

The Effective Methods for Oral Introduction 効果的なオーラル・イントロダクションの方法

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要旨

新高等学校学習指導要領では、「授業は英語で指導することを基本とする」と謳われている。その背景として「生徒が英語に触れる機会を充実する」ことや「授業を実際のコミュニケーションの場面とする」ことを想定しており、その際には「生徒の理解の程度に応じた英語を用いるよう十分配慮するものとする」という留意点も明記されている。英語で指導するには、英語で指導するための授業のスタイルを考える必要があり、生徒の理解の程度に応じた英語を用いるには英語の先生としての話し方(teacher talk)を実践する必要がある。英語での指導スタイルの一つとして、そして teacher talk を活かす活動として、オーラル・イントロダクション(oral introduction)がある。しかし、オーラル・イントロダクションという用語はよく耳にするが、その具体的な方法論となるとあいまいさが残る。本文のあらすじならともかく、時には生徒が自分の力で英文から読み取るべき結末までを先生が話してしまうオーラル・イントロダクションも行われがちである。ここでは、オーラル・イントロダクションの効用を確認しながら、story telling のようなあらすじを先に導入してしまう方法ではなく、生徒の既知の能力を活かしたり、スキーマを広げたりする目的で行う(1) “Keyword Method” や、さらに論理的な英文で応用できる(2) “Arranging Cards Method” について述べたい。ここにおける “Keyword Method” や “Arranging Cards Method” は、オーラル・イントロダクションの一方法としての筆者の造語である。

1. What is oral introduction?

In this article, we would like to explore how to find an idea of oral introduction thus making sure how oral introduction can be effective. Whether the oral introduction will be successful for students to understand it or not depends on the teachers' procedure of how he or she presents the contents. However, each teacher's presentation is different and there are many varieties to employ it. Therefore, it is unclear exactly what to tell students about how oral introduction can be made effective. With the concerns to communicative teaching that has been growing, a considerable number of studies have been conducted on a method and technique. We now know that one of the effective techniques which depend on the concepts of communicative approach is oral introduction. We should be careful to use this terminology especially since there are two kinds of oral

introduction. In oral method, this word is used as the introduction of contents. On the other hand, it means the introduction of a new structure and grammar in an oral approach. We limit the discussion to oral introduction in oral method and focus on how to introduce the contents.

2. What is the merit of oral introduction?

The aim of oral introduction is mentioned as follow (Tsuchiya 1983):

- (a) To accustom and familiarize students with English sounds
- (b) To have students train to understand English right after they listen to it.
- (c) To have students build schema in order to understand the contents.
- (d) To foster students' positive attitude toward speaking.
- (e) To enhance teachers' ability to speak English.

In addition to Tsuchiya's statement, what must not be forgotten is to implement a stronger relationship between the teacher and students through using English, so to speak authentically about use of English in classroom. Teachers' statements in English classes may sometimes be for English instruction only, which is also called classroom English or for explaining something. Izumi (2009) points out that teacher's explanations are not an input and it will not help the student intake the language through the explanation as an inter-language. On the other hand, English used in oral introduction is English as a communication tool. In order to have students understand the contents, teachers should speak English as teacher's talk. Teacher talk is defined as follows: Teacher address classroom language learners differently from the way they address other kinds of classroom learners. They make adjustments to both language form and language function in order to facilitate communication (Ellis 1994). This authentic use of English will help not only both teacher and students build a relationship through English, but also students' understanding the contents. Furthermore, oral introduction will give teachers the chance to introduce the language structure and function to all students. Learners learn languages not just for communication, but through communication (Izumi 2009).

3. How can we start to prepare oral introduction?

We need to distinguish small talk from oral introduction. As I mentioned above, oral introduction is a technique for the introduction of contents in oral methods. Therefore,

teachers must have the intimate knowledge of contents that will be treated in the next class. Then, the question we have to consider is to what degree teachers can tell students the contents in oral introductions. If we use the technique such as a storytelling, we can rephrase the sentences and ask some questions depending on the outline in order for students to understand the contents. In this case, we should not reveal the climax of the story. The aim of oral introduction is not to have students understand it perfectly, but to have them build schema. If we have students understand the contents perfectly including the climax by teachers' oral introduction, how and when can we have students learn to read the story by themselves without teacher's guide? What is important in oral introduction is to have students build scheme. Then, we would like to propose key word methods to make oral introduction effective. The procedure is summarized as follows:

- (a) Teachers read the text carefully then repeat it over and over to understand the entire teaching materials cohesively.
- (b) Pick one word from the text. That word should be key word for the contents, and they should be familiar with the word in Japanese.
- (c) Utilizing the students' imagination what has already gained knowledge which will become broader the world of language.
- (e) Finally, the teacher will ask some questions which is related to the word that was chosen.

For instance, there is a story below. According to the procedure written above, which word may be chosen as a key word?

The Millennium Seed Bank you are visiting today is trying to conserve plants for the future by collecting and storing seeds from all over England and the world. Since seeds contain the code necessary to make living things, we can use seed banks to save endangered species. Why are we putting so much effort into this project? Why do we need to conserve plants?

(CROWN English Series II New Edition: SANSEIDO)

As you read, this story is about The Millennium Seed Bank. If we present all the contents and want students to understand it, we have to tell everything about it. However, just to explain the contents doesn't reach students' imagination and it does not allow students to feel the topic is interesting. The key word method is to choose one key word from the text which allows students to use their imaginations about the topic. It must be a small entrance, with a huge exit. Actually, I chose "code" as key word here. If students can understand the meaning and function of this word, they will finally be able to

understand the relationship between the word “code” and “The Millennium Seed Bank” and why a Millennium Seed Bank is needed. In addition, students must know the word “code” as one of the Katakana words in Japanese. It will reduce the student’s burden in oral introduction.

4. The example of oral introduction

I have spoken about chosen the word “code” here. Then, how can we treat this word as oral introduction as the key word method that I would like to present?

T: Where can you see this word (put the word card on the blackboard) in everyday life?
S: Code...?
T: What is this? (Show students bar code)
S: Bar code!
T: What kind of information is there in the bar code?
S: Price.
S: Name of productions.
T: Anything else? Take a look at this number. A lot of productions have a number that starts from 4. What does it mean?
S: Made in Japan!
T: Exactly! It means the place where it was made. As the same as the bar code, seeds have code in them. Then, what kind of information do you think the code in seeds has?
S: Name of the plants.
S: Where is the best place for it to grow.
S: What color of the flowers are...
T: All right! Now you have known that every plant has code and we have merit using seed banks. Read the passage, and think of the function of the seed banks.

(This is the real oral interaction in my lesson.)

First of all, students can utilize their knowledge like the bar code. It helps them go into introduction smoothly. During out first look, bar codes do not have anything to do with the story, but it will connect with the word “code” that each seed has in the text. Now, students have already known notion about the function of “code” or rather the surface meaning of “code” by Japanese translation. In the English-English dictionary, the word

“code” is explained as follow: a set of numbers, letters, or symbols that shows what something is or gives information about it. Sometimes, to use English-English dictionary is recommended in order to understand English word directly from English explanations. However, it is possible for students to understand and build a notion of the word from the explanation above. Teacher’s oral introductions will help students do it better than just using the English-language dictionary.

5. The another example of oral introduction

Let us take a look at another example to illustrate how oral introduction of a logical passage should be done. When it comes to oral introductions of a logical passage, we sometimes explain the outline of it mechanically. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that oral introductions is one of the ways of making students’ schema active, it should not always be required to explain it, but it gives students an opportunity to think of the topic that they are going to read or of how to read this passage. Explanations are sometimes needed as it is the teachers’ job, but what we must not forget is to make use of the student’s already known knowledge and foster the attitude of passive reading. There is a story below. According to the procedure written above, let’s take a look at the example of oral introduction.

Part 3

Trevor thinks of an idea, “Pay It Forward,” and explains it to the class.

“The top one is me, and then there are three people. And I’m going to help them, but it has to be something they can’t do by themselves. So I do it for them. Then they do it for three other people. That’s nine. And they do it for three more, that’s twenty-seven. It just keeps getting bigger. Soon that number will be bigger than the population of the world. It’s like a pyramid. People just keep doing nice things for other people, and it just keeps going forward. That’s why it’s named ‘Pay It Forward.’”

(Power On English I Lesson10 “Pay It Forward”)

This is a story about “Pay It Forward.” In that movie Kevin Spacey plays as Mr. Simonet, who was a social studies teacher, it was based on this story. In this lesson of part3, the passage talks about the system of paying it forward. It’s not interesting just to explain the concept of paying it forward with the students’ just listening to teacher’s explanations. In addition, just an explanation doesn’t help students to find and use the strategies to read this kind of a logical story. Then, the activity that is written below must be effective.

<Preparation>

- (1) Teacher selects the sentences that are necessary to cover the outline of the story.
In addition, those sentences must include logic.
- (2) Teacher writes each sentence on the cards. We can make the following cards in this way.

I'm going to tell you about the explanation of an idea, "paying it forward."

I'll help three people because they are in trouble.

Then the three people whom I helped will help another three people.

That's nine.

And they do it for three more, that's twenty-seven.

It just keeps getting bigger. Soon that number will be bigger than the population of the world.

It's like a pyramid.

<In class>

- (3) Teacher tells students to make pairs or groups and give them the cards.
- (4) Teacher tells students to put the cards in the right order.
- (5) Around the time they finish it, the teacher then asks them listen to the original story on CD and check their ideas.

This activity requires students to use their reading skills to read each sentence, listening skills to check whether the order on which they put each card is right or not. Also, it does cause them to make use of their grammar competence. When this activity was conducted in a class, some students were saying, "Then" or "and" which will be helpful or a number such as "nine" or "twenty-seven" which is useful information. That idea was shared with the entire class. They used their imaginations, grammatical competence and reading skills. After that, they listened to the CD and checked whether

the order on which they put each card is right or not. As you noticed, the sentences on the cards and the original text are different. Therefore, students are required to listen to CD carefully in order to get the necessary information. It must be effective and a passive listening activity.

6. Conclusion

As I have said, we need to make use of the students' knowledge and their imagination as it will help them built schema for reading the text. Inevitably, the teacher does not have to tell the students everything about the story. On the contrary, teachers should not tell all the parts of the story. To understand the story is the students' main job. Teachers should not have students lose the chance to do it. In other words, a teachers' job is to have the students learn how to arouse their own interest about the text. Besides, we have to think of the most effective way of preparing oral introductions. I'm always thinking of the enjoyable ways for both the students and myself. I want to present tasteful oral introductions. I'm sometimes addicted to thinking about it. However, it's not always possible to come up with a good idea. Then, this concept, which I have proposed such as the key word method will help teachers ease the workload. First thing teachers have to do is to choose one key word. Next, present the word to the students and arouse their imagination. Brainstorming can be the effective way of having students come out of their idea on the key word.

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