

Teaching Discussion and Strategies for Foreign Language Teaching in Preschool Education College

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Abstract: Classroom teaching is the main position to implement quality-oriented education. The goal is to optimize classroom teaching, let the limited teaching time of 40 minutes glow with infinite vitality, make students truly become involved in learning. Nevertheless, this is also what the educators unremittingly pursue. However, the fact is, most of the students' knowledge accumulation and skills upgrading are still in place in current English teaching. Although teachers spend a lot of time and energy preparing materials and organizing teaching activities; and students also actively participate in classroom teaching activities, FLT is not that available and efficient. In this article, the author lists questions in FLT and illustrate the strategies for teaching and learning.

1. Introduction

We invited a foreign language teacher named John Meertens to our teaching seminar for English teaching discussion. Mr. Meertens is from Netherlands and is retired from his job. This has been the fourth time for him to come to China for Chinese learning and English teaching. There he found some problems in the foreign language class, which reveal the core question for ELT in our city, even the most provinces in the whole country.

2. Questions and Remarks for Teachers

- I realize that many things are very difficult because the groups you work with are quite large.
- Therefore, I would like to discuss things with you instead of giving suggestions.
- Write down the relative importance of reading, writing, speaking, and listening as you see it. Then show statistics on whiteboard.
- What is the goal?
- How do you teach vocabulary?
- I see that often a question is asked of the whole class and the whole class answers. Who do you know answer the question? I tried myself this morning. Do you know then who actually answered the question correctly and who did not, or who did not answer the question at all?
- Do you use differentiation? I.e. do you treat stronger/weaker students differently? There is a lot of information on the internet on how to do this.
- The texts that the students (can) read are often quite complex/difficult, but their speaking level is usually (a lot) lower. Of course, this is unavoidable but it also shows/brings to light one important rule, I think: depth of knowledge is more important than width -> i.e. it is better, I think, to know important words very well, than many words superficially. To be able to use words actively (in speech) you have to know them more or less deeply.

3. Suggestions for ELT

3.1 Activation

Give students more opportunities to talk (not reading out loud). E.g. you could have them do pairwise practice or conversations.

Do not only show standard sentences and definitions, but let students come up with their own ideas.

Class-wide discussions are OK?

Some teacher told me that some students are not really interested even do not finish their homework properly. Try to bring the material into the students' world. Talk about their life etc.

3.2 Variation in teaching method.

Some ideas for activities:

Exercises

Presentations about a self-chosen subject. Maybe 5 to 10 minutes.

Class-wide discussions on subjects that are of interest to the students.

Role plays

Games

Quizzes (esp. useful for vocabulary)

2-person conversations

Games, quizzes, songs (!), etc. loosen things up and get the students involved.

See the websites for English teaching.

3.3 Grammar

Grammar points are difficult rules and things. Try to teach it using a number of examples. More advanced students can be taught the grammar rules.

3.4 Vocabulary:

How do you teach vocabulary?

It is better not only to present it passively but make the students use the words.

Use it or lose it.

I have read in several places: depth not breadth is important.

Depth does not mean to learn all the meanings of a single word. Very difficult to do and it does not mean students can use all these meanings of the word in sentences. I think it is enough to memorize the meaning of the word in the context where it was used and being able to use it in that way. Add new meanings when encountered.

Not only present single words but also sentences that the use of the word, the context.

Give/ask for synonyms, antonyms, etc. Let the students 'play' with the word esp. with conjunctions etc. less so with simple nouns.

Make a connection with the students' life/world.

Generally, it is said that words need to be repeated at least 8-10 times to end up in long term memory.

Use games, quizzes, word of the day.

3.5 Listening

Provide students with (native-spoken) recordings!

A lot available on the internet and a lot of it for free.

Explain to them to listen piece wise.

More questions to individual students (not the whole class).

General lesson plan: warm up – review (and maybe check) last class' material – present new material – exercise – recap / conclusion.

3.6 Encourage students to

Tell (short) 'stories'.

Saying single sentences is very different from saying a series of sentences one after the other: rhythm and melody are a lot more important.

Listen to English as much as possible.

Read texts out loud at home.

Point out:

Speed is not important, but clarity.

That it is important to understand what you are reading while you read it.

The importance/use of reading out loud in improving/exercising pronunciation and using language. Again: rhythm and melody are important.

Think in English

Do not translate Chinese into English -> work from English straight away.

Use English outside of class.

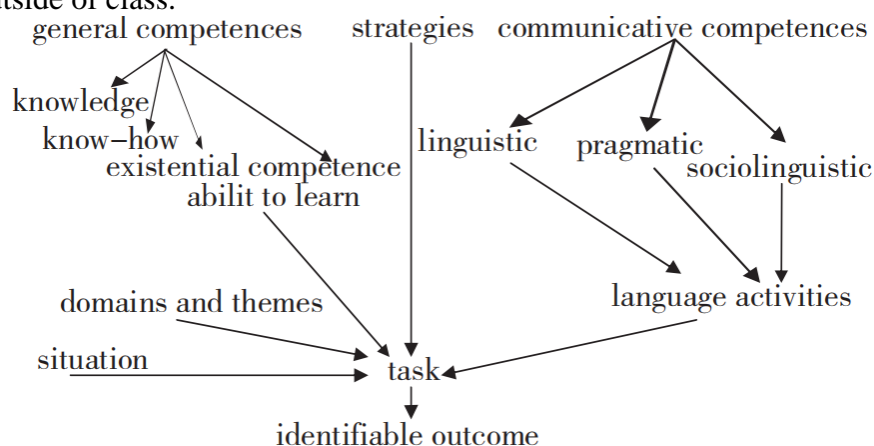


Fig. 1 The model of the language communication outcome

3.7 Stress production (writing, speaking)?

Pay more attention to functions and patterns, less to grammar: how do you say this/that/etc.?

Pay attention to a few often-heard problems:

Answering negative questions

The proper use of tenses e.g. ~~Yesterday I go to school~~

The difference between -ing and -ed

The proper use of 'the', 'a' and 'an'

The proper use of 'he' and 'she' e.g. ~~my brother, she said ...~~

The proper use of 'small words' in general e.g. ~~I go Shanghai~~

Table. 1 Language Competence

Ranks	Levels	Names
C	C2	Mastery
	C1	Effective Operational Proficiency
B	B2	Vantage
	B1	Threshold
A	A2	Way stage
	A1	Breakthrough

4. Seven Tips for Learning English Vocabulary

1) Read whenever possible. Whether it is novel or a magazine or something trivial, pay close attention to anything with writing on it. The more you are exposed to words, the more you will learn.

Do not skip unfamiliar words: if you don't know what a word means, look it up and make a note of it.

2) Write down new words. Writing the actual word with the meaning will help you remember it. Keep a diary so that you will have a collection of all your new words that you can easily revise when needed.

3) Vocally practise new words. Have a "word of the day" and use your newly learnt word throughout the day so you will learn to use it in context and not forget it quickly.

4) Visually remembering words is very helpful. Try writing words on small sticky notes and adding them to items around the house so that you will associate new words with their relevant images.

5) Play word games online and look up the meanings of new words as you encounter them. Scrabble is a fun game to play for this purpose.

6) Use new words regularly so that you don't forget them. Write articles that people will enjoy reading or start a blog that could be about anything.

7) Correspond with an English pen friend. The best way to gain confidence in speaking any language is by talking to a native speaker(s).

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