

Teaching Design and Analysis of the Guided Discovery Method in English Grammar Class in Senior Middle School

Juan Wang

China West Normal University, Nanchong, China

Abstract

English grammar teaching has always been a crucial part of senior middle school English teaching. However, the teaching method in traditional grammar class is relatively single, and the cramming teaching method overemphasizes the teacher-centered teaching mode and ignores the importance of students as the main body of learning in the teaching process of the grammar class, thus resulting in students' lack of interest in grammar learning and low classroom participation. This teaching design selects Unit 1 from FLTRP senior English Book 2 as the design object, and aims to use the guided discovery method to explore its application and related teaching plan designs in English grammar class. In the end the author makes specific self-evaluation and teaching reflection, hoping to provide certain reference value for English grammar teaching in senior middle school.

Keywords

English Grammar; Teaching Methods; Teaching Design; The Guided Discovery Method.

1. Introduction

Learning English is very important, it provides us with good opportunities to develop and communicate with people all over the world. Therefore, English grammar cannot be ignored. In recent years, with the continuous reform of teaching methods, a large number of epoch-making scientific teaching methods have emerged. Especially under the promotion of China's educational reform, many foreign language researchers pay too much attention to communicative competence, thus largely ignoring the importance of grammar learning. At present, English grammar teaching in middle schools has been neglected under the reform of the new curriculum standards, and even some teachers themselves have ignored the important role of English grammar teaching, resulting in the low grammar ability of students, which seriously hinders the pragmatic ability of the language, and thus affects the English level of students. [1].

However, grammar teaching is not the ultimate goal of English teaching, it is an important condition to cultivate students' English communicative ability, so it cannot be ignored. The purpose of grammar teaching is not only to make students understand the content and principles of grammar rules, but more importantly to make students use grammar rules correctly in language communication activities.

2. Problems to Be Solved in English Grammar Class

Since the curriculum reform, there are still many problems in the actual grammar teaching process. For example, some English teachers are not aware of grammar and think that grammar learning is the ultimate goal of grammar education. They may be teaching without considering context and actual language skills. In the traditional grammar class, English learning and teaching are mainly exam-oriented, and teachers mostly instill grammar points without

considering students' interest and class participation, which leads to poor classroom atmosphere.

2.1. Backward Teaching Methods

Because of the fear that students can't keep grammar knowledge in mind after imitating drills, some teachers are accustomed to adopt the method of "speaking first and then explaining" to improve the teaching results. Actually, the way of passive memory will limit active thinking of students in learning English. Although it has an effect in a short time, it is difficult to internalize grammatical knowledge into real language ability. As a result, it is very common that students cannot use grammar items accurately despite it has been explained many times by the teacher. It is undeniable that the teaching of "direct instruction" has hindered the development of students' creative thinking to a certain extent.

2.2. Low Classroom Participation

Through the internship, the author has found that students are not very engaged in learning English grammar in class. Though class questions are carefully designed before, few students can actively or spontaneously join in the answers. Not to mention the part of discussing, students can not effectively discuss or cooperate with their partners. Sometimes when it comes to the session of voluntary questioning and answering, students deliberately bow their heads in order not to let the teacher call their names. This situation seriously affects the interaction between students and teachers. As a result, the effectiveness of English grammar teaching is greatly reduced, and ultimately it will also affect students' academic performance.

2.3. Dull Classroom Atmosphere

Because of the traditional grammar translation method, students can only passively listen and do exercises without interest. The loss of interest makes them unable to concentrate and devote themselves to learning grammar. In addition, teachers are too concentrated on the practice of grammar form without paying attention to the understanding of meaning and the flexible use of grammar in context, which greatly reduces the fun and richness of grammar learning. Last but not least, it is easy for students to feel that the English grammar class is very boring and exhausted, because the teacher's explanation is complex and tedious.

3. Overview of the Guided Discovery Method

In recent research and practical teaching work, the guided discovery method has been proved to have positive effects on English teaching and learning in middle school. The understanding of the guided discovery method is conducive to more effective application of it to English grammar teaching. It is essential to make a clear understanding about the the guided discovery method' theory before its application.

3.1. Definition of the Guided Discovery Method

The guided discovery method is an effective way to teach grammar that fully embodies teachers as the leading, students as the main subject. It advocates the creation of situations to provide language input to students, and let students experience and feel the language, and then guide students to analyze the characteristics of the materials presented, so as to summarize the grammar rules, and apply these rules through various activities, so as to finally put the rules into practice.

Wang qiang held a bold view that the guided discovery method is similar to the inductive method in that the students are induced to discover rules by themselves but different in that the process of the discovery is carefully guided and assisted by the teacher and the rules are then elicited and taught explicitly. [2]To put it simply, the guided discovery means that the teacher guides the students to discover grammar rules. Above all, the guided discovery method

means that the teacher divides the textbook into a process of discovery according to the structure characteristics of the textbook and students' situation (their thought, knowledge and language level). Then, following the law of students' cognition and inherent cultural and scientific knowledge, the teacher guides the students to actively study and find out problems by the way of reading, observation, experiment, thinking, discussion and listening to class, aiming to achieve the purpose of knowledge acquisition, ability development and awareness raising, thus promoting students' all-round development.

From the above definitions, it is easy to find that the guided discovery method focuses on developing students' learning independence and creative thinking. Although different people have different understanding of the guided discovery method, the essence of it is that students learn knowledge actively under the guidance of teachers.

3.2. Application of the Guided Discovery Method

The guided discovery method, also known as the "exploration method", is the deepening of the discussion method. It refers to the teaching method of discovering problems, exploring problems and solving problems by students themselves under the guidance of teachers. Teachers can guide students to explore and discover grammatical rules step by step by creating conditions, and freely use grammar in context, so as to improve students' comprehensive language use ability.[3] The basic requirements for the use of the discovery method are as follows:

Firstly, according to the characteristics of teaching materials and students' situation, determine the topic and process of inquiry and discovery. Secondly, carefully design and organize the teaching and actively guide students' discovery activities. Thirdly, try to create a good class situation for students to explore and discover.

The steps of the guided discovery method are as follows: Firstly, create problem situations, propose problems to be solved and stimulate students' interest in learning. In specific teaching, teachers should carefully design some exploratory teaching situations according to the nature of teaching materials, students' cognitive level, age characteristics and existing teaching equipment, so as to promote their strong desire for knowledge, take the initiative to explore and solve problems, and cultivate students' interest in learning. Secondly, carefully devise solutions to the problem and collect relevant data extensively. Based on the existing tasks that students can complete independently, teachers should carefully design some problem situations to induce students' forming thinking, promote students' self-improvement in collective cooperation, and independently complete the transfer of learning. Finally, ask students to propose hypotheses and test them. Therefore, when they are organized to discuss, guide the students to clarify the ambiguities or confusions in their thinking to improve the quality of their knowledge, and at the same time, the students can exchange and supplement their own discoveries, so as to learn from each other's unique insights and apply the unique insights of others to future learning, so as to obtain more complete and profound knowledge.

However, these steps are not fixed. A teaching model is effective only when it is appropriate for the teaching context. Therefore, the best thing to do is to develop one's own teaching methods and steps based on the context and integrates the merits of different methodologies to serve the purpose of teaching and the needs of students.

3.3. Theoretical Basics of the Guided Discovery Method

The guided discovery method mainly puts problem-solving first, emphasizes the development of students' independence, and pays attention to the exercise of students' creative thinking and will, which is conducive to the cultivation of students' interest in learning English and the improvement of class participation. The evolution and development of the guided discovery

method cannot be separated from the study of some basic theories from various types of scholars.

In Bruner's discovery learning theory, it argued that the essence of learning is that a person connects similar things and organizes them into structures that give them meaning. Learning is the organization and reorganization of cognitive structures. The learning of knowledge is to form a structure of knowledge in various ways in the minds of students.[4] Obviously, in Bruner's discovery learning theory, it emphasizes the importance and creativity of a learner's subjective initiative. What's more, Bruner believes that students should be inspired and guided by teachers to exhibit the structure of knowledge in their own special way of observing things, and discover things with the help of teachers or other materials provided by teachers. Learning based on the guided discovery method aims to help students learn independently and become autonomous and automatic thinkers.[5].

In the constructivist learning theory put forward by Piaget, he believed that learning is "self-construction". Individual can get their individual and social experience between the subject and object interaction in the development process of individual thought, which highlights the initiative of a man as the subject of cognition, and believes that knowledge is a structure, and without the construction activity of the subject, knowledge cannot be produced.[6] According to Piaget, learning is not simply allowing learners to take the knowledge of others, learners should actively construct their own knowledge and experience, which is a process of self-regulation. Therefore, how the mastery of knowledge is and how to promote learning more effectively require learners to grasp and regulate it themselves.[7].

4. Teaching Plan Design

Step 1 Leading in

Greet the class and play a song named Five Hundred Miles and ask students to listen to the lyrics carefully:

If you missed the train I'm on,
You will know that I am gone,
You can hear the whistle blow a hundred miles.
A hundred miles, a hundred miles.

...

Ask students a question and invite some volunteers to answer the question.

Question: Can you find out some modal verbs in this song?

Try to help students find out grammar points about modal verbs, and write them on the blackboard.

(Justification: By using a song named Five Hundred Miles to arouse students' interest in learning English and preparing essential grammar knowledge for the next step. Students are familiar with the song Five Hundred Miles, they don't know exactly the grammar points in this song, which may make they feel anxious. The teacher should guide students to find the grammar and make a review in time.)

Step 2 Presentation

Ask students to find out the sentences with modal verbs in the reading passage: A Child of Two Cuisines from page 2 and 3.

Teacher: Please find out the sentences with modal verbs in the reading passage: A Child of Two Cuisines from page 2 and 3.

Student 1: I was able to hold a knife and fork and chopsticks!

Student 2: But there are still some dishes that Dad dares not try even after many years of marriage to my mother.

Student 3: Mum and I just have to find a way to get him into the kitchen!

Explain the grammar points of "be able to, had better, have to, dare not" one by one.

Make a table list to show the grammar points:

Ask students to read the example sentences repeatedly and compare their differences.

Grammar summary:

Ask students to answer the following questions and make a summary of the modal verbs.

Question 1: What are the modal verbs?

Question 2: What are the characteristics of modal verbs?

(Justification: Based on the relevant grammar examples found by students in reading passage in step 1, it can effectively help students complete the task quickly and have a better understanding of modal verbs than before. A table list of modal verbs can consolidate students' understanding of the basic usage of modal verbs. Though it is confused, appropriate encouragement and hints are necessary. And the repeating exercise is essential for memorizing. The final example sentences and questions can make students a clear.)

Step 3 Practice

Ask students to finish the following sentences with the suitable modal verbs by themselves.

Table 1. exercise 1

He might ____ fix your piano.
You ____ hurry, for there is a lot time to go to the school.
You ____ finish you homework before 9 o'clock.
Wang Hong ____ go out alone in the evening.

(Justification: It is beneficial for students by asking them to do related exercises after grammar explanation. The teacher should give further explanation in time to help students have a clear understanding of the modal verbs.)

Step 4 Production Role play

Ask students to create a conversation with their partners by using the modal verbs and invite 3 pairs of students to perform in front of the classroom.

Table 2. exercise 2

Imagine that Zhang Qiong's bike was broken down last weekend, therefore, she is unhappy this week, and Wang Cong gives some suggestions to her after knowing it. Example conversation:
Wang Cong: You look so sad, why?
Zhang Qiong: Because my bike was broken last weekend.
Wang Cong: I am so sorry to hear that. You had better take your bike to the repair shop to fix.

Micro-writing.

Ask students to write a short paragraph about 50 words on their own by using the five modal verbs learned in this part. The example can be written as follows:

Hello, everyone. My name is Li Ming, I am able to play the piano and play badminton. However, I don't dare to play basketball because I was afraid of getting hurt...

(Justification: By doing role play, students can be fully involved in the class and the awareness of using modal verbs can be improved. Students are afraid of making mistakes or they are

simply feel shy to speak out in front of the whole class, the teacher should give appropriate encouragement and prompt. By doing micro-writing, students can write about their life by using the modal verbs that they learned in this lesson. Most of them can write well, but some students are lack of vocabulary and excellent expressions. The teacher need to check their writing and give feedback as soon as possible.)

Step 5 Summary and Homework

Summary: Lead students to summarize what they have learned today in this lesson.

Homework: Ask students to review the usages of modal verbs and organize their notes.

(Justification: By summarizing and reviewing the modal verbs, students can have a deeper understanding of modal verbs and consolidate their knowledge as well, which can lay a solid foundation for further grammar learning.)

5. Analysis and Evaluation of the Teaching Plan Design

Based on literature reading, practical teaching work and help from the thesis advisor, the author has made certain reflection and self-evaluation about the teaching plan designs, though they may have kind of reference significance, there are still some problems needed to be improved.

5.1. The Advantages of the Teaching Plan Design

Firstly, the teaching plan designs mainly used the guided discovery method to teach grammar and it was a better way for students to learn and develop their ability to think independently compared with the traditional cramming teaching method. Obviously, as the main participants in the class, students can be actively involved in grammar teaching and learning under the guidance of the teacher.

Secondly, the teaching plan designs tried to apply the learner-oriented approach as much as possible. During the process of learning, the teacher took students' language proficiency and their needs into consideration. For example, in the teaching plan design, the leading part was related to their life and they could fully got involved in the lesson.

Finally, although the grammar points are difficult for students to learn, the teacher carefully designed grammar examples and activities that were fit for students, which also greatly aroused their interests in learning English grammar points and help them understand better.

5.2. The Disadvantages of the Teaching Plan Design

Although the two above teaching plan designs used the guided discovery method to guide students to learn the grammar points, there are also some disadvantages needed to be improved.

Firstly, the teacher tried to set students as the center of classroom teaching and learning by the arrangement of various activities, but the effect was relatively poor. Students can only carry out the activities in their own pre-arranged pace. In the teaching plan design, the teacher simply asked students to find out sentences with the modal verbs, so the teacher ignored those students with learning difficulties.

Secondly, during the above two teaching plan designs, the authors used a variety of learning styles to make the classroom atmosphere more active, such as whole class work, group work, pair work, and individual study. But in real classroom situation, the discussion time was not enough, so activities may seem rushed and messy. Therefore, learning should focus on results rather than diversity of forms. For example, In the teaching plan design, the teacher asked students to do exercise 2, and ignored whether the time was enough or not.

Thirdly, when the teacher guided students to master knowledge and skills, the author neglected the process efficiency and students' emotional cultivation. The new curriculum advocates the

integration of three-dimensional goals of knowledge aims, ability aim and emotional aims in classroom teaching. The three dimensions are not independent, but closely integrated. For example, in the teaching plan design, when the teacher explained the grammar points of modal verbs, the teacher should give more attention on the cultivation of emotions, attitudes and values.

Finally, due to the limited competence of the author, the teaching plan designs lacked an in-depth understanding of teaching. And in teaching practice, the author only selected two representative units with the grammar part for teaching plan designs, which did not involve more grammar knowledge and lacked innovation. What's more, due to the lack of grammar teaching practice, the role of teachers in teaching design and practice needed to be improved.

6. Measures to Be Improved

Firstly, the teacher should take students into consideration, for example, students' interests, motivation, aptitude, age and so on, only in this way, can the teacher put students in the center and the efficiency of the class can be improved. Therefore, under the new curriculum reform, teachers should pay full attention to the needs of students, give students more free time and space, so that students can be in an active learning state to the greatest extent and the teaching can become a creative and magical process. Most importantly, it is also the process that fully displays students' unique personalities.

Secondly, the teacher should think about the time allocation carefully in each step, especially during the group work and pair work. As a teacher, he should consider all students in the classroom, not only the excellent or top students. Group cooperative learning is the learning style advocated by the new curriculum, but it cannot be understood mechanically, and not all teaching tasks can only be completed through group work or pair work. In the teaching process, teachers should choose the types of learning according to the actual needs of teaching, and teachers must also choose the right time to guide them. All in all, cooperative learning is no longer an embellishment of classroom teaching, but a solid and effective learning method with practical significance.

Finally, the teacher should give more examples related to their life to guide students to find out the grammar rules and stimulate students' positive enthusiasm for learning and cultivate students' moral sentiments. Meanwhile, the teacher should lead students to take the initiative to experience the process of learning basic knowledge and skills that meets the requirements of lifelong learning, actively guide students to discover, summarize and master the learning methods of knowledge, constantly stimulate students' positive enthusiasm for learning and correct attitude towards learning, cultivate students' moral sentiments and form correct values and positive attitudes towards life.

7. Conclusion

Before the teaching design, the author has found some serious problems in grammar class in senior middle school. Based on the literature reading and internship experience, the author tries to combine the theoretical analysis and teaching plan designs to probe into the grammar teaching and learning in senior middle school. The author chooses the guided discovery method as the research subject, aims to explore its application in grammar class.

At the end of the teaching plan design, the author conducted objective evaluation and reflection and hoped to provide certain reference value for senior middle school English grammar teaching. As a result, the guided discovery method can greatly help improve the class efficiency and arouse students' interest in grammar class, but the author still holds the view that teachers

should try to use different teaching methods to make the lesson efficient according to specific learning context.

Because of the author's limited professional ability and teaching practice, the teaching design still has some disadvantages that need to be improved in future teaching. More time and energy should be devoted to grasp and understand the theoretical knowledge of the guided discovery method, so as to provide better teaching practice.

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to thank my family, especially my grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, uncle, aunt, sister, brother who give me financial support and encouragement. kindness and help that I can finish this teaching design.

All in all, there's too much thanks to whom helped me during the writing. Wish them safe and sound.

References

- [1] Chen Lin, "Regular High School English (Students' Book) Compulsory Volume 2". Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2022.
- [2] Chen Lin, "English for Ordinary High School (Teacher's Book) Compulsory Volume 2". Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2022.
- [3] Feng Qi, Zhang Mingzhu, "The application of Guided Discovery Method in Grammar Classroom Teaching", *Literary Education (I)* 09 (2019) : 158-159.
- [4] Fraida Dubin, and Elite Olshtain. *Course Design*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2002.
- [5] H.D. Brown. *Principle of Language Learning and Teaching*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2002.
- [6] Hua Zhijuan, "Analysis of the Current Situation and Countermeasures of English Grammar Teaching in Middle Schools", *Liberal Arts Navigation (First Ten Days)* 12 (2015) : 43.
- [7] Jespersen, Otto. *How to Teach a Foreign Language*. Beijing: Taylor and Francis Group, 2013.
- [8] Li Juhua, "The Enlightenment of Bruner's Cognitive Discovery Theory to Education and Teaching", *Journal of Yanbian Institute of Education* 36 (2022) : 134-135.
- [9] Lv Lin, "A Study on the Cultivation of College English Autonomous Learning under the theoretical model of Piaget's Constructivism", *Overseas English* 03 (2017) : 73-74.
- [10] Lindley Murrat. *English Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- [11] Michael McCarthy. *English Grammar: The Basics*. Beijing: Taylor and Francis Group, 2021.
- [12] Wang Lv, Yu Yangkui, "Constructivist Learning Theory", *Contemporary Education Forum (Teaching Research)* 04 (2010) : 13-15.
- [13] Wang Qiang, *English Teaching Methods (2nd Edition)*. Beijing: Higher Education Press, 2006.
- [14] Yang Li, "How to apply Bruner's 'Cognition-discovery' Learning Theory in English Teaching", *Contemporary Education Forum (Subject Education Research)* 09 (2008) :85-86.
- [15] Yan Ping, "Design of high school English Grammar Teaching Activities based on Guided Discovery Method", *Foreign Language Teaching in Primary and Secondary Schools*, 39 (2016) : 49-54.