Initial Analyses on the Application of Direct Method in Russian Teaching

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Abstract. In the foreign language teaching methodology, the historic Direct Method has made a great contribution to the practice of foreign language teaching. Through the theoretical research, this paper discusses the practical application of the Direct Method in the Russian teaching process, and the integration of this method and other teaching methods, so that the traditional Direct Method could restore the vitality in modern Russian-language education.

The Concept of Direct Method

What is Direct Method? The Wechsler English Dictionary explains that "Direct Method is a method of teaching foreign languages, first and foremost modern foreign languages. It teaches foreign languages through conversation, conversation and reading in the foreign language itself, without students' mother tongue, translation or formal grammar."

This definition accurately explains the basic characteristics of direct method which is different from classical grammar and translation method: direct use of foreign languages to practice foreign languages without translation or grammatical analysis. There are many aliases for direct method, such as modern method, anti-grammar translation method, natural method, induction method, phonetics method, mental method and so on. The term "direct method" first appeared in a document issued by the French Ministry of Education in 1901. For this term reflects the characteristics of this school better than other names, it has been widely used.

Basic Principles of Direct Method

Direct-connection Principle

When children learn a new language, they gradually understand the meaning of the relevant words while learning. A language's form of expression is direct, and there is no translation process itself. As far as the characteristics of language expression are concerned, the learning of a foreign language should try to link language with substance and minimize the negative impact of mother tongue in teaching.

The principle of direct connection is an effective way to eliminate the interference of mother tongue in learning a foreign language. It is also a guarantee for students to learn a classical foreign language. In the teaching of translation method, the biggest problem of achieving the teaching goal through word-by-word translation is the interference of mother tongue to foreign language. If we can use direct teaching method, we can effectively avoid this problem and let students truly learn classical foreign languages.

It should be pointed out that the concessions made by direct method on mother tongue are all in the stage of "speaking", while in the stage of "practicing", they still believe that "practice" is the key to teaching.

Sentence-based Principle

In direct foreign language teaching, we should start with sentences, and take sentences as the basic unit in teaching. In this way, we can not only learn words, but also understand grammar through learning. But this teaching feature of direct method does not mean that we do not attach importance to the teaching of words and grammar. It let students feel the meaning and grammatical
rules of each word of each word from the sentences through the teaching of sentences rather than starting with the idea of combining words into sentences.

In our daily communication, the basic unit of communication is sentences. When we learn a lot of sentences, natural communication is much more convenient, not only can we make fewer mistakes in communication, but also can adapt to the speed of communication. In fact, direct method teaching is not unfamiliar to us. In the process of foreign language learning, teachers still use direct method in the part of foreign language writing. By letting students feel the content and meaning of articles, sentences and paragraphs, students can construct new ones by analogy and substitution after learning a lot of sentences to meet the needs of communication.

However, direct method advocates the principle of sentence-based, not meaning words and monosyllables cannot be taught, but that words and phonetic rules should not be taught in isolation.

The Principle of Prioritizing Imitation

The basic principle of direct method teaching is imitation training. Linguistic theory and pedagogical psychology play an important role in direct method teaching. In foreign language teaching, it is not to learn foreign language grammar rules first for students, but to enhance students' understanding and memory through repeated imitation and contact under the guidance of teachers, and in the whole process to cultivate students' ability to learn foreign language with foreign language thinking. If we learn a lot of foreign language grammar at the beginning of foreign language teaching, it will affect students' induction of grammar rules in a certain extent. In foreign language learning, students will gradually deepen the brain's memory of learning content through continuous imitation and repetitive connections, coupled with the brain's stimulation and association of things, so as to achieve the ability to truly master a foreign language.

Principles of Teaching Grammar Rules by Inductive Approach

The main characteristic of direct method is that we start with the basic communication of speech, not from words in foreign language teaching, let students grasp the communicative thinking of language initially, and gradually infiltrate the rules of words and grammar in learning. This process of learning foreign language is also the basic process of learning our mother tongue in childhood. In direct method teaching, we advocate the use of "living language" teaching method, with the help of the classical language of the foreign language and the contemporary common language, and oppose the translation-based teaching materials in the past.

Although there is no large number of grammar teaching content in the process of direct method teaching, students feel grammar in the process of learning through direct method teaching, and this feeling will stimulate students' association and understanding of grammar.

This principle of direct grammar is contrary to the idea that grammar rules should be first and deductive approaches should be taught in classical grammar translation. In foreign language learning guided by direct method, we will also learn the grammatical structure of mother tongue, which is the basis or framework of language. Therefore, the advocates of direct method believe that learning a foreign language requires a considerable effort to grasp the actual grammatical structure of a foreign language, but they cannot memorize grammatical rules by rote. In compiling excellent primary reading books of direct method, the author carefully arranges various items of grammatical structure. Each sentence will highlight one or two key points of grammatical structure that students are required to master.

The main teaching principles and characteristics of direct method are as follows:

1) Principle of direct connection: The most basic thing in direct method is to establish the connection between language and external experience. That is to say, in foreign language teaching, every word is directly related to the things or meanings it represents, without being translated into its mother tongue. By doing so, students can throw away the stick of "heart translation" as soon as possible and think directly in a foreign language.

2) Based on the principle of oral English, oral English teaching is the main means and purpose in the initial stage.
3) Sentence-based principle: teaching foreign languages starts with sentences, takes sentences as units, and enters the whole sentence and outputs the whole sentence. In this way, we have learned not only words but also grammar. Starting with sentences does not mean ignoring the teaching of words and phonetics. The direct method attaches great importance to the teaching of words and phonetics in sentences.

4) Principle of imitation: repeat the sentences learned through various imitation means, form habits, and achieve automation.

In addition to the four main principles mentioned above, the direct method has other teaching principles, such as the principle of selecting language materials, the principle of gradual progress, interest and so on.

Application of Direct Method in Russian Teaching

Application of Direct Method in Oral Russian Teaching

The direct method requires students to carry out intuitive perception of language materials, exclude native spoken language and translation, establish direct relations between Russian and objective things, and emphasize the use of visual means such as physical objects, pictures, movements, gestures, synonyms, antonyms, context and so on. The direct method mainly adopts the sentence-based teaching, while the grammar learning takes the second place. To acquire fluent oral Russian is the aim of direct Russian teaching. Dialogue is one of the basic forms of oral Russian learning. In oral Russian teaching, dialogue has the characteristics of intuitive teaching. It can cultivate students' interest and make them develop their sense of language through their speech expressions, body movements and so on. The cultivation of language sense and oral practice play a mutually reinforcing role. In the process of repetitive and intuitive practice, the brain will produce certain imprints on different recurrent languages, actions and expressions. Over time, students will have habitual and associative thinking about these intuitive language and teaching methods. In the process of oral teaching practice, in oral learning class and intuitive oral teaching process, students constantly receive and process information by observing the other's expression, behavior and action combined with their own visual and auditory feelings and stimuli, and ultimately achieve the goal of successful dialogue.

In daily Russian teaching, especially oral Russian teaching, it is a common method for teachers and students to use question-and-answer mode. In a great extent, the cooperation between teachers and students determines the learning effect of a class. Successful application of teacher-student question-and-answer forms can enable students to understand and think more actively about the questions or dialogues raised by teachers, through which the brain can be activated. At the same time, teachers can also observe whether the students understand the questions raised by and whether they can give appropriate answers according to the sentences, speed of speech and expression of the students' answers. Although the direct method teaching is still based on teachers and supplemented by students in practice, the cooperation between teachers and students plays a vital role in the direct method teaching. Because of the lack of intuitive communication between teachers and students, the application of direct method teaching is naturally out of the question.

On the other hand, how to stimulate students' interest in learning Russian, even teachers' interest in lectures, is also an important part of direct infiltration into oral Russian teaching. If teachers can guide students to gradually increase their interest in the teaching content and close the distance between them, then the whole process of oral Russian teaching will be happy and harmonious.

Application of Direct Method in Russian Intensive Reading Teaching

The cultivation of students' reading perception is an important means to enhance students' reading ability. Direct teaching can improve students' reading perception more effectively, but this cultivation is closely related to the accumulation of students' reading material content, life and learning quantity.

Students transmit reading content to the brain through visual signals. When the brain receives
stimuli, visual action reflects people's direct reaction to reading. Visual action can be divided into eye stop and eye movement: eye movement is every movement of the reader's sight in the process of reading, and eye stop is that the sight stays in a certain place after eye movement. Human visual information is acquired at eye stop. By observing the different expressions of eye stop and eye movement during reading, it can reflect the students' understanding, interest and difficulty of reading content. This characteristic is helpful for us to use direct method to cultivate students' reading ability. Select some valuable Russian reading materials for reading exercises, stimulate the brain through repeated exercises, and ultimately make the brain deeply impressed by the reading content, and form long-term memory.

Direct teaching is absolutely not a single applied foreign language direct teaching. In the process of cultivating students' reading ability, teachers can use the psychological role of direct teaching to select excellent Russian original books to communicate and discuss with students, so that students can improve their reading ability through their own brain thinking.

Integration of Direct Method and Other Teaching Methods

With the development of foreign language teaching methods in recent centuries, many schools have emerged, including direct method, translation method, listening and speaking method, communicative method and so on.

The teaching idea of translation method is to understand and memorize the structure of sentences, grammatical rules and irregular usage, focusing on the memory of grammar and words. When you have mastered these contents, refer to the actual text and translate them word by word according to your mother tongue's thinking. Although the translation method is complicated in action, it is simple in thinking. Such a teaching method can help students improve their understanding ability and form their thinking habits based on their mother tongue, but it will also hinder the improvement of other aspects of students, such as listening and speaking ability.

Hearing and speaking came into being in the United States in the 1940s. Before World War II, there existed "language isolationism" in American linguistic circles, which was in a backward position in foreign language teaching. Soon, however, the United States was involved in World War II, and the army was in urgent need of effective foreign language training for its soldiers. In order to meet the practical needs at that time, American foreign language teaching applied structuralism linguistics theory and behavioral psychology to practical teaching, focusing on improving learners' practical application ability. Audio-linguistic approach emphasizes the practicality of foreign languages and the training of listening and speaking as well as the practice of sentence patterns. It has made great contributions to foreign language teaching both in theory and practice.

Communicative Approach (CLT), which originated in Europe in 1970s, is a teaching method based on language function to improve students' communicative competence. Since communicative competence is the basic unit of human language use, and the fundamental purpose of learning foreign languages is to improve human communicative competence, this teaching method focuses on improving students' communicative competence.

Throughout the characteristics of different schools of foreign language teaching methods, each school has its own unique advantages, but at the same time, each teaching method also has obvious limitations. Therefore, in the actual Russian teaching process, we can take the direct method as the outline, and fully integrate the translation method, listening and speaking method and communicative method. It not only pays attention to the accumulation of basic vocabulary and grammar, but also develops the learners' cognitive ability to understand the learning content. At the same time, it trains the students' practical communicative and comprehensive application ability through scene simulation and listening and speaking exercises.

But direct French Russian teaching equates the process of Russian learning with the process of students' mother tongue learning, ignores the special rule of Russian as a non-mother tongue, ignores the role of grammar in language learning, and even ignores the role of native language in the process of Russian learning. College Russian teaching is facing many practical difficulties, such as students' low learning enthusiasm, students' insufficient attention to Russian learning, as well as
limited teaching facilities and conditions. However, we believe that as long as Russian teachers continue to strengthen the research and practice of Russian teaching methods and timely absorb and utilize the new achievements of advanced Russian teaching methods at home and abroad, they will surely be able to effectively improve the level of Russian teaching in universities and cultivate more and more excellent Russian professionals for our country.

Reference


