

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS: A TEACHING PLAN

In this chapter, the implications of this study for English teachers will be made.

In section 6.1 the implications in English teaching will be discussed, and in section 6.2 the design of a teaching plan and the rationale behind it will be described. Then in section 6.3 this teaching plan will be introduced in detail. Finally in section 6.4 a summary of this chapter will be made.

6.1 Implications for English Teaching

In chapter 4, I have found that the topic structure LD was most difficult for my subjects, and then the next difficult structure was DP, eliciting asymmetric responses of which DP(O) was more difficult than DP(S). In chapter 5 I further attributed the difficulty in LD to its indirect nature of positive evidence and that in DP to its higher transferability in terms of typological markedness, and I judged the asymmetric responses in DP to be due to the relative enhancement of the positive input.

Despite the presence of corresponding positive inputs of all topic structures in the textbooks, the two topic structures still seem difficult for the learners to unlearn. Therefore, it is assumed in this study that additional negative evidence is needed for

the learners to reset L1 parameters for the L2 in these two structures. That is, besides providing enough exposure to the positive evidence for adequate L2 knowledge, a precautionary procedure via negative evidence is needed for the unlearning of the L1 topic structures.

In this study I assume that the presence of overt pronouns and the appropriate knowledge of their use in English can serve as the positive evidence for LD and DP. A technique of input-enhancement (Sharwood Smith, 1991), previously termed consciousness-raising (Sharwood Smith, 1981), is employed to focus learners' attention on the formal properties of the L2 input forms, thus facilitating the transformation of input into intake. I thus employed the interpretation task (Ellis, 1995:87), which "emphasizes helping learners to notice grammatical features in the input, comprehend their meanings, and compare the forms present in the input with those occurring in the output." The step of comparison also enhances the intake.

On the other hand, the garden path technique (Tomasello and Herron, 1988a, 1988b) is adopted to serve as the negative evidence to unlearn the L1 setting of the two structures. This technique aims to induce transfer errors purposefully and then correct them immediately. This technique is found effective in improving both overgeneralization errors and transfer errors than the traditional one—direct error correction (Tomasello and Herron, 1988a, 1988b).

The teaching plan proposed in the following section is suggested to be a remedial plan incorporated in one class period to solve the LD and DP transfer errors. It can be adopted whenever the usage of pronouns has been introduced. I follow Chen's (1983) format and design the last period of a lesson plan with four periods in total.

6.2 the Design of a Teaching Plan and the Rationale Behind It

I have designed a teaching plan which consists of the following activities:

1. Warm-up and review--family reunion game (6 minutes)
2. Interpretation task (12 minutes)
3. Group discussion--rule formation (3 minutes)
4. Garden path--translation exercise (12 minutes)
5. Consolidation--explanation and oral practice on the new patterns (3 minutes)
6. Practice--grammaticality judgment task (7 minutes)
7. Assignment (2 minutes)

The warm-up session is to refresh students' memory, arouse their interests in learning, and prepare them for the new material to be learned.

The reason for the interpretation task and garden path lies in the fact that many empirical have suggested that mere exposure to L2 positive evidence enhances only the L2 knowledge, but does little good to remove the L1 transfer errors (Lightbown and Spada, 1990; White, 1991; White et al, 1991; Trahey and White, 1993; Spada,

1997; Lzumi and Lakshmanan, 1998; Lightbown and Spada, 1999). Therefore, it has been proposed that the positive input should be enhanced in order to make it more salient (White et al, 1991; Sharwood Smith, 1993). On the other hand, negative evidence in the form of corrective feedback is needed for the unlearning of L1 setting (Lightbown and Spada, 1990; White, 1991; Spada, 1997; Lzumi and Lakshmanan, 1998; Lightbown and Spada, 1999). Therefore, I design the interpretation task to serve as the input-enhancement activity and the garden path technique to serve as the timely corrective feedback.

Besides, I design the group discussion session of rule formation for the reason that “explicit knowledge accelerates the process of acquiring implicit knowledge” (Fotos & Ellis, 1991). I want the learners to induce the rules of pronoun usage after they finish the interpretation task because these rules are easy to identify.

The consolidation session after the garden path task aims to prevent the students from being misled by the incorrect input, and to make sure that they understand the correct usage.

Moreover, the grammaticality judgment task is designed to enhance their explicit knowledge of the correct usage of pronouns.

Finally, the assignment session serves as the application practice for the students to use the pronouns in real situations outside of the classroom.

In sum, it is hoped that the combination of input enhancement and negative feedback on L2 pronoun usage can help the students reset the Chinese L1 parameter for English L2 in the two topic structures--LD and DP.

The purpose of the teaching plan is outlined in table 25.

Table 25: the purpose of the design of each activity

Activity	purpose
1. Warm-up and review --family reunion game	Memory, readiness, motivation
2. Interpretation task	Input enhancement
3. Group discussion--rule formation	Explicit knowledge facilitates implicit knowledge
4. Garden path-translation exercise	Negative evidence
5. Consolidation--explanation and oral practice on the new patterns	Avoid the negative influence coming from misleading clues
6. Practice--grammaticality judgment task	Enhance explicit knowledge
7. Assignment	Application practice

The warm-up activity aims to ensure that every student is prepared and highly motivated to learn the lesson. The interpretation task and the garden path technique serve as the enhancement of the positive input and as the negative evidence respectively. The consolidation session is designed in case that the negative evidence session may provide misleading evidence. The group discussion and the practice session are to improve students' explicit knowledge, thus facilitating the acquisition of implicit knowledge. Finally, the assignment further improves the students' spontaneous use of the L2 knowledge outside of the classroom.

6.3 The Proposed Teaching Plan

Text: The Standard English Textbook for junior high schools (2003)

Book I, Lesson 3, Sally Is A Singer

Class period: 4 periods, 45 minutes for each

Equipment: 1. Blackboard

2. Tape recorder

Materials: 1. A tape recording of the text and dialogue

2. Flashcards with new words and their phonetic transcriptions

3. Pictures and charts displaying different situations and sentence patterns

4. Game cards of “family reunion”

5. Task sheets

Lesson Objectives:

I. The Cognitive Domain:

1. Uses the two personal pronouns correctly -- *he* and *she*.

1.1 Knows the form of the two pronouns.

1.2 Identifies the usage of the two pronouns

1.3 Use the two pronouns in sentences

1.4 Uses the two pronouns to describe people

2. Uses the two demonstrative pronouns--*this* and *that*.

2.1 Knows the form of the two demonstrative pronouns.

2.2 Identifies the usage of the two demonstrative pronouns

2.3 Use the two demonstrative pronouns in sentences and dialogues

2.4 Uses the two demonstrative pronouns to describe people and things

3. Uses the new words in this lesson.

3.1 Knows the meaning of the new words

3.2 Spells the new words correctly

3.3 Uses the new words in sentences and dialogues

4. Knows the meaning of the whole lesson

4.1 Understands the reading and dialogue

4.2 Knows how to use pronouns to describe family members

4.3 Answers the teacher' s questions about the text

II. The Affective Domain:

5. Responds willingly

6. Answers the teacher' s questions willingly

7. Likes the classroom activities

III. The Psychomotor domain:

8. Pronounces the new words correctly

9. Understands the text at normal speed

10. Reads the sentences properly

11. Writes smoothly and legibly

The Fourth Period

Activities:

I. Warm-up and review--family reunion game (6 minutes)

II. Interpretation task (12 minutes)

III. Group discussion--rule formation (3 minutes)

IV. Garden path--translation exercise (12 minutes)

V. Consolidation--explanation and oral practice on the new patterns (3 minutes)

VI. Practice--grammaticality judgment task (7 minutes)

VII. Assignment (2 minutes)

Teaching Procedures:

I. Warm-up and review--family reunion game

“Family reunion”

The “family” consists of four members—Mom, Dad, a son, and a daughter. All students are given a card specifying their name and occupation along with the information of the other three family members. They have to find the other three members based on the information. They must ask the other students questions to see if anyone matches the information of their family members. The first three groups

which find all of the family members will win the game. The fastest group will get 3 points, the next 2 points, and the third 1 point. They have to introduce their family members to all the other classmates after they win the game. One example of the game cards is shown in the following.

Example: the reunion of the Brown family

Family member 1: Dad

I am Dad. My name is Mark. I am a businessman. <u>the Brown family</u>		
Mom	son	daughter
Susan	John	Cathy
teacher	student	singer

Family member 2: Mom

I am Mom. My name is Susan. I am a teacher. <u>the Brown family</u>		
Dad	son	daughter
Mark	John	Cathy
businessman	student	singer

Family member 3: son

I am the son. My name is John. I am a student. <u>the Brown family</u>		
Dad	Mom	sister
Mark	Susan	Cathy
Businessman	teacher	singer

Family member 4: daughter

I am the daughter. My name is Cathy. I am a singer. <u>the Brown family</u>		
Dad	Mom	brother
Mark	Susan	John
Businessman	teacher	student

II. Interpretation task

Activity 1: Comprehending

Students listen to the following sentences and decide which picture matches the description. Then they should put a check next to the picture which matches the description.

Example:

1. Bob is a singer. He sings good songs.

Picture A_____

Picture B_____

??

??

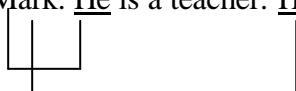


Purpose: to negotiate oral input

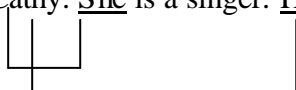
Activity 2: Paying attention

Students need to draw an arrow to show which person the pronoun refers to.

1. This is Mark. He is a teacher. His son is my student.



2. This is Cathy. She is a singer. Her mother is my teacher.



Purpose: to enhance the input

Activity 3: What's the difference?

Students should read the following paragraph, identify the problematic parts of the following sentences, and then correct them.

Reading text:

I am a student. My name is John. My father, he is a teacher. Teach at my school.

My mother, she is a singer. My sister, name is Sally. A student, too.

Purpose: to focus learners' attention on the difference between the correct way of using pronouns and the incorrect way (enhance the intake).

III. Group discussion--rule formation

Students are divided into groups, each comprising three people. They have to work out the rule of correct pronoun usage. One of them has to report their findings to the other classmates, and then other students comment on their findings. Finally the teacher makes a conclusion on the rules of pronouns.

IV. Garden path--translation exercise

All students are required to finish the translation exercise. After they have done it, the teacher asks all students to read their answers. The teacher then writes down the answers they read and correct the errors immediately.

Example:

我哥哥他是個生意人,名字叫做 John . 我姐姐她是個老師,在我們學校教書 . 她名

字叫做 Sally .

V. Consolidation—explanation and pattern practice

Explanation:

The teacher further emphasizes the correct usage of pronouns. Namely, each pronoun refers back to the noun farther than a clause, and they must not be adjacent.

In addition, each pronoun should be overtly expressed.

Mechanic drill:

The teacher leads the students to practice the following mechanic drills.

This	is	My father	He	is	a teacher
That		Mr. Brown			She
		My sister			a singer
		Miss Wang			



His name	is	Mark
Her		Cathy

Meaningful drill:

Students are divided into groups of three members. They first introduce their own family members' names and occupations. Each student takes turns introducing the other students in terms of their family members' names and occupations. The teacher may walk around to see if there are any unfamiliar words about the occupations, and write them down on the blackboard if there are. Finally the teacher asks one volunteer to introduce another person by reporting his or her family

members' names and occupations.

VI. Practice--grammaticality judgment task

The format of this task is the same with that I adopted in this thesis. That is, a set of grammatical and grammatical sentences are presented with a bracket next to them for the students to judge their grammaticality. If students think a sentence is wrong, they should circle the problematic part and write down the correct usage. The teacher asks all students to finish the task. After they finish it, the teacher checks their answers item by item.

Example:

1. () My father, he is a teacher.
2. () I have a sister. Is a singer.

VII. Assignment

The teacher asks the students to draw the pictures of their family members, and write down three sentences to describe each member.

Example:



1. This is my father.
2. He is a businessman
3. His name is Mark.

6.4 Summary of Chapter 6

In section 6.1 I have discussed the implications of my study for English teaching. Namely, the most difficult structure LD and the next difficult one DP could be solved by the positive input of overt pronouns plus their correct usage, together with the negative evidence to serve as the precautionary procedure. In section 6.2 I have described my design of a teaching plan and its underlying rationale. First, the warm-up session is to stir students' motivation of learning. Next, in order to ensure that the positive input can be acquired without the trace of L1 influence, interpretation tasks are adopted to enhance inputs, and the garden path technique is also employed to provide negative evidence. Then, for fear that the negative evidence may have misleading effects, a consolidation session is designed. On the other hand, the rule formation and grammatical judgment exercise are also included in the plan to improve students' explicit knowledge, for further facilitation of implicit knowledge. Then the final assignment session is to improve students' spontaneous use of the target features. Finally in section 6.3 a detailed description of the teaching plan is offered.