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An Investigation into Developing Comprehensive Language Competence in Junior Middle Schools

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Abstract:

With the development of technology and economy, English as an international language is becoming more widely used. Therefore, high level English teaching is needed. However, there are still some problems in English language teaching, like the tendency to pay too much attention to the explanation and teaching of phonetics, vocabulary and grammar. Therefore it's one of the reasons for putting forward the general goal of English curriculum, that is, to cultivate the comprehensive language competence. The purpose of this paper is to investigate into the students' use of comprehensive language competence in Dalongshan Junior Middle School.Through the questionnaire and data analysis, the author finds that most students have a clear idea about comprehensive language competence. And they know the relationship between language knowledge and language skills. But they don't realize the importance to use learning strategies. Also, there are some teaching problems in this class, such as too much homework and tests, so the author suggests that the students should be trained to develop learning strategies and the teacher should avoid mechanical teaching method.

1. Introduction

In recent years, people gradually realize that it is wrong to purely concentrate on teaching and ignore students no matter in theory or teaching practice. According to *English Curriculum for Nine-year compulsory Education (2011)*, it concentrates more on cultivating the students' comprehensive language competence, and holds that learning English is not a process which repeats and recites language knowledge, but a learning process which is improving constantly the students' comprehensive language competence.[1] Therefore, based on this background, the research mainly investigates how students develop comprehensive language competence in Dalongshan junior middle school. Specific purposes and questions of the research will be elaborated in the following part.

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2. Literature Review

Based on the *English Curriculum for Nine-year compulsory Education (2011)*, the general goal of nine-year compulsory education is to enable students to develop comprehensive language competence, promote mental development and improve comprehensive humanistic quality through English learning.[1] So, the definition of comprehensive language competence will be discussed in detail in the following part.

2.1. The Definition of Comprehensive Language

According to the *English Curriculum for Nine-year compulsory Education (2011),* the comprehensive language competence includes language knowledge, language skills, learning strategies, cultural awareness and emotional attitudes. [1] The five aspects of comprehensive language competence also have several their own parts: firstly, language knowledge consists of phonetics, vocabulary, functions and topics. It is an integral part of comprehensive language competence and the basis of developing language skills. Secondly, language skills include the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, in which listening and reading are skills of understanding, while speaking and writing are skills of expression. Thirdly, learning strategies refer to actions and steps which students take to learn effectively. And learning strategies can be classified into cognitive strategy, regulative strategy, communication strategy and resource strategy, etc. Fourthly, cultural awareness means that students have their knowledge and understanding on different cultures. During the process of learning English, the contact and understanding of foreign cultures will be beneficial to students' English learning and deepen their love to Chinese traditional culture. The last one is emotional attitudes, which refers to students' feelings towards English learning, like international perspectives, patriotism, confidence and motivation.

In order to understand the definition of comprehensive language competence, the author will have more explanation from two aspects. One is language competence; the other is comprehensive competence.

2.1.1. Language Competence

As for language competence, Bachman in *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing* states that Language competence comprises, essentially, a set of specific knowledge components that are utilized in communication via language. [2]

Bachman also insists that language competence is classified into two types: organizational competence which consists of grammatical competence and textual competence, and pragmatic competence which includes illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence.[2]

2.1.2. Comprehensive Competence

R.W. White first came up with the term "competence" in 1959, which is as a concept for performance motivation.[3] Some scholars regard "competence" as a combination of practical and theoretical knowledge, cognitive skills, behavior and values used to improve performance. And comprehensive competence mainly refers to the ability of observation, practice, thinking, integration and communication. [4]

2.2. Researches About Developing Comprehensive Language Competence Home and Abroad

In the following part, researches from five respects of comprehensive language competence at home and abroad will be elaborated, which are language knowledge, language skills, learning strategies, emotional attitudes and culture awareness.

2.2.1. Language Knowledge

As regard to language knowledge, Zhang Jianzhong states that:

"From a psychological point of view, in English teaching, the generalized English knowledge has three important elements which are independent and related to each other: declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge and strategic knowledge. Declarative knowledge refers to knowledge of English pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and discourse, etc.; procedural knowledge includes English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills and communicative language skills and then strategic knowledge consists of the cognitive strategies and methods of internal regulation. So, language knowledge as a basis to learn English has been paid much attention for a long time." [5]

Since the Cultural Revolution, English was regarded as the secondary curriculum. At that time, the aims and requirements of teaching focused on phonetics and grammar, as well as words. [6] And the syllabus in 1978 emphasized developing reading, self-learning abilities and some skills of listening, speaking and writing. [7] Then, from 1978 to 1982, teaching quality began to be given more attention. And the syllabus at that time put more emphasis on reading and self-learning ability.

2.2.2. Language Skills

As Sheng Li states that the studies of language skills in China now are mainly in two aspects: one is on the research about how to develop students' skills; the other is the study of the relationship between language knowledge and language skills. [8] Also, Feng Yubang studies and discusses how to cultivate English language skills from the following three aspects: opening more forms of English classes, giving multiple channels to cultivate students' English language skills and creating a good English learning environment. [9]

2.2.3. Learning Strategies

Since the 1960s, as modern cognitive psychology developing, there has been a fundamental change in people's understanding of cognitive processes. According to the theory of modern cognitive psychology, human activity was an extremely complex process of thinking and problem solving.[10] This provided a theoretical basis for the study of learning strategies. The study of learning strategies, which emerged in the 1970s, had its social background as well as its basis.

As Zheng Xiaotang and Zheng Ming say in *English Learning Strategies*:

From the 1970s, America and other countries' survey revealed that the education quality of all kinds of schools at all levels declined, and students generally lack learning strategies, and the reason was that people only unilaterally emphasized low-level skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic but neglected to learn methods and strategies. Anyway, since the 1970s, both in the psychology field and in the education field, people had recognized the significance of studying learning strategies. [11]

Since the 1980s, the study of language learning strategies has been rapidly developed, especially the researches by Chamot and O'Malley, whose studies were guided by the cognitive learning theory and based on the research of information processing theory. [12] On the basis of understanding, storing and processing the research information, a set of theoretical language learning strategies were concluded, which were classified and described in detail, and then they put these learning strategies into practice.

After the 1990s, the studies about language learning strategies continued to develop, and several new trends emerged. Firstly, the study of language learning strategies was combined with study of the autonomous learning. Secondly, language learning strategy training became the focus of learning strategy research. And lastly, researchers of language learning strategies began to focus on the relationship between learning strategies and culture. Also from this time, China carried out extensive researches on the foreign language learning strategies of Chinese students and published a large number of papers.

2.2.4. Emotional Attitudes

Since the eighth curriculum reform in 2001, our curriculum concept has been significantly developed. And cultivating the comprehensive development of students has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, and the importance of emotional attitudes has obviously attracted more attention. At the end of the 20th century, many countries and regions in the world carried out large-scale basic education reform and formulated various policies.

The stage of primary education is a critical period for the development of teenagers' emotional attitudes. [13] Every stage and every subject in basic education should pay attention to students' emotions, and help them develop positive emotional attitudes, which are not only closely related to language but also directly or indirectly influenced it in many aspects. In recent years, researchers of foreign language education have conducted a large number of studies on the relationship between emotional attitudes and foreign language learning and made outstanding achievements. [14] The main conclusion is that it is necessary to solve emotional problems in language learning.

2.2.5. Cultural Awareness

According to Vygotsky's theory of social culture, in the process of language teaching, the object of our study should not only be the language system itself, such as grammar and lexicon, etc., but also the social and human communication. [15] Also, sociocultural theory holds that only pure linguistic knowledge (phonology, vocabulary and pragmatics) cannot achieve the internalization of language knowledge and the effective use of language, because learners are not only restricted by factors such as the mother tongue and the social and cultural environment of the target slogan, but these social and cultural factors are likely to play an vital role in the process of language learning. And some people thought that language and culture were inseparable. Then, many scholars in China began to study language from the perspective of culturology, resulting in a large number of related works.

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3. Research Design

In the following part, the author will discuss the research design including research questions, questionnaire design, research subject and research procedure as well as calculating tools.

3.1. Research Questions

In present research, three questions will be presented and analyzed:

What attitudes do the junior students have towards developing comprehensive language competence?

How do the students develop comprehensive language competence? What problems exist when they develop comprehensive language competence?

What suggestions will be given to the students to develop comprehensive language competence?

3.2. Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire consists of 50 items involved in seven parts, with five degrees of answers to each item: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. Items 1-5 are for having a research on students' attitudes towards developing comprehensive language competence. Items 6-7 investigate students' ideas about the relationship between language knowledge and language skills. Then, Items 8-23 focus on investigating students' developing their language skills, including listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. And Items 24-39 are mainly for students' learning strategies, in which Items 24-25 are designed for vocabulary and grammar learning strategies; Items 26-31 are about listening and speaking learning strategies; Items 32-33 are for reading strategies; Items 34-35 are designed for writing strategies and Items 36-39 focus on metarecongnize and resource strategies. Then, Items 40-42 are for cultural awareness. At last, Items 46-50 mainly concentrate on surveying the problems existing in teaching.

3.3. Participants

Data was collected from students of Grade 8 in Dalongshan Junior Middle School in Anqing, Anhui province. There are 20 boys and 19 girls in the class, who are outgoing and are willing to answer the questionnaires. So, they play an important role in my study.

3.4. Survey Procedure and Calculating Tools

The survey is conducted in class 1, Grade 8 in Dalongshan Junior Middle school in November. When giving out questionnaires, the author makes sure that each of them has a copy of questionnaire and asks them to fill in the questionnaire carefully and anonymously. Also, the author assures them the results of their questionnaires will not be harmful to their privacy. Then, they finish the questionnaires in 15 minutes. The author gives out 39 questionnaires in total, among which all the 39 copies are valid. After collecting their answers, the author calculates them with Excel and works out the percentage of each item. Therefore, data presentation and analysis of the survey are as follows.

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4. Data Presentation and Analysis

This is the central part of the paper. The nine charts with relevant data for developing of comprehensive language competence are shown below.and asks them to fill in the questionnaire carefully and anonymously. Also, the author assures them the results of their questionnaires will not be harmful to their privacy. Then, they finish the questionnaires in 15 minutes. The author gives out 39 questionnaires in total, among which all the 39 copies are valid. After collecting their answers, the author calculates them with Excel and works out the percentage of each item. Therefore, data presentation and analysis of the survey are as follows.

4.1. The Attitudes of the Students Towards Comprehensive Language Competence

Five items are designed to explore students' attitudes towards comprehensive language competence. The relevant data are as follows.

Table 1. *Attitudes toward comprehensive language competence.*

Options	items	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	N	0	2	0	1	7
	P (%)	0	5	0	2	18
Disagree	N	2	2	3	2	13
	P (%)	5	5	8	5	33
Neutral	N	8	11	10	7	12
	P (%)	20	28	26	18	31
Agree	N	15	13	12	12	2
	P (%)	39	34	31	31	5
Strongly agree	N	14	11	14	17	5
	P (%)	36	28	35	44	13

As regard to Item 1 (Comprehensive language competence includes language knowledge, language skills, learning strategies, emotional attitudes and cultural awareness) in Table 1, only 5% of the students disagree with it, and 20% of them keep neutral, which means these students do not have a clear idea about comprehensive language competence. Meanwhile, 75% of the students agree with it. That is to say, most of them know what comprehensive language competence is.

As for Item 2 (A good language learner not only uses English freely, but also loves his country and introduces his own culture into the world), which is related to students' cultural awareness, disagreements take up 10%. And neutrality comprises 28%. At the same time, agreements account for 62%. To conclude, most of students think a good language learner can deal with the relationship between English learning and culture communication well.

Concerning Item 3 (A good language learner always believes in himself and tries his best to learn English well), only 8% of the students do not think so and 26% of them have no idea about it. Meanwhile, 66% of the students support it. Therefore, we can see that two thirds of the students believe that if they work hard, they can learn well.

In terms of Item 4 (A good language learner always tries different learning strategies to make learning effective), 7% of the students do not agree with it and 18% of them are neutral. At the same time, 75% of them agree with it, which means most of the students hold that different learning strategies are connected with learning efficiency.

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As regard to Item 5 (Doing well in testing is more important than speaking English), disagreements account for 51%. That is to say, they believe that speaking English is more important than doing well in testing. 31% of them don't know about it. Also, there are only 18% of them agree with it, which means some of them pay more attention to the test than oral English.

In conclusion, most of students have a correct attitude towards comprehensive language competence, but there are still some students have a vague understanding about it.

4.2. Students' Practices to Develop Comprehensive Language Competence

In the following part, 8 tables will be presented and analyzed, which mainly pays attention to the students' practices to develop comprehensive language competence.

4.2.1. Students' Understanding About the Relationship Between Knowledge and Skills

Language knowledge includes phonetics, grammar, vocabulary, function and topics, while language skills consist of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and reading are receptive skills; speaking and writing are called productive skills. Language knowledge and language skills are two aspects that complement each other in the continuous unification of language. Language knowledge is different from language skills, but language skills should include language knowledge. So, two items are designed to assess students' understanding about the relationship between language knowledge and skills. Let's see the Table 2 about the data.

Table 2. Students' understanding about the relationship between knowledge and skills.

Options	items	6	7
Strongly disagree	N	7	7
	P (%)	18	18
Disagree	N	13	14
	P (%)	33	36
Neutral	N	12	10
	P (%)	31	25
Agree	N	2	3
	P (%)	5	8
Strongly agree	N	5	5
	P (%)	13	13

As to Item 6 (Getting language knowledge is much more important than developing language competence), 51% of the students disagree with it, 31% of them keep neutral, and 18% of the students agree with it, which indicates that many of them have a clear and correct understanding on the relationship between knowledge and skills.

As regard to Item 7 (I like to learn words and grammar, but don't like to speak English), disagreements account for 54%, which means they are not interested in learning words and grammar but like speaking English. And about 25% of them are neutral, meanwhile 21% of them agree with it. It shows that over half of the students like speaking English.

In conclusion, although many students have a clear idea about the relationship between language knowledge and skills, some of them still think that knowledge is important than skills.

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4.2.2. Students' Language Skills

In order to understand how students develop language skills, the collected data will be discussed in two tables. Table 3 is about how students developing their listening and speaking skills, and Table 4 is a survey on students' developing their reading and writing skills.

Table 3. Students' developing language skills (Listening and speaking skills).

Options	items	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Strongly disagree	N	9	8	6	9	8	5	6
	P (%)	23	20	15	23	21	13	15
Disagree	N	10	5	11	9	8	11	9
	P (%)	25	13	28	23	20	28	23
Neutral	N	14	15	15	13	14	12	14
	P (%)	36	39	39	33	36	31	36
Agree	N	3	5	4	5	5	6	5
	P (%)	8	13	10	13	13	15	13
Strongly agree	N	3	6	3	3	4	5	5
	P (%)	8	15	8	8	10	13	13

As for Item 8 (Only when I have more listening can I speak well), disagreements account for 48%. That is to say, they think speaking well has nothing to do with listening. And neutrality takes up 36%. Then, only 16% of them agree that they can speak well if they have more listening. Therefore, we can see that only a small part of students admit that listening skills is related to speaking skills.

As to Item 9 (I do listening practice before and after class at home), 33% of students don't do listening practice when they have free time, while 39% of them keep neutral. And agreements just account for 28%, which means these students have a good habit of improving their listening skill.

As regard to Item 10 (I watch English TV programs), 43% of the students don't watch English programs and 39% of them are neutral. To my surprise, only 18% of them will do it. That is to say, not too many students watch English TV programs after class.

As regard to Item 11 (I speak English with my classmates in class), agreements account for 46%. And neutrality takes up 33%, meanwhile only 21% of them will do it. It shows that only a small proportion of the students develop their speaking skills actively.

According to Item 12 (I'm active in role plays in front of class), about 41% of the students disagree with it and 36% of them keep neutral. To my surprise, only 23% of them agree with it. However, if they do not take part in the role plays actively, it will not help them improve their skills.

As to Item 13 (I like to answer the teacher's questions in class), the number of students who disagree with it accounts for 41%. Then, 31% of them are neutral. That is to say, quite numbers of students are unwilling to answer teachers' questions. They do not catch chances to make interaction with teachers. And 28% of the students admit that they are willing to answer questions in class. Therefore, we can see that the class is not very active.

As for Item 14 (I'm active in English discussion in class), 38% of the students don't agree with it. And 36% of them keep neutral. While only 28% of them declare that they take part in English discussion actively.

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To conclude, many students neglect to improve their listening and speaking skills, furthermore over half of them are not willing to take part in class activities, which is not beneficial to their English learning.

Table 4 is concerned with how students develop their reading and writing skills, and 10 items are included.

Table 4. *Students' developing language skills (Reading and writing skills).*

Options	items	15	16	17	18
Strongly disagree	N	7	7	10	8
	P (%)	18	18	25	20
Disagree	N	9	7	11	14
	P (%)	23	18	28	36
Neutral	N	11	10	12	10
	P (%)	28	26	31	26
Agree	N	8	8	3	5
	P (%)	20	20	8	13
Strongly agree	N	4	4	3	2
	P (%)	10	10	8	5
Options	**items**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**
Strongly disagree	N	2	6	15	18	11
	P (%)	5	15	38	46	28
Disagree	N	7	5	15	11	16
	P (%)	18	13	38	28	41
Neutral	N	1	7	7	6	7
	P (%)	3	18	18	16	18
Agree	N	11	8	1	2	3
	P (%)	28	21	3	5	8
Strongly agree	N	18	13	1	2	2
	P (%)	46	33	3	5	5

As to Item 15 (I read the reading materials in my textbook before and after class), there are 41% of the students disagree with it, and 28% of them remain neutral. At the same time, 31% of them agree with it. That is to say, these students have a good habit of developing their reading skills. However, many students admit that they do not have this habit.

According to Item 16 (I read passages in coach materials), disagreements account for 36% and 26% of the students keep neutral. Then, agreements take up 38%.

As regard to Item 17 (I surf the Internet to read news and articles), 53% of the students admit that they seldom surf the internet for reading, and 31% of them keep neutral. While only 16% of them insist that they read by surfing the internet. So, we can conclude that over half of them do not make good use of the internet.

As to Item 18 (I read English stories in magazines), disagreements account for 56%, and the number of students who are neutral takes up 26%. Then, 18% of them agree with it. It indicates a large amount of them will not read some extracurricular books.

For Item 19 (I do exercises in my textbook), 23% of the students don't agree with it, and only 3% of them keep neutral. Meanwhile, 74% of them agree with it. It shows that most of the students use traditional ways to learn, relying on the exercises in the textbook to develop their skills.

According to Item 20 (I write compositions given by the teacher), 28% of the students insist that they seldom even never write compositions given by the teacher,

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and 18% of them keep neutral. At the same time, 54% of the students agree with it. It indicates that over the half of the students would like to follow their teacher's instructions to improve their writing skills.

As to Item 21 (I write English letters to my friends), about 76% of the students response that they do not write English letters to their friends. And 18% of them are neutral. However, only 6% of them admit they will do it. From this, we can conclude that most of the students will not actively develop their writing skills.

As for Item 22 (I write e-mails), disagreements account for 74% and neutrality takes up 16%. To my surprise, agreements only account for 10%. It shows that they do not realize that writing English e-mails frequently is also an effective way for their English learning.

According to Item 23 (I write English life diaries), 69% of them don't agree with it, and 18% of them keep neutral. Meanwhile, only 13% of them agree with it. It indicates that most of them do not concentrate on developing their writing skills by writing English diaries, which can also help them manage their learning.

In conclusion, analysis from Chart 4 shows that most of the students are used to traditional learning approaches to developing language skills, neglecting modern and more effective ways to learn English. Therefore, students should be trained and encouraged to try new and more efficient ways to enhance their language skills.

4.2.3. Students' Developing Language Learning Strategies

In the following, two charts will be listed to present how students develop their language learning strategies. Table 5 mainly investigates students' vocabulary and grammar learning strategies (Items 24-25) and listening and speaking learning strategies (Items 26-31). Then, Chart 6 will focus on how students develop their reading, writing, metacognition and resource strategies.

Table 5. Students' developing language learning strategies (Language knowledge and skills).

Options	items	24	25	26	27
Strongly disagree	N	7	6	10	5
	P (%)	18	15	26	13
Disagree	N	8	7	6	8
	P (%)	20	18	15	20
Neutral	N	10	11	13	10
	P (%)	26	28	33	26
Agree	N	8	7	5	6
	P (%)	21	18	13	15
Strongly agree	N	6	8	5	10
	P (%)	15	20	13	26
Options	items	28	29	30	31
Strongly disagree	N	4	11	9	9
	P (%)	10	28	23	23
Disagree	N	9	9	19	3
	P (%)	23	23	48	8
Neutral	N	14	15	7	14
	P (%)	36	38	18	36
Agree	N	7	0	3	7
	P (%)	18	0	8	18
Strongly agree	N	5	4	1	6
	P (%)	13	10	3	15

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According to Item 24 (I like to speak English so that I can remember new words and grammar), 38% of the students disagree with it, and 26% of them keep neutral. At the same time, 36% of them agree with it.

As to Item 25 (I write important sentences with new words and grammar so that I can master them), agreements account for 33%, and 28% of the students are neutral. Then, agreements take up 38%.

In Item 26 (I make notes while listening), the number of students who disagree with it accounts for 41%, and 33% of them are neutral. And 26% of them make notes when they do listening exercises. So, we can see only a small proportion of the students will take this valid way to develop their listening skills.

From Item 27 (I pay special attention to intonation and stress while listening), 33% of the students disagree with it. And 26% of them keep neutral. Meanwhile, the number of students who agree with it accounts for 41%. It shows that many students pay attention to improving their pronunciation when they do listening practice.

As regard to Item 28 (I catch every chance to practice my speaking skills in class), 33% of the students admit they will not do it. And 36% of them are neutral. In the meantime, 31% of them agree with it. It shows that there are still one third of students who are willing to speaking English in class.

Concerning Item 29 (I put up my hands to have role plays in class), 51% of them disagree with it, and 38% of them remain neutral. To my surprise, only 14% of the students agree with it. So, we can see that most of them will not take part in class activities actively.

As to Item 30 (I talk to myself in English at home), 71% of the students admit that they seldom talk to themselves in English at home, and 18% of them are neutral, which means maybe they sometimes will talk to themselves in English. However, only 11% of them agree with it. It indicates that most of the students cannot make good use of the way to practice their oral English.

According to Item 31 (I retell stories in and after class), 31% of them disagree with it, and 36% of them keep neutral. And 33% of the students agree with it.

To sum up, many students seldom apply learning strategies to their study and their autonomy needs to be improved.

Now, let's look at Table 6, which is about how students develop their learning strategies to improve their reading, writing and self-management.

Table 6. *Students' learning strategies about language learning (Reading, writing and self-management).*

Options	items	32	33	34	35
Strongly disagree	N	1	2	7	2
	P (%)	3	5	18	5
Disagree	N	8	10	5	8
	P (%)	21	25	13	21
Neutral	N	9	8	11	12
	P (%)	23	21	28	31
Agree	N	11	7	5	10
	P (%)	28	18	13	25
Strongly agree	N	10	12	11	7
	P (%)	25	31	28	18
Options	items	36	37	38	39

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Strongly disagree	N	7	6	4	6
	P (%)	18	15	10	15
Disagree	N	18	9	3	4
	P (%)	46	23	8	10
Neutral	N	7	12	14	14
	P (%)	18	31	36	36
Agree	N	5	5	7	7
	P (%)	13	13	18	18
Strongly agree	N	2	7	11	8
	P (%)	5	18	28	21

As to Item 32 (I read passages quickly to get the main ideas), 24% of them disagree with it, and the number of students who have a neutral view accounts for 23%. Then, 53% of the students admit that they can read passages quickly and get main ideas.

According to Item 33 (I read here and there in the passage to find the specific information), 30% of the students disagree with it and 21% of them keep neutral. And the number of students who agree with it takes up 49%. It means some of them know how to read effectively.

For Item 34 (I write about what I'm interested in), 31% of the students disagree with it, and 28% of them are neutral. Then, 41% of them agree with it.

Concerning Item 35 (Before I start writing compositions, I like to read something for reference), 26% of the students disagree with it, and 31% of them keep neutral. Meanwhile, the number of students who agree with it accounts for 43%. Therefore, it shows that some students can make full use of the reference books.

As regard to Item 36 (I write learning diaries to manage English learning), about 64% of the students admit that they don't write learning diaries, and 18% of them keep neutral, maybe they sometimes write them. To my surprise, the number of students who agree with it only takes up 18%. So, we can see, most students cannot manage their learning by writing learning diaries, not realizing the importance of learning strategies.

As for Item 37 (I make learning plans so that I learn effectively), 38% of the students disagree with it, and 31% of them are neutral, which shows they may have an ambiguous view about learning plans or they sometimes make learning plans but they don't work. And 31% of them have learning plans which helps them learn effectively, knowing how to manage themselves in language learning. That is to say, there are nearly one third of the students in their class who master scientific and effective learning strategies.

In Item 38 (I will ask someone for help if I meet with some learning problems), 18% of the students disagree it, and 36% of them keep neutral. And agreements account for 46%. From this item, we can see most of students are willing to ask for help, using social learning strategy.

According to Item 39 (I will surf the Internet to get help if I have questions), 25% of the students will not choose this way to get help, and 36% of them keep neutral. Then, 39% of them will choose the Internet to ask for help, which will make learning more convenient.

To conclude, learning strategies are some useful ways which students can apply to their study, which can improve their study. According to the statistics, the number of students who cannot use learning strategies effectively is larger than students who can.

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4.2.4. Students' Emotional Attitudes Towards Language Learning

The Table 7 below will be about emotion attitudes, which includes how students use their emotion to stimulate their study, such as determination, confidence and cooperation with others.

Table 7. Students' emotion attitudes towards language learning.

Options	items	40	41	42
Strongly disagree	N	7	5	2
	P (%)	18	13	5
Disagree	N	4	2	3
	P (%)	10	5	8
Neutral	N	13	10	11
	P (%)	33	25	28
Agree	N	7	12	9
	P (%)	18	31	23
Strongly agree	N	8	10	14
	P (%)	21	25	36

As to Item 40 (I'm ready to help others with their English learning), 28% of the students don't agree with it, and 33% of them are neutral. At the same time, 39% of them declare that they are ready to help others, which shows they carry out cooperative learning.

According to Item 41 (I like to work with my classmates to solve problems), 18% of the students disagree with it, and 25% of them have a neutral view about it. Then, 56% of them say that they like solve some learning problems with their classmates. So, we can conclude that more than half of them are willing to learn together, which proves to be very effective in learning.

Concerning Item 42 (I tell myself, "Nothing is difficult if I put my heart into it."), disagreements only account for 13% and neutrality takes up 28%. Then, agreements take up 59%, which means many of them believe that problems can be overcame if they work hard.

In conclusion, students have good emotional attitudes. Most of them are willing to help others and have a determination to learn English.

4.2.5. Cultural Awareness

Item 43 to Item 45 in Table 8 are about cultural awareness, which reflects whether students are willing to bring their culture to others or accept other countries' culture.

As for Item 43 (I share the culture of my hometown with my friends), 28% of the students don't agree with it, and 18% of them are neutral. And 40% of them approve it.

According to Item 44 (I should learn high-technologies from other countries), 33% of them don't agree with it, while 23% of them are neutral. At the same time, 44% of them think they should do it.

As for Item 45 (It's important to communicate cross cultures), 31% of the students disagree with it, and 38% of them keep a neutral view. Meanwhile, 41% of them agree with it.

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To sum up, many students have a positive view about culture awareness, and they would like to share their culture with others. But there are still some students don't like do it.

Table 8. Students' cultural awareness about language learning.

Options	items	43	44	45
Strongly disagree	N	4	5	4
	P (%)	10	12	10
Disagree	N	7	8	8
	P (%)	18	21	21
Neutral	N	12	9	15
	P (%)	31	23	38
Agree	N	6	8	7
	P (%)	15	21	18
Strongly agree	N	10	9	5
	P (%)	25	23	13

4.2.6. Problems Existing in Language Teaching

In this part, the author will focus on problems in language teaching. Five items are included in Table 9.

Table 9. Problems in language teaching.

Options	items	46	47	48	49	50
Strongly disagree	N	1	1	3	2	5
	P (%)	3	3	8	5	13
Disagree	N	3	4	7	3	4
	P (%)	7	10	18	8	10
Neutral	N	4	5	5	9	8
	P (%)	10	13	13	23	21
Agree	N	3	4	10	10	11
	P (%)	8	10	25	25	28
Strongly agree	N	28	25	14	15	11
	P (%)	72	64	36	39	28

As to Item 46 (The English teacher asks us to recite texts after class), 10% of them disagree with it, and 10% of them are neutral. At the same time, up to 80% students agree with it, in which 72% of them strongly agree with it. From this item, we can see, the English teacher lets students recite texts to learn English, which shows the rote teaching method is still used in language class.

According to Item 47 (The teacher often asks us a lot of questions in English), 13% of them don't agree with it. And 13% of them keep a neutral view. Then, about 74% of them say that their teacher often raises English questions in class, which shows that the English teacher pays attention to interacting with students which can create a real language environment and tries to attract their attention.

As for Item 48 (The teacher often organizes English activities in class), 26% of the students disagree with it, and 13% of them keep neutral, while up to 61% of them response that their English teacher will organize some English activities for them. From the result of the item, we can conclude that the teacher puts efforts to stimulate students' motivation to learn English by organizing some activities.

Concerning Item 49 (We have many tests in class), only 13% of the students don't think so, and 23% of them are neutral. To our great surprise, 64% of them agree with

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it. To make students get good grades, the teacher even lets them have many tests, which is very exam-oriented.

For Item 50 (The teacher asks us to do many written exercises after class), 23% of the students disagree with it, and 21% of them students remain neutral. And 56% of them agree with it. Therefore, we can see the students have much homework after class.

In conclusion, some traditional teaching methods are still adopted in language classes which are very harmful for students' language learning.

5. The Problems of Developing Comprehensive Language Competence

According to the data from these charts, some problems of developing comprehensive language competence will be discussed. The author will elaborate them from two respects: one is the problems in students' learning, and the other one is about teaching approaches.

The main problems about students developing comprehensive competence include: firstly, some students still have a vague understanding about comprehensive language competence, although most of the students have a clear idea about the relationship between language knowledge and language skills, some of them still think that language knowledge is much more important than language skills. Secondly, most students don't realize the importance of language skills, especially listening and speaking, so, they will not develop their language skills actively. Thirdly, students neglect some effective ways and resources for their English learning. And at last, although most students have positive attitudes towards emotional attitudes, some of them still have wrong attitudes to it.

Then, some problems still exist in teaching. Firstly, the English teacher still teaches by rote, according to the data, up to 80% of the students claim that their English teacher asks them to recite texts after class. Secondly, the teacher gives them too many exercises and tests. The situation of exam-oriented education is quite serious.

6. Conclusions

The English courses for compulsory education strive to face all students and establish the foundation for developing their comprehensive language competence. Based on the concept, main findings and some suggestions will be presented.

6.1. Main Findings

According to these charts, most students have a clear idea about comprehensive language competence. Furthermore, they know the relationship between language knowledge and language skills. But they don't realize the importance to use learning strategies. And most of them cannot manage their learning by using some effective ways. Also, there are some teaching problems in this class, such as too much homework and tests. The teacher still adopts traditional teaching methods in language class. The relief is that the teacher sometimes will carry out some English activities for students to stimulate their interests and attract their attentions.

6.2. Suggestions to Develop Comprehensive Language Competence

As for suggestions, the author thinks that on the one hand, students should know how to learn. Firstly, they should have a full understanding of comprehensive language competence and find useful ways, which are suitable for themselves, to learn English. Secondly, they would better keep some good learning habits, such as reading some English texts after class. Lastly, they should have a positive attitude to English learning.

On the other hand, firstly, teachers should realize that the method of duck stuffing may not the best way to teach English. High motivation plays a vital role in English learning. Some different methods should be used in English class teaching, which can make students have interests in English.

Secondly, teachers should try to give students different homework or tasks to stimulate students' interests to learn English. Too much homework and tests will make students feel bored.

Thirdly, teachers should guide students to use some effective learning strategies. Using effective learning strategies, students can not only improve their learning quality but also reduce the learning anxiety.

Lastly, teachers should keep in mind that emotional attitudes have a profound impact on students' English learning. Negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, shyness, tension, anger, depression, doubt, etc. affect the learning potential. If learners are negatively affected too much, even the best teachers, textbooks and teaching methods will not work. On the contrary, positive emotions such as self-esteem, self-confidence, empathy, motivation, pleasure and surprise can create a psychological state conducive to learning.

Appendix

Questionnaire

Investigation into Developing Comprehensive Language Competence in Junior Middle Schools

Dear students, Hello!

Please read carefully the following survey items about comprehensive language competence development and fill in the numbers according to the degree of your agreement: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree).

I promise taht this survey will not have any negative impact on students' privacy. Thank you for your active cooperation!

Part A

1.( ) Comprehensive language competence includes language knowledge, language skills, learning strategies, emotional attitudes and cultural awareness.

2.( ) A good language learner not only uses English freely, but also loves his country and introduces his own culture into the world.

3.( ) A good language learner always believes in himself and tries his best to learn English well.

4.( ) A good language learner always tries different learning strategies to make learning effective.

5.( ) Doing well in testing is more important than speaking English.

Part B

6.(   ) Getting language knowledge is much more important than developing language competence.

7.( ) I like to learn words and grammar, but don't like to speak English.

Part C

8.( ) Only when I have more listening can I speak well.

9.( ) I do listening practice before and after class at home.

10.( ) I watch English TV programs.

11.( ) I speak English with my classmates in class.

12.( ) I'm active in role plays in front of class.

13.( ) I like to answer the teacher's questions in class.

14.( ) I'm active in English discussion in class.

15.( ) I read the reading materials in my textbook before and after class.

16.( ) I read passages in coach materials.

17.( ) I surf the Internet to read news and articles.

18.( ) I read English stories in magazines.

19.( ) I do exercises in my textbook.

20.( ) I write compositions given by the teacher.

21.( ) I write English letters to my friends.

22.( ) I write e-mails.

23.( ) I write English life diaries.

Part D

24.( ) I like to speak English so that I can remember new words and grammar.

25.( ) I write important sentences with new words and grammar so that I can master them.

26.( ) I make notes while listening.

26.( ) I pay special attention to intonation and stress while listening.

28.( ) I catch every chance to practice my speaking skills in class.

29.( ) I put up my hands to have roles plays in class.

30.( ) I talk to myself in English at home.

31.( ) I retell stories in and after class.

32.( ) I read passages quickly to get the main ideas.

33.( ) I read here and there in the passage to find the specific information.

34.( ) I write about what I'm interested in.

35.( ) Before I start writing compositions, I like to read something for reference.

36.( ) I write learning diaries to manage English learning.

37.( ) I make learning plans so that I learn effectively.

38.( ) I will ask someone for help if I meet with some learning problems.

39.( ) I will surf the Internet to get help if I have questions.

Part E

40.( ) I'm ready to help others with their English learning.

41.( ) I like to work with my classmates to solve problems.

42.( ) I tell myself, "Nothing is difficult if I put my heart into it."

Part F

43.( ) I share the culture of my hometown with my friends.

44.( ) I should learn high-technologies form other countries.

45.( ) It's important to communicate cross cultures.

Part G

46.( ) The English teacher asks us to recite texts after class.

47.( ) The teacher often asks us a lot of questions in English.

48.( ) The teacher often organizes English activities in class.

49.( ) We have many tests in class.

50.( ) The teacher asks us to do many written exercises after class.

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