

On the Application of Situational Teaching Method in Foreign Language Class From the Perspective of Interaction

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Abstract

The effective application of situational teaching method in foreign language class is inseparable from classroom interaction. In view of this, this paper aims to explore the approach of situational teaching in foreign language class from the perspective of interaction. Through the research, it is found that interaction and situational teaching complement each other and are closely related. In addition, the paper finds that interaction includes three forms: teacher-individual interaction, teacher-group interaction and student-student interaction. From the perspective of interaction, situation creation includes three ways: real situation creation, virtual situation creation and simulated situation creation.

Key words: Interaction; Situational teaching; Foreign language class

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning are the most important activities for teachers and students to communicate with each other in foreign language class. Therefore, in the foreign language

teaching class, which method should be used by teachers and which method should be used by students is always a question worthy of thinking and research. Influenced by the domestic teaching mode, the traditional “infusing” teaching pays attention to the teaching of knowledge, and the teacher plays the main role in the classroom, or it is a “teacher-centered” teaching mode. Under this kind of teaching mode, teachers often perform a one-man show, which not only involves themselves but also causes students to lack initiative and interest in classroom learning and even resist or give up learning. (Cheng, 2012)

In order to respond to the call of the Ministry of Education to cultivate students’ creativity and practical ability and implement the OBE (Outcome-based Education) teaching concept, foreign language teaching in colleges and universities pays more and more attention to the transformation of teaching mode, explore “heuristic” teaching methods, and initiate the transformation of traditional “teacher-centered” teaching mode to “student-centered” teaching mode. In the new teaching mode, teachers play a role in guiding students to learn, inspiring students to think, encouraging students to discuss and participating in student interaction and so on. This heuristic teaching model not only emphasizes the interaction between teachers and students, but also emphasizes the creation of teaching situations by teachers, so as to integrate interaction and situations and apply them to classroom teaching together, improve teaching effect, and enhance students’ interest and motivation in exploring thinking and creative learning.

2. REVIEW OF SITUATIONAL TEACHING METHOD AND INTERACTION THEORY

The definition of “situation” in the *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (7th edition, 2016) is circumstances or context, which refers to the generalization of many specific

contexts in a period of time and space. Li Jilin (2005) pointed out that context is a humanized educational environment, while Zhang Huirong and Zhu Dequan (2007) pointed out that context includes students' internal situation and students' external situation. Context is the objective environment in which the subject language activity is carried out, which has a direct impact on the content and interaction mode of communication, and plays a suggestive role in language communication. Cui Yonghua (2008) believes that context creation in case teaching means that teachers create a vivid scene for students through language description, physical demonstration, video viewing and other means to arouse students' emotions and improve teaching effect. Zhang Hua (2000) pointed out that context creation is the creation of situations containing real problems or events in the teaching process, and students understand knowledge and construct meaning in the process of solving problems or exploring events. Sun Wentong (2022) emphasized the application of context creation in language teaching, pointing out that context creation is an important way to make the teaching and learning in class more interesting, and can stimulate students' spatial imagination and enthusiasm for independent learning, so as to achieve better language teaching results. Liu Xiaoyu (1999) pointed out that the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language should be carried out in natural situations as much as possible to increase the interaction process and activity links between teachers and students, so as to strengthen the connection and combination of situation creation and interactive teaching.

Different scholars have different views on situational teaching method. Scholar Chen Yongjing (2012) summarized these different views into three categories. To be specific, the first type of situational teaching: "Situational teaching is to create a situation containing real events or real problems, and students can independently understand knowledge and construct meaning in the process of exploring events or solving problems." The situation here emphasizes the real situation. The second type of situational teaching: "Situational teaching is a teaching method that starts from the needs of teaching, and the teacher creates specific scenes or atmosphere with image as the main body and full of emotion according to the teaching goal (theme) to stimulate and attract students to take the initiative to learn and achieve the best teaching effect." Context here emphasizes that context creation can be adjusted according to teaching needs. The third type: "Situational teaching refers to the establishment of a good emotional atmosphere between teachers and students, between students themselves, between cognitive objects and cognitive subjects in teaching, creating a suitable learning situation, so that teaching activities can be carried out in a positive emotional and beautiful environment, and students' emotional activities can actively participate in

the cognitive process, so as to activate students' situational thinking, which helps them to acquire knowledge, cultivate competence and develop intelligence." The context here emphasizes the relationship between emotion and situation, that is, emotion and situation are unified with each other. To interact with students with good emotion can enhance the relationship between teachers and students. Apart from that, the interaction can develop students' thinking and communicative abilities.

From the above three definitions, it can be seen that situational teaching is a functional teaching method, in which teachers create specific, real or near-real scenes according to the teaching objectives, and use real, imaginary or simulated situations to stimulate students' emotions and cultivate students' ability to actively think and solve practical problems in foreign language teaching.

The definition of "interaction" in *the Encyclopedia of China·Sociology* is: "The essence of interaction is the round-trip activity between the subject and the object, and the communication between the subject and the object. "Interactive teaching, also known as mutual teaching, is the unity of teachers' 'teaching' and students' 'learning'." This unity can be understood as that in the process of classroom teaching, teachers design interactive questions and assign teaching tasks according to the teaching objectives. Students can participate in classroom activities with teachers through group learning, discussion, thematic discussion, role playing and other interactive practice forms, so as to achieve the unity of "teaching" and "learning" and form a student-centered teaching mode, also to change the traditional teacher-centered model, in which students passively accept the knowledge.

Interaction helps to promote the interaction between language form and situation, and classroom interaction can't be carried out without specific situation. Environment and interaction are the means and ways of situational teaching. In the field of language teaching, interaction is regarded as an important approach to target language learning. (Zu, 2009) Li Xian-Yin (2020) puts forward the practical approaches of "scenario-based grammar interpretation" and "contextualized grammar teaching" from the perspective of interactive linguistics theory. Therefore, situation creation from an interactive perspective is of great significance to foreign language teaching. On the one hand, effective situation creation can stimulate learners' interest in learning, and make the teaching activities in the classroom authentic and communicative according to the needs of learners' life and communication. On the other hand, it can improve the cognitive level of learners. Students can not only understand the knowledge in the context, but also practice the language skills to promote the grasp of language skills. (Luo, 2023)

To sum up, language can only be understood and expressed in a certain context, and learners can more

fully grasp the ability of using language to communicate through interaction. Teachers create situations in order to provide context, attract learners' attention, stimulate learners' interest, and interact with learners in the situation. Learners who interact in situations, can link language skills, professional knowledge and application, and therefore promoting cognitive construction of knowledge. Therefore, situational teaching under interaction can effectively connect situation with interaction, place interaction in a certain context, and the two complement and promote each other.

3. APPLICATION OF SITUATIONAL TEACHING METHOD FROM INTERACTIVE PERSPECTIVE

From the perspective of interaction, there are different ways to apply situational teaching. In the teacher-student interaction, the subject of "teacher-individual interaction" is an individual teacher and an individual student, which generally occurs in the teacher's questioning, the student's answering, then the evaluation and feedback of the teacher. The subject of "teacher-group interaction" is the individual teacher and the student group, and the "group" here includes the student group or the whole class. The teacher's behavior is directed to the student group, and the students think that they react to the teacher's behavior as a part of the group, which generally occurs in organizational teaching, classroom teaching or classroom discussion. "Student interaction" can be divided into "interaction between two individuals", "interaction between an individual and a group" and "interaction between groups". These interactions are not completely independent of teachers, and teachers sometimes participate in guidance and evaluation.

3.1 Situational teaching in "teacher-individual interaction"

"Teacher-individual interaction" refers to the interaction between teachers and individual students. Specifically, it involves the evaluation and feedback of the teacher's questions, the student's answers and the evaluation and feedback of the teacher. When asking questions to individual students, teachers should create situations in advance, design questioning and evaluation links, and give feedback to students' answers after asking questions. Take the fifth unit of the course "Selected Reading of Ceramic English Literature" as an example, the author here offers the procedure of context creation. When the author taught the topic of traditional blue and white porcelain in Jingdezhen, the teacher began the class with questions in order to introduce the topic. The teacher should do a good job of classroom teaching situation creation before class: mainly use the real situation creation, that is, the way of physical display.

The teacher displayed three pieces of blue and white wares in class, including a blue and white dish, a blue and white bowl and a blue and white Yühuchun bottle. After showing the real situation, the teacher began to ask questions for individual students. Question 1: Who can use these three pieces of blue and white wares to talk about his or her understanding of the blue and white in Jingdezhen? Student A answered: Blue and white porcelain is the most representative porcelain type in Jingdezhen. It enjoys the reputation of "white as jade, sounds like a bell". The blue and white porcelain in the Yuan Dynasty and Ming Dynasty is renowned in the world. The decoration pattern of the blue and white is simple, elegant and beautiful, so as to be deeply loved by the Chinese and Europeans. Teacher's evaluation: The student talked about the popularity and the important position of blue and white wares in the history of Chinese ceramics. In addition, he talked about the characteristics of blue and white porcelain. Well done, please continue to observe the three blue and white wares, and answer Question 2: Please talk about the shape and decoration pattern of the three blue and white wares! Student B answered: The shapes of the three wares are dish, bowl and vase respectively. The decoration pattern of the vase is a figure and a goose, and the motifs in the bowl and dish are plants and floral patterns. Teacher evaluation: Students' answers are basically clear, and they can express their views in basic English ceramic terms, but the depth of their views and the degree of careful observation and comprehensiveness need to be improved. Teachers' feedback: The decorative patterns of ceramic ware can be understood by reading both Chinese ceramic literature, and English ceramic literature. By comparing the expressions of Chinese and English ceramic terms, students can get familiar with the expressions of Chinese and English ceramic terms, laying a foundation for the translation of Chinese-English ceramic literature, and further accumulating knowledge for the international dissemination of Chinese ceramic culture.

"Teacher-individual interaction" is mainly reflected in the form of teachers' questions and students' answers. This kind of interaction can make the creation situation produce real and direct experience, improve the enthusiasm of students to participate in the interaction, but also increase the students' understanding of the professional knowledge of ceramics. Through the physical display, students can observe the actual ceramic objects at close range, get the real feeling, avoid imagination, and make the teaching activities more real and meaningful.

3.2 Situational teaching in "teacher-group interaction"

"Teacher-group interaction" refers to the interaction between a teacher and students, or the interaction between

a teacher and student groups. “Teacher-group interaction” is the core of “student-centered” teaching mode, which is of great significance for stimulating students’ learning interest and cultivating their spirit of exploration and innovation. The situation creation of “teacher-group interaction” includes video viewing, physical display and simulated scenes. The author takes the second unit of the course “Selected Reading of Ceramic English Literature” as an example. When teaching the topic text of the unit, the author adopts the situational teaching method of video watching, that is, the teacher prepares a video program about the collection and washing of the blue color. Specifically, the author organized students to watch a 26-minute video of collecting and washing the blue color so that they could have an intuitive and clear visual understanding of the process of collecting and washing the materials. After watching the video, the teacher would interact with the students based on the video content. The teacher leads the students to discuss the content of the video. Discussion topic 1: What are the ways to collect the blue color, and under what circumstances? The teacher divided the students evenly into six groups. The students discussed in groups, and the teacher listened to or participated in the group discussion. Discussion topic 2: What is the procedure of blue color collection? After the students discussed in groups, the teacher invited three groups, and each group appointed a representative to report the conclusions or opinions of the group discussion. After that, the teacher made a summary and evaluation according to the report of the representatives. Discussion topic 3: English-Chinese translation practice, that is, the teacher asked students to translate the English text about blue color collection and washing from the textbook into Chinese. The teacher will make the different translation versions of the students into parallel texts and show them in class. After showing different translated texts, the students will discuss the different translations in a group, select the excellent ones and give the reasons. Through discussion and teacher’s evaluation, students are more impressed with the issues that should be paid attention to in the translation process and basic translation skills, and are more willing to think creatively and independently.

Compared with teacher-group interaction, “teacher-group interaction” has a larger interaction group and more interaction ways. In addition to video display, we can also use physical display, simulation scenes and other situational creation methods. “Teacher-group interaction” can activate the classroom atmosphere and promote the communication and feedback between teachers and students. Through the interaction in the context created in class, teachers can be clear about

students’ grasp of knowledge points and their problems. At the same time, students can recognize and understand knowledge points in certain scenes and practice what they have learned. Through interaction, they can timely report their difficulties or problems to teachers, so as to wait for the teacher’s help and so as to promote their grasp of knowledge points.

3.3 The situational teaching in “interaction between students and students”

“Student-student interaction” refers to the interaction among individual students, including “interaction between individuals”, “interaction between individual and group” and “interaction between groups”. The interactive subject of “interaction between individuals” is individual students, such as students sitting next to each other practicing language skills, or two people making dialogues and so on. “Interaction between individual and group” refers to the interaction between individual students and a group of students, which generally occurs in classroom exercises and classroom discussions, such as individual students expressing their views or demonstrating to all students. The main body of “interaction between groups” is the interaction between different groups. In this paper, the communication among student learning groups such as inter-group communication and group role playing are classified as “interaction between groups”.

In order to actively promote the “interaction between students”, teachers create teaching situations according to teaching content and design. Similarly, taking the author’s “Selected Reading of Ceramic English Literature” as an example, the teacher created a simulated ceramic exhibition scene when teaching the topic of Long Quan celadon, and the teacher set up a simple ceramic exhibition scene: exhibition layout and exhibit introduction. After the creation of the scene, the students who are organized as groups to have discussions within groups about the introduction of the wares for exhibition. The introduction includes the name of the object, the type, glaze characteristics, making-process characteristics and decorative patterns and other distinctive aspects. After completing the English introduction, group members discuss the wording of the introduction, improve the content, and finally form the introduction for class report. For example, the three representative celadon objects on display in the simulated celadon exhibition are a basin, a brush washer and a pair of vases. The students completed the introduction of the wares in English, through the interaction between students, that is, the observation of the characteristics of the wares and how to express them in ceramic terms were discussed in small groups.



Group one's introduction of the above ware: This is a hexagonal celadon basin with six feet. The glaze is light green. The basin is glazed both inside and outside. The shape of the feet looks like cloud, very elegant.



Group two's introduction of the above bowl: This is a brush-washer with celadon glaze. It is a Long Quan ware. The glaze is thick and green, the shape of the washer is elegant and it is well potted.



Group three's introduction of the above vases: This pair of urns are for funerary purposes. The celadon glaze is light green. The decoration of the urns is fantastic. The covers have nobs, the nobs are in the shape of bird. On the walls of the urns are applied relief ornament. The relief are two dragons. There are vertical lines on the body of the urns.

4. CONCLUSION

The application of situation teaching in classroom teaching is an effective way to improve teaching effect and stimulate students' learning interest. Situational teaching allows students to have a more intuitive experience of what they have learned through the creation of real or simulated scenes. By learning and practicing in certain scenes, students can quickly enter the learning state and improve the learning effect. And situational teaching is inseparable from interaction. Situation teaching is static scene, while interaction is dynamic communication. "Teacher-individual interaction" enables teachers to more accurately understand students' learning problems in teaching, and enables students to feedback their own problems to teachers, so as to enhance the understanding and feedback between teachers and students; "Teacher-group interaction" makes the classroom teaching atmosphere more active and positive; "Student-student interaction" can greatly promote students' independent and creative learning and stimulate students' creativity. Static situations make interactions more experiential, and interactions make static situations meaningful. Therefore, interaction and context complement each other and jointly promote the implementation of the "student-centered" teaching model.

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