

The Captivating Wine: A Case Study of Situational Teaching Method in High School English Listening and Speaking Classes

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Abstract

The Situational Teaching Method is an engaging and interactive approach to English instruction. As the role of English as a global lingua franca becomes increasingly significant, high school listening and speaking courses are receiving greater attention. However, the pressures of examinations and the uneven development of language skills require urgent intervention. Teachers and students, confronted with the immense demands of college entrance examinations, often resort to a teaching model that prioritizes test preparation and high scores. This focus on exam-oriented education, coupled with a lack of daily communication contexts, has resulted in an uneven development of high school students' English listening and speaking abilities. Consequently, students frequently find themselves capable of understanding English content but unable to express their thoughts effectively, thereby failing to achieve the intended purpose of communication. This paper advocates for the implementation of the Situational Teaching Method to create vivid and authentic contexts that promote students' core English literacy. It explores the enhancement of high school English listening and speaking skills through this method, using wine culture as a case study, to improve teaching effectiveness, adapt to educational reforms, and advance high school English education.

Keywords

Wine culture; Situational Teaching Method; listening and speaking class

1. Introduction

Innovations in teaching models are integral to education reform. The Situational Teaching Method emphasizes student participation, interaction, and cooperative learning, offering authentic experiences. Teachers should try to set up real environments. This is helpful for learners to acquire new knowledge, improve their ability, and apply it in a real-life setting (Zhang, 2022). It places learning tasks in real contexts, allowing students to apply their English skills practically, which enhances engagement. This method transforms traditional, monotonous textbook content into lively, context-based learning. For example, in the Oxford Shanghai High School English module, "The Search for Happiness," creating scenarios related to family, school, and society makes the abstract topic more relatable and engaging. Thus, the Situational Teaching Method improves students' listening and speaking skills, increases classroom participation, and provides practical teaching strategies for teachers.

2. The Necessity of Situational Teaching Method

2.1 The Classification of Situations

The characteristic features of "situations" are that they are graphic, concrete, and can be fully felt and perceived (Wang, 2017). In the teaching process, due to the different teaching materials, teaching objectives, and students' basic situations, the situations that teachers can create or introduce are diverse and complex. But no image there is no situation, image is one of the essential features of contextual teaching. The image mentioned here is in a broad sense. For the convenience of research, we can categorize the context into direct and indirect contexts according to the different images of the subject of the context in teaching. The direct context consists of the whole of the situation, which is dominated by direct images. Direct image refers to the direct impression reflected in the student's head. The object of reflection is mainly non-symbolic and real objects and the reflection mainly relies on the function of the first signal system. The story of Mencius's mother breaking the loom and the concept of nature serve as direct context (Mi, 1990). Indirect context is mainly composed of the indirect image. Indirect image mainly refers to the artistic image such as the image of the performance, the image of the literary works, and the description of the situation and atmosphere. The formation of indirect images mainly relies on the function of the individual's secondary signal system. The situations presented on TV, on the stage, and depicted in words are all indirect situations.

2.2 The Advantage of Situational Teaching Method

2.2.1 Deepening the Students' Impression of Knowledge

Situational teaching methods can effectively stimulate students' learning interest and enthusiasm, so as to better realize the construction of an efficient classroom (Fu, 2023). The situational teaching method is conducive to students' immersion, direct perception, and deepening the impression of what they have learned. First of all, creating or introducing image-based situations in the teaching process to make students feel like they are there or in the same situation is one of the characteristics of situational teaching. No matter which kind of teaching situation is directly based on the context of teaching, always by certain means, show the students vivid and concrete images and images as the main body of the composition of the context ultimately help to achieve the purpose of learning services. The introduction or creation of direct context in teaching is to enable students to immerse themselves in the context, direct perception, and the formation of specific and distinctive images. Indirect context is mainly to make the students be in the situation, by virtue of imagination and association, to form representations in their minds, then to obtain the effect of verbal or symbolic intuition (Mi, 1990).

2.2.2 Stimulating Students' Emotional Experience and Emotional Resonance

Students learn English in a specific context, which changes the previous situation of single and boring teaching and improves the quality of high school English classes (Ni, 2024). The second advantage of situational teaching is to stimulate a certain emotional experience in students and also to make students have a related emotional experience after being exposed to the context. To introduce or create a certain situation is closely linked with the stimulation of students' feelings. If there is only a situation but not stimulate the feelings of students, it cannot be situational teaching. The eyes are the windows of the mind, and the immediate situation visualized through the eyes is characterized by intuition, richness, and vividness. The use of direct context in the classroom can directly and quickly cause students' emotional experience and emotional resonance, which is conducive to stimulating students' interest in learning, enhancing students' desire to learn, and maintaining students' motivation to learn. Indirect context requires students' rich imagination to support and thus stimulate emotional resonance and emotional experience, which is conducive to promoting students to connect the knowledge taught in class with the knowledge already in their minds, and to form a unique way of encoding, storing, and extracting knowledge³ The Problems of High School English Listening and Speaking Class.

3. The Problems of High School English Listening and Speaking Class

3.1 The Pressure of College Entrance Examination

The problem of excessive academic burden on school students has become a stumbling block on the road to reform and development of education in China (Xiang, 2019). In recent years, high school students have had more books, more lessons, more homework, more examinations, more tutorials, more competitions, less sleep, fewer cultural and sports activities, fewer moral education activities, fewer activities related to the cultivation of life skills, fewer independent activities and fewer creative activities. Under such circumstances, high school students are burdened with heavy learning

and mental pressure (Cao, 2011). For our students who learn English, learning English starts with memorizing a lot of English words, and the memorization of words not only takes a lot of time but is not particularly helpful in getting good grades in the college entrance examination in English. However, this is only the first step in getting good grades in the college entrance examination. At the same time, the questions of English in the college entrance examination are generally more difficult than the questions in the English textbooks, so to get good grades in the college entrance examination, students need to spend more time and energy, which increases their learning burden. Secondly, due to the status of English as a major subject, the time students spend studying English far exceeds the time spent on other subjects, which also compresses the time spent on other subjects until a few days before the final exams, when they spend days and nights cramming for the study of other subjects, which increases the burden on students even more. Teachers and students, facing the immense pressure of the college entrance examination, often resort to a classroom teaching mode that prioritizes test preparation and high scores. As a result, daily teaching focuses primarily on rote memorization and the consolidation of English language knowledge points. This leads to classrooms dominated by mechanical training, neglecting the development of students' English listening and speaking skills, and fostering negative attitudes towards English learning. Even listening and speaking classes can devolve into sessions centered on vocabulary, grammar, and reading, driven by the demands of the college entrance examination.

3.2 The Inadequacy of Students' Abilities

According to the requirements of the English curriculum standards, the most critical aspect of cultivating students' core qualities in English is language proficiency. The primary external manifestation of language proficiency is interpersonal communication ability, which involves developing a sense of the language through listening and speaking (Zhang, 2022). However, the lack of daily communication contexts and the focus on exam-oriented education have led to uneven development of high school students' English listening and speaking abilities. Consequently, students often find themselves able to understand English content but unable to express their thoughts effectively, failing to achieve the purpose of communication. Due to the external pressure of the college entrance examination, the internal performance of students' English listening and speaking ability is insufficient, making the English listening and speaking course teaching process and teaching effect not good. Moreover, the relationship between language and thinking is close and complex. From the perspective of learning, thinking is present throughout language learning activities, and the process of language learning is also a process that promotes the development of thinking and the mind (Meng, 2019). It is not clear to academics and frontline teachers what thinking skills the English language program promotes and how it promotes the development of students' thinking skills through English language learning (Cheng, 2015). In actual teaching, the cultivation of thinking skills mostly stays at the level of lower-order thinking, and the design of teaching activities for the planned and targeted cultivation of higher-order thinking, such as logical thinking, critical thinking, and innovative thinking, is relatively rare, and the curricular objectives for the development of thinking skills are often not effectively implemented (Meng, 2019). As a result, it is difficult for students to integrate and apply the language knowledge in their heads to English communication and dialog when their thinking skills are deficient, which further results in a lack of English listening and speaking skills. Thinking ability is also known as an important ability that is indispensable but easily neglected in English learning.

4. Case Studies of Situational Teaching Method

4.1 Simulating a Cocktail Party Conversation

4.1.1 Analyzing the Topics

Teaching objectives serve as clear benchmarks for the changes expected in students as they acquire new knowledge. They guide the teaching and learning process, focusing efforts on desired learning outcomes. These objectives typically encompass knowledge acquisition, skill development, and core competencies. For instance, in simulating a cocktail party dialogue scene, students acquire common English expressions for socializing. Skill-wise, the aim is to enhance oral and listening abilities in social settings. Core literacy goals revolve around improving oral fluency. To achieve these objectives effectively, clear teaching steps are essential. Preparation prior to class ensures students are ready to engage. Establishing the party context precedes creating specific scenarios conducive to meeting the objectives.

4.1.2 Clarifying the Teaching and Learning Process

The teaching process involves teachers and students working together to achieve learning objectives through designated content and methods. Firstly, the English teacher sets up a simulated cocktail party environment, either physically or through media, to immerse students in a context. Next, dialogues for reception scenarios are introduced and practiced, equipping students with new English skills for subsequent activities. Role-playing exercises follow, with students

assuming party personas and practicing socializing, etiquette, and wine basics. These activities enhance listening and speaking abilities. Lastly, mutual peer and teacher evaluations foster learning and improvement in English communication skills through constructive feedback.

4.2 Wine Culture Theme Activities

4.2.1 Understanding the Theme of the Activity

For a long time, teaching materials have been equated with teaching content, a one-sided view that neglects the dynamic interaction between teachers and students. Teaching content, however, encompasses dynamically generated materials and information crucial for teaching purposes. It must be flexibly adapted to the curriculum's subject matter, with clear objectives set for classroom content, student competency, and literacy. For instance, in a wine culture activity, students may utilize resources like professional dictionaries or articles on wine culture to learn relevant expressions and enhance their English listening and speaking skills while gaining insights into wine culture.

4.2.2 Clarifying the Teaching and Learning Process

In wine culture-themed activities, defining the curriculum type for the listening and speaking class is paramount. Creating a context involves setting up a direct scenario, like students showcasing wine-related crafts or artifacts in class. Students act as exhibitors, narrators, listeners, and learners, enhancing their English skills through practical engagement. Alternatively, indirect contexts, such as screening a promotional video about Yibin, China's wine city, can stimulate imagination and prompt students to draw on existing knowledge. Following student presentations, the teacher evaluates the activity, prompting a review of learning outcomes in English.

5. Suggestions for Situational Teaching Methods

5.1 Full Understanding of the Subject

In understanding course themes, analyzing them involves identifying learning content objectives, learning competency objectives, and core literacy objectives. The content objective focuses on the knowledge students should grasp, such as expressions for a simulated cocktail party conversation. Learning competency objectives aim to enhance students' listening and speaking skills. Core literacy objectives relate to students' values, subtly integrated into the class. For instance, in a wine culture activity, students should grasp basic wine culture aspects like wine origin, production process, and drinking etiquette. Considering these dimensions clarifies course subjects, aiding subsequent teaching and learning steps.

5.2 Creating Context from Multiple Perspectives

Contexts can be classified into two main types: direct and indirect. Direct contexts involve setting up scenarios resembling the lesson's subject background, like organizing a simple cocktail party for teaching a simulated conversation. Indirect contexts are presented through audio, video, or language descriptions, such as showcasing a video of Yibin, China's wine city, for a wine culture activity.

Moreover, situations can be created from various perspectives, such as spatial (school, family, society) or temporal (past, present, future). For instance, in a lesson on bullying prevention, scenarios could be devised from spatial perspectives like school implementation, family prevention, and societal influence.

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