

An empirical study on perceptive teaching in junior middle school English in China

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ABSTRACT: Although the middle school English teaching has gotten a lot of achievements in China, some problems still exist, such as too much emphasis on words, grammars and structures. Perceptive teaching can be helpful for English teaching from a new perspective. There are three teaching procedures in the perceptive teaching: eliciting to acquire text meaning, creating situation to experience and comprehending to get the internal values in individuals. This thesis did the experimental research on English perspective teaching in middle school in China. The results show that in perceptive teaching, learners' cognitive abilities can be improved; learners can show great interests in learning and shape positive attitudes; their learning methods can greatly be promoted. For different level learners, it shows that middle level learners can gain more benefit than the high level or low level learners in English perceptive teaching.

Keywords: English perceptive teaching; middle school; cognition; affect

1 INTRODUCTION

During the process of reforming in Chinese basic education, although the middle school English teaching has gotten a lot of achievements, some problems still exist, such as too much emphasis on words, grammars and structures. Too much emphasis on language knowledge will lead to ignoring the students' feeling and perception, weakening the good learning habits and decreasing the students' learning interests or motivations.

Perceptive teaching originated from the Chinese language teaching. Researchers have done some valuable research and put forward some methods about perceptive teaching in Chinese reading (Chen 2008; Lin 2011; Pan and Sun 2009). Later, perceptive teaching was studied in other subjects such as politics, history lessons (Cui 2005; Li 2008). The limitation about the present research is that most of them are done theoretically, not the experimental ones with systems. With unsystematic theories and unfixed teaching procedures many researchers are still groping for perceptive teaching. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the perceptive teaching both in theory and in experiment.

2 PERCEPTIVE TEACHING

Perception is the reconstruction and interaction between the new information and prior knowledge in mind or the deep internalization of the new information. Perceptive teaching, based on the students' perception which can measure the teachers' teaching methods, includes the teaching process of perception, affect, image and comprehension. The learners will escalate into both the breakthrough in cognition and the sublimation in affect through the extensive and intensive experience in the perceptive teaching.

There are three teaching procedures in the perceptive teaching. First, teachers' eliciting to acquire text meaning. Second, teachers' creating situation to experience in practical teaching. Third, comprehending to get the internal values in individuals.

Eliciting is the process during which the students acquire knowledge and skills. Guided by their teachers, the students question, assume, extract and draw a conclusion through problem-solving based on their previous experience. Eliciting can also mean that the text knowledge is assimilated or accommodated into the previous cognitive structures to gain or create new knowledge. In eliciting in perceptive teaching the learners' individual values induced from knowledge and skills are emphasized.

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Creating situation is the process during which students acquire experience in practice. In creating situation in perceptive teaching, students have two kinds of activities. One is to reconstruct their cognitive structures through their reflection and perception from their experience. The other is that the students acquire the individual values from the text and construct or reconstruct their ego experience systems through learners' ego critical thinking and perception.

Comprehending is a process during which the students' knowledge and skills, emotions and values will induce the teaching subjects (including teachers and students) to reflect their teaching as they are being gradually formed in students. In the process the teaching subjects will reflect the teaching quality and learning efficiency to help the subjects gain certain methodology and internal values.

On the above theoretical research, this paper will do the experimental research from three perspectives: a. Can perceptive teaching improve the students' learning? b. Can perceptive teaching help learners develop harmoniously both in cognition and affect? c. Can the different level learners get the same results?

3 DESIGN OF RESEARCH

3.1 Subjects

The subjects for the experiment are selected from White Pagoda Middle School. There are six classes in this grade in which the students were enrolled randomly and divided equally according to the scores of their entrance examination in 2014. After the pre-test the experimental class and the control class were decided. There are 71 subjects in the experimental class including 40 boys and 31 girls and the average age is 13.3; there are 65 subjects in the control class including 31 boys and 34 girls and the average age is 13.5. The average age of the whole subjects is 13.4.

3.2 Experimental Materials

Teaching Material. The teaching material is the English textbook *Go for it!*, published by People's Education Press and Thomson Learning in 2003.

3.2.1 Testing Materials

(1) Questionnaire about learners' English learning concept, attitude, interest, and motivation. This questionnaire is designed according to Wen Qiufang's research (1996) and Oxford's research (1990). There are 46 questions in this questionnaire including English leaning concept, attitude, interest, and motivation. There are five choices in each question: strongly agree, agree, not clear, disagree, and strongly disagree. If a learner chooses strongly agree, he will get 5 points; if he chooses strongly disagree, he will get only one point. One important thing should be pointed

out: the points of some items in the questionnaire should sometimes be reversed. For example about item 3 *Teachers should have the main responsibility for learning* if a learner chooses strongly agree, he will get 1 point; if he chooses strongly disagree, he will get 5 points. The questionnaire was tested by a non-experimental class twice and the interval period was two months. The correlation coefficient is 0.77 ($p < 0.01$). It shows the questionnaire has great validity and reliability. In both pre-test and post-test the same questionnaire is used.

(2) Questionnaire about learners' learning method. This questionnaire is designed according to Wen Qiufang's (1996) and Oxford's (1990: 283-300) questionnaires about learners' strategy. There are 39 questions in this questionnaire including learners' reading, vocabulary strategy, listening strategy, speaking, writing and sentence pattern. The correlation coefficient is 0.77 ($p < 0.01$). It shows that the questionnaire has great validity and reliability. In both pre-test and post-test the same questionnaire is used.

(3) English language proficiency test. In English perceptive teaching the teacher presented new information through pictures, drawings, discussions, etc. to enlighten the learners to discover new information. This is helpful to develop learners' observing abilities, comparative abilities, judgment and so on, some of which cannot be tested in the final examination. English language proficiency test is designed with the experimental teacher's help including the following items: *filling in blanks according to pictures, choosing the best answer in the real circumstances, making sentences in the context, guessing the meaning of new words, finding the same features and making sentences, reading comprehension and writing*. The total score is 100 points. This test paper is used in the post-test. The correlation coefficient is 0.71 ($p < 0.05$). It shows that the test has great validity and reliability.

(4) Questionnaire about the evaluation of English perceptive teaching. The questionnaire includes the evaluation of perceptive teaching and their personal opinions toward perceptive teaching. This questionnaire is used in the experimental class in the post-test.

3.3 Experimental Procedure

The experiment is from February 2017 to July 2017 and lasted nearly half year. The experiment was carried out in three stages.

(1) Pre-test

The subjects in the two classes were tested in the aspects of their English learning concept, attitude, interest, motivation and method besides their final examination.

(2) Experimental Process

The pre-test results show that the experimental class and the control class are nearly at the same level ex-

cept the different teaching methods. In the experiment the teacher followed the instructional orders: collecting information, recognizing, discovering, comprehending, extracting and distilling. The experimental teacher must understand and master the theories about English perceptive teaching, and then put these principles into teaching. The teacher in the experiment should make full preparations for each lesson following these five instructional orders. In the control class the teacher taught in the traditional way.

(3) Post-test

The subjects were tested with the English proficiency test, which was designed according to perceptive teaching and its related theories.

Then, they were surveyed with the questionnaire about English learners' learning concept, attitude, interest, motivation and method.

Finally, the experimental class was surveyed with the questionnaire about the evaluation of English perceptive teaching.

4 RESULTS OF EXPERIMENT

4.1 Results of exams

In the final-term exam the subjects in the experimental class get higher marks than those in the control class. There are significant differences between them ($p < 0.01$). It shows that perceptive teaching is helpful for learners to improve language proficiency. Learning is cognitive process in which learners will recognize, perceive, judge, comprehend, think and so on. The language proficiency test can also show the changes of learners' cognitive abilities. Table 1 shows that perceptive teaching can improve learners' cognitive abilities.

Table 1. Results of the final-term exam in July 2017

Group	N	Mean	T	Sig(2-tailed)
EC	71	89.91		
CC	65	78.26	5.337**	0.000

Note: **: $p < 0.01$

Table 2 shows that the subjects in different levels in the experimental class get higher marks than those in the control class. There are significant differences between the high level subjects ($p < 0.05$) and there are more significant differences between the middle level and the low level learners in the experimental class and those in the control class ($p < 0.01$). Table 2 further proves that perceptive teaching can help to improve learners' language proficiency and their cognitive abilities.

English proficiency test was designed in terms of perceptive teaching and its related theories with the teacher in the experiment. It mainly tests learners' cognitive abilities including observation, comparison,

language transfer, judgment, generalization and comprehension. Table 3 shows that the subjects in the experimental class get higher marks than those in the control class. There are significant differences between them ($p < 0.01$). It shows that perceptive teaching can be helpful to develop the learners' cognitive abilities.

Table 2. Results of the subjects in different levels in the final-term exam

Group	High Level		Middle Level		Low Level	
	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
EC	15	95.73	41	89.29	15	85.73
CC	13	86.76	39	81.64	13	59.62
T value		2.974*		3.489**		4.874**
Sig.(2-tailed)		0.015		0.01		0.000

Note: *: $p < 0.05$

Table 3. Results of English proficiency test

Group	N	Mean	T	Sig(2-tailed)
EC	71	61.69		
CC	65	47.48	4.483**	0.000

Table 4 shows that there are significant differences between the high level and the middle level subjects in the two classes ($P < 0.01$) but no significant differences between the low level subjects ($P > 0.05$). It shows that perceptive teaching can improve learners' cognitive abilities especially for the high level and the middle level learners.

English proficiency test mainly tests learners' cognitive abilities including observation, comparison, language transfer, judgment, generalization and comprehension. Table 4 shows that the subjects in the experimental class have advantages over those in the control class. Do they have the advantages in each aspect?

Table 4. Results of the subjects in different levels in English proficiency test

Group	High Level		Middle Level		Low Level	
	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
EC	15	80.93	41	60.90	15	44.60
CC	13	61.30	39	45.87	13	38.46
T value		3.114**		4.535**		0.915
Sig.(2-tailed)		0.006		0.000		0.369

The items in the English proficiency test will be introduced at first. Item 1 is Fill in the Blanks according to the Picture (5 points); item 2 is Choose the Right Answer in the Real Circumstances (5 points); item 3 is Guess the meaning of new words in the context (20 points); item 4 is Find the Same Features and Make a sentence (30 points); item 5 is Make New Sentences Using the Structure in the Textbook (15 points); item 6 includes Multiple Choice, Give Main Idea and Find the Implied Meaning in the Passage (15 points). Item 1 and 5 test learners' observing ability and the total score is 20 points; comparative ability is tested in item 4 with 30 points; language transfer in item 2 and 5

Table 5. Results of each aspect of English proficiency test

Group	Observation Mean	Comparison Mean	Transfer Mean	Judgment Mean	Generalization Mean	Comprehension Mean
EC	11.93	19.18	13.39	12.62	2.37	4.51
CC	8.31	16.14	11.28	11.91	1.66	3.43
T value	3.883**	2.551*	2.538*	0.841	2.189*	2.151*
Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000	0.013	0.012	0.402	0.03	0.031

Table 6. Results of the high level subjects about cognitive abilities in English proficiency test

Group	Observation Mean	Comparison Mean	Transfer Mean	Judgment Mean	Generalization Mean	Comprehension Mean
EC(15)	17.33	25.40	17.27	16.93	4.40	7.33
CC(13)	14.92	23.85	15.62	15.69	3.00	6.92
T value	1.933	1.179	1.44	1.220	2.127*	0.476
Sig.(2-tailed)	0.096	0.251	0.162	0.235	0.048	0.640

Table 7. Results of the middle level subjects about cognitive abilities in English proficiency test

Group	Observation Mean	Comparison Mean	Transfer Mean	Judgment Mean	Generalization Mean	Comprehension Mean
EC(41)	13.10	20.27	14.61	12.84	2.34	4.46
CC(39)	7.6	15.85	11.33	12.30	1.64	3.18
T value	6.713**	3.607**	3.950**	0.657	1.88*	2.409*
Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.513	0.04	0.019

Table 8. Results of the low level subjects about cognitive abilities in English proficiency test

Group	Observation Mean	Comparison Mean	Transfer Mean	Judgment Mean	Generalization Mean	Comprehension Mean
EC(15)	3.93	10.00	6.71	9.20	0.40	1.80
CC(13)	3.33	9.31	6.20	5.31	0.38	0.69
T value	0.417	0.330	0.44	2.00*	0.52	1.862
Sig.(2-tailed)	0.68	0.744	0.663	0.04	0.96	1.076

with 20 points; judgment in item 3 with 20 points; generalization in item 6 (Give Main Idea) with 5 points; comprehension in item 6 with 10 points.

Table 5 shows that the subjects in the experimental class get higher marks than those in the control class in each aspect. There are significant differences in observation, comparison, language transfer, generalization and comprehension ($p < 0.05$). There are more significant differences in comparison ($p < 0.01$). There are no significant differences in judgment although the subjects in the experimental class can still get higher marks than those in the control class. Therefore, it shows that perceptive teaching is helpful to improve learners' cognitive abilities including observation, comparison, language transfer, generalization and comprehension.

Table 6 (the following table) shows that the high level subjects in the experimental class get higher scores than those in the control class. But there are no significant differences between them except generalization. The difference in generalization is significant ($P < 0.05$). It shows that perceptive teaching can be helpful for high level learners' generalization.

Table 7 shows that the middle level subjects in the experimental class get higher scores than those in the control class. There are significant differences in generalization and comprehension ($P < 0.05$) and there are more significant differences in observation, comparison, and language transfer ($P < 0.01$). It shows that perceptive teaching can improve the middle level learners' generalization, comprehension, observation, comparison, and language transfer.

Table 8 shows that the low level subjects in the experimental class get higher scores than those in the control class. But there are no significant differences between them except judgment. The difference in judgment is significant ($P < 0.05$). It shows that perceptive teaching can be helpful for low level learners' judgment.

In summary, perceptive teaching can greatly improve middle level learners' cognitive abilities including generalization, comprehension, observation, comparison, and language transfer. It can also improve high level learners' generalization and low level learners' judgment. Therefore, perceptive teaching is effective to develop learners' cognitive abilities.

4.2 Results of questionnaires

Table 9. Post-test results of English learners' learning concept, attitude, interest, and motivation

Group	Concept Mean	Attitude Mean	Interest Mean	Motivation Mean
EC	3.93	10.00	6.71	9.20
CC	3.33	9.31	6.20	5.31
T value	0.417	0.330	0.44	2.00*
Sig.(2-tailed)	0.68	0.744	0.663	0.04

English learning concept refers to learners' realization of what factors affect their English learning (Hong, 2002: 34). English learning attitude refers to the learners' realization of the importance of English learning (Wen, 1996: 54). Table 9 shows that the subjects in the experimental class get higher marks than

those in the control class. There are significant differences in attitude and interest ($p < 0.05$) and more significant differences in concept and motivation ($P < 0.01$). Generally speaking, it shows that perceptive teaching can improve learners' learning concept, attitude, interest, and motivation.

Table 10. Post-test results of high level learners' learning concept, attitude, interest, and motivation

Group	Concept Mean	Attitude Mean	Interest Mean	Motivation Mean
EC	39.46	40.15	37.73	55.15
CC	39.40	39	35.69	54.20
T value	0.12	0.894	0.975	0.293
Sig.(2-tailed)	0.51	0.381	0.340	0.772

Table 10 shows that the high level subjects in the experimental class get higher scores than those in the control class, but there are no significant differences between them ($P > 0.05$). It shows that perceptive teaching cannot greatly help the high level learners to improve their learning concept, attitude, interest, and motivation.

Table 11. Post-test results of middle level learners' learning concept, attitude, interest, and motivation

Group	Concept Mean	Attitude Mean	Interest Mean	Motivation Mean
EC	39.68	40.22	36.63	58.00
CC	39.33	37.66	33.28	50.79
T value	3.342**	2.522*	2.028*	2.99*
Sig.(2-tailed)	0.001	0.014	0.043	0.04

Table 11 shows that the middle level subjects in the experimental class get higher scores than those in the control class. There are significant differences in attitude, interest, and motivation ($P < 0.05$) and there are more significant differences in concept ($P < 0.01$). It shows that perceptive teaching can improve the middle level learners' learning concept, attitude, interest, and motivation.

Table 12. Post-test results of low level learners' learning concept, attitude, interest, and motivation

Group	Concept Mean	Attitude Mean	Interest Mean	Motivation Mean
EC	39.93	42.66	38.27	61.53
CC	38.15	35.54	33.23	51.54
T value	0.940	3.775**	2.74*	2.669*
Sig.(2-tailed)	0.357	0.002	0.014	0.014

Table 12 shows that the low level subjects in the experimental class get higher scores than those in the control class. Although there are no significant differ-

ences in concept, the score of the experimental class is higher than that of the control class. There are significant differences in interest and motivation ($P < 0.05$) and more significant differences in attitude ($P < 0.01$). It shows that perceptive teaching can change the low level learners' learning attitudes, improve their interests, and stimulate their motivations.

In summary, perceptive teaching can be helpful to change learners' learning concept, shape positive attitudes, and stimulate their interests and motivation especially for the middle level and the low level learners.

Table 13. Post-test results of questionnaire about learning method

Group	N	Mean	T	Sig(2-tailed)
EC	71	141.31		
CC	65	130.31	2.134*	0.035

There are 39 items in this questionnaire. The total points are 195. Table 13 shows that there are significant differences in learning method ($P < 0.05$). It shows that perceptive teaching can improve learners' learning method.

Table 14 shows that there are significant differences in listening strategy, speaking strategy, reading strategy, vocabulary strategy, and sentence pattern learning ($P < 0.05$). There are no significant differences in writing strategy ($P > 0.05$). It shows that perceptive teaching can improve learners' listening strategy, speaking strategy, reading strategy, vocabulary strategy, and sentence pattern learning.

4.3 Results of learners' evaluation of perceptive teaching

Questionnaire about learners' evaluation of perceptive teaching surveys the subjects in the experimental class at the end of experiment. It surveys learners' general evaluation of perceptive teaching. The results of it are that 82.13% of learners think English class in the experiment is different from the prior one; 75.97% of learners like the English class in the experiment; 72.92% of learners like the teaching in the experiment; 77.05% learners are satisfied with the teaching; 91.66% of learners think English learning in the experimental period is helpful for their study; 54.17% of learners show great interests in learning English since the experiment. The results tell us that English perceptive teaching can be really helpful for the learners' English learning and stimulate the learners' interests.

Questionnaire II is the learners' evaluation of per-

Table 14. Post-test results of each aspect in the questionnaire about learning method

Group	Listening Mean	Writing Mean	Speaking Mean	Reading Mean	Vocabulary Strategy Mean	Sentence Pattern on Mean
EC	21.92	14.37	16.81	33.76	30.02	29.86
CC	20.58	13.98	15.371	32.04	28.98	25.78
T value	2.659*	1.354	2.616*	2.621*	2.78*	3.32**
Sig.(2-tailed)	0.047	0.706	0.039	0.041	0.040	0.009

ceptive teaching in detail. The results of it are that 81.25% of learners think that the English experimental class helps to improve speaking; 58.33% of learners think that the English experimental class helps learners to participate in class; 68.75% of learners think that the English experimental class is helpful for them to think independently; 66.66% of learners think that the class is helpful for them to communicate or cooperate with each other; 87.43% of learners think that the English class helps to promote the learners' interests in learning; 64.58% of learners think that the English class helps to strengthen their confidence in learning; 75% of learners think that they will study harder after the experiment; 77.09% of learners think that English class can improve their learning method; 52.08% of learners think that English class helps to improve their oral English; 56.25 of learners think that English class can improve their listening; 47.92% of learners think that English class can help them to grasp the main ideas and structures quickly; 56.25% of learners think that they can grasp the implied meanings, values or principles in the reading passage after the experiment; 68.75% of learners think that English class can improve their English proficiency. 66.66% learners like the way that the teacher in the experiment presents the new words and sentence structures through context, real circumstances or pictures. The results further prove that perceptive teaching has a positive effect on English learning. It is helpful to improve learners' English learning in junior middle school.

5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results show that perceptive teaching can improve learners' language proficiency; learners' cognitive abilities can be developed in perceptive teaching; learners can show great interests in learning and shape positive attitudes to English learning; their learning methods can greatly be promoted. The results also show that the middle level learners can gain more benefit than the high level and the low level learners in English perceptive teaching. Simply speaking, the results of the research show that perceptive teaching can not only improve learners' cognitive abilities but also improve learners' interests in English learning.

Researchers may continue the study to probe into more sides of English perceptive teaching. Firstly, this study may be tested in senior middle school English and college English. Furthermore, researchers can do

more researches about the teaching models of perceptive teaching so as to improve learners' listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills. Finally, researchers can make more researches on language input in English perceptive teaching by qualitative and quantitative method.

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