

Analysis and Countermeasures of Students' Silence in English Class of Rural Primary Schools

-- Take Zhaojin BeiLiang HongJun Primary School as an Example

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Abstract

Silence refers to the phenomenon that teachers ask questions and students keep silent and do not respond. It is a common phenomenon in rural English classes in recent years. This paper takes Zhaojin BeiLiang Hongjun Primary School as the research object. It by means of questionnaire survey and class observation, investigates the present situation of silence in English class in rural primary schools, analyzes the types of silence and the causes of class silence, and further discusses the strategies to solve the negative silence in English class in rural primary schools, so as to help teachers improve class atmosphere and teaching efficiency.

Keywords

English Class in Rural Primary Schools; Silence Phenomenon.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the phenomenon of students' silence in English class has become more and more serious, which hinders the normal progress of the whole English class. In 2021, the author found that some students were silent in class during the teaching process of Zhaojin BeiLiang Hongjun Primary School, especially in English class. From the current research situation, researchers for the class silence phenomenon are more concentrated in the higher education stage, less attention to the rural primary school stage. Through a year's investigation and analysis, this study explores the causes of English class silence in rural primary schools, and puts forward some countermeasures to reduce class silence and improve teaching efficiency, so as to further promote the smooth development of school teaching.

2. The Current Situation of English Class Silence of Rural Primary School Students

English class silence refers to the phenomenon that teachers ask questions during lectures, while students keep silent and do not respond. A few students answer questions with procrastination, which hinders the normal progress of English class. Class is mostly teacher-centered, students always show the teaching phenomenon of "dumb English".

The subjects of this survey are students and English teachers in grades 3-6 of Zhaojin BeiLiang Hongjun Primary School. The school is located in a mountainous area, which is a remote rural primary school with inconvenient transportation. Most of the students in the school are left-behind children and single-parent families. The students' foundation is relatively weak and their parents' education level is low, they can represent and reflect the current situation of English teaching in rural primary schools to a certain extent. There are 4 classes with 116 students and 4 English teachers: 22 children in the third grade, accounting for 18.9% of the

total sample; 35 children in the fourth grade, accounting for 30.2% of the total sample; 31 children in the fifth grade, accounting for 26.7% of the total sample; 28 students in grade six, accounting for 24.2% of the total sample.

The survey showed that a total of 18.1% of students showed that the classroom atmosphere was very active and thought that they could learn happily in class; 22.4% students think that the classroom atmosphere is more active; 24.1% students think that the classroom atmosphere is average; 19% of students think that English class is inactive; 16.4% of the students think that English class is very inactive.

It can be seen that from grade three to grade six, students' English classroom activity tends to decrease, and 75% of grade six students think that the classroom atmosphere is average and inactive, which shows that silence in class is common.

Table 1. Investigation on English Classroom Atmosphere

Q: What do you think of the English class atmosphere? (%)					
	A.very active	B.active	C.general	D.inactive	E.very inactive
Grade 3	22.7	31.8	18.2	18.2	9.1
Grade 4	20	28.6	25.7	14.3	11.4
Grade 5	19.4	16.1	29	16.1	19.4
Grade 6	10.7	14.3	21.4	28.6	25
Total	18.1	22.4	24.1	19	16.4

As for the specific situation of English classroom silence, we put forward several different questions for teachers and students. Generally speaking, only 29.3% of the students regularly participate in the discussion, which also reflects that silence is common in English class. In view of the relationship between seat and active speech, most students think that active speech has nothing to do with the position before and after the seat, but the data reflects that the students who sit in the back of the classroom have less active speeches.

The situation reflected by the teachers is also consistent with the actual performance of the students. In the survey, most teachers responded that only one third of the students were able to speak actively in class, and the silence of students became more and more common with the increase of grades.

Based on the investigation of the present situation of class silence, we can further explore the causes of classroom silence and put forward corresponding solutions to improve students' classroom status.

3. Types of Students' Silence in Class

Gilmore (1985) classifies students' silence into two types, one is students' active silence and the other is students' passive silence. Active silence means that students have the ability to participate in class questioning and discussion, but actively choose self-silence. Passive silence means that students have no ability to participate in classroom questioning and discussion due to lack of knowledge and ability; Or because of the pressure from oneself and the outside world, they are able to participate but worry, so are forced to be silent in class. This study mainly adopts Gilmore's point of view to study the silence of students.

Through the investigation of students' class silence, observes that fewer students who are actively silent and more students who are passively silent. The silence students can be divided into these three types: can understand but can't speak; can speak, but dare not speak in public in class; can't understand the teacher's question.

4. Causes of Silence in English Classroom

English class silence is universal, while the reasons are diverse. Previous studies have divided the reasons into teacher-student factors, thinking factors and comprehensive factors.

Through questionnaire survey and student interview analysis, according to individual students, divides the reasons into internal factors and external factors .

4.1. Internal Factors

4.1.1. Students' Knowledge Level

Zhaojin Beiliang Primary School is located in a mountainous area, with poor educational resources. Students started English classes until the third-grade school, their foundation is weak. It is difficult for students' knowledge to be consolidated after class; students' English learning ability is poor.

4.1.2. Students' Psychological Quality

Rural students exposed to English late,so they are lack self-confidence and dare not express their views, they have poor foundation and poor pronunciation, so are worried that they will be criticized by teachers when answering questions in class. There are also some students who are nervous and worried when they take the initiative to answer questions, they forget the answers they want to say. In order to avoid this situation happening again, the students choose to keep silent in English class.

4.2. External Factors

4.2.1. Pressure from Teachers

When students answer questions in class, teachers will often give feedback, such as saying "great", "thank you", "well done" and so on when the answer is correct; When the answer is wrong, teachers generally don't give negative feedback, but only guide students to listen to other people's answers. However, many students are very concerned about their image in the class, they only want to be praised, so everyone will be silent and not participate in questions when they are not sure.

At the same time, Chinese students prefer to listen to teachers, which is a sign of respect for teachers, they seldom speak out about their thoughts, which also leads to silence in primary school English classes.

4.2.2. Evaluation from Classmates

After saying wrong answers, other students will laugh.because of this reasons,students are worriednd and embarrassed, it also is one of the main reasons for students' silence. In response to "why not participate in class Q&A", students described "embarrassing", "being laughed when I say something wrong", etc., which showed that students were worried about damaging their image among their peers.

At the same time, many primary school students think that "actively answering questions is a show-off".

4.2.3. Family Factor

Family conditions in rural primary schools are poor, and most parents have never been exposed to English courses, which makes it difficult for parents to realize the importance of English classes. This idea passes on to students' awareness that English classes are not important, which leads to students' silence.

5. Strategies for Improving Silence in Primary School English Class.

5.1. Arouse Students' Enthusiasm

Students should be the main body of the classroom. According to the survey, pupils prefer to participate in classroom games, and are more accustomed to learning English in the form of group PK. 59% of the students think that classroom activities will make them master knowledge better. In this case, teachers should change the original teaching idea of taking teachers as the main body, arouse students' enthusiasm to participate in the classroom, and adjust the way of class according to students' interest.

Students in primary school are active and love games. Teachers can create a relaxed and pleasant learning atmosphere by setting up English contests, group PK and acting English stories. At the same time, teachers should integrate teaching materials, organize topics that students are interested in, combine knowledge inside and outside class. Only by attaching importance to students' dominant position in the classroom, allowing students to participate in the classroom and entering a positive learning concept can students' participation in the classroom be mobilized and the silence in the English classroom be reduced.

5.2. Establish a Harmonious Relationship between Teachers and Students

Teachers should give each student the opportunity to show, pay attention to each student's point of view, and pay attention to the way students are evaluated in class. According to the survey, the reasons why many students are unwilling to participate in the discussion and question-and-answer in class are "afraid of the teacher saying me" and "afraid of saying something wrong", etc. This disharmonious classroom atmosphere is not conducive to students' complete participation in the classroom. First of all, we must give students more positive evaluations. "It is the best to stand up and answer" to enhance students' self-confidence and self-esteem; At the same time, students at different levels should have different requirements, and all students should experience the fun of learning through encouraging evaluation; Secondly, more targeted evaluations should be used in evaluation, and negative evaluations such as punishment and criticism should be used with caution. If students have wrong answers, teachers should evaluate them in a euphemistic way to avoid hurting students' self-esteem. Teachers should try their best to make every student feel their own value and participate in the class.

6. Conclusion

This survey is based on the current situation of class silence, in order to further explore the causes of class silence and put forward corresponding solutions to improve students' classroom status. The results show that students' knowledge level, psychological endurance, classroom mode, classmate pressure, teacher-student relationship and family factors may all lead to students' classroom silence. The education level of rural primary schools is poor, so teachers should treat students' English classroom silence correctly, adopt corresponding strategies to prevent the occurrence of negative silence, and improve students' interest in learning and English communicative competence.

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