

# *The impact of situational foreign language teaching on the psychological atmosphere in the classroom*

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**Abstract:** Classroom psychological atmosphere refers to a psychological environment and atmosphere that formed during the teaching process. It refers to the sum of emotions, attitudes, trust, and interaction between teachers and students, as well as the individual and collective psychological states of students. In foreign language teaching, teachers should create a positive, open, relaxed, and harmonious classroom psychological atmosphere. In English teaching, a positive and harmonious classroom psychological atmosphere plays a decisive role in students' achievement, motivation, perception, attention, thinking, and other aspects. It also plays an important role in improving students' enthusiasm, initiative, and effectiveness in participating in language activities. Teachers can create a positive classroom psychological atmosphere through situational foreign language teaching.

## **1. Classroom Psychological Atmosphere and Its Influence**

### **1.1. Classroom psychological atmosphere**

Classroom psychological atmosphere refers to a psychological environment and atmosphere formed during the teaching process. It refers to the sum of emotions, attitudes, trust, and interaction between teachers and students, as well as the individual and collective psychological states of students. The psychological atmosphere in the classroom can affect students' learning attitude, interest, motivation, and effectiveness.

Creating a positive classroom psychological atmosphere is crucial for foreign language teaching. Krashen's Affective Hypothesis theory suggests that foreign/second language input must undergo emotional filtering in order to be processed through the language acquisition mechanism LAD, thereby forming language proficiency. This theory also assumes that factors such as learning motivation, confidence, and anxiety can affect students' foreign language/second language learning. Gardner's research also indicates that students with strong learning motivation, self-confidence, and low anxiety are better able to accept, absorb, and utilize more language input; On the contrary, if learning motivation is weak, self-confidence is low, and anxiety is high, it will lead to more language input absorption barriers. Therefore, in foreign language teaching, teachers should strive to create a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to enhancing students' learning motivation and confidence. Only in this atmosphere can teachers and students, as well as students, coexist harmoniously, generate satisfied and happy emotions, reduce anxiety, and thus convert more language input into language

absorption for students [1].

American scholar Jenuote has repeatedly emphasized that teachers should attach importance to creating a positive classroom psychological atmosphere. He pointed out that "one function of teachers is never to be replaced, which is to create emotional learning situations." Teachers participating in building a positive classroom atmosphere not only helps to stimulate students' learning interest and motivation, but also enhances their learning behavior, allowing them to experience positive emotions, thereby alleviating their language anxiety and improving learning outcomes. A positive classroom psychological atmosphere should have the following characteristics:

(1) Respect and trust: Teachers should respect the individual differences of students and give them trust and respect. Students should feel able to freely express their opinions and ideas without discrimination or criticism.

(2) Collaboration and Interaction: Teachers should encourage collaboration and interaction among students to create a positive learning atmosphere. Students can progress together through group discussions, collaborative learning, and mutual interaction.

(3) Fairness and Fairness: Teachers should treat every student fairly, without favoring or discriminating against certain students. Students should feel fair evaluation and treatment, and have opportunities for fair competition.

(4) Encouragement and support: Teachers should provide students with encouragement and support to help them overcome difficulties and setbacks. Students should feel the teacher's care and attention towards them, and have positive learning motivation and confidence.

(5) Active and active: The classroom should be filled with a positive learning atmosphere and active discussions. Students should be encouraged to participate in the classroom, raise questions, express opinions, actively think and explore knowledge.

A positive classroom psychological atmosphere can stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm in learning, promote teacher-student interaction and cooperation, and contribute to the learning effectiveness and comprehensive development of students. Teachers play an important role in creating and maintaining a positive classroom psychological atmosphere [2].

## **1.2. The impact of a positive classroom psychological atmosphere on foreign language teaching**

(1) Improving learning motivation: A positive classroom psychological atmosphere can stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm in learning. Students are more likely to immerse themselves in learning in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere, improving their learning motivation and engagement.

(2) Promoting positive interaction: A positive classroom psychological atmosphere can encourage students to ask questions, express opinions, and interact with classmates. Students are more willing to share their ideas and experiences, learn from each other, and communicate with each other, thereby promoting classroom interaction and cooperation.

(3) Reduce anxiety and stress: High school English classrooms often have a certain level of learning pressure and anxiety. A positive classroom psychological atmosphere can alleviate students' stress and anxiety, allowing them to face learning tasks more relaxed and confident.

(4) Cultivating a positive learning attitude: A positive classroom psychological atmosphere can cultivate students' positive learning attitudes and habits. Students are more motivated to explore and learn new knowledge in a positive classroom atmosphere, and cultivate the ability for self-directed learning and self-regulation.

(5) Enhancing teacher-student relationships: A positive classroom psychological atmosphere helps establish good teacher-student relationships. Students are more likely to receive guidance and guidance from teachers in an atmosphere of respect and trust, and are also more willing to establish

good communication and interaction with teachers.

In short, a positive classroom psychological atmosphere has a multifaceted impact on foreign language teaching. It can stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm in learning, promote interaction and cooperation, reduce their stress and anxiety, cultivate a positive learning attitude, and also help establish good teacher-student relationships. These factors collectively promote the learning effectiveness and development of students.

## 2. Stereotypes of Foreign Language Teaching among Students

The teaching process is not only a cognitive process, but also a psychological change process. The effectiveness of cognition to a certain extent depends on psychological changes. Currently, many practices have shown that the psychological state that restricts the creation of a positive foreign language teaching classroom psychological atmosphere is mainly manifested in the presence of some stereotypes among students towards the English classroom. Students may have different stereotypes about English classrooms due to their personal experiences and perspectives. Here are some common stereotypes that students have about English classrooms:

**High difficulty:** Many students believe that English courses are difficult and require a lot of vocabulary memorization, understanding of grammar rules, and oral expression skills. They may feel that English classes are a subject that requires a lot of effort to achieve good grades.

**Mechanical learning:** Some students believe that English courses focus on mechanical learning, that is, rote memorization of vocabulary and grammar, lacking opportunities for practical application and communication. They may find English classes to be a tedious task, lacking interest and creativity.

**Difficulty in spoken English:** Many students feel difficulty and lack confidence in expressing themselves orally in English. They may be concerned about inaccurate pronunciation, improper vocabulary use, or grammar errors, thus feeling pressured to participate in oral activities or express their own opinions. Students may worry about their pronunciation being inaccurate or not fluent, especially when facing the entire class. This anxiety may lead to their unwillingness to actively participate in oral practice or express their opinions, limiting their language learning and communication skills development.

**Emphasize exam taking:** Some students believe that English courses place too much emphasis on exam taking, focusing only on exam results and neglecting the cultivation of actual language proficiency. They may feel that English classes are learning to cope with exams and lack practical application significance.

**Fear of making mistakes:** Students may be afraid of making mistakes in foreign language classrooms, fearing being criticized or laughed at by classmates or teachers. This fear may lead them to be afraid to boldly try new vocabulary or sentence structures, affecting their language practice and confidence cultivation. Students may feel inferior in foreign language learning compared to other classmates, leading to a sense of inferiority. This feeling may cause them to lose interest in learning, feel low, and thus affect their learning outcomes and mental health.

**Cultural barriers:** Students may feel estranged from cultural differences in foreign language classrooms, unable to truly understand and integrate into the new cultural environment. This kind of estrangement may lead to negative emotions towards learning and a decrease in interest in foreign languages and cultures.

### **3. The Principles of Building a Positive Psychological Atmosphere in Foreign Language Classrooms**

#### **3.1. Principle of subject participation**

In English classroom teaching, the teacher is the leader and the students are the main body, and teaching activities should be based on the interests of the students. Therefore, teachers need to actively explore effective teaching strategies to stimulate students' interest and motivation in learning. At the same time, students also need to change their learning concepts, actively participate in classroom activities, and achieve a transformation from "Someone want me to learn" to "I want to learn". During this process, students' interest and motivation in learning are stimulated, and the psychological atmosphere of classroom teaching becomes more positive.

#### **3.2. Principle of layered teaching**

According to the requirements of quality education, English teaching should be aimed at all students and dedicated to exploring the potential of each individual. However, due to differences in various aspects such as learning foundation, cognitive structure, and psychological characteristics among students, there is an imbalance in the development level of English learning. Therefore, when creating a positive classroom psychological atmosphere, teachers need to design diverse teaching tasks and content based on the actual needs of students at different levels, to meet the needs of different students; On the other hand, it is necessary to treat every student equally in teaching attitude, create an equal and harmonious learning environment for each student, so that they can all achieve success in the process of acquiring knowledge and developing themselves.

#### **3.3. Principle of diverse activities**

In English teaching, teachers need to follow the principle of diverse activities, that is, through various forms and angles of learning tasks, allowing students' senses to fully participate, thereby consolidating their basic English knowledge, basic skills, and comprehensive language application ability. For example, teachers can use forms such as performances, games, competitions, and thematic discussions to carry out English audio-visual and oral activities, allowing students to improve their learning interest and enhance their comprehensive abilities while completing these tasks, thus forming a good classroom psychological atmosphere.

#### **3.4. Principle of gradual progress**

Gradual progress in classroom teaching is crucial. This refers to teachers following cognitive laws, guiding students to gradually progress through a program from simple to difficult, from shallow to deep, and through orderly and step-by-step skill training and diverse and vivid scenarios, enabling students to achieve successful experiences. The gradual progress in classroom teaching helps to stimulate students' learning enthusiasm, thus forming a positive and harmonious classroom psychological atmosphere. In English teaching, the language foundation of students in the early stage is crucial for the learning effect in the later stage. Therefore, teachers must start from the existing level of students, design the next teaching tasks, and follow the principle of gradual progress in order to effectively activate the classroom atmosphere and further improve the learning effect of students.

### **3.5. The principle of layer by layer**

Psychologists believe that comprehension and experience are the summary and generalization of experiences, discovering the internal connections between psychology and behavior, and forming the internalization process of psychological qualities. If students cannot reproduce the content of classroom activities, they may experience forgetting due to the inhibition of temporary neural connections. It should be noted that "reproduction" is not a monotonous repetition, but rather follows the cognitive laws and psychological characteristics of students, selects appropriate timing, forms and methods, presents scenarios and knowledge organically, promotes the formation of student identification psychology, and creates a good classroom psychological atmosphere. Therefore, following the principle of reproducibility, fully understanding and experiencing, is actually an organic integration of various qualities of students, and a higher form of expression for students to create a healthy psychological atmosphere in learning.

## **4. Implementing situational foreign language teaching and creating a positive psychological atmosphere in foreign language classrooms**

Situational foreign language teaching refers to a teaching method in which teachers purposefully introduce or create vivid and concrete scenes with certain emotional colors and images as the main body in the teaching process, in order to arouse students' attitude experience, help students understand the textbook, and develop their psychological functions. Developed and formed by British applied linguists from the 1930s to the 1960s. The core is to stimulate students' emotions. Examples such as role models, vivid language descriptions, in class games, role-playing, poetry recitation, painting, gymnastics, music appreciation, tourism, and so on, are all embedded in specific visual contexts, and there must be subtle implications within them. By implementing situational foreign language teaching and creating a positive classroom psychological atmosphere, students can better participate and learn, develop language and problem-solving abilities in meaningful contexts, and cultivate a positive learning attitude and confidence.

### **4.1. Creating situations and stimulating interest are prerequisites for creating a positive classroom psychological atmosphere.**

Situation refers to the synthesis of all internal and external conditions in people's lives. Create authentic, interesting, and meaningful situations for students to apply their knowledge and skills in the classroom. Situations can be real-life scenarios, role-playing, group collaboration, or simulated tasks. Famous educator Tolstoy once said, "What is needed for successful teaching is not coercion, but to stimulate students' interest." Arousing students' interest is the key to implementing situational foreign language teaching. Teachers can use interesting teaching materials, multimedia resources, or practical activities to attract students' attention and engage in interaction and discussion with them. Teachers can provide students with audio-visual and activity scenarios:

Audiovisual situations are presented through various multimedia teaching methods to enhance the fun of English classrooms through visual and auditory stimuli, and to enhance learning outcomes through students' internal drive. The key to creating audio-visual scenarios lies in visually displaying and reproducing the situation. Firstly, teachers can reproduce the situation through materials such as images and videos. In the Internet era, Internet plus education has become an important means of teaching. Teachers can use modern information technology to play pictures and videos related to English courses to enhance the teaching effect.

Learning activities are the source of stimulating learning motivation and an important way to transform passive learning into active learning. Therefore, teachers should combine learning activities

with situational foreign language teaching, construct context, and enable students to gain a sense of achievement in the process of participating in activities, and be more proactive in learning guided by this sense of achievement. Integrating performance into context can create activity scenarios. There are two forms of performance: one is direct role-playing, allowing students to experience the inner emotions of the characters through role-playing; another approach is to empathize, allowing students to use their imagination to think about their possible behaviors when facing the same situation as the protagonist, in order to understand the character's behavior. These methods can help students generate emotional experiences similar to the characters in the process of interpreting texts, thereby deepening their understanding of English texts.

#### **4.2. Providing support and encouraging participation are important guarantees for creating a positive classroom psychological atmosphere**

Everyone has a desire and need to successfully accomplish something, which is reflected in their minds as the need for success. Meeting the needs of success not only generates joyful emotions, but also self-confidence and a sense of competence, promoting individuals to continue striving towards success. Because every satisfaction required for success is actually a positive reinforcement of successful behavior. In foreign language teaching, the joyful emotions generated by students' successful testing of learning activities further enhance their enthusiasm and motivation for learning. The key to the measures taken by teachers in this regard lies in: on the one hand, creating opportunities for students to obtain successful tests as much as possible; On the other hand, teachers should help various types of students establish reasonable levels of success expectations and aspirations. The appropriate level of ambition has a significant impact on the emotions of students.

Therefore, teachers should encourage students to actively participate in classroom activities and learning processes, and cultivate their ability for self-directed learning. Provide students with opportunities for self-directed learning, such as extracurricular reading, research projects, or personal exploration, to stimulate their interest and motivation in learning. Encourage students to engage in group collaboration and work together to solve situational tasks. Collaboration can promote interaction and communication among students, enhance their teamwork and communication skills, and provide opportunities for mutual support and learning. At the same time, teachers provide necessary support and guidance to students to ensure that they can successfully complete situational tasks. Teachers can provide necessary background knowledge and skill training, provide demonstrations and models to help students understand and apply knowledge.

#### **4.3. Student participation and active exploration are important foundations for creating a positive classroom psychological atmosphere**

In English classroom teaching, teachers play a leading role, while students are the main body. In order to stimulate students' interest and motivation in learning, teaching activities should be based on their interests. This requires teachers to actively explore effective teaching strategies, while also requiring students to change their learning concepts, actively participate in classroom activities, and achieve a transformation from "Someone want me to learn" to "I want to learn". During this process, students' sense of identification with classroom teaching has increased, their interest and motivation to participate in classroom activities have also been enhanced, and a positive classroom teaching atmosphere has been formed. Students actively participate and explore, allowing them to voluntarily let go of themselves and express themselves fully. Only when students participate in classroom activities, perceive their psychological processes, experience the joy of sharing with each other, feel the psychological connection between themselves and others, and gain a sense of achievement and confidence, can they develop a strong sense of belonging to classroom activities. At this point,

students' interest and emotions in participating in the classroom have been transformed into effective motivation for participation, forming a positive classroom psychological atmosphere.

Modern teaching theory holds that teaching is not only a process of imparting knowledge, but also a process of emotional interaction between teachers and students. A relaxed and harmonious teaching atmosphere can promote active thinking, enhance memory, eliminate tension, enhance confidence, and facilitate better interaction with teachers. To achieve this effect, English teachers should create a good teaching psychological field. Teachers can build a good psychological environment for classroom teaching by establishing good interpersonal relationships and conducting diverse classroom activities. In such an environment, teachers can promote emotional communication between teachers and students through methods such as integrating education with entertainment and actively encouraging them, thereby shaping the learning process into a self-motivating process for students.

In English teaching, building a good psychological environment also requires the active role of students. Students are not unconditional recipients of knowledge, and the knowledge imparted by teachers can only be internalized into their own knowledge through their own efforts; Traditional English classroom teaching often overlooks the main role of students, suppresses their wisdom and subjective initiative, and fails to make them truly the masters of learning. In fact, only by actively cultivating self-awareness can students effectively build a good teaching environment.

## References

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