A Brief Analysis of Standardization of Preschool Teachers’ Teaching Language

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Abstract: Language is the primary medium in teaching activities for transmitting wisdom, imparting knowledge and resolving the doubts. Standards and norms, accuracy and conciseness, together with enlightenment and enjoyment are the basic requirements for preschool teacher to evaluate teaching language mastering. The standardization and normalization of language is the most central and important of them all. Based on literature and the classroom observation, this article analyses language and its teaching features, and explores the existing problems and countermeasures to provide beneficial reference for preschool teacher to correct the nonstandard teaching language.

Keywords: preschool teachers; teaching language; standard and norm

Language is a symbol system used to convey information, express emotion and communicate with each other. It is an important communicative tool. Teaching language is a working language for teachers to organize and carry out teaching activities. Preschool teacher’s language refers to normative professional language which is used to impart knowledge to children in class according to the syllabus requirements. It is different from our usual talk, and it has a unique professionalism. It is influenced by many factors and it must conform to the children’s language development as well as the rules of the kindergarten teaching activities.

Children aged between 3 to 6 are the teaching object of preschool teachers, during which the children’s language ability and the vocabulary develop the most rapidly. The activities in the kindergarten will be carried out by teachers who spend time with children on a daily basis so that the teacher’s language ability is particularly important in children’s development. However, for a long time, the teaching language has not attracted enough attention in the linguistics forefront, let alone the preschool teacher’s language.

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Although the researchers have mentioned the preschool teachers’ language should be normative, enlightening, interesting, visual and encouraging, the increasing demands for preschool teachers and the shortage of training in universities have resulted in inadequate quality of preschool teachers. Therefore, it is very urgent and necessary to enhance language expression in teaching.

1. The classification and characteristics of the teaching language

According to different classification criteria, the teaching language can be classified in many ways. In reference to a lot of research on the classification of teaching language, the author classified teaching language according to the special requirement of five major areas of the kindergarten collective teaching and the particularity of preschool teacher’s teaching language to analyze the teaching language of preschool teachers and obtain the practical reference value that can guide the teaching practice. The author divided the preschool teacher’s classroom teaching language into four parts: organization language, mediums of instruction, communication language and evaluation language.

1.1 Organization language and its characteristics

Children aged between three to six are active and they lack rules awareness. During the teaching activities, preschool teachers often spend a lot of time organizing their teaching. Organization language is the language that teachers use to maintain the teaching order so that the teaching activities can be carried out smoothly, and it is also called “the language that maintains order”. If the teacher’s organization language is normative, the teaching activities can be smooth and efficient.

Preschool teachers have a set of regular organization language with individual characteristics, in order to maintain the teaching order.

For example: teacher: small eyes, children: looking at the teacher.
Teacher: be quiet, no talking.
Teacher: well, I will ask him to see where the best is. OK, I will let XXX to see, he is the best.
Teacher: I think which group of children will sit first.

The characteristic of the organization language is simple stylized, and universal.

1.2 Mediums of instruction and their characteristics

Mediums of instruction are the most important in the teaching language, mediums of instruction are the language that preschool teachers use to impart knowledge, carry out activities and teach skills. According to the lecture course, the language can be divided into introductory remarks, explanation language and closing words.
Introductory remarks are the teacher’s prologue, in order to start the teaching activities and attract students. For example: babies, you see, the small chairs are also wearing beautiful clothes today, what colors are they?

Explanation language is a teaching language that teachers use to explain the teaching content. And the language is mainly about the “what” and “why” and “how to do” three aspects to explain. For example: the teachers prepare children for green slips and red slips. The red slips indicate that the little thing can go through the elbow, and the green slips indicate that the little thing cannot go through the elbow.

Closing words are the teaching language that teachers designed according to targets and content of the activity at the end of the teaching activities. For example: well, today we find so many interesting spin phenomena. After we go home, look for it carefully and see what else can be turned. What’s the convenience it brings to our life?

The characteristics of mediums of introduction are concise, accurate, vivid and organized.

1.3 Communication language and its characteristics

Communication language is the language that teachers and children use to talk, ask and discuss while teaching. In the teaching activities, teachers need to communicate with children, and the questioning is a form of communication that is often used. Only when the language that is used to raise questions is normative can we stimulate children’s minds, arouse learning interest and implement the teaching aims.

For example: senior kindergarten text<The ants fly>

Teacher: kids, look at this animal, who is this?      Children: ants.
Teacher: one day, the ant sees the wild goose is flying in the sky and he wants to fly too. However, he doesn’t have wings. Please think about how to help him fly to the sky.

Children: by plane.
Teacher: is there anybody has different ideas?
Children: let the bird help him.
(The children heard and began to debate, some said the ants have wings, some said the ants have no wings.)
Teacher: Be quiet. The ants have no wings. Well, please think about how to help the ants.

There are communication between teachers and children, and also communication between children in this case. The characteristics of communication language are concise, hierarchical, enlightening and infectious.

1.4 Evaluation language and its characteristics

Evaluation language is also called “feedback”, it is an evaluation of
children’s answer or behavior, letting the children know whether they are right or wrong. According to the children’s performance, the teachers’ evaluation language can be divided into positive evaluative language, negative evaluative language and neutral evaluative language.

“Positive evaluative language” is the positive evaluation that teachers directly or indirectly give to the children for their answer or behavior, such as “excellent”, “very good”, “philosopher”, “very careful”.

“Negative evaluative language” is the direct or indirect negative evaluation that the teacher gives to the children when their answer or the behavior is inappropriate. It is also the tips that the teacher gives to children when they meet trouble. This kind of evaluation language is hard to operate. On the one hand, you have to make the student realize that they are wrong; on the other hand, you cannot hurt their self-esteem. Besides, it is very likely to be violent language phenomenon.

For example: when children are painting in the art activity, some children start talking and painting from the beginning. Some say “I want to draw a green sun”, some say “I want to draw a bird that loves singing, some say “I want to draw a tree that can dance”. While they are talking excitedly, the teacher said loudly: don’t talk! Get your mouth in control. Draw carefully!

Or how about trying again, it doesn’t matter.

The characteristics of evaluation language are stylized, specific, targeted, encouraging.

2. The problems existing in teaching languages

It is found that there are many problems in the teaching language from analysis on the classroom observations and cases.

2.1 Inaccurate teaching language

The children are young, and their language communication and comprehension are poor. Once the teacher’s organization language is inaccurate, the information will be blocked and the children will suffer some misunderstandings, which will affect the effect of teaching.

For example, some children don’t accept the arrangement when finishing the formation, so the teacher can design the organization language: the children look up and look forward. Hands down. Children do it as the teachers instruct, but soon there is chaos. Then the teacher emphasizes again: little eyes, children: look at teacher. Immediately quiet down, eyes towards the teacher, the team also arranged in good order.

Organization language is designed accurately and concisely, and it makes explicit demands directly, so that the children can understand and are easy to operate. Notably, children in the junior kindergarten are not awareness of the rules. While organizing teaching activities, teachers repeated the same organizational language like password to maintaining teaching order, and this will have a good effect after continuous training. However, if the
organizational language like password are also used in the senior kindergarten in the same way, which will be less effective and also will hinder the development of children’s language ability. As the so-called “words are the voice of the mind”, “conversation makes one what he is”, teachers’ teaching language is not the simply use the ready-made language and repeat other’s words. Teachers can design accurate organization language that is full of personality.

2.2 Illogical mediums of instruction

Preschool teachers’ language should be precise and scientific whether it is the introduction, conclusion or the explanation language. But in practical teaching, some teachers tend to underestimate children’s judgment and overestimate their knowledge reserve and resilience, so that they prepare the teaching content well and ignore the preparation for the teaching language during the teaching design. This is often reflected in class. The mediums of instruction often lack logic. Teachers change the topic at will. They usually say a half sentence and suddenly turn to another. This confusing teaching language not only undermines the integrity of the language, but also makes it difficult for children to understand it.

For example: teacher: this is actually a fixed phone, in order to facilitate, the past fixed phone, like the phone which hanging up in our class, it cannot move back and forth, right? The teacher continues to say: that is pager. In my age, Teacher Xue used the pager earliest. About pagers, that is a, today, I was looking for my pager yesterday……

Such medium of instruction in this case fail to express the meaning and lack logic. The most important thing in medium of instruction is not how much a teacher says, but how concise the language is. Teachers should try to use normative language, accurate words and try to be logical and comprehensive.

2.3 Unscientific Communication language

The goal of activities in kindergarten is the three dimensions of emotion, skill and knowledge. The communication is a vital factor that helps achieve the aim of the activities whether it is the communication between teacher and the children or communication among the children. Questioning words are the most critical part in the communication language. The five major areas of kindergarten language are shallow, but in the class observation, we find obvious phenomenon. For example, some teachers’ questioning language about mathematics and art are very unscientific.

For example: teaching situation: the teacher is teaching sphere, he let children talk about what kinds of sphere they know.
Teacher: do you know what the object is a sphere?
Several children answer: football, basketball, bowling and the earth.
Teacher: yes, very well. The earth is a huge globe.
People who have some common sense know that from the scientific
point of view, the earth is not regular sphere. But the globe is a sphere. In this case, the fourth child said the earth is sphere. The teacher didn’t correct it, and said that’s right. This is scientific communication language. The teacher didn’t mean to hide the mistake, maybe the teacher himself thinks the earth is a sphere, or he didn’t listen to the child carefully and deal with it casually. Communication language should be designed in advance in order to make sure that the language is accurate and logical. The teacher should listen carefully and understand the children’s answer and organize a scientific language to deal with it when the children answer.

2.4 Nonstandard evaluation language

The standardization of evaluation language is embodied in the following aspects: the formulaic phenomenon, adult phenomenon, and “violence phenomenon”. Children aged between three to six like to be praised. So teachers often say some direct positive evaluation language without specific details like “you are awesome”, “you are smart”. Excessive evaluation process will have negative impact on children.

Some teachers don’t realize that teaching language should accord with children’s physical and psychological characteristics and cognitive characteristics. So they will use adult language that children cannot understand in evaluation language unconsciously. For example: Try to make it work when you don’t succeed. “This group should study for a second time”. This kind of evaluation language is nonstandard language. Children only understand the language according to the surface meaning, and it is difficult to understand the deeper meaning. They don’t understand the teacher’s irony, and cannot figure out the meaning of teacher litotes. Correctly understand the ability and the level, in which children can comprehend the adult language. Only by doing this can you effectively use the evaluation language to guide and educate young children in different activities and different situation.

Besides, children’s sense of right and wrong is weak, their complaining ability is poor, self-protection consciousness is not strong, and they cannot timely fully and explicitly reflect the language “violence” phenomenon in the teacher’s evaluation language. For example: “what trash you are painting, it doesn’t look like anything.” “How can you be so stupid, all like idiots.”

This kind of evaluation language is nonstandard. It will hurt children’s physical and mental health, so it must be dispelled.

3. The strategies of standardizing preschool teachers’ languages

Preschool teachers’ teaching language directly influences children’s physical and mental development, language thinking and the quality and efficiency of teaching. There are now many problems in teachers’ teaching language. Therefore, we should standardize and improve the teaching language of preschool teachers.

3.1 Enhance the understanding of language teaching.
Many preschool teachers think kindergarten pays more attention to child care. The lack of understanding of the kindergarten education leads to the lack of understanding of problems existing in their teaching language and not knowing where to start.

Preschool teachers should study the theoretical knowledge about teaching language, understand the characteristics and requirements of preschool teachers’ language, train and correct the problems consciously and purposefully according to the actual problems, so as to achieve the goal of improvement and promotion. Preschool teachers can also strengthen communication and cooperation with peers, consciously observe, analyze and think about the class language of one’s own or peers, which can get twice the result with half the effort to improve their teaching language skills in a short time.

3.2 Transform the education concept

Preschool teachers should also pay attention to the application of teachers’ language as a tool of communication when organizing the five areas teaching activities. We must pay attention to multi exchange of information in the interaction between teachers and students. During the activities in the kindergarten, the exchange of information between teachers and children are mostly one-way. Teachers speak, children listen. Children have little or no access to information from teachers, and between children information exchange also lacks. As a result, preschool teachers should use normative teaching language in the teaching activities to fully mobilize all the children’s enthusiasm, making all kinds of activities an efficient multi-direction and multi-level exchange process.

3.3 Improve the standardization of teaching language

3.3.1 Enrich the organizing language in class. If preschool teachers’ language is single and poor mechanical repetition when organizing activities, this is obviously not conductive to children’s language input, and lead to children’s poor imitation and acquisition of language.

3.3.2 Simplify the mediums of instruction in class. During the teaching in the kindergarten, teachers should use simple words to teach and organize the activities as much as possible. Try not to use complex, lengthy and tedious sentence to organize activities and teaching. Try to create a correct normative opportunities to listen and express for children.

3.3.3 Activate the communication language in class. Preschool teachers should pay attention to real communication when organizing teaching activities, not only the completing task of teaching, but also listening to the children’s answer, caring about what the children say and making timely sincere response. Questioning in class should be carefully prepared. It should be designed to avoid the mechanical repetition.

3.3.4 Make the evaluation language artful. Children aged between three to six need more praise and encouragement. Different kinds of evaluation language that preschool teachers give to children in class teaching will have
different effects on psychology: direct negative evaluation language will hurt their self-esteem and frustrate their enthusiasm; too much positive evaluation cannot exert the function of encouragement for a long time, either. So preschool teachers should treat children’s performance in the five areas activities with a tolerant and friendly teaching attitude. Teachers should keep an appropriate “degree” of evaluation in class to protect the children’s self-esteem and to give children appropriate evaluation, making the teaching language charming.

In a word, the importance role of teaching language in the development of young children cannot be ignored by any preschool teachers. Every preschool teacher should reflect on, standardize the teaching language to improve their teaching language skills so that they can display the best language demonstration in front of children and create the optimal language environment.

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5. Reference


