Using Origami and Magic Tricks to Teach English

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This article presents the pedagogical value of origami and magic tricks to English teachers. First, rationales for using origami and magic tricks to teach English are discussed. Second, some ideas of how origami activities and magic tricks can be incorporated in English teaching are illustrated. Third, free online resources of origami and magic materials are provided with description.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to present the pedagogical value of origami and magic tricks to English teachers and provide teachers with ideas that lend spice to their teaching. Origami is an art of cutting and folding papers into different decorative or representative forms. Origami activities, often viewed as childlike and non-content activities, actually promote language learning among not only young but also adult learners (Ho, 2002). Meanwhile, the mysterious nature and spectacular outcome of magic tricks are certainly appealing to learners who are motivated by curiosity and the ability to impress others.

Nonetheless, origami and magic trick materials are usually not developed for language teaching purposes. Teachers need to alter and incorporate such materials to fit their teaching contexts or spend time to seek appropriate and ready-to-use materials. In this article, I offer some examples of how origami and magic trick materials can be incorporated in language teaching and useful resources of such materials that are appropriate for English teaching and learning.

Rationales

Learners’ success in folding an origami and performing a magic trick is basically attributed to their comprehension of the text that contains the folding and performing instruction. The value of this attribute is two-fold. First, the teacher can assess learners’ language learning by examining their visible outcome (i.e. final origami product and successful trick performance). Second, such activities readily lend themselves to task-based instruction. Task-based instruction emphasizes communication, negotiation of meaning, collaboration, and use of the language as a means to an end (Shrum & Glisan, 2005). While the end is the origami and trick outcome, the means is the process of engaging with the target language to comprehend the origami and trick instruction and negotiate meanings with teachers and other learners.

Origami and magic activities can be flexibly adapted for separate macro skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing) or integrated skills which promote communicative language teaching and learning. For example, a series of pictures of how to fold a particular origami shape are shown to learners who then write an instruction in their own words or by incorporating key related words taught before this activity. To embrace a communicative method, teachers can group students according to what magic tricks their groups want to perform to the others and have them discuss with their group members how to execute the trick.

Origami and magic activities also address diverse needs of learners in the language classroom. Gardner (1993) posited that learners possessed multiple intelligences, but their intelligences were not equally developed both within an individual and between individuals. Some learners learn better when they do and create something, while some others need to discuss new information with others. In the same vein, Oxford (1990) proposed five key dimensions of language learning styles. To address this inevitable diversity in the classroom, the teacher needs to use activities that incorporate multiple intelligences and dimensions. Origami activities will open the class to different learning modes such as kinesthetic and visual auditory (Ho, 2002). Origami and magic tricks...
can be adopted as both cooperative and competitive activities. Finally, origami and magic activities are certainly stimulating. Young learners are attracted to such shapes as lovely animals and toys, while adult learners may desire something less juvenile and more complex. Magic tricks are the love of learners who want to impress their friends and are curious about the mystery behind tricks.

Some Pedagogical Ideas

Origami

Basic origami materials needed for a language class include a visual (i.e., a series of pictures showing how to fold an origami) and written and verbal origami instruction. For low level or young learners, the teacher provides both the visual and instruction text to learners. The teacher can pre-teach difficult words before an origami activity by either explaining or demonstrating action of the difficult words. To explain the phrase “accordion fold”, I would fold a paper into an accordion shape in front of my learners and invite them to follow to make sure that they understand. Select words with a focus to help learners comprehend the instruction text. Pre-teaching difficult words and the visual are scaffolds for low-level learners. To make an origami task challenging for higher level learners, the teacher can remove the visual, and ask the learners to develop the visual from the instruction text given in pairs or groups.

To focus on writing, the teacher provides a visual on which learners base their origami instruction writing. Different groups may have different visuals and produce different sets of instruction. Each group tries an origami instruction different from their own. The teacher can pre-teach key words. When the learners are familiar with origami activities, the teacher can ask the learners to learn an origami folding from their families, relatives, or friends, and produce a set of instructions for other learners.

Magic Tricks

Last summer I introduced two card tricks to a class of mine. Due to complexity of the tricks and text, this lesson is for intermediate and upper intermediate learners. The instruction text for the tricks is in the appendix.

First, I pre-taught such words as “spade”, “club”, “diamond”, “heart”, “shuffle”, “cut”, “pick” by using a deck of cards. I wrote those words on the whiteboard. I showed different cards especially picture cards and called out their names. I also performed actions (i.e. shuffle) related to the verbs I was teaching. I checked their comprehension by showing some cards and performing some actions and asking some students to name the cards and provide the verbs for the actions.

I split the class into two groups. Each group held a secret of their trick. Each group received an instruction text of their trick. They discussed the trick and rehearsed the trick. I would facilitate any member who had difficulty. Discussion was effective with a group of 4 or 5 students. Then each member from one group was paired with a member from another group. One learner in the pair performed his or her trick while the other either paid attention or took note of steps taken by the trick performer. At the end, learners in each pair shared their secret behind their trick. Each learner wrote down the instruction they learned from his or her pair member. Their writing would be collected for assessment. The first card trick (see the appendix) even allowed learners to create and narrate their own story related to the trick to divert spectators’ attention from their secret.

Resources

Some free online resources of origami activities and magic tricks can be found in the following websites.

Tammy Yee’s Origami Page provides numerous origami activities including textual instruction, visuals, and pages formatted with crease patterns ready to be printed. Each activity is assigned to a difficulty level. Origami projects are also organized into three categories: nature, holidays, and multicultural. Every month new origami projects are added into the database. Everything is free.

This is a huge origami database. The website has a search and a filter mechanism that filters origami models based on the difficulty level chosen. Many of its origami models are not suitable for young or low level learners. Its complexity may be appealing to adult and advanced learners. It is also free for all visitors, and the database keeps growing.

These sites contain videos of how to make origami shapes. For teachers who love incorporating short video clips into their instruction, these sites are their love. For the videojug.com, teachers need to type keyword origami to get a list of related videos. This site contains quality videos that are downloadable once you sign up as a member for free.

This website contains a dozen of free magic tricks for school children. Its easy trick instructions are suitable for English learners in many levels. Most tricks involve easy-to-find objects such as cards and coins. The instruction is usually short and thus stimulating.
This site has several simple magic tricks with moderately long instruction but with simple words. There are also pictures to help illustrate the tricks.

This site has a wonderful collection of card tricks organized in neat categories. Teachers may find easy trick categories useful for their lessons, but other categories are also worth exploring.

References


Appendix

Card Trick 1

All card Jacks, Queens, Kings, and Aces are used in this trick. The cards are arranged in four columns based on a story. The order of each column should be a Jack, Queen, King, and Ace. Each column is collected and placed on another one to form a deck. The deck now is placed on a table. The audience is invited to cut the deck as many times as they want. Then cards are dealt in four piles so that each pile will have four cards. The effect is that all the four cards in each pile belong to the same kind (e.g. all Aces).

How does it work? The story is intended to distract the audience’s attention from the order of cards arranged in four columns. The story can be made up to match the interest of the audience. One excellent example is that one day four young men (four Jacks) had a party, but when the party became boring, they invited four young women (Queens) to join. As the party was still boring, they invited four older male friends who were outspoken (Kings) to join the party. However the party got loud and the neighbors called the police. Four police officers (Aces) came to the party and took the party goers to the police station in four cars. When narrating, first place Jacks in four different locations (Each Jack will be the first card of each column). Queens, Kings, and Aces are handled in the same way so that each column should contain in order a Jack, Queen, King and Ace. Pile the columns on one another to form a deck.

Ask the audience to cut the deck. No matter how many times the audience cut the deck on the table, the order of the cards should always be Jack, Queen, King, and Ace. When dealt into four piles, the cards will always go into their group: All Jacks, Queens, Kings, and Aces. Cutting the deck on the table, the audience has control on the deck and is not suspicious of the order of the cards believing that random cut will jeopardize the order, which contributes to amazement of the trick effect.

Card Trick 2

Two cards are picked out by the magician from a fan of cards. While picking out the cards, the magician looks at the audience’s eyes as if he or she were reading the audience’s mind. In this example, the two cards to be chosen for the effect to happen are the Nine Spade and the Three Club. The two cards match in number with the top and bottom card in the deck, the top being Nine Club and the bottom being Three Heart in this example. This is the secret of the trick. The magician places the two cards face-up on the table. Then he or she places the rest of the deck card by card (from the top to bottom of the deck) on the table and tells the audience to stop him from doing this whenever the audience wants. When stopped, the magician places the Three Club face-up on top of the pile on the table and then places the deck in hand on that pile. The secret is that the Three Heart (the bottom card of the deck in hand) meets the Three Club. The magician then collects all the cards and places the cards one by one on the table once more. The audience is invited to stop him whenever the audience wants. When stopped, he places Nine Spade face-up on top of the pile on the table and then places the deck in hand on that pile. The secret is that the Nine Spade meets Nine Club. And then the magician hands the deck on the table to the audience who will shuffle or cut the deck. After that, the magician searches for the pairs, places the pairs on the table, and turn the cards face-up. To the audience’s amazement, the cards match with the two cards picked out in number.
In what ways can conversation be regarded as a skill? How might this influence our approach to teaching it?

Both motor-perceptive skills and interaction adeptness are usually required in conversation. Many times this pairing calls upon effective understanding of the two in order to implement oral exercises in an effective manner. Motor skills involve perceiving, recalling, and articulating in the correct order sounds and structures of the language. Interaction skills involve making decisions about communication, such as what to say and how to say it. Keeping in mind the difference, the class level should play a large part in determining which of the two skills are predominately used during the course.

Generally the situation or setting makes a difference in the way the speaker uses the language, for example, time limitations. Does the speaker have time to "process" his or her thoughts before speaking out loud? Other conditions can also affect the use of language. Does it make a difference whether the speaker is interacting with one person or with a group? Differing situations do have distinct aspects and thus can influence the way in which the speaker uses language.

But how do speakers facilitate oral production? Speakers can ease the oral production of speech in the following manner:

a) Simplifying structure: Simplifications can be found mainly in the tendency to tack new sentences on to previous ones by the use of coordinating conjunctions: like, and, or but.

b) The ellipsis technique: By using the ellipsis technique when conversing the speaker is able to omit parts of speech in order to speak economically. In order to understand the listener must have a good idea of the background knowledge assumed by the speaker.

c) Formulaic expressions: Formulaic expressions are found in speech patterns consisting of conventional colloquial or idiomatic expressions. Idiomatic expressions consist of all kinds of set phrases and although such sayings usually flow together in a set conversation pattern, they may lose their meaning when taken outside such context.

d) Fillers and hesitation devices: Fillers as well as hesitation devices such as, "you see", "kind of", "you know" can used in order to give the speakers more time to formulate and organize their ideas while speaking. In addition to using simple methods of speech, the speaker can avoid complex noun groups and as a result oral language tends to become less dense than the written language.

The following are examples of speech routinely used in conversation which an instructor should be aware of while teaching in the classroom:

(a) Interaction routines typically occur in any given situation and are likely to occur in a specific sequence. For example, casual encounter and conversations at parties all tend to be organized in characteristic ways.

(b) Descriptions of places and people: demonstration of facts, or comparisons all refer to "information routines." Such routines do not just concern speech, they also occur in written language.

(c) Negotiation of meaning refers to the skill of communicating ideas clearly and includes the way participants signal their understanding during an exchange. This aspect of spoken interaction contrasts most sharply with the written word.
(d) Feedback is the method of examining comprehension as the interaction unfolds. From the speaker’s position, this may include some of the following: asking the other person’s opinion, defining one’s meaning or intent with a summarization. From the listener’s point of view there is a comparable group of reactions which complement the speaker’s opinion, such as: indicating understanding by gestures or facial expression as well as indicating uncertainty by interrupting the speaker when necessary to express one’s reservation with the exchange in dialogue.

(e) Turn-taking is the knowledge which comes with negotiating the control of a conversation. A speaker has to be efficient at getting a turn and to be proficient at letting another speaker have a turn. Practical turn-taking requires five abilities:
1. Knowing how to signal that one wants to speak.
2. Recognizing the right moment to get a turn.
3. How to use this structure in order to get one’s turn properly and not lose it.
4. The ability to recognize other people’s signals or desire to speak.
5. The ability to acknowledge other people’s signals and let them take a turn.

(f) Communication strategies are approaches designed to deal with conversation difficulties. Two such approaches to conversational difficulties are the achievement and the reduction strategies. Both are aimed to compensate for the problem of expression. If the learner uses an achievement strategy, he or she will attempt to compensate for language disparity by improvising a substitute through guess-work or intuition. In using achievement strategies, speakers do not lose or alter any of their message. On the other hand, when using the reduction approach, the learners may reduce their message in order to bring it within the scope of their knowledge or else to abandon their central idea and attempt something more manageable.

In addition to being aware of the differing kinds of speech it might also be advantageous to develop a list of some of the important speaking skills you think need to be taught to both elementary and intermediate learners:

For elementary students we might consider the following speaking skills of importance:

a) The ability to reproduce sounds.
b) The knowledge and use of a practical vocabulary.
c) The use of idioms (for example: Hi, instead of Hello).
d) The ability to respond in sentences.
e) The ability to condense verbs (for example: replacing did not with didn’t).
f) A vocabulary which enables the student to play games.
g) Knowing and using familiar “native speaker” greetings.
h) The ability to carry on a limited conversation.

When teaching an intermediate level the following speaking skills might be seen as significant:

a) The ability to agree or disagree.
b) The ability to identify people and places.
c) The capability to express preferences.
d) The skill to express opinions.
e) The ability to ask for and give suggestions.
f) The ability to report on what people are asking and saying.
g) The ability to summarize a conversation.

Also of importance are interaction activities which can be used in a speaking class. For example, the processing of information by engaging in problem solving tasks. Such an activity may include placing items in a hierarchy of importance, deciding itineraries, deciding a price range to spend on gifts, developing a story from random picture cues. Problems may arise from the restricted cooperation because of the students’ limited vocabulary. However, as students move towards a monologue (or one person speaking, as learners they may begin by not speaking smoothly. The teacher must focus on having students use language in order to complete a task rather than practicing language for its own sake.

Another example of an interaction activity may be the development and usage of role playing. Learners first take part in a preliminary activity which introduces the topic and the situation as well as some background information. Such activities may include brainstorming or ranking exercises. An example might be a role play where the students prepare to rent an apartment. Students first interview one another about the available accommodations and their desired living arrangements.

Yet, problems can arise when using interaction activities in the classroom, such as a student’s inexperience in focusing on a particular topic or a limited vocabulary for developing the necessary explanation. Different cultural backgrounds at times may also interfere with the uniform picture of the situation. For example, apartment searching in Japan varies considerably from that same activity in the U.S. Teachers must carefully monitor its effectiveness when promoting conversational fluency.

What is the role of accuracy in a speaking class? How can accuracy be included as a component of a speaking class? Accuracy in a speaking class includes the control of grammar and pronunciation as a part of learning
language fluency. For speech to be free of errors the speaker must process and produce comprehensible information. This requires the speaker to generate speech that is acceptable in both content and form. The role of accuracy in a speaking class is created by the teacher's providing opportunities for learners to engage in natural interaction in conversation through the use of communicative tasks and activities. Teachers should generally sit back and let learners engage in the natural interaction process whenever possible.

An instructor's ability to recognize cues in speech patterns and conversation goes a long way in developing one's classroom skills. Conversation is regarded as a skill requiring the speaker to generate speech that is acceptable in both content and form. Speakers learn to facilitate ease in the oral production of speech in many ways and the instructor must plan communication strategies to deal with conversation difficulties.

Promoting Learners' Speaking Ability by Socioaffective Strategies

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This paper aims to point out the efficiency of socioaffective strategies on Asian students' speaking competence. This paper outlines the level of strategy use by language learners and particularly emphasizes on the use of socioaffective strategies that language learners frequently overlook. By adapting the five phases of the CALLA instructional sequence (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Chamot et al., 1999, as cited in Chamot, 1999), the paper illustrates a useful way for language learners especially Asian learners and teachers to know how to make good use of socioaffective strategies in promoting speaking ability.

Introduction

Language learning strategies are broadly conceptualized as cognitive, metacognitive, and socioaffective strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990). Students consciously or unconsciously employ language learning strategies in language learning. Nevertheless, a number of research studies (Chamot & Küpper, 1989; Goh & Kwah, 1997) have discovered that students rarely utilize socioaffective strategies. These studies provide the evidence that learners overlook the efficiency of socioaffective strategies (Chamot & Küpper, 1989; Goh & Kwah, 1997).

All too often, language learners neglect the effectiveness of socioaffective strategies. Therefore, the integration of socioaffective strategies into classes should be taken into serious consideration. The paper stresses on those following issues:

- What effective applications can language teachers integrate socioaffective strategies into classes in order to promote Asian students' speaking ability?
- What useful implications can language learners and teachers employ when using language learning strategies in language learning?

The Efficiency of Socioaffective Strategies for Asian Students in the ESL Environment

Learning how to speak English fluently and accurately is always a grand task for Asian students who study abroad. Due to the significance of interaction between the instructor and students, students and students at U.S. education institutions, speaking competence can hardly be overvalued. However, because of the limitation of speaking competence and the influence by Confucianism, some Asian students are not inclined to express opinions in class, some appear conservative and uncomfortable, and seldom ask questions that they do not understand (Brice & Roseberry-Mackibbin, 1999; Lim, 2003). In other words, influenced by Confucianism, students tend to value quietness, and be less opinioned (Lim, 2003, p.1). Commonly, they rarely ask questions even though they do not understand the content that the instructor lectures, and they seldom express their own opinions (Lim, 2003). Lack of asking questions and expressing opinions for opportunities for Asian students is inferred.
Fourthly, giving Asian students chances to evaluate the usefulness of socioaffective strategies is critical in this stage. Asian students need to feel comfortable in English and practice their English-speaking skills. The teacher can have relaxed conversations with Asian students to understand the difficulties they encounter. This stage is to encourage Asian students to have an individual meeting with the teacher. During the meeting, the teacher can teach learners to try to relax when they are afraid of speaking English. Meanwhile, the teacher can explain and help learners know how to use each strategy in a given situation (Chamot, 1999). For example, learners can lower anxiety by using some mental techniques and solve problems through teacher-student or peer interactions (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990). Therefore, socioaffective strategies can be regarded as a useful approach for Asian learners to accelerate their speaking competence and vigorously interact with native speakers and instructors in the ESL classroom.

Researchers (O’Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, & Küpper, 1989, as cited in Chamot, 1993) have studied the results of language learning strategies that were taught to English as a second language (ESL) learners in numerous different tasks, including vocabulary, listening, and speaking tasks. The outcomes of the studies reveal that language learning strategies are primarily of benefit for the speaking task (Chamot, 1993). It is patently attainable for learners to accomplish the goal of communicative competence in the target L2 by language learning strategies. Additionally, Bialystock (1978) recognizes that when learners communicate in the target L2, they can consciously apply language learning strategies in order to deal with the difficulties they encounter.

As commonly accepted, socioaffective strategies are the strategies that help learners regulate and control emotions, motivations, and attitudes towards learning, as well as help learners learn through contact and interaction with others (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990). For example, by means of socioaffective strategies, language learners can lower anxiety by using some mental techniques and solve problems through teacher-student or peer interactions (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990). Therefore, socioaffective strategies can be regarded as a useful approach for Asian learners to accelerate their speaking competence and vigorously interact with native speakers and instructors in the ESL classroom.

Various researchers have devoted themselves to identifying the strategies used by students. Some researchers (Chamot & Küpper, 1989) assert that the cognitive strategies are the most frequently used strategy. Meanwhile, learners apply far fewer metacognitive than cognitive strategies, and seldom employ socioaffective strategies. Some researchers (Goh & Kwah, 1997) report high use of metacognitive strategies and low use of socioaffective strategies; in other words, students frequently employ metacognitive strategies in language learning and rarely utilize socioaffective strategies. The previous research studies have shown a consistent perspective that language learners tend not to use socioaffective strategies in language learning.

Those previous research studies tell us that language learners are apt to use confined learning strategies and socioaffective strategies are frequently overlooked by learners. Consequently, the paper aims to provide Asian students and language teachers with an effective way to successfully promote speaking competence by means of socioaffective strategies.

Applications and Recommendations for Language Teachers and Learners

In order to help students recognize the value of socioaffective strategies, assist Asian students to improve their speaking competence, and stimulate Asian students’ motivation to master their speaking competence, educators can constantly carry out the strategy research and integrate socioaffective strategies into class instruction (Lacina, 2001). There are five phases that the teacher and learners can follow (adapted from the five phases of the CALLA instructional sequence, Chamot & O’Malley, 1994; Chamot et al., 1999, as cited in Chamot, 1993).

Firstly, the teacher needs to diagnose learners’ level of strategy use. The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL, Oxford, 1990, p.293-300) questionnaire can be utilized to determine learners’ use of language learning strategies because questionnaires are “cost-effective and easy to administer” (McDonough, 2001, p.2). In these previous research studies, the results show that students seldom use socioaffective strategies. Therefore, the particular attention is needed for the teacher to notice whether learners neglect of utilizing socioaffective strategies.

Secondly, the teacher can offer learners knowledge to know the characteristics, effectiveness, and applications of socioaffective strategies. In this stage, it is essential for the teacher to present each strategy with a specific explanation and help learners know how to use each strategy in a given situation (Chamot, 1999). For example, the teacher can teach learners to try to relax when they are afraid of speaking English. Meanwhile, the teacher is supposed to “weave strategy into regular classroom events in a natural, and comfortable way” (Oxford, 1996, p.39, as cited in McDonough, 2001) and create the supportive and encouraging environment for language learners.

Thirdly, in order to offer hands-on practice for Asian students to use socioaffective strategies, collaborative works with classmates are effective in this phase (Chamot, 1999). The teacher assigns students into several small groups consisting of at least one native speaker. Learners in each group can exchange opinions of different cultures, share their learning experiences, as well as complete a certain task. Another application in this stage is to encourage Asian students to have an individual meeting with the teacher. During the meeting, the teacher can have relaxed conversations with Asian students and try to understand the difficulties they encounter while studying abroad. The teacher provides opportunities for Asian students to express their feelings in English and to practice their English-speaking skills that are the powerful ways in which to accomplish the use of socioaffective strategies.

Fourthly, giving Asian students chances to evaluate the usefulness of socioaffective strategies is critical in this
Asian students know how to make good use of socioaffective strategies in both the ESL classroom environment. Socioaffective strategies should be fully integrated into classroom contexts and everyday learning. Only when they are treated as a long-term instruction can they effectively help learners to stimulate their motivation to master English-speaking competence. Language teachers can provide Asian students with practical practice and reinforcement of the use of socioaffective strategies (Kinoshita, 2003), such as co-operating with classmates, encouraging oneself with a reward when performing well in speaking English, and asking questions in English. Language learners can integrate socioaffective strategies not only in the classroom contexts but also in everyday life (Chamot, 1999). Looking for opportunities to have conversations with native speakers, learners can utilize socioaffective strategies whenever they speak English even without the teachers’ supervision.

Applications for Language Teachers and Learners

First, a practical implication is that Asian students are supposed to know how to use a wide variety of language learning strategies, as well as understand how to use language learning strategies flexibly. Language learners need to use different and times of socioaffective strategies. Language teachers need to ask students to use those effective socioaffective strategies in the classroom contexts and in daily life as well. Obviously, it takes time for language learners to know how to successfully incorporate socioaffective strategies in language learning. Language teachers need to give language learning strategy instruction patiently, and learners are required to use the strategy consistently. It is hoped that learners can utilize socioaffective strategies whenever they speak English even without the teachers’ supervision.

Second, another implication is that applying language learning strategies in the language classrooms should be treated as a long-term instruction. There is no positive variation between learners’ speaking competence and the use of socioaffective strategies in a short period of the treatment. The successful acquisition of the speaking competence can be achieved only on condition that language teachers give the strategy use instruction patiently, and learners employ socioaffective strategies continuously.

Finally yet importantly, special efforts should be concentrated on helping improve Asian students’ motivation to learn English-speaking competence. Language teachers can provide Asian students with practical practice and reinforcement of the use of socioaffective strategies (Kinoshita, 2003), such as co-operating with classmates and teachers. These activities increase learners’ motivation and efforts to master English-speaking competence. Language learners can integrate socioaffective strategies not only in the classroom contexts but also in everyday life (Chamot, 1999). In order to encourage students to depend more on themselves instead of the teacher, the teacher needs to ask students to use those effective socioaffective strategies in the classroom contexts and in daily life as well. Obviously, it takes time for learners to know how to successfully incorporate socioaffective strategies in language learning. Language teachers need to give language learning strategy instruction patiently, and learners are required to use the strategy consistently. It is hoped that learners can utilize socioaffective strategies whenever they speak English even without the teachers’ supervision.

Conclusion

For promoting English ability, receiving higher education, and developing the international perspectives, the population of Asian students has increased steadily in American colleges and universities recently. It is clear that Asian students have much anxiety and pressure while studying abroad (Parr et al., 1992). According to many research studies (Parr & Yoon, 1992), international students with higher language proficiency can adjust to the foreign environment more easily. Therefore, how to advance learners’ language proficiency has always been a major mission in the profession of TESOL.

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From this article, it is obvious that socioaffective strategies can be considered as an effective approach to accommodate Asian learners’ speaking competence as well as their learning motivation. Both language teachers and learners are supposed to evaluate whether socioaffective strategies are being overused or not. Moreover, socioaffective strategies should be fully integrated into classroom contexts and everyday learning. Only when Asian students know who to make good use of socioaffective strategies in both the ESL classroom environment and everyday life, they can effectively help learners to stimulate their motivation to master English-speaking competence.

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Rationales

Learners’ success in folding an origami and performing a magic trick is basically attributed to their comprehension of the text that contains the folding and performing instruction. The value of this attribute is two-fold. First, the teacher can assess learners’ language learning by examining their visible outcome (i.e. final origami product and successful trick performance). Second, such activities readily lend themselves to task-based instruction. Task-based instruction emphasizes communication, negotiation of meaning, collaboration, and use of the language as a means to an end (Shrum & Glisan, 2005). While the end is the origami and trick outcome, the means is the process of engaging with the target language to comprehend the origami and trick instruction and negotiate meanings with teachers and other learners.

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perform to the others and have them discuss with their group members how to execute the trick.

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**Some Pedagogical Ideas**

**Origami**

Basic origami materials needed for a language class include a visual (i.e. a series of pictures showing how to fold an origami) and written and verbal origami instruction. For low level or young learners, the teacher provides both the visual and instruction text to learners. The teacher can pre-teach difficult words before an origami activity by either explaining or demonstrating action of the difficult words. To explain the phrase “accordion fold”, I would fold a paper into an accordion shape in front of my learners and invite them to follow to make sure that they understand. Select words with a focus to help learners comprehend the instruction text. Pre-teaching difficult words and the visual are scaffolds for low-level learners. To make an origami task challenging for higher level learners, the teacher can remove the visual, and ask the learners to develop the visual from the instruction text given in pairs or groups.

To focus on writing, the teacher provides a visual on which learners base their origami instruction writing. Different groups may have different visuals and produce different sets of instruction. Each group tries an origami instruction different from their own. The teacher can pre-teach key words.

When the learners are familiar with origami activities, the teacher can ask the learners to learn an origami folding from their families, relatives, or friends, and produce a set of instructions for other learners.

**Magic Tricks**

Last summer I introduced two card tricks to a class of mine. Due to complexity of the tricks and text, this lesson is for intermediate and upper intermediate learners. The instruction text for the tricks is in the appendix.

First, I pre-taught such words as “spade”, “club”, “diamond”, “heart”, “shuffle”, “cut”, “pick” by using a deck of cards. I wrote those words on the whiteboard. I showed different cards especially picture cards and called out their names. I also performed actions (i.e. shuffle) related to the verbs I was teaching. I checked their comprehension by showing some cards and performing some actions and asking some students to name the cards and provide the verbs for the actions.

I split the class into two groups. Each group held a secret of their trick. Each group received an instruction text of their trick. They discussed the trick and rehearsed the trick. I would facilitate any member who had difficulty. Discussion was effective with a group of 4 or 5 students. Then each member from one group was paired with a member from another group. One learner in the pair performed his or her trick while the other either paid attention or took note of steps taken by the trick performer. At the end, learners in each pair shared their secret behind their trick. Each learner wrote down the instruction they learned from his or her pair member. Their writing would be collected for assessment. The first card trick (see the appendix) even allowed learners to create and narrate their own story related to the trick to divert spectators’ attention from their secret.

**Resources**

Some free online resources of origami activities and magic tricks can be found in the following websites.

http://www.tammyyee.com/origami.html

Tammy Yee’s Origami Page provides numerous origami activities including textual instruction, visuals, and pages formatted with crease patterns ready to be printed. Each activity is assigned to a difficulty level. Origami projects are also organized into three categories: nature, holidays, and multicultural. Every month new origami projects are added into the database. Everything is free.

http://dev.origami.com/diagram.cfm

This is a huge origami database. The website has a search and a filter mechanism that filters origami models based on the difficulty level chosen. Many of its origami models are not suitable for young or low level learners. Its complexity may be appealing to adult and advanced learners. It is also free for all visitors, and the database keeps growing.

http://www.origamitube.com

http://www.videojug.com/

These sites contain videos of how to make origami shapes. For teachers who love incorporating short video
Hints into their instruction, these sites are their love. For the videojug.com, teachers need to type keyword origami to get a list of related videos. This site contains quality videos that are downloadable once you sign up as a member for free.

http://www.kidzone.ws/magic/index.htm

This website contains a dozen of free magic tricks for school children. Its easy trick instructions are suitable for English learners in many levels. Most tricks involve easy-to-find objects such as cards and coins. The instruction is usually short and thus stimulating.

http://kids.mysterynet.com/magic/

This site has several simple magic tricks with moderately long instruction but with simple words. There are also pictures to help illustrate the tricks.

http://www.cardtricksite.com/tricks.htm

This site has a wonderful collection of card tricks organized in neat categories. Teachers may find easy trick categories useful for their lessons, but other categories are also worth exploring.

References


Appendix

Card Trick 1

All card Jacks, Queens, Kings, and Aces are used in this trick. The cards are arranged in four columns based on a story. The order of each column should be a Jack, Queen, King, and Ace. Each column is collected and placed on one another to form a deck. The deck now is placed on a table. The audience is invited to cut the deck as many times as they want. Then cards are dealt in four piles so that each pile will have four cards. The effect is that all the four cards in each pile belong to the same kind (e.g. all Aces).

How does it work? The story is intended to distract the audience’s attention from the order of cards arranged in four columns. The story can be made up to match the interest of the audience. One excellent example is that one day four young men (four Jacks) had a party, but when the party became boring, they invited four young women (Queens) to join. As the party was still boring, they invited four older male friends who were outspoken (Kings) to join the party. However the party got loud and the neighbors called the police. Four police officers (Aces) came to the party and took the party goers to the police station in four cars. When narrating, first place Jacks in four different locations (Each Jack will be the first card of each column). Queens, Kings, and Aces are handled in the same way so that each column should contain in order a Jack, Queen, King and Ace. Pile the columns on one another to form a deck.

Ask the audience to cut the deck. No matter how many times the audience cut the deck on the table, the order of the cards should always be Jack, Queen, King, and Ace. When dealt into four piles, the cards will always go into their group: All Jacks, Queens, Kings, and Aces. Cutting the deck on the table, the audience has control on the deck and is not suspicious of the order of the cards believing that random cut will jeopardize the order, which contributes to amazement of the trick effect.

Card Trick 2

Two cards are picked out by the magician from a fan of cards. While picking out the cards, the magician looks at the audience’s eyes as if he or she were reading the audience’s mind. In this example, the two cards to be chosen for the effect to happen are the Nine Spade and the Three Club. The two cards match in number with the top and bottom card in the deck, the top being Nine Club and the bottom being Three Heart in this example. This is the secret of the trick. The magician places the two cards face-up on the table. Then he or she places the rest of the deck card by card (from the top to bottom of the deck) on the table and tells the audience to stop him from doing this whenever the audience wants. When stopped, the magician places the Three Club face-up on top of the pile on the table and then places the deck in hand on that pile. The secret is that the Three Heart (the bottom card of the deck in hand) meets the Three Club. The magician then collects all the cards and places the cards one by one on the table once more. The audience is invited to stop him whenever the audience wants. When stopped, he places Nine Spade face-up on top of the pile on the table and then places the deck in hand on that pile. The secret is that the Nine Spade meets Nine Club. And then the magician hands the deck on the table to the audience who will shuffle or cut the deck. After that, the magician searches for the pairs, places the pairs on the table, and turn the cards face-up. To the audience’s amazement, the cards match with the two cards picked out in number.
Motivation and Motivating in the Foreign Language Classroom

Introduction

In this paper, we will briefly examine a variety of techniques, strategies and macrostrategies which teachers can employ in order to motivate their students. As Dornyei (2001: 116) notes, “teacher skills in motivating learners should be seen as central to teaching effectiveness.” Even though there have been a lot of education-oriented publications providing taxonomies of classroom-specific motives, they fall short of offering an efficient guide to practitioners. Thus, our main goal is to familiarize any putative “practitioners” with a set of techniques and strategies (henceforward, “motivational strategies”) for motivating foreign language students.

Power in the Classroom

Prior to presenting some of these motivational strategies, it would be of relevance to say a few things about the teacher / learner relationship. Whichever way we look at it, this relationship is riddled with power and status. Power plays a large part in the relationship, as Language and Power in Education further explains. The rights and duties of teachers and learners are related to power. For example, many teachers might assert that they have the right to punish those learners who misbehave. In any social encounter involving two or more people, there are different power relationships which are similar analysis asymmetrical (Wright, 1997: 179). Social psychologists distinguish between three different types of power: coercive, reward-based and referent. The basis of coercive power is punishment. Some individuals or institutions have the authority to punish others. The basis of the second type of power is reward. Some individuals or institutions have the power to reward what they deem appropriate behaviour. For example, business organizations reward employees with a salary, a bonus etc. The basis of the third type of power is motivation. In this case, individuals or institutions appeal to the commitment and interest of others. In view of this three-fold paradigm, it is of importance to concern ourselves with the fostering of learner motivation, as it is considered to be the most effective and proactive, so to speak, power relationship.

Group Processes and Motivation

A discussion of motivation and motivational strategies would not be complete without a consideration of group processes, although as there is usually a group of people that we as teachers are called on to motivate, common classroom problems are big. First, we shall explain that a group, even though it goes through four stages from its formation, has important implications for the study of the classroom and the use of group activities during teaching.

- **Stage 1 Forming**: At first, there is some anxiety among the members of the group, as they are dependent on the leader (that is, the teacher) and they have to find out what behaviour is acceptable.
- **Stage 2 Storming**: There is conflict between sub-groups and rebellion against the leader. Members of the group resist their leader and the role relations attending the function of the group are questioned.
- **Stage 3 Norming**: The group begins to develop a sort of cohesion. Members of the group begin to support each other. At this stage, there is co-operation and open exchange of views and feelings about their roles and each other.
- **Stage 4 Performing**: Most problems are resolved and there is a great deal of interpersonal activity. Everyone is devoted to completing the tasks they have been assigned.

Experience shows that almost every group goes through these four (or even more) stages until it reaches equilibrium and, thus, taps into its potential. In reality, this process may go on forever, since student lethargy and underachievement norms in the classroom are considered to be basic tendencies to ineffective teaching and learning (Ganik, 1994). Against this background, we will try to design a framework for motivational strategies.

A Framework for Motivational Strategies

As we have already said, skill in motivating students to learn is of paramount importance. Until recently, however, teachers were forced to rely on “bag-of-tricks” approaches in their attempt to manage their classroom and motivate their learners. Good and Brophy (1994: 212) hold that these approaches have been influenced by two contradictory views:

1. That learning should be fun and that any motivation problems that may appear should be ascribed to the
teacher’s attempt to convert an enjoyable activity to drudgery; and
b) that school activities are inherently boring and unrewarding, so that we must rely on extrinsic rewards and punishment with a view to forcing students to engage in these unpleasant tasks.

Rewards and punishments may be a mainstay of the teaching-learning process, but they are not the only tools teachers’ arsenal. Dornyei (2001: 129) believes that the spectrum of extrinsic motivational strategies is so broad that it is hard to imagine that none of them would work.

The central question in designing a framework of motivational strategies is to decide how to organise them into separate themes. The following taxonomy, around which our main discussion will revolve, is based on the process-oriented model by Dornyei and Otto (1998): The key units in this taxonomy are as follows:

- Creating the basic motivational conditions, which involves setting the scene for the use of motivational strategies;
- Generating student motivation, which roughly corresponds to the preactional phase in the model;
- Maintaining and protecting motivation, which corresponds to the actional phase;
- Encouraging positive self-evaluation, which corresponds to the postactional phase

Creating the Basic Motivational Conditions

Motivational strategies cannot work in a vacuum. There are certain preconditions to be met before any attempts to generate motivation can be effective. Some of these conditions are the following:

- a) appropriate teacher behaviour and good teacher-student rapport;
- b) a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere;
- c) a cohesive learner group characterised by appropriate group norms

Appropriate Teacher Behaviour and Good Teacher-student Rapport

It is good to remember that a tense classroom climate can undermine learning and demotivate learners (see Auh 1998 and Young 1998 for further details). On the other hand, learner motivation will reach its peak in a relaxed and supportive classroom climate in which students can express their opinions and feel that they do not run the risk of being ridiculed.

To be motivated to learn, students need both ample opportunities to learn and steady encouragement and support of their learning efforts. Because such motivation is unlikely to develop in a chaotic classroom, it is important that the teacher arrange and manage the classroom as an effective learning environment.

Furthermore, because anxious or alienated students are unlikely to develop motivation to learn, it is important that learning occurs within a relaxed and supportive atmosphere (Goot and Brophy, 1994: 215).

It stands to reason that a learner’s motivation is further influenced by extrinsic factors as well. In other words, teacher behaviour is a powerful motivational tool (Dornyei 2001: 129). Teacher influences are manifold, ranging from verbal to non-verbal, both in support with the students to teacher behaviour which ‘prevails upon’ and ‘attracts’ students to engage in tasks. For Albon (1998), a key element is to establish a relationship of mutual trust and respect with the learners, by means of talking with them on a personal level. This mutual trust could lead to enthusiasm. At any rate, enthusiastic teachers impart a sense of commitment to, and interest in, the subject matter, not only verbally but also non-verbally—thus that students take from them about how to behave.

A Pleasant and Supportive Classroom Atmosphere

According to Evans (1999: 42), it has been noted above that ‘fragmented groups, characterised as lack of cooperativeness, can easily become ineffective, thus reducing the individual members’ commitment to learn. There are several factors that promote group cohesiveness, such as the time spent together and shared group history, learning about each other, interaction, intergroup competition, common threat, active presence of the leader [ ] (see Ehrman and Dornyei 1998: 142).

For group norms, they should be discussed and adopted by members in order to be constructive and long-lasting. If a norm mandated by a teacher fails to be accepted as proper by the majority of the class members, it will not become a group norm.

Generating Student Motivation

Ideally, all learners exhibit an inborn curiosity to explore the world, so they are likely to find the learning experience instrinsically pleasant. In reality, however, this ‘curiosity’ is weakened by such inexorable factors as compulsory school attendance, curriculum content and grades—most importantly, the premium placed on them.

Accordingly, unless teachers increase their learners’ goal-orientedness, make curriculum relevant for them, and create realistic learner panels, they will come up against a classroom environment fraught with lack of cohesiveness and rebellion.

Increasing the Learners’ Goal-Orientedness

That some classes mean, if not most, students do not understand why they are involved in an activity. It may be the case that the goal set by outsiders (i.e., the teacher or the curriculum) is far from being accepted by the group members. Thus, it would seem beneficial to increase the group’s goal-orientedness, that is, the extent to which the group tunes in to the pursuit of its official goal. This could be achieved by allowing students to define their own personal visions for what should be a group goal.

Making the Curriculum Relevant for the Learners
grades are 'the ultimate embodiment of school rewards, providing a single index for judging overall success, doing what little teachers can, and we need to disappoint them. Therefore, it is important to help learners get rid of these preconceived notions that they want to hinder their attachment. To this end, teachers need to develop an understanding of the nature of second language learning, and should be cognizant of the fact that the mastery of L2 can be achieved in different ways. Using a diversity of strategies; and a key factor is for learners to discover for themselves the optimal methods and techniques.

Increasing Learner Satisfaction

We will only briefly discuss the third one.

Increasing Learner Autonomy

Many educators and researchers (Benson, 2000; Little, 1991; Wenden, 1991; also see my article, 'What is Learner Autonomy and How can I foster it?' in Dornyei, 2001: 131) distinguish between two types of practice fostering the development of autonomy: a) increasing the learners' self-confidence; and b) creating learner autonomy.

Maintaining and Protecting Motivation

In an inherently face-threatening context, as the language classroom is likely to be, it is important to find out how to maintain and increase the learners' self-confidence. There are five approaches that purport to help to do this and (Dornyei, 2001: 130):

- Teachers can foster the belief that competence is a changeable aspect of development.
- Favourable self-conceptions of L2 competence can be promoted by providing regular experiences of success.
- A small personal word of encouragement is sufficient.
- Teachers can reduce classroom anxiety by making the learning context less stressful.

Creating Learner Autonomy

Learner control over the planning and evaluation of learning to the curriculum as a whole.

Promoting and Protecting Motivation

Research has shown that the way learners feel about their accomplishments and the amount of satisfaction they experience after task completion will determine how teachers approach and tackle subsequent learning tasks. By employing appropriate strategies, the latter can help learners to evaluate themselves in a positive light, encouraging them to take credit for their advances. Dornyei (2001: 131) presents three areas of such strategies:

- resource-based approaches, which emphasise independent interaction with learning materials
- technology-based approaches, which emphasise independent interaction with educational technologies
- learner-based approaches, which emphasise the direct production of behavioural and psychological changes in the learner
- classroom-based approaches, which emphasise changes in the relationship between learners and teachers in the classroom
- curriculum-based approaches, which extend the idea of learner control over the planning and evaluation of learning to the curriculum as a whole.
Comment

There is also a wide assortment of microstrategies used to foster motivation, but we will not dwell on them (see Dornyei, 2001: 137-40 for more details).

Conclusion

In general, motivation is the “neglected heart” of our understanding of how to design instruction (Keller, 1983 quoted in Dornyei, 2001: 116). Many teachers believe that by sticking to the language materials and trying to acquire their students’ students, they will manage to create a classroom atmosphere that will be conducive to learning. Nevertheless, these teachers seem to lose sight of the fact that unless they accept their students’ personalities and work on those minute details that constitute their social and psychological make-up, they will not be able to motivate them. What is more, they will not be able to form a cohesive and coherent group. Unless they succeed in turning most curriculum goals into group goals, they will not be able to form a cohesive and coherent group, unless they succeed in turning most curriculum goals into group goals, goals accepted by the group members, that is, students. Learning a foreign language is different to learning other subjects. Therefore, language teaching should take account of a variety of factors that are likely to promote, or even militate against, success. Language is part of one’s identity and is used to convey this identity to others. As a result, foreign language learning has a significant impact on the social being of the learner, since it involves the acquisition of new social and cultural behaviours and ways of thinking.

References

Introduction

In Japan, team teaching with a native English teacher and a Japanese teacher has become a common way of conducting EFL classes in high schools and junior high schools. However, not all team teaching relationships are as satisfactory as they should be. So, what is the best way to create a good team teaching relationship between the Assistant Language Teachers (ALT) and Japanese teachers? Here are some ideas you can try.

Step 1: Exchange Emails

1. Contact the other to make sure both teaching partners understand the curriculum and the specific goal of the upcoming classes. If you are a Japanese teacher, email the ALT at least a day before the class to describe the expected learning outcomes and the lesson plan. Leave the lesson plan flexible enough to incorporate any ideas the ALT may have.
2. If you are an ALT, don’t hesitate to send an email first to ask information about the upcoming lesson. By exchanging ideas before the lesson, both of you are actively working to create a co-participant stance that will help foster a more satisfactory approach to cooperative class management.

Step 2: Talk for Five Minutes Before Class

1. As an ALT or a Japanese teacher, bring your ideas along with the lesson plan to school. Take five minutes to talk to each other before class. You can ask the following questions:
   a. What are the students expected to achieve through today’s class?
   b. What kinds of activities are they going to do? Are the materials suitable for today’s lesson?
   c. What are the specific roles of each member of the teaching team?
2. If you are an ALT, you can offer your ideas to the Japanese teacher by using phrases such as:
   a. I like your idea of doing a dialogue in class, but what do you think if...
   b. I have brought some materials with me; I think they will help the students to acquire some expressions while playing these games.
3. If you are a Japanese teacher, try to avoid giving requests directly, such as “Please read the paragraph” or “Please ask the students questions,” because these can sound like direct orders, which might make the ALT feel like he or she is being treated as a CD player. Instead, you can use implicit methods such as a gaze or body language to invite the other to take the next action, or you can just wait to offer your teaching partner a chance to take active actions. An experienced ALT will have the ability to judge when to commence an activity and when to take action. If you really need to prompt the other teacher, try using phrases such as “Jenny, would you like to say that in English with us?” or “Matthew, can we get you to show us how to make that sound?” This will help the ALT feel like a valued member of the team. Framing your directions as requests or invitations will also provide the students with important pragmatic awareness.

If you work as an ALT, display your trust of the Japanese teacher through actively participating in the class. Don’t act as a robot waiting for orders. Observe the class to see where and what kind of action needs to be taken. Remember good cooperation is co-established through how you perform in the class.

Step 3: Display Your Trust

1. Conduct conversations, usually, there is a ten-minute break. Of course you should choose to be by yourself during this time, but you can also use these ten minutes as a great opportunity to establish a closer rapport with your student.
Here are some topics you could use.

Talk about what is happening in the classes.

Class related topics contain at least two advantages. First, reflecting on the class can help you come up with ways to modify the lesson plan, as well as promote cooperation for the coming class. Second, talking about something you have in common can establish a sense of membership, which therefore creates better teamwork.

Talk about culture or language related topics.

As a native speaker of either English or Japanese, you might find that there are some interesting aspects of your teaching partner’s way of life that he or she can teach you about. For ALTs, this can be an important way of getting to know about the world around you. For Japanese teachers, talking about the ALT’s home country can broaden your knowledge of English teaching cultures.

Talk about hobbies or interests.

Hobbies such as listening to music or watching movies can be used as resources in the classroom conversations. The more information you know about each other, the more resources you can apply to teaching.

Well-chosen topics will help establish a closer rapport with each other, and therefore it will foster a better atmosphere of cooperation. The more familiar you are with each other, the better and more effective the lesson will be.

Step 5: After Class, Write Your Reflections

After the class, take two minutes to write down your reflections about the lesson. It could be observations, thoughts or feelings, anything about the class. If you think the team teaching didn’t go well, try to think about where you felt it needed work, or about when the other person seemed uncomfortable and why. Send emails to your teaching partner to discuss the class. Express your ideas honestly but politely. Respecting each other’s job and being sensitive to that about teaching partner will result in the establishment of an effective teaching team.

Conclusion

These five steps are practical tips. The most important thing is to remember that a good cooperation is co-established through interactions both in and out of the class. Employing your own and being sensitive to that about teaching partner will result in the establishment of an effective teaching team.

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A Role Play Activity with Distance Learners in an English Language Classroom

Filed under: articles related to English language teaching — Leave a comment

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Introduction

In recent years, language teaching has focused on the learning process rather than the teaching of the language. The emphasis is not only on linguistic competence of the language learners but also on the development of their communicative ability. In order to develop the learners’ communicative ability, the teacher needs to create a scenario to teach the target language in a vibrant, active and interesting manner.

Thus, extended activities in the form of role play, simulations and problem solving are vital in developing the communicative ability of the learners. These activities require students to go beyond the text, which require the students to have a sound understanding of a text and be able to apply their knowledge outside the classroom and their own experiences into the activities.

According to Crockett and Cutler (1980), there is little consensus on the terms used in the role playing and simulation literature. A few of the terms often used interchangeably are: simulation, games, role play simulation, game, and role play simulation, role playing game.
What is a Role Play?

Brian Freeman (1986) explains that role plays, whether structured or unstructured, are important in the communicative approach because they give learners an opportunity to practice communicating in different social contexts and in different social roles.

Role play is a highly flexible learning activity which has a wide scope for variation and imagination. According to Freeman (1986), role plays use different communication techniques and strategies to enhance interaction in the classroom and increase motivation. Here peer learning is encouraged and sharing of responsibility between teacher and learners.

One of the requirements of the English Language Proficiency course offered to distance learners at the National University of Malaysia is to make the course as close as possible to the courses offered to students on-campus in terms of course content and evaluations. English for Social Sciences is based on a study guide which wraps around the text Global Views by M.E. Sokolik. The course is designed to equip learners with integrated skills in English to enable them to cope with language requirements in the academic and work environment.

The role play was chosen as one of the tasks in the course to create a situation for the learners to actively interact in the language, thereby making the language learning more meaningful. At the same time, the learners are introduced to the different learning styles—listening, remembering, discussing, writing and presenting.

The purpose of this study is to provide an opportunity for learners to practice a real-life situation. It was also appropriate for role play because it involved many personalities thus allowing the learners to assume those roles. The topic chosen was good as it highlighted social issues.

The teacher's role in giving clear instructions was equally important. The learners were asked to get into groups of five and choose a leader for each group. All the reports were given to the leaders who assigned individual roles to each group member. They were asked to improvise the message in the reports which were not too structured and to find a structure that fits into a real-life situation.

In the end of the activity, the teacher conducted a session to get feedback from the learners on their participation. This is important for any activity-based learning as it helps to reinforce the aim and purpose of the activity. Besides that, learners develop awareness and confidence in their own ability and learning strategies.

The role play in this distance learning class allows the objectives of the course to be met in the limited time through an integrated approach which allows the practice of language skills, content and interaction skills and strategies.

Individual work such as task-based activities may hamper or minimize communication among the learners. Full-time students in normal classes who have plenty of contact hours for teacher-student consultation may not face such problems.

The role play in this distance learning class allows the objectives of the course to be met in the limited time through an integrated approach which allows the practice of language skills, content and interaction skills and strategies.

The teacher had chosen this issue to provide an opportunity for the learners to practice a real-life situation. It was also appropriate for role play because it involved many personalities thus allowing the learners to assume those roles. The topic chosen was good as it highlighted social issues. The learners' role in giving clear instructions was equally important. The learners were asked to get into groups of five and choose a leader for each group. All the reports were given to the leaders who assigned individual roles to each group member. They were asked to improvise the message in the reports which were not too structured and to find a structure that fits into a real-life situation.

In the end of the activity, the teacher conducted a session to get feedback from the learners on their participation. This is important for any activity-based learning as it helps to reinforce the aim and purpose of the activity. Besides that, learners develop awareness and confidence in their own ability and learning strategies. (Refer to Appendix A for additional information on the role play.)


The activity was explained and short role descriptions were provided. The amount of time for the role play was negotiated. For the purpose of obtaining feedback from the learners, the teacher recorded what the learners said at two different times. From their feedback, the teacher started explaining the role play and the procedure to the class. The learners' feedback was recorded for the second time after the presentation. Besides recording, casual interviews were conducted with the learners in order to allow them to reflect on their presentation.

Learners' Feedback was divided into three categories: the preparation stage, the presentation stage, and the learners' overall impression regarding the activity.

**Preparation Stage**

The majority of the learners stated that the activity created the atmosphere that encouraged the reading of the reports carefully although the issue did not interest them earlier when they saw it in the newspaper. They were compelled to look out for certain difficult words in the article in order to prepare for the role play.

In the early stages of the role play, the learners were uncomfortable and uncertain. This led to initial lapses of silence. Soon they began helping each other to decide who should speak. Towards the end, their shyness left them and they began prompting each other with ideas.

If not for this activity, they would not have found out much about this particular issue. Some learners said that this activity gave them a chance to do group work and allowed much free interaction especially to clarify the meanings of difficult words. They enjoyed working together and took pride in their roles and wanted to give their best. The learners said that they developed confidence in making the necessary adjustments to the report as they went along. This activity also set the stage for them to interact more with the teacher as they kept asking a lot of questions to ensure they were on the right track.

**Presentation Stage**

The learners attempted to perform a real life talk show. Throughout the presentation, they showed enthusiasm and a sense of fairness — listening to others in the group to express their views. Some learners were seen taking down notes, perhaps to be better prepared in handling their turn. They also played their role as the audience by following and giving their opinion at the end of the presentation. In doing so, their interest was heightened and the likelihood of remembering the language skills being introduced was strengthened. They spoke more and more unselfconsciously as they progressed, not fearing that they made mistakes with grammar.

**Post-Presentation Stage**

A post-mortem was held with the learners and they were given the opportunity to give their views and opinion of the activity. Such comments and criticisms can help the teachers to prepare better future activities in other classes.

- **Comments given by learners when the role play was explained by the teacher:**
  - It would create chaos in the class. The class would be too noisy.
  - We don't understand the issue that much. How are we going to play a real life situation?
  - To take part in a role play is meant for students who can speak well. The weaker ones will be too shy to even contribute their ideas.
  - How could we act like farmers?
  - We may use too many Malaysian words.

- **Comments given by learners after the role play:**
  - We enjoyed ourselves trying to be someone else.
  - I felt closer with my group members and I realized that by working in groups I learn better.
  - I gained more confidence to take part in such activities in future.
  - My English was not bad after all.
  - This activity made me realize the importance of reading.
  - I think I needed more time to prepare for this role play.

**Some Reflections**

The main problem faced by the distance learners was the inability to express ideas due to lack of proficiency in the language. However, the strong points noted were that such activities helped the learners increase communicative skills, encourage participation, change the attitudes towards language learning and above all motivated them to regularly work with others in the classroom. These adult learners given more time for preparation and practice can without doubt improve their performance.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study focused on distance learners whose contact hours with their instructors were limited. The analysis of the feedback has enabled the researcher to some extent to establish the learners' language needs. Video recordings would have further helped to validate both the observations made and the feedback.

**Conclusion**

Although at the beginning the learners had doubts and lacked confidence, the activity was successful in achieving its aims. We want our learners to gain fluency and accuracy in the oral presentation. Being accurate does not mean using structures and vocabulary correctly, but saying the right things in the right place, at the right time.
right time. Nunan (1989) describes the communicative tasks as a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form—manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language.

It is crucial for us as teachers to think and plan what should be done to stimulate and facilitate the use of spoken English for academic purposes effectively, when making oral presentation, participating in discussions and in a variety of other classroom situations. We need to think of what kind of approaches can be created for distance learners to participate actively in class and how to successfully achieve the needs especially of the weaker learners who have limited face-to-face interaction.

Language teaching can be an interesting challenge when teachers make the effort to explore a variety of approaches. Role play is just one of the many methods available for exploitation. With some attention given to the needs of the learners, both the teacher and the learners can play active roles in the classroom. Making language classes livelier, challenging and above all rewarding.

References


Appendix A

- Level: Intermediate
- Time: 30 minutes for preparation, 1 hour for presentation (20 minutes for each group) and 30 minutes for follow-up.
- Skills: Expressing views, giving opinion, agreeing, disagreeing, clarifying etc. Other skills enhanced are listening, reading, speaking and writing.
- Issue: In 1998, pig farms in several states in Malaysia were affected by the JE (Japanese Encephalitis) outbreak. The virus had claimed several lives. The outbreak disrupted the livelihood of the farm owners, workers and affected residents who had to be evacuated.

**Why Teachers Should Use Timed Reading in ESL Classes**

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Students are faced with a bombardment of information need to be better prepared for the demands that reading in society places on them. This paper explores the importance of gaining higher reading speed via timed reading and how strategic application is important for its success. When teachers apply timed reading to their program, they better prepare their students for the fast-paced world ahead of them.
Introduction

Reading is an all-important language skill that is now in more demand than in any time in our history. With the exposure of the Internet in a global arena, students need to master reading in order to understand the vast knowledge the world embraces them with. It has been said that the literate adult today is reading more in one week than their great-grandfather did in a whole year (Swalm and Kling, 1973). This fact places pressures on the student to perform at a higher level than the student before them.

It is the belief of many teaching professionals that the ESL student needs to be able to read at a level challengeable to a native speaker of English in order to keep up with the academic workload. The idea of this paper is that through the training in timed reading, the student will increase their reading speed, which will better prepare them for the challenges they will encounter when they enter the collegiate playing field (Anderson 1999). There are many reasons for implementing timed reading into a reading program and it is my wish to elaborate on some of them in this paper.

The Benefits of Faster Reading

There are many benefits in gaining a faster reading rate and Klaeser (1977) presents four positive points in this regard. The first one is the amount of time you will save when you’re able to double your speed (for example). With an increase in speed, the student will be able to cover more materials than at a slower speed. Figure A illustrates the gains a student will make when their speed is increased.

This illustration shows what the gains are for students that are slow readers (150 words per minute (the average ESL student entering college)) versus students that are good readers (350 words per minute). The difference in quantity is at about 2.33 times more for the faster students. If the student increases their production to 250 WPM, they would be increasing their reading production by 67%. These are important gains for the student that will promote academic success.

The second advantage is that readers are able to concentrate better which leads to greater comprehension. Of course this area is under debate because there have been studies of students that lost comprehension when they were striving to increase their reading speed. This is usually the case of “rushed reading” and contains little more technique than scanning. However, it is believed that through an “effective” timed reading program, students can attain an increased reading rate and comprehension.

Thirdly, with the increase in potential speed and comprehension, academic grades tend to rise as well. This is all due to the control of extra time, which allows for greater understanding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timed Reading Rates</th>
<th>Slow Reader (150 words per minute)</th>
<th>Fair reader (250 words per minute)</th>
<th>Good Reader (350 words per minute)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Week 3/4 Book</td>
<td>1 1/4 Books</td>
<td>1 3/4 Books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Month 3 Books</td>
<td>5 Books</td>
<td>7 Books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Year 36 Books</td>
<td>60 Books</td>
<td>84 Books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Years 360 Books</td>
<td>600 Books</td>
<td>840 Books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure A

Lastly and most importantly, students will enjoy the act of reading more, which promotes greater extensive reading, an added area for increased reading speed and comprehension. With increased reading rate and motivation for extended reading, students will encounter frequent and repeated vocabulary, which will transcend into other areas of language skills development.

Reading Strategies
Like any reading program, increasing reading rate is more than just opening a book and jumping into the text. Timed reading involves the use of various strategies in conjunction with in-class exercises and extensive timed reading. Timed reading isn't reading as-fast-as-you-can over a passage and simply marking the gradual improvement (if there are any). It involves reading strategies via the teacher's instruction.

Successful readers reported that they used various strategies such as reading in broad phrases, skipping inessential words, guessing from context, and continuing to read the text even when they encountered a term that they didn't know (Wallace 2001). Training in strategic use is what timed reading promotes and reflects what Devine means by, "...training enhances the metacognitive knowledge base of readers and results in improved reading performance."(Devine 1993)

Another strategy mentioned by Wallace is the ability to make informed predictions as the student progresses through the text (Goodman 1967, Smith 1971, Wallace 2001). Through making predictions, students take an interactive role in the reading process, which Blanton states is "...at the heart of literacy, formal learning, and academic success" (Blanton 1994). This interaction is stimulated by the reader's background knowledge that acts as a catalyst for text comprehension. Afflerbach researched the effects of background knowledge on readers and found that those readers who applied background knowledge or had extensive applicable prior knowledge were able to construct the main idea faster than those who didn't (Afflerbach 1990, Zhicheng 1992).

Kitao utilizes pre-reading activities to unleash knowledge the students might have about the passage, such as having them read the title, headings, and first lines of the paragraph for initial gist (Kitao 1994). Kitao also employs other strategies like scanning (for specific information), skimming (for gist), understanding the pieces of information by mentally tying them together as the student proceeds throughout the text, understanding the sequence of events/ideas in the reading, and lastly, visualizing the descriptions as the students zip through the text at a rate above reading.

Lono utilizes different strategies to attain quick information on the thesis of what is being read by reading the first and last sentence of each paragraph, reading the introduction and conclusion, and reading transition words that may show a change in the authors thought and direction (Lono 1987). Pre-reading strategies allow students to attain an advanced idea of what the text is about, which helps increase their speed and comprehension during the timed reading process.

**Phrase Reading**

There is a structural technique that timed-reading instructors employ to aid in the speed of reading. This is known as *Phrase Reading*. This was developed because of how the eyes move across the page. When an individual reads they move across the text fixating on certain words. When a jerk in motion occurs between fixations, a *saccadic* motion occurs. This particular motion doesn’t pick up information for the brain to process (Klaeser 1977). Klaeser states that "a good reader does between 85-95% of his reading time fixating...5-15% percent moving from fixation to fixation. A poor reader spends more time moving and less time fixating. Why? Because a good reader makes each fixation work better for him. By seeing two or three words at each fixation, his saccadic movements are rapid jerks from phrase to phrase... the poor reader fixates on every single word, sometimes on every syllable or every letter. To become a good reader, the goal for using the eyes well is obvious: try to read two or three words at a glance" (Klaeser 1977).

Plaister supports this idea by implementing it in his ESL program. He administers timed reading exercises and reading strategies to aid in the students speed and comprehension. He explains that, "Most of our students are word-by-word readers and, as a consequence, read at very low rates — 125 to perhapss 150 words per minute (the average native speaker is at around 300 WPM). Evidence shows that reading by structures help native speakers gain comprehension" (Plaister 1968)
It is clear that strategies play an intricate role in the effective development of any reading program. This is especially true for timed-reading because emphasis tends to reside in the speed of reading and comprehension. The interaction with the text in timed reading forces the ESL learner to move beyond the word level of reading (bottom-up), that most tend to be in, to a level that requires cognitive negotiations of meaning (top-down).

**Automaticity**

One of the reasons proposed by many theorists for readers being able to read faster is through the reflex of automatic responses to vocabulary and text comprehension across the written work. This “unconscious” response is termed Automaticity and refers to the internal understanding of what is being read and the complete comprehension of appropriate vocabulary. By appropriate, I’m referring to reading materials that apply to a specific task in relation to the students abilities. A reading task that is cognitively undemanding and content embedded (Cummins and Swain 1986) will produce a more automatic process. Materials that are more demanding, like academic work for example, will demand less automatic movement because the reading is denser and the vocabulary is more reserved for a specific context.

Automaticity is a nice residual skill that is brought about by combining many learning elements, but I question its idealized effect. Anderson’s exemplary analogy of himself driving home emphasizes the automatic nature of getting home without thought, but he also mentions that he didn’t remember the details of the trip (Anderson 1999). This makes me question Automaticity’s function on comprehension. I feel the automatic motion is established from a habitual action in conjunction with tangent thinking. The tangent thinking produces a loss of thought. Am I making this sound ineffective? Actually, I feel that there are two kinds of Automaticity, (a.) **Unconscious Automaticity** and (b.) **Conscious Automaticity**.

**Unconscious Automaticity**

This occurs as in the above examples where the individual undergoes actions through an automatic function, which was caused by the mind going off course. Like the times when I took a shower and couldn’t remember if I washed my hair. I ended up double washing because of a tangency in thought. This doesn’t help the student, but instead causes them to backtrack and read the material again (time loss).

**Conscious Automaticity**

This is established when the habitual motion is consciously acknowledged and the process is unconsciously executed. An example of this is when I was on the wrestling team in high school. During a match, I remember executing a wrestling technique to counter my opponent’s assault. I remember going through some motions, which were triggered by my opponent’s hand positioning on my body. The series of moves took only about a second and resulted in a win for me. I was aware of what I was to do (split second) and I automatically executed it. This is what the ESL reader needs to do. Carver’s description of Automaticity coincides with this explanation and timed reading as follows:

“Automaticity theory has forced a focus upon the role of repetition as a primary factor that causes improvement in reading rate. Practice in decoding known words supposedly should result in there being read more rapidly and with little attention because they will be perceived more rapidly while attention is being directed toward understanding the complete thought represented by all the words in the sentence”(Carver 1990).

As the student practices timed reading and is exposed to various language learning elements, as mentioned above, they become more automatic in their response due to the holistic experience. Timed reading forces the re-occurrence of certain, frequent vocabulary to be internalized, which ultimately aids in the speed and comprehension of reading materials.

**Conclusion**

Timed reading is more than just reading as fast as you can and hoping your
speed will increase with practice. It’s a process of implementing various elements from reading theory to make it work more efficiently and effectively. Taking into consideration the students needs, background, and affective domains help shape the content of timed reading. Promoting the use of strategies adds to the ease of reading rate increase in the long term as well as an increase in reading for pleasure. ESL students will benefit from the use of these timed reading components, but only as long as they have realistic goals, patience and practice in timed reading skills. The practice will create an automatic response towards the text reading, which will prepare the student for the task of greater reading demands that society has placed on them.

References


The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. IX, No. 6, June 2003

http://iteslj.org/

Numerically Assessing Young ESL/EFL Learners Without Tests

Filed under: articles related to English language teaching — Leave a comment
This article shows ESL teachers how they can quickly turn simple observations into information that is easy to compare, analyse and share with parents.

**Introduction**

Parents would like as much information on their child as possible and this is especially true when they are paying for English lessons. Furthermore they want to see clear improvements and hard evidence of those improvements. However for young learners tests can be very intimidating and in some cases are only being done, because the teacher does not have a better system in place for assessing students. This article will show you, step by step, how to take simple observations and turn them into quantified information. Very few parents are likely to argue with hard figures especially when they are presented in a graphical form.

**From Observation to Numbers**

A test is easy to quantify, because there is a mark and that mark can then be entered into a system. For example the 44 common sounds that English use in the International Phonic Alphabet can simply be measured on a 0 to 44 scale. (O’ Connor 1980)

However that does not tell the whole story and a large part of assessment in younger learners is their attitude to learning and the social skills that they learn. For example, one goal in the Early Learning Framework is to, “Enjoy listening to and using spoken and written language, and readily turn to it in their play and learning.” (UK Govt: DSCF 2008)

The first step is to turn this goal into an assessment of some kind. In this case observation might be appropriate and so the teacher would listen to the dialogue that children use in play and learning.

The second step is to turn this into a scale with:

- 0 No new vocabulary used,
- 1 very little vocabulary used,
- 2 some new vocabulary used,
- 3 good use of new vocabulary and
- 4 excellent use of new vocabulary.

Other scales might include those for motivation or interest:

- 0 Shows no interest,
- 1 Shows a little interest,
- 2 shows some interest,
- 3 shows good interest and
- 4 shows a lot of interest.

The advantage of a 0 to 4 scale is that it can also be quickly be turned into grades with, 0 being Ungraded, 1 being D, 2 C, 3 B and 4 A. You can also make half grades with the use of the decimal point so 3.5 could be a B+ etc.

These two sets of scales could be applied to a wide range of skills and really show to parents that you have measured progress.
From Numbers to Information

Once the scales have been decided then you can either decide to keep them in a manual mark book, which in itself would allow you to quickly compile reports for parents or put it into a spreadsheet such as Microsoft Excel or the free Open Office Calc. The advantage of a spreadsheet is that you can quickly generate individual reports and show the information graphically.

There are a number of useful functions in Excel that once learnt will enable you to quickly identify children falling behind and those who are getting ahead of the class.

One of the most useful functions and least used is conditional formatting. This allows you to change the colour of the cell dependent on number put in. In Excel 2007 this can be found in the home ribbon and there are a number of ready made schemes to use.

Also you can create averages that allow you to see how the class is doing as a whole. Excel uses the mean average as the default average, but do not forget the mode average which allows you to know how the majority of the class are doing. It is also good to use MAX and MIN to find out the highest and lowest scores at a glance.

What is most important for parents is to be able to see how their child has improved and line graphs are an invaluable tool to do this and once you have the information in a spreadsheet, a graph can be generated in a few clicks of the mouse. There are other useful functions such as VLOOKUP, which allows you to change numbers back into grades.

If you are not familiar with spreadsheets, then here is a ready made spreadsheet template with all of the formulae for 20 students in Excel 2007 (grading.xls 20KB) and Open Office Calc. (grading.ots 60KB) If you have more than 20 students, just use two sheets.

Conclusion

People have traditionally divided science and humanities, but by taking this approach we can take advantage of a scientific numeric approach without significantly compromising on qualitative assessment. In essence this approach quantifies the unquantifiable with excellent benefits for teachers, parents and centre managers alike.

Bibliography

Encouraging Reluctant ESL/EFL Learners to Speak in the Classroom

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Introduction

EFL learners’ reluctance to speak English in the classroom is a problem commonly found in EFL contexts. Consequently, students have fewer opportunities to learn from speaking than the more oral students. Research shows that they develop more negative attitudes to school and are likely to lack motivation to put more effort in it (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). For other students, working with students who are reluctant to maintain and extend conversations also limits their opportunities for language use.

This paper aims to provide EFL teachers with a range of techniques to encourage reluctant students to speak in the language classroom. Many of these techniques are suggested based on the Cognitive, Affective and Situational Framework put forth by Nation (2007).

Reduce the Level of Task Difficulty

From Nation’s point of view, if students do not know enough, they will not be able to perform the task well, and this is one of the causes of students’ unwillingness to speak. The following techniques are practical in dealing with the problem:

Give Students More Time to do Tasks

This can be done by giving students more preparation time. Alternatively, allow them to perform oral tasks without time pressure (Ellis, 2005) by giving them enough time to plan for and perform a task at the same time.

Bring the Tasks Within Students’ Experience

According to Nation (2000), teachers can create recalling and sharing-experience opportunities for students to make use of their background knowledge and experience in doing the tasks. Key oral skills and strategies should be pre-taught in preparing students for communicative tasks. Also, it is advisable that teachers grade the difficulty level of oral tasks to suit their students’ communicative ability.

Allow Students to Collaboratively Solve Communicative Tasks (Nation, 2000)

When organizing pair work and group work, make sure that every student’s participation is necessary for the task to be completed. It is best if each participant has “unique, essential information” or distinctive role to play (Nation, 2007).

Provide Students with Task Guidance

Nation (2000) suggests providing this kind of support through repeated input, guiding questions, multiple choices, and so on.

Attend to Individual Students’ Needs and Ability
In a class of heterogeneous communicative ability, the teacher should not expect every student to perform at the same level. Likewise, different kinds of tasks can be devised to suit different levels. Alternatively, task demands can be adjusted according to individual levels of oral competence.

It is thought that once a student has a learning problem, it is best to allow the student to try to solve the problem on their own in the first place. When the problem is too challenging for the student to solve, support can be provided. The above list is made with the amount of support increasing from the first to the last solution.

Promote Positive Attitudes among Students

Students who hold positive attitudes towards language learning are less likely to suffer from language learning anxiety and more likely to participate actively in learning tasks (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2010).

The techniques suggested below can help the teacher build up positive attitudes among students so that they can feel free to speak in the language class.

Change Students’ Negative Beliefs and Attitudes Towards Mistakes

Teachers can discuss with students the value of language use even if it is not fluent and accurate (Young, 1991; Nation, 1997). Meaning-focused oral activities (Nation, 2007) can also be used frequently with the goal clearly stated. When students are rewarded for successfully conveying a message, they will gradually change their perceptions about mistakes and language use. The teachers’ tolerance of mistakes also needs to be made clear because there is no point in trying to change students’ attitudes when the teacher still keeps them.

Boost Students’ Self-confidence

This can be done by creating various opportunities for classroom success in using spoken English (Oxford, 1999). A sense of success and high self-perceived communication competence can be easily achieved by students if easy tasks with clear and simple goals are used in the first place. The level of difficulty can be increased over time as students’ ability develops. General goals should be broken down into smaller, short-term goals so that even when students do not achieve the final goals they still feel a sense of achievement for completing some of the sub-goals. Also, students should be rewarded once they achieve one or more goals.

Lower Students’ Anxiety in the Classroom

According to Young (1991), teachers can start with finding out what students are anxious about. Then teachers can help them ease some of their irrational fears and teach them strategies such as self-talks and doing relaxation exercises to deal with fears.

With the principle of encouraging students to solve their own problems, the first two solutions should be prioritized because they provide assistance for them to change their own attitudes and affect in an apposite way while the third solution does not require as much effort from the students in solving the problem.

Build a Supportive Learning Environment

Once students feel a sense of support from their teacher and peers, it is likely that they will be more willing to speak in the target language. The following are some techniques that teachers can use to create a supportive atmosphere for students.

Encourage Peer Support in the Classroom
Tsui (1996:160) suggests that "allowing students to check their answers with their peers before offering them to the whole class also encourages students to speak up." Similarly, they can be allowed to have a discussion with their peers before talking to the whole class so that they will feel more confident in speaking English.

### Be Sensitive When Assigning Students into Groups

Many students tend to talk more with their close friends. Therefore, when organizing group work, the teachers should take account of and accommodate these personal traits. For example, students can be allowed to choose who they are going to work with.

### Tolerate L1 Use When Appropriate

At a low English communicative level, students are not able to convey their every thought. Therefore, teachers should be tolerant of some L1 use. According to Nation (1997), using L1 can help learning in many cases. The teachers’ attitude to L1 use should be positive so that students are not humiliated when they use L1 to assist L2 development. When L1 use is not necessary, the teachers should tactically lead students back to using English, e.g. by commenting or asking a question in English instead of showing strong objections.

### Make the Classroom Environment a Non-threatening Place (Oxford, 1999)

The classroom should be an environment where students are not scared of making communicative mistakes and being ambiguous in communicating. Situations that make students anxious such as correcting mistakes on the spot, calling on students at random (Young, 1991), calling on students without allowing them to prepare for the answers, and calling on a student simply because he/she is quiet or not concentrating should be avoided. Otherwise, what the teacher gets from students is usually not desired language use but threatened faces and this will have negative effects on the students' feelings and attitudes afterwards.

### Introduce Opportunities for Students to Speak English Outside the Class

Opportunities such as English clubs inside and outside the school should be introduced to students. The benefits of and tactics for participation should be clearly explained to them. Classroom activities can also be linked to these club activities. For example, students can be asked in the class to report on their participation in the clubs or they can share their experience with their classmates. More opportunities for speaking English outside the class can also be created. For instance, students can be put into groups to do some projects and if possible, their group work should be recorded. They may also be asked to carry out and record interviews with foreigners who are visiting or living around.

The solutions in this category are ranked from the most specific, day-to-day basis to the most long-term one. Although short-term and long-term measures should be taken in parallel, it is believed that short-term solutions should receive priority to be completed first. This will create more opportunities for the long-term ones to be successful.

### Conclusion

This paper has focused on the problem of students who are reluctant to speak in the English classroom and suggested a range of techniques that can be used to address the problem. It should be noted that the list of techniques is far from comprehensive because the causes of students' reluctance to speak are varied. Teachers need to adapt these techniques to suit their class situation. Furthermore, many of these solutions should be implemented simultaneously so that they can supplement each other in tackling the problem from different angles, creating a better chance that the problem will successfully be solved.

### References
For centuries, magic tricks have mystified and entertained people around the world. Magic tricks are a great way to socialize and make new friends, but you can also use these tricks to impress friends, family, and passersby. Performing magic tricks can improve your public speaking skills, and can even lead to a rewarding hobby or job. [1]

Steps.

Part 1.

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