

CREATING A MOTIVATING INTERACTIVE
PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASS IN CHINA

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PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASS IN CHINA

A Seminar Paper

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirement for the Degree

Master of Science in Education

English Education

By

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2019

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those who helped me during the writing of this paper. I would like to extend my appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Richard Garrett. He has devoted a significant amount of time and energy to guiding me through my paper writing process and helped me solve the problems I met while writing the paper. I feel very honored to have met all the professors at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, who have offered me not only knowledge but also experiences. Without their guidance and painstaking efforts in improving my drafts, the completion of the thesis would have been impossible.

Abstract

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IN CHINA

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Under the Supervision of Dr. Richard Garrett

Although the motivating interaction classroom has been studied to primary school English teaching in China, most primary school English teachers do not know how to effectively make their lessons more motivating and interactive in their classroom. This study aims to investigate how to create such a classroom in China. Based on the reviewed literature, the researchers provided approaches for making a class interactive and students motivated in China as well as suggestions for dealing with some problems who might meet in their teaching.

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Chapter I Introduction

After entering the 21st century, China has become a major English teaching and learning country with the comprehensive opening of the new curriculum standard reform in China's basic education system. Primary school English teaching is also actively implemented nationwide, and English education enters a period of high-speed development stage (Wang,2002). More than 100 million primary and middle school students begin to learn English. Since then, the prelude to English teaching in primary schools in China has been opened, and the starting time of basic English education has also been greatly ahead.

English is a course that combines language instrumentality and cultural knowledge together. In order to achieve its diverse and comprehensive teaching goals. In the process of teaching, teachers often pay attention to teach students to master some basic elements of English learning, and help students to develop good abilities, attitudes and interests in English learning.

Primary school English teaching is the entry stage for students throughout the English learning process. But in public elementary schools, teachers are responsible for teaching in multiple classes. Therefore, it is very difficult for teachers to conduct targeted English learning guidance for each student. Some problems in the classroom teaching also make teachers confused. For example, in the same class, the students' language level is highly polarized. Under the same teaching objectives, it is difficult to achieve the learning goals of students at different levels. Or, students with higher levels can quickly and accurately understand the teacher's questions and give answers, and this behavior will bring pressure to the lower-level students, causing them to abandon their thinking or even lose the interest to the course. Another example, English learning as a foreign language subject, students need a certain communication environment, but the teacher not only

expects an active classroom atmosphere but also fears that this class has no control over the classroom, and does not dare to carry out the classroom interactive activities. Therefore, in primary school English teaching, teachers are often used to control the teaching procedures, to use unilateral guidance and evaluation to students, and to implement simple knowledge indoctrination. Such teaching methods can not mobilize students' desire and interest in learning. Teachers' teaching strategies can not be used. Meanwhile, the precious learning time and opportunities of students are wasted and consumed.

Improving classroom efficiency has become one of the core topics of China's curriculum and teaching reform. Classroom teaching is the main place for schools to achieve educational goals. It is also the channel for the current school to deepen education reform, to comprehensively promote quality of education, to implement a new round of curriculum reform and promote students' all-round development. Park. B (2004) investigated the relationship between motivation and language acquisition and found out that motivation is one of the most important factors in succeeding to learn a second or foreign language. That is, teachers should effectively arouse students' desire to learn, let students recognize their main position in the classroom, stimulate students' interest in learning English, guide students to actively research and explore in the process of acquiring a language, and encourage students to carry out more active thinking activities. Jeremy (2007) said, "Motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something." Language learning can start from the things that students are interested in. Teachers should change the traditional teaching methods, guide students to explore and discover their inner desires, and avoid passive and boring English learning style. These teaching strategies are of great significance for improving English teaching in primary schools.

Statement of the Problem

In the reform of English teaching in China, the teacher-centered teaching method has been replaced by the student-centered teaching philosophy. In terms of cultivating students' language proficiency, in addition to listening, speaking reading and writing skills, students' thinking ability has also been paid attention to. But these conceptual changes are not enough to motivate students' interest in learning and to improve classroom efficiency. Therefore, this paper will research the following questions to help primary school English teachers create interactive English classes that can stimulate students' interest.

1. What does a motivating interactive classroom refers to?
2. Why should Chinese primary school teachers consider making an English classroom motivating and interactive?
3. What are potential problems of creating a motivating interactive classroom?
4. How do Chinese primary school teacher create a motivating interactive classroom properly?

Definition of Terms

Motivation is the factor that causes someone to do or achieve something successfully with strong will. In terms of language study in an English classroom, it indicates that students who has positive motivation will do and participant well toward language acquisition (Ushida, 2005).

Interactive Teaching Method is not only used to indicate the interaction between teachers-students, but also refers to the interaction between students-students. The interaction happens when

the teacher asks questions, the student answer individually or together. Or, teachers give feedback to students. An interactive classroom also emphasizes on studying among students(Xiaoyan H, 2007). For example, students can do group work, give feedback, ask questions to other students. etc. Because they think it is more interesting to learn from friends.

Purpose of the Study

Creating a motivating interactive English classroom can help primary students build a good foundation in language acquisition, and it also helps to develop young learners' communicative ability. This study will investigate how faculty can help language learners acquire a language more effectively in class. The goal of this study is not only focusing to increase learner's interests but also helps to inspire Chinese teachers to realize how important proper interactive teaching method is in primary schools.

Significance of the Study

The English Curriculum for Compulsory Education clearly points out that the goal of English education in China is to reflect the instrumentality and humanity of English language. It is necessary to develop students' communicative ability in the process of language learning, and also develop students' thinking ability, so as to comprehensively improve students' comprehensive humanistic qualities. The premise of achieving this overall goal is to ensure the efficiency of students' classroom learning. At the same time, "dumb English, exam-oriented education" are the biggest challenges in the current language classroom. As communicative language teaching is gradually valued in China's primary education stage, how do teachers improve the effectiveness of teacher-student interaction in English classroom has become a heat issue in current English teaching researches.

Creating a scientific and efficient classroom that meets the characteristics of primary school students. English as a foreign language is an important subject for improving the development of students' language communication skills. This paper aims to analyze the current teaching situation, advantages and disadvantages of primary school English classroom in China, to learn from other countries to mobilize students' interest in learning methods and interactive teaching strategies to provide a reliable basis for improving Chinese primary school English teaching.

Methodology

I am going to locate basic theories and recent achievements in the field of creating a motivating interactive English classroom by collecting, reading and organizing relevant literature with the library literature research method. I will search the current interactive situation of students-teachers, students-students, such as pair work, group work etc. and figure out practical problems and benefits of their collaboration in primary school English classes . The review of the literature on the methods and strategies of improving efficiency of classes will also be conducted.

Chapter II Review of Literature

In this chapter, four questions will be discussed in order to determine how teacher can make English classroom more motivating and interactive for primary school students. These topics include: First, what is a motivating interactive classroom? Second, the reasons why should Chinese primary school teachers consider making an English classroom motivating and interactive? Then, is there any potential problems while creating such a classroom? And the last, the basic strategies that Chinese primary school teacher could use to create a motivating interactive classroom. In short, this chapter will explore some basic theories of the importance on the interaction among students and teachers or students and students, and some materials or methods that teachers can use for motivating young students' desires to learn English.

What does a motivating interactive classroom refers to?

Lee (2013) pointed out that the effect of teacher-student interaction can be either positive or negative. She stated that the interactions in class have great influences on the acquiring of knowledge, skills, emotions and feelings, and so on. The ways of interaction can be divided into explicit interaction and implicit interaction. Among them, students can feel the explicit interaction easily from the teachers' questions, explanations and evaluations. Meanwhile, they are also involved in the interactions that are invisible from both teachers and classmates' facial expressions, body languages, gestures and their diverse tones.

Chen & Gao (2013) explained in their research that teacher-student interaction consists of variety of forms and various levels of interaction and communication between teachers and students in the classroom context. The research also shows that motivating interactive classroom is one of the most effective and important strategy of language teaching. Furthermore, The New

Curriculum Standard for Primary School English (2015) clearly pointed out that the overall goal of English teaching is to help students develop their language skills, and it is also help to to develop their logical mind,so as to improve the application of using a foreign language. The realization of these goals depends to a large extent on the content of the teaching process and the interactions between student-teacher during the class.

There have been lots of researches that have explored the relationship between motivating factors and successful foreign language acquisition. Merce and Robert (2008), analyzed language achievements among teachers' motivating strategies and students' learning motivations. They found out that teachers could use strategies that have effective influence on students' attitudes and motivation which help them develop learning interests and language skills. They also claimed that students' motivation and English achievement are influenced not only by what happens in the classroom but also by other situations, such as their attitudes toward integrative activities and interactions with other students or the language anxiety toward the learning atmosphere.

Researchers have come to an agreement on the importance of motivating interactive classroom in language learning and teaching. Karen (1994), Chi & Gwo (2018), Sun & Hsieh pointed out that this type of class could help students become more autonomous and responsible in their learning and communication that could also enhance their performance and make them more satisfied while they are motivated and interact with others.

Why should Chinese primary school teachers consider making an English classroom motivating and interactive?

Lee (2013) has pointed out that the direct purpose of teacher-student interaction is to improve the teaching effect, which enables students to achieve efficient and sustainable development. She

also stated that it is very important for teachers to study the motivation of students. They could neither encourage students nor to cultivate students' desire to learn if they don't know the students' interests and can't experience the students' feelings, then teachers can't achieve their teaching goals or help students develop well in language acquisition.

Many students are afraid of making errors in grammar or having bad pronunciation when they give a speech in front of the class. They couldn't speak loudly enough for everyone to catch them, couldn't make eyes contacts with their peers, couldn't perform confidently in a presentation. All of those behaviors show that they feel uncomfortable or suffer intensive stress in such an atmosphere. According to Karen (1994), a motivating and interactive classroom could help student get prepared to make a public speech, could provide them a non-threatening communicative experience that reduces tension, builds rapport and offer intensive oral practice of target structures, tenses and vocabulary.

Merce and Robert(2008) found out that teachers' interactive and motivating behaviors and beliefs have great influence on students. They considered that the motivating strategies are significant based on student- teacher questionnaires, that investigated the relationship among the apply of the strategies, students motivation and their achievement when they learn a foreign language. It is said that the motivating strategies could improve the quality of the learning experience, create learn autonomy, increase their self-confident, deepen their satisfaction and encourage positive evaluations.

What are potential problems of creating a motivating interactive classroom?

Lee(2013) found out that the current situation of interactions between students and teachers are not satisfactory through the observing the classroom and making connections with others

scholars investigations. The main problems in primary school classrooms in China are as follows: From the main point of view, teachers are in an authoritative position, and students are passive recipients; from the perspective of interactive opportunities, the opportunities for interactions given by different students are unequal; from the perspective of interaction modes, the interaction is procedural and superficial. Meanwhile, oral interaction is the most common kind, and nonverbal interaction is ignored to some extent.

(1) Inequality of interactive subjects

Inequality in interactive subjects refers to the inequality of interaction between teachers and students in the classroom. The unequal interaction status begins with the role of teachers and students. That is to say, from the role of the interactive subject, the teacher plays the role of adult and knowledge transfer, while the student plays the role of minor and knowledge recipient. In the process of classroom teaching, teachers occupy an absolute dominant position, and students are basically in a passive position. Teachers design questions and organize teaching activities based on curriculum standards, teaching content, and lesson plans prepared before class. Such questions are mainly for the students to recall relevant facts and pave the way for further explanations; or to check whether the students concentrate on listening, and whether they understand the teaching content of the teachers. Students are not free to ask questions and can only answer the content designed by the teacher. It is only when the teacher needs it that he has a chance to speak and can be interrupted at any time. In the long run, the repressive feelings brought about by the role of the oppressed by the students in the interaction will inevitably affect their enthusiasm for participating in the classroom interaction, leading to a "silent" situation in the classroom.

(2) Unequal opportunities for interaction

Inequality in interaction opportunities means that every student in the classroom does not have the same opportunities for verbal and nonverbal interaction. In order to carry the classroom teaching through, some teachers will offer them different chances for interaction based on their level of study achievement, popularity in the class or other reasons while the students with more mediocre abilities have gradually become "outsiders" among all the students. In terms of giving the interaction time, teachers will be more patient and tolerant to students with better academic performance, and looking forward to the high quality of questions. On the other hand, teachers rarely give the students who is behind others enough time to think and express their opinions, and the expectations for the answers are relatively low.

(3) Programmed forms of interaction.

The programmed forms of classroom interaction is an important issue under the current classroom teaching reform policies. There is a lack of deep communication and interaction between teachers and students except for the "interact" itself. The most common problem is that the interactive questions from the teacher is not effectively enough to stimulate the students' thinking. Most students can answer the questions with the contents in the book or rote memorization. That is to say, the teacher knows what to ask, and ask without thinking. For instance, the teacher speaks out the first part of a sentence, let the students finish with the second part; or the teacher habitually asks "Is it right?" "Is it true?" "Do you understand?" Under such circumstances, students can use "Yes/ NO", "I do / I don't" to cover for themselves. etc. without listening to the teachers or thinking about the questions carefully. Such interactions will not promote students' thinking ability, nor to help students to grow their knowledge or develop their individuality. Sometimes, the students' responses meet the teacher's presupposition, the whole class will be encouraged and applauded. Although the whole classroom seems to be lively and

active, the students did not really understand the circumstances under which they need to estimate, nor do they understand the process of estimation. From the perspective of interaction, lacking of substantive communication leads students do not understand what should be mastered. This interaction is ineffective and formal.

(4) Simplification of interaction

From the perspective of interaction, it is not balanced between verbal and non-verbal . In class interaction, teacher interactions occupy an absolute proportion, and the proportion of interaction between teachers and individual students and groups is very small. Teachers in the classroom rarely walk down the stage unless there is something special happens during the class. This pattern is likely to lead to an increasing distance between teachers and students. Furthermore, in the classroom, teachers really leave little time for students to interact with their peers.

How do Chinese primary school teacher create a motivating interactive classroom properly?

A. Establishing a good relationship between students and teachers

According to Jiang Xu & Zhang Yun (2017) , teachers should constantly improve their own ability and establish a good teacher-student relationship. They found out that motivation of primary school students' in English learning are influenced by the characteristics of teachers. Teachers not only have role models, they are also the link for the students to communicate with the society, the school and the growth of the students to form the correct motives. To this end, the teacher must constantly improve his knowledge in the teaching process, on the other hand, he must use his career enthusiasm to treat his students, so that students can truly feel the sincerity, patience and care from the depths of the teacher ,and then accept teachers' teaching, and actively cooperate with teachers.

They also mentioned that teachers should focus on how to effectively provide learners with a practical communication environment that used to master the language structure. Starting from the things around the students, it is very appropriate to make students pay attention to the rules of the usage of words and sentence patterns. However, in the current primary school English classroom, the so-called "life scenes" provided by teachers are often artificial and not a natural authentic living situation. Therefore, teachers can fully utilize existing resources according to the teaching content, provide students with real life situations and to effectively stimulate students' learning motivation.

B. Using picture books to stimulate students' learning interesting and motivation

Lee Chunyang (2018) stated that Picture Book Teaching Method combines with flexible and changeable contents. Simple and clear language are used to help students form a general idea of the story, and to facilitate their rapid understanding of knowledge through this methods. The advantages of picture book teaching method are as follows: (1) Stimulating students' interest in learning. The contents of the English picture book appear in the form of pictures. The primary school students' English reading comprehension ability is weak, and the use of pictures can make them to understand the content and meaning of the article, to maximize their reading enthusiasm. The English picture book is beautifully made, the composition content is rich in story, the color is bright, and has a strong visual impact. In the primary school English teaching, the teacher integrates the English picture book into the teaching. It could help teachers to grasp the students' eyes and stimulate their interest in learning quickly. (2) Creating realistic teaching situations. In traditional English classroom teaching, students can only abstract contextual imagination uses English picture books for teaching. Students can experience the charm of English language in a specific image context and enrich English vocabulary and apply them effectively in real life.

(3) Enrich the imagination of students. The story of the excerpts in the picture book also incorporates the customs and cultures of many countries. By reading the stories , students can vividly experience the rich and colorful world culture and enrich the imagination.(4) Supplement teaching resources. As a teaching resource, the picture book is good for students to use the story line in the picture book to promote the understanding and memory of the content they learn, and help them to input a large amount of language, increase their knowledge of language, and supplement the content of the textbook. Enrich the role of teaching resources.

C. Using authentic communication while reinforcing language acquisition.

Karen(1994) found out that natural and enthusiastic communication among students is a goal of every second-language class. Interaction activities could promote interpersonal experience and verbal practice of target language structures in a comfortable atmosphere. For instance, ask students to find the person in the class whose favorite sport is closest to their own, and watch their persistent endeavors to communicate in English. Learners will be motivated to use target language when their new language becomes the tool of getting to know their classmates. The focus will be on the message itself rather than the errors in grammar or pronunciation. There is no need to worry about the students asking one same question many times because they are interested in each answer they will receive. Hence,this type of interactive process could offer opportunities for students to use target language to make connections and build relationships. So it is encouraged to use authentic communication while reinforcing language acquisition.

D. Using flipped classroom teaching method to motivate students' learning desire and to fully use the inside and outside class time.

Ya Lee (2019) stated that with the continuous development and maturity of English education, relevant teaching theory research has also made new breakthroughs. For example, from the past emphasis on the construction of teachers' ability level and assessment of teaching level, to the consideration of students' learning autonomy and subjective initiative, school education have become more and more a platform for independent learning and free communication. The primary's English teaching pays more attention to the students' autonomy. Because of the disciplinary characteristics of English, the subjective initiative of students has a great influence on the English learning effect, and the flipping classroom teaching mode can maximize the students' initiative and let the students instruct.

She also claimed that flipping classroom means readjusting the time inside and outside the classroom, and shifting the decision-making power of learning from the teacher. A teaching model that is transferred to students. In this mode of teaching, the time is precious in the classroom, students can focus more on active, curriculum-based learning, and jointly study the challenges of localization or globalization and other real-world problems for a deeper understanding. In the flipped classroom, the teacher no longer occupies the time of the class to teach the information. After the class, the students independently plan the learning rhythm, the learning progress, the learning content, the style and the way of presenting the knowledge. The teacher uses the teaching method and the collaborative method to satisfy the students. The need and contribute to their personalized learning.

Chapter III Conclusions and Recommendations

Through extensive access to information and literature, the author makes a more systematic understanding of how to create a motivating and interactive English classroom in primary school in China. The author found out that teachers' flexible and variety teaching strategies have great influences on students learning motivation and the relationship between the teacher and the students will also affect students' learning desire and interest. A good relationship can help students to rely on the teacher. There are a lot of strategies that former educators found and practiced. Based on the study of the scholars such as Lee(2013), Xu Jiang & Yun Zhang(2017), Chunyang Lee and Ya Lee(2019), the paper mainly discusses what the motivating interactive classroom is , the importance of building such a classroom, the difficulties teachers might meet in the process of creating a target study atmosphere and some effective methods teachers are using to enhance students' learning efficiency. This chapter draws conclusions on how to create a motivating interaction classroom in China on the basis of literature reviews.

As a primary school English teacher, the scariest scene is “ silent students sit silently in a silent classroom”, which means you have no idea of how they learn, what they have learned in this lesson and what they are thinking about. Lots of my colleagues have met this situation before. We all wonder why the students keep silent in class. The students actually know it is very important to speak, to tell others their messages, to listen to others. But the result is no one starts speaking. The teacher try every possible course of action in order to make the students speak. And we found out the “interaction” is the key to solve the problem.

Jerry Chih-Yuan Sun and Pei-Hsun Hsieh(2018) pointed out that interactive response systems have gradually become a common tool for teachers' use in the classroom. And they showed that

the interaction between teachers- students and among students have positive effects on study and can effectively trigger students' motivation on language acquisition. So, the students in each of my class have been divided into 8 or 9 groups and there are 4 or 5 students per group. It's called "common growth group". They will be scored by their positive behaviors such as sharing ideas in class, giving comments on classmate's performance, taking part in the presentation or presenting any kinds of group work. Every two weeks there will be a champion group chose and they can choose a reward for good behavior such as an extra outside activity time, study tools or some snacks. With the motivation for group honor and prizes , students active more positively and with the help from their peers in groups, they become more confident on class activities.

Meanwhile, as Xu Jiang & Yun Zhang(2017) mentioned that the harmonious relationship between teachers and students is also important to enhance students' learning efficiency. Lots of teacher have noticed that being an affable and genial teacher help to establish emotional connection between teachers and students. It is indeed a long term goal and a slow process to build trust in class, but the result could speed student's learning motivation and practice up. One of my student Ellen who got low scores and didn't like English when I took their class at the beginning. Her mum told me that she's scared of me because I was too strict and she couldn't stand my criticism for her forgetting bring the homework or playing with pencils in class. I consider her mum's opinion and all my students reaction for a long time. I realize that when I commend them for their good behavior or great ideas, students are more lively and studied hard. They like to study English and interact with me because of my understanding and patience with them. I changed the way to see and talk to my student. Ellen became more positive in class and liked to show herself on the stage. Her mum told me she was aware that the teacher cared about her and her learning process. So, a

good relationship between students and teachers is a very useful and efficient power to improve student's learning motivation.

English learning can not only happen inside the classroom, it also exists in every moment and everywhere in our life. Lage, Platt and Treglia (2000) found out that with the flipped classroom method, learning traditionally taking place inside the class has been moved outside the classroom. In China, teachers are encouraged to assign different task to satisfy students' diverse developmental needs. In our school, some mobile phone applications are used for students to submit their homework videos or posters which can motivate students to practice at home. These applications are quite popular in Beijing for they are full of plenty of learning resources such as original English pictures books, film and mini lectures. Students can choose and make their own study plans according their interests and levels on the flexible platform.

In this paper, motivating interactive classroom are discussed and lots of strategies have been found and practiced by the former educators are explored. If the teachers set up a classroom with those useful and helpful strategies, the students will be motivated to active positively in language acquisition with inner desire and they could learn more efficiently, which means they would like to produce new resources with what they've learned. However, there is not enough practical cases and experiences on how do teachers fully use the instant resources from the students. So, teachers and educators could keep researching and pay attention on the exploring of effective methods to maximize these instant resources in class.

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