

A Classroom-Based Research on Participles

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ABSTRACT

Grammar is one of the key points of English teaching in secondary vocational schools, and attributive clause is an important grammatical task in secondary vocational English learning. The proportion of attributive clauses in college entrance examination reform papers is still not reduced, and its importance cannot be underestimated. However, the teaching of attributive clauses in secondary vocational schools has been facing some problems, especially in the choice of relative words. Students are used to doing exercises through language sense without any theoretical methods. Teachers have the desire to change the way of teaching, but at the same time, they will be limited by various factors, so that they do not know how to change teaching methods. Some teachers pay too much attention to the communicative ability of language and play down grammar, not to mention that in the teaching of attributive clauses, the teacher only explains the grammar points by explaining the text. The foundation of secondary vocational students is generally poor, and their learning ability needs to be improved. Therefore, in order to help senior high school English attributive clause teaching break through the bottleneck of the current problems, this study mainly discusses the selection of relative words in secondary vocational English attributive clause teaching methods. This study selected 16 students from a class of 53 students (30%) in Grade Two in an undisclosed secondary vocational school in Shandong Province, China.

To examine the proficiency level of relative words of attributive clauses of students, the study selected 16 attributive clauses without the relative words from the textbook and workbooks and made the subject students choose proper relative words to complete the sentences. Choosing relative words in attributive clauses is not only a knowledge point in teaching non-predicate verbs but also an important and difficult point. In order to achieve the teaching effect of highlighting the key points and breaking through the difficult points, we should select attributive clauses from the textbooks for students to practice, trigger the resonance of students, and also help them to review the old and learn the new in the meantime.

Keywords : Grammar Teaching, Syntax, Secondary Vocational School, English Class, Attributive Clauses

INTRODUCTION

Grammar is one of the key points of English teaching in secondary vocational schools, and attributive clause is an important grammatical task in secondary vocational English learning. The proportion of attributive clauses in college entrance examination reform papers is still not reduced,

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However, the teaching of attributive clauses in secondary vocational schools has been facing some problems, especially in the choice of relative words. Students are used to doing exercises through language sense without any theoretical methods. Teachers have the desire to change the way of teaching, but at the same time, they will be limited by various factors, so that they do not know how to change teaching methods. Some teachers pay too much attention to the communicative ability of language and play down grammar, not to mention that in the teaching of attributive clauses, the teacher only explains the grammar points by explaining the text. The foundation of secondary vocational students is generally poor, and their learning ability needs to be improved. Therefore, in order to help senior high school English attributive clause teaching break through the bottleneck of the current problems, this study mainly discusses the selection of relative words in secondary vocational English attributive clause teaching methods.

According to the syllabus, attributive clauses have long been the focus and difficulty of English teaching in secondary vocational schools, especially the relative words. Traditional teaching usually talks about the definition and characters of attributive clauses in the texts instead of explaining the grammar rules deeply, which leads to students' shallow cognition of it and insufficient grasp of its internal logical relations, so that mistakes occur frequently when using it. Due to the deep influence of their native language, learners often express sentences that defy English grammar. As a result, teaching attributive clauses is still a long way to go.

Through sorting out and analyzing, since 1993, scholars have focused on the teaching of attributive clauses, the classification and function of attributive clauses, the wrong analysis of attributive clause learning, and the teaching methods of attributive clauses. In 1993, Qi Guangsheng published the first journal with the theme of high school attributive clauses teaching. Seven specific steps are put forward to guide students to learn by that, which, and who, which provides practical teaching methods for high school English teachers. Since 2006, scholars have begun to study the teaching of attributive clauses in high school English from the perspective of teaching methods. Mao Weizhou published a master's thesis entitled "Communicative grammar teaching based on senior high school English clauses" in 2006, which mainly studied the application effect of SCNQA's communicative grammar teaching mode in senior high school official clauses. It is also proved that the grammar teaching mode is effective for high school students to learn English grammar and then provides English teachers with a new and effective grammar teaching mode. Later, some domestic scholars proposed that different teaching methods should be applied to the teaching of attributive clauses in high school English. Wang Xiangfeng and Cheng Liang published a paper in 2011 on the application of task-based teaching methods to the teaching of attributive clauses in high school English. In 2012, Gui Yuping proposed that explicit grammar teaching and implicit grammar teaching have different characteristics and meanings in the face of different grammatical knowledge points, but they are not mutually excluded but complementary. In the study, Gui Yuping is an example of attributive clause teaching for case presentation and analysis. Tang Shujing published an empirical research paper on the role of formal focus in English grammar teaching in 2012. Zhang Xiao'ang published in 2014 an empirical study on the attention function of the output hypothesis in the teaching of attributive clauses and proved its effectiveness. In recent years, senior high school English attributive clauses have studied more in teaching methods, in addition to the above-mentioned communicative grammar teaching mode and assignment. In addition to the attention function of pragmatic teaching, explicit and implicit grammar teaching, and formal focus and output hypothesis, there is also the application of graphic background theory and input and output theory proposed by

scholars in the teaching of attributive clauses. To sum up, the teaching methods of attributive clauses are gradually valued by the education circle, and scholars are studying and discussing. After the analysis of its characteristics and errors, it began to start on the specific teaching mode. Researchers have teachers from the first line, and most of them study the teaching steps and methods of a specific knowledge point. There are other graduate students or researchers in school who mainly study linguistics, apply the teaching methods of language acquisition to the teaching of attributive clauses, verify their effect, or explore the process of learners acquiring attributive clauses under the support of a hypothesis. Whether it is the teaching research of specific knowledge points of front-line teachers or the acquisition of pure linguistics by researchers, it is the necessity and importance of the study of attributive clauses.

According to Shandong Province in the past five years of vocational high examination questions, we know that attributive clauses are compulsory points; the amount of examination is an annual average of 1 to 4 questions, mainly in two types of questions: multiple choices and fill in the blanks; and examination points include the choice of relative words, the person and tense of the predicate in the subordinate clauses, and the mixture of attributive clauses and other types of subordinate clauses. (See the table below).

Year	Attributive Clauses			
	Relative words	Person	Tense	Mixture
2019	1	/	/	1
2020	2	1	1	/
2021	1	/	1	1
2022	1	1	/	1
2023	2	/	1	1
Total	7	2	3	4

Table 1 Statistical table of non-predicate verb test questions in Shandong Secondary Vocational High School Examination from 2019 to 2023

In fact, attributive clauses can be found in cloze, reading comprehension, sentence rewriting, grammar filling, practical writing, and other test questions, all of which directly impact the examinee's comprehension and response to the question. Whether students can consciously analyze the subordinate relationship between main and subordinate clauses when reading English texts, whether they can consciously choose correct relative words to accomplish long and difficult sentences or complex sentences, and whether they can actively distinguish attributive clauses from other types of clauses are all important and difficult points in attributive clauses teaching.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology

Given the necessity and importance of teaching attributive clauses, this study employs a quantitative research method. It aims to summarize the process of selecting relative words for students and assess their mastery of attributive clauses through various exercises, including gap filling and sentence rewriting. The research objectives are as follows:

1. Examine the students' grammar skills.
2. Understand the students' difficulties learning attributive clauses.

Research Design

1. Participants

This study included 16 students from a class of 53 (30%) in Grade Two at an undisclosed secondary vocational school in Shandong Province, China.

2. Instrument (Materials)

To examine the proficiency level of relative words of attributive clauses of students, the study selected 16 attributive clauses without the relative words from the textbook and workbooks and made the subject students choose proper relative words to complete the sentences.

1. This is the most beautiful picture_____I have ever seen.
2. I am looking for the only book_____my teacher gave me yesterday.
3. I have found some pictures of the most interesting places_____you can visit during the summer holidays.
4. Most of the time, a resolution is a kind of promise_____we make to ourselves at the beginning of the year.
5. The most important rule_____you should follow is to communicate.
6. You raise me up is the only song _____brings me much courage in the face of difficulties.
7. A true friend is a person_____reaches for your hand and touches your heart.
8. The educational program tries to show the things_____are important in life.
9. I am packing my clothes and daily things_____are necessary for the coming trip.
10. Do you remember the places_____you visited last year?
11. I will never forget the things and people _____I met in the town.
12. Dare to Grow up is a new documentary_____follows three students for eight years, from their first day of high school to their graduation from college.
13. The West Lake Park in Zhangzhou_____was completed last year, has become a new tourist attraction.
14. True friends are persons_____always take care of you and encourage you to succeed.
15. The man and the dog_____are walking in the park and live in our neighborhood.
16. The first thing_____I will do is to make a card for him.

3. Methodologies

4. Translate the sentences into Chinese;
5. Determine whether the antecedent is a person or a thing;
6. If the antecedent is a thing, choose a relative word from “that(subject, object, predicative), which(subject, object, predicative), whose(attribute)”;
- if the antecedent is a person, choose a relative word from “that(subject, object, predicative), who(subject, predicative), whom(object)”;
7. Determine what element is missing in the clause and choose a relative word according to the rules in c;
8. Pay attention to some special rules as follows:
 1. The situations that you can only use “that” but not “which”:
 - 1.1 The antecedent is modified by the superlative adjectives;

- 1.2 The antecedent is modified by ordinal numerals;
- 1.3 The antecedent is modified by "the only," "the very," and "the last."
- 1.4 The antecedent is indefinite pronouns or be modified by indefinite pronouns (such as all, everything, nothing, anyone);
- 1.5 The antecedent includes both a person and a thing.
- 1.6 The question begins with "which" or "that."
- 1.7 The relative word is predicative in the attributive clause.
2. The situations that you can only use "which" but not "that":
 - 2.1 Non-restrictive attributive clauses;
 - 2.2 The antecedent is used with a preposition.
3. The antecedent is "that".

Data collection and sample selection

First, the teacher wrote the 16 sentences on 16 pieces of paper and randomly assigned them to the 16 subject students. Then let the subject students choose relative words alone without explaining any rules to them and make them write down the sentences. Table 2 displays the result. Second, explain the rules above to the subject students and then let the subject students choose the relative words again. Table 3 displays the result.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

No	Sentence	Type of antecedent	Missing element	Relative word	Analysis
1	This is the most beautiful picture_____I have ever seen.	/	/	What	Incorrect
2	I am looking for the only book_____my teacher gave me yesterday.	/	/	which	Incorrect
3	I have found some pictures of the most interesting places_____you can visit during the summer holidays.	/	/	where	Incorrect
4	Most of the time a resolution is a kind of promise_____we make to ourselves at the beginning of the year.	/	/	that	Correct

5	The most important rule_____you should follow is to communicate.	/	/	which	Incorrect
6	You raise me up is the only song _____brings me much courage in the face of difficulties.	/	/	which	Incorrect
7	A true friend is a person_____reaches for your hand and touches your heart.	/	/	Which	Incorrect
8	The educational program tries to show the things_____are important in life.	/	/	Which	Correct
9	I am packing my clothes and daily things_____are necessary for the coming trip.	/	/	What	Incorrect
10	Do you remember the places_____you visited last year?	/	/	Where	Incorrect
11	I will never forget the things and people_____I met in the town.	/	/	Which	Incorrect
12	Dare to Grow up is a new documentary_____follows three students for eight years, from their first day of high school to their graduation from college.	/	/	What	Incorrect
13	The West Lake Park in Zhangzhou_____was completed last year has become a new tourist attraction.	/	/	Which	Correct

14	True friends are persons_____always take care of you and encourage you to succeed.	/	/	Which	Incorrect
15	The man and the dog_____are walking in the park live in our neighborhood.	/	/	Who	Incorrect
16	The first thing_____I will do is to make a card for him.	/	/	which	Incorrect

Table 2 The subject students' answers before teacher explaining the grammar rules

No	Sentence	Type of antecedent	Missing element	Relative word	Analysis
1	This is the most beautiful picture_____ I have ever seen.	A thing	Object	That	Correct
2	I am looking for the only book _____ my teacher gave me yesterday.	A thing	Object	That	Correct
3	I have found some pictures of the most interesting places_____you can visit during the summer holidays.	A thing	Object	That	Correct
4	Most of the time a resolution is a kind of promise_____we make to ourselves at the beginning of the year.	A thing	Object	That/Which	Correct
5	The most important rule_____you should follow is to communicate.	A thing	Object	which	Correct
6	You raise me up is the only song _____brings me much courage in the face of difficulties.	A thing	Subject	That	Correct

7	A true friend is a person_____reaches for your hand and touches your heart.	A person	Subject	Who/ That	Correct
8	The educational program tries to show the things_____are important in life.	A thing	Subject	Which/ That	Correct
9	I am packing my clothes and daily things_____are necessary for the coming trip.	A thing	Subject	Which/ That	Incorrect
10	Do you remember the places_____you visited last year?	A thing	Object	Which/ That	Incorrect
11	I will never forget the things and people _____I met in the town.	Thing and Person	Object	That	Correct
12	Dare to Grow up is a new documentary_____follows three students for eight years, from their first day of high school to their graduation from college.	A thing	Subject	That/ Which	Correct
13	The West Lake Park in Zhangzhou_____was completed last year has become a new tourist attraction.	A thing	Subject	Which/ That	Correct
14	True friends are persons_____always take care of you and encourage you to succeed.	A person	Subject	That/ Which	Correct
15	The man and the dog_____are walking in the park live in our neighborhood.	Thing and Person	Subject	That	Correct
16	The first thing_____I will do is to make a card for him.	A thing	Object	That	Correct

Table 3 The subject students' answers and analysis after teacher explaining the grammar rules

CONCLUSIONS

Before the teacher explained the grammar rules to the students, none of the 16 subject students chose the right relative word and completed the sentence correctly. We can see that students had difficulty identifying the type of antecedents and didn't know how to choose a proper relative word.

We can see that no subject student can analyze the type of antecedent and missing element correctly, but most of them know some of the relative words. However, the students simply believe that the relative words are the things that appear in the attributive clauses; for example, if there is a date in the clause, some students would choose "when" as the relative word (as in the sentences 1, 3, 9, 10, and 12); on the other hand, students didn't know some special rules of relative words in attributive clauses, such as the conditions in which we can only use "that" and those we can only use "which." For example, when the antecedent is modified by "the only," "the very," and "the last," we can only use "that" as a relative word (as in sentences 2, 6); when the antecedent is modified by ordinal numerals, we can only use "that" as a relative word (as in sentence 2, 6); when the antecedent is modified by the superlative adjectives, we can only use "that" as a relative word (as in sentences 1, 3, 5); when the antecedent includes both a person and a thing, we can only use "that" as a relative word (as in sentences 11, 15).

After the teacher explains the grammar rules for choosing relative words in attributive clauses, almost all of the subject students are able to analyze the type of antecedent and missing elements. What's more, they are able to choose the correct relative words on their own.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Choosing relative words in attributive clauses is not only a knowledge point in teaching non-predicate verbs but also an important and difficult point. To achieve the teaching effect of highlighting the key points and breaking through the difficult points, we should find attributive clauses from the textbooks for students to practice. This will not only trigger their resonance but also help them review the old and learn the new in the interim. Practical classes give students a sense of gain. Sixteen sentences facilitate the organic integration of knowledge and skills.

However, the process evaluation is a little weak, and an evaluation scale can be added. Secondary vocational students need interesting, learnable, and disciplinary English classes. To make students understand and learn well, the key lies in the treatment of teaching content. How to filter, adapt, or develop the teaching content according to the students' own starting point level, design, and integrate to form a system is worthy of further discussion.

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