

Communicative Analysis of Activity Design of Junior High School English Teaching Materials

-- Take the Ninth Grade Textbook of People's Education Press as An Example

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Abstract: With the deepening of globalization, English, as an international language, has become increasingly important. The goal of language teaching is no longer just to improve students' language knowledge, but to pay more attention to cultivating students' communicative competence. Communicative principle is a fundamental principle of language teaching. Since 1970s, foreign language teaching mode based on communicative principle has become increasingly popular at home and abroad. Textbook is the core text of the course, the main content and important carrier of teaching. As an important part of English textbooks, activity design plays an important role in cultivating students' language ability. Therefore, it is in line with the current development trend of language teaching to analyze and study the communicative nature of the activity design of junior high school English textbooks. This paper analyzes the communication of activity design in the ninth grade of junior high school English textbook published by People's Education Press through literature review and textbook analysis, so as to provide feasible suggestions for English teachers. At the same time, it can also help students better understand and master language knowledge, improve teaching effect and improve junior high school students' practical foreign language communication ability.

Keywords: People's Education Edition junior high school English textbooks, Activity design, Communicative approach.

1. Introduction

With the deepening of globalization, English, as an international language, has become increasingly important. The goal of language teaching is no longer just to improve students' language knowledge, but to pay more attention to cultivating students' communicative competence. Textbook is the core text of the course, the main content and important carrier of teaching, and also an important way of cultural inheritance. (Guo Baoxian) Therefore, it is in line with the current development trend of language teaching to analyze and study the communicative nature of the activity design of junior high school English textbooks. Traditional junior high school English textbooks often pay attention to the teaching of language knowledge such as grammar and vocabulary, but ignore the cultivation of students' practical communicative competence. With the deepening of education reform, more and more educators and scholars realize the importance of communicative competence. Therefore, a communicative analysis of the activity design of junior high school English textbooks is helpful to promote the reform and innovation of textbooks. By analyzing the communicative nature of the activity design of junior high school English textbooks, we can find out which activity design is more conducive to improving students' communicative competence, thus providing more effective guidance and suggestions for teachers. At the same time, it can also help students better understand and master language knowledge, improve teaching effect and improve junior high school students' practical foreign language communication ability.

Textbooks are the concretization of curriculum standards, which turn the requirements stipulated in curriculum standards into systematic and operable teaching contents, show the essence and laws of language, and promote students to master knowledge and develop skills. In recent years, the educational circles have paid more and more attention to the

study of teaching materials. Textbook research is of great significance. On the one hand, it can promote the reform and construction of modern teaching; on the other hand, it can help educators make better use of textbooks. Through in-depth analysis of the activity design in the textbook, we can understand how it can improve students' communicative competence through different teaching activities, sum up some effective communicative activity designs, and promote them in other textbooks or teaching, so as to enhance students' communicative competence and promote the improvement and improvement of junior high school English teaching.

As a language, English is mainly used for communication. Through the communicative analysis of junior high school English textbook activity design, we can better understand and use English and improve students' communicative competence in practical situations. Moreover, communicative teaching activities are usually more interesting and interactive, which can stimulate students' interest in learning and make them more actively participate in learning. In the design of communicative teaching activities, students are usually required to use the language knowledge they have learned to express and communicate for language output, which is helpful to consolidate and deepen students' understanding and mastery of the language knowledge they have learned.

To sum up, the communicative analysis of junior high school English textbook activity design is of great significance for improving students' communicative competence, enhancing their interest in learning and promoting the mastery of language knowledge.

2. Theoretical Basis

Communicative language teaching theory emphasizes that the purpose of foreign language teaching is to cultivate students' communicative competence. According to the theory of communicative language teaching, people's

language learning process is spontaneous and unconscious, just like children mastering their own mother tongue. Traditional mechanical imitation learning and practice can not make students master the language effectively, but should carry out meaningful communication activities in the classroom. Howatt (1984) put forward two views: weak communication view and strong communication view. The weak version of communication advocates learning language structure first, and then developing language application ability, which means learning language knowledge first, and then developing language ability. The strong version of communication, on the other hand, emphasizes that only the development of language application ability can promote the learning of language knowledge, and the acquisition of communication ability is not only an end, but also a means of learning. We should apply foreign languages and learn language knowledge in the process of developing meaningful communication activities. Therefore, communicative language in life should be integrated into textbooks, so as to effectively cultivate and develop students' communicative competence in foreign languages. No matter whether it is a weak communication view or a strong communication view, the theory of communicative language teaching has some recognized characteristics: (1) Function-idea as the key link. (2) Communicative teaching process. (3) Put students in the main position of learning. (4) Emphasize the fluency of language. (Du Honghong)

The essence of activity design is to meet the specific needs of human beings to acquire knowledge, skills, emotional attitudes and values. At the same time, the activity design should also conform to people's psychological characteristics, cognitive rules and cognitive level. Only the teaching activity design that conforms to people's psychological characteristics can be an effective activity design. (Yang Dongdong) The activity design of junior high school English textbooks combines junior high school English textbooks and activity design. Therefore, the research object of this paper is "activity design of junior high school English textbooks", which is based on English language knowledge, and presents activities that meet students' learning needs and teachers' teaching needs in specific situations in teaching forms such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. This paper mainly takes the ninth grade junior high school English published by People's Education Press (Quan Yi Book) as an example to study.

Foreign scholars have done a lot of research on how to use communicative language teaching theory to improve students' comprehensive language use ability. These studies are aimed at students of different ages and involve language knowledge and skills, learning strategies and teaching materials. Since the mid-1970s, scholars have attached importance to the application of the principles of communicative language teaching method in classroom teaching. On this basis, textbooks written by using the principles of communicative language teaching method have come out one after another.

Although communicative language teaching theory can be applied in a wide range, there are still limitations in some teaching units. Some studies by foreign scholars can inspire us, but they can't be directly used in English learning environment in China, so we need to conduct in-depth research according to the current teaching environment and teaching status in China.

In the research of textbook activity design, Palmer(1917) put forward the principle of "snowballing". The activities of textbooks exist according to the content of the text, which

plays an irreplaceable role in strengthening and consolidating the cultivation of English abilities such as vocabulary, grammar, listening and speaking. Grant(1989) pointed out that perfect textbooks do not necessarily exist, but for teachers and students, the best textbooks do exist at present. Such a textbook should meet the following three factors: 1. Meet students' interests and needs; 2. Suitable for teachers; 3. Meet the needs of teaching syllabus or open teaching examination.

Since Hu Wenzhong, a self-taught student, introduced communicative language teaching to China in 1982, the theory of communicative language teaching has had a far-reaching impact on the traditional ideas and concepts of foreign language teaching in China. After that, Chinese scholars began to evaluate China's foreign language teaching system with new standards. Domestic scholars not only discuss the theory of communicative language teaching, but also deeply study the application of communicative approach in practical teaching. In 1980s, communicative language teaching theory began to be widely used in foreign language teaching and became a new hot spot in international foreign language teaching (Wang Xia; Luo Deqiong, 2008). The research on teaching materials has become popular in the field of foreign language teaching, and the compilation of English teaching materials in China has been deeply influenced by these studies, and it has begun to focus on the function and application of language from the teaching of language knowledge.

In the research of teaching material activity design, domestic scholars Li Hongbo and Zhan Zuoqiong (2006) analyzed the authenticity of oral English teaching material and activity design, and found that the popular oral English teaching material activities lacked authenticity at that time, the fundamental reason was that the teaching material itself was untrue, and the training methods of oral English also lacked authenticity due to the limitations of education level at that time. The suggestion put forward by this scholar is that teachers should have keen insight and pay attention to collecting real corpus, and design it into different oral activities to meet the teaching needs. Xiong Huanhuan (2015), a scholar, comparatively studied the design of oral activities in four sets of widely used textbooks (People's Education Edition, Yilin Edition, Hebei Education Edition and Foreign Studies Edition), and analyzed the presentation mode, quantity, topic and the correlation with listening, reading and writing of oral activities, and finally came to the conclusion that in order to ensure students' sufficient language input, an appropriate number of oral activities should be set up; At the same time, in order to stimulate students' interest in learning, we should also ensure the diversity of topics in teaching materials as much as possible. Teachers should arrange teaching activities reasonably according to classroom needs in order to improve students' ability in an all-round way.

To sum up, at present, the research on the communicative design of junior high school English textbooks at home and abroad mostly stays on the individual communicative teaching method and the activity design of English abilities in English textbooks, while the overall research on the communicative design of junior high school English textbooks is less. This paper will analyze the content of junior high school English textbooks published by People's Education Press (Quan Yi Book), so that teachers can better understand and use junior high school English textbooks published by People's Education Press, arrange teaching activities and improve teaching quality.

3. Textbook Analysis

(1) Quantitative Analysis of Teaching Material Activity Design

The junior high school English textbooks published by People's Education Press are arranged according to units and parts. Each unit discusses a main topic, and one unit is divided into two parts, namely section A and section B. The activity design of each unit is from 1a to 4c, and that of Section B is from 1a to 3b. Junior high school people's education edition ninth grade English textbooks are arranged in this unified form. Here, the author found that there are 375 activity designs in the ninth grade textbook through calculation. In order to reflect the distribution of each unit activity design in the junior high school English textbook published by People's Education Press more intuitively, the author made a table, as shown in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1. Statistics on the Number of Activity Designs for Grade 9 English Textbooks

unit	Section A	Section B	Self Check
Unit1	12	12	3
Unit2	13	11	3
Unit3	12	11	3
Unit4	13	13	2
Unit5	13	12	3
Unit6	13	12	3
Unit7	13	12	2
Unit8	13	11	2
Unit9	13	11	2
Unit10	13	11	2
Unit11	12	12	3
Unit12	13	12	2
Unit13	12	12	3
Unit14	12	12	2

Through the table, we can find that the activity design in the textbook of People's Education Edition is abundant and evenly distributed, and runs through the textbook from beginning to end. It can be concluded that the junior high school English textbooks published by People's Education Press attach great importance to activity design, which can meet students' English learning needs in the classroom.

(2) Communicative Analysis of Teaching Material Activity Design

Communicative English teaching means that language should be taught as a communicative tool in English teaching, so as to improve students' foreign language communicative competence. Then, in order to embody and apply the communicative principle in the design of teaching material activities, scholar Xu Dijia (2007) thinks that the following points should be achieved: (1) Contextualization of teaching content; (2) Practicality of teaching materials; (3) Diversification of teaching methods; (D) Regular after-school English communication training.

Through reading the ninth grade junior high school English textbooks published by People's Education Press, the author divides the communicative activity design in junior high school English textbooks into three categories: discussion and communication, role-playing and writing sharing.

1) discussion and communication

The design of discussion and communication activities mainly refers to the activities in the form of peer

communication or group cooperation after students systematically learn some new knowledge, and the new knowledge told in class needs to be used in the activities. The main purpose of such activities is to enable students to communicate and apply foreign languages in various forms, create a real and relaxed language environment for students, enhance the interaction between students, help students review what they have learned and improve their communicative competence. On the other hand, such activities can stimulate students' enthusiasm for language learning and application and create a good classroom learning atmosphere.

In the ninth grade junior high school English textbook published by People's Education Press, the 1c part of Section A in each unit and the 2a and 2e parts of Section B in some units are designed for communication and discussion activities, as shown in Figure 3-1, 3-2 and 3-3, which are peer communication, group discussion and peer discussion respectively.

1c Make conversations about how you study for a test.

A: How do you study for a test?
B: I study by working with a group.

Figure 3-1 is selected from the Unit 1

2a Discuss the questions in your groups.

Are you allowed to make your own decisions at home? What kinds of decisions?

Figure 3-2 is selected from Unit 7

2e Discuss the questions with a partner. Use the information in the passage to support your opinion.

What is your dream job? Do your parents support your dream?

Figure 3-3 is selected from Unit 7

2) Writing sharing

Writing is a difficult language output activity. Teachers need to organize and sort out the teaching content from the perspective of holistic view. In the arrangement of writing activities in the ninth grade textbook of People's Education Press, most of the writing activities are similar to the topic and stylistic characteristics of the reading text in this unit, and on this basis, students are required to write imitatively. (Zhang Ning, 2021) The writing activity design of ninth grade textbooks pays more attention to the improvement of students' language ability and thinking ability, and guides students to form a correct outlook on life and values. The design theme of ninth grade writing activities is closely related to the daily life of most students, and it is in line with the real society. It can guide students to write in real context, let them get more contact with the writing scenes and contents in real society, and improve students' real language communication ability and ability to use language in practical situations. This part reflects the regularization of after-school English communication training.

Part 3b of Section B in each unit of junior high school English textbook for Grade 9 of People's Education Press is designed for writing sharing activities, most of which are designed to write letters by using the textual knowledge of

this unit in specific situations, in addition to writing articles or stories with specific requirements, such as the theme writing of "describing people or things" in Unit 14 and "Lucky | Unlucky Day" in Unit 12. Figure 3-4 shows the design of writing activities in Unit 6, Grade 9.

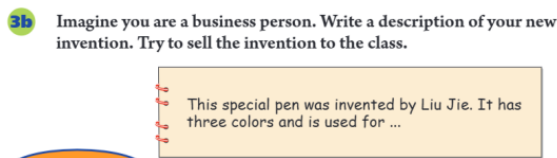


Figure 3-4 is selected from Unit 6

3) Role-playing

Role-playing refers to providing students with a simulated real situation, in which students play their chosen roles and play them according to teaching needs and role characteristics. In the design of English teaching activities, role-playing is an activity that allows students to fully display their roles in English language in order to achieve better teaching results according to specific teaching needs. In the activity, students need to combine oral and body language, and apply the language knowledge learned in class appropriately. In this kind of activity design, students can learn new knowledge from chemistry, improve their practical ability to use language and improve their communicative competence. Real activity scenes can help students deeply understand the meaning of words and master their usage, and deepen their impression of language in real use. Similarly, English phonetics, grammar and other language knowledge should be studied in the context as much as possible, so that students can truly understand and master the language knowledge they have learned and use it correctly in communication practice. (Xu Dijia, 2007)

The content of each unit of the ninth grade English textbook of junior high school People's Education Edition is Role-play the conversation. The activity design is basically carried out in the form of two partners, each with a corner. On the one hand, role-playing activities can enhance the participation of students in the classroom, so that all students can participate in the use of language, on the other hand, it is conducive to mobilizing students' enthusiasm for learning language. For example, unit 3 could you please tell me where the restrooms are? The requirement of this topic is to ask about the location of the bathroom and distinguish the different English expressions of "bathroom" in different countries. Figure 3-5 below is a dialogue illustration of role-playing in the textbook.

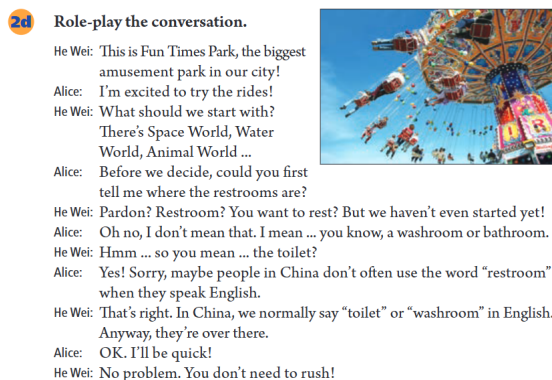


Figure 3-5 is selected from Unit 3

To sum up, there are a large number of communicative activities in the ninth grade junior high school English textbooks published by People's Education Press, which meet the requirements of contextualization of teaching content, practicality of teaching materials, diversification of teaching methods and regularization of extracurricular English communicative training, and embody and apply the communicative principle in the design of teaching materials activities.

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

Through the above research, it can be concluded that there are a large number of communicative activities designed in the ninth grade junior high school English textbooks published by People's Education Press, and each chapter is evenly distributed, which can meet the needs of students' language learning in class and the actual use of language; Discussing the design of communication activities, role-playing activities and writing sharing activities can not only improve the communication of teaching material activity design, but also enhance the interest of teaching material content, so as to cultivate students' interest in learning and improve their language communication ability. From the function of activity design, discussion and communication, role-playing and writing sharing have their own characteristics, which can improve students' pragmatic competence from different aspects. Judging from the basic characteristics of the activity design of the textbook, the concept, content, subject, mode, requirements and functions of the activity design of the textbook basically meet the requirements of the English Curriculum Standard for Compulsory Education, and it is very scientific and practical.

As the transmitter of subject knowledge, the organizer and implementer of teaching material activity design, teachers should effectively implement the activity design in teaching materials. Li Guanyi (1989) advocated that communicative activities such as role-playing and language games in communicative teaching methods should be used for reference in actual English classroom activities. Communicative teaching method emphasizes the authenticity and "a lot of input" of language. Therefore, the language materials used in teaching should be real styles in life and should not be divorced from students' real life, and the teaching content should be richer and more extensive, paying attention to the introduction of different registers. Activity design should provide students with specific situations, and should not be divorced from language situations for mechanical language training. Basic language units, such as words, phrases and sentences, have meaning only in a certain context. Without context, language units have no communicative function. Contextualization is the basic premise of English teaching. Any language knowledge that is taught out of context can not achieve the ideal teaching effect, and it is impossible for students to master the communicative function of language in actual situations. (Xu Dijia, 2007)

Teachers should realize that it is an arduous task to improve junior high school students' language communicative competence. Teachers should try their best to provide students with richer language situations and materials, and design some communicative tasks in the arrangement of after-school activities so that students can continue to learn English language knowledge and language use strategies after class. Communicative language teaching emphasizes that language teaching should be activity-centered. Therefore, in the

classroom, we should try our best to simulate all kinds of real situations in real life, and choose real and life-oriented language materials, so that students can learn and develop language in all kinds of real activities. In order to make students truly become the main body of classroom learning, we should mobilize students' learning enthusiasm, stimulate students' learning motivation and make them fully participate in classroom learning through activities such as situational simulation, role-playing and information transmission. Communicative language teaching believes that language errors are inevitable in the process of language learning, and teachers don't have to point out every mistake made by students. If the language errors don't affect the fluency and understanding of the language, they should be tolerant. Allowing students to make some mistakes that do not affect language fluency can eliminate students' anxiety in learning a foreign language, enhance their learning enthusiasm and improve their foreign language level. In addition, there are some problems that need to be paid attention to in the process of implementing teaching design: (1) Before implementing teaching design, teachers should think about the intention of teaching material activity design, so as to implement teaching activities with maximum efficiency, improve teaching efficiency and achieve the best teaching effect. We can't lose the original function of activity design for the implementation of teaching activities. (2) Flexible use of teaching materials. The activity design of teaching materials should be based on the specific teaching situation and students' level, and should not be mechanically copied. Before implementing the activity, we should take into account the feasibility of the activity and the students' acceptance and learning level. If necessary, we can make appropriate adjustments to the activity design and adopt the presentation method that best meets the teaching needs. (Yang Dongdong, 2021)

5. Limitations and Future Prospects

Although this paper chooses the junior high school English textbook published by People's Education Press, which is widely used in China, due to the limitation of time and energy, it is impossible to analyze and compare several other textbooks used more in China, and the conclusion is relatively simple. In addition, when classifying the communicative activity design of teaching materials, there is no more rigorous and meticulous classification method, which may make the activity design analysis more targeted. In the application of activity design, the author's practical experience and teaching experience are not sufficient, so I only analyze and suggest from the previous research and the elaboration of curriculum standards. If we can look at and analyze the design and practical classroom application of communicative activities from a higher angle, we should be able to put forward more practical teaching suggestions for teachers and English teaching. In the future study and work, we should strengthen the theoretical literature reading of communicative teaching method and analyze and reflect on it in practical application, so as to carry out more in-depth and detailed research.

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