Students.

1. Introduction

If you learn English, it is very important to improve your oral English. Just like Lin Yutang said, anyone who do not focus on spoken English will not be able to write natural, fluent and authentic English. (Lin Yutang, Contemporary famous Translator) From this you know that learning spoken English is a necessary part. In the questionnaire survey of 170 students from the junior middle schools in Tongde county, the data shows that the students were facing problems with oral English. When the students were asked to say something in English or read words or sentences in their English book, they couldn't do it well, and their pronunciation was poor. Of course, there are lots of reasons for the problem. We should find ways to improve their speaking skills. In the Number One Junior Middle School of Tongde County, problems exist with their oral English ability. So, I have chosen this topic, and I want to find an expedient way to improve their English speaking ability.

1.1 Current Situation Analysis

English is the official language of the European Union, many international organizations and Commonwealth countries. It is the dominant language in three countries, and is also the most widely used language in the world. Therefore, in order to broaden the horizon and know more knowledge, improve the level of students are the vitally important part. The new English Curriculum Standards also emphasizes the ability of students to use the language comprehensively. The purpose of English teaching is to help students master the language as soon as possible which means that students can successfully communicate in English. However, the reality is that it is very difficult for students to communicate effectively in English. As an example we will look at Number One Junior Middle School in Tongde County, there are 2135 students and 41 classes in total.

In the process of investigation I have found that most students are struggling with English, especially oral English. In comparison, their English writing ability is little bit better. Some students can't say a word when they are called on to answer a question. It is understood that many students hardly speak English after class. They do not have the necessary environment to speak English. In addition, there

are few lectures in English in class, and the teachers force them to memorize words or sentences every day. Some students have lost interest in English, students are not interested to improve their English, they just want to pass the examination by rote learning. However, this should not be the reason for us to ignore the teaching of oral English. We should find appropriate ways to improve oral English in junior middle school.

This paper mainly discusses the problems of oral English learning for junior middle school students and how to improve the teaching of oral English in Tongde County.

2. Current Problems in Oral English

2.1 The Influence of Environment on Oral English Learning

English is one of the compulsory courses in junior middle school, but according to my researching findings from the questionnaire, most of the students' English level not good, especially speak English, In the context of studying English, family factors and school factors have a strong theoretical and realistic significance for the effects of English learning of junior middle school students in Tongde County. However, it is not that school's focus on learn spoken English, nor does family have to be aware of how much communicative ability is in a language curriculum. This leads to a reduction in the students' ability to speak.

2.2 Too Inclined to Traditional Teaching Methods

In Tongde County, teachers are still using traditional teaching method. The traditional English teaching method has been taught with a teacher as the center of the class, but ignoring the language training and practice of students in actual situations, which weakens the ability of spoken English. During the class, the teacher barely speaks English to teach English. The students listen silently to all the teaching in the class, unless asked by the teacher. Just listening to what the teacher says about speaking doesn't assist the students to cultivate their speaking skills.

2.3 The Problems from Students

Of course, there are existing problems in students themselves in the Number One Junior Middle School in Tongde County. First of all, it is difficult to learn oral English without a environment. Secondly, with family factors, some students pay less attention to English learning. As soon as they see so many words and phrases to memorize in their textbook, they are unwilling to work hard and spend time to memorize these most basic words and sentences. As time goes on, the amount of new vocabulary increases more and more, which is the biggest obstacle for English learning. Once again, the Tibetan students have a unique cultural background and living environment, and special linguistic atmosphere and mode of thinking. Learning English requires that transformation of Tibetan, Chinese and English which increases the difficulty of learning English. In accordance with the questionnaire survey, the investigator learned that the students' foundation is not very good, the content of the text often cannot be understood, and the pronunciation is not accurate. There are many words with similar pronunciation, but these words have different meanings. Suppose someone said, "I will cure you." But the other person heard something like, "I will kill you." or "I'm full" is heard as, "I'm a fool." There are also homonyms, words which sound exactly the same in English, but have completely different meanings. For example: hair/hare, there/their, way/weigh, tail/tale, your/you're. Thus, the teachers should attach importance to teaching students to become familiar with the phonetic symbols and grasp their basic knowledge.

3. Effective Solutions

3.1 Creating a Certain Environment for Learning Oral English

The creation of a language environment is also called the simulated language environment. It refers to the creation of different language conditions and requirements, according to the requirements of teaching contents and teaching objectives in oral English teaching. A language environment should be constructed so that students can practice oral English in the created environment. For example:

warning signs, placards and posters in the campus, both English and Chinese; The equipment names of the playing field could be bilingual; The class schedule and rules of the classroom could be bilingual. In this way help student to improve their english level. It is no doubt that teachers should try to speak English as much as possible in the English classroom. Some students will not understand the language in the English classroom but the teacher can find a way to use an intuitive means such as physical objects, pictures and so on to help these students understand English instructions. Secondly, the teacher can use hand gestures and other body language to help them learn to understand. Thirdly, English should be used as much as possible, such as greetings upon meeting someone, and making conversation between classmates or roommates. For exemple, in the class they learned Unit 3: What is the weather like in New York? They can talk about the weather in Tongde. And also can use English songs and films to create an authentic English-speaking environment.

3.2 Correcting Teaching Methods

At present, there are still some common problems in the field of teaching. It is mainly focused on teacher-centered learning rather than students-centered learning and it pays attention to the teaching material. Teachers explain more than students practice. In English class teaching, the proportion of English lectures is very low. The attitude of middle school English teachers is that the most important is grammar and translation. The class is divided into three parts, the first fifteen minutes to check their homework, the second 15 minutes for new teaching. During this period, teachers used to teach new vocabulary, grammar structure and pronunciation, the third fifteen minutes is used to strengthen practice. But in most of these situations, the teachers will teach the word or grammar or content of the text, the rest of the time, the students read the text several times, when the bell rings, there is no time for students to practice. As a result, most students find it difficult to speak English.

There are still existing problems in this school as mentioned above. Traditional teaching methods have been applied for quite some time; this teaching method has been a teacher-centered style, and it is mainly focuses on the teaching method of grammar-translation and always emphasizes by rote learning. There is no obvious efficiency in this teaching method. So, in order to improve the verbal expression skills, teachers should look for a teaching method that is suitable and efficient . There are several methods which I will relate for helping improve the ability of oral English.

Firstly, it is more effective to combine traditional teaching method and task-based language teaching method or communication teaching approaches, which properly shift from the teacher-centered to student-centered. The teacher should grasp the organization of the classroom, finish his own content within the expected time, and give the students most of the time to practice creativity around what the teacher said. For example, in teaching unit 1 Friends, students are required to describe their good friend. The teacher let the students before class to bring a picture of their best friend, and prepare in advance for five words describing the friend's appearance. In such a classroom, most students practiced oral expression.

Secondly, Expand more related knowledge based on the content of the textbook.

Thirdly, teachers must teach English in English. At the beginning, some students would have difficulties, but as time goes by, it will become easier.

Finally, communicating with others is the purpose of learning a language. In the classroom, real communication is a solid foundation for students to work out of the classroom. The teaching form has been arranged in a certain way of life: asking for directions, dining, home visits and so on. It is imperative that students talk in English to solve the problems these scenarios, thus mastering the functions of the learned English.

3.3 Stimulating Interest and Cultivate Conversational Competence

Psychologists point out that ‘interest’ is a tendency for people to try to recognize something or to engage in some kind of activity. It is based on that need to explore something, which is an important motive to drive people to recognize things and seek for truth. ”(Wu Lin Ru,2014) It is well known that interest is the best teacher in the study. So if one make students interested, they are willing to

learn and listen well. For students the attention span is extremely easy to be dispersed. Once the teaching content is boring, or the teaching method is rigid, and the rhythm is slow, the students can not quietly listen in class. Because the students at that stage love to speak and love to make noise, they have no qualms, they dare to speak. They want to move, they have a strong desire for new and different things, and they are most influenced by interesting things. And so, firstly, it is possible for a teacher to combine that characteristic of the students to be active and good, to be happy with the characteristics of the interesting things, and to transform them into an interesting form of activity, so that the students can be emotionally and intellectually engaged in the activity. It is especially important to develop and build a consciousness of learning interest in our activity!

Secondly, create a pleasant learning atmosphere, it helps to cultivate the interest in learning, to make the students rich and excited, to influence each other, and to participate in the teaching activities. For example, at the beginning of the class teachers and students greet each other, or review what we learned in last class. It's a lively, orderly class. Many successes are related with self-confidence, thus should increase the students' self-confidence and gradually experience the fun of English learning, thus laying a foundation for learning English well.

Thirdly, harmonious teacher-student relationships are the catalyst of interest. Harmony means the emotional connection between the teachers and students, and love and respect is the central element. Love requires a teacher's passion for a student, a concern for his students, especially for students who have difficulty learning. Teachers should convey to the students the emotional information of kindness, encouragement, trust and respect through their own words and deeds and expressions. In this way the students are not afraid to make mistakes while speaking English. Keep your smile and motivational language in your face when you are facing timid and poor students. Because these will give them great encouragement and support, they will feel that type of kindness, and draw them closer together.

3.3.1 Using Online Resources

The English teaching in Junior Middle School in Tongde, combined with the information technology, can break through the barriers of the traditional teaching mode. For more smooth communication between teachers and students, help the students through the network of autonomous learning. The teacher and student can also share information resources. The influence of information technology to the junior middle school English teaching is significant. The application of information technology can make use of more time to carry out detailed analysis of knowledge and deepen students' understanding of that knowledge, which is conducive to improving teaching quality. It can allow teachers to create the teaching situations by means of it technology by making various forms of it courseware, and arousing the students interest in studying English. For example, use slides to make courseware, PPT courseware, etc. also use online resources such as one-to-one English speaking training or 51talk, and on those websites the teachers can provide help on the basis of the students' level to teach oral English. The students can use such as resource to improve oral English.

3.3.2 Making Connections with the Native Language

There are some similarities between Tibetan and English, so students can rely on their mother tongue to learn English.

Table 1. Regular verbs

past	present	Past participle	འདས་པ།	ད་ཟླ་བ།	མ་འོངས་པ།
worked	work	worked	བཟུགས	ཟུག	བཟུག
stopped	stop	stopped	བཟུབས	ཟུབ	བཟུབས
tried	try	tried	བཟུགས	ཟུག	བཟུག

There are few grammatical similarities between English and Tibetan, verbs are used in the same way, the variation of regular and irregular verbs are somewhat similar.

Table 2. Irregular verbs

past	present	Past participle	འདས་པ།	ད་ལྟོ་བ།	མ་འདོངས་པ།
let	let	let	གཤགས	གཤགས	གཤགས
pay	paid	paid	བཏུལ	ཏུལ	བཏུལ
give	gave	given	གྲིས	གྲི	འགྲི

Since some of English pronunciation is similar to the Tibetan language, the Tibetan students find it easy to pronounce some sounds, for example, consonants: /θ/ /s/ /ts/ /tʃ/ /tr/;

Voiced consonant: /ð/ /z/ /dz/ /dʒ/dr/.

3.4 Encouraging Students to Speak English

In the course of teaching, it is necessary to stimulate the student's creative motivation, to accurately grasp the characteristics of the student. During the class, finding students' merit, arousing their interest, so that each student should have the awareness and enthusiasm to participate in the competition. In the form of group discussions, group games, and so on, it creates an atmosphere of contest, which allows each student to fully express themselves, motivate them to be motivated and motivated to learn, and to interact with each other. It can be said that every time the students participates in such teaching opportunities, there will be more motivation to stimulate their thinking, and more enhancement of their speaking abilities. During the class, teachers should give students more opportunities and encourage them to speak English.

As technology develops, computers are vital for students to study English. Also it is an interesting way to learn English. They can listen and imitate way of speaking in the DVD's or films. It would improve oral abilities and listening abilities. In addition, singing English songs is a good way for students to practice English speaking.

4. Conclusion

The ability to speak English is vitally important for junior middle school students, because it plays an important role in English learning. There are many problems and difficulties for teaching oral English in middle school. Teachers must face it with an objective attitude. Teachers should also think about how to deal with the problem according to the student's specific situation. It is necessary for each English teacher to continually optimize classroom teaching methods, and to help students overcome psychological disorders, create positive conditions, and provide opportunities for students to dare to speak, and want to speak English. It is that holy duty of every English teacher to improve the students' ability to speak and to cultivate the talent needed in the new century. It is important for listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. We should not only to promote that development of listening, but also to improve the ability of reading and writing. In sum, the ability to develop spoken English by a middle school student is not an isolated event, nor is it a rush to pursue. It is necessary for us to grasp all available opportunities in teaching, adopt flexible and diversified teaching methods, and cultivate students' interest in learning. The assistant of teachers and the main role of students, so as to improve the ability of rural middle school students to express their oral English.

From my investigation, I found these problems and tried to find some effective ways for the students to improve. Of course, there are still deficiencies in my paper, but I did this paper to the best of my ability.

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