

The Theory and Practice Analysis of Foreign Language Teaching Method Schools

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Abstract—With the continuous development of the society, people's demand for foreign languages is constantly changing. Different stages of historical development and people's different needs for foreign languages have produced different teaching theories and methods. There are many schools with varied theories. The emergence of new theories and new schools of thought shows that foreign language teaching is flourishing. The various schools of foreign language teaching methods have been coexisting, developing and improving in the fierce competition between different schools of thought for a long time, striving to make their methods more scientific, perfect and applicable. From the perspective of the historical development of various schools of teaching methods, one of them inherits the translation method, such as the conscious-comparative method and the cognitive method. The other school developed from the direct method, such as the audiolingual method, and the audio-visual method and so on. Different teaching schools have their own advantages and disadvantages. How to choose appropriate teaching methods to improve classroom efficiency is the main issue discussed in this paper.

Keywords: *foreign language teaching, schools, teaching practice, inheritance, development*

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, as science and technology are changing with each passing day, mankind has entered the era of knowledge economy. The multi-polarization of international politics, the informationization of social life and the globalization of economic activities make foreign languages play an increasingly important role in international exchanges. Learning and mastering a foreign language is one of the basic qualities of a citizen in the 21st century.

It is this kind of development and change in today's world that puts forward an important task for foreign language educators: how to adjust the foreign language curriculum in time according to the social change to make it adapt to the social development as soon as possible, and train more high-quality and compound foreign language talents in line with the requirements of the 21st century.

Therefore, for foreign language educators, how to choose appropriate foreign language teaching methods and improve the efficiency of the classroom has become a subject to be discussed. Many kinds of foreign language teaching methods

as there are, they are all interrelated and not isolated. This paper will make a comprehensive analysis of different schools of teaching methods, and then discuss their advantages and disadvantages, so as to provide reference for foreign language teaching workers.

II. TRANSLATION METHOD

A. The emergence and development of the translation method

Translation method, also known as grammar method, grammar-translation method, traditional method and classical method, is one of the longest and most widely used methods in foreign language teaching. Both in China and abroad, the translation method is widely used in early foreign language teaching. In the middle ages, Latin and Greek were the international languages of European culture, education and writing, as well as religious and official languages. Therefore, Latin and Greek were the main foreign language subjects in European schools. Since Latin grammar is extremely complicated, the emphasis on teaching Latin grammar became the main teaching content which produced the corresponding teaching method. What's more, at that time, humanists believed that the main purpose of foreign language teaching was to develop students' wisdom rather than to master language knowledge. They even thought that it was better to hone students' wisdom and achieve the purpose of general education than to teach students some practical knowledge. In this way, the translation method became the main teaching method and means to train students' memory and thinking ability and develop their wisdom.

By the end of the 18th century, Latin and Greek teaching in Europe mostly adopted the grammar-translation method. The historical comparative linguistics prevailing in the 19th century provided a theoretical basis for the grammar-translation method: to master a foreign language and appreciate foreign literary works by means of translation and by comparing the similarities and differences between the pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar of the mother tongue and the foreign language.

B. Teaching principles and advantages and disadvantages of the translation method

The principles of the translation method are the combination of phonetics, grammar and vocabulary. It advocates that teaching should begin with phonetics, take grammar as the main line, and adopt vocabulary according to the content of the text. The teacher should take the text as the center, and conduct an integrated teaching of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary; giving priority to reading, they should focus on developing students' reading and translation skills, as well as listening and speaking exercises; they should focus on grammar and guide students to read and translate texts under the guidance of grammar theory; and depending on the mother tongue, they take translation as both the teaching method and teaching objective.

The teaching process is: first translating the main idea of the text, so that students have a general understanding of the text content, explaining the language materials, then analyzing the text and translating word by word to deepen students' understanding of the text, translating appropriately, last, reading directly and understanding the original text directly in order to cultivate students' ability to read directly without the aid of translation. The whole process is supported by reading. It is necessary to cultivate students' listening, speaking and writing ability under the premise of reading. It should be said that modern translation has made a great leap forward on the basis of classical translation.

Through the translation teaching method, students can have a clear concept, understand the meaning of words more accurately, and develop their translation ability. At the same time, the translation teaching method combined with the reading and writing teaching method can help students improve their reading and writing ability. However, there are also shortcomings. First of all, the absolute authority of teachers hinders the initiative of students. Students are passive in learning, and some will lose interest. Students with learning difficulties often lack the confidence to learn a foreign language well. Secondly, the translation method cannot fully cultivate students' communicative ability, especially their oral ability. The long-term use of translation method will make students suffer from deaf-mute foreign language. Therefore, this method should not be used frequently when teenagers are first learning a foreign language.

III. DIRECT METHOD

A. The emergence of the direct method

Direct method is a new school formed after the reform of foreign language teaching. The school of direct method believes that foreign language learning should be a "direct" process, which requires no translation, no explanation of grammar, no use of students' mother tongue, and only direct teaching, conversation and reading in a foreign language. Advocators also believe that learning a foreign language is a "natural" acquisition process, just like children learning their mother tongue. In learning, spoken language is the first and it

should thus be developed first; and the use of induction in teaching is proposed. Therefore, direct method is also called reform method, natural method, oral method and inductive method. Indeed, different from the basic characteristics of the translation method, the direct method reverses the translation principle of "teaching a foreign language in its mother tongue", puts forward with the speaking and practice of the foreign language without using translation and grammatical analysis so as to link students' thought directly with the foreign language, which is the essential difference between the translation method and the direct method.

B. The teaching principle of direct method and its advantages and disadvantages

The teaching purpose of the direct method is to bring students' foreign language proficiency close to that of native speakers. The so-called "direct" refers to eliminating the interference of mother tongue in foreign language teaching and directly combining foreign language with objects, pictures and actions. This is because foreign language learning, like children's first language acquisition, begins with spoken language close to life, rather than written language in literary works. When listening to the teacher's natural language and watching pictures, slides, movies and in their own activities, students master the pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar of a foreign language while practicing speaking instead of learning a foreign language through the teacher's detailed explanation. Therefore, this requires teachers taking the foreign language as the native language. For example, English teachers are generally British and American people with English as their mother tongue.

Through the direct method, students can get in touch with and use a large number of natural languages through listening, speaking and their own practical activities, which is conducive to enhancing the sense of foreign language and improving the ability of foreign language practice, especially listening and speaking. In addition, students' learning initiative will be enhanced when they actively participate in classroom teaching. For primary school students and beginners, the direct method is effective in stimulating their interest in learning foreign languages.

However, it is difficult for the direct method to teach complex and abstract language content and structure, so it is generally not suitable for foreign language teaching in high schools and universities. Some introverted students also do not welcome direct method, because they are more passive when teachers use direct method. At the same time, completely excluding the connection between mother tongue and translation makes it difficult for students to master some complicated concepts, and using too many foreign languages to explain a phenomenon in a circuited way often wastes valuable time in class.

IV. THE AUDIOLINGUAL METHOD

A. The emergence and development of the audiolingual method

The audiolingual method was a foreign language teaching method that appeared in the United States from the late 1940s to the early 1950s. The emergence and development of this method has drawn on the theories of structural linguistics, behaviorism and psychology, as well as the research achievements of American language education, and also benefited from the American military's experience in developing translators during World War II. According to the audiolingual method, language is spoken rather than written, and foreign language teaching should teach living language rather than relevant language knowledge. Therefore, the audiolingual method is also called the oral method. The audiolingual method maintains that language is a structured and habitual behavior, learned through imitation and repetition through the process of "stimulus-response". Therefore, it is also named as the structural method. Although the names above are different, the essence of their teaching methods is the same. They all study the problems of foreign language teaching through structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology. They hold basically the same views on foreign language teaching theories and principles, all advocating that listening and speaking should be given priority in teaching. That is to say, learners first listen, then speak, and after repetitive oral practice can finally use the language materials automatically, that is, expressing the language they hear orally. The audiolingual method also believes that no matter this method is called audiolingual method, oral method or other methods it is not any specific method, but the way to achieve the teaching purpose. Therefore, audiolingual (or oral, structural) method is not only a teaching method aimed at mastering spoken language, but also a teaching approach.

It was born in the United States after the outbreak of World War II. Before the war, foreign language teaching in the United States was relatively backward and paid little attention to. In 1941, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States fully entered World War II. The war required sending large numbers of young soldiers abroad to fight, which forced young American soldiers to master a foreign language in a short period of time, mainly to be able to listen and speak. Since before the war, the foreign language education in the United States had been relatively backward, few soldiers knew foreign languages, which became a prominent contradiction during the war. Faced with this situation, the US government commissioned American colleges and universities to design foreign language courses for training military foreign language talents. Prominent structural linguistics such as L. Bloomfield, then at Yale, and C. C. Fries, then at the University of Michigan, were involved in the development and implementation of the project. They teach the army through intensive, short-term training, taught by informant speakers of foreign languages and taught by use of the audiolingual method. In 1943, about 15,000 soldiers were trained in 27 languages in 55 institutions of higher learning

in accordance with the "Specialized Military Training Program", while the air force started classes in six institutions of higher learning. These institutions opened 19 languages for them, which was unprecedented in scale. In a short period of time, they trained a large number of talents to master foreign languages for the army, which met the needs of the war, and played a significant role in winning the war.

B. The teaching principle of audiolingual method and its advantages and disadvantages

The audiolingual method is based on the theories of structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology. It has been mentioned in the discussion of linguistic schools that structural linguistics, when applied to foreign language teaching, explicitly divides language competence into listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. The audiolingual method, which reflects this point of view, aims at cultivating students' practical ability of listening, speaking, reading and writing. At the same time, as the American school of structural linguistics mostly describes the views of linguistic schools, they regard spoken language as the primary and written language as the secondary. Advocates of the listening and speaking method also believe that the cultivation of oral speaking and speaking ability should take precedence over the reading and writing ability. Therefore, the audiolingual method is sometimes called "listening and speaking primary method".

According to the basic view of behaviorism, the audiolingual method holds that foreign language learning is a process of forming habits through "stimulus - response". In addition to using foreign languages as much as possible, teachers also use a large number of audio, video and audio-visual aids as a means of stimulation, and adopt methods such as imitation and mechanical training to strengthen students' responses and consolidate what they have learned. Pattern drill is one of the basic characteristics of audiolingual method. Teaching materials that advocate audiolingual method generally list sentence pattern according to grammar and sentence structure. They are arranged not only in the dialogues of each lesson, but also in the pattern replacement exercises after the text. In class, students are required to do a lot of sentence drills of quick response. The audiolingual method holds that students' mistakes in foreign language learning are the result of the interference of the first language, and therefore, it is necessary to adopt the attitude of correcting every mistake. "Contrastive analysis" is adopted for the mistakes, to make a detailed comparison of the correct and wrong language items and let students practice to overcome the interference of the first language. The early audiolingual method focused on mechanical training. The "minimal pair" is usually used in language practice. For example, by comparing and practicing the pronunciation of "ship, sheep", "sake, shake" and other pairs of words with only one phoneme, students can master the correct pronunciation. The pattern drill can be adopted in language structure practice. After the 1960s, this teaching method that is not conducive to students' creative learning was criticized, and some applied language scholars began to improve the audiolingual method, making the practice develop in a

meaningful and beneficial direction to practical communication. One of the most representative methods is the "MMC" proposed by C. B. Paulston, namely three steps of mechanical drills → meaningful exercises → communicative activities. The first step is the early mechanical drills. The second step is a meaningful exercise when the teacher asks the students to practice the language in the prescribed situation related to their life. For example, in the exercise of adding "s" to the third person singular of the simple present tense of English verbs, the question "What do your parents do on weekends?" can be put forward and students are asked to answer according to the situation in real life. In the third step of the communicative activities, native English speakers can be invited to talk, and students should be asked to use the language structure they have just learned in the conversation. This method is popular with foreign language teachers. The audiolingual method advocates teaching in a foreign language, but it does not completely exclude the mother tongue as the direct method does. For some difficult or abstract vocabulary or grammatical structure, the first language of students is often used to make brief explanation, so as not to waste time.

Through the use of audiolingual method can students' foreign language practice ability (especially oral ability) to talk with foreigners boldly and actively be cultivated. In the use of a foreign language, fluency has an obvious advantage over the students trained by the translation method. Sentence drills advocated by the audiolingual method are of great help to beginners and are widely used in foreign language teaching. Its biggest drawback is not conducive to the development of students' creative thinking. A great deal of mechanical practice, imitation, and simple repetition put the students in a parrot-like state. After following teachers for a long time, students can lost the initiative to learn. At the same time, the over-emphasis on listening and speaking ability relaxes the cultivation of reading and writing ability, which not only affects the overall improvement of practical ability, but also limits the further development of listening and speaking ability.

V. COGNITIVE METHOD

A. The emergence and development of the cognitive method

The cognitive method is also known as the cognition-sign method. It is a method system that applies cognitive psychology theory to foreign language teaching, which appeared in the United States in the mid-1960s targeted to the defects of the audiolingual method. The founder of this method was the American psychologist J. B. Carroll.

In the 1960s, with the rapid development of science and technology, international competition and exchange have penetrated into science, technology, economy, culture, education and other fields and the society needs a large number of high-level foreign language talents. However, the once audiolingual method, due to its disadvantages such as emphasizing practice over theory, oral language over written language, mechanical practice over flexible application, was not up to the task of cultivating high-level foreign language

talents entrusted by the society any more. It is imperative to study and apply a new teaching method in foreign language teaching. At the same time, education, psychology, linguistics and other disciplines in the United States have made great progress. The development of the basic theories of foreign language teaching will inevitably promote the development of foreign language teaching theories and the emergence of new teaching methods. As the opposite of the audiolingual method, cognitive method is inevitably attached importance to by foreign language teaching experts and teachers. In the mid-1960s, cognitive testing was widely carried out in the United States. The results showed that the classes taught by cognitive method are better than those taught by audiolingual method in all aspects, especially the improvement of students' self-learning and reading ability. The two methods were also tested in Sweden in 1972, with opposite results.

The development of cognitive method has gone through a tortuous process, with both assenters and dissenters. Dissenters argue that the cognitive method is not a new method, but a copy of the translation method. However, people can see that although cognitive method originates from translation method, it is not the mechanical repetition of translation method, but its development and improvement. It overcomes the extremity and one-sidedness of translation, absorbs the latest scientific achievements of contemporary linguistics and psychology, and makes its own methods more scientific. Therefore, cognitive method is also called "a reformed modern grammar-translation method".

B. The teaching principle of cognitive method and its advantages and disadvantages

From the literal point of view, the teaching purpose of cognitive method is the same as that of direct method and audiolingual method, which is to make students' language ability close to the level of native speakers. However, the "language ability" referred to by the cognitive method is the ability to generate the internalized grammar rules advocated by the theory of transformational grammar, which is embodied in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, while the direct method and audiolingual method mainly develop the oral practice ability. The cognitive method clearly points out that foreign language teaching should focus on students' cognitive activities rather than let teachers dominate the classroom. Teachers who adopt direct method and audiolingual method often design various teaching links subjectively, while cognitive method requires teachers to prepare lessons based on students' cognitive characteristics and conduct teaching according to students' cognitive process. One of the important features of cognitive method is that it opposes mechanical imitation, pays attention to cultivating students' creative thinking, and encourages students to learn and use the creative spirit of foreign languages. Therefore, the cognitive method requires students to make clear the teaching purpose of each class and even each exercise. Both language knowledge and skill training emphasize the understanding of the content, so that students can learn creatively according to the teaching objectives. The teaching of cognitive method attaches

importance to grammar and can be conducted in the mother tongue when necessary. However, the teaching of grammar in cognitive method is different from that in the grammar-translation method, which requires meaningful practice to achieve this goal. At the same time, according to the principles of cognitive psychology, cognitive method emphasizes that teaching must follow the cognitive process from students' known, that is, the knowledge they have mastered, to the unknown, that is, the field of new knowledge, which is different from the deductive method widely used in grammar-translation method.

The cognitive approach emphasizes the cultivation of students' creative thinking, which is the weakness of the traditional foreign language teaching method. The development of creative thinking and the promotion of creative spirit in foreign language teaching can not only improve students' foreign language level fundamentally, but also help to strengthen the overall quality education for students and meet the requirements for talents in the new century. Cognitive approach advocates that in foreign language learning one must understand language rules and language practice must be meaningful and combined with the actual life of students, which is conducive to arousing students' enthusiasm for learning and improving the accuracy and appropriateness of using a foreign language, which is exactly what the audiolingual method lacks. When using the cognitive method, the explanation of grammar must be just right. If the teacher spends too much time or explain in detail, he or she may go down the old path of grammar-translation method. At the same time, the cognitive method emphasizes that language practice must be meaningful and completely denies mechanical practice, which is not feasible in practical teaching. Especially at the beginning, a certain amount of mechanical practice is inevitable. Therefore, how to deal with the proportion of grammar teaching and mechanical practice to meaningful practice is still a problem to be discussed in cognitive method. Another disadvantage of the cognitive method is that it does not emphasize the cultivation of students' communicative competence. More extracurricular activities should be carried out to provide more conditions and opportunities for students to communicate in foreign languages.

VI. CONCLUSION

The foreign language teaching method is the product of the social development in different historical periods. The emergence of each new teaching method marks the change of the society and the development of the theories of adjacent subjects, marginal subjects and interdisciplinary subjects. However, the emergence of any school of pedagogy is the result of inheriting the experience of predecessors, concentrating the theories of related disciplines and the experience and wisdom of the vast number of practical workers, which has been gradually formed through long-term accumulation. Although, in today's view, the early translation method and direct method have some defects, their contributions to the establishment and development of foreign language teaching theories and methods are

undeniable. For example, the direct method creates its own system in the anti-translation law, the conscious-comparative method and the cognitive method inherit the grammar-translation method and the audiolingual method, audio-visual method then developed the direct method. There are other schools that draw on the strengths of different schools and create more reasonable teaching systems through integration and optimization, such as the method of conscious practice and the method of function, etc. Therefore, it is not right to unilaterally talk about the advantages and disadvantages of any method regardless of history.

Although different schools have developed alternately, the teaching methods are not simply making back and forth. For example, the cognitive method is derived from the grammar-translation method, but it has been developed and improved. While both of them attach importance to grammar learning, the cognitive method emphasizes meaningful learning on the basis of understanding, exploration and discovery, rather than mechanical explanation, examples and rote memorization. Generally speaking, the development of foreign language teaching methods is spiraling upward and ongoing.

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