Different Kinds of Classes Adapted in English Learning in Chinese Primary School

Xizi Wang[1+], Sitong Ren[2+*], Banruo Liu[3+]

[1]Yiling Tianwen International High School, Yichang, 443002, China
[2]Department of international cultural exchange, Hebei Normal University, Shijiazhuang, 050024, China
[3]Talyors college, Auckland, 610000, New Zealand
+These authors contributed equally to this work and should be considered co-first authors.

*Corresponding author email: 2914660597@qq.com

Abstract. With the globalization of the economy, learning a second language is becoming more and more important in more and more countries. We all know that classroom teaching is one of the important forms of learning and that there are two opposing classroom forms, the teacher-centred classroom and the student-centred classroom, so what are the effects of these two classroom forms on language learning? This paper investigates the effects of the teacher-centred classroom and the student-centred classroom on Chinese primary school students' knowledge of adjectives in the context of English, and assesses them using a written test. Reflections are made on the shortcomings of the experiment and the confounding factors that influenced the results. Finally, suggestions for improvement are made for Chinese English classroom teaching in the hope of improving the effectiveness of language education.

Keywords: second language education, children, student-centered classrooms, teacher-centered classrooms

1   Introduction

Classroom learning is very important for language learners. The topic of this essay is to compare the academic behavior of learning English in two different types of classroom education. It can be divided into student-centered and teacher-centered classes. A teacher-centered class, according to Lathan, he defined it as the role teachers play is the classroom lecturer, presenting information to students, who passively accept the knowledge presented [1]. For student-centered classrooms, he said, teachers remain authority figures in the classroom but function more as facilitators because students assume a more active role in their own learning. Jabbarifar's study suggests that learner self-efficacy plays an important role in foreign language learning and that allowing students to take the lead in learning may have pedagogical implications for foreign language teachers and English language students [2]. In this essay, this study will consider the academic performance of English as a second language learners who are Chinese

primary students, and group discussion is involved in student-centered classes rather in teacher-centered classes. The group discussion is in the form of roleplaying and English dialog which would be introduced later.

English learning is more and more important nowadays, so classroom teaching for English is taken seriously by Chinese governments. This study is supposed to provide the best form of English classroom education (student-centered or teacher-centered) for junior high school students as second language learners.

2   Background

Both types of classes are widely used in education around the world. According to Hahn, he concluded the features, approaches, drawbacks and benefits of teacher-centered and student-centered classes respectively [3]. He also said that the teachers and students both play significant roles in accomplishing a classroom education. Currently, teacher-centered classes seem to be a traditional one, as advocates of student-centered classes argue that it is more effective [4].

In contrast the traditional teacher-centred classroom is not so popular, as Zohrabi, M says, the specific form of the traditional teacher oriented study is that English teaching has been carried out within classrooms, in which learning is shaped in practices, teacher's management, and particular course books without any opportunity for the students to use knowledge learned [5]. The reason why student-centered class is so popular nowadays is that it not only makes the classes be more enjoyable, but also improve students' performance through many studies [6]. Froyd and Simpson also supported that some of the bibliography papers from the Center for Teaching Excellence at Texas A & M University confirm the positive influences of student-centered learning approaches to academic performance. However, due to behavioral problems, it is difficult for teachers to control a class dominated by students [7]. In addition, Mark said that passionate teachers know that it is their duty to encourage active learning in a teacher-centered class [8]. Therefore, a teacher-centered classroom could also be very active because teachers devise many ways to promote students' understanding.

Based on learning English as a foreign language, in teacher-centered classes, Acat and Dönmez said teachers are more likely to input knowledge such as grammar, language's structures [9]. In this situation, students do not have their own view of English and no speaking practice. On the other hand, in English teaching, student-centered learning is combined with flexible, experiential and self-directed learning.

However, the subjects of research which compare the best class education types for EFL have less focus on children during the critical period, which is the best time to learn English. Relate to this, this study will focus on the academic performance of children at a critical period in student-centered and teacher-centered classes, and hope to choose a better EFL learning process during childhood.

3   Proposed Study

Our research question is focused on the differences of the child-centered study and teacher oriented study's impacts on the quality of Children learned English In China.

There are four alternatives to this question. The first alternative is the student-centered study is more effective than teacher-centered study. The second alternative is the teacher-centered study is more effective than children-centered study. The third alternative answer is that there is not a significant difference between these two types of classes. The fourth alternative answer is student-centered method is more effective to some students and teacher-centered method is more effective to other parts of students

The method we are going to use is to comparing the typical children oriented study method "role play" to traditional teacher oriented study. The role-play method we mean here is a speaking activity in which students play the roles of the characters in the article they are learning and imitate how the characters speak and act. The role-play is an effective technique to animate the teaching and learning atmosphere, arouse the interests of learners, and make the language acquisition impressive [10]. In the form of the traditional teacher-oriented study, speaking and writing abilities were the most commonly studied language skills [11]. For a teacher orientated class we will follow the typical ESL class form which is generally introduces the topic, grammar points, vocabulary and key expressions. In this plan, the teacher takes on the lead role and has students listen and repeat phrases.

4   Methods

4.1   Subject characteristics

Our study subjects are nine-years old Chinese primary students who are not disabled. We choose the age of nine because this is the average age of the primary students in China, this age group can present all the age groups in primary school, and 9 years old are in the critical language period. The critical period is the most important time period for children to learn language with significant results [12]. So, this evidence proves that children at nine, grade three is the most appropriate age to test. Our experiment sample size for student-centered method is 30 and for teacher-centered method is 30 as well. Because this is the average class size in China. As a result, there will be two classes in total.

4.2   Study material used and the experimental procedure.

The study material we are going to use is called "Starting Point" from the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (FLTRP), and the article we are going to adopt is on page 32 to 33, called "Mr.Crisp's classroom". The teaching aim is to teach students to use sentence structures "Here is and here are…" For example, after the class the students can say sentences like "Here is an apple" or "Here are some apples".

We will use the same teacher to teach both of student-centered class and teacher-centered class. This can make sure to make the only variable is the method that the teacher uses.

The test should include 80% easy questions to test their basic understanding of the sentences they have learnt in class, and also include 20% harder questions to test if they can practice knowledge that they have studied in the experiment class to answer the questions. The writing test we would use is the test from the tutorial booklet- "Starting line" from People's Education Press. The reason we choose this material is that this is the official tutorial booklet designated by the education administration.

4.3   The experimental procedure

First, for the child-centered experiment, the teacher will learn the aim phrases by using the following way. The teacher will play the audio of the text twice, and let students repeat sentences. Then we will let the teacher assign the task to the students to practice how to play the role in the text. The 30 students should be divided into 5 groups. Each group includes 6 people. In the process, the students need to be directed to assign the lines of the characters in the article to their group members, imitate the intonation of the text audio and can use props to reconstruct the scene in the text. The time should be restricted to 10 minutes for preparation. At the end of the class, each group should perform the text in front of the class. For the teacher-centered class experiment, we let the teacher give the lesson to the teacher-oriented group. Students will learn the phrases in the article by answering teacher's questions about the content and will be assigned tasks (reading the article, repeating after the audio, discussing with classmates, answering the questions). Eventually, we will give the same writing test to both groups.

5   Results and Discussion

In each experiment, the teacher-centered study will serve as the control group while the child-centered study will serve as the experimental group. Written test scores will be recorded separately for the experimental and control groups, and data will be analysed using SPSS. After uploading the data, the total scores will be categorized into 90-100 excellent, 80-89 good, 60-79 pass, and less than 60 fail according to the Chinese elementary school test score scale (100 is a full point). Frequency analysis was performed on the achievement variables, and the results of the frequency analysis formed a bar comparison chart, which allowed visualising the number and percentage distribution of each achievement segment in the two groups. Multiple base values such as mean and median, variance, etc. are noted to remove dissimilar data.After completing the basic analysis of the original data, we tested independent samples of the experimental data.

One possible result is no significance ($p > 0.05$), indicating that the children-centered study and teacher-centered study didn't have a significant effect on academic performance and that the two class formats had similar effects on English acquisition. Another possible result was significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that there was a significant difference between child-centered study (role-playing) and teacher-centered study on

academic achievement, and there was a meaningful difference in the effect of the two class formats on English acquisition. At this point, it is necessary to combine the results of the frequency analysis to see which class format had more passing students and higher average scores, it is possible that the class with the child-centered study (role-playing) was more effective and the students performed better. Therefore, this class format should be promoted. However, the opposite can also happen. Students perform better in teacher-centered class and master better knowledge of being verbs.

6   Conclusion

Although this study attempts to illustrate the effects of student-centered and teacher-centered classrooms on second language acquisition, role-playing is only one form of student-centered classroom and cannot have the same effect in all student-centered classrooms. Due to the limited sample size, this study only investigated the teaching of vocabulary knowledge related to forms of the Adjectives, which does not indicate that it is generalizable to all English language knowledge, such as syntactic rules, which are important English language knowledge but have not been studied. If possible, we would continue to collect more experimental samples to verify the relationship between students' English proficiency and classroom format, or to verify which series of knowledge is better matched with which classroom format to obtain better classroom results.

In addition, we need to recognise the difference between acquisition and achievement. Achievement can verify acquired knowledge to a certain extent, but the test cannot fully examine all acquired knowledge, and the effect of the test is greatly influenced by students' own mentality and test-taking skills, which are uncontrollable factors. Therefore, in future experiments, we should increase the follow-up survey time while increasing the experimental sample to obtain a more natural corpus.

It is important to consider that in a real classroom setting, there are not only those factors internal to the experiment mentioned above that interfere with the results, but also a number of other factors associated with the classroom that can affect language learning outcomes. For example, the teacher's own level of knowledge or teaching skills. The use of the same teacher in this experiment ensures that their knowledge base is the same, but it does not ensure that all teachers have the same level of knowledge; secondly, even if the same teacher has the same level of teaching skills in both classroom formats, it is possible that the teacher is only good at one of the classroom formats, resulting in a strong contrast in effectiveness. What needs to be brought to the attention of many here is that it should not be assumed that student-centred classrooms require less effort and workload from teachers because they are centred on student interaction; equally, student-centred classrooms require highly qualified and competent teachers. As Rogers identified that the important precondition for student–centred learning as the need for a leader or person who is perceived as an authority figure in the situation, is sufficiently secure within herself (himself) and in her (his) relationship to others that she (he) experiences an essential trust in the capacity of others to think for themselves, to learn for themselves [12].

In addition to this, if there is a post-graduate re-examination it needs to be noted that there are different results due to individual student differences, for example some students are very good at learning knowledge quickly and can acquire points in a short time but forget them easily, on the contrary some students are slow learners and need to repeat multiple times to master but form a long term memory. So testing the same group of students at different post-teaching periods may produce different results from one period to the next. Another example is that extroverted and introverted students adapt differently to teacher-centred and student-centred classrooms, with extroverted students being more willing to express themselves and possibly performing more prominently in student-led classrooms. So for teaching, teachers should not be monotonous in using one teaching technique over and over again. Price said that implementing only one of these approaches in the classroom may not meet the needs of all students in the class [13,14].

Acknowledgement

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