

Research on Innovative Teaching Methods for Cultivating English Listening and Speaking Ability in Vocational Colleges

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of a globalized economy and the development of vocational education, higher vocational English teaching places higher demands on cultivating students' listening and speaking abilities. Traditional teaching methods have certain limitations in improving students' practical English listening and speaking skills, making innovative teaching approaches an inevitable trend. This article focuses on cultivating listening and speaking skills in vocational English, deeply analyzing the importance of innovation in teaching methods, and discussing in detail the difficulties faced during the innovation process, such as integrating teaching resources and coping with individual student differences. Through research, a series of targeted innovative strategies are proposed, including introducing diverse teaching resources, utilizing modern information technology, and conducting situational teaching, with specific course cases explaining their implementation effects, aiming to provide useful references for improving the quality of vocational English teaching and enhancing students' workplace English application abilities.

Keywords: Vocational English; Listening and Speaking Skills; Innovative Teaching Methods

1. Introduction

As economic globalization deepens, English has become an important tool for international communication, and the importance of English listening and speaking skills in vocational college students as they prepare for future career development is becoming increasingly prominent. The goal of higher vocational education is to cultivate application-oriented talents who meet social needs. The listening and speaking ability of English is directly related to students' communication efficiency and professional competitiveness when working in

foreign-related work settings. However, there are still many problems in vocational English teaching related to the cultivation of listening and speaking skills. Traditional teaching methods struggle to meet students' actual needs. Based on this, the study explores teaching methods for cultivating listening and speaking ability in vocational college English to achieve innovation, which is of significant practical importance.

2. The Importance of Innovative Teaching Methods for Cultivating Listening and Speaking Ability in Vocational College English

2.1 Meeting Career Development Needs

In today's increasingly diverse job market, many industry positions have clear requirements for practitioners' English listening and speaking skills. Taking the field of cross-border e-commerce as an example, practitioners need to use formal language to conduct smooth business negotiations with foreign clients, properly handle international mail, and communicate online. Vocational graduates with excellent English listening and speaking skills can quickly adapt to the pace of work within the scope of these positions, accurately convey relevant information, and avoid business losses caused by poor communication. According to surveys conducted in relevant industries, among foreign-related business positions, employees with relatively strong English listening and speaking skills tend to see their performance growth rate about 20% higher than that of ordinary employees within the first two years after joining. Innovative approaches to vocational English teaching methods closely focus on vocational scenarios by conducting listening and speaking training activities, which helps students better grasp English expressions related to their careers, achieving seamless alignment with workplace needs, and laying a solid foundation for the smooth start of their careers. [1].

2.2 Promote the Improvement of Comprehensive Language Literacy

As a language, English is a skill system that is interconnected and complements each other. Effective listening training greatly promotes the improvement of students' comprehensive language literacy. When students focus on English listening comprehension, they need to quickly recognize sounds and achieve semantic understanding, which helps enhance their language sense and leads to deeper understanding of vocabulary and grammar. For example, in the area of listening practice, students repeatedly encounter vocabulary and sentence patterns in different contexts, which helps them naturally master their usage rather than simply memorizing grammar rules. At the same time, oral expression requires students to organize their internal language knowledge into coherent sentences. This process not only trains students' logical thinking but also encourages continuous enrichment of vocabulary and optimization of language expression structure. By using innovative teaching methods and strengthening listening training, it breaks the traditional model of isolating language skills and achieves comprehensive improvement in language literacy.

2.3 Enhance International Exchange Capabilities

The accelerated pace of globalization has enabled international talent mobility and cultural exchange. As the main force in future social development, vocational students have gained more opportunities to participate in international project collaborations, academic communication, or to pursue in-depth academic studies abroad. Good English listening skills are key for them to integrate into the international environment and broaden their global horizons. Within the scope of international exchange activities, students can engage in interactions with people from different countries, gaining a deeper understanding of multiculturalism and broadening their ways of thinking. Take vocational college students participating in international vocational skills competitions as an example: when they possess fluent English listening skills, they can communicate and interact smoothly with foreign contestants and judges during the competition. While showcasing their professional skills, they can also absorb and accept advanced foreign

technical concepts and experience. Innovative measures for listening English teaching in vocational colleges can cultivate students' confidence and composure in international exchange settings, enabling them to better showcase the style of Chinese vocational students on the international stage.

3. Analysis of Innovative Difficulties in Teaching Methods for Cultivating English Listening and Speaking Ability in Vocational Colleges

3.1 Challenges in Integrating Teaching Resources

What vocational English listening and speaking teaching requires is support from a rich variety of teaching resources. However, there are currently significant difficulties in resource integration. On one hand, textbook resources are relatively limited. Most vocational English textbooks do not sufficiently integrate the listening and speaking content of current professional scenarios and social hot topics, resulting in a lack of timeliness and practicality. For example, some listening materials in textbooks are still limited to traditional campus life scenarios and are disconnected from business negotiations and workplace meetings that students will encounter in their future work. On the other hand, although network resources have rich characteristics, their quality varies greatly and lacks systematic integration and screening mechanisms. When teachers search for suitable listening and speaking teaching materials among vast online resources, it often consumes a lot of time and effort, and it is difficult to ensure that the selected resources accurately match the teaching objectives and students' actual levels. Additionally, there is a lack of effective connection and integration among different teaching resources. For example, textbooks and multimedia resources, online and offline resources, do not form an organic whole, resulting in low resource utilization efficiency during the teaching process and affecting the effectiveness of students' listening and speaking skills.

3.2 Individual Student Differences in Coping with Challenges

There are significant individual differences among vocational college students in the basics of English, learning ability, and learning

motivation, which poses challenges to the innovation of listening and speaking teaching methods. Some students have a weak foundation in English at the admission stage, and may not have mastered basic pronunciation and intonation, while others may already have a certain level of English listening and speaking skills and have higher demands for the learning content. In the process of innovative teaching, it is difficult for teachers to formulate unified teaching plans that meet the learning progress and needs of students at different levels. For example, when using group cooperative learning for oral training, students with weaker foundations may hesitate to speak out due to fear of making mistakes, placing themselves in a passive position during group activities; On the other hand, students with a stronger foundation may feel that the activity content lacks challenging, resulting in low enthusiasm for participation. At the same time, students' learning motivations also vary. Some students engage in learning activities with the aim of passing the English proficiency test, while others, considering future career development, find ways to stimulate students' interest in learning and encourage their active participation in innovative teaching activities. This is a major challenge faced by teachers.

3.3 The Professional Capabilities of the Teaching Staff Are Limited

Teaching method innovations for cultivating listening and speaking ability in vocational college English place higher demands on teachers' professional competence. Currently, some vocational English teachers face certain limitations in professional competence and teaching ability. Some teachers have areas where their own English listening and speaking skills need improvement, especially in the fluency and accuracy of pronunciation, intonation, and spoken expression, making it difficult to provide students with standard and authentic English demonstrations in the classroom. In terms of teaching method innovation, some teachers lack a deep understanding of advanced teaching concepts and technologies, as well as their ability to apply them. For example, for teaching methods based on new technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), some teachers are unfamiliar with their operational processes and teaching application models, making it difficult to effectively

integrate them into listening and speaking instruction. In addition, teachers also lack interdisciplinary knowledge reserves. Vocational English listening and speaking teaching often involves knowledge from different professional fields, such as business English and tourism English. If teachers lack relevant professional knowledge, it is difficult to provide targeted guidance during the teaching process, which in turn affects teaching effectiveness.

4. Innovative Strategies for Teaching Methods for Cultivating English Listening and Speaking Ability in Vocational Colleges

4.1 Introducing Diverse Teaching Resources

To address the dilemma of integrating teaching resources, actively introducing diverse teaching resources can be adopted. Using the listening and speaking course in the Business English major as an example, teachers can use current international trade hotspots to collect real business negotiation audio and video materials from well-known business websites such as Alibaba International and Global Sources, using them as listening material. At the same time, with the help of online language learning platforms, students are provided with a wide variety of speaking practice resources such as Fluent English Speaking and Daily English Listening. These platforms feature intelligent grading and feedback functions, helping students stay informed about their speaking proficiency in real time. In addition, senior business professionals within companies are invited to conduct workplace-related English lectures or record experience-sharing videos, using them as supplementary teaching resources. During the teaching process, teachers organically integrate the textbook content with these diverse resources. For example, when teaching the business negotiation unit, students are first guided to learn negotiation techniques and common sentence patterns from the textbook, then play real business negotiation videos to analyze language use and communication strategies, and finally organize students to practice simulated negotiations on online platforms, thereby improving their English listening and speaking skills in a rich resource environment.

4.2 Implement Tiered Teaching

Implementing tiered instruction is an effective strategy for addressing individual student

differences. At the beginning of the semester, teachers divide students into foundational, advanced, and extension levels through English proficiency tests. For students at the foundational level, the teaching focus is on correcting pronunciation and intonation, basic vocabulary, and learning simple daily conversations. For example, by using English pronunciation software, such as English phonetic learning apps, students can help correct pronunciation errors. Through situational dialogue exercises such as shopping or asking for directions, students become familiar with basic expressions. Advanced students focus on training in workplace English and general business communication. For example, organizing simulated business meetings allows students to host meetings, speak out, and participate in practical activities. Students in the extension level can participate in more challenging project activities, such as international business case analysis and online exchanges with students from foreign institutions. Throughout the tiered teaching process, teachers adjust teaching content and methods according to the learning progress and needs of students at different levels, regularly conduct assessments, and promptly adjust the tiered learning based on students' progress, achieving the effect of stimulating students' motivation and enabling each student to improve their English listening and speaking skills at a pace that fits their own learning pace.

4.3 Enhance Teachers' Professional Competence

Enhancing teachers' professional competence is key to advancing innovative changes in teaching methods. The school regularly organizes teachers to participate in English listening and speaking skills enhancement activities, inviting domestic and international English education experts to give lectures and training sessions, such as specialized courses focused on English pronunciation and intonation training and improving spoken English fluency. Encouraging measures encourage teachers to participate in domestic and international academic exchange activities, aiming to learn about the latest English teaching concepts and methods, such as attending international English education conferences and studying the application of advanced teaching models such as project-based learning and cooperative learning in the field of

listening and speaking instruction. At the same time, with a supportive attitude, teachers are assisted in conducting interdisciplinary learning activities, such as business English teachers learning professional knowledge such as international trade and marketing, and tourism English teachers conducting related knowledge activities such as tourism management and tour guide practice. Through continuous learning and practical action, teachers apply the knowledge and skills they acquire to classroom teaching, such as incorporating more authentic professional scenario cases into the teaching process, thereby enhancing the professionalism and practicality of teaching and providing students with higher-quality teaching services.

5. Conclusion

Innovation in teaching methods for cultivating listening and speaking skills in vocational colleges is a necessary measure to meet the development of vocational education and the needs of society. In terms of importance, it aligns with career development, promotes language literacy improvement, enhances international exchange, and aligns with educational reform trends. However, the innovation process faces challenges such as integrating teaching resources, addressing individual student differences, and limitations in faculty capabilities. By introducing diverse resources, implementing tiered teaching, enhancing teacher quality, and implementing specific course cases, the quality of English listening and speaking teaching in vocational colleges can be effectively improved, empowering students' future career development and helping vocational education cultivate more internationally competitive application-oriented talents.

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