

An Analysis of the Causes and Countermeasures of Students' English Learning Weariness in Junior High School

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Abstract—Solving the problems of the students' English learning weariness plays an important role in improving the students' English learning achievement. The paper uses questionnaire to study students in The Third Junior High School of Yantai Development Zone. This paper analyzes the causes and countermeasures of students' English learning weariness based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. The survey shows that lack of learning motivation and interest is the main causes of students' English learning weariness. So this paper will study countermeasures of students' English learning weariness in the aspect of students' learning motivation and interest. And it proposes the following countermeasures to change the students' English learning weariness: By intriguing enthusiasm through competitive activities; By helping students set up their own goals to arouse their interest; By creating question situation to cultivate and stimulate students' learning motivation; By using the praise properly in the process of teaching; By making the English class more attractive; By creating a development atmosphere to arouse motivation; By cultivating a harmonious relationship between teachers and students.

Index Terms—English learning weariness, countermeasures, interest, motivation

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the problem of students' English learning weariness becomes more and more serious. It is remarkably broad in scope and presents complicated features. And its negative impact is becoming obvious and arouses people's concern. Psychological barrier is one of the most common and dangerous problem. In addition, English weariness is more likely to develop and spread because junior high school students influence each other. So, if the problem can't be solved in time, there would be serious consequences. Therefore, this topic is of great importance and significance. And finding the causes and countermeasures of students' English learning weariness has become an urgent problem.

For students junior high school is the most complex period as well as the most crucial period of the English study and development in the life time. English is used all over the world, which is one of the world's most important languages. In current English teaching, many students are weary of learning English. In addition, some students have a headache when hearing English. Some students even have a doze. They lack confidence in learning English and sometimes abandon learning English. The classroom has become dull. As a result, the teacher can't carry his teaching activities. And the students are weary of learning English. "Weariness" can also be called "learning weariness", which means that students lose interest in studying and feel tired of learning. It often embodies the stronger intensity of indifferent attitude, boredom, psychological conflicts and representing bad behavior from their reaction towards learning. The phenomenon of students' weariness in current has been the prevalence of school education. The situation is not optimistic. The atmosphere of weariness grows fast.

II. THEORY BASIS

Many psychologists and educators make the survey and conclude that interest plays a very important role in students' English learning. As Einstein (1979) said, "Interest is the best teacher. Interest can arouse people's creative enthusiasm, curiosity and thirst for knowledge." (P.144) The reason why many people acquire the great success in his career is that all of them are interested in the career they are engaged in (Guo Benyu, 2006, P.34). At the beginning of the 19th century, one of the earliest theories of interest was developed by Herbart (Antia, 2003, P.11). Interest is a phenomenon which comes from a person's interaction with his environment, and it can be regarded as a feeling of wanting to know, learn, or take part in something (Hidi, 1992, P.12). Schiefele makes a survey and concludes that individual's learning interest is related to the achievements (Schiefele, 1992, P.23). Due to lose interest in English, many students have the problem of English learning weariness. Students are unlikely to be very successful at learning anything unless they enjoy the process (Michael Lewis, 2009, P.12). So taking an interest in learning English plays a crucial role in learning English well. David Hayes (1997, P.2-6) argues that interest is a kind of psychological inclination demonstrated by children when they try to understand or do something. Study interest means children's positive inclination of recognition towards study, and it presents an intensive attitude of students to study. Study interest can be categorized into material and

psychological interest on the basis of the content of study, and divided into direct and indirect interest on the term of study targets. Study interest can be defined as permanent and temporary interest according to the study time, and categorized into wide and main interest on the term of study scope. Positive inclination of recognition presents an intensive attitude of students to study. Study interest plays an important role in students' study. Teachers should know the motivation that makes children study; it is also the most realistic, energetic and intensive internal factors to study. Interest is the best way to forget hardship and make people devote themselves to study; people are willing to try their best out of interest. Once the child becomes interested in study, he will try to take part in learning activities.

From Tao Xingzhi's opinion, he thinks that when the students are interested in something, he will do it wholeheartedly (Tao Xingzhi, 1985, P.22). The famous psychologist of our country, Pan Shu (1982, P.34) thinks that interest is the most realistic and active factor in learning motivation. Shen Jiliang (2008, P.31) investigates 278 junior high school students and concludes that the higher the level of students' learning interest is, the better the students' achievements will be. If the students are interested in English learning, their interest will be motivated and the achievements will be improved.

In recent China, researchers began to study interest to English learning in 1980s, and more and more researchers paid their attention to the study since 1990s, such as He Yaqin (2000, P.45-49). Improving the students' English and making the students practice English basic abilities is necessary, such as, listening, speaking, reading and writing initiatively is crucial. When a student has interest in something, he will express particular concern about it and explore it bravely. He would like to engage in activities related to the thing (Zhao Liqin, 2010, P.53). It can stimulate the students' interest and motivation actively and facilitate the students' English learning.

Language learning motivation is the reason why learners learn a language, the central force or inner power that make people move forward in the language learning process persistently, is also the dynamically changing increasing cognitive and emotional arousal in the language learning which decides how much conscious intellectual and physical effort the learner makes to attain a previously set goals and how long the learner keep this effort. It is one of the key factors that determine the result of learning.

A simple definition is provided by Keller (1999, P.389), "motivation refers to the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect". Gardner and Lambert (1959, P.266-272) first focus on the role of attitudes and motivation in second language acquisition. Later, researchers have carried out a great number of researches in the field of second/foreign language acquisition so as to find out what constitutes motivation to learn a foreign language, and how it functions in the process of foreign language acquisition.

American psychologist Abraham Maslow (2007, P.18-25) proposed that all humans seek to fulfill a hierarchy of needs, which he represented with a pyramid. Hierarchy of needs theory suggests that, to some extent, students who lack of learning motivation may be due to a lack of Deficiency needs. So teachers should not only care about students' study, but also care about their life and emotion to cultivate their learning motivation. Lack of motivation to learn is another cause arising English learning weariness. Motivation is a force which inspires, guide the person's behavior and make the behavior towards certain direction (Chen Qi, 2005, P.192). English learning motivation includes the purpose of learning English, attitudes, interests, and personal values. It is not simple structure but a multiple-layered, multi-level and multi-factors structure. American psychologist Maslow put forward Self-Actualization theory that it is called the main learning motivation theory. This theory points out that people have the desire of self-actualization, but they also have a lot of fears and worries (Chen Qi, 2005, P.171). Zhang Yimin believes that the New Zealand education attaches importance to cultivate students' self-confidence and sense of success. Losing self-confidence and sense of success would damage the "desire", and then will lead to English learning weariness. As Zhang Yimin (2006, P.32).said, the New Zealand education through the formation of the students' self-confidence and sense of success is effective in preventing English learning weariness. So that, in the teaching process, the students who are lack of learning motivation should be fully respected. Let them feel the love and the sense of belonging, and help them to realize the necessity of learning English and improve their recognition of the value. The humanistic psychologist Rogers (1971, P.36) thinks individuals' cognitive activities are always accompanied by a certain emotional factors. When the emotional factors are repressed even killed; self-invention also won't get development and implementation. Only by respecting and understanding of students' inner world attitude can stimulate the students' learning enthusiasm and enhance their self-confidence. So it is extraordinary necessary to train and motivate the students' motivation.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. *Research Subjects*

The subjects of the survey are from The Third Junior High School of Yantai Development Zone. They are from 4 regular classes, each of which is chosen from different grades. The sample consists of 100 students, 53 females and 47 males. After 3 years English learning, they have acquired basic knowledge of English and formed their own learning methods which are always used in real learning process.

B. *The Questionnaire Survey*

The author has omitted some items according to the need so as to avoid language barrier. This paper probes an

investigation and analysis into the main problem of students' English learning weariness in junior middle school. Students are the main role of the class. Therefore, they will encounter various problems while learning. Only if the teacher can find these problems, find the causes of these problems, the teacher can better help the students, help students to solve the problems.

The questionnaire survey aims to dig out the following questions:

- (1) What reasons result in students' English learning weariness in junior high school?
- (2) What are the effective strategies in solving students' English learning weariness?

The author did a questionnaire for the survey (see appendix) to make the survey more comprehensive. The questionnaire is designed from different aspects to investigate the main problems of students' English learning weariness in junior high school.

C. Results and Analysis

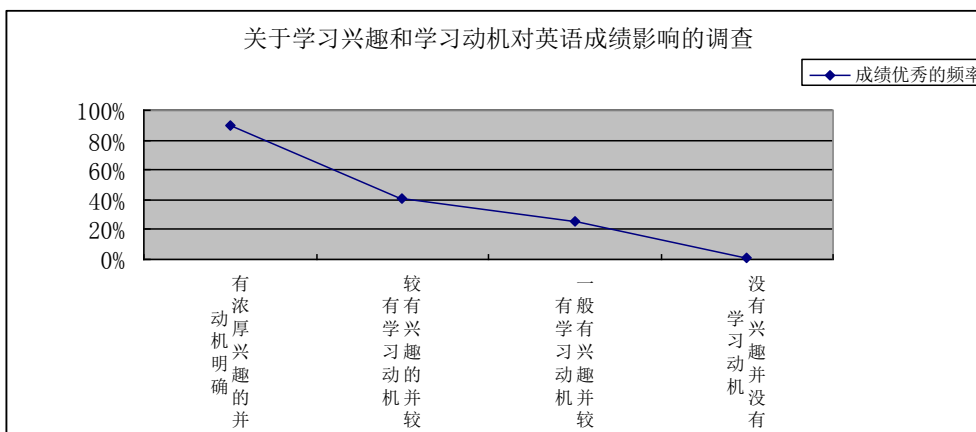


Figure about Learning Interest and Learning Motivation Influence on English Achievement

According to the survey: 90% of the students who can make excellent grades during the study at school are extremely interested in studying English and have clear motivation of learning English. 40.80% of the students who can make excellent grades during the study at school are interested in studying English and have motivation of learning English. 25.70% of the students who can make excellent grades during the study at school have a little interested in studying English and have motivation of learning English. 1.09% of the students who can make excellent grades during the study at school aren't interested in studying English and have no motivation of learning English. In addition, in the consultation, the most reaction is the idea that let the teacher change and improve students' interest in learning. The survey expresses that most students lack English learning motivation and most of them are not interested in learning English.

IV. EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

A. Intrigue Enthusiasm through Competitive Activities

According to the survey: 90% of the students who can make excellent grades during the study at school are extremely interested in studying English and have clear motivation of learning English. So intriguing enthusiasm of the students is very important. Junior students share the same psychological characteristic that everyone wants to be the best among their peers. Therefore, competition just takes advantage of this point, being one of the most effective means to intrigue students' interest in studying. During the teaching process, competition employs various forms, including competition among individuals, among groups, between individual and groups, and between boys and girls. And its content is also abundant, such as English handwriting competition, common sense competition, recitation competition and acting competition, etc. Certainly, teachers should be impartial in the whole process, they can give a commendatory comment or applaud for students. All these would make students acquire the feeling of success. Therefore it will help students require confidence and intrigue huge enthusiasm to study.

Mr. Bruner said, "The best learning motivation is students' interest in learned material itself." Therefore, in the teaching process teachers should strive to create all sorts of pleasant situation for students to cause students' surprise, interest, questions, etc. And this will make the teaching process a kind of attractive to students and attract students actively devoted to learning. The author thinks teaching is not only in the classroom, but we also can make some practice out of class. Rich and colorful activities for children are always huge magnetic fields which have infinite attraction.

Competition with competitive mechanism drives students continuously to surpass others and himself to make further progress. There are many English competition projects. For example, knowledge vies to answer first, guessing riddles and the listening test, etc. In order to help students to memorize words, the author divides the students into two groups

carrying on memorizing the new words. Two students who are chosen at random take part in the game and their scores are recorded every day. The one who makes the highest score will receive rewards. The form and rule of the game can be made according to the actual situation of the students in different class. The game should be launched more frequently and make sure that more and more students will receive rewards.

The author designs an interesting game to help the students to learn the new words: head, hand, leg, foot, toe, and nose. The teacher requires that the students should point to the correct part when they hear the word. As the teacher gives the password faster and faster, the students can remember the words much deeper. Then teacher asks the students to send number in front of the class. As a result, all of the students do their favorite games, and master all the words. They also can communicate with other students using these words. This activity takes advantage of the characteristics of students' interests. Students feel the strong interest in a variety of activities by using his head, hands and mouth, which achieves good teaching effect and makes the students enthusiasm enduring.

B. Help Students Set Up Their Own Goals to Arouse Their Interest

According to the survey: 90% of the students who can make excellent grades during the study at school are extremely interested in studying English and have clear motivation of learning English. So it is important to arouse students' interest. What's more, to help the students to set up their own goals can also arouse their interest. A proper goal plays a significant role in learning English well. Studying English is a process in which one can't make progress one or two days. If one wants to make progress, he must study hard every day. But the students who are weary of learning English are poor in English in many ways. As a result, we should analyze them carefully first, and according to the right level of these students, teachers should help them set up their own proper English learning goals. As is known to all of us, the students will feel bored soon, if their goals are too easy to achieve. In order to avoid this, the teacher should make learning goals a little challenging, but not discouraging. Challenging goal offers students to explore the unknown and to activate thinking, which is expected to bring about a satisfactory result. However, if the goal is too hard to achieve, the students will feel frustrated. In that case, these students may give up their hope completely soon. Therefore, it should be too hard or too easy for the students to set up their goal. And later, teachers should offer various of learning style to make the students' make progress everyday and gradually achieve their goals.

C. Create Question Situation to Cultivate and Stimulate Students' Learning Motivation

Teachers should adopt various teaching methods. On selection and processing for the content of courses, teacher should attach importance to richness and novelty. In the mode of English teaching, teachers should pay attention to the heuristic teaching rather than the traditional cramming method of teaching. The teachers should break away from old teaching ideas, and create an atmosphere which can stimulate the students to engage. Stimulating students' interest in English learning and mobilizing students' learning enthusiasm and initiative is an important means to promote English language teaching. So the students can change his character from the audience to the actor. And the teacher should play the role well as the director and the actor, which creates a free space for the development of creative thinking and enables students to comprehensive development. Form interaction between teaching and learning, and create a comfortable question situation. Teaching is a kind of art. In the teaching process, the teacher should create the English atmosphere, and makes the students involving into their study. The teacher should try his best to enrich students' English information based on the practical situation. By design the teaching and learning activities to enhance students' learning enthusiasm, initiative, and indeed to stimulate students interest in learning English. The students' study desire can be heightened if the teacher asks a question clearly. Teachers will stimulate their thinking and bring their initiative and other positive factors into full play in classroom

D. Use the Praise Properly in the Process of Teaching

According to the survey, 1.09% of the students who can make excellent grades during the study at school aren't interested in studying English and have no motivation of learning English. So interest and motivation play an important role in studying English well. Motivation is the direction of students' efforts and the evaluation criteria. Appropriate praise and criticism can stimulate students' learning motivation. Correct evaluation, the appropriate praise and criticism, not only can strengthen the students' learning effect, but also can consolidate and develop students' correct learning motivation. This is because praise can stimulate the students' learning enthusiasm, cultivate the students' self-confidence; criticism can let students know the direction of the self-shortcoming in study and hard work. So praise and criticism have a certain meaning righteousness to the development of the students. As a result, the evaluation for students should pay attention to combine the praise with objective criticism to promote students' physical and mental development.

E. Make the English Class More Attractive

According to the survey: 90% of the students who can make excellent grades during the study at school are extremely interested in studying English and have clear motivation of learning English. So it is significant to arouse students' motivation to learn English. The teacher should know what to teach, and know how to teach so as to make the students be interested in learning English.

The teacher should make themselves as good actors. The teacher should make the class a place for the students.

Students are able to understand the vocabulary, patterns and the grammar more easily, if the teacher displays or performs how people use languages. The teacher will make the class very real. Students may be highly involved in the teacher's different tone of voice and colorful gesture. The students will be in high spirit, if the teacher could use real items when it is necessary. As a result, the backward students are able to remember the words quickly. What's more, the teacher should be friendly to every student in the class. Then the teacher will be popular with the every student in the class. The students love the teacher as well as your class. Then the students will be interested in learning English.

In the final, the teacher should give the backward students a chance to perform in class. In fact, the backward students don't like to ask questions. But the teacher should encourage them to speak in class and frequently give them positive feedback.

F. Create a Development Atmosphere to Arouse Motivation

American psychologist Abraham Maslow proposed that all humans seek to fulfill a hierarchy of needs, which he represented with a pyramid. Hierarchy of needs theory suggests that, to some extent, students who lack of learning motivation may be due to a lack of Deficiency needs. Teachers are too harsh and demanding, frequently reprimand and criticize students, which cannot meet students' security needs and respect needs, etc. And it is these factors, will become the main obstacle to student learning and self-realization, so teachers should not only care about the students study, but also should pay attention to student's life and emotions in order to stimulate their learning motivation

According to psychological researches, motivation is not genetic, it is learned. In other words, motivation is learnable and teachable. There are some factors that affect one's motivation, such as family, neighbors, prior teachers, learning conditions and so on. They are beyond our control. However, there are some ways that can change your learning habits and establish your motivation. Here are suggestions.

Proper level of concern can activate one's effort to learn. Learners should take care about what to learn and learning results, and have a right attitude toward learning. Suppose learners show indifference or unconcern about their learning, they will make no or little progress in learning. So we can say no learning without concern. Set up learning goals. Setting a goal demonstrates an intention to achieve and activates learning from one day to the next. Students will be motivated to take part in activities and try their best to achieve their goals. Acquire the sense of success. Success is more motivating than failure. How to gain success? Normally, the material must be relevant, and learners can choose proper activities rather than those that are difficult (little likelihood of success) or easy (high probability of success). Passing a test or getting a reward is a success. Every minor success is the progress toward goals. The more you get successes, the more satisfied you are, and the harder you learn. This is the emotional experience. Show one's interest to learning. Interest is the best teacher. Two methods can be used. First, try to find interesting learning materials (different people, different topics); second, try to connect your learning to realistic life (speaking, writing, and application).

G. Cultivate a Harmonious Relationship between Teachers and Students

Harmonious relationship between teachers and students is the foundation of cultivating students' learning motivation. Trust your master, follow his way. The relationship between teachers and students directly restricts the students' emotion and affects their learning behavior. The traditional opinion "Teacher way dignity" no longer adapts to the modern education environment. If you want to build a harmonious relationship between teachers and students, it requires teachers to change their roles. The teacher should walk down the tall podium to students and make friends with the students. And the teacher should give a hand to students in their learning process by using their own knowledge and experience. The building of good relationship between teachers and students should pay attention to the following points:

The teacher should stand in the perspective of students when he thinks a problem and design the teaching activities. There have the democratic platform between the teachers and students. Students are more likely to walk into the happy mutual learning atmosphere between teachers and students.

A good language teacher should have ethic devotion, professional competence and personal styles. The most important and difficult part is the development of professional competence. The teacher should learn from others, learn from his own experience and learn the received knowledge. The teacher should use his own charm to attract students and establish authority in students' mind. Only by this way can teacher be loved by his students. Teachers should discover the advantages of students especially a rebellious and learning difficulty student. Teachers in a positive or a approval, would give them a great deal of support and encouragement, and then close the relationship between teachers and students.

The teacher should treat students equally without discrimination. The teacher should equally treat every student. The teacher should not abandon the students who lag behind in study. On the contrary, the teacher should spend more time in helping the backward students to improve their English. The reason why the students are weary of learning English is that they are short of basic knowledge. Then they can't catch up with other students. As a result, the teacher should spare no efforts to take appropriate measures and find ways of mobilizing all positive factors to improve students' English level. In the meanwhile, the teacher should make out every student's different limitation. Then the teacher should give different help to different students according to his limitation. The teacher should help students to develop good habit of learning English.

Teachers should love every student and respect his opinion. Teachers should take efforts to make a harmonious

relationship between teachers and students. If teachers are full of energy, students may be involved in the class. Teachers should help the students with actual actions when students are in trouble. Teachers are ought to respect students. Students will respect teachers if their self-esteem is respected. Harmonious and close relationship between teachers and students will be naturally established if teachers are able to do that. Students are willing to complete what teachers ask them to do.

What's more, teachers should spare no pains to induce students' motivation for learning English well. First and foremost, in order to change students' English learning weariness, teachers should try their best to help students to build confidence in learning English well, which will make students believe that they are able to learn English well through their own efforts. It would also make students understand that learning is necessary and significant. If a student put enough effort into achieving a result, he will certainly achieve it. Students will naturally succeed if they are hard enough. The teacher should stimulate students' motivation to acquire knowledge and learning responsibility. Certainly, it is impossible for the students to be successful in short time. Only with long-term patient, can we expect students' vision broadened, ambition inspired and success expected. There is another factor that deserves some words here. It is necessary to enable students to experience the joy of success and to change the students' emotion of weariness. Therefore, students would gradually get rid of English learning weariness sooner or later.

V. CONCLUSION

The author study students' English learning weariness based on the survey of students coming from The Third Junior High School of Yantai Development Zone. The survey reflects all kinds of beliefs that are not beneficial to the changes of the junior high school students' English learning weariness. The results of the survey reflect that the lack of interest and motivation is the main cause which influences students' English learning weariness. So the teacher should spare no efforts to stimulate students' motivation of learning English and train the interest of the student consciously.

Questionnaire and data analysis are not sufficient enough to study English learning weariness. If the author spends more time on interviews and classroom observations, the results may be even more convincing. In addition, the numbers of the students who participate in the survey are not sufficient enough. In the meanwhile, students sometimes make the choices that can't reflect their real views. The author studies the causes and countermeasures of students' English learning weariness mainly from students' learning interest and motivation. The author makes the conclusion that students who can make excellent grades during the study at school are extremely interested in studying English and have clear motivation of learning English. The author doesn't study other aspects which influence students' English learning weariness. So the future study can focus on other aspects that influence students' English learning weariness.

APPENDIX. 初中学生厌学英语的调查问卷

班别: 性别:

我们这次问卷调查的目的是为了改进学校和老师的工作, 提高英语教学质量。本次问卷不记名, 不会对你有任何影响, 请你按照自己的真实情况选择, 并在你同意的小方框里打“√”里。感谢你的合作。

调查对象	初中生
调查内容	1 你的英语成绩如何? <input type="checkbox"/> 优秀 <input type="checkbox"/> 良好 <input type="checkbox"/> 及格 <input type="checkbox"/> 不及格
	2 你喜欢英语么? <input type="checkbox"/> 非常喜欢 <input type="checkbox"/> 比较喜欢 <input type="checkbox"/> 一般 <input type="checkbox"/> 不喜欢
	3 你对上英语课有兴趣吗? <input type="checkbox"/> 非常感兴趣 <input type="checkbox"/> 比较感兴趣 <input type="checkbox"/> 一般 <input type="checkbox"/> 不感兴趣
	4 你想学好英语吗? <input type="checkbox"/> 非常想 <input type="checkbox"/> 比较想 <input type="checkbox"/> 一般 <input type="checkbox"/> 不想
	5 你觉得英语对自己重要吗? <input type="checkbox"/> 非常重要 <input type="checkbox"/> 比较重要 <input type="checkbox"/> 一般 <input type="checkbox"/> 不重要
	6 我英语学好主要是因为 <input type="checkbox"/> 对英语感兴趣 <input type="checkbox"/> 自己想学好 <input type="checkbox"/> 老师教的好 <input type="checkbox"/> 其他
	7 我英语学的不好主要是因为 <input type="checkbox"/> 对英语不感兴趣 <input type="checkbox"/> 没有学习的动力 <input type="checkbox"/> 老师教的不好 <input type="checkbox"/> 其他
	8 你认为造成你厌学英语的最直接原因是 <input type="checkbox"/> 缺乏学习动机 <input type="checkbox"/> 老师方法枯燥, 没兴趣 <input type="checkbox"/> 自己不努力 <input type="checkbox"/> 其他
意见征询	你对英语教师的教学还有哪些意见?

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