

On “Audio-lingual Method” and “Communicative Language Teaching Method” in Foreign Language Teaching

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Abstract:

The audiolingual method and the communicative language teaching method are commonly used in foreign languages teaching. They are based on different theories, but they complement each other in teaching practice. This research compares and analyzes these two teaching methods in the perspectives of linguistics and psychology and elaborates the application in teaching practice. It is hoped that this paper can provide references for the exploration and reform of foreign languages teaching.

Keyword: Audiolingual method; communicative language teaching method; foreign languages teaching

I. Introduction

Throughout the history of foreign language teaching, there have been many teaching methods in the field of foreign language teaching. Among them, the audiolingual method and the communicative language teaching method are the most widely used, most influential and well-recognized foreign language teaching methods. The article compares the advantages and limitations of these two methods in theory and practice, aiming to explore a more reasonable and effective teaching method in foreign language teaching, which is to combine the two methods or use them in the process of using Integrate and make full use of its advantages and limitations to achieve the best teaching results.

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II. Comparative analysis of theoretical basis

In order to compare the audiolingual method with communicative language teaching method, it is indispensable to figure out the theory of language and the theory of learning underlying these two famous English teaching method.

1. The theoretical basis of the audiolingual method

(1) Theoretical basis of linguistics

The theory of language underlying the audiolingual method was derived from a view proposed by American linguistics in the 1950s - a view that came to be known as structural linguistics.¹ The most outstanding representative figures of audiolingual method are L. Bloomfield, one of the pioneers of American structuralist linguistics, and C. Fries. Structuralist linguists believe that all people have to learn to speak before they can carry out the deep learning of reading, and words are just a form of expression for language learners².

(2) The theoretical basis of psychology

The learning theory of audiolingual method comes from the stimulation-response theory of behaviorism. The main representatives are Skinner and Watson, who put forward the theory of stimulus-reflection through experimental observation. Skinner thinks that the three main factors of Reinforcement of learning behavior are Stimulus, Response and Reinforcement. Thus, the acquisition of a second language is the result of a connection of stimulus and response and the reinforcement of the connection.³

Audiolingual method is the product of the perfect combination of American structural linguistics and behaviorism. Fries particularly emphasized the importance of "context" when discussing the communicative theory of language and the theory of language teaching. He believed that it is not easy for people who speak the same language to understand the meaning of each other's expression through and through, because there is no basic understanding of the specific environment in which the mother tongue is used⁴. In other words, the audiolingual method also pays attention to the use of contextual context for ideology.

2. The theoretical basis of the communicative language teaching method

(1) Theoretical basis of linguistics

The theoretical basis of linguistics in communicative language teaching method is sociolinguistics, which mainly supported by the following four theories. The first is the "communicative competence theory" developed by Hymes,⁵ which including "language ability" and "language use". The second is Halliday's systematic functional linguistic theory. The third one is Widdowson's "The concept of language communication"⁶ and the forth one is communicative competence developed by Canale, M., and M. Swain⁷ on the basis of Hymes' communicative competence theory. In Hymes' opinion⁸, communicative competence is composed of grammatical competence, social language competence, discourse competence and strategy competence. At the level of language theory, Communicative Language Teaching has a rich, if somewhat eclectic, theoretical base. Some of the characteristics of this communicative view of language follow.

1 Language is a system for the expression of meaning.

2 The primary function of language is for interaction and communication.

3 The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.

4 The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.^[9]

2. The theoretical basis of psychology

The psychological theoretical basis of communicative language teaching method is humanism and psycholinguistics. The main representative is Chomsky. Chomsky's linguistic innate theory holds that there is a natural universal grammar in the human brain, namely the "language acquisition mechanism."¹⁰ Therefore, in the process of language teaching, students should be helped to develop and improve the "language acquisition mechanism" in their brains.

Communicative language teaching method is the product of sociolinguistics and the perfect combination of humanism and psycholinguistics. Linguists Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers analyzed the characteristics of language communication and thought that the communicative method originated from the theory that language is communication. They agreed that the communicative language is the most essential function of language. It is to cultivate students' communicative competence

11.

III. The comparative analysis of design

Derived and influenced by different language and learning approach, the design of each language teaching method may be different with each other in a large degree.

1. Different content of practice

Both audiolingual and communicative language teaching methods are important exercises in foreign language teaching, both of which emphasize practice and training in the English learning process. But based on their quite different theoretical foundations, the content of practice, from time to time is very different. The content of the practice in audiolingual method is mainly sentence-type, with mainly use the basic knowledge of grammar, words and other key points. The teacher arranges the course content according to the grammatical difficulty. These are the lesson plans prepared by the teacher in advance. Students are passively accepted in the classroom.

But the communicative language teaching method focuses on the meaning, function, and communication activities. What is more, communicative language teaching method emphasizes the use of real language materials in textbooks. In the classroom, the teacher conducts contextualized teaching, simulates the real context, and encourages students to express their ideas in English through some classroom activities to achieve the purpose of communication. During the practice, grammar, sentence structure, and pronunciation are not the matter of the teacher's attention, but the contextualized teaching and the fluency of the students' expression. Students in the communicative classroom are in a proactive position and full of energy and interest.

2. Different training objectives

When foreign language educators use these two methods, what they focus on about the development of student can not be the same. For educators who believe in audiolingual method often focus on whether the student can express the target language without any error¹². While for those who believe in the communicative language teaching method always emphasize what the student expresses¹³. The focus of the audiolingual method is based on the construction of the basic knowledge framework of English. Teachers who use this method mainly hold this thought that students should lay a good foundation in language. And students can master the language better if they have mastered the most basic grammar knowledge. Therefore, in the course, when students do drills, once the teacher finds the student's mistake, he/she will correct it immediately in order to achieve the accurate pronunciation and grammatical .

In the process of using the communicative approach, teachers use English as a tool to cultivate students' ability to use different language styles in different occasions in order to achieve the purpose of communication. Speech, grammar is no longer the focus of communicative language teaching method. Teachers do not have to rush to correct errors. In other words, some language mistakes can be tolerated in communicative approach for that it is inevitable when people make natural speech. Therefore, the communicative approach is more extensive in its use, and its form is more diverse than that of audiolingual method. Students can master a richer learning style through communicative language teaching class.

3. Differences in teaching subjects

The audiolingual method is mainly used in class with teachers as the subject, while the communicative language teaching method puts students in the subject position. The two method are essentially different in this respect. When teachers use the audiolingual method, they must record the lecture content in advance, and teach the classroom according to the teacher's own ability level, quality level and foreign language knowledge. The teacher is not only the organizer in the student learning process, but also controller of the student when they learn foreign language. The controller and organizer--language teacher, in a large degree, occupies an active position in guiding students in the learning process.

The subject of communicative language teaching method is transformed into a student, and the student is considered to be the most critical factor in the learning process. Therefore, in the process of using the communicative approach, teachers should start from the reality of students, and mobilize the learning enthusiasm of students to ensure the correct attitude of students in the process of foreign language learning. In addition, teachers are also be supposed to pay attention to the cultivation of students' practical operation ability, and ensure that students can make use of what they have learned.

IV. The comparative analysis of the teaching process

This is a big difference between the audiolingual method and the communicative language teaching method. In the audiolingual method, teachers must first introduce new knowledge (mostly sentence patterns) to students, and then guide students practice sentence patterns through all kinds of pattern drills.

After continually practicing the formation of language habits, students choose certain vocabulary and sentence patterns from the knowledge they have learned to express and describe specific scenes, situations or events¹⁴.

The teaching order of the communicative language teaching method is completely different. The teaching order of the communicative language teaching method is: using the known language materials to develop communicative activities → introducing the language projects needed for more effective communicative activities → (if necessary) drills on individual projects¹⁵. In the classroom, teachers often organize students to carry out communication activities through various channels, and the teaching contents are based on the actual needs of the students.

V. The comparative analysis of advantages and limitations

1. The advantages and limitations of the audiolingual method

The advantages of the audiolingual method: (1) Emphasis on listening and speaking, advocating students to use foreign language for thinking; (2) Paying great attention to the accuracy of students' pronunciation; (3) Extensively using contrast method to compare foreign language and native language. On this basis, find the difficulty of foreign language learning; (4) Emphasis on the use of modern audio-visual means or audio-visual teaching aids for teaching.

Limitations of listening to the argument: (1) Over-emphasizing the development of students' oral English ability, neglecting the cultivation of their literacy and communicative competence; (2) The practice of sentence structure is out of context, one-sided emphasis on mechanical memory and imitation.

2. Advantages and limitations of the communicative language teaching method

Advantages of the communicative language teaching method: (1) Emphasize the ability to use language and pay attention to the actual needs of students; (2) Encourage students to use improvised language to express their fluency in a large number of authentic language; (3) Intrinsic to stimulate students' learning language motivation and enthusiasm for learning; (4) Emphasis on the student-centered teaching philosophy and emphasis on the development of communicative competence.

Limitations of the communicative language teaching method: (1) Overemphasize the cultivation of students' communicative competence, ignoring their grasp of language accuracy so that teachers can not find out whether the student acquire the foreign language with right pronunciation and spelling; (2) The choice of communicative content is subjective and arbitrary so that it may be quite difficult for teachers to determine teaching contents that is suitable for every students in communicative classroom; (3) This method puts out a pretty high request for foreign language teachers in the communicative classroom, which will inevitably worsen the phenomenon that lacking of teachers.

Through the comparisons mentioned above, it is not difficult to find that the audiolingual method is a teaching method that repeatedly exercises the sentence patterns, which aims at cultivating the students' listening and speaking ability for that they hold the view that speaking is first. The communicative language teaching method emphasizes the practical application ability of the language, and aims at cultivating students' communicative competence so that students can use the target language

appropriately in different situation[5]. Listening to the emphasis on cultivating students' listening and speaking ability, but neglecting the training of their literacy skills, sentence patterning is too mechanical and out of context; and communicative law attaches importance to the cultivation of students' communicative competence and the actual needs of students, but at some To a certain extent, it ignores the grasp of the accuracy n of language, and the choice of communicative content has great subjectivity and randomness.

VI. Revelation

Since these two methods are based on very different theories, they are just the opposite. The audiolingual method is based on structural linguistics, and the theoretical basis of communicative language teaching method mainly comes from sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and Chomsky's conversion-generating grammar. Therefore, the former believes that the purpose of language teaching is the mastery of language structure. Language ability, while the latter thought it was the cultivation of skilled communicative competence. It is scientific and practical to listen to the teaching of sentence structure rules. Students can make significant progress in a short period of time. Communicative language teaching method is good at fostering communicative competence, paying attention to cultural characteristics and social functions. Both the two methods have their own limitations. Students trained in the audiolingual method can skillfully use sentence structure, but they may not be able to communicate effectively and appropriately. Students who are mainly based on communicative learning are neglecting the normative and accurate language. Sexuality affects communication, and it also has great subjectivity in the choice of function.

As a foreign language teacher at the front line of teaching, we must fully realize that there is no universal teaching method that can adapt to various situations. We should be prepared to absorb and use the most effective aspects of the various methods, depending on our style, experience and ability, to adapt to the various variables in the teaching, such as the age of the student, the original foundation, the size of the class, The arrangement of class hours and schedules, the influence of other disciplines and activities, etc.

The only way to learn foreign language teaching methods is to combine theories with practice and to seek truth from facts. On the one hand, teachers must carefully study the theories of foreign language teaching methods, compare different teaching methods and processes, and master a variety of measures and means. On the other hand, teachers insist on trying and verifying various situations in teaching practice and accumulating rich practical experience. Only in this way can the teaching level be continuously improved and the teaching effects can be continuously improved.

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