

## Causes and Solutions of Silence Phenomenon in English Classroom of Rural Junior Middle School

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### Abstract

**This article focuses on addressing the pervasive silence phenomenon observed in English classrooms in rural junior middle schools. Drawing upon an extensive literature review, a comprehensive investigation is conducted using methods such as questionnaire surveys, classroom observations, and after-class interviews to gain insights into the causes behind this phenomenon. The findings reveal that the reasons for students' silence stem from various factors including individual student characteristics, teaching approaches adopted by teachers, school environments, and family backgrounds. Based on the identified causes for student silence, the author puts forth corresponding strategies and measures to combat and alleviate this issue in rural middle schools. The ultimate goal is to enhance the quality of classroom teaching and promote a more engaged and interactive learning environment.**

### Keywords

**Rural junior high school students; English classroom silence; Countermeasure.**

### 1. Introduction

English is an important course in middle school, but in rural middle school English classrooms, students rarely participate in classroom interaction, and the phenomenon of classroom silence is becoming increasingly serious. Classroom silence has become an important factor hindering the comprehensive improvement of English teaching level. The process of English classroom teaching is a communicative teaching process that emphasizes both language output and language input.

According to Swain and Lapkin's (371-391) language output theory, he believes that correct and fluent language can only be obtained through corresponding language output after language input. Negative classroom silence is undoubtedly detrimental to the development of English teaching activities and language output. The overall goal of the 2022 new curriculum is to cultivate students' comprehensive language abilities. The study of classroom silence has important theoretical and practical significance for the comprehensive development of students and the implementation of English teaching activities.

According to Piaget's cognitive development theory, the thinking development of middle school students is also more mature. They have a willingness to express themselves, but pay more attention to their image in the eyes of others, so they speak cautiously in class. In addition, due to limitations in regional culture, educational conditions, and parental education, most middle school students living and studying in rural areas are shy, timid, face saving, and have weaker abilities. Therefore, this article selects a rural junior high school as the research object and conducts in-depth research on its causes through questionnaire surveys, classroom observations, and post class interviews. Research has found that the reasons for student silence are related to students, teachers, schools, and parents. In response to different reasons, the author proposes corresponding measures and teaching suggestions to change the phenomenon of classroom silence in rural middle schools and improve the quality of classroom teaching.

## 2. Theoretical Basis

### (1) Classroom silence

In foreign country, Phillips (22-38) first coined the term silence and introduced it into the field of communication. He pointed out that people avoid communication because they believe that speaking will lose more than silence, so many people directly avoid active communication. Burgoon(60-69) understands silence as a psychological tendency of an individual, manifested as a psychological state, emotional state, or personality tendency of the individual's unwillingness to speak or communicate during communication. McCroskey (46) tends to view silence as a psychological state, pointing out that a subset of silence is communication fear, which is the level of fear and anxiety that a person experiences through actual or expected communication with others. Foreign scholars have provided different interpretations of silence from different perspectives, indicating that silence has complex and diverse meanings.

In China, the term silence originated from the Five Dynasties and means not speaking, not making a sound. In the Fifth Edition of the Modern Chinese Dictionary, there are two definitions of silence: firstly, as an adjective, it refers to not liking to talk or laugh; The second is to act as a verb, referring to not speaking. Although silence is silent, it can also convey rich social information. As the term silence is introduced into different disciplinary fields, the connotation of silence is gradually enriched and deepened. In education, silence mainly refers to classroom silence, including students' classroom silence and teachers' classroom silence. In communicative linguistics, silence can be defined in a broad sense and a narrow sense. In a broad sense, silence includes all forms of nonverbal communication, including all forms of information transmission except the use of words and language, such as body movements, facial expressions, space utilization, touch behavior, voice cues, dress and other decorations; Silence in a narrow sense is a branch of language space in paralanguage. It includes discourse pause and silence. Discourse pause refers to the pause during a conversation, while silence refers to the silence and interruption of speech that exceeds a certain time limit. (Li 259) In sociology, silence is considered a means of communication and communication between individuals. When individuals are unable to express their opinions or provide explanations, they often respond with silence, striving to conceal their inner thoughts or avoid positive interpersonal conflicts. (Lu 3) In the field of psychology, silence is a silent psychological state, a static psychological process in which people process, analyze, encode, and decode the information they receive. (Zhang 10) Silence is a means of communication and exchange that can show respect and acceptance, as well as self reflection.

In summary, silence, as a nonverbal form of expression, contains rich, complex, and profound meanings. The scope of silence discussed in this study mainly covers rural middle school English classroom silence, with minimal classroom interaction. The main research focuses on the current situation, causes, and coping strategies of silence.

### (2) English classroom silence

English classroom silence is a common "educational reality" in classroom teaching in universities, middle schools, and primary schools in China. Students' different psychological characteristics and personality differences based on different living environments and social experiences lead to different behavior and thinking states in the classroom. Wang (4) believes that it is a phenomenon of silence that hinders the learning and improvement of students' comprehensive language abilities in English classroom teaching, specifically manifested in the silence and silence of students in terms of thinking, behavior, and emotions. The author believes that the definition of silence in English classroom should refer to Wang Yanni's definition. The phenomenon of silence among students in English classroom teaching that hinders the learning and improvement of their comprehensive language abilities is manifested in its silence and silence state in terms of behavior, thinking, and emotions, and specifically refers to the silence

of students, which is characterized by complexity, accompaniment, situational nature, and “non expression”. Among them, situational nature is the primary limiting feature, and in this study, situational limitation is applied in English classroom teaching. “non expression” is an important feature of silence in English classroom, but it is not a limiting feature. Some students are seemingly silent but their thoughts are actively using their brains and thinking, while others are verbally perfunctory but not seriously thinking, but are psychologically and emotionally silent. English classroom silence is accompanied and complex. Accompanying refers to the performance of silence in English classroom, in addition to the main “silent” representation, but also accompanied by various body language, such as expressions, actions, and so on. Complexity refers to the complexity of the causes of silence in English classrooms, which is the reflection of many students’ personalities, emotions, language abilities, and attitudes.

### (3) Current research abroad

Silence in English classrooms is a common phenomenon, and the author has reviewed the current research status at home and abroad.

In abroad, in 1996, Tsui’s research (145-167) found that students’ silence is mainly related to anxiety through a survey of students’ silence in foreign language classroom. Other reasons include: teachers cannot tolerate students’ attitude towards silence and the waiting time given to students after questioning is too short. In 1997, Liu&William(371-384) conducted two large-scale surveys and found that: teachers’ high expectations of students will cause pressure on students, affect students’ confidence in speaking English and create a sense of low self-efficacy, causing students anxiety. This anxiety is the main reason why students keep silent in class and do not actively participate in classroom activities. Ken(104-107) believes that students’ self-esteem and self-efficacy have a significant impact on students’ classroom silence. Every time students answer questions, they are always worried that their wrong answers will be laughed at by other students and criticized by teachers. Some students are not confident enough and are already afraid of socializing. They naturally remain silent in class and try to avoid communication with teachers or classmates as much as possible. Ikuko (17-18) found in Australian universities that Japanese students tend to keep silent in class. The reasons why Japanese students keep silent in class are: low language level, fear of negative evaluation, language anxiety, etc. Through the review of foreign literature, it can be found that the main reasons for silence in foreign scholars’ research on English classroom teaching are students and teachers.

### (4) Current research at home

With the deepening of the curriculum reform, more and more teachers have begun to pay attention to the phenomenon of classroom silence. The phenomenon of silence is universal, and its causes are complex and diverse. Previous studies mainly focused on factor of teachers, students, classroom environment and traditional culture. Zhang(25) proposed in her research in 2011, that teachers’ teaching strategies, classroom organization, communication style, and teacher-student relationship are closely related to students’ classroom silence. The students’ language ability, their own personality and their long-term passive learning habits are the reasons for their classroom silence. Classroom atmosphere and class size affect students’ classroom participation. In 2014, Lan(36) believes that the reasons that affect students’ silence in the classroom are related to five factors: Chinese traditional culture, classroom teaching style and questioning skills, harmonious relationship between silence, students’ personality, language ability and learning habits, students physical fatigue, and poor mental state in the classroom. Zhan(56) proposed that there are three types of silence in rural junior middle school English classroom: “knowledge silence”, “forced silence” and “active silence”, and 92.7% of students believe that English classroom silence is passive silence in his 2014 research conclusion. There are many reasons for silence in rural junior middle school English classroom, and the reasons behind different types of silence are different, such as difficulties in English

learning, teachers' teaching methods and feedback methods, students' lack of self-confidence and silent cultural outlook.

From previous research results, most scholars believe that silence in English classrooms is common. In summary, most scholars' exploration of classroom silence starts from subjective and objective aspects, nonverbal and verbal, psychological and behavioral aspects, and the scope is too large to discover the various reasons behind the phenomenon of silence and corresponding solutions from more perspectives. In response to the existing problems in the research, this study adopts various research methods to conduct in-depth and detailed exploration from multiple aspects, deeply analyzing the reasons of the main factors such as family, school, English teachers, and students, and finding more coping strategies for classroom silence.

### 3. Research Design

In this section, the author identified the survey questions and targets around the topic of "A Study on the Causes and Solutions of Silence Phenomenon in English Classroom of Rural Junior Middle School" and then designed survey methods and questionnaires around this topic.

#### (1) Research questions

What is the nature of classroom silence in English classes in rural junior middle schools?

What are the factors contributing to the phenomenon of classroom silence in English classes in rural junior middle schools?

What strategies can be implemented to improve classroom participation and reduce silence in English classes in rural junior middle schools?

#### (2) Research objects

The subjects of this study will be 207 students and 6 English teachers from four classes at Longyan Middle School in Yangan Town, Suixi County, Zhanjiang City, Guangdong Province, China. This school was chosen due to its location as the most remote rural junior high school in the town, making it a suitable representation of current English teaching in rural junior high schools. Random sampling will be used to select classes for the study.

#### (3) Research methods

##### Method of questionnaire

This survey questionnaire is modified based on Li Meifeng's (2010) "English Silence Survey Questionnaire". The questionnaire survey method is used to investigate the situation of students, and to understand and analyze the reasons why rural junior high school students remain silent in English class from four aspects: student factor, English teacher factor, school factor and family factor. Through questionnaire surveys, statistical survey data, and analysis of survey results, we can comprehensively understand the current situation of rural middle school English classroom silence, explore the reasons for rural middle school English classroom silence, and propose effective teaching suggestions. See Appendix I for the Questionnaire. The questionnaire has 23 single choice questions and 1 essay question. Table 1 is the question setting table of the questionnaire, reflecting the corresponding relationship between the survey content and the questionnaire topic.

**Table 1.** The setting of the questionnaire on silence in English class in junior middle school

Survey outline	Survey content	Questionnaire title
Student's factors	Learning motivation	1,2, 3,15
	Character	8, 9
	English level	4, 24
	Group psychology	6, 9
	Face-saving psychology	5, 7
	Fear	16
	Preparation before class	17
	Class state	24
Teacher's factors	Teaching style	13
	Questioning skills	10, 11
	Classroom feedback	24
	Teacher-student relationship	12, 14
School's Factors	School activities	19, 20
	Class seat factor	23
Family's Factors	Family learning atmosphere	21
	Parental support	22

#### Method of classroom observation

The author adopts the classroom observation method to deeply explore and record the interaction between students and teachers and students in the rural junior middle school English classroom. According to the actual situation recorded in the classroom observation scale, this paper summarizes the characteristics of silence in the English class from three aspects: the overall atmosphere of the classroom, the teaching behavior of teachers and the classroom behavior of students. Class Observation Record Form (see Appendix II). A total of 8 English classes were observed, one class lasted 40 minutes, and each class observed two classes.

#### Methods of interviews

The interview method is to make up for the shortcomings of classroom observation method and questionnaire survey method, so as to explore the phenomenon of silence in rural junior middle school English classroom more deeply. The interviewees include six teachers and six randomly selected students. The interview arranged and recorded by the author in the form of personal interview after the classroom observation. See Appendix III and IV for the Interview Outline.

## 4. Research result and analysis

### (1) Analysis of classroom observation results

From the classroom observation table of classroom oral interaction, it can be seen that English teachers spend most of their time explaining in class, and students have significantly insufficient time to ask and answer questions. In English class, the teachers spent a long time talking to themselves and explaining alone. The phenomenon of classroom silence is quite serious.

Based on the classroom observation scale and interview records, the following describes the current situation of English classroom silence in rural junior high schools from the students' classroom performance, teacher' teaching behavior and the overall atmosphere of the classroom.

#### Observation of Students

Classroom observations and survey results indicate that in rural middle school English classrooms, teachers control the discourse power of the entire classroom, and classroom interaction is mainly carried out through questioning. When the teacher asks questions in class, most students remain silent. Students prefer to answer collectively rather than individually. When teachers take turns answering in groups, students' participation and activity in the classroom are significantly better than other forms. Many students are very nervous when facing the teacher's questions. They worry about the teacher asking them to answer questions, but neglect to think about the questions raised by the teacher.

#### Observation of teachers

From the perspective of teaching methods, teachers mainly adopt the teaching method of "teacher speaking, students listening". In these 8 classes, the author found that almost all English teachers spent more than 30 minutes explaining. When the teacher asks questions in English, the students feel very scared inside. Due to limitations in family conditions and educational resources, the English foundation of rural students is relatively weak. It is difficult to organize English answers in a short period of time, which makes them feel nervous and anxious. From the perspective of questioning methods, teachers mainly use collective questioning. In order to save class time and ensure the smooth progress of the teaching process, teachers often require students to respond collectively and quickly transition to the next teaching process. Over time, students gradually lose interest in answering questions and choose to remain silent. From the perspective of feedback methods, English teachers provide relatively simple feedback to students. The feedback given is not a genuine appreciation from the heart, but a procedural language for completing the feedback process, which reduces students' enthusiasm for answering questions. Due to limitations in educational resources and conditions, rural English teachers lack effective teaching methods and methods, making it difficult to meet students' learning needs.

#### Observation of the classroom

Classroom observations and interviews have found that the overall state of the four classes during classroom interaction is very similar. Teachers are the leaders of classroom activities, and students only listen attentively or take notes, lacking interaction between teachers and students. In addition, when there is little interaction between teachers and students, the classroom is only slightly lively. The two English teachers from Class 4 and Class 6 are good at observing students' reactions in class and promptly asking questions to interact with students, focusing their attention. After the students answered, both English teachers were able to provide targeted feedback and comments in a timely manner to motivate the students, making this class more active compared to the other two classes.

#### (2) Analysis of the results of the questionnaire

207 students from four classes participated in the questionnaire, and 207 copies were actually collected, with a recovery rate of 100%. The questionnaire has 23 single choice questions and 1 question and answer questions. Different questions are designed from four angles: student factor, English teacher factor, school factor and family factor. The causes of classroom silence are investigated in the form of multiple-choice questions from multiple dimensions and all directions, and then statistical analysis is made.

#### Students' factors

The questionnaire explores the influence of student factors on the phenomenon of silence in rural junior high school English classrooms from aspects such as students' learning motivation, personality, English proficiency, conformity psychology, face saving psychology, fear psychology, Preparation before class, and classroom state.

Questions 1, 2, 3 and 15 in the questionnaire explored students' learning motivation, and from the question 2, we can see that most of the students agree that speaking more in class has a

great auxiliary effect on learning English. However, nearly 30% of the students still believe that speaking in class has little effect on learning English well. This shows that some students do not pay enough attention to the importance of participation in English class. It can be seen from the third question that 58.97% of the students think that students' silence in the English class is a manifestation of passive learning. They also feel that this kind of silent learning brings great negative effects, even the performance of not learning. It can be seen from question 15 that only 39.61% of the students do not think that the main purpose of learning English is to participate in the middle school examination, so most of the students learn English in junior high school only to get high marks in the middle school examination. In question 1, only 16.43% of the students took the initiative to speak in class, and most of the students chose to be silent in class, because the spoken language in the middle school entrance examination was not included in the total score of entering school. However, learning motivation is an internal motivation that directly drives students to learn, and a need to motivate and guide students to learn.

Questions 8 and 9 in the questionnaire explored students' personality factors. It can be seen from Question 8 that a considerable number of students are not willing to speak actively in class because of their introversion. However, 55.07% of the students are not introverted, but they are not very active in class. From Question 9, we can see that more than half of the students like to answer in groups, and they also envy the students who can answer alone. So the students' character in class is relatively introverted and can't be put away, so the class is not very active. It can be seen that introverted students are more likely to remain silent in the classroom. Silence can provide introverted students with more psychological security, making them tend to be silent in the classroom. The results indicate that most students in rural areas are introverted and are more likely to remain silent in the classroom.

Questions 4 and 24 in the questionnaire explore the students' English level. From question 4, it can be seen that most students believe that their English proficiency is very poor. Even if they know the answer to the question, due to their limited level of English expression, they are unable to express their views in English and dare not raise their hands to speak, so they are forced to remain silent. From the subjective response of students to question 24, many students write that even if they know the answer to the question, due to their poor English foundation, they are unable to express themselves in English.

Questions 6 and 9 in the questionnaire explored students' conformity psychology. From these two questions, it can be seen that in the classroom, if students with good grades do not answer the questions raised by the teacher, then students with poor grades or lack of confidence will also remain silent. If the majority of students in the class participate in the classroom, they will also actively participate.

Most students align with the crowd. In class, if other students do not raise their hands to speak, they will follow suit, or they are unwilling to behave differently from other students, fearing that they will attract different attention from them. Therefore, most students tend to answer the teacher's questions with their classmates instead of raising their hands alone. This herd mentality also leads to a low stress state, silence, and oppression in the classroom to a certain extent.

Questions 8 and 10 in the questionnaire explored the students' face-loving psychology. It can be seen from the above two questions that nearly half of the students are not willing to raise their hands to speak even if they know the answer to the question because they are worried that their classmates say they love to behave and show off. After entering junior high school, a significant change has taken place in students' psychology, that is, they have strong self-esteem and are very sensitive. In class, many students keep silent in order to save their face and protect their self-esteem. Nearly half of the students are afraid that their pronunciation is not standard enough, so they will be laughed at by teachers and classmates when raising their hands to speak,



and choose to be silent to avoid making mistakes. So many students keep silent in order to maintain their good behavior and fear of making mistakes.

The 16th question in the questionnaire explored the students' fear psychology. From the survey results, we can find that many students are afraid of answering questions in class, and it is very stressful for them to answer teachers' questions. When the teacher asked questions, the students were very worried that because no one raised his hand to speak, the teacher would call himself to answer the questions.

Question 17 in the questionnaire explored the students' preparation for pre-class preparation. It can be seen from this question that if students preview the content of the next class sufficiently before class, they can also find the answer quickly. Many times, students are very nervous or even have no clue when facing the teacher's questions in class, and they are even asked to answer after being silent for a few seconds, and even do not find the answer to simple questions. This proves that the students' pre-class preparation is completely inadequate, which makes them, who are not good enough, completely unable to keep up with the teacher's class progress and have to be silent.

The 24th question in the questionnaire explored the students' state in class. From the students' autonomous responses, we can learn that many students are silent in English class for many reasons. Some students also tried to keep up with the teacher, but soon found that they could not understand and keep up with their efforts, so they fell into a state of passive learning. There are also some students with a better foundation who think that the teacher's questions are not difficult, unattractive, even have no desire to answer, and also show a state of passive resistance. Therefore, these students will become more and more silent in class. Even if they can answer, they will not answer. They feel that there is no interest and no need to answer. In addition, the Internet and other entertainment will distract students from learning energy and rest and sleep time, resulting in poor English grades and silence.

#### English teacher factors

According to classroom observation, there is a great relationship between rural junior high school English classroom silence performance and its English teachers. Therefore, part of the questions in the questionnaire are investigated from four aspects: teachers' teaching style, questioning skills, classroom feedback and teacher-student relationship, in order to find out the reasons for classroom silence from teachers' factors.

Question 13 in the questionnaire explored the influence of teachers' teaching style. It can be seen from the result of this question that 74.88% of the students do not think that there is a problem with the teaching method of the English teacher, and only a few of the students are not satisfied with the teaching method of the teacher. They think that the teacher has absolute authority and seldom gives students the opportunity to ask questions. Due to limitations in educational resources and conditions, English teachers in rural areas lack effective teaching methods and methods, which undoubtedly has a significant impact on students' classroom performance.

Questions 10 and 11 explored the impact of teachers' questioning skills. From the results, we can see that nearly 26.09% of the students thought that the teacher's questions were boring and could not mobilize the enthusiasm of thinking and participation. Moreover, nearly 54.59% of the students will feel that the time left by the teacher for thinking is too short, the students have not had time to organize the language, and even have not come up with an answer for the short circuit of thinking, so they cannot raise their hands in time to speak, resulting in a long silence in the classroom. It can be seen that the professional quality of teachers is not high, and due to limited class hours and numerous teaching tasks, it is easy to lead to the phenomenon of incomplete listening for teachers and students. Rural middle school students have a poor



foundation in English, making English teaching difficult to achieve and difficult to complete teaching tasks in a short period of time.

It can be seen from the students' subjective response to the reason for their silence in class in question 24, a large number of students feel that the teacher's feedback on students' answers is too simple. Some students show that when students answer questions correctly, teacher always says "Good!" Or "Very good" and other stylized comments. If students always get such simple feedback, they will get used to it, and the feedback will gradually lose its positive reinforcement effect and cannot achieve the effect of encouraging students to actively answer. Some students think that they will be criticized more or less by the teacher when they can't answer the question or make mistakes in the answer. As a result, their enthusiasm and self-esteem were hit, so they became unwilling to answer questions. The classroom teaching atmosphere also became silent. Some students also mentioned that teachers will not make any evaluation, so students can't get affirmation from teachers without feedback information, and gradually don't want to answer questions. Teachers' appropriate and timely classroom feedback can stimulate students' enthusiasm for further learning, give students new inspiration and lessons, and make them look forward to the next speech.

From questions 12 and 14 explored the impact of teacher-student relationship. It can be seen that nearly 15% of the students have been ignored by the teacher for a long time, so they feel that it is not important to participate or not in the heart, or they are dissatisfied with the teacher's preference for certain students, so they habitually behave silently in the classroom. Nearly 20% of the students think that the teacher is too serious and has a sense of distance from the teacher, so they dare not take the initiative to speak in class and are unwilling to take the initiative to speak. Therefore, improving the relationship between teachers and students and enabling them to cooperate more closely will greatly help to reduce the phenomenon of classroom silence.

Through the above data analysis, it is found that English teachers' teaching style, questioning skills, classroom feedback and teacher-student relationship will affect students' classroom performance, thus causing students' classroom silence.

#### School factors

The questionnaire investigates the influence of school factors on English classroom silence in rural junior middle schools from the aspects of school activities and class seats.

Questions 19 and 20 in the questionnaire explored the development of school activities. From these two questions, nearly 90% of the students have rarely or hardly participated in the school English corner activities, and only 9.18% of the students have participated in the school English reading competition and calligraphy competition. This shows that the school does not pay enough attention to the creation of the English learning environment and does not care enough about the development of students' oral English. Due to limitations in educational resources and conditions, as well as the relatively weak English foundation of students in rural areas, there are few opportunities for students to exercise.

Question 23 of the questionnaire explored the factors of class seats. It can be seen from the data that nearly half of the students said that their silence in class was due to the seat to a certain extent. It can also be seen from the situation of raising hands in class that the time length of students sitting in the back row and the edge is ignored by the teacher because the distance is a little far. For a long time, these students felt that they were not valued by the teacher, and were too lazy to raise their hands to participate in the speech. There are also a few students who are forced to be silent when interacting because their seats are too far away from the platform and sometimes they can't hear the teacher's questions clearly. Therefore, students seating arrangements are also an important factor in classroom silence.

#### Family factors

Family is the most primitive and basic unit of individual development, and it is also a dynamic system formed by parents and children. A simple and complex family atmosphere formed by this dynamic relationship may have an obvious or subtle impact on individuals. (Yang Cheng, Liu Jianping, 2017, 364-368.) Family is another important base for children's growth and learning. A good family environment can make students' learning to a higher level. The questionnaire investigates family factors from two aspects of family learning atmosphere and parental support to analyze the impact on classroom silence of rural junior high school students. Question 21 of the questionnaire explored the impact of family learning atmosphere. From the survey data, it can be seen that only 23.15% of parents can care about their children's learning and their performance in the classroom at home. In the interview, the author found that half of the students believe that their parents are both working outside, and no one can provide tutoring and learning, resulting in high academic pressure. There is simply no time or energy to speak English. These situations all reflect the impact of family environment on students' classroom silence. A classmate said that their parents go out to work all year round and are mostly taken care of by their grandparents at home. They are elderly, weak, and have a low level of education, which makes it impossible for them to provide learning assistance. Even if their parents are at home, they cannot provide homework guidance due to their low level of education, let alone practice English speaking. In addition, spoken English is rarely used in daily life, and one's own foundation is not very good, lacking the courage and confidence to speak up. It is not difficult to see that the family environment has a significant impact on students' classroom silence.

Question 22 of the questionnaire explored the impact of parental support. Parents are the first teachers of children, and family is the first classroom of children. The influence of family and parents on children cannot be ignored. It can be seen from the above data that 40.09% of students' parents are not very supportive of their children's purchase of English learning materials, which also does not pay enough attention to students' English learning. Due to limitations in family conditions and educational resources, students in rural areas have a relatively weak foundation in English. Parents can pay more attention to students' English learning, which will help students lay a good foundation, improve their English level, and reduce classroom silence.

#### Analysis of interview results

In order to deeply understand the current situation, reasons and strategies of classroom silence in rural junior middle schools, this study will interview teachers and students to understand their real ideas and views. The author will interview teachers and students in time after each class, and randomly select three students who actively answer questions in class and three students who do not answer questions. The teacher interview is arranged after the student interview.

#### Analysis of teacher interview results

Several English teachers interviewed stated that there was silence in their class's English classes. Most students are not actively answering questions, and only a few students with good grades participate in classroom interaction. Some teachers are even tired of those silent students and have low evaluations of them. Several teachers often use these words to describe their students: timid, introverted, shy, unwilling to speak, and so on. According to the answers of several teachers, there are many reasons why students remain silent. Some students remain silent in class due to their introverted personality, while others are unable to concentrate due to poor sleep habits. Some students have a poor foundation and do not have previews to answer the teacher's questions in class. In the conversation with teachers, we found that they all believed that classroom silence had a great negative impact on students' enthusiasm and efficiency in class.

### Analysis of student interview results

In the conversation with the interviewed students, it was found that students' silence in class was a common phenomenon. Students are used to listening to the teacher's explanation in class. They are used to taking notes instead of thinking about the questions raised by the teacher. It was found that most students have the phenomenon of classroom silence. They also know that this kind of classroom silence has brought some negative effects on their learning. Most of them like the active classroom atmosphere. But he remained silent for various reasons.

Several of the students interviewed got good grades. They said that the teacher's question was too simple and they were not interested in answering it. There are also several students with middle grades who said that the teacher was too strict and was afraid of being criticized by the teacher for their mistakes, and would not raise their hands to answer. They said they didn't like the teacher's teaching mode, and they hoped that the teacher could be a little less strict with them. Most students' parents often go out to work, while only a few students improve their grades through their own efforts.

## 5. Solutions

Through further organization and analysis of survey data, this study found that classroom silence is mainly influenced by factors such as students, English teachers, schools, and families. Based on the existing problems and the reasons for these problems, this study proposes corresponding strategies, in order to enhance students' enthusiasm and interactivity in participating in the classroom and improve the current situation of classroom silence

### (1) Strategies for students

Change negative learning motivation. Students should know that learning English is not only to get good grades, but also to develop their comprehensive quality and ability.

Strive to improve their comprehensive English level and increase their confidence.

Refuse to follow the crowd. Junior high school students should have their own ideas and opinions on every matter or problem.

Don't be face-saving. Don't worry about being laughed at by others for making mistakes and don't dare to raise your hand to speak, and don't worry about your inaccurate pronunciation will leave a bad impression on the teacher.

Don't be afraid. Students should change this mentality. Don't be too nervous to think because of the teacher's questions.

Be sure to preview before English class. Especially for students with poor foundation and low English level, if the pre-class preview is not sufficient, there is no doubt that these students will be completely unable to keep up with the pace of the class and will be forced to be silent.

Reflect on and change the related bad habits that affect the English class. Each student should pay attention to the silence in class, and then try to adjust class state according to actual situation, and participate in the class with good class mood.

### (2) Strategies for teachers

Change the single teaching style. Due to various reasons, the English foundation of rural students is relatively weak, and English teachers lack effective teaching methods and methods. Faced with these difficulties and challenges, rural English teachers need to continuously improve their teaching ability and quality, actively explore teaching models and methods suitable for rural areas, and thus improve classroom silence. In the English class, teachers should put themselves in a proper position, give full play to the main role of students, guide students to learn in a way suitable for their own English level, organize classroom activities suitable for students at different levels, and give full play to the role of supervision. The teaching methods should also be diversified, which can be combined with lectures and group discussions.

The way of group discussion can provide more opportunities for students to speak, greatly reduce students' anxiety when answering questions, and improve students' enthusiasm to participate in the classroom.

Improve questioning methods and skills. First of all, teachers should design more open questions. This can not only stimulate students' interest but also provide them with a space to express their ideas freely. In addition, when designing a problem, teachers need to grasp the difficulty of the problem. When English teachers ask questions, they should be simple and clear, easy to understand, clear instructions, and not speak too fast to ensure that most students can understand. In addition, after asking questions, pay attention to the students' preparation. Finally, teachers should pay special attention to problem allocation. Teachers should treat every student fairly and equally. They should try to give every student the opportunity to answer questions in class instead of fixing a few people, so as not to make students feel neglected.

Students should be given appropriate feedback information in a timely, targeted, encouraging and constructive manner. Junior high school students are in adolescence, and their self-esteem is very strong. They love face, pay special attention to others' views on themselves, and are eager to get the approval of teachers and classmates. When they are respected and praised by teachers and classmates, they will feel satisfied and confident, and naturally become happy, so they are very happy to participate in classroom activities. But this does not mean that teachers should not give students negative feedback, because when students answer questions incorrectly, it is very necessary for teachers to correct them.

Consciously and actively build a good teacher-student relationship. Teachers should respect students, care about students, recognize students, treat students without discrimination, and do not be prejudiced against underachievers. Harmonious teacher-student relationship can reduce classroom silence and improve classroom efficiency. There are a certain number of single parent and left behind children among rural middle school students, who lack confidence. Teachers should use questioning to build students' confidence and stimulate their confidence in learning English well, so that all students can have a sense of achievement and achievement in the English classroom. Teachers can occasionally focus their attention on these students when asking questions in the classroom, encouraging them to actively participate in the classroom, making them feel the teacher's expectations and attention, thereby changing their mindset and actively participating in the classroom to break the silence of students.

### (3) Strategies for schools

Increase support for English activities. Schools should pay more attention to the creation of English learning environment and vigorously support various activities in campus English, such as opening English corners, introducing foreign teachers, and increasing students' interest in learning English. In addition, the school can vigorously support English speech contest, English singing contest and English debate contest in terms of money and manpower, and will also provide more opportunities for students to speak and learn English, so that students have a better atmosphere for learning English.

Schools should pay attention to the arrangement of classroom seats. The survey found that students also became silent to some extent due to some reasons for the arrangement of seats in the classroom. Therefore, schools should try to create an equal and happy learning environment for each student.

### (4) Strategies for families

A. Parents should create a good learning atmosphere. The interview found that few students recite English at home and spend less time reading aloud. Parents can encourage children to listen and speak more English at home, create a learning atmosphere at home, and drive their

enthusiasm for learning. Because the home is a relaxed and free learning environment, students can better practice oral English.

B. Investment in support of English learning. In the interview, it was found that many parents did not support the purchase of students' English learning materials, indicating that many parents did not recognize the difficulty of English learning and did not pay attention to children's oral development. Parents should change their ideas and fully support the overall improvement of children's language learning ability. This will also convey a positive learning attitude to students, which is conducive to their progress.

## 6. Conclusion

This study focused on investigating the phenomenon of classroom silence in the English classrooms of a rural junior high school in Suixi County, Zhanjiang City, Guangdong Province. Through classroom observations, questionnaire surveys, and interviews, the current situation and influencing factors of classroom silence among the selected students were examined. The findings revealed that classroom silence is widespread in middle school English classrooms, which hampers students' English learning to some extent. Analysis of the survey data indicated that the reasons for classroom silence are complex and diverse, influenced by students, English teachers, schools, and families.

Based on the identified problems and their causes, this study proposes strategies at four levels: students, English teachers, schools, and families, with the aim of enhancing students' enthusiasm and participation in the classroom, improving the situation of classroom silence, and mitigating its negative impact on rural middle school students' English learning. Recommendations include students changing their negative learning motivation, improving their English proficiency, and boosting their confidence. English teachers in rural areas should adjust their teaching methods, improve questioning techniques, provide supportive feedback to students, and foster positive teacher-student relationships. Schools should increase support for English education activities, improve educational resources, and elevate the overall quality of English education. Additionally, parents are encouraged to create a conducive learning environment at home and actively support their children's education.

It is important to acknowledge that the representativeness of the selected sample of research subjects is limited. Therefore, further research is needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of this issue and offer feasible suggestions for English teachers' teaching methods, student management, and other aspects, ultimately creating a relaxed, enjoyable, warm, and productive English classroom learning environment for rural middle school students.

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