

Suggestions For English Teaching In University Change The Educational Philosophies In University English Teaching From How To Learn English To How To Use English

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Abstract. The main purpose of this paper is to elaborate that the college English teaching should be changed from teaching the university students how to learn English to guiding them to use English. First, this paper indicates that if students are forced to study or they study just for a high score in tests, there will be less subjective initiatives, and the study would be inefficient. Then, it is suggested that after more than 12 years learning of English, the students should be taught how to use English in universities rather than still be taught how to learn English or how to get a high score in tests. This is very important, for the students can be more proactive in learning English only when they can truly understand its importance. So the main task of English teachers in universities is to make student understand why they learn English, make them understand that English is a tool to communicate with others and exchange information, they learn English to use it but not for a score. At last, this paper gave 4 suggestions on how to guide students to use English, to give some courses completely taught in English, the bilingual teaching, some changes in professional English teaching and to provide more chance for the communication and exchange between foreign students and domestic students.

Keywords: English teaching; bilingual teaching; teaching philosophy; exchange and communication

1. Introduction

The situation of English study in China is that, a child will be forced to start learning English when he or she is 6, or more earlier, following is a lot of English examinations[1]. Maybe in the first several years, English study is somewhat interesting, but when the study continues and last for 12 years, and the students can barely find somewhere to use it, the situation changed, students became sick of English learning, and they learn it just for the test scores or for a certificate[2]. What a sad situation it is.

Well, this is something about our educational philosophies.

In china, most parents will tell the children what is right, what is wrong, what is good for them and what is bad for them. They always do this because they might have made some mistakes in their lives and they thought they have gain some useful experiences, so they want to tell their children the experiences and avoiding them from making the same mistakes. But this educational methods made a big mistake, that is it ignored the children's thoughts. It is just like that "No matter how sweet the apple is, if the man is forced to eat it, it change to be tasteless". So if the children are forced to learn English, the learning became dull.

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When the children entered universities, and that they had already learned English for more than 12 years, what should teachers do to guide them to learn English? Shall the teachers go on to tell them “If you don’t learn English hard, you will not pass the exam, and you can not find a good job.”? This is something the educators and the teachers should take a deep thought.

2. The Current Situation Of University English Teaching In China

The most obvious feature of English learning in universities of China is the CET 4(College English Test Band 4) and CET 6(College English Test Band 6). From the day a freshman enters the university, he starts learning College English, and the ultimate goal of this learning is to pass the CET4 and CET6.

Not only the students take passing CET4 and CET6 as the goal of learning English, but also the teachers and the universities. The universities may take the pass rate of CET4 and CET6 as the assessment indicator of teaching ability for the English teachers[3]. The pass rate of CET4 and CET6 may directly lead to whether the English teacher is evaluated qualified or not, and the pass rate of CET4 and CET6 may directly affect the teachers incomes.

The students who can not pass CET4 can not be granted the bachelor degree several years ago. Though this provision is abolished recent years, the situation is still unchanged. The students still take passing CET4 and CET6 as the purpose of their English learning, and some students still learn English when they feel really weary of it[4]. Why they still struggling to learn English for CET4 when they can be granted bachelor degree without passing it. The answer is that, they want to find a good job, they want to win in the competitions, if others have passed CET4, but they didn’t, they may be eliminated in the competition and can not find a good job.

This is really a sad situation that, when someone ask a student in university“Why are you learning English?”, he or she will get this answer,“To pass CET4”. This is completely a situation of cart before the horse.

Why does one learn Chinese? For the examinations? Of course not. Everyone learn Chinese to communicate with others. Why do deaf people learn sign language? They learn sign language to communicate with others too. So why do they learn English? They learn English to communicate with others. So it must be made clear that to communicate is the real objective of learning any languages.

So, when the students had already learn English for at least 12 years, what should the teachers do for their English learning when they enter the universities? The answer is to tell them how to use it but not how to learn it anymore or how to get a high score in CET4 and CET6. How can the students go on learning English with passion when they can barely find somewhere to use it? So what the teachers in university should do first is to make the students know that English is useful, then, when they find this is useful they will be initiative to learn it.

3. How To Guide Students To Use English

Chinese would like to say life-long learning, and one will never had learn too much or had learn enough. But, it is really enough for the students who had learn English for more than 12 years. As English is taken as a useful language that students had learned so much, let’s go on to guide them how to use the language in universities[5-8]. There are several methods to make students realize that English is a useful tool and guide them how to use it:

3.1. Courses Taught In English

To give some courses completely taught in English. This is very important, because in these courses[9], English is no more a subject but only a tool.

In these courses, English return to its original essence of language, it is only a tool to communicate with others, a tool to get correct information and knowledge. When this can be done well, students will find that English is really useful that they can get some new ideas, new opinions, new information and knowledge through it.

These courses can help greatly improve the students ability of using English, including the ability to communicate in English and the ability to acquire information and knowledge in English. Through the study of courses taught in English, students will experience that the language English is just a tool for them to acquire information and knowledge.

This will be a new learning experience, and it will enable students to overthrow the previous opinion that taking learning English as the goal of study which is completely a cart before the horse.

3.2. Bilingual Teaching

Besides giving some courses completely taught in English, all the courses in university can take some reformation to bilingual teaching.

This is a way to tell the students that English is useful and how to use it, and also this is a preparation for the courses taught completely in English.

This is feasible because most the teachers in universities nowadays are born in 1970s or 1980s, and English learning had been promoted widely when they were young, so their educational experience make them able to give bilingual teaching to some extent. These courses are the groundwork for the courses teaching in English, and they are just the beginnings to make students to realize that English is a language, a tool, rather than t the purpose of study.

3.3. Changes In Professional English Teaching

The professional English courses of each disciplines are also the important groundwork for courses completely taught in English.

The purpose of professional English teaching is to make the students understand some professional words, make them able to read some professional articles, and can write some plain scientific articles. But the author of this paper believes that the course professional English can take another role, that is a window to show the students some new developments in their fields abroad.

The teaching of professional English in most universities are been some kind of limited and constrained. That is they are using the unified teaching plan, the unified teaching content, the unified testing methods and the unified testing content. But the author believes that for different professions in a discipline the teaching methods and content should be different from each other and highlighting their own characteristics, rather than exactly the same.

So when the teacher can introduce some new developments in their fields, this is more convincing that English is a useful tool to acquire information and knowledge, and the new development can help increase the students interests in study.

3.4. Provide More Chance For Students To Use English

To recruit more foreign students is another way to make English useful for domestic students. For academic exchanges and improving the international influences of universities, almost all universities recruit foreign students[10,11].

But for most universities the foreign students are less than 1% of its total students number, and the number may be even less for some universities. At the same time, the foreign students are separated from the domestic students in most universities. This may be reasonable because the foreign students have different educational background and different educational plan to domestic students.

As the foreign student come to China not only to learn knowledge but also to learn Chinese culture, and abroad study itself is a part of the academic and cultural exchanges, so there should be more chances for the foreign students and domestic students to know each other and to exchange their knowledge and opinions.

The contacts and exchanges between foreign students and domestic students can help the foreign students to learn Chinese faster, to know more about Chinese culture, to integrate into Chinese society faster, to start their further study quickly, and also it can provide domestic students a good condition to learn English and to use English.

These contacts and exchanges can make domestic students be well aware that any language is only a tool for people to exchange information, rather than the purpose of learning. The purpose of learning a language is always to get more information and knowledge correctly through it.

So to recruit more foreign students, give the foreign students and domestic students more chance to contact and communicate with each other, and even give some courses for those students together can help guiding students to use English.

4. Conclusion

This paper mainly discussed the changes should be made in college English teaching. College students are adults, and they had already learn English for more than 12 years, so when they enter university, the teachers should have a think of what teaching philosophy they should take toward these students.

First, this paper indicates that if students are forced to study or they study just for a high score in tests, there will be less subjective initiatives, and the study would be inefficient.

Then, it is suggested that the students should be taught how to use English in universities rather than still be taught how to learn English or how to get a high score in tests.

It is also suggested that the main task of English teachers in universities is to make student understand why they learn English, make them understand that English is a tool to communicate with others and exchange information, they learn English to use it rather than for a score.

At last, this paper gave 4 suggestions on how to guide students to use English.

To give some courses completely taught in English, in this way, students will experience that the English is just a tool for them to acquire information and knowledge, and they will understand that they learn English for it is useful.

Bilingual teaching in other courses is the groundwork for the courses taught in English, and this is the beginning to make students realize that English is a language, a tool, rather than the purpose of study.

Making some changes in traditional professional English teaching, to introduce some new developments in the field, this is more convincing that English is a useful tool to acquire information and knowledge, and the new development can help increase the students interests in study.

To provide more chance for the communication and exchange between foreign students and domestic students, this can make domestic students be well aware that any language is only a tool for people to exchange information, rather than the purpose of learning. The purpose of learning a language is always to get more information and knowledge correctly through it.

5. Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank Research Fund for the Doctoral Program of Higher Education of China (200807030002), Key Programs for Industry of Shaanxi Province (2008K07-31), National Natural Science Foundation of China (General Program 90715003), Research Foundation for Natural Science of Shaanxi Province (2007E205), SJJT08 (08JZ35), Chinese National Key Laboratory Projects (08KF02), Key Laboratory Scientific Projects of Shaanxi Province Office of Education (09JS022) and Key Laboratory Visiting Scholars Projects of Shaanxi Province Office of Education (09JS023, 09JS024) for their financial support, Start Project for P.H.D. of Xi'an University of Technology(2010QDJ037).

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