

Teachers' Behaviors that Motivate Students in English Classes

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find out teachers' behaviors that motivate students in English classes. There should be some common factors that can make good English classes for students and, as a result, students brush up their English skills.

Keywords

English class, teacher's behaviors, motivation

1. Background

Through English classes, some students become interested in English, but others do not even if they use the same textbook. What are the differences between them? There are some factors: topics that are interesting for students to think about, relationship between students and their teacher, environment that is good for students to learn English and so on. However, the teacher's roles are thought to be the most important things. Therefore, our research focuses on teacher's roles in English classes.

2. Method

There are four points that we would like to find through the observation of these classes: teachers' actions, teachers' performance, teaching materials, and class styles — teacher-centered or student centered. Three teachers whose students learn English actively were selected:

- 1) A teacher from a private elementary school in Tokyo
- 2) A teacher from a public junior high school in Kanagawa
- 3) A teacher from a private senior high school in Tokyo

We visited their schools, where we observed and videotaped the classes. After that, all the procedures were transcribed and analyzed.

3. Analysis

3.1 Elementary school

We observed the six graders' classes in which

students were actively involved in each activity. We found out the following points that motivate students.

- 1) The teacher introduces different activities one after another.
- 2) The teaching procedures are well organized.
- 3) The teacher and their students are enjoying themselves together.

3.2 Junior high school

The class focused on English basic skills. Topics were the class consists of some activities for review and the target sentence "What is this?" In the previous lesson, students studied how to introduce the third person and wrote some introduction of their friend or a famous person. Then, they read their sentences and got some information in the class. Next, the teacher gave oral introduction and some questions with the sentence "What is this?"

A lot of original handouts were used, and many opportunities to speak English were given to students in class. These are the reasons why students enjoy studying English and have high motivation. The following points could be found to motivate students.

- 1) The most important point is that students enjoy English sounds.
- 2) The teacher prepares many activities so that students can get many opportunities to speak English and think by themselves.
- 3) Students do not need to take notes a lot because the teacher gives out a lot of original handouts and students can take a lot of time to practice speaking English in class.
- 4) The teacher makes groups with some intentions to calm down students, and make opportunities to concentrate on speaking English.
- 5) The teacher gives comments and feedback about students' homework every time. It keeps students' motivation high.

3.3 Senior high school

We observed two different classes of one teacher at

a private high school.

3.3.1 Reading class

The first class was four-skill-integrated English class whose special focus was on Reading. The topic of the reading material on the day was "It is not easy to be a flight attendant." Before having this class, the students studied about the job of a flight attendant through some activities such as brain storming and they also made a summary about the story. Students learned this unit with four hours, and we observed the fourth lesson.

Since the teacher utilizes group works for the students to comprehend the passage, so students actively participated in all works in class. Then, the teacher did not give answers until all the student find the answers on the tasks and finish discussion in groups so the students think answers by themselves. Therefore, students are involved in cooperative learning. The following points are picked up in our observation.

- 1) Before starting English classes, the teacher and his students have already talked in English so that they can make atmospheres to learn English.
- 2) The teacher picks up students' Japanese utterances and he responds to them in English, so students feel relaxed to speak out.
- 3) The teacher changes groups to each activity, so his students have some opportunities to check their answers. That is why they have more confidence in giving answers in class.
- 4) The teacher explains new words with easy English and specific situations.
- 5) The teacher makes another handout with the comments by the students that were collected in the previous lesson, so the students learn with the motivation.

3.3.2 Grammar class

This class was to confirm students' grammatical knowledge that aims to forester students communication skills. The target grammar of the lesson was tense. The teacher conducts the class with group work and the students tried to answer the questions in each group. He used one handout which had only six English sentences with the target grammar.

The students keep high motivation to learn English so they speak out in class when they have a question. We found out some points that make the class active.

- 1) When the teacher wants students to think about the topic, he shows related topics at the beginning of the class without any explanation by the teacher.
- 2) The teacher explained some example sentences

which enable students to imagine the scene in reality.

- 3) At first, the students learn the target grammar with easy example sentences, and then they are given explicit explanation about the grammar.
- 4) In the class, students do not have to remember grammatical terms. The teacher makes them remember just the usage.
- 5) The teacher chooses example sentences that students are interested in.
- 6) The teacher chooses example sentences for the students to understand easily.
- 7) When the teacher explains the grammar, he explains it with easy words.
- 8) There are some selected English sentences with the target grammar, where students can compare it with grammatical items which they have already learned.
- 9) When the students have questions, the teacher always gives opportunities for them to speak out freely.
- 10) There are good atmosphere for students to feel relaxed to speak out.

4. Conclusion

The research shows that the teacher's roles in English classes are important to motivate students. The teachers have to make good relationship with students. In order to make classes more active, the class style should be student-centered rather than teacher-centered. The details of our research will be presented with the class videos at PAAL conference.