Students' College English E-learning: A Survey Between Two Universities

Li Xu [*]

Associate professor, School of Foreign Languages, The University of Technology, China

Suping Tian

Associate professor, School of Foreign Languages, The University of Technology, China

Abstract

In this E^+ age, advanced learning technology has been widely adopted in language education. From the standing viewpoints of both Behaviorism and Cognitive theories, we learn the significance of outer elements in education. According to our case study, we find that our research result is in agreement with our hypothesis that taking use of advanced technology and means doesn't mean for certain that students' language learning effect can be improved accordingly. The key is how doers use it. And our conclusion from the survey analysis is that we college English teachers are more important than new electronic multimedia in helping improve students' English acquisition. Therefore, we put forward 3 corresponding teaching strategies for dealing with 3 relationships in future college English teaching under the environment of computers and internet in order to obtain better college English e-learning effect.

Keywords: e-learning, application of computer & internet, college English teaching & learning, teaching strategy

INTRODUCTION

The e-learning technology has brought educational field new vigor and vitality, and greatly changed the ecological environment of teaching and learning activities. All the time we take it for granted that the application of computers and internet will greatly promote the process of language acquisition, therefore, e-learning is largely advocated and supported in language teaching and learning among academic educational institutions, and big investment, much time and energy have been conducting in order to improve the language teaching and learning. This paper is to analyze students' e-learning via a survey in two universities between China and South Korea, and put forward corresponding teaching strategies to our research result.

The paper consists of 4 parts. Part 1 is the introduction. In Part 2 The essay firstly defines our research topic range, then states the theoretical basis for the development of

language learning technology and the significance of e-learning in college English teaching and learning. In Part 3, based on the investigation of the computer and internet application in college English e-learning between two universities in both China and South Korea, we try to analyze the survey data objectively from 8 aspects in order to learn what important and helpful role e-learning has played in students' college English acquisition. Part 4 are our discussions and suggestions from 3 aspects.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research definition

Every way of language learning is inseparable from corresponding support of learning technology. English learning is developed from traditional grammar translation approach, listening and speaking approach to communicative approach. The learning technology also has developed accordingly. From blackboard, projector to cassette, and to computer, internet. Our E-learning research refers to all the English learning inside or outside classroom by using computers and computer technology, together with relative learning techniques, including interactive learning and autonomous learning. For example, four-skill practices online, multimedia learning materials, internet chatting, etc. the activities for the purpose of improving English learning.

Research theory

The theory of behaviorism and Cognitive theory are the theoretical basis for the development of language learning technology and the foundation of our theoretical research. The theory of behaviorism thinks that learning is the bind between stimulus and response. One main direction the behavioral learning theory thinks highly is the impact of learning environment, outer elements on learning process. Therefore it emphasizes to supply abundant of perceptual materials via multimedia to pass on knowledge, attaches importance to the stimulus of outer environment put onto students so as to promote knowledge absorption and digestion. Applied in education, the behavioral learning theory requires teachers to grasp the methods to shape and correct students' behaviors, establish students an environment, which can, to the most extent, consolidate students' proper behaviors, get rid of improper ones as much as possible.

The cognitive theory thinks that cognitive process is a process of information processing through individual cognitive activity. The cognitive learning theory thinks highly of the two-way communication between the stimulus and the response of language learning approach. The cognitive style is a steady psychological tendency formed in the long-term cognitive activities, presented as the preference to certain information processing method. Both the cognitive approach and the social cognitive approach based on the communicative language teaching imply the same connotation on how to best integrate advanced technology with language acquisition. The language learning technology of social cognitive approach realizes students' working on real tasks and projects via internet and conducting communication and cooperation.

Two theoretical proposals confirm us that outer elements, like learning environment and technology, greatly affect students' learning, are closely connected with students' learning outcome.

E-learning

Literatures display that, in 1950s to 60s, with computers coming into being and developing, e-learning started to be applied in education and training, then further used to help teachers' teaching, students' learning, teachers' managing and organizing teaching activities, etc. Nowadays in this "E⁺" age, e-learning has become a new widely-spreading educational approach. We know that the developing process of language learning always connects closely with language learning technology. We also believe that the application of advanced technology and means strongly promote the process of language acquisition.

At the beginning of 21st century, two American professors Warschauer, M and Meskill, C, well known in the research field of education and language educational technology, published their new joint idea that computers and internet are applied in language learning, whether it improves or reduces language learning purpose that teachers and educational organizations hope to get, which is uncertain and involves many influence factors, and human factor is a key element. For example, in late 1970s the prevailing audio-lingual method in language learning got a bad name in the end just because expensive language labs received awful effect of language learning. We have searched the research articles about the teaching technology, they are mainly the case studies on the application of computer and internet, seldom examine whether the technology applying practice among the outer learning elements has really played such a vital role as we expected. Under this background, it shows necessity for us to examine our applying effect of language learning technology, to analyze objectively the stimulus and response of e-learning to students in college English teaching and learning, and to sum up our advantages and disadvantages.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESULT

Research hypothesis

Computers, internet and so on modern teaching and learning technologies are good and important tools for teachers to promote the process of language learning, but this catalytic role should happen under certain conditions that teachers and students cooperate closely, that applications of various elements are integrated, therefore, the ideal learning effect can be realized. Taking use of advanced technology and means doesn't mean for certain that students' language learning effect can be improved accordingly. The key is how doers use advanced technology and means. The current researches done throughout the world on the topic like this are mostly case studies, therefore, there's no general conclusion that computer and internet aided environment is good for language learning. It's also not scientific to draw a conclusion like that.

Research method

A survey has been done via Survey Monkey about the students' some e-learning elements between two universities in China and South Korea. According to the survey data, this

research has analyzed objectively different learning conditions, eg. learning environments, learning methods, learning effects and so on, especially language learning technology.

The participants of Chinese students who filled the questionnaire are 55 Band One students and 39 Band Two students. Korean students' English proficiency is higher than Chinese ones. 40 of them study in the US, 51 of them study in native land.

Chinese students are from authors' university, which is one of 42 national "Double First-Rate" universities since 2017. This university has been taking leading position in college English teaching with computers and internet, therefore, it has typical research value. But for years we have been carrying out top-down teaching reform policy, knowing less about what level we have done comparing to other countries in the world. Both China and South Korea are non-English countries, but South Korea accepts western influence on culture and technology earlier than China. This research has investigated and compared E-learning conditions of two universities, which is helpful for us to learn from each other.

RESULTS

Our research group firstly compared survey data from Chinese students of College English Band 3, who are better in English proficiency than Band 2 with South Korean students. The followings are comparing results:
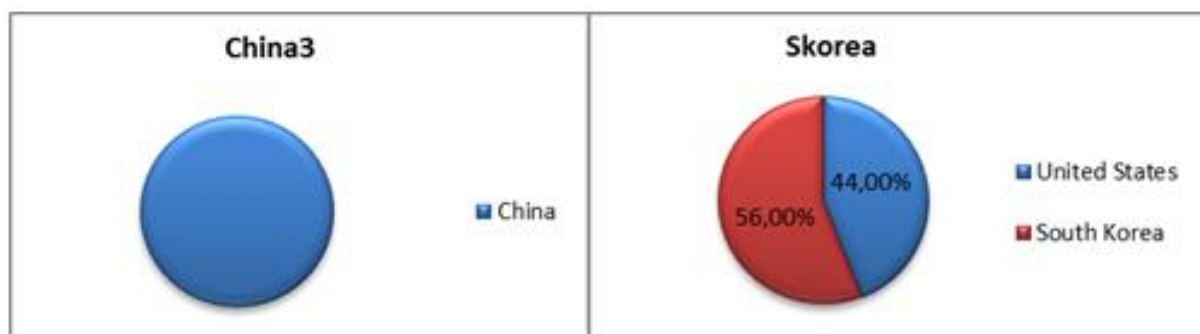

Figure 1. *The composition of respondents*

All the respondents from China are native Chinese students in authors' university, and the respondents from South Korea are 44% Korean students studying in USA, 56% in Korean native land.
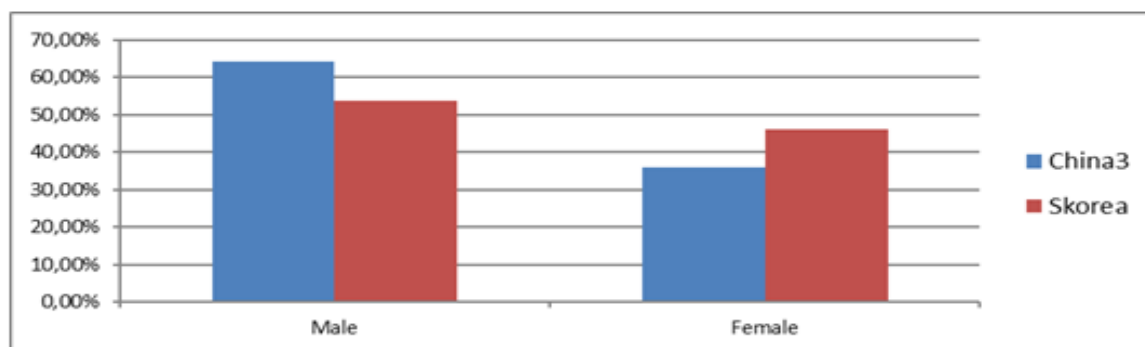

Figure 2. *The composition of age and gender*

According to the statistics, the ages of respondents from two universities are mainly grouped between 18-22 years old. The majority of Chinese students is male because a university of engineering and technology tends to have more boy students, the gender proportion difference of Korean students is less.
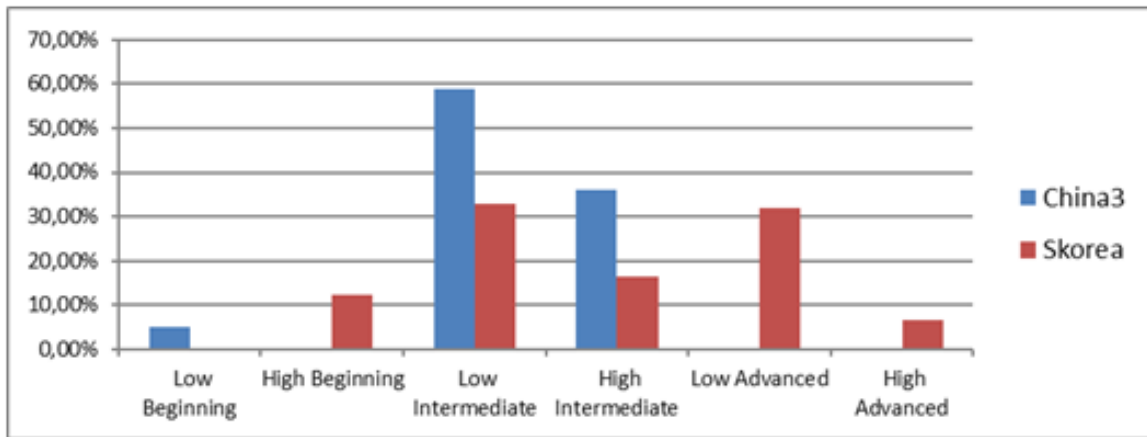
Figure 3. *The distribution of English proficiency*

According to the comparison, the respondents' English proficiency from Band 3 Chinese students is bit lower than that from Korean ones. The weighted average is 1*5.1%+2*0%+3*59%+4*35.9%+5*0%+6*0%=3.257. The reason why South Korean students' English proficiency is bit higher than that of Chinese students may be related with part of them studying in USA. Its weighted average is 1*0+2*12.1%+3*33%+4*16.5%+5*31.5%+6*6.6%=3.883.

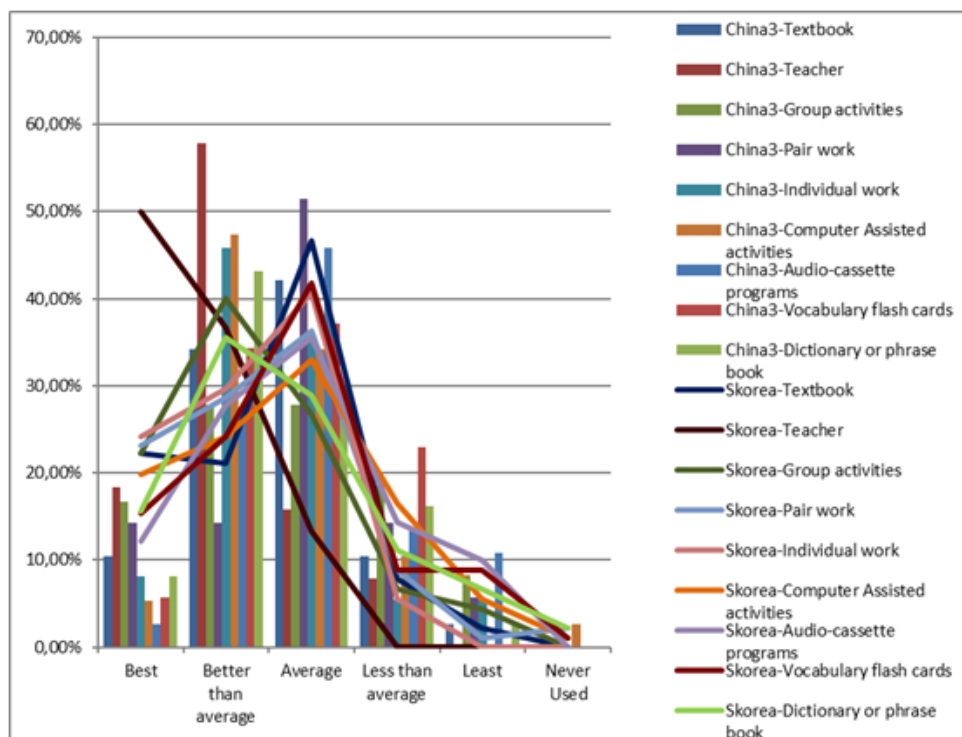**Figure 4.** *The comparison of English learning approaches*

We learn from the comparison that by and large the general tendency of the impact of various learning approaches on students from two universities is the same. The students from the two universities both think that teachers' role helps the most or much more in their English learning, the role of multimedia computers and internet helps less than teachers, but the proportion of South Korean students is much higher than that of Chinese ones who think that these two aspects help them the most. The higher proportion lies in Chinese students who think that both teachers and multimedia computers help them better than average in learning English, but in this comparison the teachers' help is still higher than that of multimedia computers. South Korean students think that among better-than-average learning methods, teachers and multimedia computers occupy higher proportion, but much lower than the proportion of Chinese students. And South Korean students still think that teachers' role is much higher than that of multimedia computer. The proportion of students between the two universities who think that multimedia computers help them so-so in English learning is above 30%. Generally speaking, teachers' role is more important than multimedia computers.
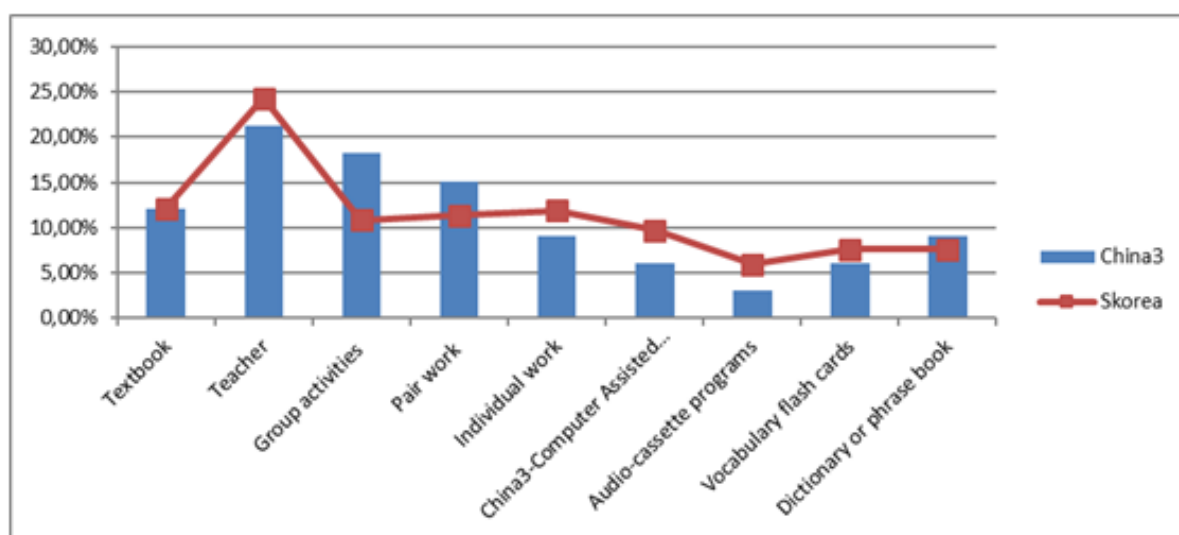

Figure 5. *The comparison of the most helpful English-learning elements*

As for the most helpful English learning method to the students of two universities, various learning methods essentially function to them in agreement, in which teachers' role functions the most, the next are group activities and pair works, multimedia computers occupy lower proportion. It shows that interpersonal communication is still the main English learning method, and functions the most, e-learning still functions with limitations.
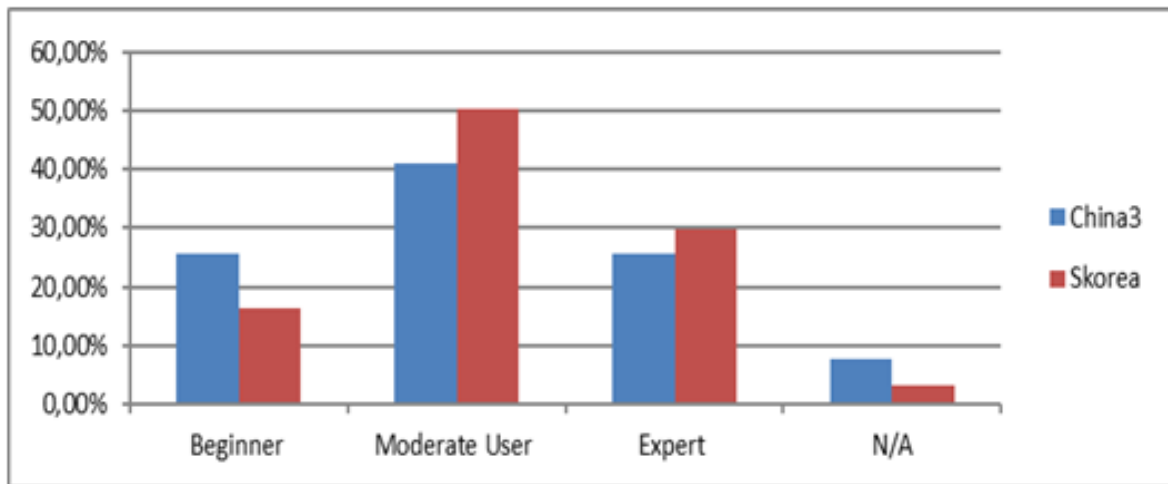
Figure 6. *The computer proficiency when starting to learn English*

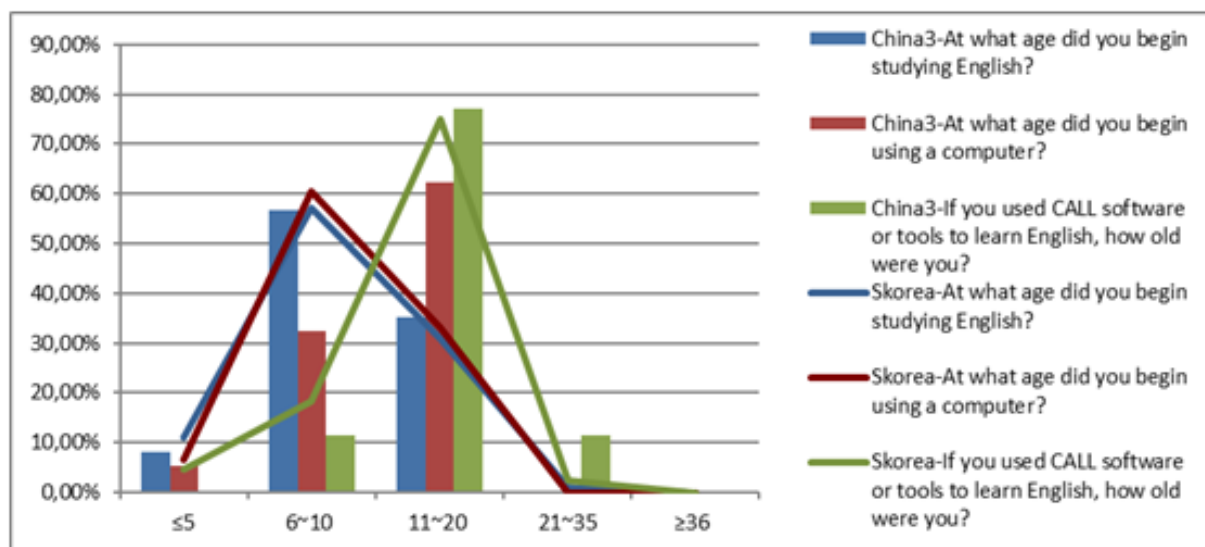It shows in the diagram that South Korean students had higher computer proficiency.

Figure 7. *The time relation between English learning & computer application*

The comparison of the diagram shows that the majority of the respondents in two universities started to learn English between the ages of 6-10, they all integrated English and computer learning together between the ages of 11-20, the application of language learning software tended to be similar. However, 60% of those polled in South Korea started to use computers between the ages of 6-10, whose proportion is higher than Chinese one. And more than 60% of those polled in China started to use computers between the ages of 11-20.
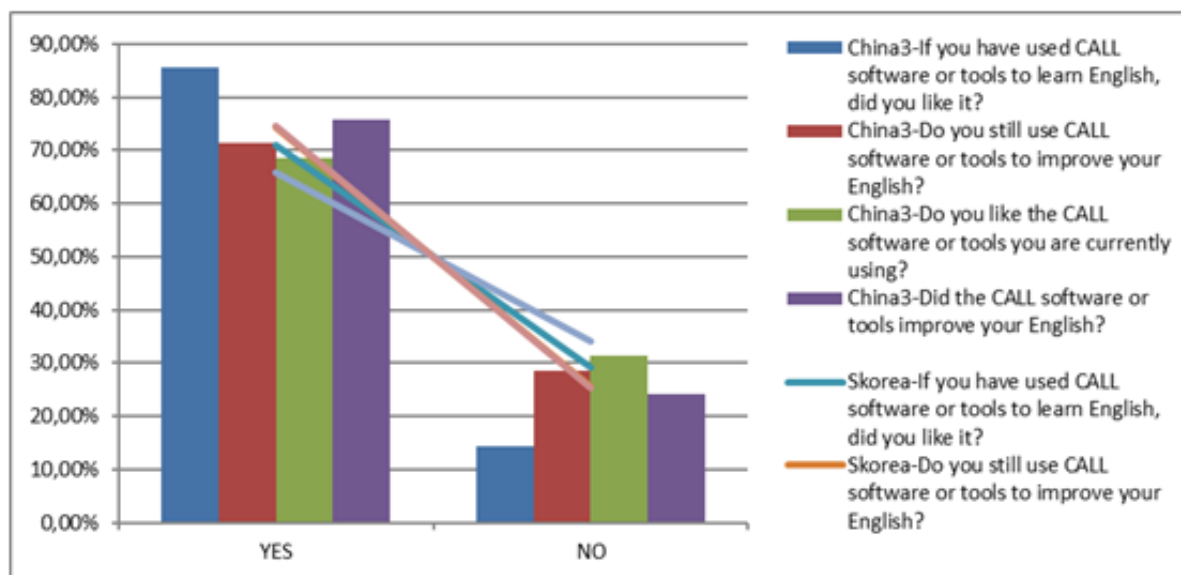
Figure 8. *The function of language learning software*

According to the statistics, more than 70% of either Chinese or South Korean student respondents like the software they used before, and assess that learning software helps them improve English learning. At the same time, more than 65% of the respondents in both universities like the software they are using and agree that these kinds of learning software help them in English learning. But we find that their preference and comments towards previous learning software are better than present ones.

Table 1. *The usage of English learning software*

Country & participants	Software type	Respondents' amount	Percentage	The software of the most users	Percentage of respondents
China Band 3(39)	used	16	41.03%	New Horizon College English	37.5%
China Band 3(39)	using	16	41.03%	New Horizon College English	43.75%
South Korea(91)	used	75	82.42%	English Central	32%
South Korea(91)	using	75	82.42%	English Central	33.33%

Notes: New Horizon College English (the textbook of College English in my university & its corresponding learning software) / English Central (an international English learning website)

From respondents' answers, we learn that students are curious about trying various kinds of English learning software, but in China we find that many of them tend to use more of those teachers require or recommend.

DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of our research result, we put forward three counter-strategies to improving our future e-learning of College English.

First, to obtain further the relation between E-learning and English language acquisition. We are sure that multimedia computers help English learning, but now this catalytic role functions with limitations. In our investigation, South Korean students think in a large proportion that group activities, pair work and individual learning, especially teachers'

help, improve their English learning more than multimedia computers. So do Chinese students. The students' proportions between two universities are both above 30%, they think that e-learning helps so-so in their English acquisition.

With the constant development and innovation of IT technology and modern teaching approach the application of internet technology, has widely used in English classroom of higher education, which has optimized the teaching environment, and injected the vitality to English classroom. Modern teaching technology forms student-centered multi-dimensional informative space in which students can feel the authenticity, the figure and the interestingness of knowledge so as to inspire students' learning desire. Multimedia teaching software offers abundant, specific, intuitive and vivid information of image-texts and videos that students can better establish their basic perceptual understanding, which is good for students to better take the learning initiative and active thinking, to grasp firmly English technique and knowledge, to inspire their imagination and creativity.

E-learning forms computer-centered interactive group of network, a self-controlled, inter-connective and interactive learning approach, which has broken through the spatial and temporal limitation of classroom teaching, enlarged students' learning vision, therefore, offered students more room and help for their personal learning and development. But from our present sight of view on English teaching experience to see previous college English e-learning, we feel we have many limitations on the application of modern teaching technology; therefore, we can't fully expand its advantage in helping students' English learning. e.g., according to our survey result of English learning approaches in two universities, intercommunication between people is still their main English learning approach, and improves their English learning most. E-learning helps with limitations, less than interpersonal learning approaches.

New technology in future will develop much mature, and people will obtain learning resources in more diverse ways and wider channels. Nowadays mobile learning technology, various internet virtual learning technologies have developed greatly. The important issue for us teachers is to choose efficient teaching approaches and how to apply new learning technology into our teaching. In order to improve e-learning effect, we need work more on the application of e-learning technology to make it more adapted to personal learning, more suitable for students to study interactively.

Second, to strengthen further teachers' role in students' English E-learning. Teachers are executors of education goals, designers, conductors and organizers of education activities. That is to say, a teacher is the motive power in education activity. It's a teacher who conducts and drives the whole education process and realizes the education goal. Teachers are directors in students' learning activities, media between students (cognitive subject) and education impact (cognitive object). It's a teacher who directs students to grasp knowledge smoothly and develop themselves regularly. Teachers are main source impact in education activities. It's a teacher who passes students education impact via different ways, sets up personal examples for students with purposes, plans and rules, carries out teaching syllabus, teaching contents of textbooks, tries to combine properly different kinds of education impact and passes onto students so that students can grow up well. That is to say, a teacher's impact on students is gigantic.

Therefore, one important element of future E-learning promotion is teachers. Teacher's training should be a key to E-learning development. As English teachers in 21ˢᵗ century, we should obtain an important quality of integrating multimedia computer with English curriculum. Only if teachers' minds keep up with the information time, can new teaching technology be effectively applied, and improve E-learning effect. Firstly, let teachers get acquainted with the functions of new teaching technology and new tools and understand the roles they can play in teaching. If teachers' sense of using new technology and new tools is supposed to be cultivated, training time and expenses must be given to them that they can be familiar with relative methods and techniques of new teaching tools. At the same time, the establishment and perfection of inspiring policy and system should be done so that those teachers who make use of new technology to improve teaching effect can be encouraged and awarded, and teachers' enthusiasm towards application of new teaching technology can be motivated feasibly. Further, those role models who have done successfully in application of new teaching technology are provided to be learned from. We believe if teachers' example role is set up firstly, students must be willing to accept new things, and both teachers and students interact to enhance the virtuous development of students' E-learning.

Third, to intercommunicate equally between teachers and students in E+ era. China is a country with thousands of years of historical tradition for respecting teachers and attaching great importance to education. In early ancient times there were many brilliant summaries about the relation between teachers and students. Han Yu in Tang Dynasty said, "A teacher is one who propagates doctrines, imparts knowledge, and resolves doubts." And said, "A student is not necessarily inferior to his teacher, nor a teacher better than his student." "Irrespective of the distinction between the high-rank and the low one, and the senior and the young, where the way is, there is a teacher." The truth stated is so clear that those sentences can still be present mottos for both teachers and students to search for our growth. With the development of the era and the technology, teachers' authoritative role of teaching knowledge and truth in the classroom gets challenged because E-learning makes it possible for students to obtain them earlier. But we can see from our survey data that teachers still play an irreplaceable important role in students' English acquisition though in this E+ era there may estrange emotional or other ties between teachers and students. Advanced technology can only provide students a tool to acquire extensive knowledge, but language learning and using involve various comprehensive professional trainings, well-experienced college English teachers will still be instructors who guide students to grasp English knowledge and skills.

Therefore, the future of E-learning also closely relies on the harmonious relation between teachers and students. Teachers must convert the traditional education thoughts, constantly study professional knowledge to solid professional ability, and learn from those students in an equal attitude who have taken the lead in new knowledge and technology. As a teacher, care and love students kindly, attract and convince students with excellent teaching, mutually trust and communicate with students, as well as learn from each other so as to establish an equal teaching environment of "both master and friend". We hope E-learning can at utmost enrich and improve English learning means

and methods, and teachers and students are always two important elements that coexist closely and harmoniously in the educational environment of college English.

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