

Exploring the Promoting Effect of English Knowledge on German Grammar Teaching: Taking Infinitive Structure as an Example

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Abstract: German is currently the second foreign language that many learners in China learn and master, but in the process of learning German, it will be influenced by the English language. In practical teaching, in order to enable learners to flexibly apply existing English knowledge, it has a certain promoting effect on German learning. The following will comprehensively compare and analyze the similarities and differences between Germany and England, explore teaching methods of German infinitive structure, adopt effective means, play the teaching role and value of English, and achieve good teaching results. German and English are two important languages, and there are some similarities and differences in the grammatical structure. This paper aims to compare the infinitive structure in German and English and explore their similarities and differences. First, we will introduce the basic definition and usage of the infinitive in German and English. We will then compare the differences in the grammatical form and usage of the infinitive in the two languages. Finally, we will summarize and discuss the application strategies of English knowledge in the teaching of German infinitive structure.

Keywords: Infinitive structure; English knowledge; German grammar; Teaching application

1. Introduction

From the end of the 20th century until now, research on third language acquisition has received widespread attention in Europe. Three languages mainly refer to one or more foreign languages that learners are learning in chronological order, in addition to mastering their mother tongue or first foreign language. Currently, most third language learners are adults with rich learning experience. In the process of learning a third language, it will be influenced by many external factors, including the learner's mother tongue, first foreign language, and foreign language learning experience and strategies. Most German learners in China use English as their first foreign language, while German is only a second or third language. The concept of trilingual learning has been flexibly applied in domestic German classrooms. There are three main types of German learners in China: first, undergraduate students majoring in German, second, students preparing for German exams for studying abroad in Germany, and third, students who consider German as a second foreign language or a second major in universities^[1]. Although students have different motivations during the learning process, German learning has certain common characteristics. It is necessary to improve one's language proficiency in a relatively short period of time, which carries significant pressure on learners. Grammar is the focus of teaching and has certain learning difficulties. Integrating English into German grammar learning can encourage learners to flexibly apply existing English knowledge and ensure better mastery of the language.

2. The Impact of First Foreign Language English on the Learning of Second Foreign Language German

In the 1970s and 1980s, people believed that the first foreign language had no profound impact on the second foreign language and did not pay attention to the phenomenon of third language learning. In 1991, Hufeisen conducted a systematic study on the learning of written expressions in German by non Indo European native speakers. According to relevant research, 9% of language errors were attributed to the mutual influence between German and English. On this basis, Marx (2000) also conducted a study on learners whose mother tongue is non Indo European, and subsequently concluded that the impact of learners' current English knowledge on German learning includes both positive and negative aspects^[2]. Compared with non Indo European language learners, learners of different native languages of the Indo European language family have a significantly higher impact on the learning of German as their first

foreign language, English. So Hufeisen (1994) believes that English can serve as a bridge in German language teaching. In practical teaching, the similarities between English and German can help students better learn German, but in the process, it is also necessary to pay attention to the differences to avoid being negatively affected by English.

After the Second World War, the influx of English loanwords influenced the production and life of Germans, especially enriched the vocabulary of German language, and brought new ideas to the language norms of German language. With the development of economic globalization, the language development in inclusive, in the development of fusion: the role of the European Union also cause language communication more and more frequent, language convergence and fusion is the trend of The Times, so the English foreign word vocabulary, as the fusion will be more and more introduced into the German, and have various effects on German. German and English belong to the Indo-European Germanic language families, which are based in Latin, therefore, German and English have great similarities in vocabulary, grammar and other aspects. Moreover, under the influence of history (such as the Second World War) and today's globalization, the penetration effect of English into German can not be underestimated [3]. When learning German, students will naturally compare their German knowledge with their English knowledge. Both English and German belong to the Germanic language family under the Indo-European language family, and the basic letters used in German and English are all from Latin, and the two languages have great similarities in terms of vocabulary and grammar. Therefore, in the primary stage of German teaching, reducing the interference of English and appropriately learning from English will certainly get twice the result with half the effort. Since English for students in German learning will inevitably influence, since students often compare in German learning German and English, so, we might as well face the reality, find the point of German teaching and English teaching, the influence of English on German learning guide for positive influence, make students more easily master German, at the same time, also can let German learning in turn to promote English learning.

In terms of letters, except for the three variable vowels and β , the other 26 letters are written exactly the same as in English, and even the individual pronunciation are exactly the same. As for pronunciation and spelling, English and German also have quite many similar pronunciation and spelling methods. Therefore, German learners may have a lot of convenience in memorizing German words similar to English, but occasionally encounter spelling difficulties, because German learners often apply English phonetic rules to German spelling. Of course, these errors will often occur in certain specific sounds and spellings. For example, in the German phoneme / j / the corresponding letter in English is y, so the German learners usually write with y instead of j. Therefore, it is common for beginners to see Jahr (Yahr).

German learners with an English foundation also have great advantages in vocabulary learning, because German has many words that are similar to English or even spell exactly the same as English. "Student" is "Student" in both German and English. In addition to English loanwords in German, there are also many words in English and German that have very different semantics despite similar writing forms. People often refer to these words that cause semantic interference as "fake friends". Most of the "fake friends" are purely "fake friends", meaning that the words have completely different meanings in the two languages. Such as German word Gift and English word gift though.

The grammar point of infinitive in both English and German languages, In the process of the infinitive explanation, the teacher first lists the examples of the verb infinitive in English, Such as: To get up early is necessary. infinitive subject He decided to buy a new car. infinitive object His wish is to be a policeman. infinitive table I have no time to go there. infinitive attribute went to town to buy some books. infinitive adverbial, Then let the students say the composition structure and usage of the English verb infinitive, After reading the example sentence, students can summarize: the English verb infinitive is composed of "verb infinitive symbol to + verb original form"; The verb infinitive can serve as the subject, object, table language, attributive and adverbial in a sentence. Then the teacher gives the German infinitive sentence in turn according to the components of the infinitive in the English example sentence. Let the students find independently that:the German infinitive is composed of "verb infinitive symbol zu + verb form", while the German infinitive component is separated from other components by comma;the verb infinitive can also act as the subject, object, table language, attributive and adverbial in the sentence, but the German verb infinitive structure "um...zu".

In different grammatical phenomena, there are certain differences in the similarities and differences between English and German, and there are also significant differences in the role of English[4]. In order to fully utilize the important role and value of English in German grammar learning, practical grammar phenomena should be combined. The following will take the infinitive structure as an example to analyze the application of English knowledge in German teaching.

3. Differences and similarities between German infinitive structure and English infinitive structure

The verb infinitive in German refers to the form of a verb that only represents the process or state of an action but not changes in numbers. Its constituent form is the verb with the suffix-en or-n^[5]. Therefore, it is said that the German infinitive is the verb listed in the dictionary. The German verb infinitive can be divided into infinitive and second or present and complete infinitive. The infinitive in English is a non-qualified verb in the form of to plus verb.

The infinitive in German and English can be used as a substitute for a clause under certain conditions, serving as the subject, object, attribute, or adverbial of a sentence.

Compared to clauses, infinitive structures do not have their own subject or finite verb, and many of the logical subjects of infinitive structures originate from the subject or object of the main sentence. Busha believes that the identity between the logical subject and the main sentence components of the infinitive structure is a fundamental condition for the use of the infinitive structure. When the infinitive is the subject of the main sentence, the logical subject of the infinitive is the object of the main sentence^[6]. For example, in Example A, the clauses corresponding to the German and English infinitives are "dass du nichts sagst" and "that you don't say anything", respectively. In addition, when the infinitive structure is the subject of the main sentence, the corresponding occupying subject is the impersonal, such as "es" and "it" in Example A. When an infinitive sentence is the object, the corresponding logical subject is the subject of the main sentence, or the object of the main sentence. For example, in Example B, the logical subjects of the infinitive are the main sentence subjects "er" and "he". In this type, the verb of the German infinitive subject is a verb with a four case object or a three case and four case double object, such as *vorhaben*, *auftragen*, *empfehlen*, etc. In addition, the German English infinitive can also be used as an attributive to modify nouns, such as example sentence C. Unlike the other three situations, the adverbial infinitive structure has its own semantics. This type of German infinitive includes "um... zu, ohne... zu, anstatt... zu", etc., and the corresponding logical subject is the subject of the main sentence. Some German and English adverbial infinitive structures correspond.

The German verb infinitive can be with or without: zu (to to English). When it does not carry zu, it is the verb form of English. In English, the verb infinitive usually has a to, but some verbs, such as *let* (*lassen*), are used together with another verb, then the latter infinitive has no to.

In summary, German and English have similar grammatical structures. The infinitive structure in German and English has the same syntactic function and can be regarded as the subject, object, attribute, or adverbial of a sentence. There are also certain similarities in the use conditions of the identity of the infinitive logical subject and the main sentence components.

The usage conditions of English infinitives are widely used in German infinitives, using the preposition "for" to expand logical subjects. English infinitives can also be applied to questions, and in these two types of situations, German requires the use of clauses to express.

In English infinitive can replace the noun clause, the words of guide noun clause are what, whether (if), who, what, etc., if clause cannot be changed to if + inf, and why cannot add infinitive with to; can replace with what, whether, what, who, replaced with indefinite, can be changed to: it + V. + inf. type.

In addition, the English infinitive can replace the object clause, usually consistent with the subject in the object clause and the object clause, or if the subject of the object clause is not consistent with the subject of the sentence, but the predicate verb in the sentence should generally be a verb with dual object, such as *show*, *touch*, etc. Replacement of the attributive clause is also a feature of the English infinitive. If the predicate verb and the antecedent clause form a logical subject-verb relationship, verb relationship or verb relationship, then this attributive clause can usually be replaced by the infinitive.

There is also an extended infinitive in German. It is based on the addition of the above two non-extended infinitive, also called a simple infinitive, such as *zu arbeiten* (work) is a simple infinitive, but *um zuarbeiten* (for work) is an extended infinitive, also called an infinitive phrase (*Infinitivgruppe*). This extended infinitive plays the role of various components in the sentence, which can be replaced by the corresponding clause, so it is also called the infinitive sentence.

Based on the above similarities and differences between English and German languages, teachers must properly organize students to compare the similarities and differences between English and German pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure in teaching practice. Students by finding the correlation and comparability of two languages on the one hand, improve the German language learning interest, increase the affinity of German learning, on the other hand, students also in the English and

German language similarities and the difference between effectively simplify the German language learning, make full use of the positive migration but also effectively avoid the interference error. Teachers avoid unnecessary repetitive work in the teaching process, and students also reduce the repetitive fatigue of language learning. Besides, in terms of learning psychology, learners with successful English learning experience also have the psychological advantage of German learning. They can apply the knowledge, experience and experience of English learning to German learning. Using the similarities of the two languages to overcome the strangeness of a third language, increased intimacy, to promote German-language learning. Also pay attention to the distinction of the differences, in order to avoid causing confusion; learners who experience pain in English learning and those who do not have English learning experience, need the necessary psychological counseling in the early stage of German study, help them recognize the differences in second and third languages and the advantages of German language culture, thus excluding negative psychological implications of the second language, gradually cultivate the interest in learning the third language, German.

In terms of way of thinking and language consciousness, because English as a second language preconceptions, most learners have initially formed the English way of thinking and language consciousness, so in the process of German learning, to use the same ear by language similar way of thinking and language consciousness, speed up the cognitive process of the third language. At the same time, the distinction and discrimination between the two is also essential, at least through the basic stage of German teaching.

Language is the carrier of culture, therefore, the learning of language is ultimately the identification and acceptance of culture. The national origin of the Angles and the Germans and the Germanic cultural traditions inherent in English and German languages make the English language culture knowledge have a great influence on German learning. People can not only regard the knowledge of English language and culture as the previous cultural knowledge reserve of German learning, but also make a necessary comparison between English culture and German culture in German teaching, so as to cultivate students' ability of cross-cultural communication between English and Germany.

4. Analysis of the application strategies of English knowledge in the teaching of German infinitive structures

Germany has always been at the forefront of science and technology, but due to the world influence of English, the works on science and technology are used to be expressed in English. Especially in the modern IT vocabulary and high-end technology industry, the popularity of English is quite high. However, the impact of this English language has also brought many opportunities for the learning of German language. For example, students who go to Germany use English in the interview process, which gives German beginners a certain buffer and transition opportunity: in Germany, they can directly communicate with each other in English, but these are only temporary. In the process of in-depth learning of German, they can directly apply the mode and experience of English learning. The pronunciation of German is relatively simple, which is an advantage compared with English. English grammar is more direct compared with German, and the two languages are complementary. When learning German, you can summarize the experience of learning English, find out the common problems of both, and learning German naturally becomes relatively simple.

There is no concept of infinitive in Chinese, but German infinitives can be compared to predicate subject object in Chinese, which refers to a verb or verb phrase directly serving as the subject or object of a sentence. For example, he forgot to close the door. The conditions for the use of German infinitives are relatively unfamiliar to domestic learners of Chinese as their mother tongue, so it is easier to turn to the familiar first foreign language English during learning. And there are certain similarities between English and German, which can help students better understand the usage of German infinitives. In the classroom introduction stage, teachers can compare English and German infinitive structured sentences to make students realize that there are certain similarities in the structure of German infinitives and English infinitives, which can be used instead of clauses.

In the teaching of German infinitive structures, English knowledge can be applied to the following aspects:

(1) Comparative analysis: Both English and German have infinitive structures, although there may be differences in usage and construction. By comparing the similarities and differences in infinitive structures between English and German, students can better understand the German language.

In comparative analysis, students can discover some similarities and differences in the infinitive structure between English and German. Firstly, both languages use infinitives to represent the indeterminacy of actions or states, such as "to eat" in English and "essen" in German. Secondly, both English and German can use infinitives as the object of verbs, such as "I want to eat" in English and "Ich möchte essen" in German. However, there may be differences in the construction of infinitives between the two languages. The infinitive in English is usually composed of "to" followed by the original form of the verb, while the infinitive in German is the basic form of the verb. In addition, infinitives in German are generally placed at the end of a sentence, while infinitives in English can be placed in different positions within the sentence. Through comparative analysis, students can better understand the characteristics and usage of German infinitive structures, and be able to compare and contrast them with English infinitives, thereby more accurately applying German infinitives.

(2) Knowledge transfer: Students who have a good grasp of English infinitive structures can apply this knowledge to their understanding of German infinitive structures. They can identify similar patterns and structures in both languages, which helps their learning process.

For students who are already familiar with English infinitive structures, they can transfer this knowledge to the understanding of German infinitive structures. By comparing the infinitive structures of English and German, students can identify similar patterns and structures in both languages. For example, the sentence 'I want to eat' in English can correspond to the German word 'Ich möchte essen'. Students can understand the infinitive structure in German by comparing these similar sentences and apply it to their own language expression. This knowledge transfer can provide students with a foundation and help them master German infinitive structures faster, as they already have background knowledge of similar grammar patterns and structures. In addition, this knowledge transfer can also improve students' learning efficiency, as they can utilize existing knowledge and experience to become more confident and targeted in learning new language structures.

(3) Vocabulary expansion: English and German have many cognate and borrowed words. By identifying the English infinitive form of a word, students can easily infer its corresponding word in German. This can greatly enhance their vocabulary and help them construct German infinitive structures.

(4) Sentence construction: English users are accustomed to using infinitive structures to construct sentences, such as "I want to eat" or "She needs to study". This familiarity can be applied to the teaching of German infinitive structures, where students can learn to construct similar sentences in German, such as "Ich möchte essen" or "Sie muss lernen".

(5) Comparative analysis: By comparing the infinitive structures in English and German, students can identify specific challenges or differences that may arise when using infinitives in German. This comparative analysis can help students avoid common errors and have a more accurate understanding of German grammar.

The differences between English and German will bring certain difficulties to learners' German learning. Therefore, in teaching, teachers need to actively mention these phenomena and remind learners to avoid confusing English knowledge in German learning. For example, teachers should emphasize that there is no guiding preposition in German like "for" in English, and the guiding phrase is the use of an infinitive logical subject. The most common error currently is 'Er lief zu schnell für mich, um ihn zu fangen.' (He ran too fast for me to catch him.). In this case, clauses can be used to express in German.

Since English for students in German learning will inevitably influence, since students often compare in German learning German and English, so, we might as well face the reality, find the point of German teaching and English teaching, the influence of English on German learning guide for positive influence, make students more easily master German, at the same time, also can let German learning in turn to promote English learning.

5. Conclusion

In recent years, the study of third language acquisition has attracted increasing attention. The three languages mentioned here do not specifically refer to the number of languages, but are currently learning one or more languages other than the learner's mother language and the second language already mastered. At present, the first foreign language for most German learners in China is English, and in this case, German is a typical third language. Therefore, based on the western Germanic branch, which belongs to Indo-European languages, having a close connection in the history of language and years of English learning experience of German learners, the second language English is bound to have a significant

impact on the acquisition of German in the third language. According to the above article, in the process of teaching German infinitive structures, teachers should recognize that English as a first foreign language has a certain positive impact on learners' German learning. On the basis of English knowledge, learning German infinitives can effectively reduce learning difficulty, promote students' better understanding and mastery, and provide corresponding cases for the teaching of other grammar phenomena. In the actual grammar teaching process, teachers should master the similarities and differences between English and German in different grammar phenomena, apply existing English knowledge to German teaching, deepen understanding and memory, emphasize the differences that are prone to errors, and improve the quality and efficiency of German teaching, achieve good teaching results, and make learners become high-quality talents.

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