

## Analysis of Mongolian Students' English Learning Status and the Countermeasure Study of Existing Problems

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### Abstract

Because of the fact that Mongolian students know so little about English when they enter the university, there exist some questions in their English learning. This thesis is about the present situation of Mongolian students' English learning in Inner Mongolian University for the Nationalities, analyzing their main questions in English learning to give some good suggestions about how to improve Mongolian teaching quality.

**Key words:** Mongolian students; Status; English learning; Existing questions; Countermeasure

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### INTRODUCTION

In the domestic background of increasingly frequent exchanges and the faster pace of reform, our country implements the western development strategy. Thus to increase the demand for the foreign language talents, the English teaching also is paid more attention. In the Inner Mongolian area the national education has been extended

from the Mongolian and Chinese bilingual languages teaching to Mongolian, Chinese and English trilingual language teaching. So setting up a group of Mongolian teachers with higher cultural quality and professional standards is the key to be closely related to the English teaching implementation of the trilingual language teaching in this area. Therefore it is obligatory for the Inner Mongolian higher schools to train Mongolian English teachers about the primary and middle education of nationality. In the English education of Inner Mongolian Higher school, the school of foreign language in Inner Mongolian University for the Nationalities set up the Mongolian English courses with the national color for the Mongolian students to make up for the blank of no higher education of English Major for the minorities in the history of our national education to foster the talents of the trilingual languages (Mongolian, Chinese and English) for the whole area of Inner Mongolian and the surrounding areas of minorities. The fact is that the Mongolian students know little about English, which is obvious in English teaching. It is important for Mongolian students on how to fully make use of the language teaching class and improve the learning effect and quality within the four years. As a result the existing questions in English learning for the Mongolian students will be discussed in this thesis paper to put forward some scientific and effective teaching methods, which are fit for the Mongolian students and the language teaching regularity, and put them in the teaching practice. Within the limited four years in the university, the teachers should make full use of the language teaching class, improving the effect and quality of teaching and learning, exploring a path both for the character of minorities students and suitable for the teaching rules. The scientific and effective teaching mode is employed in the teaching practice to guide the teaching practice in the English major of universities for the nationalities. To improve the

English level of Mongolian students and their professional skills of the teacher, to train and deliver the qualified English professionals for the ethnic minority areas, this is a significant research topic for the national education worker.

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## **1. THE PRESENT ENGLISH LEARNING SITUATION FOR THE MONGOLIAN STUDENTS**

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The autonomous area of Inner Mongolia, a western province, is the major living area for the Mongolian nationality with the economy and education developing relatively lagging behind. The Inner Mongolian autonomous region, a western province, is the Mongolian groups, relatively lagging behind in economic and education level. English teaching for Mongolian students has not been open for a long time in Inner Mongolian region. English major for Mongolian students is all Mongolians who are mostly from the backward rural pastoral areas with the poorer and lower economic and education. Their English basic knowledge is almost zero. Some Mongolian students have never been in touch with English. Although some Mongolian students learned English when they were in senior middle school, they didn't learn and study carefully and systematically at all. That is to say, their English is zero starting. Furthermore, they are called Mongolian students and their class is also called Mongolian class. After they went into the universities they began to learn from A, B, C. Through investigation the main reasons for leading to their zero starting points are: in the first place, in the stage of the junior and senior middle schools the schoolmasters and the teachers give less importance for the English teaching. Although English is considered the important course in the high school teaching, only 30 percent college entrance examination scores are accounted for, even the worse is not considered. Secondly, the old teaching mode is unsuitable for the teaching book. Because in town and the English teachers are not powerful and perfect, which directly affects the effective of the English teaching quality. The backward teaching mode also affects the students' learning interest and the mastery of English language knowledge. For a long time, there have not been suitable English teaching material for the Mongolian students to use. Thirdly, the learning attitude of Mongolian students is not correct. Therefore in the Mongolian English teaching the English course is not considered seriously and students don't realize the importance of English learning. Just because in the Mongolian English teaching the English course has been considered unimportant for a long time, the students can not realize the importance of English learning, which caused students unconsciously to form the bad habit of learning English lazily. These factors are all the direct reasons for the students not to have the strong basis even

the zero basis in learning English. Obviously, it is difficult both for the teachers and students to teach and learn English. Furthermore, thanks to the difference between Mongolian and English in the grammar structure and other factors, English teaching is much harder. However, the fact must be faced positively. English teachers should start with the basic English level of Mongolian students trying to find their difficulties and questions which are existed in their English learning, eventually to solve the problems.

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## **2. THE EXISTING PROBLEMS OF MONGOLIAN STUDENTS IN ENGLISH LEARNING AND THE STUDY OF COUNT MEASURES**

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By means of questionnaire survey and teaching practice towards Mongolian students for a long period, the English teachers find that Mongolian students have more questions and trouble in the following aspects when they are learning English.

Firstly, Mongolian students have difficulties in English grammar learning. Most Mongolian students are weak and poor in English grammar. They cannot read and understand the meaning of grammar quite well, even sometimes it is unclear for them to understand the concept of some grammar. In the practical teaching, the teacher found that students are confused by many grammar concepts, the Chinese sentence patterns equal to the English sentence patterns. For example, the Mongolian students can not accurately distinguish the part of speech of the words in the language output, without the correct tenses in translating sentences and unclear sentence ingredients. They lack the basic knowledge on the part of the speech of the words. Their language knowledge is broken and unsystematic. The exact expression is that they are poor at the language accuracy who is not able to use the different language expressions to express the same meaning. Their grammar using ability is terrible. In communication, a great number of grammar mistakes appear in language practice such as translating and writing. After the teacher taught, they cannot be fully and flexibly make use of the grammar points. Even though they are able to apprehend the meaning of the grammar ideas, in fact they can not do the exercises well. The deep reason is that in the high school English is only a selective course, the teacher and students do not pay more attention to it and in the entrance university exam English is not required as a necessary subject. When they practice, it's more difficult for them to distinguish between different grammar points especially more grammar points are combined together and they do exercises just out of feeling. They just can read sentences fluently and easily, but they cannot analyze the structure of sentences and know the meaning of sentences. Just because of Mongolian students' various Chinese level they are

affected by their apprehending levels. They are confused by the Chinese explanation of a certain grammar. Furthermore, as for the teaching plan for the English major of Mongolian students, the time to start the English grammar course is short and not in season. When the Mongolian students almost with the zero base of English went to the university, the grammar course was not started in time. So if the Mongolian students want to learn English well, the grammar knowledge should play the vital and basic role. From the start, it is necessary for the Mongolian students to be permeated with the grammar learning. From the second year on of the university, the grammar course is open. It seems to be late. However, grammar periods are not so many. The earlier teaching plan about English grammar course was about a whole year but with the new teaching plan changed, the number of periods of English grammar course was cut down, English grammar course has been started only within a semester. So in the limited time it is not an easy thing for the Mongolian students to master English grammar knowledge well. The teacher teaches from beginning till ending for the whole class. There are so many contents for the teacher to teach. Mongolian students have little time to do grammar exercises in the class. Doing exercises are the key factor to learn English thoroughly. It is the first time in the Mongolian students to learn the new knowledge which needs a long time for them to digest. In addition they are lazy and inactive in learning. After class they cannot go over what they learnt and do exercises in time. In the class they are passive and just follow the teacher's step. All these will lead to their difficulty in understanding English grammar knowledge. While the students of Han nationality did a lot of grammar exercises when they were in their junior and senior middle schools. Therefore they have the deep base of the grammar knowledge. Just owing to the lack of a large number of exercises, Mongolian students' grammar knowledge is weak. They do not master the newly-finished grammar knowledge well while they will go on with the new grammar points, causing the Mongolian students' difficulty in grammar learning. As for this situation the teaching plan should be adjusted earlier and the teaching periods should be increased after class. With the help of teachers doing more exercises and making every grammar point clear is the Mongolian students' main task to improve the teaching effect of Mongolian students about grammar learning. All varieties of questions in the grammar teaching put forward a huge challenge for the grammar teachers. In the course of grammar teaching, the choice and design of teaching methods directly determine the class teaching quality. Therefore it is necessary for the teachers to actively explore the new grammar teaching mode for the Mongolian students of English major in national universities just like our university.

Secondly, there exist questions and difficult points in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating.

Listening ability is all the Mongolian students' weak point. When they listen to the long dialogue, the speed is so fast that they cannot follow it. When in dictating a passage, the students' speed is slower and they cannot write it down. About passages listening, after the students listen to them, they almost forget the content, let alone to do the listening exercises. All in all, listening is hard for all the Mongolian students. The reasons for their poor listening are more-sided. On one hand, the listening material is not suitable for them. Because from the beginning the Mongolian students learn this language formally and systematically, the listening material should be matched with the learning level of Mongolian students. But the contents of more teaching books are not proper for the Mongolian students, which are even harder. In a certain way it increases the students' listening difficulties and it becomes students' listening obstacle. As a result, the students lose the interest of listening. Besides, the limited time in the class cannot improve the students' listening ability. After class the students spend less time in listening. They are not hard-working in listening training. If there is no input of language material, it is obvious that listening difficulty is known. At the same time the students seldom communicate in English. The less they speak, the poorer their listening is. Faced with such a situation, how to improve the Mongolian students' listening is a key problem to solve. To find some proper listening materials and to make them listen more are the solutions. As far as the teacher is concerned, increasing the teaching intensity is necessary. The teacher and students can perform some activities in the English corner and English club. They can communicate more in English. Beginning with the simple activities the teacher can help them to solve the initial hearing obstacles. In this way their oral English expression can be improved a lot. Most of the Mongolian students are afraid to open their mouth to communicate, who are so nervous that they make some grammar mistakes when they speak something out. About oral English they are still not confident. But thanks to the similarities between Mongolian language and English in vowels, consonants and syllables, Mongolian students can read the words and sentences out quickly and accurately. About this aspect, they learn much faster than the students of Han Nationalities. Therefore after a year's English study, Mongolian students can conquer the difficulty of pronunciation. Furthermore, in the pronunciation the teaching material is organized systematically, and the contents are step by step. All these factors are helpful to the Mongolian students to have a strong and solid foundation. The reasons why Mongolian students are not confident in speaking are on one side their vocabulary is small, on the other side, they are poor at the grammar structure. They do not remember a lot of basic sentence patterns and make use of the words, phrases and sentences flexibly. So in speaking, if the Mongolian students want

to improve it, they must recite a large number of words and sentence patterns. As for the existing problems the best way is to recite the passage. As the days go on they recite more and more. If they have formed such a good habit, they would like to recite the passages. Little by little, their language library is richer and richer, and their expression becomes more and more flexible. When mentioning reading, the Mongolian students just can read the passage. But the reading comprehension, they have difficulties in understanding the whole passage, so they always cannot give the correct understanding of the text. Not only a lot of new words appear before them but also so complicated sentence structures are in front of them. The deep root is also about their limited understanding level of Chinese. Concerning this situation, the first task is to make students have solid grammar, then to reserve a large number of vocabularies and eventually improve Chinese accomplishment. With a large amount of accumulation, after the test of time, the Mongolian students surely will have a qualitative leap in reading. As for writing, the teacher requires the students to write about 200 words. Although they can write the composition, in fact what they write is simple in sentence structures and lacks varieties, and they would like to repeat the words. They made a lot of grammar mistakes. All in all, all these are attributed to their poor grammar and improper sentence expressions. As far as the repeated words, although the Mongolian students have already recited a large number of words, they can not apply them flexibly. They are just used to the use of the simple words, without using the complicated and advanced words. How to improve their writing level is still a crucial question. Strengthening grammar structure and reciting some sentence models are all the basic ways to improve their writing skills. The teachers are supposed to do more exercises to different themes and genres of articles. The teachers should guide students to write in a standard way when teaching the articles to ask students to imitate the native writer's styles. About translation, influenced by the Mongolian language, most of the Mongolian students cannot translate English into correct Chinese, without fluent and coherent expression. What their translations are not faithful to the original article. Because of their limited Chinese level, they have no apprehension about Chinese culture, so most of their translations are wrong. Some are even worse and they can not give a translation directly. They feel so difficult to translate, so let alone to mention applying skillfully.

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## CONCLUSION

Take the foreign language school of Inner Mongolian Universities for the nationalities as an example, by the means of strengthening practice in listening, speaking,

reading, writing and translating, in the last ten years, the Mongolian students make a greater progress in the College English Test 4 and College English Test 6. Almost half of the whole Mongolian class passed the tests. And in the fourth year of the university, some Mongolian students can pass the English Major Test 8 smoothly. To sum up, choosing the proper Mongolian teaching methods and teaching plans as well as the good teaching materials, together with the active and hard-working practice of Mongolian students, they will achieve a lot and realize their final goals. Teachers should consider the main factors influencing the students to construct language knowledge in the teaching environment, starting from the system and integrity of language teaching, using the means of analysis, induction, comparison and judgment to remove interference and help students improve the sensitivity of language. The final purpose is to improve teaching effectiveness and ask students to master English language better. At the same time, teachers need to elaborate teaching process, building multivariate teaching mode, having the first and secondary point in teaching. Through these methods, the Mongolian students can make the correct use of grammar knowledge to improve their English learning level, examination skills and the actual use of language comprehensive ability. In practice, making the language output is flexible to achieve the best learning effect. It is a good way to train more English talents for the minority nationalities areas, in order to improve the professional level of minority students.

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