The Importance of Apperception in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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ABSTRACT

All over the world many people seek to master English in order to get better information, higher education and even to reach for better career opportunities. Teachers play a pivotal role in equipping foreign students with the necessary language skills to thrive in this globalized world. One of the more common challenges that teachers may encounter is the lack of motivation from young EFL learners. TEFL teachers can use to increase classroom immersion and help motivate their students is by commencing apperception at the beginning of the class. This is a qualitative study utilizing the literature study method. It is a method focusing on existing literary sources (books, article etc) as its primary source. The best way to tune out the emotional state of students and get them ready for the lesson is to do some fun Apperception activities. The concept of apperception encompasses the acknowledgment of the myriad perspectives and backgrounds that each student brings to the classroom. By acknowledging and valuing the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students, teachers can foster a sense of belonging and respect among the students. This can significantly enhance the learning experience, promoting not just language acquisition, but also cross-cultural understanding.

Keywords: English teachers, EFL, apperception, classroom management

INTRODUCTION

English is a widely used language around the globe (Rohmah, 2005) with almost two-thirds of English users being non-native speakers (Cahyanti et al., 2021). Many people seek to master English in order to get better access to information, education and even better career opportunity (Irjananta, 2019). Teachers play a pivotal role in equipping foreign students with the necessary language skills to thrive in this globalized world. Through effective teaching methodologies, innovative pedagogical approaches, and cultural sensitivity, teachers empower students to become confident and competent users of the English language, thereby contributing to its spread and relevance in today's interconnected world (Pelivan, 2021).

Of course Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL) is not an easy thing. TEFL teachers play a vital role in facilitating language acquisition and promoting cross-cultural understanding (Devos, 2014). They face learners with minimum exposure to authentic English language environments outside of the classroom. Therefore, creating an immersive learning experiences within the classroom environment, incorporating authentic materials such as videos, podcasts, and real-life scenarios is a must to simulate real-world language use. In this aspect, though one can argue that the ease of internet access has helped English

content but a one-sided information exchange cannot truly foster social communication skills; though it is a great help to familiarizing with the language.

One of the more common challenges that teachers may encounter is the lack of motivation from young EFL learners. Learning new things require the teacher to impart knowledge to their pupils. Though this may be effective to some degree, it cannot provide a longlasting change with the English language outcome being unused. Teachers who can motivate young learners to actively acquire English, also igniting a sense of curiosity and enthusiasm within them will see a more lasting change where their students may attempt using it in real life situations. Faced with such challenge, educators must employ innovative teaching strategies, incorporate interactive and relevant materials, and cultivate a supportive and encouraging classroom environment (Novayanti et al., 2018). By fostering a sense of purpose and relevance in their lessons, teachers can inspire and empower EFL learners to actively participate in their own language learning journey.

Another TEFL challenge is related to cultural differences and classroom management (Choudhury, 2013). Teaching English to students from diverse cultural backgrounds requires sensitivity and awareness of cultural norms and values. Teachers must create a supportive and inclusive learning environment where all students feel respected and valued. By addressing the diverse needs of students, creating immersive learning experiences, implementing effective assessment strategies, and fostering a culturally responsive classroom environment, TEFL teachers contribute to the development of confident and competent English language learners(Kristiandi et al., 2017).

One of the tools that TEFL teachers can use to increase classroom immersion and help motivate their students is by commencing apperception at the beginning of the class (Bañados-Santana, 2018). This allows teachers to raise their student's curiosity by showing something interesting, by using enthusiastic attitudes while initiating the lesson or by doing both. There are various activities that can captivate learners' interest, such as games (adjusted for age and type), music, thought-provoking discussions, vibrant visuals, captivating stories, and entertaining poems. After teachers have incorporated specific "warming-up" activities, they should ensure that students are thoroughly understand what the topic, exercises, or language content they will be taught during the lesson. That way, students will find it easier to focus.

Apperception in itself is a term coined by German philosopher Immanuel Kant which refers to the process by which new experiences are assimilated into our existing framework of understanding (Pratama, 2021). In the context of TEFL, apperception can be seen as the bridge that connects the learner's existing knowledge and cultural background with the new language they are trying to learn. This approach recognizes that every learner brings a unique set of experiences, knowledge, and cultural perspectives to the classroom. By connecting new English language concepts to this existing knowledge, teachers can make the learning process more meaningful and relevant for the students. For instance, a teacher might draw parallels between grammatical structures in the student's native language and English, or use culturally relevant examples to explain new vocabulary. This not only aids comprehension but also helps students see the relevance of English in their own lives, thereby increasing their motivation to learn.

Based on the explanation above, the writer is interested in exploring more about the effects that apperception has in aiding EFL learners, its benefits, the stages of its application

and finally how to make an apperception classroom. This knowledge may help new EFL teachers in creating the ideal learning environment for their students to learn English.

METHOD
This is a qualitative study utilizing the literature study method. It is a method focusing on existing literary sources (books, article etc) as its primary source. Literature reviews rely on secondary data—information collected by others—rather than primary data obtained through direct observation or interviews. The purpose is to help researchers gain a comprehensive understanding of their chosen research subject/ theme by examining existing studies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Teachers play a pivotal role in education, guiding students toward knowledge acquisition and personal development. Effective knowledge delivery hinges on the choice of teaching methods and materials. By strategically employing these tools, teachers can facilitate successful knowledge transfer during the learning process. However, it is essential for educators to explore diverse teaching approaches to ensure effective communication with their students.

Students who approach lessons with intrinsic motivation—driven by genuine interest and passion—actively engage in the learning process. Their self-motivation propels them to absorb knowledge eagerly, making teaching more straightforward for educators. However, assessing student motivation is not straightforward. One social cognitive model cannot definitively determine whether students are intrinsically motivated. Therefore, teachers must remain attuned to students' initial conditions during the learning process. When students lack intrinsic motivation, teachers can provide extrinsic motivation from external sources. This external encouragement becomes crucial during apperception transfer—the moment when new concepts connect with existing knowledge.

1. Understanding Apperception
Students bring with them a variety of emotional states every time they enter the classroom (Kärner & Kögler, 2016). These vary from positive to negative and have significant impact on the learning process and ultimately affect its outcomes. Ideally all students enter class ready to learn, this is called a favorable learning condition and it tends to positively influence the knowledge transfer process. The opposite is also true when students carry negative emotions to class. Teachers play a crucial role in creating an optimal learning environment and delivering knowledge effectively to their students. The best way to tune out the emotional state of students and get them ready for the lesson is to do some fun Apperception activities.

The concept of apperception encompasses the acknowledgment of the myriad perspectives and backgrounds that each student brings to the classroom. With each learner possessing a unique tapestry of experiences, knowledge, and cultural insights, it becomes imperative to honor and appreciate this diversity. By doing so, educators lay the foundation for an inclusive and culturally sensitive learning environment, where every individual feels valued and heard. Embracing the rich tapestry of students' backgrounds fosters a sense of belonging and encourages active engagement in language learning activities.

Apperception involves the art of linking new English language concepts with the learners' existing knowledge. This bridging process serves as a catalyst for comprehension and retention of language skills. For instance, educators can facilitate this connection by drawing parallels between grammatical structures in the students' native language and English. By highlighting similarities and differences, teachers empower learners to grasp linguistic concepts more effectively. Additionally, integrating culturally relevant examples into the curriculum enhances students' motivation and engagement levels. By showcasing the practical relevance of English in their everyday lives, educators infuse language learning with deeper meaning and significance.

2. Benefits of Apperception

Apperception offers several benefits in EFL language learning, improving the learning process of pupils. According to Rahmi (2022), it facilitates meaningful learning by connecting new language concepts with learners' existing mental frameworks. When students can relate new English language concepts to their prior knowledge and experiences, they achieve a deeper understanding and retention of the material. This integration into a broader context fosters more impactful and lasting learning experiences, as learners grasp the relevance of language skills in real-life situations.

Apperception in Howard's (2002) view contributes to motivation in language learning by demonstrating the practical relevance of English to students' personal experiences. By incorporating authentic materials, real-life examples, and culturally relevant content into their lessons, teachers ignite students' interest and engagement. When learners understand how language skills can directly benefit them in their daily lives, they become more motivated to actively participate in the learning process. Consequently, apperception helps create a more positive learning environment, where students feel a sense of purpose and excitement about acquiring language skills.

Furthermore, apperception fosters cross-cultural understanding by connecting new language concepts with students' existing cultural backgrounds (Shindler & Case, 1996). Through exposure to diverse perspectives and cultural norms, learners gain insights into global citizenship and develop empathy for others. By recognizing similarities and differences between their own culture and others, students cultivate mutual respect and understanding. This promotes open-mindedness, tolerance, and empathy, essential qualities for navigating our interconnected world with sensitivity and awareness.

In summary, apperception enhances language learning by facilitating meaningful connections, boosting motivation, and promoting cross-cultural understanding. By integrating new language concepts into learners' existing mental frameworks and demonstrating their practical relevance, educators can create more engaging and effective language learning experiences. Through apperception, students develop not only language skills but also important life skills, preparing them to thrive in an increasingly diverse and interconnected global society.

3. Things to do during the Apperception

In Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), the stages of apperception serve as crucial pillars in creating a dynamic and engaging learning experience for students. According to Morrison-Plan there are six stages of apperception; (1) Exploration, with a test or discussion to check upon the background knowledge students had about a problem, (2) Knowing, where

learners are as compared to the learning objectives set beforehand, (3) shows the shortcomings and weaknesses the students exhibits so that they know the areas specifically to overcome them, (4) shows the weakness of teaching methods, student shortcomings are often the result of a flaw in the teaching method itself, (5) Provide clearer instructions about the lesson objectives, and (6) giving encouragement to the students.

Munir (2011) in an attempt to understand Herbart's Theory on apperception has broken it down to 4 stages as follows:

The Alpha Zone sets the tone for each lesson, focuses on establishing a positive and receptive atmosphere from the start. Alpha zone is one of brain waves which takes the brightest stage of brain creativity process. It is the best condition to learn because the neurons are in a harmony. Through ice-breaking activities, fun anecdotes, and brain teasers, teachers aim to engage students and foster a sense of camaraderie within the classroom. This initial phase is vital as it primes students' minds for learning and encourages active participation throughout the lesson.

Moving on to the warmer stage, teachers aim to connect new material with students' prior knowledge and experiences. By prompting students with questions related to previous lessons or personal experiences, teachers help bridge the gap between familiar and new concepts. This connection not only builds relevance but also enhances comprehension and retention of new material. Students feel more invested in the lesson when they can see how it relates to their own experiences and knowledge base. Examples of this stage are giving questions related to the previous lesson or relevant experiences or encouraging students to reflect on what they already know about the topic.

In the pre-teach stage, teachers provide essential instructions and context to ensure smooth learning progression. Clear explanations, vocabulary introductions, and setting expectations are key components of this phase. By laying a solid foundation for learning, teachers guide students through the lesson and help them understand what to expect. This guidance is essential for students to navigate the lesson effectively and make the most of their learning experience.

Finally, the scene-setting phase immerses students in the heart of the lesson by transporting them into relevant scenarios or situations. Through storytelling, visualization exercises, and role-play, teachers bring language concepts to life and demonstrate their practical application. This hands-on approach not only ignites students' curiosity but also motivates them to actively engage in the learning process.

4. Creating an Apperceptive Classroom

Utilizing apperception in the classroom involves implementing strategies that foster meaningful connections between students' prior knowledge and new learning experiences. Setting clear expectations at the beginning of the academic term establishes a foundation for positive behavior and active participation. Consistent enforcement of these expectations ensures that students understand what is required of them, promoting a sense of security and structure in the learning environment. Engaging with interesting topics plays a crucial role in capturing students' interest and motivation. By planning lessons around relevant topics that resonate with students' interests and real-life experiences, educators can create a dynamic and engaging learning environment. Variety in teaching methods, including games, activities, discussions, and multimedia resources, caters to diverse learning styles and keeps students actively involved in the learning process.

Minimizing dead time is essential to maintaining students' focus and engagement throughout the lesson. This involves avoiding lulls in activity by planning smooth transitions between tasks, ensuring a seamless flow of energy and momentum. Strategic seating arrangements contribute to a conducive learning environment by separating disruptive groups and pairing students strategically to promote collaboration and positive peer interactions. Positive reinforcement is a powerful tool for motivating students and reinforcing desired behaviors. Acknowledging students' efforts and celebrating their achievements, no matter how small, boosts their confidence and encourages continued participation.

Furthermore, assigning responsibilities to students, such as classroom tasks, fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility in the learning process. Finally, learning students' names and addressing them personally establishes a connection between educators and students, demonstrating care and respect for their individual identities. Whether through verbal praise or the use of name tags, personalizing interactions in the classroom helps create a supportive and inclusive learning environment conducive to apperceptive learning.

CONCLUSION

In summary, apperception plays a pivotal role in TEFL classrooms. By leveraging learners' existing knowledge and cultural contexts, educators can create a dynamic and engaging language learning experience. Through apperception, students not only acquire language skills but also develop a deeper understanding of the world around them.

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