PSGL and Its Application in College English Teaching

Ying-jie GUO*
School of Foreign Languages, Shaanxi Normal University, Xi’an 710062, China
*Corresponding author

Keywords: PSGL, Teaching style, College English teaching.

Abstract. The integrated teaching style of Play Show, Speaking Activities, Group Lecturing and Listening Practice, PSGL in abbreviation, turns out to be experimental and individual in college English teaching. The rationale is that students are the center of the class. In order to establish an effective teaching environment, teachers need to ask students to be the active directors of the play show, the volunteering hosts of the speaking activities, the responsible organizers of the group lecturing and the willing designers of the listening practice. To highlight the learning subjectivity, students ought to fulfill their duties before class, in class and after class. The whole teaching procedure is conducted through students’ flexible participations and demonstrations. Of course, nothing is perfect, there are still the expected suggestions for PSGL to reevaluate and reconsider.

Introduction

College English teaching has been considered as an indispensable part of Chinese higher education. Since the Reform and Opening-up Policy was carried out in 1978, Chinese nation has made great achievements and brilliant wonders, one of the key factors to bring the benefits is that college English teaching, to a large extent, contributed to the glory of the economic development[1]. However, we have to realize that there are still a variety of jobs to undertake. In Chinese colleges, institutes and universities, college English teaching has to adjust itself to the essential requirements of practical fulfillment. On the one hand, college English teaching needs to be available to enforce the established work that contributes to Chinese people, on the other hand, it needs to embrace the challenges of the new era that appears unpredicted. As a result, college English teaching has been making corresponding innovations in teaching contents, ways, organizations and even styles within the Chinese educational systems. Such teaching experiments as Knowledge Lecturing, Autonomous Learning, Cooperative Learning, Task-based Teaching, Inquiry-based Teaching, etc have been adopted alternatively by Chinese teachers in class. Besides, new teaching ideas, styles and methods are introduced continually into the real teaching atmosphere as usual, including the well-known Flipped Classroom, Massive Open Online Courses, Micro-lesson Teaching and the like. What’s more, Chinese government and educational authorities have provided flexible platforms for Chinese teachers to create the suitable teaching styles on their own, the purpose of which is to encourage Chinese teachers to fill themselves with innovative spirits. Initiated by such fine environment and stimulating mechanism, independent teaching modes begin to spring out[2]. Among the innovative teaching methods, Pad Class, originally proposed and fulfilled by Professor Zhang Xuex in at Fudan University, receives great popularity and recognition in Chinese middle schools and certain higher institutions[3]. Inspired by the new Chinese-oriented teaching style, Chinese teachers become confident, and individual teaching modes are worked out afterwards. PSGL belongs to one of the innovative and individual achievements.

PSGL and Its Application

PSGL refers to the integrated teaching style of Play Show, Speaking Activities, Group Lecturing and Listening Practice in college English teaching environment. PSGL is distinctive because it concerns the comprehensive effects of English teaching in class, it focuses on the characteristic function of
English teachers and the flexible roles of students. Essentially, the critical rationale is that students are the center of the class. Both English teachers and students ought to work together and cooperate with each other for the sake of optimum learning. Briefly, PSGL turns out to be experimental and individual in college English teaching, and it demands attention and discussion.

**Basic Elements of PSGL**

PSGL involves some basic elements, which will guarantee the effects of college English teaching. Specifically, the fundamental elements of PSGL regard play show, speaking activities, group lecturing and listening practice.

**Play Show.** English teachers ask students to prepare plays, so to speak, the English plays. The English plays have no definite categories or genres. It is okay for students to make up their own favorite styles. The contents can be classical or popular, ancient or modern, east or west. It is students who will decide their own forms and members of the participations. At least two? Or at most five? It depends on their individual designs and schedule. If students love English literature, they can play William Shakespeare(1564-1616)’s *Hamlet, The Merchant of Venice, Romeo and Juliet, King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, As You Like It, the Tempest,* or *Henry VI.* If students love American literature, they can play Eugene O’Neil(1888-1953)’s *Now I Ask You, Beyond the Horizon, The Emperor Jones, The Hairy Ape, The Fountain, Marco Millions, Desire Under the Elms,* etc. If students love Chinese literature, they can play Wang Shifu(1234-1294)’s *Romance of the Western Chamber,* Guan Hanqin(1234?-1300?)’s *The Injustice to Dou E,* Bai Pu(1226-1306?)’s *Rain of the Phoenix Tree,* Ma Zhiyuan(1250?-1224?)’s *Autumn in the Han Palace,* Ji Junxiang’s *The Orphan of Zhao,* etc. Students can even play the real life happening around them like campus love, dormitory quarrels, unforgettable friendship, sports meeting, music concerts, dance shows, etc. Whatever students perform and display, the most important thing is that students have become the active directors of their plays[4].

**Speaking Activities.** Speaking activities here do not simply refer to those traditional ones casually fulfilled in the routine studies. They are composed of two parts. One is closely associated with students’ play show. The questions, three or four, are made by teachers and students respectively. The whole class will be asked to participate in the speaking activities. After a circle of the oral practice in class, then follows the other part of speaking, which should be based on the corresponding contents of the teaching plans or the scheduled texts, Text A or Text B. Students are organized into different groups according to their seat patterns. Usually, three or four students constitute a team and they have the responsibility of designing one or two questions. English teachers are there to gather the luminous questions and read them on the stage for them to have further speculations and critical thinking. The speaking activities in the second part are purposely stimulated and activated. The questions for the speaking activities have to be related to the new knowledge of the new class, acting as vehicles to combine the lesson learned with the one to learn. As for teachers, they try to serve as the assistants of students’ demonstrations and showing-offs. To ensure the quality of the speaking activities, the students should be the volunteering hosts of the speaking course.

**Group Lecturing.** Group lecturing here constitutes a major event, lying in the fact that it does not mean the pure group work or the group discussion about a couple of questions designed by English teachers or students. Instead, it fulfills the duties of lecturing classes. Group lecturing involves the assignments from English teachers before the new classes begin, the team learning and discussion for the prepared plans, the essential grammar absorption and transmission, the language points and meaning interpretation of the texts, the concrete lecturing of the details, questions for teachers, etc. Group lecturing makes English teachers become listeners, which seems unusual. And the more unusual event is that students, after reading and learning the prepared texts—the so-called new texts to learn, will challenge English teachers, who stand aside or among students at that time, with questions that students do not understand or cannot locate the answers. Students ask questions for English teachers, which changes the traditional order of questioning, i.e., English teachers turn out to be those in class to be asked and “aimed at” while students obtain the authority and priority of dominating the real class. After students’ group lecturing in class, English teachers may have
additional information to add in or supplement. Transparently, students become the responsible organizers of the group lecturing and they are the true heroes of the class teaching.

**Listening Practice.** Listening practice should also be highlighted because Chinese students, critically speaking, have no enough practice in English listening. Although there are students who would like to practice their listening almost all the time, they have not virtually equipped themselves with effective listening abilities. Referred to the author’s years of observation and research, the related study and corollary have demonstrated that due to the lack of the true English environment and the stereotypes of Chinese language habits as well as thinking customs, students live in the dilemma of balancing the messages from Chinese to English or from English to Chinese. It requires the continuous communicative programs to strengthen the results that students have already accomplished. However, a problem comes out. Who should be responsible for distributing the listening materials among students? Traditionally, English teachers will take the job and work hard for the details, yet students may not utterly satisfy with teachers’ “knowledge gifts” and would even complain about this or about that. So what? Why not offer students the priorities of determining the listening materials and make them be the interpreters of the listening practice. The evidence shows that the experiment works and students can make the teaching smoothly going on. But the crucial point here is that students should be the willing designers of the listening practice.

Undoubtedly, the elements mentioned above are closely related with each other and influence each other from the very beginning to the end of the class teaching.

**Procedures of Fulfilling PSGL**

To make college English teaching effectively going on, it seems vital that the procedures of fulfilling PSGL should be reasonable, coherent and natural throughout the course.

To start with, English teachers give directions for the overall schedule of the whole teaching semester, which includes the very concrete details like what PSGL looks like, what rules will be observed, what texts will be taught, what assignments will be taken, what duties will be concerned, what activities will be carried on, etc. The first and the second classes are fairly important because students are trying to adapt themselves to the new teaching mode. The first class is generally the one for English teachers to make introductions and lay out the teaching plans while the second is the one for students to try some activities as experiments. For the good performance, English teachers should support and encourage; for the poor, English teachers should make necessary corrections and help. On some occasions, English teachers may take the place of students and serve as models, letting students know what ways are correct during the process of fulfilling PSGL. After a round of exercise, PSGL style will become familiar to all students. The rest is left for students to show and prove themselves.

The core procedure of fulfilling PSGL is to change each element, i.e., P, S, G, L into the real practice. As for play show, students ought to make teams of their own and decide what they intend to play. Then it is up to the team members to find the relevant manuscripts or use their head to design some unique scenario. Students’ play show can be neither long nor short, implying that it should be limited within proper time span, ten to fifteen minutes will do. During the play show, students need to liven their roles and make their audience interested and touched. After the play show follow the speaking activities. As mentioned earlier, speaking activities should be diverse and changeable, aiming to bring all students to the English environment to have free talk and argument. The speaking topics begin with enlightening comments upon the play show, then extend to the themes about the new lesson to learn. Both English teachers and students will ask questions so as to arouse the attention of the whole class and naturally step into another exciting stage of communication. The questions can be easy or difficult, commentary or critical, but the point is that they have to make sense, not available to waste time and energy. Usually, speaking activities should be controlled within fifteen minutes. Next comes the group lecturing, which means the beginning of the body part of PSGL. All students will participate in the lecturing and take some group work as the new lesson about Text A or Text B is interpreted through students’ cooperation and talents. Frankly, students’ cooperation virtually starts
before the class. They have to consider their roles in group lecturing and make full preparations about their lessons. In this way, their individual talents will be cultivated and their learning levels of the new texts will be reflected, from which English teachers can observe and judge what they are short of. Based on students’ group lecturing on the stage, English teachers will decide what should be supplemented additionally. Yet do not forget that students will challenge English teachers with their sophisticated questions. Since group lecturing occupies a significant position in fulfilling PSGL, it will take about forty minutes to make sure all students can have a chance to communicate with each other about what they have acquired and learned. The final job is the listening practice. When listening begins, it shows that the monitor of the class has gathered all the listening materials that students have carefully chosen and intend to display in public. The students who play the listening materials, two in most cases, work together and cooperate with each other about the listening directions, listening frequency, and even the listening techniques they obtained when preparing. English teachers become their listening objects as well. During the interactive responses, English teachers may also have to cope with some difficult or confusing questions in order to make the listening practice efficient and effective[5]. Listening practice, comparatively, will take twenty minutes. The last step is English teachers’ comments or conclusion of the class, and it is about five minutes. Hence, the whole procedure of fulfilling PSGL requires ninety minutes, i.e., two periods of class.

Advantages of Fulfilling PSGL

The advantages of fulfilling PSGL are obvious and the following are merely a part of the facts.

In the first place, students take the place of English teachers and become the real center of the class. They are no longer directed and ordered by English teachers as the traditional teaching style designs. Instead, they bring their real life into English environment, they display what they like or dislike in class, they communicate with their partners about what they think and consider, they exchange ideas with teachers and even challenge the so-called sustained teachers’ priority and authority, and the like.

Moreover, students will find opportunities to combine what they prefer to learn with the unexpected new knowledge, either from their partners or the spontaneous speeches of the English teachers. Students are no longer the passive knowledge receivers. Instead, they become active language learners. They are active because they hope to harvest something in class, they are active because they desire to obtain some valuable insights for the sake of themselves, they are active because they want to prove they are capable and good, and so on so forth.

Last but not least, the old class patterns are deconstructed and PSGL promises a different teaching style. English teachers can free them from the burden of “chores” which exhaust them too much at times. Interestingly, teachers may share a flexible perspective to look into the problems of students when they announce their claims and ideas. Students, at the same time, may open their heart and share their critical minds in the context of “the old knowledge” and “the new”. Fundamentally, PSGL provides a stage for students to develop their potential abilities in a comprehensive way, which is the very goal of English teaching objective of China[6].

Suggestions of Fulfilling PSGL

To be honest, nothing is perfect. PSGL cannot escape the destiny as well. When fulfilling PSGL, English teachers may run into unexpected moments and occasions in class, some are even more embarrassing. For instance, when some students are lazy and have not prepared certain necessary assignments, they may frustrate their partners and spoil the chain of the teaching procedure or hurt the exciting atmosphere of the class; When some students are reluctant to communicate with others and keep silent, they may also barrier the overall effects of the teaching course. To make sure PSGL is going on well and to guarantee PSGL benefits all students, English teachers should

1. Love students and make friends with them
2. Get to know all students and their personalities in advance
3. Expect the possible bad results beforehand when frustrations happen to appear
4. Think out the ways of managing students’ accidental events
5. Be open-minded and generous about students’ mistakes
6. Develop a habit of acquiring new knowledge
7. Become confident and optimistic in teaching, etc.[7].

Summary
PSGL is the integrated teaching style, composed of Play Show, Speaking Activities, Group Lecturing and Listening Practice. Based on the discussion of the functions of the elements, PSGL turns out to be experimental and individual. When put it into practice in college English teaching, PSGL has its unique charms and characteristics. The rationale, in essence, is that students are the center of the class, which is one of the particular and distinctive advantages of fulfilling PSGL. In order to establish an effective teaching environment, English teachers need to make reasonable plans and ask students to be the active directors of the play show, the volunteering hosts of the speaking activities, the responsible organizers of the group lecturing and the willing designers of the listening practice. To refer to the course of practicing PSGL and to highlight the learning subjectivity, students ought to fulfill their duties before class, in class and after class. Besides, the whole teaching procedure is conducted through students’ flexible participations and demonstrations. However, it is a truth that nothing is perfect, PSGL cannot be considered flawless. Instead, there are still the expected suggestions for PSGL to reevaluate and reconsider for the better destination of its development.

Acknowledgement
This research was financially supported by the 2015 High-level Academic Writing Cultivation Project Attached to the School of Foreign Languages, SNNU and the 2017 Special Fund Project of the Basic Research of the Central Universities Attached to the School of Foreign Languages, SNNU(Project No.: 17SZYB12).

References