

# Similarities and differences of English teaching methods between China and Germany

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**ABSTRACT.** *For China and Germany, the commonly used teaching methods are three-dimensional teaching method and holistic teaching method. There are differences and similarities between the two teaching methods in language theory and understanding of language. It is a typical teaching method in the world. The research and analysis of the similarities and differences between Chinese and German English teaching methods will provide a useful reference for the improvement and reform of English Teaching in China.*

**KEYWORDS:** *China, Germany, English, teaching methods, similarities and differences*

## 1. Introduction

With the acceleration of globalization and the rapid development of society, the demand for English talents is increasing day by day. How to cultivate English talents to meet the needs of the society and the market has always been the focus of primary school English teaching reform. However, it seems that the cultivation of English talents is always in a passive state dominated by the market [1]. The root cause is that our curriculum management model, classroom paradigm and assessment methods of language skills are insufficient. In a sense, English education is utilitarian. English education has a history of nearly one hundred years in the history of Chinese education. The current English education plan in China's primary schools has repeatedly stressed that teaching needs to focus on students' independent thinking and innovative ability. It is not difficult to see that the cultivation of English talents should have a long-term vision, comprehensive skills training and high-quality education as the basis of English education, and strive to cultivate innovative talents for sustainable development. In order to achieve this goal, in the final analysis, it is necessary to update the concept of education and teaching [2]. As the leader of European economic development, Germany has taught English in primary schools for more than 100 years. From curriculum design to management

mode, from teaching methods to evaluation system, English courses are taught in German primary schools, which embody the people-oriented education and teaching concept. In this paper, we will compare and analyze the primary school English Teaching in China and Germany from three aspects: curriculum management model, classroom paradigm and language skills assessment, in order to stimulate the reform of primary school English Teaching in China [3].

## **2. The present situation of English teaching methods in primary schools in China and Germany**

### ***2.1 The current situation of English teaching methods in primary schools in China***

With the deepening of the internationalization process, the society has higher and higher requirements for English skills. According to statistics, more than 70% of urban primary schools have English courses, while rural primary schools only account for 30%. There are more than 130 million primary school students in China, which shows that 50-60 million primary school students have started to learn English, but the learning time varies [4]. China's demand is to open as soon as possible, usually starting from the third grade at the latest. However, in China, there are many places starting from the first grade of primary school, some starting from kindergarten or even preschool education, and some are in Grade 5 or grade 6. In this way, the educational opportunities offered seem unequal. But most of the formal English knowledge is taught in the third grade of primary school. From this point of view, China pays more and more attention to English learning, but the effectiveness is still too low. It involves the use of English teaching methods, especially in primary education. Because the psychological development characteristics of primary school students are completely different from that of adults, they usually show the characteristics of unstable and unbalanced attention, poor independence and emotional fluctuation. Therefore, in the course design, we should pay attention to the cultivation of temperament, pay attention to the experience of learners, encourage them to actively participate, avoid monotonous and repetitive practice, increase formative assessment scores, make full use of different teaching environment and methods, and create teaching environment boldly, so as to improve their communication skills and language awareness. At present, China's three-dimensional teaching mode teaching methods are as follows.

#### **(1) Three dimensional teaching mode**

Learning mode is the functional framework of learning activities supported by theory. It can be constructed on the basis of some teaching theory, and also can be summarized by practical experience. This makes it a bridge between theory and practice, and also a way to study both. The essence of the three-dimensional teaching mode is to establish a complete, rich and interactive teaching mode in the curriculum system by using new educational ideas, new technical means and new teaching methods, closely connecting teachers and students, teaching and practice

teaching, teaching and evaluation [5]. It has aroused people's attention to the expansion and extension of teaching time and space, the vertical and horizontal opening of teaching content, the richness and diversity of teaching methods and the comprehensive effect of teaching, making the whole teaching process have three-dimensional texture and dynamic. Professor Zhang Zhengdong's "principles and models of English stereoscopic teaching methodology" takes an open approach to the application and Realization of ideas, so that everyone can construct an appropriate learning environment according to the three-dimensional point of view. Different teaching technology can be selected and created by subject and subject teaching model. From the basic point of view and theoretical basis of the three-dimensional method of English teaching, we can see that the three-dimensional model of English teaching is open and can be constructed and reproduced according to the specific situation and the development of practice in the teaching process.

### **(2) Classroom teaching with teaching mode**

Generally speaking, the three-dimensional teaching method is more detailed, and its teaching process is usually subdivided as follows: before class - class bell, formal class. Among them, the formal class has evolved into three stages: teaching words, teaching texts and doing exercises.

### ***2.2 Current situations of English teaching methods in German primary schools***

The text is a comprehensive material for language learning and phonetic improvement. Training on listening, speaking, reading and writing should be carried out around words. Therefore, text teaching is the main topic of primary school English teaching [6]. According to the increasing trend of the length and difficulty of reading in recent years, it is necessary to strengthen the teaching of text reading. Practice has proved that the text teaching mode of "sentence pattern neologism phrase sentence structure, interpretation, translation practice" can no longer meet the requirements of cultivating students' ability to analyze, solve problems, think and evaluate and use language. In this regard, the author believes that the overall teaching is more suitable for the characteristics of primary school English text teaching. Now the author will talk about the experience of the whole teaching combined with teaching practice. The main feature of holistic teaching is to guide students to understand and summarize the content of the article at a macro level, and then analyze the general meaning of paragraphs, and then learn the structure of sentences and vocabulary on this basis. The focus of classroom teaching is learners, and the focus is to tell students to use what they have learned to participate in language activities and gradually develop their practical language skills.

The whole process is a general understanding and generalization of the text. Decentralization refers to reading the article in detail as much as possible and solving the difficulties and key points in the text. Teaching focuses on understanding the whole article, not just the "linguistic points" of the article. In order to express the model clearly, the author tries to illustrate it by examples. Take lesson X in the first volume of the textbook for primary school English people's education press as an

example. The short story introduces age with the help of dialogue. Teachers can introduce different ages, syntax, sentence patterns and age-based cultures in different countries by asking questions or discussing them. This will help students understand the whole article and deepen their memory of the whole article.

In a word, the whole teaching method should be focused on learners as much as possible so that learners can participate in various activities to stimulate their learning motivation. The task of teachers is not to explain the text word by word, but to organize and design various activities according to the needs of different levels, so that each student can actively participate in teaching activities. Teachers can use different methods according to the specific situation to get the best results.

### **3. Similarities and differences of English teaching methods in Germany and China**

#### ***3.1 Curriculum management mode based on comparison***

English Teaching in China basically focuses on improving basic language skills in theory, but in fact it is aimed at the demand of talent market. In the "English curriculum syllabus for English Majors in primary schools", it is emphasized that the English curriculum for grade one and grade two is a "basic stage", and that grade three and grade four should "continue to improve basic language skills". It is also clearly pointed out that "English learning in primary schools has a solid English foundation and extensive cultural knowledge, as well as in foreign affairs, education, economy, business and culture Ability to use English in chemical, scientific and technological, military and management departments. Other jobs are part of the goal of training English talents. As a result, many primary school English courses provide relevant vocational courses. Many language workers have made this statement in order to expand students' knowledge and cultivate interdisciplinary talents needed by the society. In fact, such courses are usually overwhelming and affect language knowledge courses. At the same time, in some primary schools, these courses are shown as extracurricular expansion courses, but many of them are "compulsory texts", and students' autonomy is very small. If vocational courses aim to consolidate oral English skills and improve humanistic quality, such as British and American literature, translation, linguistics, etc., they can only be further studied in higher grades. Due to the limitation of the total teaching hours, the course is very insufficient. Students not only lack the basic knowledge of language, literature, culture and so on, but also cannot meet the basic professional requirements, and it is difficult to achieve enough level. In addition, almost all primary schools have specialized colleges offering vocational courses, such as the above-mentioned "law", "foreign trade" and "tourism", and these schools also offer public English courses. Therefore, setting up appropriate vocational courses for English majors may not enable students to acquire solid professional skills, but it will waste resources. The characteristics of German primary school English curriculum are first "specialization", then "extensive". Its "professional" approach is reflected in the fact that students begin professional education as soon as they enter primary school.

English Majors in German primary schools are roughly divided into three main areas: language, humanities and education. The whole learning process is divided into three stages. The first stage is the basic stage, and the second stage is the improvement stage. After passing the mid-term examination, you can enter the third stage of learning. No matter what direction he has a complete curriculum; he must eventually become truly professional.

"Breadth" refers to "breadth" in German primary school English teaching, which is mainly reflected in optional and additional courses. Regardless of the learning field, the selected learning content must be related to English proficiency and language professional knowledge. It not only emphasizes the depth of language learning, but also pays attention to the breadth of learning and cultivates students' general practical skills. Another meaning of "broad" is "Relaxation", which is a relaxed learning atmosphere created by humanistic management mode. Students can plan the whole learning process independently. Students not only have complete autonomy to choose courses, but also can choose class time and lecturer according to their own preferences, and decide the order of courses according to their own situation. Therefore, its curriculum and management mode is based on the actual needs and interests of students, so that students can really expand their knowledge and deepen their professional knowledge from multiple angles. It can be seen that German primary school English education fully embodies the professional teaching concept of the course. It fully embodies the open, humanitarian and personalized management teaching concept. Compared with German primary schools, the management mode of English Majors in primary schools in China is relatively simple, without individuation, and the curriculum is complex and more practical; and it requires our English majors to study in school for a long time. However, the specialization and depth of knowledge structure are not enough, the perception of language and culture and the cultivation of practical skills are not enough. The real effect of talent training is relatively low.

### ***3.2 Comparison based on classroom teaching paradigm***

The paradigm of English Teaching in classroom refers to the generally accepted teaching method as English teaching or traditional teaching method. Since the reform and opening up, foreign language teaching in China has lasted more than 30 years. Over the past 30 years, China's foreign language teaching reform has made great progress. Chinese primary school language curriculum is also developing rapidly, but there are still many problems in the classroom teaching paradigm, which are worthy of reflection and discussion. Although Chinese primary school English learning classroom paradigm has developed into "from teacher-centered teaching paradigm to student-centered classroom teaching paradigm", this transformation "still stays in a few places and is in the initial transformation". Although there are still different teaching methods and teaching modes, it is a kind of research practice, but it is impossible to get rid of the teacher centered teaching paradigm. In recent years, more and more teachers begin to try multimedia or web-based teaching, and create multimedia training materials with vivid images. The increase of information

in classroom teaching makes teaching more intuitive, but not all of these procedures can produce ideal effect, and some students even feel disgusted. The reason is that many teachers only regard multimedia as hardware equipment, which can be used as a tool to change classroom teaching mode; some teachers just give textbooks to students. As training materials, the past "textbook based publicity" has become "training based publicity". Some teachers even organize problem discussion and have a dialogue or debate in class. However, these activities only appear in the classroom as specific learning links and are teacher related activities. Students' learning mode is clearly manifested as individual learning. There are few discussions or interactive collaborative learning activities between teachers and students. The participation of students in the classroom is limited. In essence, the classroom is dominated by teachers, with educational content as the main element, which is consistent with this classroom teaching mode. Teachers are lecturers and commanders.

English courses in German primary schools are taught in the form of lectures / basic vocational courses, seminars, small discussion courses and practical courses. However, its overall teaching mode is based on students. "Participation" and "interaction" become the common characteristics of all courses. In the case of seminars, this kind of course is mainly taught through lectures. The whole process includes task introduction, group preparation, individual task guidance, topic introduction, discussion and feedback on Evaluation letters. Before introducing the topic, teacher tips will be provided to the group after class. The rest of the steps are performed in the classroom. There won't be more than five teachers in the classroom. After discussion, the students participated in almost all the activities in the classroom. To provide students with greater discourse power, fully embodies the modern foreign language teaching concept of taking students as the main body, so as to cultivate students' learning autonomy and creative thinking. Teacher student interaction scenes are more common in teacher lectures. In addition to the teacher to ask questions to students, students can stop to ask questions at any time in the teacher's teaching. Sometimes, there may even be very heated disputes between teachers and students or between students. It is this kind of participation and interaction that creates a democratic atmosphere in teaching and enables students to enjoy autonomy in learning. In such a classroom, students' autonomy and internal motivation have been fully enhanced. Moreover, teachers' teaching materials have never been designed as exquisite "training materials". The outline and vivid illustrations on the screen will be replaced by the theme. What attracts students is not the vivid pictures, but the knowledge itself. This kind of participation and interaction will conflict between "teaching" and "learning". In this atmosphere, the desire for knowledge and pragmatism has been formed. In this paradigm of classroom teaching, the teacher is the "next" student. It's three-dimensional and multifaceted. The awareness of the cultivation of learners' language ability from different perspectives essentially reflects the people-oriented education and teaching concept and the learner centered classroom teaching mode. Students actively participate in the whole learning process rather than passively; the learning process is the pursuit of knowledge, not the pursuit of utilitarianism. On the contrary, the main English class teaching paradigm tends to be single and flat. The lack of

democracy, humanistic environment and pragmatic spirit in teaching makes it difficult for students to understand and cultivate their independence and innovation consciousness.

### ***3.3 Comparison based on the perspective of language competence assessment***

Examination is a way to confirm English knowledge. At present, all kinds of English tests in China have greatly promoted English learning. However, with the continuous improvement of social needs, some examination problems gradually appear which is not conducive to the development of students' language skills. The scoring system has not been widely used in academic evaluation of primary schools in China. In their first year of study, English linguistics graduates must pass the following examinations: (1) entrance examination; (2) each required examination in each semester. The above examinations are closely related to the future development. They are usually a unified closed book examination. The main part of the examination is objective problems, including listening test and written examination. The reason is that more certification means more education opportunities. This is one of the important factors that affect the utilitarian teaching of English in primary schools in China. However, how many times in these examinations, and in what sense can language ability and practical skills be proved? German primary schools adopt academic grade credit system. All examinations include oral and written examinations. The paper is used for subjective examination. It can be seen that German primary school English curriculum does not have to pass a variety of tests frequently, and there is no repeated examination, so more energy can be spent to acquire knowledge and improve practical skills. Although the course and all course content are applicable to the entrance examination. However, these tests are subjective tests, and all the questions are about all aspects of cultural content related to students' language ability. Therefore, all teaching activities are aimed at cultivating and developing students' comprehensive skills. The essence of teaching goal is to make students have the skills and level to pass the entrance examination. In our country, English learning test is too frequent, and the test is often repeated and similar. These complex and similar tests make students tired, but also improve the working environment of teachers. Numerous and repeatable tests will inevitably lead to the disadvantages of examination oriented education. Due to overemphasis on obtaining different test scores and various entrance examinations, students' extensive and flexible range of knowledge and ability to use the language in practice are very limited, resulting in a large number of "deformed talents" with "high scores but low abilities". This is obviously contrary to our original intention of language learning and language education.

#### **4. Enlightenment of German English teaching method to China**

##### ***4.1 Professional market positioning***

Indeed, the expression of "education outline" is based on demand analysis. Because of the large demand for English talents who understand the relevant social direction, "zaris" puts forward a complex talent training mode - "professional + direction". However, practice has proved that "students take courses in the fields they choose, which inevitably extends the class hours. In order to learn more than one different direction at the same time, we need to increase investment. Otherwise, it may lead to the lack of solid foundation for English learners, while the professional knowledge in other fields is only learning, which is a little superficial. The combination of these two majors is still a special level. The compound innovative talents are the main demand of all kinds of talents in the 21st century. However, we understand that "combined talents" should be "single professional and multi skilled" talents, which means that the composite talents must be "technical talents" first. Therefore, we should strengthen the in-depth theme learning of English, namely, the advanced learning of language, literature and culture. Only with deep professional knowledge can we deal with the rapidly changing talent market. In the high stage of German English education, the curriculum emphasizes the humanistic level, and their talents are professional who are proficient in English and culture.

##### ***4.2 Utilitarian orientation of examination***

In order to pass the two exams effectively, many students prefer not to study other related professional courses, nor to train skills such as "listening, speaking, reading and writing" during the examination due to the blind exaggeration of the role of the examination and the final examination. At the same time, 80% of the test questions in the examination are standardized and objective questions, focusing on the study of students' memory. Therefore, students' learning method is mainly mechanical memory method, which lacks the ability to exercise logic and critical thinking. This is also one of the main reasons for "speculative absence". Utilitarian examination will certainly bring about utilitarian learning aiming at success, while students' learning ability will only be more and more worrying. Therefore, it is necessary to change the concept of examination, optimize and perfect the scoring system. First of all, it is necessary to strengthen the monitoring of language skills development in the learning process, and make a greater assessment of the process. Secondly, it is necessary to establish a multiple evaluation model to reduce the number of repeated examinations. We should strengthen the reform of the examination form combining oral examination with written examination. Finally, we should expand the evaluation scope of humanistic and thinking ability, and increase the weight of practice to minimize the negative impact of testing on teaching.



#### **4.3 Stereotype of teaching paradigm**

English centered stereotyped teaching has seriously restricted the development of students' independent learning and critical thinking ability, and has become one of the main reasons for the "speculative absence" of Chinese English majors. We should change the single plane teaching mode to create a multi-dimensional teaching model. In order to transform as many courses as possible into topic based training, it is necessary to reform the traditional content and teaching methods purely based on language, and focus on topic research instead of topic research, so as to promote language training. Make students improve their language skills in purposeful learning. Cooperative learning and scientific research should be promoted both in class and after class, and learners' personal advantages should be used to develop independent learning. This ability, problem-solving ability, creative thinking ability and practical application ability will cultivate the comprehensive quality of learning sustainable development ability and social cooperation ability. Therefore, the German classroom teaching paradigm such as holistic teaching is worthy of reference in China.

#### **5. Conclusion**

To sum up, the most important concept in German primary school English teaching is "people-oriented". This concept is the key to the reform of English education in China. Only by establishing innovative management concept and pragmatic and peaceful humanistic environment can we fundamentally complete the reform of curriculum management mode, classroom paradigm and language skills assessment method, and create a new learning system, so as to cultivate sustainable and innovative English professionals.

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