

# **An Analysis of the Present Situation and Problems of English Classroom Instruction in Primary Schools**

**Ying Fan**

*School of Humanities, Xi'an Shiyou University, Xi'an, Shaanxi 710065, China*

**ABSTRACT.** *Adequate and appropriate classroom instruction language can stimulate students' learning initiative, attract students' attention, strengthen the interaction between teachers and students, and improve teaching efficiency. However, in the present primary school English classroom, there are some problems in Teachers' classroom instruction language, such as unclear directive language, too fast language speed, complex instruction language and non-standard use. In view of these problems, the author puts forward some suggestions, hoping to help primary school English teachers in improving classroom instruction.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Directive language, Primary school english classroom, Current situation, Countermeasures*

## **1. Introduction**

Teachers' classroom instruction language is a part of classroom language and an important part of teacher-student interaction. In a sense, the quality of teachers' classroom teaching language is the epitome of their basic quality.<sup>[1]</sup> Teachers' choice and use of instruction language will affect the teaching effect of teachers and the learning effect of students. Reasonable and useful instruction language can help students quickly understand the specific content and rules of relevant teaching tasks, and also can improve students' learning enthusiasm.

## **2. An Overview of Classroom Instruction**

### **2.1 Definition of Classroom Instruction**

Classroom instruction language is a kind of classroom language used to convey teachers' instruction requirements to students and explain certain activities. The "instruction" in "deixis" indicates that it has the function of making others do something or some behavior. The function of classroom instruction is that teachers initiate, start or stop students from learning, organizing and maintaining classroom

teaching activities.<sup>[2]</sup>

## ***2.2 Classification of Primary School English Classroom Directives***

According to the teaching process of English teachers, they can be divided into pre class instruction language, instruction language that causes students' behavior in the teaching process and instruction language that controls classroom discipline.

(1) Instructions before class. It refers to the instruction words used by teachers to convey greetings and activate the classroom atmosphere in the first two minutes of class. For example: Hello, boys and girls! / Let's start class!

(2) The instruction language that triggers students' behavior. The directive language is closely related to students' behavior. Students should make corresponding learning behaviors after hearing the instruction from teachers in class. For example: All together. / Sit down. / Listen carefully. / Please answer my question.

(3) Command language of control discipline. The instruction language is mainly used to keep the classroom order and ensure the effective and smooth teaching activities. For example: Be quiet! / Stop talking. / No cheating!

According to the language function of the sentence itself, it can be divided into the required instruction language, the suggestion instruction language and the request instruction language.

(1) The required instruction language. The tone is relatively strong, that is, the teacher asks or orders students to do something. Close your book. / Read after me. / Turn to page...

(2) Suggestive directives. The tone is mild, which means that the teacher puts forward suggestions for students' learning activities. Don't be nervous, try it again! / You can do it. / How about?

(3) Request instruction. The tone is more euphemistic and friendly. Would you please...

## **3. The Current Situation of Instruction Language in Primary School English Class**

### ***3.1 High Frequency of Instruction Language***

In most primary school English classes, the frequency of teachers' classroom instruction is very high. Classroom instruction plays an important role in promoting English teachers to improve classroom teaching effect. Reasonable classroom instruction language can help teachers organize classroom teaching activities, maintain classroom discipline, and strengthen the communication between teachers and students.

### 3.2 *The Imperative Sentence is the Most Important*

In the classroom, teachers need to give instructions to the whole class. Considering the English level of most students, teachers usually use imperative sentences to give instructions to students. Such instructions are easy to understand, easy for students to understand and enable them to quickly participate in the classroom.

### 3.3 *There Are Rich Forms of Directive Language*

According to the pragmatic characteristics, there are three kinds of deixis: command, suggestion and request (see Table 1). According to the characteristics of sentence patterns, there are imperative sentences, declarative sentences and general interrogative sentences (see Table 2). In the actual classroom, many teachers will use different directives according to different teaching content and students' learning level, so as to avoid reducing students' interest in learning due to the single form of directive language.

*Table 1 Sentences of Classroom Directives*

| Deictic function | Example sentences                              |
|------------------|--|
| Command          | Open the book.<br>Turn to page...<br>Stand up! |
| Suggestions      | How about...?<br>Try it again, OK?             |
| Request          | Would you please.                              |

*Table 2 Sentence Pattern Distribution of Classroom Directives*

| Sentence pattern     | Form                          |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Imperative sentence  | Let's...<br>Please...         |
| General question     | Can you...?<br>What about...? |
| Declarative sentence | I want...<br>You can...       |

## 4. **Problems in the Use of Instruction Language in Primary School English Class**

Classroom instruction is not only related to the implementation effect of a whole English class, but also reflects the level of teachers' teaching ability and teaching

quality. However, in the real English classroom, there are still some problems in the instruction of many teachers.

#### ***4.1 Speaking Speed is Too Fast***

English teachers usually speak instructions too fast and do not consider the learning level of most students in the class. Some students with poor foundation will not know what to say, and some timid students dare not raise their hands to ask questions. The classroom is not a stage for teachers to show their oral English. We should control the speaking speed according to the students' development level and acceptance ability, otherwise the teaching effect will be affected.

#### ***4.2 Directive Language is Not Concise***

Some novice teachers tend to ignore the learning acceptance of primary school students. The instruction language used is complex and lengthy, which makes it very difficult for students to understand quickly. Can you tell me what kind of music you like best. T: I like pop music. What kind of music do you like?

#### ***4.3 Combination of Chinese and English Directives***

Some teachers will give “mixed Chinese and English” instructions. For example, when learning the unit of sport, the teacher wants to let his classmates share his favorite sport. He expresses this way: “你最喜欢的 sport 是什么呢? Who can tell me? “ It's not conducive to the development of students, because students will imitate the teacher to speak. In the long run, students will develop the bad habit of combining Chinese and English in English class.

#### ***4.4 Directive Language Has No Practical Meaning***

In the process of teaching, some teachers will unconsciously issue some invalid and meaningless instructions. These instructions have no practical help to students' learning and understanding.

Clip 2: The teacher asks the students to read the text aloud

T: Now, read the dialogue together, OK?

S: OK.

T: OK, read it.

S: (start reading the text)

The marked part is meaningless instructions given by the teacher. These instructions are optional and have no practical significance.

## **5. Countermeasures to Improve the Use of Instruction Language in Primary School English Classroom**

### ***5.1 To Improve the Normalization and Orderliness of Directive Language***

Although classroom instruction language is only used as a medium language in English classroom, we can not ignore the standardization of its use. The instructions should be simple and easy to understand, and sentences should not be too long and complex. The teacher should also control the speaking speed according to the difficulty and complexity of the sentence, so that the students can give feedback according to the instructions when they hear and understand clearly. The content of the instruction should be clear, and the teacher should give clear instruction so that students can quickly realize what they want to do and how to do it after hearing the instruction. The form of instruction sentence should not be too single, because repeating the same instruction will make students tired. Teachers can change the form of instruction within the scope of students' cognition.

### ***5.2 To Use Directive Language Reasonably According to Students' Acceptance Ability***

Even in the same class, the level of different students will be different. Teachers should use more simple sentences and try not to use complex directives, which can not only promote students' learning, but also do not undermine their self-confidence. According to Krashen's "i + 1" comprehensible input principle, teachers can input instruction words slightly higher than students' level in class, but they need to be controlled within the scope of students' acceptance. According to the overall learning level of the students in the class, the instruction language which is slightly higher than the students' current understanding level should be issued appropriately, so that the students can accept the comprehensible input of the teacher imperceptibly.

### ***5.3 To Give Instructions in English as Much as Possible***

The "all English" context is very important to the primary school English classroom, which is conducive to creating a good English acquisition environment. Some teachers often use Chinese to explain and translate because they are worried that students can't understand the instructions. This practice can make students quickly understand the teachers' instructions, but in the long run, students are easy to rely on the teachers' Chinese instructions. Therefore, teachers should try to use English when giving instructions in English class. If the sentences are too difficult, they can be divided into simple clauses and repeated appropriately.

### ***5.4 To Improve Their Professional Quality***

As a teacher, professional quality is an important indicator to reflect the teaching

quality of teachers, and is the basis for ensuring teachers' professional specialization.<sup>[3]</sup> In the teaching process, whether teachers can reasonably and effectively use directive language is also the embodiment of teachers' professional knowledge. In order to improve the bad habits of using directive language, teachers should be good at self reflection, continuous learning, and improve their own professional knowledge. We should also learn from experienced English teachers, participate in special training activities, and strive to make our teaching level to a higher level. In addition, teachers should also summarize the choice and use of directives, and deeply study the relevant theories of English classroom directives.

## **6. Conclusion**

As an important part of teachers' classroom language, directive language has an important impact on teachers' classroom teaching and students' learning. Teachers should not only pay attention to their own classroom teaching links, but also pay more attention to classroom instruction, which will influence students imperceptibly. Teachers should strive to standardize the use of classroom instruction language and create a good language input environment for students.

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