The Application of English News in College English Teaching

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Abstract
At present, college English teaching is in an awkward situation, some students complain that the materials in the textbook are dead materials. However, the development of the economy, science and technology, especially information technology makes it necessary and possible to introduce English news and current affairs into college English teaching and learning. The paper analyzes the necessity, the advantages and feasibility of English news and current affairs in college English teaching.

Key words: News and current affairs; English teaching; Internet; Information technology

INTRODUCTION
According to the requirements of college English curriculum, the college English course is not only a language foundation, but also a quality education course to help students to broaden the knowledge and to understand world culture, being both instrumental and humanism. Therefore, the design of college English course should also give full consideration to the students' cultural quality education and the cultural knowledge teaching. And according to the current college English teaching material widely adopted, there is a great deal of information lagged behind and seemingly far away from the social and cultural phenomenon. In the article published in 2011 The University Senior Phase of the Development of English Learning Motivation, author Zhou Yan quoted a student as saying:

I would rather read the newspaper than the textbooks, it is better to get to the Internet; there are not many new words. I did not see the editor’s good intention in the teaching material. I am not interested in content, in the four years study in college; none of the articles in the textbooks impressed me. I can’t remember any of them after study.

Now, the information is in the form of various getting into every corner of the life, the requirements of college students to learn something with more practicability is getting more and more urgent. How can an article which the teacher seems to have no interest arouse the extensive concern of the students? English news is a kind of teaching material with high flexibility to update soon, not only can provide a lot of training material for English learning, but also can make the students understand the cultural background of English-speaking countries and the international event through English news, thus increasing students’ language fluency. However, the ability to exchange views on certain topics has increased slowly. The main problem is the lacking of depth of communication content and language expression is not accurate enough.

Students’ language “output” is rooted in “insufficient language input”. After all, relatively fixed teaching materials as the main source of language input is a language form finely tuned material (Krashen, 1982), language is difficult to complete synchronization with the times, and it can also be difficult to cover the information students need in communication subject and content in real life. Naturally, the students’ real communication demand cannot be fully satisfied. Therefore, college English teachers should make full use of various media and network resources, to add the contents of the English
news and current affairs in accordance with the scientific teaching theory in teaching practice. Some educators have tried in this field. The author thinks that bringing in English news and current affairs in college English teaching has great advantages and feasibility.

1. NEWS AND ENGLISH NEWS

The news came into being in order to meet the need of humans to communicate and exchange information in the social practice. With the continuous development of modern science and technology, the transmission of the news media showed a trend of diversification, the spread of news means become more and more advanced, and the international communication becomes increasingly frequent, a lot of information pass through the mass media including newspapers, magazines, radio, television and Internet. English news belongs to the category of journalism study. Journalism is the study of news phenomenon and the law of science; from narrow sense, it mainly refers to news theory, from the broad sense, journalism, including the theory of journalism, journalism research and journalism history. Journalism as a science to study, some universities began in the late 17th century in Germany. Since the Second World War, journalism research center moved to the United States, and began to form in the mass media as the research object of “communication”.

News is to reflect the objective of affairs, news source is a fact, the primacy of the facts, news is secondary, the fact is the source of news, but not any facts can form the news. As a world widely used international language of communication; English media has become increasingly important role. The rapid development of the modern society changes and expands the scope of modern English. English news is both the common practical style in modern English, is also one of the standard English language standard, it will not only help learning various style and the style of modern English, but also expand the world knowledge, expand the study vision. English news has various styles and each has its characteristics.

2. THE ADVANTAGES OF USING ENGLISH NEWS IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

2.1 Improve Students’ Learning Interest and Learning Enthusiasm and Activate Classroom Atmosphere

In his paper foreign language teaching psychology, Zhu Chun mentioned two basic factors to arouse interest—thirst for knowledge and positive attitude of objects. According to the research on students of Changchun University of Science and Technology by Ding Guojuan, 85% of the students believe that it is necessary to focus on current events. The main social hot spots of interest focus on entertainment, sports and events at home and abroad. This shows that students have a positive and welcoming attitude towards English news and current affairs and are interested in them. Strong learning motivation comes from continuous and stable learning motivation and interest in learning. Comparing with traditional teaching, the theme of the English news and current affairs involves politics, economy, business, entertainment, sports, etc., and covers all aspects of the Anglo-American countries today, can stimulate the enthusiasm of students in a greater degree. There has been the tradition for Chinese college students to concern about society and understand the world, for example, the south snow disaster, the Olympic torch relay, Wen Chuan earthquake and the international events such as floods in Myanmar, the US election, and the world food crisis. How can students not be interested in them? If creating appropriate problem situation, how can student not be actively involved in it?

2.2 Make Up for the Defect of the Small Amount of Information in Textbook

English news plays the role of connecting the bridge between the knowledge in classroom and reality. News and current affairs coverage can make up textbooks lag. Many materials in textbooks are different from language often used in real life on content, mainly emphasizing on literature and philosophy. The news and current affairs in the real world event just happened, but may occur around us. So if the current news is applied into English classroom, it seems to be a bridge between the classroom and the real world, to provide students with an understanding of the outside world through the most authentic channels. Imagine in the traditional mode of teaching as the key link to the textbook, for graduate students, their knowledge of English is limited to have learned that dozens of textbooks, but with the poor practical application of English. The results must be “inefficient and time-consuming”. Through this bridge of current news in English, students’ horizons can be unprecedentedly opened; a lot of authentic materials can be presented to students. Therefore, English news and current affairs is undoubtedly the most beneficial supplement to textbook knowledge.

2.3 Cultivate Students’ Independent Learning Ability

Personalized teaching requires teaching students based on each student’s personality, interests, strengths, needs, student learning mode is autonomous learning. In the traditional college English teaching, teachers and textbooks are the major sources of student to have access to information. All students have to face the same textbooks and teaching methods. It’s hard to meet the different requirements of the students with different ability levels. And if we introduce English news and current affairs into the classroom in the scientific method, it will help to solve this problem. First, teachers can properly arrange the classroom tasks (such as requiring students to prepare a report on current events), students will collect
relevant materials according to their current level in their spare time, which is conducive to the realization of “teaching requirements” submitted “without time and place limit” of teaching students to choose extra study material capabilities. Second, the use of the news and current affairs can enable students to become the center of classroom, and “student-centered” teaching. Teachers can organize news reports, discussions, debates, lectures and other forms of activities, from material preparation to participating in various activities; students are the subject of these activities. In addition, on the “independent study”, one commonly held belief in academia is that independent study involves five skills, includes identifying learning objectives, developing a learning plan, adjusting learning strategies, selecting learning materials, and assessment of learning effects. The introduction of English news and current affairs in the classroom will help students to develop these skills.

2.4 Other Advantages
News and current affairs in English can provide more real communication corpus and communicative environment for college English teaching, so that students can participate in the preparation and construct authentic seasonal English into their own knowledge. In addition, the introduction of English news and current affairs in college English teaching is conducive to combine “teach” and “educate” together. Teachers can publicize to students the correct political direction and noble morality in the teaching activities.

3. THE FEASIBILITY OF NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

From the above analysis, we can easily see English news and current affairs have many advantages in college English teaching, but is this method feasible in the actual teaching? The answer is yes.

3.1 Newspapers and Broadcast Have Extensive Contents, Suitable for Students of Different Interests and Varying Academic Performance
From CNN, Reuters to other sites, many sites offer VOA, BBC and other news download. On CNN and Reuters news sites we can watch some videos. With the accelerating process of our university information, the use of news and current affairs in English in college English teaching is entirely feasible.

3.2 Newspapers and Networks are Featured with Popularity, Flexibility and Low Prices
In addition, most of the college students now have a variety of reference books in English teaching or learning manual, so it may be appropriate to reduce classroom teaching time for intensive reading and listening materials content, which also offers the possibility to learn the news events in the classroom.

3.3 The Rapid Development of Network Resources and Newspapers Radio and Other Media Makes It Possible for Today’s Teachers and Students to Learn English
For example, by using shortwave radios, students can listen to VOA, BBC, and other English-speaking CRI broadcasts; by using TV, you can watch other English-speaking channel CCTV 9. Network resources are more abundant, for example, to read news and current affairs in English can be authentic.

4. THE APPLICATION OF ENGLISH NEWS IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

Comparing with other styles, news style is innovative, simple, fun, having wide range of topics, with the characteristics of the times, allowing students to learn English words with a flavor of the times, phrases, sentences and “fashionable” way of expression and the general stylistic content, and is popular with students of all ages. In English listening teaching practice, I chose the latest recording of VOA Special English news, VOA Standard English News, BBC news broadcasts in English and CC TV English news and other programs, selected appropriate content as the English teaching materials, and trained students and helped students to learn English in different stages. English news teaching is divided into three phases, in each stage, I selected different materials, set different teaching objectives, and used different teaching methods and means, and ultimately achieved a series of goals: improve students’ listening, speaking, translation, writing and other practical English ability, broaden students’ English knowledge, students self-learning power, innovation, teamwork, etc. Before teaching, the whole class is divided into different study groups with 3 to 4 persons in each study group, to facilitate teaching and extracurricular learning process, help each other, mutual inspection, marking homework.

4.1 News Selection
4.1.1 Teachers Should Emphasize on Timeliness and Select Appropriate Amount of News
The teacher should select the news one night before the scheduled class in order to help students to get the latest news at home and abroad of English reports. The amount of news in English every teaching should be preferably controlled within ten to fifteen minutes, otherwise it will affect the normal teaching tasks.

4.1.2 Teachers Should Note the Diversification of the News Content
Selected news should not be limited to major domestic and international political news, but also should include economy, science and technology, education, military,
sports, culture, entertainment, environmental protection and other aspects of the news. It also helps to broaden students’ knowledge, help students successfully to pass the CET. Because in recent years CET has increased the proportion of news stories, related to natural disasters, brand awareness, gender differences, environmental protection, junk food, intelligence and so on.

4.1.3 Teachers Should Pay Attention to the Degree of Difficulty of the Language in the Form of News
Krashen’s +1 theory stressed that language acquisition occurs only when input language learners can meet the following three factors: (1) comprehensible input; (2) contains a known language component (i); (3) contains component slightly higher than the known composition (i + 1). If the language is too easy without any challenges, students will lose interest. And too many new words and too difficult language will make it too difficult for students to accept them. Therefore, in order to make the language input “comprehensible” and able to absorb, the difficulty level of the selected news should be slightly higher than the current (Yang, 2002). Try to choose the concise news and properly remove some difficult or uncommon words.

4.2 Combination with Textbooks
4.2.1 How to Combine English News with Textbook
(1) The teacher can ask students to make sentences with the new words in English news. I found in teaching, some of the words in teaching reference in sentences, although classic accurate, seem to be far from real life, so that it is difficult for students to understand and remember and cannot help students learn in practical use. If we use sentences in English news, we not only can arouse the interest of students, but also help them to better grasp the precise usage.

(2) The teacher can insert the material closely related to textbooks so that the students can get more information. Teachers should pay attention to the collection of related news stories in order to facilitate students to learn more about textbooks.

4.2.2 How to Improve Students’ English Proficiency in a Short Time
(1) Oral reports can be represented by students in the class list in order to help students get fully prepared for each English class. One student does an oral report for about three minutes, the content can be domestic and international news and information recently reported. Then the teacher can do a simple evaluation of the report and introduce to the other students some important words and phrases in the presentation. In my class, students reacted strongly; they all take an active part in it. They will surf the Internet to get the latest news before class, select what they are interested in. In this process, not only their literacy skills are exercised, but also their verbal ability.

(2) Visual exercises. I selected some English audio or video news which are suitable for students from the Internet, and ask the students to listen and watch in the classroom. And let them listen and do compound dictation, or answer questions.

(3) Writing exercises. In order to further mobilize the students’ enthusiasm in learning English news, the teacher can ask students to apply the knowledge learned in English news, according to what is happening around them, according to structural pattern of the English news, and to write 50-100 word press release in English and invite students to give live show. So these activities can effectively develop verbal skills of students, but also students’ writing skills, make the classroom atmosphere more active, students are more likely to accept. Pick some hot news for students to learn to read, arrange students to have discussions on these hot issues, and write an essay to express their views. I once read the news about World Low Carbon Congress in 2014, and write an essay to express their views on low carbon economy.

CONCLUSION
In this information age, college English teaching is unable to meet the need to develop new talent if confined to textbook content. The news and current affairs in English in the classroom can make up for this shortfall. In the current English education, news and current affairs in English can play an irreplaceable role in improving students’ interest and enthusiasm, increasing the amount of information in the classroom, cultivating the students self-learning ability and other aspects. And it is also feasible to apply news and current affairs in the actual teaching of English in the classroom. However, this method will undoubtedly give teachers a greater challenge. But as a teacher, “engineers of human souls,” the challenge is duty-bound to accept.

REFERENCES