

A Survey on the Application of Lead-In in Rural Junior High School English Teaching in Henan Province of China

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ABSTRACT

With the higher requirements of The English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education for English teaching design, the lead-in phase emerging as a critical component that has received more attention from frontline English teachers. However, a significant knowledge gap exists regarding the practical application of lead-in strategies in rural junior high school English classrooms. This study aims to address two primary research questions: the current state of lead-in practices in rural junior high school English teaching and the factors influencing the effectiveness of these strategies. To explore these questions, employing a quantitative research approach, a survey was conducted using a convenience sampling method, which involved selecting 40 English teachers from 7 rural junior high schools in Henan Province. The data from the questionnaire survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS 25.0.

The findings highlighted various challenges faced by teachers during the lead-in phase, such as limited teaching resources and students' low English proficiency levels. Furthermore, the study identified teachers' professional development and experience as crucial factors affecting the effectiveness of lead-in strategies. The conclusion drawn from the study suggests that enhancing the lead-in phase in rural junior high school English teaching necessitates a multifaceted strategy encompassing improved resource allocation, teacher training, and the implementation of innovative teaching methodologies. Based on these findings, the study recommends increasing investment in rural English education infrastructure, strengthening teacher professional development, and promoting the exploration of diverse lead-in strategies to better cater to the needs of students.

Keywords: lead-in; rural areas; junior high school; English teaching; survey

INTRODUCTION

As the beginning of classroom teaching, the lead-in can play an important role. As people often say, "well beginning is a half done", a good lead-in can influence the teaching and improve the efficiency of the entire class. On the one hand, lead-in can help teachers "promote the whole teaching process" (Shi, 2011:51). On the other hand, it can also help students have a basic understanding of new knowledge. In English teaching, teachers should not only pay attention to what content is taught, but also consider whether students can enjoy learning. Lead-in, as the first step in stimulating students' interest in learning, is of great significance for teachers to guide students to enjoy learning English. Therefore, in the lead-in process, many English teachers try to attract students' interest and stimulate their participation in the class by designing rich and colorful lead-in.

However, based on previous research, the lead-in in most rural junior high schools has not truly played its due role. On the one hand, the traditional teaching model centered on test-oriented education is still deeply entrenched. Many rural English teachers often ignore the important of lead-in to gain time in teaching and impart more new knowledge to students as much as possible. On the other hand, lead-in is only a formality in most rural English classes. Teachers do not pay enough attention to the lead-in content. Many lead-in steps have problems such as single lead-in methods, unreasonable lead-in time and so on, which are difficult to arouse students' interest and attention, resulting in many students not really participating in it.

Lead-in is like a prelude to music, which is the key to “capturing students’ interests, concentrating students’ attention and creating positive interactive atmosphere” (Sheng, 2021:134). Lead-in lays the main theme of the whole English class. If the lead-in is used properly in a lesson, teachers can mobilize the enthusiasm of students effectively, help students integrate into the class atmosphere quickly and participate in class activities actively as well as achieve the teaching objectives of the class more efficiently.

In views of the above, this research adopts questionnaire to survey the application of lead-in in rural junior high school English teaching, aiming to understand the real application of lead-in in Henan Province of China. In addition, this research explores the factors that influence the effect of lead-in in junior high school English teaching at rural areas. The purpose is to further understand the factors that influence the effect of English lead-in in rural junior high schools, hoping to promote the development of lead-in in rural junior high school English teaching.

It is hoped that through this research, more rural frontline English teachers can realize the importance and necessity of lead-in and pay more attention to this step in future teaching, in order to optimize English teaching and improve the effect of teaching. In addition, from this study, the shortcomings in the lead-in at present can be found out, teaching enlightenment can be drawn and suggestions can be made, which can have a certain reference significance for English teachers at rural areas to understand and use lead-in correctly in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers have given many definitions of lead-in. In 1970s, Turney (1975) pointed out that lead-in is the first link in English teaching and a behavioral pattern of teachers. He regards the lead-in as the first link in teaching, which is accepted by many researchers in the future. In 1996, Willis (1996) explained lead-in from the perspective of task-based language teaching. He divided task-based language teaching into pre-task, while-task and post-task, and proposed that the lead-in belongs to pre-task. This study not only continues the findings of previous researchers, but also further clarifies the relationship between lead-in and other teaching tasks. In the research of Willis, he systematically put forward that lead-in is the first stage of teaching, which is about 3-5 minutes before the start of a new class or the presentation of new knowledge. Then, Hu (1996) defined lead-in as “starting a lecture”. She further pointed out that lead-in is not only the beginning of a class, but also can throughout the whole class. This research not only makes people clearer about the relationship between lead-in and other teaching links, but also makes later researchers more clearly understand the concept of lead-in.

In recent years, the definition of lead-in has become richer. Xiao and others defined lead-in as “a general term for all kinds of activities before lectures by students and teachers” (Xiao, Huang & Che, 2001:38). They stressed that the lead-in should pay attention to the time and activities of each teaching link. Guo (2010) defined lead-in from the perspective of teaching. The lead-in is a kind of teaching organization behavior that teachers consciously and purposefully guide students into a new learning state at the beginning of teaching. In English teaching, the lead-in phase involves the use of engaging and succinct language by teachers or the creation of novel and distinct learning scenarios to initiate the lesson effectively, facilitating a smooth transition for students into the educational activities. As for lead-in, this study defines it as: lead-in is the first 3-5 minutes of a lesson, during this some minutes the teacher selects the most appropriate method to fully stimulate students’ learning interest and concentrate students’ attention based on the teaching tasks and content of the lesson, which is an essential link for the smooth implementation of the whole lesson.

In the 1970s, Turney (1975) compiled *Sydney Micro Skills*, which explained the functions of lead-in to many educators. The research notes that lead-in has the functions of arousing students’ attention and stimulating learning motivation. It is the first book with a comprehensive description of the functions of lead-in.

In the 1980s, Roger Gower and Steve Walters (1983) studied the methods of lead-in and put forward socializing and leading the students inductively. That is to say, teachers take familiar and interesting topics in daily life as the lead-in. In the free conversation between teachers and students, they can establish a good teacher-student relationship and at the same time disperse students’ thinking, so that students can naturally start learning new knowledge.

In the 1990s, scholars further study on lead-in. Cooper (1992) further clearly pointed out that the purpose of lead-in is to stimulate students' interests and make students actively learn new knowledge in the class. In a word, lead-in should serve teaching and the ultimate goal of lead-in is to stimulate students' expectation and interests in learning.

After entering the 21st century, scholars have made a deeper study on lead-in. Slavin (2004) believed that teachers should base themselves on students' learning situation in the lead-in process, take students' interests as the breakthrough point and stimulate students to actively participate in teaching activities. Enkhsaruul (2009) further pointed out that lead-in activity is a kind of teaching activity that enables students to make the best use of class time. From Enkhsaruul's research, the lead-in activities can build a bridge between old and new knowledge, so that students can learn new content smoothly and improve the effectiveness of teaching. With the gradual deepening of research, Madaoui (2013) used the classroom observation scale to study the influence of lead-in methods on students' academic performance, and the results shows that lead-in can help students get better grades and have a better understanding of knowledge. Morton (2015) through the study in English teaching, have put that the fun of lead-in is positively correlated with the effect of the English teaching. Diril (2015) compared the lead-in to the warm-up exercise of athletes before exercise, so as to reduce the injury caused by exercise. It is also pointed out that in English teaching, lead-in activities can reduce students' learning difficulties and help students to learn smoothly.

On the research of lead-in functions, researchers have put forward many functions of lead-in. Liu believes that lead-in has the functions of "stimulating students' interests, constructing knowledge framework and making students want to learn actively from their hearts" (Liu, 2004:32). Although the lead-in link is only a few minutes, it is very important. With the deepening of research, Yu and Cheng pointed out from the perspective of teachers that the lead-in can "greatly improve class efficiency" (Yu & Cheng, 2012:42). Lead-in as the first few minutes of a class is the most concentrated time for students, so grasping the lead-in can greatly improve class efficiency. Zhang (2016) further put forward the relationship between lead-in and teaching, a good lead-in can establish a close relationship between the imported content and the new knowledge as well as establish students' learning expectations.

In recent years, more and more scholars have put forward different lead-in methods. Wang put forward the lead-in of "topic background method, review method, free conversation method" (Wang, 2010:131) and so on. This research shows that teachers can design different lead-in methods according to the actual situation to stimulate students' interest in learning English. Chen put forward "intuitive teaching method, group competition method and art form method" (Chen, 2011:60), which further enriched the methods of lead-in. In a word, researchers put forward various research methods with the deepening of research.

On the study of lead-in principle, Gong proposed that lead-in design should follow the principles of "fun, pertinence and simplicity" (Gong, 2013:75). Chen talked about more specific lead-in principles including that a good lead-in should "stimulate students' interests, meet the needs of learning and set the suspense of learning" (Chen, 2012:66). In addition, in recent years, scholars have gradually paid more attention to the research on the combination of lead-in and specific course types, conducted in-depth research on lead-in according to different course types in English. Such as, Li (2022) made related research on the problems existing in the lead-in of junior high school English listening and speaking classes. Sun (2018) studied the implementation of lead-in strategies in English reading teaching and put forward suggestions on what factors teachers should consider when designing lead-in activities in English reading classes.

However, the above studies rarely focus on English classes in rural junior high schools. To sum up, there are relatively few studies on the application of lead-in in junior high school English teaching at rural areas in China, leaving gap for this research.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A. Research Questions

The theme of this study is "lead-in in rural junior high school English teaching", through questionnaire survey

to know the application of lead-in in rural junior high school English teaching, as well as the factors that influence the effect of lead-in in rural junior high school English teaching. Aiming at enriching the research on lead-in in English teaching at rural areas. The research can help with further understanding lead-in of rural junior high school English teaching, finding out the advantages and disadvantages of lead-in at rural areas at present, helping more teachers carry forward the advantages, correct the shortcomings of lead-in and optimize teaching efficiency. To achieve the above objectives, the research mainly focuses on the following two questions:

- 1) What is the current situation of lead-in in junior high school English teaching at rural areas?
- 2) What are the factors that influence the effect of lead-in in junior high school English teaching at rural areas?

B. Participants

In order to conduct this research, 40 rural junior high school English teachers were investigated by questionnaire survey to know the real situation. These 40 teachers invited by the researcher are all from 7 rural junior high schools in Henan province, including 6 in Anyang City and 1 in Luoyang City. Given the researcher's status as an intern and the limitations in capabilities and resources, the study was constrained to employ a convenience sampling method. The accessibility and willingness of the schools and teachers to participate determined the selection, with an understanding of the potential limitations this method presents in terms of representativeness. The descriptive statistics on teachers' majors and academic qualifications are presented as follows.

1) Teachers' Majors: In terms of teachers' majors, among the 40 teachers, 32 teachers graduated from teacher-oriented English major, accounting for 80%, which shows that most English teachers who are currently engaged in English teaching in rural junior high schools have received formal professional learning and teacher training. It means that they have a certain understanding of lead-in, and they started to contact lead-in earlier and received professional lead-in training. In addition, there are still 8 teachers who graduated from non-teacher-oriented English major, accounting for 20%. It shows that there is a situation of mismatch English teachers' majors in rural junior high schools. Therefore, for this part of English teachers, they may not have received long-term and systematic professional training for teachers, and there may be some deviations in their understanding and application of lead-in.

2) Teachers' Academic Qualifications: Based on the Table 3-2, in terms of teachers' academic qualifications, only 1 English teacher graduated from junior college, accounting for 2.5%. While the remaining 39 English teachers have bachelor's degrees, accounting for 97.5%. None of the teachers in this survey have master's degree. According to the data displayed in the current questionnaire survey can infer that there are few English teachers with master's degrees at rural junior high schools in Henan Province. While as far as the current statistics are concerned, the majority of teachers have already received undergraduate education. It shows that English teachers at rural areas have the knowledge reserve of junior high school English teaching and the ability to use and innovate lead-in in combination with students' specific conditions to improve teaching efficiency.

C. Research Method

Based on the purpose of this research, to make the research more universal and reflect the overall situation of lead-in activities at rural junior high schools in Henan Province as much as possible. This study adopts the questionnaire survey and releases questionnaires to rural junior high school English teachers. The questionnaire designed with reference to Zhou (2023), which is adapted based on relevant research by Huang (2015), Zhang (2019) and others, combined with constructivism theory, advance organizer strategy and the affective filter hypothesis. The questionnaire can be divided into three parts. The first part is the basic information of teachers. The second part and the third part are 13 single-choice questions and 3 multiple-choice questions respectively, aiming at understanding the current situation of lead-in in rural junior high school English teaching and the factors that influence the effect of lead-in. 40 copies of questionnaire were distributed and finally recovered all, with a recovery rate of 100%.

The questionnaire consists of single-choice questions and multiple-choice questions. To verify the reliability of the questionnaire, 13 single-choice questions suitable for reliability and validity testing are analyzed. 40 valid questionnaires were imported into SPSS25.0 to test the reliability and validity. The Cronbach's α is 0.772, indicating that the reliability is eligible and KMO is 0.737, which shows that it is suitable for factor analysis. Therefore, the questionnaire can be used for this research.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing these 40 valid copies of questionnaire, this part makes descriptive analysis on the current situation of lead-in and the factors influencing the effect of lead-in.

A. Current Situation of Lead-in

This part mainly explores the current situation of lead-in in rural junior high school English teaching through the frequency and length of lead-in, arrangement of lead-in, effect and functions of lead-in and teachers' feedback on the application of lead-in.

1) Frequency and Length of Lead-in: There are two items in relation to the frequency and length of lead-in which can be seen from the Table 1. Item 1 is about the frequency of lead-in, according to the item, 82.5% of English teachers indicate that they designed lead-in for each class. It shows that most English teachers have not overlooked the lead-in step. However, nearly 2.5% of teachers still indicate that not every class has a lead-in step designed. While 15% of English teachers have an unclear attitude towards whether to design the lead-in step for each class. From this, it can be seen that most teachers support designing lead-in for each class and they have the lead-in step each class, but there are still a small number of teachers who not design the lead-in every class, resulting in a lack of lead-in step.

Item 2 is about the length of lead-in. According to the item, 75% of rural junior high school English teachers indicate that they control the lead-in time about 3-5 minutes; Other 25% of English teachers indicate that the length of lead-in may sometimes between 3-5 minutes. None of the teachers always give the lead-in time for less than 3 minutes or more than 5 minutes. Much research has shown that the lead-in time should not be too long. The lead-in time is about 3 minutes, not exceed than 5 minutes. (Willis, 1996) Therefore, the best lead-in time is about 3-5 minutes. The above data show that in rural junior high school English teaching, most English teachers have a good control over the lead-in time and the length of lead-in designed by most teachers is reasonable.

Table I Frequency and Length of Lead-In

| Items | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 1. I design lead-in in every class. | 0% | 2.5% | 15% | 50% | 32.5% |
| 2. I spend about 3-5 minutes leading in each time. | 0% | 0% | 25% | 50% | 25% |

Therefore, in terms of frequency and length of lead-in, it can be found that in actual rural English teaching, most teachers generally control the lead-in time to 3-5 minutes. In addition, most teachers design lead-in in almost every lesson and there are few cases of no lead-in.

2) Arrangement of Lead-in: There are two items in relation to the preparation of lead-in methods, which can be seen from the Table 2. In terms of understanding students' needs, most rural junior high school English teachers can consider students' learning needs. Only about 2.5% of teachers do not always know the learning needs of students before designing lead-in. The above data indicate that most rural junior high school English teachers can clearly realize the subjectivity of students when designing the lead-in and understand that they should choose the appropriate lead-in methods according to students' learning needs. So that in rural junior high school English teaching, most English teachers have achieved a student-centered approach and considered the actual needs of students.

Item 4 is about selecting lead-in methods, 92.5% of rural junior high school English teachers can adjust the lead-in methods according to the class types and teaching content. Only 7.5% of teachers indicate that they sometimes change lead-in according to class types and teaching content. Judging from the above data, most teachers can choose appropriate lead-in methods according to the class types and teaching content.

Table II Preparation of Lead-In

| Items | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 3. Before I design lead-in, I always know the students' learning needs. | 0% | 2.5% | 12.5% | 45% | 40% |
| 4. I often adjust the lead-in methods based on the class types and teaching content. | 0% | 0% | 7.5% | 55% | 37.5% |

Based on the Table 3, the most frequently used lead-in method by teachers is the daily topics lead-in method, accounting for 85%, which shows that most teachers tend to use daily topics to lead the theme of the class in real teaching. Next are the review lead-in method and the multimedia situational lead-in method, both accounting for 60%. Therefore, daily topics lead-in method, review lead-in method and multimedia situational lead-in method are the three most frequently used by rural junior high school English teachers in English teaching, accounting for more than or equal to 60%. In addition, the Stories, games, sayings, idioms, and songs lead-in method accounts for 55%. The question lead-in method accounts for 47.5%. And the direct lead-in method accounts for 40%. These three lead-in methods account for more than or equal to 40%. Then there are cultural background knowledge lead-in method and picture lead-in method, both accounting for about 37.5%. Through the above data, it can be found that rural junior school English teachers have diversified ways of lead-in and in actual teaching, there is basically no situation of no lead-in.

Table III Frequently Used Methods of Lead-In

| Frequently Used Methods | Number | Percentage (%) |
|--|--------|----------------|
| Direct lead-in method | 16 | 40 |
| Daily topics lead-in method | 34 | 85 |
| Question lead-in method | 19 | 47.5 |
| Review lead-in method | 24 | 60 |
| Cultural background knowledge lead-in method | 15 | 37.5 |
| Picture lead-in method | 15 | 37.5 |
| Stories, games, sayings, idioms and songs lead-in method | 22 | 55 |
| Multimedia situational lead-in method | 24 | 60 |
| No lead-in | 0 | 0 |

As can be seen from the Table 4, teachers believe that the most popular method by students is the stories, games, sayings, idioms and songs lead-in method, accounting for 75%. Next is the daily topics lead-in method, accounting for 67.5%. Then the third is multimedia situational lead-in method, accounting for 57.5%. Therefore, the stories, games, sayings, idioms and songs lead-in method, daily topics lead-in method and multimedia situational lead-in method are the three methods that favored by students. Combined with the Table 3, which the daily topics lead-in method, review lead-in method and multimedia situational lead-in method are the three most frequently used by teachers. It is obvious that the frequently used lead-in methods by teachers in teaching are not completely consistent with the ones they think favored by students.

Table IV Lead-In Methods Favored by Students

| Frequently Used Methods | Number | Percentage (%) |
|--|--------|----------------|
| Direct lead-in method | 7 | 17.5 |
| Daily topics lead-in method | 27 | 67.5 |
| Question lead-in method | 14 | 35 |
| Review lead-in method | 10 | 25 |
| Cultural background knowledge lead-in method | 18 | 45 |
| Picture lead-in method | 21 | 52.5 |
| Stories, games, sayings, idioms and songs lead-in method | 30 | 75 |
| Multimedia situational lead-in method | 23 | 57.5 |
| No lead-in | 0 | 0 |

3) Effect of Lead-in: There are three items in relation to the effect of lead-in which can be seen from the Table 5. On students' participation in lead-in, 60% of English teachers indicate that students always participate in lead-in actively. About 32.5% of teachers believe that students sometimes participate in lead-in. Meanwhile, 7.5% of teachers indicate that students have not actively participated in the lead-in step. So, there is a problem of low students' participation in the lead-in of English teaching in rural junior high schools. On students' interest in lead-in, 90% of teachers believe that their lead-in can make students interested in the content it will be learned. Only 2.5% of teachers think that their lead-in can't make students interested in what they are going to learn. In addition, on students' learning state, 85% of teachers believe that their lead-in can help students quickly enter learning state. Only 2.5% teachers think that their lead-in can't make students enter the learning state quickly.

The data indicate that most English teachers in rural junior high schools affirm the effect of lead-in. They believe that lead-in steps have a good help of making students interested in learning and entering learning state quickly. However, there are still a few teachers who believe that there is a problem of low students' participation in the lead-in of English teaching in rural junior high schools.

According to the research, most English teachers in rural junior high schools affirm the effect of lead-in, indicating that the step of lead-in is very helpful for students to actively participate in lead-in, be interested in English learning and quickly enter the learning state.

Table V The Effect of Lead-In

| Items | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 5. Students always actively participate in my lead-in. | 0% | 7.5% | 32.5% | 50% | 10% |
| 6. My lead-in can make students interested in the content it will be learned. | 0% | 2.5% | 7.5% | 60% | 30% |
| 7. My lead-in can help students quickly enter learning state. | 2.5% | 0% | 12.5% | 50% | 35% |

4) Functions of Lead-in: Table 6 is about the functions of lead-in. Most teachers believe that the main functions of lead-in are to stimulate students' interest in learning English, active classroom atmosphere, improve classroom efficiency, etc. According to the table, the survey data show that firstly, rural junior high school English teachers generally believe that the greatest function of lead-in is to activate the classroom

atmosphere, accounting for 90%. Krashen (1982) proposed that positive emotional factors can promote language absorption. At the beginning of the new lesson, teachers can activate the classroom atmosphere through appropriate lead-in methods, which can enable students to accept and actively learn in a pleasant classroom atmosphere. Secondly, the function of lead-in is to stimulate students' interest in learning English, accounting for 77.5%. "Interest is the best teacher", a great lead-in can enable students to experience the joy of learning English and actively participate in the lesson. Finally, most English teachers believe that main functions of lead-in also include connecting old and new knowledge, promoting knowledge transfer, enhancing teacher-student relationships, stimulating students' thinking and improving English comprehensive ability.

Table VI The Functions of Lead-In

| Function | Number | Percentage (%) |
|---|--------|----------------|
| Activating classroom atmosphere | 36 | 90 |
| Enhancing teacher-student relationships | 23 | 57.5 |
| Connecting old and new knowledge | 30 | 75 |
| Expanding knowledge reserve | 13 | 32.5 |
| Stimulating students' interest | 31 | 77.5 |
| Stimulating students' thinking | 17 | 42.5 |
| Promoting knowledge transfer | 24 | 60 |
| Improving English comprehensive ability | 17 | 42.5 |

5) Teachers' Feedback on the Application of Lead-in: Table 7 is about the teachers' feedback on the application of lead-in. Most rural junior high school English teachers have a good evaluation of lead-in. According to the table, 77.5% of rural junior high school English teachers are very satisfied with their designed lead-in; 20% of teachers hold an uncertain attitude, while only 2.5% of teachers are dissatisfied with their own lead-in design.

Table VII Teachers' Feedback on the Application of Lead-In

| Item | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 8. I am very satisfied with my lead-in step. | 0% | 2.5% | 20% | 52.5% | 25% |

B. Factors Influencing the Effect of Lead-in

The purpose of this part is to find out the factors that influence the effect of lead-in by rural junior high school English teachers. This part refers the external factors and the internal factors influencing the effect of lead-in.

1) External Factors: There are two items in relation to the external factors influencing the effect of lead-in which can be seen from the Table 8. In terms of designing lead-in, 62.5% of English teachers believe that students' English level limits the effect of lead-in; 27.5% of teachers believe that students' English level sometimes limits the design of the lead-in. Just 10% of teachers indicate that students' English level have not limited the design of the lead-in. As the research focuses on English teaching in rural junior high schools, most students are living in underdeveloped areas facing the problem of marginalization in English learning. Therefore, most English teachers believe that students' English level constrain the effect of the lead-in.

In terms of selecting lead-in methods and content, 62.5% of teachers believe that the lead-in influenced by the school's teaching environment and teaching equipment when choosing lead-in methods and content; 20% of teachers state that they are sometimes influenced by teaching equipment and the teaching environment. In

summary, in rural junior high school English teaching, the teaching environment and teaching equipment in schools restrict most teachers conducting lead-in. So, the teaching environment and teaching equipment also constrain the effect of the lead-in.

Table VIII External Factors Influencing the Effect of Lead-In

| Item | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 9. When designing lead-in, students' English level always limits the effect of the lead-in. | 0% | 10% | 27.5% | 35% | 27.5% |
| 10. I am often influenced by the school's teaching environment and equipment when choosing lead-in methods and content. | 2.5% | 15% | 20% | 40% | 22.5% |

2) Internal Factors: There are three items in relation to the internal factors influencing the effect of lead-in which can be seen from the Table 9. In terms of using modern teaching tools, 82.5% of rural junior high school English teachers are proficient in using modern teaching tools to design lead-in; 17.5% of teachers sometimes can combine modern teaching tools with lead-in. Meanwhile, the survey shows that there is no situation that teachers can't use modern teaching tools. According to the survey, the overall use of modern tools is optimistic, and most teachers can use modern tools well.

Reflection is the key to progress, with 77.5% of rural junior high school English teachers sated that they often reflect on the lead-in process after class; 17.5% of teachers sometimes reflect on the lead-in process. Only 5% of teachers do not often reflect on the lead-in after class. It can be seen that most teachers have a strong sense of reflection on the lead-in process.

In terms of reading the lead-in books and journals, 72.5% of teachers stated that they frequently read books and journals related to the lead-in; 25% of teachers sometimes read books and journals related to the lead-in. Only 2.5% of teachers do not often read books and journals related to the lead-in. From the data, it once again indicates that most rural junior high school English teachers have the ability for lifelong learning and attach great importance to continue learning the lead-in knowledge.

Table IV Internal Factors Influencing the Effect of Lead-In

| Items | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 11. I can use various modern teaching tools and proficiently design the lead-in step. | 0% | 0% | 17.5% | 50% | 32.5% |
| 12. After class, I often reflect on the lead-in step. | 0% | 5% | 17.5% | 42.5% | 35% |
| 13. I often read books and journals related to the lead-in. | 0% | 2.5% | 25% | 35% | 37.5% |

C. Summary

Based on the above analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that firstly the application of lead-in in rural junior high schools is good. Almost every lesson is set up with lead-in and the lead-in time is controlled at 3-5 minutes. However, for the application of lead-in, there are still some problems of the frequently lead-in methods used by teachers in teaching are not completely consistent with the ones they think favored by

students, and the problem of low students' participation in lead-in.

Secondly, students' learning needs are one of the factors that teachers should consider when designing lead-in. Most teachers are student-centered, agree with the view of "knowing students' needs before designing lead-in" and put it into practice. At the same time, most rural junior high school English teachers can choose the appropriate lead-in methods according to the course types and teaching content. In actual teaching, there are various methods of lead-in and there is basically no situation of no lead-in.

Thirdly, most rural junior high school English teachers have a high evaluation of the effect and functions of lead-in in English teaching. Most teachers think that the lead-in can arouse students' interest and make students actively participate in other steps in the class. In addition, most rural junior high school English teachers have the ability of lifelong learning and using modern tools, as well as they pay attention to continue learning of the lead-in knowledge.

Finally, in most teachers' views, several key factors impede the development of effective lead-in strategies in rural schools. These include the outdated teaching facilities, the low proficiency and weak foundational skills of the students in English, and the limited time teachers have for lead-in training and reflection.

CONCLUSION

The major findings of this study can be concluded as follows:

In the actual English teaching, teachers generally control the lead-in time to 3-5 minutes, sometimes they also extend or shorten the lead-in time according to the actual situation. In addition, teachers design lead-in in almost every class and regard lead-in as a teaching habit. On the preparation of lead-in, most teachers use student-centered way. They agree that teachers need to know the learning needs of students before designing lead-in. At the same time, they have various methods to choose as well as they can choose different methods according to the class types and teaching contents. Daily topics lead-in method, review lead-in method and multimedia situational lead-in method are the three frequently used methods by rural junior high school English teachers. Rural junior high school English teachers believe that the methods favored by students are stories, games, sayings, idioms and songs lead-in method, daily topics lead-in method and multimedia situational lead-in method. So, at present, there is still a phenomenon that the lead-in method used by teachers is not all consistent with the lead-in method that students may like.

According to the research, most frontline English teachers in rural junior high schools affirmed the effect of lead-in, indicating that the step of lead-in is very helpful for students to be interested in English learning and quickly enter the learning state. At the same time, they also affirmed the functions of lead-in can active classroom atmosphere and arousing students' interest in learning. In addition, in terms of teachers' feedback on the application of lead-in most rural junior high school English teachers have a good evaluation of lead-in and they are satisfied with their design of lead-in. However, the teachers also expressed the shortcomings of lead-in. For example, questionnaire survey shows that a small number of teachers think that students still have the problem of low participation in lead-in. Finally, teachers agreed that in rural junior high school English teaching, first of all, the backwardness of schools' teaching equipment and the bad English teaching environment limit most teachers' lead-in. Moreover, students' low English level and foundation influence lead-in in teaching. At the same time, teachers' own factors including short time of lead-in learning and reflection may have a bad impact on lead-in. However, according to the research, most rural junior high school English teachers have the ability of lifelong learning and using modern tools, as well as paying attention to after-class reflection and continue learning of lead-in knowledge has a positive impact on the improvement of lead-in.

From the research, some pedagogical implications can be drawn as follows.

Firstly, teachers should strengthen their understanding of the ideological and theoretical aspects of lead-in, and truly implement it in practice. Teachers play an irreplaceable and important role in the entire English teaching. If teachers do not have a comprehensive and in-depth understanding or lack the correct theoretical guidance of

the lead-in, may lead to the inability to truly implement the lead-in in practice. Therefore, teachers should constantly enrich their theoretical knowledge and strengthen their understanding of the lead-in. Only in this way, they can better guide practice and truly implement the lead-in in practice.

Secondly, teachers should strengthen the rational utilization of teaching resources, learning and mastery of modern educational technology. In developing society, rural teachers need to constantly update their educational and teaching concepts, as well as keep up with the times. Research has shown that most rural junior high school English teachers have the ability to lifelong learning and use modern tools, as well as attach great importance to the continue learning of lead-in knowledge. The era of information technology in teaching has arrived. To meet the requirements of the times, teachers should effectively combine modern educational technology with lead-in, use teaching resources more reasonably in the lead-in, and make lead-in play its due role.

Thirdly, rural schools should strengthen the maintenance and upgrading of teaching equipment. Due to the development of the economy, the allocation of teaching resources in rural schools is relatively complete and modern teaching tools are increasingly entering rural schools. To ensure the effective operation of the modern teaching equipment rural schools should promptly repair and upgrade equipment.

This study inevitably has certain limitations. Firstly, the research sample is insufficient. Secondly, there is no distinction between teachers' teaching ages, gender and professional titles as well as findings and discussion of some questions may not be in-depth enough. Finally, due to the involvement of the author's subjective judgment, the investigation may not be comprehensive enough.

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