



# The Analysis of The Associative Memory Method in English Grammar Teaching

Yujie Huang

School of Foreign Languages, Zhejiang Ocean University, Zhoushan, Zhejiang, China  
83929449@qq.com

**Abstract.** This paper discusses the effectiveness of applying the associative memory method in analyzing traditional English grammar teaching methods. Through literature review, experimental research, and teaching case analysis, integrating the associative memory method into English grammar teaching can effectively improve students' learning interest and memory efficiency, to optimize the grammar teaching effect. This paper also proposes specific teaching methods and strategies to provide a reference for reforming English grammar teaching in middle schools.

**Keywords:** middle school English teaching, English grammar, associative memory method, teaching strategy.

## 1 Introduction

With the development of globalization, English has become an important tool for international communication. Grammar teaching has always played a significant role. However, for a long time, traditional middle school English grammar teaching has mainly relied on the teacher's explanation and the students' passive memory mode<sup>1</sup>, which is very boring, resulting in poor teaching effects. Therefore, exploring the new grammar teaching methods and improving the teaching effect has become an important topic of the current English teaching in middle schools. Only if teachers adopt correct teaching methods and let grammar lessons become interesting can students be interested in them and learn better. Nowadays, the associative memory method becomes very popular.

Associative memory provides a more vivid and interesting way of learning<sup>2</sup>. For example, when teaching attributive clauses, teachers can guide students to correlate attributive clauses with specific situations in daily life<sup>3</sup>. For example, the teacher could set a scene: "I met an interesting person I had never seen yesterday, wearing a red hat and holding a book in his hand." Then, the teacher can guide the students to describe the part "He wears a red hat and holds a book in his hand", namely, "Yesterday I met a funny man with a red hat and a book in his hand."

Through this teaching method, students can associate abstract grammatical rules with the specific situation to form a vivid memory image. This not only helps students master the grammar rules more quickly but also stimulates their interest in learning.

Based on the comparison of such teaching methods, this research aims to explore the practical application and effect of the associative memory method in English grammar teaching in middle schools<sup>4</sup>. We hypothesize that classes using the associative memory method for the same teaching content and teaching time will be significantly better than those using traditional teaching methods in terms of grammar test scores and learning interest. By comparing the teaching effect of the two classes, we will be able to verify the effectiveness and superiority of the associative memory method in middle school English grammar teaching and provide a useful reference for the reform of middle school English grammar teaching.

## 2 Research Methods and Procedures

This study was conducted by using a combination of literature analysis, questionnaire survey, and experimental methods. Firstly, the author understands the limitations of the traditional grammar teaching method and the theoretical basis of the associative memory method through literature analysis. The author has read a large amount of literature on traditional grammar teaching and memory association methods; secondly, a questionnaire is designed to understand students' attitudes and views on the traditional grammar teaching method and associative memory method. The author randomly distributed the questionnaire to 10 students from two classes and collected the survey results. By collecting this firsthand data, the study aimed to uncover students' preferences and the challenges that they encounter; finally, compare the effects of traditional teaching method and associative memory method in English grammar teaching through the experimental method.

The experimental process is as follows: two parallel classes were selected as the experimental group and the control group, the experimental group used the associative memory method for grammar teaching, and the control group adopted the traditional teaching method. The experimental period is one semester. After the experiment, the grammar mastery and learning interest of the two classes are compared through the test.

## 3 Findings of the Study

First, through literature analysis, the author finds that the traditional teaching method is such a "cramming" teaching method, which ignores the students' learning subjectivity. Besides, the students only mechanically repeat and imitate, lacking a deep understanding and active application of the grammar rules. The traditional grammar teaching method fails to attract students' attention and let them fully understand the grammar rules, but the associative memory method succeeds in arousing students' interest and offers an access for students to understand easily. Second, according to the questionnaire, it is found that plenty of students dislike traditional grammar teaching method for they feel very bored and difficult to understand the grammar and they are not familiar with the associative memory method. But they guess it may be more enjoyable and let them better understand the grammar rules. Finally, the experimental results show that the students in the experimental group were better than the control group in terms

of grammar mastery and learning interest. Specifically, the grammar test scores of the students in the experimental group were significantly higher than that of the control group, and they showed higher enthusiasm and initiative in learning interest. This indicates that the associative memory method has significant advantages and effects in English grammar teaching.

## **4 Summary and Suggestions**

### **4.1 The Feasibility of the Application of Associative Memory Method in Junior Middle School English Classroom Teaching**

#### **The Associative Memory Method Adapts to the Rules and Characteristics of Students' Learning of English Grammar.**

Junior high school students have active thinking, but when learning English grammar, they are often influenced by the grammar habits of their mother tongue, leading to difficulties in understanding and mastering English grammar. Especially in the memory of grammar rules, students often feel bored and difficult to last long, the memory time is short and easy to forget. This is particularly common in English grammar learning, especially for students who have a weak learning foundation.

However, the learning advantage of junior high school students lies in their ability to associate, and this thinking characteristic can play a huge role in grammar learning. Through the associative memory method, students can associate the abstract grammar rules with concrete and vivid scenes or examples, thus making the grammar learning more vivid and interesting, and the memory more profound and lasting.

For example, when learning the tense (Tenses), students often confuse the use of different tenses. At this point, the teacher can guide the students to use the associative memory method. In simple past tense (Simple Past Tense), for example, teachers can guide students to think of specific events they have experienced in the past, such as "I played football with my friends last weekend." In this sentence, "played" is the verb form of the past. By considering the scene of playing football with friends on weekends, students can more intuitively understand and master the usage of the past.

Similarly, for other complex grammatical structures, such as attributive clauses (Attributive Clauses) or subjunctive tone (Subjunctive Mood), the associative memory method can also be used to link complex grammatical rules with specific examples or scenes, to help students better understand and master them.

From the perspective of students' own characteristics, in the English grammar classroom teaching in junior middle school, teachers should actively guide students to use the associative memory method to transform boring grammar learning into a vivid and interesting exploration process, to improve students' learning effect and interest.

#### **The Associative Memory Method is Beneficial to Breaking Native Language Habits.**

In the process of English learning, learners generally encounter conflicts and contradictions between English grammar and mother grammar. This conflict not only exists

objectively but also has different characteristics in different students. These differences mainly stem from the fundamental differences in the structure, usage, and expression of the two languages.

Some students find it particularly difficult to learn English grammar, largely because they have become deeply accustomed to the rules and expressions of Chinese grammar. When they analyze and memorize the structure of English grammar, they often unconsciously apply the logic of Chinese grammar. This phenomenon of "mother tongue transfer" hinders their effective mastery of English grammar to some extent.

To break this native grammar constraint, adopting associative memory is an effective tactic. The associative memory method encourages students to understand and remember English grammar from a completely new, different perspective from their native language. For example, when learning English tense, students can associate different tenses (such as past, present, and future) to different positions on the timeline, to deepen their understanding and memory. This associative memory method can not only help students remember the use of the tense but also allow them to quickly associate with the correct tense form when they need it.

Through this associative memory method, students can gradually overcome the interference of mother tongue grammar, and better understand and master the essence of English grammar, to achieve better results in English learning.

#### **4.2 The Specific Strategies of the Associative Memory Method in Junior Middle School English Teaching**

Traditional English grammar teaching often focuses on the explanation of rules and the recitation of example sentences. The teaching method of "cramming" not only makes students feel bored but also it difficult to master the practical application of grammar. In addition, traditional methods often ignore the subject position of students in language learning and pay attention to students' differences, which leads to low teaching efficiency and difficulty in quantifying learning results. Because of these problems, teachers need to change their thinking and introduce more vivid and practical teaching methods.

By integrating the associative memory method into English grammar teaching in middle school, this study effectively improves students' learning interest and memory efficiency, thus optimizing the grammar teaching effect. Based on the research results, the following specific application strategies are proposed:

##### **Associate Vocabulary and Image Associations.**

The associative memory method emphasizes linking abstract knowledge to concrete images or situations<sup>5</sup>. In English grammar teaching, teachers can help students memorize grammar rules by associating vocabulary and image association. For example, when learning a verb tense, teachers can guide students to relate the verb forms of different tenses to specific images or actions. Such as "past time" can be associated with an old photo or a recalled scene, and "future time" can be combined with images of a

plan or a dream. Such associations can help students to form a deep impression and improve the memory effect.

### **Story Series.**

Using the method of story series, teachers can integrate multiple grammar knowledge points into an interesting storyline<sup>6</sup>. By telling a fascinating story, students learn and master grammar in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. For example, when teaching subjunctive mood, a teacher can write a story about dreams and regrets that subtly incorporates the use of the subjunctive tone. Students can understand and use the subjunctive tone through the characters and plots in the story, to deepen their memory and understanding of the knowledge points.

### **Emotional Links.**

Emotional linking is a very effective method in the associative memory method. Teachers can build emotional links by guiding students to recall emotional experiences related to grammatical knowledge.<sup>7</sup> For example, when learning the comparison level and the highest level of adjectives and adverbs, teachers can let students recall the comparison and competitive scenes they have experienced, such as sports meetings, exams, etc. Students can describe their own emotional experience to use the comparative level and the highest level of adjectives and adverbs to express themselves, to deepen the understanding and memory of the knowledge points.

## **4.3 The Application of the Associative Memory Method in Junior Middle School English Teaching**

In junior middle school English grammar teaching, the key to applying the associative memory method is to find the internal connection between different grammar rules and concepts<sup>8</sup>. This requires careful summary and analysis in daily teaching to help students make these connections. In this way, students can use the associative memory method to master and understand English grammar more effectively.

For example, when learning the tense (tenses), teachers can guide students to remember by associating the common points and differences between different tenses. For example, when teaching simple present tense (Present Simple) and the general past (Past Simple), the teacher can point to the common point — they are used to describe regular or habitual movements, but at different times: one is in the present, one is in the past. Through questions or discussions, teachers can help students connect these two tenses to practical situations in life, such as "I get up at 7 am" (Present Simple) and "I get up at 7 am yesterday" (Past Simple).

In addition, when introducing complex grammatical structures, such as passive voice (Passive Voice), teachers can guide students to associate with active voice (Active Voice) and deepen their memory by comparing the structure and usage of the two. For example, by asking students to analyze the different expressions of the same sentence in the active and passive voice, such as "I cleaned the room" (Active Voice) and "the

room was cleaned by me" (Passive Voice), students can understand and remember the basic structure of "be verb + past participle" in the passive voice.

To sum up, when applying the associative memory method, teachers should also pay attention to guiding and inspiring students' thinking, encouraging them to find the connections and rules between grammar rules and finding the most suitable memory method according to their thinking characteristics. In this way, students can more skillfully use the associative memory method to learn and use English grammar, to improve the learning effect.

## 5 Conclusions

By combining associative memory methods, teachers can effectively overcome the limitations of traditional English grammar teaching methods. Associated vocabulary and image association, story series, and emotional link methods can help students combine grammar knowledge with specific situations, images, or stories to improve their learning effect and interest<sup>9</sup>. At the same time, these methods can also stimulate students' initiative and creativity, allowing them to learn and grow through participation and interaction. Therefore, teachers should actively explore new teaching methods and strategies, constantly innovate teaching methods, and improve the quality and effect of English grammar teaching. In addition, with the development of science and technology, ChatGPT can also be used to enhance the efficiency of grammar teaching by generating songs and connecting knowledge points<sup>10</sup>.

In short, teachers should be fully aware of the limitations of traditional English grammar teaching methods, and actively explore new teaching methods and strategies to let students better learn grammar vocabulary and master grammar rules. Through the introduction of diversified teaching methods and technical means, students can learn English grammar more actively and efficiently and lay a solid foundation for their language learning and future development.

## References

1. "Reflection and Reform of Traditional Grammar Teaching Mode in Junior High School English" [J] by Zhongxin Zhang. *Educational Practice and Research (B)*, 2022(01): 24-26.
2. "Feasibility Analysis and Rationality Suggestions for Constructing 'Chinese Vocabulary Palace' Using 'Associative Memory Method'" [J] by Qian Xu. *Life Education*. 2023(6).
3. "Application Strategies of Situational Teaching in Junior High School English Teaching" [J] by Changmi Hu. *Campus English*, 2024, (14): 151-153.
4. "Effective Strategies for Vocabulary Teaching in English Classrooms" [J] by Qiaolan Wang. *New Curriculum (Volume 2)*. 2019(09).
5. "On Vocabulary Teaching in Junior High School English Education" [J] by Rong Deng. *New Curriculum (Volume 3)*. 2018(02).
6. "Analysis of Innovative Methods for Teaching High School English Vocabulary" [J] by Haixia Wang. *English for Middle School Students*. 2018(06).
7. "Passionate Associative English Learning Method" [M] by Bo Jiang. *World Book Publishing Company Beijing*. 2011, Page 14.

8. "Application of the Phonics Method in Teaching Vocabulary in Junior High School English"[J] by Lixia Zhang. English for Middle School Students. 2019(40).
9. "Analysis of Teaching Methods for Junior Middle School English Vocabulary" [J] by Zhouwei Chen. New Curriculum Research, 2022, (17): 114-116.
10. "Using "ChatGPT" to Promote the Application of Associative Memory Method in English Teaching" [J] by Yanan Gao, Fangfang Sun. Primary School Teaching Research, 2023, (28): 82-83+88.

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

