

# Communicating in English During English-learning Learning English During English Communicating---Study on the Communication-centered English-teaching Method

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**Abstract:** The basic function of language decides the aim of learning it. The purpose of learning a language decides its teaching method. Stages of this teaching method and some factors affecting the result of teaching are introduced.

**Keywords:** Teaching method; Nonverbal communication; Social position

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The basic function of language is communication. The final purpose of students' learning English should be to finish the communication in the practical language environment. People often make mistakes in understanding and practicing about how to reach this purpose. Many people think that to grasp a language means to own the ability to communicate naturally and freely. However, the truth is quite different. During a long time our traditional English-teaching modes have cultivated a number of English-knowing mutes, not the social English talents. Nowadays, the international and national backgrounds of English globalization force us to break our traditional English-teaching method. We must take more practical and more effective teaching method to cultivate students' abilities to communicate with the language knowledge they have got. Thus we should create necessary conditions to realize the communication-centered English-teaching method. According to the different ages, psychological features and English levels of English learners, the communication-centered English-teaching process goes through the following three stages.

## 1 Elementary stage

At this stage, the English learners are 6-12-year-old primary pupils. Generally speaking, they are at the perceptual stage of cognition, full of strong curiosity and badly interested in new things. According to these special features and the elected teaching contents, teachers can utilize some relevant auxiliary materials, such as videos, pictures etc. to increase students' perceptual knowledge about English and their interest in learning it, which can achieve better teaching result. Teachers also should try their best to create language circumstances so that students can know about and be familiar with the difference of English usage on different occasions. Why we can learn Chinese well is because we see and learn it almost everywhere. We are imperceptibly influenced by Chinese that we constantly see and hear, which gives us great help in learning Chinese well. Identically, those who learn English as a foreign language also need this "help", and what they are in need of is just the English-applying surroundings<sup>[1]</sup>. Moreover the English-applying scenes in teaching books are very limited. Therefore it is very necessary to provide for students the chances of scene practice and to make the English-applying circumstances similar to British or American social life. The teaching of listening and speaking can play a big part in helping us. When students are watching or listening to the videos, teachers can give some explanation and analysis at the right moment, realizing the unity of theory and practice. In order to reach the aim of consulting what is taught to students, teachers can guide them to creatively write simple English dialogues on their own initiative and let students act them out.

## 2 Intermediate stage

At this stage, the learners are 13-18-year-old middle school students. Generally speaking, while they keep their perceptual cognition, they start to have rational knowledge about things and can analyze problems. Thus the main task at the second stage is to cultivate students' ability to use suitable English on different occasions by watching and imitating the English expressions of different people at different spots so as to increase their English knowledge<sup>[2]</sup>. For example, on the same occasion, the speaker explains the same thing with completely different expressions to different objects. At this time, teachers should timely explain to students what leads to such differences. Teachers also may guide students to imitate and practice these dialogues of real scene and emphasize some points where students make mistakes easily. At this stage, the teaching of watching, listening and speaking can provide many chances for students to know about the social life of English speaking countries so as to understand English better. At the first stage, sound materials are only auxiliary teaching method. At the intermediate stage, the teaching model of scene conversation including these sound materials are the main teaching means. For example, under the teachers' instructing, students may write some English short plays with richer contents, as a form of classroom practice. Teachers also can divide students into several groups, let each group

imitate the classical dialogues, expressions, action and so on.

### 3 High stage

At this stage, the learners are the over 20-year-old college or university students or some grown-ups most of whom have higher understanding of English after studying in middle school, but they still need to improve their flexibility of using English. Thus the emphasis of teaching aim at this stage is on making students get used to regarding English as everyday communicating tool like Chinese and strengthening their consciousness and ability to use English in actual life. Some materials such as the original edition of English films recording tapes, TV plays which students are interested in can be spiced into the process of teaching to create original and flexible classroom teaching and enriching teaching contests. It can not only satisfy students' desire for knowledge in limited classroom practice, arousing their studying enthusiasm but also liven the atmosphere of classroom, changing students' position from passive receivers to active ones. Students can naturally realize the features of oral English when they watching. By analyzing the language features of different people with different character and status, on different occasions and to different objects, teachers induce the trait and law of everyday English usage. Meanwhile students can deepen their cognition of English and finally increase their ability to use English more accurately, more appropriately and more colorfully in real language communication. In addition, a key link of learning English at this stage (which also penetrates in the whole process) is to practice again and again. Teachers should encourage students to read some original editions of English plays or masterpieces, English newspaper and magazines, etc., ask them to listen to or watch English programs and to take part in English corner regularly and so on. It can not only increase the chances to learn English but also cultivate students' understanding of English. Students can try to abridge the original edition of English plays, translate Chinese plays, or write English plays by themselves, so as to reach the aim of studying English and communicating with it.

What always runs through the above-mentioned three stages of English teaching is to communicate in English between teachers and students, between students. Students are subjects of studying. Whether language teaching succeeds, to great extent, lies in these multilateral actions rather than teaching materials, teaching methods or language analysis. Language teaching is different from others. The language is not only teaching content but also teaching method. In order to get good result, teachers must let students actively take part in the teaching. In the practical teaching if we can build systematical English teaching from primary school to middle school to university, and coherently cultivate and improve students' ability to use English in actual life, it is very likely to root out the long-standing problems of English teaching in our country.

Another more traditional, older, and convenient communicating form, coexisting with language communication, is nonverbal communication, used widely in our everyday life. People commonly think that it contains posture, facial expression, use of time and space, touch, dress, sound, silence and so on. Nonverbal communication is a silent language and manner. It can show a person's inner world and his or her self-cultivation. Some celebrity ever said, posture language comes from the bottom of your heart and from your self-respect. If you want to better your language, you must strengthen your inner accomplishment, not just imitate rigidly. Dongshi, an ugly woman, knitted her brows in imitation of the famous beauty Xishi, only to make herself uglier. This famous Chinese story tells us that the blind imitation may lead to ridiculous effect. Meanwhile it shows the great importance of using nonverbal language correctly. We also need to pay attention to the nonverbal languages with the same meaning but different expressions. For example, to act out the meaning of the sentence "I'm full", Chinese pat their stomach with one hand or both while Americans put one of hands on the throat with fingers stretching and palm downward. So we can draw a conclusion that it's important and necessary to pay attention to the intercultural differences when we use nonverbal language. We mustn't apply other people's experience mechanically. Especially to those who learn English as a foreign language, if they are able to make use of those nonverbal language rationally, to some extent, it can make up for limit of expressing in language. Therefore it will produce positive function to add some nonverbal communication in our English teaching process.

Learning at network time will, instead of the "school-centered" tradition, faces society and people's life. Communication in English classroom also won't just depend on teacher's books, classroom also won't just depend teacher's books, classrooms, lab or other old teaching facilities, but will be a kind of free and random activity. By communicating in English class, we can break the former closed state between school and society, study and life, and strengthen the link between them. What's more, by watching, rehearsing English short plays and listening to some other materials, students can leap over the time and space to experience the ancients' life and imagine the changes in the future. Meanwhile they can learn from it the social developing and the changing of time. In this open communication, students can gain not only knowledge but also the process of relating the knowledge in books and actual life. Successful communication is real and natural and can touch people's hearts. With the rising of students' ability to use language and with the richness of their language content, classroom teaching can't satisfy students to speak English in actual life. Communicating in actual scene can help students form the habit of using English and thinking in English. It approaches the application and reaching the purpose of learning English.

In practical language communication, people have different controlling rights in conversations because of their different social positions. The following is a good example<sup>[3]</sup>:

A: a foreign immigrant    B: a native Canadian

One day A and B were working together. B pointed at a man and said to A: "Do you see him?"

A: Yes, why?

B: Don't you know him?

A: No. I don't know him.

B: How come you don't know him? Don't you watch TV? That's Bart Simpson.

This conversation made A feel very sad and she didn't answer B. Until now A doesn't know why this person was so important. As a native Canadian, A controlled this conversation. When she said: "How come you don't know him? Don't you watch TV? That is

Bart Simpson.” She didn’t expect any answer from A, but wanted to end the conversation. As an immigrant, A felt inferior to others. When she was laughed at for not knowing the famous person, Bart Simpson, her self-respect was hurt, so she kept silent and hoped to end the embarrassing dialogue as early as possible. Although perhaps he had wanted to speak more English with B so as to practice her oral English, the controlling right wasn’t in her hand. Let’s assume A isn’t an immigrant but a native Canadian like B. Under this circumstance A perhaps explains that she is indeed not interested in those popular people and never watches that kind of TV programs. If this assumption is tenable, A also has controlling right and their rights are balanced. From this assumption, we can know the great function of “social position” in language communication. It can motivate and prohibit people’s desire to communicate. Therefore in the process of English teaching teachers admit the objective existence of social position, create equal social circumstance for students and encourage them to talk freely, not considering respective social status.

English language is not a mechanical language system. We shouldn’t simply regard it as static grammar structure, but learn it and use it in actual language actions and in complicated association among people. English teachers should emphasize on how to communicate in English in the teaching (i.e. communication-education-centered teaching method). Because the previous teachers didn’t make great enough efforts at this point, the teaching result wasn’t satisfying as expected. English teachers, as the main part of English teaching should constantly raise their knowledge of English. Meanwhile, they should perfect the teaching plan and often organize communication-education-centered teaching activities.

At this present time, different teaching methods of English, like different flowers, have been blossoming in our country, though a more scientific, perfect and riper teaching method system doesn’t yet come into being. Many problems of English teaching need further to be discussed and resolved by English teachers, like how to more effectively dispose those guidance materials, how to make rational use of modern techniques of education to help English teaching and so on. In recent two decades, teaching methods of foreign languages have been constantly introduced, the new replacing the old, and then replaced by the newer. The concrete practice shows that the successful examples which depend on only one teaching method are few. There is no ready theoretical model of teaching. The communicating teaching method mentioned in this essay doesn’t work alone. Only when it is used together with the useful part of other methods, we can get the best teaching result. The tree of life is evergreen. Theory is grey. What we can do is to find a teaching theory and method conforming to the English- teaching law of China so as to cultivate more and better English talent.

## References:

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