



# Study on Pause Phenomenon of Interactive Mode in Junior Middle School English Classroom

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**Abstract.** The new curriculum reform concept advocates that classroom teaching should be changed from the traditional "lecture teaching" to "dialogue teaching". Classroom teaching is the main channel for students to acquire knowledge. In order to solve students' language barrier, knowledge "disconnect" and distraction in English classroom, most English teachers don't reasonably use pause methods, such as pronunciation and intonation pause, collective pause ("leading-speaking" mode pause) and questioning pause, so as to adjust the teaching rhythm, guide learning "output", stimulate reading emotion and reflect and summarize knowledge, so as to improve the efficiency of listening to lectures and learning efficiency. Taking Zhoushan Middle School as an example, this paper expounds the pause phenomenon in middle school English teaching classroom interaction from the aspects of pause method, time strategy, educational psychological law and pause effect.

**Keywords:** Classroom, Teaching, Pause teaching

## 1 Introduction

During probation and practice in middle schools in Zhoushan City, the author observed that vocational English teachers utilized short and subtle pauses in English teaching classes (listening and speaking, reading, and writing classes) to aid students in listening and learning, thereby regulating the overall teaching rhythm. Throughout the research process, three main issues emerged: Firstly, despite being briefly labeled as "magic" and "art" in China, the teaching psychological principles and pause judgment methods are not clearly articulated, with scant discussion on this strategy in international research across various disciplines. Secondly, with the implementation of curriculum reform, the demand for teachers to engage in dialogue and persuasion in the classroom has increased. The traditional method of imparting knowledge unilaterally no longer aligns with the contemporary students' need for knowledge and skill acquisition, as well as the core literacy standards outlined in the new curriculum guidelines (as per the 2022 edition of compulsory education English curriculum standards). The revised curriculum places emphasis on innovation, comprehensive practicality, and student-centered learning to cater to individualized and diverse needs. Finally, despite a decade of research

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on interactive teaching modes, the concept of curriculum pause has not been utilized as a concrete theoretical basis. It remains a subconscious expectation among teachers without a solid theoretical underpinning (based on interviews conducted at Zhoushan No.5 Middle School and Zhoushan No.1 Junior High School, where 90% of teachers acknowledged the importance of curriculum pause without being able to articulate a theoretical basis).<sup>[1]</sup>

Therefore, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive theoretical foundation by elucidating the method of classroom pause, the psychological principles guiding this strategy, the temporal strategies, and the application effects in English subjects. The study employs field interviews, literature analysis, self-practice, and simulation exercises to delve deeper into the topic.

## 2 Main Pause Methods and Time Control in Junior High School Classroom

The pause methods used by junior middle school teachers in class can be classified as: pronunciation and intonation pause, concentration pause and questioning pause. Pronunciation and intonation pause refers to paying attention to the emotional ups and downs inside and outside the sentence when reading aloud in English texts, and highlighting the characteristics of pronunciation and intonation through pause, so as to improve students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills (such as Example 1). Therefore, teachers should inject pause into feelings while playing the role of "leading speech" in class, so that the classroom is no longer boring follow-up study, but full of English recitation. Concentrated pause can also be called "leading-following" mode pause (according to, the teacher's "leading" is a kind of guidance, and the pause of "leading" is triggered by the teacher's instructional design and class management. Concentrated pause can well adjust students' intentional attention, so that their attention can be concentrated on the teacher, but it is difficult to take into account the learning state of some students whose academic achievements are on the edge. Therefore, teachers should intersperse it with the key points of classroom rhythm, such as a collective reading in about 20-25 minutes in class (such as Example 2); Questioning pause refers to the teacher's intentional pause to arouse students' attention and thinking before and after the set questioning classroom activities, which can give students a certain amount of time to think and organize language, and reduce the situation of "unable to answer" and "unable to respond" in class.<sup>[2]</sup>

Example 1: Teacher: Now read it together! I read one sentences and then you read next. Please read it with emotion.

Teacher: I have a ... dream ... that one day this nation will rise up ... and live out the true meaning ... of its creed ...

Students: I have a dream ... that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

(In the above examples, short pauses are made before and after the core word "dream", respectively, to emphasize the key points in the sentence and extend the intonation in the sentence, so that the feelings can be fully rendered in the classroom. Pause after "up" and "true meaning"-The extension of intonation increases the emotional ups and downs of the sentence, and at the same time implies the allocation of pauses when students read aloud.)

Example 2: Teacher: ... Now read up with me! ... "I have been to Hongkong."

Students: I have been to Hongkong.

Teacher: This is the Present Perfect Tense.

(In the introduction part of the present perfect tense in the above example, teachers use collective pauses to let students have a preliminary understanding of the sentence patterns of the present perfect tense, and can adjust the classroom rhythm in time to attract students' attention and lay the foundation for subsequent in-depth study.)

Teacher: Here is a simple question to conclude today's class ... How to use Present Perfect Tense? ... Lily please!

Lily: ... It uses "have been" sentence.

Teacher: Yes! And what we should pay attention to? ...

Lily: ... We should pay attention to the time ...

Teacher: ... Time? Such as ...

Lily: Such as "Since"!

Teacher: That's right!

(The above examples fully reflect the teacher's art of questioning and questioning inspiration, in which "...", as a pause signal, can gradually inspire students to think about the core of "how to use the present perfect tense" together with the question. At the same time, the teacher's short pause after initiating the question can satisfy the students' brain response timeliness allows students to exercise and develop their ability to play on the spot.)<sup>[10]</sup>

These three methods of pausing each have their merits and versatility. Furthermore, there are diverse individual pausing methods that can yield unexpected outcomes in the classroom, tailored to teachers' unique instructional styles. Proper utilization of pausing techniques requires an analysis based on principles of educational psychology, particularly the concept of the "attention curve" as proposed by Lucy Jo Palladino. Human attention is closely tied to external stimuli, and an inverted U-shaped attention curve can be delineated based on this relationship. Within this curve lies the optimal attention zone, accessible to individuals through specific techniques to regulate their mental state and emotions, facilitating more effective study and work habits. Key to sustaining concentration are two crucial elements: an appropriate level of stimulation. By incorporating pauses for pronunciation and intonation, teachers provide students with emotional stimulus, allowing for deeper internalization of textual emotions and fostering the development of core literacy skills. Collective pauses enable teachers to guide students collectively before encouraging individual concentration, thereby reinforcing students' sense of collective pride and cohesion while also motivating certain individuals to keep pace with the classroom's rhythm. Interjecting questioning pauses prompts students to engage in critical thinking, review previously learned material, and apply their knowledge in practice.<sup>[4]</sup>

Furthermore, pause time is the core factor of classroom pause. Teachers need to pay attention to reasonable pause time to control the classroom rhythm and ensure the clear communication of teaching content. At the same time, it is supplemented by appropriate teaching language to make the classroom rhythm strong, neither too compact nor too loose, and keep ups and downs. Teachers can use the five-second silent counting method to count silently for three to five seconds after asking questions, giving students a certain time to think and organize language, language conversion and translation, so as to improve students' learning effect and ability to play on the spot. Secondly, when teachers read emotional texts, they need to pause on words and sentences in terms of rhythm, tone, rhythm, etc. The pause time is about 0.1 to 1 second, so that students can understand the key points between words and sentences, and lay the foundation for collective reading and comprehending emotions. The collective pause is about 1 to 3 seconds, which gives most students the initiative to read and imitate behaviors from consciousness reflection to behavior, thus playing a collective role to adjust the classroom rhythm. Finally, according to the "Pause Procedure", students' long-term recall ability can be significantly improved by interspersing short pauses of 2-3 minutes in class, giving students the opportunity to discuss and review notes. The experiment also requires teachers to use only 6-7 minutes of time for management in class, thus improving the efficiency of classroom management.<sup>[5]</sup>

To sum up, the core of teachers' time management strategy of classroom pause lies in time-limited teaching and cooperative learning-that is, teachers' teaching time in class should not exceed half of students' activity time. This strategy encourages students to cooperate, inquire and communicate independently, and appropriate pauses can provide students with such opportunities, thus improving classroom timeliness.<sup>[4]</sup>

### 3 Research Significance

There are significant differences in the application effect of classroom pauses in different subjects, particularly in the comprehensive English classroom interaction of English majors. According to Hou Huili's research on classroom interruption phenomenon among English majors, "classroom interruption can be categorized into cooperative interruption and non-cooperative interruption during the teaching process of English majors<sup>[3]</sup>. Cooperative interruption outweighs non-cooperative interruption, as interruption is frequently utilized to facilitate the continuity of topics or acquire discourse opportunities." Therefore, we can generalize the common characteristics of classroom interaction interruption and pauses: both aim to sustain English classroom interaction and provide opportunities for discourse. A fundamental discrepancy between classroom pauses and interruptions is that pauses can be classified into collective pauses and individual dialogue pauses, with individual dialogue pauses prevailing over collective pauses. In contrast to classroom interruptions, the impact of a teacher's pause does not put students in an uncomfortable position and allows them sufficient time to ponder and articulate their thoughts.<sup>[6]</sup> This implies that in accordance with the new curriculum standards, students must actively engage in class discussions and be willing to express their opinions following a teacher's pause, while teachers may take on a more guiding role. It is

noteworthy that a greater number of pauses in the classroom lead to enhanced teaching effectiveness, with a curvilinear relationship, indicating that an optimal number of pauses can yield the best results for overall classroom instruction under varying levels of educational content difficulty.<sup>[7]</sup>

This necessitates that teachers develop the ability to utilize appropriate pauses in conducting teaching activities in the English classroom under the new curriculum standards. Doing so can not only enhance students' participation and oral proficiency but also facilitate their comprehension of and engagement with the taught material, consequently improving their academic performance. According to the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory, it is emphasized that foreign language learning requires a lot of "listening" and "speaking" in order to obtain necessary input and accumulate certain vocabulary and language sense.<sup>[8]</sup> Classroom pauses can be used as a medium between "listening" and "speaking": teachers' timely pauses when telling content can not only help maintain classroom order and ensure the smooth progress of the teaching process (e.g. Example 1), but also create "speaking" opportunities for other students to exercise their oral English ability (e.g. Example 2). However, if teachers pause frequently or deliberately prolong the pause time, it may slow down the teaching progress and delay the completion of teaching tasks. Therefore, how to balance the two effects of classroom pause is the key to improve the effect of English teaching.<sup>[9]</sup>

Example 1: Teacher: Silence! ...(Students notice teacher's pause and gradually become quiet.)

Teacher: ... Now read up with me! ... "What would you like?"

Students: What would you like?

Teacher: ... I'd like some beef.

Students: I'd like some beef.

Example 2: Teacher: Lily. What do you think about ... "How will you protect our planet?" Lily: err ...

Teacher: ... I will ...

Lily: I will ... take bus ...

Teacher: Yes! You will take a bus to develop a habit of ... Green transport, right?

(In the above example, "... " is used as a pause signal, giving students time to think and organize their language, and mobilizing students' attention in time to prevent their attention from being distracted.)

## 4 Conclusion

In order to meet the requirements of the new curriculum standard for young students' English learning, teachers should change their teaching methods in time, from traditional indoctrination teaching to interactive teaching, and use appropriate pauses as batons to adjust the rhythm of the whole classroom. First of all, teachers need to learn three general pause methods-collective pause, questioning pause and pronunciation and intonation pause, then adjust and innovate according to the teaching style, and then constantly practice reasonable control of pause time, such as the five-second silent

counting method. These pause strategies not only promote the interaction between students and teachers, but also help students review and consolidate key information in teaching. From the perspective of teaching interaction, proper pause conforms to the law of teaching psychology-attention curve, and students can have enough time to think and digest what they have learned before teaching key points, between teaching links and after throwing out questions. This strategy helps to create a more positive learning environment that encourages students to actively engage and explore knowledge.

As one of the classroom interactive strategies, classroom pause is of great significance to enhance students' learning, memory and understanding ability, create a more active and efficient learning environment, and at the same time, it is conducive to adjusting classroom rhythm and reduce students' anxiety and pressure. It can not only promote the development of students' dominant position, but also improve teachers' dominant position.

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