

The Importance and Application of English News in College English Teaching

QIAO Xiaohong

University of Shanghai for Science and Technology, Shanghai, China

This paper analyzes the importance and advantages of English news in college English teaching, expounds the specific application of English news in class and outside class, and shows that introducing English news into teaching can help college students improve their interest in English learning, enhance their independent learning ability, and cultivate their lifelong English learning habits.

Keywords: English news, college English teaching, importance, advantages, application

Introduction

With the deepening of “globalization” and “informatization,” mass media has become the best way for us to understand the rapidly changing world, and English news is an important means for us to understand the international situation and master the cutting-edge knowledge and technology, and its importance in English learning is also rising.

The Importance of Introducing English News into College English Teaching and Learning

The Teaching Requirements for College English Courses promulgated in 2007 made it clear that the teaching goal of college English is to “cultivate students’ comprehensive English application ability, especially their listening and speaking ability, so that they can effectively communicate in English in future study, work, and social communication.” Among the three levels of English ability proposed for college students, different requirements are put forward, such as “being able to understand English radio and TV programs at a slow speed,” “being able to basically understand English radio and TV programs with familiar subjects and longer length,” and “being able to basically understand radio and TV programs from English-speaking countries.” Since June 2016, the CET-6 Test Committee has made adjustments to the listening questions of the test: the cancellation of short dialogues and short essays, and the addition of three short news paragraphs. It can be seen that the proper and moderate introduction of English news into college English teaching can effectively improve the teaching effect, provide college students with the most authentic language input and the most vivid cultural experience, help improve their comprehensive English application ability, and expand their knowledge range and vision.

QIAO Xiaohong, M.A., lecturer, College of Foreign Languages, University of Shanghai for Science and Technology, Shanghai, China.

The Significant Advantages of English News in Improving the Teaching Effect of College English

English News Is Extensive and Timely in Content

The purpose of introducing English news into college English teaching is to enable college students to have access to a wider range of corpus information, so as to make up for the deficiency of the existing teaching materials in terms of the breadth of content. Current events cover politics, economy, culture, science and technology, history, and other aspects. For example, on the Voice of America (VOA) website, there are many columns, such as Agriculture Report, The Making of a Nation, and People in America, which can meet the interests of different students in different aspects. Contemporary college students have a relatively mature outlook on life and values, therefore they are generally concerned about domestic/international events. Daily updates of English news can effectively attract students' attention, which is conducive to students to get the freshest corpus, cultivate their interest in listening to English radio and reading English newspapers or periodicals, and further develop their habits of English learning. The new vocabulary and new language phenomena appearing in English news can also effectively supplement the shortcomings of traditional college English textbooks in reflecting the trend of language evolution and language vitality.

English News Is Characterized by Authentic Context and Idiomatic Language

English news uses the most authentic and popular language to objectively report or comment on events happening around the world. Students can listen to, watch, or read the latest news and learn original English from such media as Cable News Network (CNN), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and VOA. Immersed in a highly authentic context, students can truly experience the language in real life. For example, in recent years, terrorism has spread and terrorist organizations have carried out various terrorist attacks all over the world, so we can often hear or read related news reports. In such a real context, students can learn about the English words "terrorism," "terrorist," "suicide attack," "XX claimed responsibility for the attack," and "not give way in the fight against terrorism." In addition, if students want to improve their English pronunciation and pursue the idiomatic and fluent oral English, it is a shortcut to learn and imitate the received pronunciation of British and American radio hosts.

The Practical Application of English News in College English Teaching

Adhering to the principle of "appropriate and moderate," the author has introduced English news in teaching practice for years, and has achieved good teaching results. In this paper, it is divided into two aspects: in class and outside class.

The Application of English News in College English Classes

Since most college classrooms are equipped with multimedia facilities, teachers can select and download English news clips of moderate length and difficulty in advance, and play them in class. After listening to the news, the teacher can ask the students to answer the questions about the understanding of the news, or ask the students to repeat the main content of the news—time, place, people, and events:

1. For students with weak English foundation, after the first broadcast, the teacher can explain the new words in the news report, introduce the news background knowledge, and then ask the students to listen again;
2. For news videos, it is suggested to "cut off the subtitles for the first time, play the subtitles for the second time, and still cut off the subtitles for the third time" step-by-step, so as to ensure that students can fully

understand the news content without relying too much on Chinese subtitles;

3. For students with a good foundation in English, the presentation method can be adopted: Ask a student to make a good preparation one day before class, find a piece of English news that he/she is interested in, tell it to the students in class, and add the speaker's personal views on the news report, which can be supplemented by PPT or blackboard writing.

Then, the audience will ask the speaker questions about the content of the news report or the speaker's views. Through such activities, the speaker needs to have a deeper understanding of the news and even the background, but also to exercise their pronunciation and intonation, pay attention to their posture and manners on the platform. At the same time, the audience needs to pay attention to the news, think and ask questions after listening. This kind of 3-5 minute interactive activity in class puts forward higher requirements for both the speaker and the audience, and can greatly mobilize the active atmosphere of the class.

The Application of English News Outside college English Classes

Given the condition that the class hours of college English are generally limited, college students' extracurricular learning, or independent learning, is particularly important. Teachers can assign students to do some dictation exercises of news report paragraphs after class.

The teacher can instruct the students to listen to the news report coherently first, strive to have a general understanding of the content, and then listen to memorize sentence by sentence. For a sentence, the students with weak foundation can listen one or two times, and finally listen again coherently to check the accuracy of the dictation. During dictation, the news content is input into the brain through ear listening and mind reading, and then output by writing.

Secondly, by dictating news reports of moderate length, it helps to develop students' ability to grasp the key points of the article. In practice, it makes students realize that they should listen to paragraphs as groups of ideas instead of listening word by word, so as to help them understand better.

Thirdly, dictation of news reports can also exercise the ability to use hands and brains, enhance memory, and enable students to take good notes, which greatly improves the efficiency of language learning.

In addition, teachers can also ask students to spend 10 to 15 minutes a day listening to a news report, and write down the new words learned from it. Reading English newspapers and periodicals is also a good choice. Teachers can guide students to read English newspapers and periodicals by skimming the titles first, and then choosing what they like for further intensive reading. Students who read English newspapers for a long time will gradually find that the initially difficult English news reports (Which are often a great obstacle to reading and understanding due to the large number of new words) will become easier to understand under their own perseverance. The reason is that some words are repeated on a certain subject, such as: When reporting on natural disasters, words such as "disaster," "El Nino," "earthquake," "flood," "asualty," "rescue," and so on are high-frequency words. For students who get into the habit of reading English news, the learning, mastering, and accumulation of these words will be accomplished naturally and effortlessly. It is an effective way to cultivate students' independent learning and lifelong learning.

Conclusion

Introducing English news into college English teaching is not only a measure to deal with the new question type of CET-4 and CET-6, but also an essential part of English learning. By listening to and reading English

news, it can improve the interest, enthusiasm, and initiative of college students in learning English, and improve the teaching effect of college English classes. Therefore, it is also an important development direction of college English teaching.

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