Design and Practice of Business English Audio-visual-oral Course

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Abstract. Taking “Hotel Reception” unit as an example, this article explores the teaching design for English Audio-visual-oral Course in higher vocational colleges and universities based on practicality and efficiency of knowledge. It focuses on the cultivation of students’ language knowledge, language skills, cross-cultural awareness and comprehensive qualities by adopting the teaching methods of brainstorming, group work, and role play and scenario simulation, as to guide students to master hotel reception language and etiquette and effectively improve their Language application ability.

Introduction

Business English audio-visual-aural teaching aims to cultivate students' ability to communicate and conduct business activities in English in a certain business environment, which is highly professional and applicable. However, due to the influence of traditional English teaching concepts, most teachers focus on the transfer of language knowledge in class, such as vocabulary and grammar, neglecting the cultivation of students' language application ability, which leads to the disconnection between teaching content and actual work. At the same time, the classroom teaching model is outdated, the methods are single, and the proportion of audio, visual and aural is unbalanced. With the single and fixed teaching mode, students remember a lot of words and grammar, but “seem to communicate in a vacuum.” They do not really master the skills and methods of using language, resulting in a large number of “dumb English” And “deaf English.” One of the main reasons for this phenomenon is the unreasonable design of the Business English Audio-visual-aural course, which deviates from the actual work process, resulting in students' poor ability to apply professional knowledge to the actual business environment, and there is a big gap between practical ability and corresponding job requirements. As Mr. Jiang Dayuan puts it, taking work process as the reference frame for curriculum design is more in line with the characteristics of vocational education [1]. Taking the unit of “Hotel Reception” as an example, this article focuses on the cultivation of students’ language knowledge, language skills, cross-cultural awareness and comprehensive qualities so as to effectively improve their Language application ability.

Teaching Objectives

On the one hand, students need to master the working process of room reservation and hotel reception, be familiar with the etiquette in reception and communication, and improve the quality of etiquette services. On the other hand, students should grasp expressions for hotel reception, and be able to receive foreign guests skillfully and decently in English, including room reservation, check-in, guiding service, wake-up service, room service and check-out. At the same time, teachers need to develop students’ teamwork spirit and communicate ability, enhance their confidence in business communication, cultivate their ability to analyze and solve problems, and improve their professional skills.

Teaching Content

The theme of this unit is “Hotel Reception,” and various language activities are carried out around this topic. Students have acquired basic listening skills, such as predication, searching for keywords...
and topic sentences, etc. They can basically follow business conversations of 60-80 words per minute and introduce hotel facilities and services in English. Students have a preliminary understanding of reception etiquette and its importance. The design of this unit mainly highlights the cultivation of students’ communication skills and etiquette in the hotel reception.

About the Students

This course is mainly for higher vocational students. We follow the principle of combining practicability, effectiveness and interest in teaching design and adopt brainstorming, group cooperation, role-playing, and scenario simulation method through the full use of multimedia language training equipment. The traditional “listening” teaching mode has been completely subverted. Discussion, role play and scenario simulation are carried out through the integration of audio, visual and aural teaching methods.

Teaching Process

Lead-in

Constructivism holds that the learning process is not a simple input, storage, and extraction of information, but an active construction process based on students' existing knowledge and experience. When a person accepts new knowledge, he always starts a new learning task with some appropriate memory structure [2]. New information can only be meaningful if it is related to knowledge and experience already in the person's mind. Therefore, in the cultivation of listening ability, teachers should promote the learners to integrate and infiltrate the stored knowledge with the newly acquired information, and inspire them to think about relevant topics by introducing background knowledge, cultural common sense, related words and expressions, so as to naturally penetrate into the unit theme and improve the effect of class teaching.

In the lead-in stage, brainstorming is mainly adopted, that is, setting up interesting topics, inspiring and guiding students, and encouraging them to communicate and discuss freely, in order to maximize their potential, enhance their confidence, practice their creative thinking [3], mobilize their enthusiasm and initiative in learning to guide them to consciously and naturally integrate into the learning of new knowledge and skills. During the phase, students discuss the work process of hotel reception freely in groups of five, and analyze the preparation, service content, common problems and solutions of each process. They are guided to summarize reception etiquette from dress, standing posture, expression and attitude, etc. and several groups are randomly selected for class presentation.

Pre-listening

This stage mainly adopts the group cooperation method. Students engage in learning activities in groups of three and complete the tasks assigned by the teacher. In this process, we mainly promote the communication and interaction among students through watching videos, answering questions and other methods, so as to encourage students to think actively and prepare for listening training activities.

Reviewing various listening skills, such as prediction, searching for key words and topic sentences. Watching a hotel reception video, including room reservation, check-in, guiding service, wake-up service, room service and check-out. Students discuss the common expressions of each process in group of three. The teacher guides the students to be familiar with the vocabulary and expressions related to hotel reception, as shown below:

1. Do you have a reservation?
2. What kind of room would you like? We have single room, double room, suites and deluxe suite.
3. A double room with a front view is 300 RMB per night and with a rear view is 280 RMB per night.
4. You'll have continental breakfast and service, free Wi-Fi, a color television, a telephone and a major international newspaper delivered to your room every day.
(5) What’s your arrival date? How long will you be staying?
(6) We do have a double room available for those days.
(7) If the child is under 16 and needs an extra bed in your room, the charge is 75 RMB.

Designing some questions as a guest, selecting students for mutual communication and guide them to become familiar with the expressions used in hotel reception.

While-listening

The traditional listening teaching is a monotonous and repetitive process of playing recordings, students finishing exercises, and checking answers by teachers and students. It is lack of communication and interaction between teachers and students, so listening comprehension becomes a one-way transmission and passive acceptance of information, which hinders the improvement of listening skill. Therefore, in listening teaching, teachers should adopt all methods and means to let students make full use of their existing knowledge and experience to actively process and sort out the information input, and help students master the necessary listening skills and methods to enhance their grasp and understanding of listening materials.

In this session, the teacher first explains various listening skills and methods to students in an inspiring and interactive way, such as prediction, listening to topic sentences, grasping specific information and key words, etc., teaches some practical shorthand methods as abbreviations, initials, symbols and so on, and then let the students listen to a piece of real speech material. Students are required to find out the words and expressions related to reception and ask questions with what, when, where, how and why. While playing the recording, the students listen carefully and complete the exercise, exchange answers in pairs, discuss the use of listening skills, and then read after each sentence. The Teacher grasps students’ emotional changes, give timely inspiration and guidance, and improve their reaction to language.

Post-listening

The main function of language is communication. Listening and speaking, as the basis of language communication, are a pair of entities that restricts and promotes each other. The purpose of listening is to express better. The improvement of speaking ability will in turn promote the improvement of listening level. Therefore, teachers should be student-centered, choose hot topics that are related to the text or well-designed, increase the output of the language and improve students' language skills by guiding them to make speeches, debates, and scenario simulations, etc. Constructivism believes that learning is always associated with certain situation, so scenario creation is one of the important tasks of teaching design. The combination of scenario teaching, case teaching and traditional multimedia method will greatly improve the effect of classroom teaching [4].

The scenario simulation method is mainly adopted in the post-listening phase of this unit. The teacher first guides students to role play in the created simulation situation and to fully display their speech, behavior and psychology. and then evaluates their actual application ability and level according to their performance.

In this stage, the teacher, according to the teaching objectives of the unit, creates five real situations from room reservation, front desk reception, ushering into the room, wake-up call, room service and check-out. Three students play the roles of receptionist A, doorman B and waiter C, and the other student simulates guest D. The four performed six tasks through the division of labor and cooperation. They are required to master the daily English of the hotel through inquiry, soliciting opinions, suggestions, expressing preferences, etc.

Appropriate teaching evaluation can effectively control teaching process and test teaching effects. Before reception, the teacher introduces the steps and scoring criteria of scenario simulation, requiring appropriate language, good manners, proper communication, good teamwork and cross-cultural communication skills. After the role play, the teacher gives a comprehensive evaluation according to the students’ performance, and gives positive recognition and encouragement to their language use, emotional expression and performance skills, so as to enhance students’ sense of achievement and self-confidence. At the same time, suggestions for improvement are also provided to help students effectively adjust the learning process and better participate in the class.
Summary

On the whole, students are interested in the theme of this unit. Under the guidance of teachers, most students can actively communicate and cooperate with each other, and the overall participation is high, which better achieved the expected teaching objectives and teaching effects. However, in the actual teaching process, due to the limited class time and the large number of students, it is difficult for each student to get fully spoken and trained. In view of such problems, it is proposed to solve the problems of insufficient training time and excessive number of students by splitting teaching tasks or sending video assignment, so that each student can effectively participate in the class and truly become the master of the learning process.

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