

Students' Perceptions of College English Teachers' Role

Deng Rong

Capital Normal University, Beijing, China, 100048

Keywords: students' perceptions, teachers' role, college English teaching

Abstract: The role of College English teachers has been extensively studied in recent years. It is well acknowledged that students are the future of a country, and teachers are regarded as the ladders of their development and the education of normal university students is a crucial process of the whole country's strategy.

1. Introduction

It is well acknowledged that College English Instruction has been attached great importance over a long period of time, and it is definitely the case especially after the enacting of the National Education reform and Development of Long-term Planning Programs. According to the Chapter of Tertiary Education published by Organizational Department of Chinese Central Communist Party ([ODCCCP], 2010), it is of crucial importance to speed up universal higher education in order to improve the overall quality of university students comprehensively and meanwhile, the elementary of higher education is to cultivate the well-developed students who are not only knowledgeable but also persistent, courageous, virtuous and innovative as well. Furthermore, it is also mentioned by the Program that it is only the teacher who can accomplish such a magnitude mission (ODCCCP, 2010). It goes without saying that the students who will become the future teachers themselves after their graduation from Normal Universities should take full advantages of the resources from their normal universities and be well educated so that they will become more outstanding teachers in the near future.

2. The importance of the quality of College English teachers

Normal University as the main base to train future teachers, has the responsibility and obligation to do a good job of teacher education. With the gradual deepening of the reform of teacher education, teacher education is gradually showing a new trend of development of the globalization of the university, specialization, integration and lifelong learning.

According to College English Curriculum Requirements, the quality of teachers is the key to the improvement of the teaching quality, and to the development of the College English program. Shu and Chen (2010) argued that there were three most important aspects which could embody the characteristics of high quality teaching: the first priority is the practical ability, second priority is the theoretical quality of applied linguistics, and last but not least priority is the spirit of professional ethics and dedication as well. Colleges and universities should build a faculty team with a good structure of age, educational backgrounds and professional titles, lay emphasis on the training and development of College English teachers, encourage them to conduct teaching and research with a

focus on the improvement of teaching quality, create conditions for them to carry out relevant activities in various forms, and promote effective cooperation among them, so that they can better adapt to the new teaching model. Meanwhile, opportunities should be created so that the teachers can enjoy sabbaticals and engage in advanced studies, thus ensuring sustainable improvement in their academic performance and methods of teaching.

3. The students' perception of College English teachers' role

3.1 The implied interpretation of teachers' role

Xu (2006) has mentioned that a teacher's understanding of the nature of language will determine to a large extent how he teaches a language. The implied interpretation might be illustrated from the following aspects: on one hand, the teacher's understanding of how the learner learns a language will determine his philosophy of education, his teaching styles, his methods, approach and the classroom techniques; on the other hand, the accomplishment of teaching is a dual direction process, thus not only the teacher but also the students are fully involved in the process; consequently, none of their role could be neglected.

3.2 Systematic teaching procedure

It is well acknowledged that students are the future of a country, teachers are regarded as the ladder of their development and the education of normal university students is a crucial process of the whole country's strategy of enhancing the state by educating students. Meanwhile, the education of normal university students is a systematic procedure and it involves many factors, such as: designing systematically and integrating the educational rationales into the whole process of cultivating the normal students.

Over the past few decades, many researches on the roles of foreign language teachers have been performed, and one of the most typical investigations belongs to Barbara Mullock's study (2003), and the title of the paper is "What makes a good teacher? The perceptions of postgraduate TESOL students". Undoubtedly, there are other numerous researches which focus the attention the role of good language teachers; however, the perspectives from the Normal University students' of College English teachers have not been taken into account, and at the same time there are relatively few data-driven investigations of the subjects. Thus, comparatively speaking, little systematic research has been dedicated to the sphere of non-English majors in the Chinese normal university. In order to fill in the gap which is mentioned above, the chief aim of the present research is to analyze College English teachers' role in the sequence of importance from the Normal University students' perspectives to a certain extent.

3.3 Fully involvement of College English teachers

Du (2011) indicated that the fully involvement of College English teachers is the foundation to the success of College English reform. As a consequence, the teachers' participation, creativity and initiative should be highly motivated. Xu and Luo (2011) claimed that from the postmodern perspective, teaching can be regarded as an intellectually challenging mission that transcends the exaggerated dichotomies between content and process and between research and teaching. Undoubtedly, those who are integrators, who enjoy field work, who excel as scholars in the classroom should be rewarded for these special talents alongside researchers, accordingly, they are expected to be considered of equal worth. Moreover, Wen and Han pointed out that the aim of conducting teaching-based research is to enhance the teachers' ability of reflection and logic and

input more energy and creativity to the daily teaching instructive life so that the students could develop in a healthier, harmonious and well-round way. Li has indicated that the factors that affect Chinese lifelong learning are listed as follows: economic factors, political factors, social factors and cultural factors.

Although little importance has been placed on the role of researcher of College English teacher from the perspectives of students, it is of great necessity to attach its importance from the aspect of teachers. It is generally acknowledged that only if a teacher keeps on meeting challenges, keeps on reflecting his or her own teaching methodology, could he or she make rapid progress. As a result, as a teacher of Colleges and universities, besides improving their teaching methodology and expertise continuously, college English teachers are highly recommended that they should endeavor their utmost to carry out researches on the basis of daily instruction so that their teaching effect could be improved to a certain extent and what is more their students learning efficiency could be enhanced as well, and as a result, a new pattern of virtuous circle could be formed and the subjects who are fully involved could gain more benefits to a larger extent.

4. Strategies for teachers to apply

4.1 The process of reflective teaching

Tian (2011) pointed out that there are at least six steps during the process of reflective teaching which involves observation, interpretation, introspection, questioning, consideration to alternatives and adaptation of instruction. All the above mentioned steps could be conducted in a circulation and the reflective teaching could be implemented according to the real situation of daily teaching. As also demonstrated by the researcher Tian (2011), there are at least eleven strategies for language teachers to apply to practice when they have the opportunity to carry on reflective teaching and the eleven strategies are listed as follows: teacher's workshop, self-monitoring, teacher support groups, teaching journal, peer observation, teaching portfolios, analyzing critical incidents, case analysis, peer coaching team teaching and action research.

4.2 Life-long learning

Meanwhile, in order to keep up with the rapid development of science, society and technology, College English teachers should have a strong awareness of life-long learning. First of all, they are supposed to be open-minded, and only in this way, could they learn more by listening to different opinions and could they be courageous enough to question the validity of his or her own inherent beliefs or values. Next, the College English teachers should be whole-hearted simply because if the instructor is genuinely passionate about or crazy for something, he or she will spare no effort into pursuing it without and hesitation. Last but not least, to be responsible and conscientious is another important trait of a reflective teacher who definitely thinks thoroughly in advance and prepares fully ahead of schedule. Otherwise, as is stated by Cai (2012 b), with the increasing level of junior and senior high school students' proficiency in spoken English and written English, it tends to become a spontaneous tendency that some less qualified College English teachers may transcend to middle school.

4.3 Professional development

According to Zeng (2012), College English teachers have comparatively strong consciousness about their professional development, innovation and the ability to conduce systematic reflection; however, the harmonious and unified relationship between individual vision and team vision is not

completely established. In other words, collective cohesion and consciousness of team learning and its ability are supposed to be enhanced and strengthened; training at home and abroad, bonus and welfare fund and promotion of professional technical titles are the main factors influencing College English teachers' professional development. Furthermore, in order to enrich the variety of the content and form of the academic activities (Chen, 2013), Chinese and foreign famous experts and scholars should also be invited to give lectures on the specific field so that the College English teachers should be trained and get access to the latest development of their researching domain. Generally speaking, conferences, meetings and workshops allow the College English teachers to hear about the latest developments in the field, participate in investigating workshops and enter into debates about current issues in theory and practice. To summarize, according to the current situation of professional development and reflective teaching of College English teachers, to update educational philosophy, conduct reflective practice, and promote cooperation reflection should be emphasized to improve the awareness and the ability of reflection and innovation and create the innovative team as well.

4.4 Writing critical journals

It is well acknowledged that there are a number approaches to explore teaching effectiveness through increasing language teaching awareness, for instance, increasing self-awareness, reflecting language teaching, action study, writing teaching journals, classroom observation, case analysis, using videos, peer coaching and mentoring, team teaching, teaching portfolios and so on. Research conducted by Yan supported the importance of writing critical journals simply because it is the most common method to improve teachers' instruction. Han has founded out that if the instructor forms a habit of writing academic journals daily, it is presumably that this kind of reflective and critical approach might attribute to his improvement in the field of teaching and research as well. As a matter of fact, it is a time consuming process in order to cultivate the critical ability and reflective sense because none of the language teachers could accomplish their goal in one move. Dou & Sang (2013) argued that each College English teacher should be regarded as an independent individual and each one of them can also have the chance to become mature and grown up with the process of growing up of the language learners.

5. Conclusion

R., Wang and X., Wang, (2013) points out that the reform of college English language teaching has provided an extremely rare opportunity and platform and consequently, the result of the reform is determined by the college English teachers' initiative, originality and their frontier spirit to larger extent. Accordingly, the researcher herself puts forward several suggestions concerned the professional development of the college English teachers in order to meet the rapid development of the society and self-enrichment as well. To begin with, the college English teachers should read extensively including the field of philosophy, literature, history, teaching- pedagogy and so forth so that their literal quality could be cultivated to a certain extent. Secondly, it is an excellent opportunity for college English teachers, especially novice teachers to participate in various kinds of competition and as a result they may obtain encouragement and criticism as well from the experts in their field and meanwhile, they might get access to the latest development and trend of the kernel factor which trouble them if they are fortunate enough. Moreover, the college English teachers should take full advantage of the training programs to update their acquired knowledge, teaching techniques and their scientific awareness. Last but not least, the college English teachers should be fully engaged in different scientific research groups so that all the members from the same might discuss together, share their opinions together and thus a virtuous circulation based on the scientific

research and teaching could be established sooner or later.

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