



On the Influential Elements of English Study

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the most important elements in English study. The influential elements are classified into types outside classroom and types inside classroom. After a thorough analyzing the important elements, the interrelationship between the two kinds is also explored. Besides, the typical ESA (Engage, Study, Active) patterns of the inside class in English study is discusses.

Keywords: English study, Outside classroom, Inside classroom

1. Introduction

Nowadays, more and more people are learning English for various reasons: getting a job; a chance to get educated; the ability to take a full part in the life of one's own country or the opportunity to emigrate to another, and so on. Many researchers have exerted a lot of efforts to help people achieve the language proficiency more easily and the important elements for the English study are found. As people learn language either outside classroom or inside the classroom, it is reasonable to divide the relative elements into two categories--elements outside the classroom and inside the classroom.

2. Important Elements for English Study outside the Classroom: Exposure, Motivation, and Use

It is no doubt true Exposure is one of the important elements to learn English outside the classroom. All the children who are repeatedly exposed to a language will in normal circumstances learn it. They do this unconsciously rather than as a form of study. Sooner or later, most adults can learn English well, if they get endless exposure, for they can get help from the surrounding language speakers.

Motivation is people's internal motility to learn the second language. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), there are integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. A learner is said to be interactively motivated when the learner wishes to identify with another ethno linguistics group, while a learner with instrumental motivation is motivated to learn English for utilitarian purposes, such as furthering a career, improving social status or meeting an educational requirement. It is said Integrative motivation is more powerful than Instrument motivation. No mater what kind of motivation the students have, it is clear that highly motivated learners do better than those who haven't any motivation at all.

The Use of language gives people the chances to practice what they have obtained and the chances to monitor the language. There are some adult immigrants, without frequent use of the language, it is difficult for them to learn English well, even if they are repeatedly exposed to the language and they have either integrative motivation or instrumental motivation. Getting endless exposure of English for a long period time, the immigrants may understand the target language when it is spoken or read, but if they don't practice the language intentionally, they can not succeed in speaking and writing, and they can't be called successful language learners.

3. Important Elements for English learning and teaching inside the classroom: Engage, Study and Activate

The features of learning language outside the classroom and inside the classroom are deferent from each other. The former focuses much on learning, while the latter combine teaching and learning. Teaching and learning are two closely related components of the inside classroom study. There are three elements in English learning and teaching inside the classroom, which are Engage, Study and Activate.

Engage is the point in a teaching sequence where teachers try to arouse the students' interests, thus involving their emotions. Activities and materials which frequently Engage students include: games, music, discussions, stimulating

pictures, dramatic stories, amusing anecdotes etc. Even where such activities and materials are not used, teachers will want to ensure that their students engage with the topic, exercise or language they are going to be dealing with. Engage plays dominant role in language learning inside the classroom and it often takes place at the beginning of the teaching sequence, which ensure that the process of teaching goes smoothly and efficiently. Without the element of Engage, the class may be boring and the students will switch off from what was being taught. If the students are engaged, they will be interested in the class and learn better.

Study activities are those where the students are asked to focus in on language and how it is constructed. They range from the study and practice of a single sound to an investigation of how a writer achieves a particular effect in a long text; from an examination and practice of a verb tense to the study of a transcript of informal speech to discuss spoken style. Study is a typical element for learning English inside the classroom, and it is a conscious activity of learning which is different from language acquisition outside classroom. Successful language learning in a classroom depends on a judicious blend of subconscious language acquisition and kind of Study activities.

Activate is the element describing exercises and activities which are designed to get students using language as freely and communicatively as they can. The objective for the students is not to focus on language construction and practice specific bits of language, but for them to use all and any language which may be appropriated for a given situation or topic. Thus, Activate exercises offer students a chance to try out real language use with little or no restriction---a kind of rehearsal for the real world. Typical Activate exercises include role-plays advertisement design, debates and discussions, describe and draw, story and poem writing etc. If students do have a chance to activate their knowledge in the safety of a classroom, they may have fewer problems in using the language in the real world.

4. Connection between the Elements for English Study Outside and Inside the Classroom

The elements of learning language outside the classroom and inside the classroom are different from each other, while there are some connections between them. If the students are frequently Engaged in the class, they will probably be interested in the class and have a motivation to learn the language. Some activities and materials which frequently Engage students will also make the students be exposed to the language. Activate is the element which creates a second language spoken environment in which the students will be exposed to the language, and it gives the students more chances to use the second language.

5. Some Different ESA Patterns in English Study inside the Classroom

To say that the three elements, Engage, Study and Activate are very important for English study inside the classroom and need to be present, does not mean they always have to take place in the same order. The frequently used in English study of different ESA patterns are as follows.

5.1 ESA Straight Arrows sequence

ESA Straight Arrows sequence is a type of teaching sequence takes students in a straight line: first the teacher gets the class interested and Engaged, then the students Study something and they then try to Activate it by putting it into production.

For example: at the beginning of the class, the students may be engaged by watching a movie clip concerning about Christmas celebration. Then the teacher helps the students to concentrate their attention on the language used in the text, "Christmas", for example, to analyze the grammar or the writing features of the text. At last, the teacher asks the students to do a role play named "On the Christmas EVE".

ESA Straight Arrows sequence works well for certain structures. It is frequently used in the classroom learning and teaching, and many teachers often use this type of sequence without cautious.

5.2 EAS(A) Boomerang sequence

Boomerang is a curved flat wooden missile (use by Austrian Aborigines), which can be thrown and it returns to the thrower if it fails to hit anything. EAS(A) Boomerang sequence is one type the teacher is answering the needs of the students. They are not taught language until and unless they have shown (in the Activate phrase) that they have a need for it.

For example: In the Engage phrase, students and the teacher discuss issue surrounding job interviews and the students get interested in the discussion. Then the element of Activate takes place: after the teacher describes an interview situation, the students act out in role-plays. While the students perform the role-play, the teacher makes a lot of English mistakes they make and difficulties they have. When the role-plays are over, the teacher works with the students on the grammar and vocabulary which caused them trouble during the role-play. They might compare their language with more correct usage and try to work out (discover) for themselves where they went wrong. They might do some controlled practice of the language. Some time later, students role-play another job interview, bringing in the knowledge they gained in the Study phrase.

EAS(A) Boomerang sequence makes much better sense because the connection between what students need to learn and what they are taught is more transparent. However, it places a greater burden on the teacher since he or she will have to be able to find good teaching material based on (often unforeseen) problems thrown up at the Activate stage. It may also be more appropriate for students at intermediate and advanced levels since they have quite a lot of language available for them at the Activate stage.

5.3 EAASAEA Patchwork sequence

EAASAEA Patchwork sequence is made up with some patches of ESA elements. It is a mixture of procedures and mini-procedures, a variety of episodes building up to a whole.

For example: Engage: the teacher shows the students a science fiction movie clip concerning about the Internet to arouse the students interests. Activate: they have a discussion about the effect of the internet. Activate: they act out a role-play named "Internet Friends". Study: the teacher does vocabulary work on words of the text. Activate: the students describe their opinions on the virtual world. Study: the teacher focuses the students attention on the relative clause construction used in the text. Engage: the students watch another relative movie clip. Activate: the students have a discussion about how to use the internet efficiently.

EAAASEA Patchwork sequence is commonly used in the class of intermediate and advanced levels, because they probably reflect the way we learn--rather chaotically and not always in a straight line. But this type of class is often limited by the time and the size of the class.

6. Conclusion

From the all above, the conclusion can be given: whichever way of learning and teaching the learners and the teachers prefer, the elements describe--Exposure, Motivation, Use, Engage, Study and Activate--are the basic building blocks for successful language learning and teaching. Therefore, if the learners and the teachers take the conscious of the important elements and use them intentionally, it is easier to succeed in English study.

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