The Application of TED Corpus in Listening and Speaking Teaching in Middle Schools

-- Take PEP as An Example

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Abstract

Under the requirements of the New Curriculum Standard, English teaching in middle schools has developed in many aspects, but there are still some problems in listening and speaking teaching in middle schools that are difficult to solve completely. TED talk video has many advantages, such as profound topic, authentic expression, etc., so it can be learned by middle school students to improve their listening and speaking ability. A large number of literatures show that the application of corpus in middle school teaching is feasible and effective. Therefore, this paper attempts to apply TED corpus to middle school English listening and speaking teaching.

Keywords

TED; Corpus; English listening and speaking teaching.

1. Introduction

Listening and speaking is the most convenient and active way of English communication. The new curriculum standard points out that listening and reading are comprehension skills, speaking and writing are expressive skills, and both skills are needed for middle school students to master at the same time and the two skills complement each other. In teaching, many teachers attach importance to reading and writing but neglect the cultivation of listening and speaking skills. With the rapid development of computer technology in China, corpus has been widely used in English teaching. Because the topics of TED talks are profound and creative, it is conducive to improving the quality of thinking and cultural awareness of middle school students.

2. Relevant Concepts and Research Status

2.1. Current Situation of Middle School English Listening and Speaking Teaching

The new curriculum standard extends the 15-20 minutes per week for students in the old curriculum to 30 minutes, which shows that the Ministry of Education attaches great importance to the improvement of listening and speaking ability. However, there is a common problem in middle school English listening and speaking teaching in our country. Most teachers attach importance to exam-oriented education, i.e. students' reading and writing, but neglect students' listening and speaking. Zhang Feng (2018) proposed that teachers should pay more attention to the teaching of textbook content than the cultivation and training of listening and speaking ability. Li Huifang (2019) believes that some teachers have a weak awareness of cultivating students' core qualities in listening and speaking teaching. According to these

problems, Liu Meng (2022) proposed that teachers should provide a large number of listening and speaking materials and attach importance to the use of multimedia.

2.2. Application of Corpora in Middle School English Teaching

Professor Yang Huizhong of Shanghai Jiao Tong University pointed out that "corpus linguistics is a subject with strong practicability and application." Middle school English teaching is one of the important application areas of corpus linguistics. For example, Jiang Qiaoling et al. (2021) studied corpa-assisted teaching methods for senior high school English subject vocabulary; Chen Yunliang (2019) compared old and new subject vocabulary from the perspective of corpus; and Zhang Fengxiang (2021) conducted a study on using corpus to effectively improve students' English reading and writing ability. As can be seen from the above, a large number of literatures have pointed out that corpora can be applied to the learning of vocabulary, phrases and sentence patterns, etc., while few literatures have proposed the application of corpora in listening and speaking teaching in middle schools.

2.3. TED and English Listening and Speaking Teaching in Middle Schools

Zheng Xiaojun et al. (2012) proposed ten years ago that English teaching in China could use TED talk videos or video sharing websites for networked learning. In 2011,TED released TED-ED project, which focused on how to apply TED talks and TED talk methods to primary and secondary school teaching. Yu Xiaomei et al. (2020) introduced many advantages of using TED resources to study medicine, such as providing a large number of real and fresh English corpus and helping to cultivate critical thinking ability. Wang Wei (2021) also made a multidimensional analysis of the discourse domain features of TED speeches and found that the education and culture narratives in TED are the strongest, the persuasion is the most obvious, and the language is the most specific. The above research on TED shows that the TED corpus is suitable for middle school students to improve their listening and speaking ability, thinking quality and cultural awareness development.

2.4. Summary of Literature Review

From the above research, it can be seen that the problems of listening and speaking teaching in middle schools are common, and the TED corpus can be applied to English listening and speaking teaching in middle schools. The TED Corpus of corpus Linguistics of Beijing Foreign Studies University has a collection of 2.4 million words, covering the corpus of classic TED talks. Therefore, this thesis applies this TED corpus to English listening and speaking teaching in middle schools.

3. TED Corpus Is Applied to English Listening and Speaking Teaching in Middle Schools

3.1. Analysis of Listening and Speaking Teaching Content of Compulsory Unit 1 of PEP

The topic of Unit 1 is Teenage Life. The theme of this unit is person and self, and the purpose of listening and speaking exercises in this unit is to enable students to correctly deal with challenges and difficulties in life and study and make plans for the future. Therefore, the key words of listening and speaking in this unit are difficulty, challenge, future and their derivatives. This paper takes the key word challenge as an example to explore the following teaching application.

3.2. The Application of TED Corpus Before, During and After Listening and Speaking Classes

3.2.1. Collect Relevant Expressions of Keywords Before Class

The topic of Unit 1 is Teenage Life. Before class, students can use the standard query function in the TED corpus of Beijing Foreign Studies University to search for the word challenge. The query shows that the word challenge appears 238 times in the corpus. Students can select the first dozens of results in the list to read and explore the usage of challenge by themselves. For example, in the first 30-50 results, students can learn by carefully reading each sentence that challenge is not only a verb, but also a countable noun, and the adjectives big, great, principal, leadership, tremendous, etc., can be used to describe challenge. Therefore, before class, students can accumulate some idiomatic expressions by using standard queries. This step can serve as a knowledge reserve for students and enrich their oral expressions.

3.2.2. Targeted Learning in Combination with Teaching Materials

According to the theme of this unit, the teacher sorted out the usage and related expressions of this word in the corpus before class. For example, the above mentioned adjective collocation used to modify challenge can be used by teachers in listening and speaking exercises in class. For example, during listening practice, complete TED lecture videos without subtitles containing some pre-prepared expressions are played to students, and relevant exercises are set to improve students' listening skills such as intensive listening and extensive listening. After listening practice, students are allowed to combine their own pre-class preview with in-depth oral communication in class.

3.2.3. Collect Relevant Topics After Class to Develop Listening and Speaking ability

In this unit, listening and speaking teaching is a topic related to the challenges faced by students who have just entered high school, but there are many other topics related to challenge in oral practice. For example, in this corpus, there are many topics related to challenge, such as life and health, national development, and education quality. After class, teachers can assign oral practice tasks to students in specific situations on these topics to help students improve their logical and correctional thinking skills, such as "Today's fierce competition among countries, in order to make our country stand tall among the world powers, how should we high school students face such challenges?" Similar oral practice questions can be used to improve students' oral and thinking qualities.

4. Conclusion

This paper discusses the application of TED corpus in middle school English listening and speaking teaching based on the content of Unit 1 of the compulsory version. Listening and speaking teaching is one of the most important parts to improve middle school students' comprehension skills and expressive skills, and TED corpus plays an irreplaceable role in improving middle school students' listening and speaking English ability. It is hoped that the content discussed in this paper can bring valuable thinking to English listening and speaking teaching in middle schools.

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