

# **Improve Students' Ability of Using The Language Is A Main Objective of English Teaching Concerning Quality-oriented Education**

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To carry out quality-oriented education, English teachers should put forth efforts in training students to use the language, that is improving their ability of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Decades of years' study and practice has helped English teachers to accept this concept in rationality.

Setting out with the main task of English teaching, we, English teachers of foreign language schools clarify teaching mentality and try to better the teaching result practically. Most of the students we teach can speak English fluently, and they have an available vocabulary of 5,000 words and expressions.

This article is devoted to introduce our theory and practice.

## **(A) Rationale**

It should be an overall request for teachers to raise students' ability of using English for communication. When we are making our teaching plan, we have in our minds that we should stick to fulfilling the task all the time, and that we can lay special emphasis on different aspects according to different grades and different ages of students.

We realize that to accomplish the mission, the most important thing is to create a good environment for students to learn the language. In other words, we have to create an environment in which we can "give the innate language potentiality of their brains enough effective stimulation", which has been the propositions of most linguists and language teaching experts.

Our target is to foster students' ability of listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. This kind of ability has three main factors, namely the language rule, phonetics and vocabulary. Among them language rule is essential. It is generated by the hereditary language potentiality of human brain after a great amount of effective --- understandable with situational meaning --- stimulation. This kind of stimulation must be of a huge amount. This theory is supported by System Theory. When discussing the dialectical relation between structure (the organization form of the factors with a system) and function (function that the system can display under a certain circumstance), System Theory remarks that the rise and fall of environment can bring about orderliness so as to form new structure. That is to say that, if we want students to learn the English language structure and to display function, in general sense, to be able to listen, speak, read and write, we must have a great "rise and fall" of the teaching environment --- devote a fairly long period of time to learning to speak English, eliminating interference from the mother tongue. All the teachers and the

students are supposed to speak English, only English. Great rise and fall of the environment is to the advantage of the forming of English structure, thus reach a certain function. If there is only a very small rise and fall of the teaching environment --- little by little without a letup --- little can be done. The result usually is "to take a lot of time but to yield little results". It is very difficult for the students to learn to use the language.

Based on the above understanding, from the very beginning we "throw students into an English ocean". The teacher creates a situation by using slide pictures, objects, performances for students; the teacher and the students all speak English only. Quantitative change leads to qualitative change. When the brain of a human being is "stimulated" to a certain quantity and to a certain degree, a qualitative change will take place. He or she has learned to speak English. Then the language rule is generated in his or her brain. The generation of the language rule in the brain can help the person to say thousands of thousands of correct sentences without even thinking activity. This kind of language rule can't be stored in human brain by memorizing. It can only be generated by a great amount of effective stimulation, That is why we call listening, speaking, reading and writing "four skills" --- skill, not knowledge. Skill can be obtained only through practice while knowledge is stored by memorizing. By the way, the language here has nothing to do with grammar rules. Grammar rules are for the combination of words into sentences, which linguists sum up according to the practical language. Grammar rules can never be the essential actor of the language. Using a common saying their relation is just like that between knowledge of swimming and skill of swimming.

The other essential factors of the language are phonetics and vocabulary. Under the influence of language rule, they form living language to express rich and varied ideas. Phonetics and words can be memorized, and therefore can be forgotten; yet language rule is difficult to disappear just because it is not memorized; Language rule is generated by stimulating.

### **(B) Our practice**

We divide school English teachings into three stages, specifically speaking: the first stage (Grade 7 & 8) is the rudimentary stage; the main mission of this stage is to help the students form good language-learning habit. At the early stage after a child was born (up to the school age), it has a good ability to learn by hearing. After the child enters the school, he or she begins to learn to read and write. Then gradually along with the improving of reading ability (reading becomes more and more important in the process of study), the position of the sense of hearing is weakened. So when we teach very beginners, we try our best to awaken this innate ability of the students. We often devote about 60 teaching period to oral practice without reading and writing, even without learning letters. Thus, we can help the students form the habit of learning information by listening. The second stage (Grade 9 & 10) is the laying-foundation stage; the main task of this stage is to help the students grasp English phonetics, learn basic grammar, and remember fundamental words and expressions. The students have a vocabulary of more than 3,500 words, and they can communicate with others in simple English. The third stage (Grade 11 & 12) is the standard-raising stage; the main task of this stage is to help the students to build up a larger vocabulary (most students can have one of five thousand to five thousand and

five hundred) and to widen their range of knowledge. In the last two years of senior high school study, students make greater progress in listening, speaking, reading and writing and learn to discuss problems of different subjects in English. Of course, in the last year we have to use a certain part of time to help the students prepare themselves for the college entrance examination.

What we have done or is doing is like the following:

**1、 Adopting an appropriate mode of English course:** Because we can teach students English in smaller classes (some twenty students in each class) and we have more class periods each week for English study (15 class-periods including morning and evening classes), we adopt the mode of English course as follows:

Grade	7 & 8	9	10	11 & 12
<b>Main task</b>	Start with listening and speaking in order to form the students' right way of learning English and good habit of thinking in English	Help the students to have a firm foundation of language learning and a special attention should be paid to cultivating their ability of listening, speaking, reading and writing	Lead the students to lay a comprehensive foundation of knowledge in language learning and strengthen their ability of listening, speaking, reading and writing all-sidedly	Raise the students' ability of using language, expand their reading to enlarge their vocabulary and enrich their quantities of the writing
<b>Mode of course</b>	listening	listening	listening	listening
	Comprehensive English course (lay greater emphasis on oral practice)	Comprehensive English course (devote more time to written practice)	Comprehensive English course (four skills)	Comprehensive English course (raise students' ability of teach themselves)
	Oral English (foreign teacher)	Oral English (foreign teacher)	Oral English (foreign teacher)	Oral English (foreign teacher)
	AV-aids lesson (cultural background knowledge, learn more words)	AV-aids lesson (cultural background knowledge, learn more words)	AV-aids lesson (cultural background knowledge, learn more words)	AV-aids lesson (cultural background knowledge, learn more words)
		Reading (pay attention to quantity)	Reading (pay attention to speed & comprehension)	

**2、 Reforming the mode of examination:** Insist on a comprehensive mode of test, including listening, oral and written tests. Listening test: set the students to listen to records. Oral test: the ways we adopt should be effective, believable and workable. Main points for the test are: correct pronunciation, natural intonation, fluent speaking, strong language sense, proper sentences. The main function of written test is to help the students learn English while its secondary function is to test their standard.

### 3、Adhering to seven principles:

1) **The principle of training all-sidedly and laying particular emphasis on different stage:** For beginners, special attention should be paid to oral practice.

2) **The principle of communication:** lay special emphasis on situation;

3) **The principle of practicality:** The students constant interest in learning English comes from putting the language into use, and from their progress in the use. Most of the class time should be devoted to the students' practice (Pay attention to the points of their practice: tempo, high-tide, density and degree of difficulty).

4) **The principle of recording leading:** The first step should be listening with books shut. Set the students to imitate the record.

5) **The principle of entirety:** Never break the entirety of a text or a dialogue. We take the sentence as the smallest unit of the language. Even when we are doing dictation practice, we just set the students to write down a whole sentence.

6) **The principle of emotion quality:** Never give the students a "surprise attack" in class. Let the students always in a cheerful frame of mind.

7) **The principle of interest:** Always try hard to make our classes interesting and keep the students' interest of learning.

We encourage English teachers to create a rich and dynamic teaching mode. Apart from Listening, Oral, Seeing & Hearings, Reading, we mainly have comprehensive English. The Comprehensive English course is usually conducted with four steps: Understanding, Explaining, Discussing and Homework.

A1: Understanding	B1 Introduction (Record, slide show, AV-aids, teacher's speech, acting the scene, pictures, real objects, etc.)
	B2 Listening to record, questions and answers
	B3 Beginners: imitation, students of higher grades: discussion
	B4 Reading
A2: Explaining	B5 Language analysis (students of higher grades: teaching themselves with the help of reference books)
	B6 Drills (four skills, mainly students' activities)
A3: Discussing	B7 Retell, acting the scene
	B8 Discussion & debating on a certain subject
A4: Homework	B9 Both written and oral

The aim of having this course designed this way is to help students understand from the top layer to the profound layer. Thus they may accumulate over a long period to form a better ability of using English. As for a foreign languages school, how strong the students' ability of using foreign languages will be an important index to decide the students' language ability and comprehensive qualities. This thesis will explain and expand all from the standing of theory and the experience of our teaching.

The textbooks we are using:

Comprehensive English: *Look Ahead(Book 1-4)*

Reading: The teachers select the materials by themselves after their research work --- a group discussion; the principle is "Extensive" and the new words are not more than 5 percent, simplified literature books, popular science fictions, magazines and newspaper articles are included.

Listening: Focus Listening (*College English Book 1-5*)

AV-aids English course: *Family Album U.S.A.(Book 1-2)*

### (C) Points for attention in course

- 1. intensive training:** Always remember that practice makes perfect. What we should do is to give the students brain enough simulation.
- 2. controlled goal:** Control teaching with the teaching objectives.
- 3. extensive reading:** Set the students to read more.
- 4. be skilled:** *Being skilled is the essential factor in speaking.* (Norman F. Davis, Sweden)
- 5. confidence established:** Sense of success is the best motive power.
- 6. teach in accordance with aptitude:** Decrease the degree of difficulty for those who are lagged behind.

### (D) Conclusion

(1) To improve the English teaching method is not merely a problem of teaching a subject. It has influenced and is still influencing the carrying out the policy of opening to the outside world and thus it will influence the economic and social development. The starting point of our thinking should be the interest of our people.

(2) Knowledge and ability are closely combined. No hard and fast line can be drawn between the two. There are two aspects, which supplement and complement each other. What we should do is to try to get the result of “both win”.