An Exploration of the Characteristic "College English Listening and Speaking" Course under the ARCS Theory

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Abstract: The course of "College English Listening, Speaking and Viewing" aims to enhance students' listening skills while improving their ability to describe local cultures and phenomena in English. In response to common problems such as weak learning motivation and the separation of listening and speaking among students, this study attempts to apply the ARCS Motivation Theory, establish local cultural features related to the content of the text, and formulate online and offline teaching plans to cultivate students' learning motivation and their ability to tell stories about their hometowns in English, thereby enhancing their sense of patriotism and cultural confidence.

1. Course Introduction

Since its establishment, Dianchi University has always been committed to cultivating innovative and creative compound talents, adhering to the concept of cultivating high-quality applied talents. Through deepening educational and teaching reforms, strengthening practical teaching links, improving students' practical abilities and innovative spirit, and emphasizing students' all-round development, it serves the economic and social development. In light of the actual situation of our university, the public teaching of College English should focus on cultivating students' practical English application skills to enable them to possess the innovation and flexibility to adapt to future development. As a basic-level course, College English Listening and Speaking is an important part of College English. Its task is mainly improving students' English listening and speaking abilities through rich listening materials and oral practice, enhancing their interest in English learning and deepening their understanding and mastery of English vocabulary and culture. [1]At the ability level, it aims to improve students' listening comprehension while conducting corresponding oral output. At the educational level, it aims to enhance students' listening skills while cultivating their critical thinking, cross-cultural communication skills, and fostering their love for their hometown and the great rivers and mountains of the motherland, as well as cultural confidence.

2. Textbook and Student Situation Analysis

The textbook provides rich listening and speaking materials, including dialogues, speeches, lectures, news reports, etc., covering topics such as college life, social hotspots, customs and culture. The themes are novel and closely related to the real situation of college students, making it suitable for the English foundation of our students. It ensures that students can receive adequate training in

different scenarios while improving their oral expression ability and the accuracy of pronunciation and intonation. However, in the traditional listening and speaking classes, although student-centered teaching was implemented, due to the limited class time, more emphasis was placed on listening input practice and less on oral communication. This led to a separation between listening and speaking, failing to attract students' attention and curiosity, and was not effective in enhancing their understanding of their own and local cultures. In the context of intelligent teaching, teachers should play the roles of organizer, supervisor, facilitator, and guide in the teaching process, guiding students to actively seek meaningful and valuable learning activities, and striving to enhance their learning interest, cultivate cultural awareness, and improve critical thinking and innovation abilities. [2] To make up for the shortcomings of traditional listening and speaking classes and better cultivate students' critical thinking, innovation, and the ability to spread local culture and tell Chinese stories, this study attempts to apply the ARCS teaching model proposed by American psychologist Keller in 1983 to the design of listening and speaking teaching activities, providing direction and ideas for the mixed visual, listening, and speaking teaching. [3]The ARCS learning motivation model has four components: "A" represents attention, "R" represents relevance, "C" represents confidence, and "S" represents satisfaction. To stimulate students' learning motivation, first, local cultural elements in the textbook content should be explored to attract their attention (attention), and this task should be associated with the given materials (relevance). Then, students should gain confidence (confidence) in the output results of group cooperation and brainstorming. Finally, they should experience satisfaction (satisfaction) in completing this task, thereby stimulating their learning motivation.

3. Teaching Case Analysis

Taking Unit 8 "The Beauty of Diversity" from *New Target College English Listening and Speaking Book 2* as an example, this section elaborates on how to effectively integrate local culture with the textbook content and flexibly apply the ARCS model of learning motivation throughout the teaching process.

Firstly, the teacher introduces the theme of this unit to the students from the beginning of the class. To capture their attention, play a video from Bilibili titled "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Yunnan" and ask the students to note down several of the intangible cultural heritages mentioned in the video, such as Bai ethnic group's tie-dyeing, Dai ethnic group's brocade weaving, Jianshui purple pottery, Xuanwei ham, Mengzi rice noodles, Pu'er tea, Tengchong shadow puppetry and jade carving, Dongba papermaking, and Jianchuan woodcarving.[4] Many students from Yunnan are familiar with these intangible cultural heritages, and some even found the intangible cultural heritage of their hometowns. This undoubtedly greatly stimulated the students' interest in completing the unit tasks, capturing and stimulating their learning attention (attention). In the following learning stage, students need to discuss relevant questions in the "Endangered Languages" section of the listening comprehension of the text——this part sets three questions: (1) Do you think language is a kind of intangible cultural heritage? (2) What do the artifacts and language have in common? (3) What suggestions do you propose to protect the intangible cultural heritage? Through the group discussion of these three questions, the knowledge of the text is linked to the output task (R). Firstly, it effectively stimulates students' interest in learning; secondly, the results produced by the students through brainstorming reflect their rich creativity and constructive suggestions, awakening their awareness of the protection of related intangible cultural heritage.

The second teaching task of this unit is to complete the video listening on "comparison between Eastern painting and Western painting". To provide students with a better listening experience, professional painting terms such as "canvas", "perspective", "three-dimensional" and "elaborately" are introduced. After playing the video twice, multiple-choice questions about the comparison and

contrast between Chinese and Western paintings are assigned on the Rain Classroom. Through this teaching arrangement, not only can the students' listening skills be tested, but also targeted and effective feedback can be provided based on the error rate. During this process, students' learning confidence (C) and learning satisfaction (S) are enhanced, encouraging them to engage in effective learning in the next stage. Then, in combination with the content of news listening, dialogues and passages, the English descriptions of "blown glass", "ancient zither" and "Kunqu Opera" are studied, and the learned vocabulary and phrases such as "immerse" "pass on from generation to generation"; "cultural heritage", "excellent artifacts" are applied. Here is one of their works:

"Bai Tie-dye, a unique and ancient textile dyeing technique originating from the Bai ethnic group in Yunnan Province, China, is a national intangible **cultural heritage.** Over time, this skill gained immense popularity, with dyed garments even being presented as gifts to emperors. The intricate process involves several steps, including designing patterns, tying or stitching the fabric in specific folds or shapes**, immersing** it in dye, steaming, drying, untying, rinsing, and finally pressing the fabric. This **excellent artifacts** is a cultural symbol**, playing significant role in the world treasure house.** Its enduring popularity and continuous evolution serve as a reminder of the timeless beauty and should be preserved and **passed from generation to generation.**"   Among them, the bold words are expressions from the newly learned listening materials. They are immediately applied and used to draw inferences by analogy, truly achieving the goal of learning and applying knowledge.

The entire teaching process can be divided into the following parts: (1) Attracting Attention (A): Based on the relevant materials about Yunnan's intangible cultural heritage sent to the class group, assign two pre-class tasks: Task one: the students prepare a group oral report on a certain aspect of Yunnan (such as ethnic festivals, handicrafts, or local snacks) and present it in class (within 5 minutes); Task two: the teacher familiarizes the students with the vocabulary, phrases, and listening materials of this unit through the Welearn platform. (2) Establishing Relevance (R): the teacher connects the theme with the textbook content, finding the students' interest points, emphasizing regional characteristics, enhancing students' regional identity and cultural pride, and raises their awareness of the importance of protecting intangible cultural heritage. Offline task: the teacher should further integrate the context and conduct a brainstorming session based on the questions set in the stories they have watched. Through group discussions based on the set questions, link the knowledge from the text with the output tasks (R). (3) Boosting Confidence (C): the teacher should encourage students to participate in the production and performance of target tasks, and through the connection of new and old knowledge, encourage students to learn through their own observations and from their peers' demonstrations, and bravely express their views using the newly learned language knowledge. (4) Achieving Satisfaction (Satisfaction): the teacher should understand and grasp students' learning situations and dynamics based on their task completion on Welearn, and conduct self-evaluation and peer evaluation for each unit, enhancing students' learning satisfaction, establishing a feedback mechanism, and provide timely positive evaluations and encouragement to help students build satisfaction and confidence.

The ARCS Motivation Theory should run through the entire teaching activity, and each element is closely connected and progressive. In the practical process, when students appropriately apply and internalize the knowledge they have learned, it will make them have a desire for continuous learning, thereby generating a sense of satisfaction and maintaining a good learning motivation.[5]

4. Course Outlook

Appropriately applying the ARCS learning motivation model in the teaching of listening and speaking courses can help students better combine visual and auditory information, thereby stimulating their interest and enthusiasm for learning. Through diverse teaching activities such as

group discussions, role-playing, and debates, students can enhance their English listening and speaking skills in an interactive environment. Incorporating Yunnan elements into the "College English Listening and Speaking" course can create an academic yet regionally distinctive learning environment, which not only improves students' language skills but also increases their understanding of China's diverse cultures. Fully utilizing both online and offline platform resource libraries can provide students with more abundant online learning resources and interactive communication platforms. Encouraging students to create or collect English tour guides or travel introductions about famous Yunnan scenic spots enables them to understand Yunnan's geographical and cultural features while listening. Simulating travel dialogues, designing simulated travel scenarios, and having students play the roles of tourists and tour guides within groups can enhance their oral expression skills and critical thinking. These tasks can cover various aspects of Yunnan, such as its natural scenery, historical culture, and ethnic customs, guiding students to think deeply and cultivate their survival and development skills as well as their humanistic sentiments.

5. Conclusion

The ARCS motivation model aims to improve language ability, critical thinking ability, and autonomous learning ability simultaneously, emphasizing the enhancement of listening and speaking skills while also focusing on cultivating students' critical thinking and autonomous learning abilities. Through tasks and project-based learning with local characteristics, students are guided to engage in in-depth thinking and autonomous learning. Students have the right to speak and choose regarding unit tasks, and they need to connect what they have learned with real life, understanding the significance and value of the knowledge and skills they have acquired for the future. They should be able to flexibly apply both new and old knowledge, create language environments, and learn by doing, internalizing language knowledge and consolidating learning skills. Therefore, establishing cultural relevance in listening and speaking courses not only enhances students' language skills but also stimulates their interest and desire to explore the diverse cultures of Yunnan and China.

Acknowledgement

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