The Revelation of Situational Language Teaching in English Teaching at Middle Schools

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ABSTRACT. *This paper elaborates on the revelation by using SLT. At the beginning is the introduction includes significance of SLT and some problems existing in English teaching at middle school. Following the introduction is the main part of this paper, which contains the definition, five forms lingual description, role-playing, visual illustrations, game adoptions and musical affection and three steps choosing suitable situation according to the question, giving some introduction according to students' performance and then solving problems by utilizing the situation about SLT. The writer gets some effective revelation after analyzing the application of SLT in English teaching from its forms and steps. SLT inquires the situation which is substitute to make the students feel easy and enjoyable, pleasant and peaceful, and fresh from all aspects in the new knowledge understands. It is regarded as an adoptable teaching method by correctly choosing and creating the teaching situation although there are some disadvantages in using SLT.*

KEYWORDS: *Situational Language Teaching; application; revelation*

1.   Introduction

With rapid development of science, technology and globalization, English has become a world language. Meanwhile, the competitions make English language become more and more important in this society. So it is significant for students to learn English.   In order to help students to improve the English learning ability, many teachers try to use different methods in English teaching. Different teaching approaches have been put forward by linguists and language teachers, especially in

the twentieth century. According to many predecessors' experience, for example, Davies Paul and Pearse Eric, Situational Language Teaching (SLT) is one of the most useful teaching methods for middle school students. This paper mainly tends to explore the revelation from the application of SLT in English teaching at middle schools.

1.1. Significance of SLT in English Teaching at Middle Schools

Since the purpose of teaching a foreign language is to enable learners to use it, and then it should be listened, spoken, read and written according to a realistic situation. Drilling of words and sentence structure or making the most out of the substitution table, will inevitably lead to unreality, boredom, and the remoteness of the language. So it lies in the fact that the structure should be presented in a situation where they can be used.

"SLT takes the Direct Method idea of presentation and practice using objects, pictures, and demonstration a step further, doing presentation and practice within a single coherent 'situation' whenever possible."In the SLT, language in the teaching situations should be realistic, all words and sentences must grow out of some real or imagined situations. Thus, the meaning of the words will be bound with a situation where they are used. Therefore, even if the classroom environment is limited the teacher should put practice into pretending to be from a picked up from outside the classroom situation.

1.2. Problems Existing in English Teaching at Middle Schools

Improving the teaching methods is not only the main efficient path for increasing students' interests in English, but also for strengthening the quality of English teaching. Nowadays, English teaching has been made many progresses, but there is no method definite perfect in English teaching. There are some problems which obstruct to improve the quality of English teaching. Firstly, some teachers use cramming method of teaching. The teacher speaks only all the time and requires students to take many notes all the time. Students accept limited knowledge so passively that they don't have enough time to think independently, absorb rapidly, and consolidate. This teaching model drags students into a vicious circle. Secondly, the teaching purpose of some teachers is just to pass examinations. Thus students' brains are brimming with all rules and regulations of grammar or structures. In this case, the knowledge students learnt is too circumscribed to use into the real life. Thirdly, some teachers are sick of teaching because of teaching too many years with the same approach which is too mechanical to arouse students' interests. At the same time, students are fed up with this teaching model which is following the beaten track. So in order to salve those problems, some researchers who engaged in English teaching try to find effective teaching method according to the problems above.

2. The Application and Revelation of SLT in English at Middle School

Since the purpose of teaching English is to enable the learners to use it, then it must be listened, spoken, read, and written in suitable realistic situations. Drilling words and structures or making a maximum of sentences out of substitution tables

would inevitably lead to the unreality, boredom, and remoteness of the language process. So it lies in the fact that structures must be presented in situations in which they could be used. So it's essential to learn more details about SLT.

2.1 The Definition of SLT

This method was developed in the 1920s and 1930s by British applied linguists who were not entirely happy with the Direct Method. It continued developing up to the 1970s. It shares many views about language and learning with the Direct Method, and is equally opposed to the Grammar-translation Method. In its origins, it was partly a response to the weaker aspects of the Direct Method, and partly a development which arose from theoretical concepts in British linguistics, especially the idea that language can be properly understood only in the context of real situations of use.

SLT came from the Constructivism theory which was put forward by J.Piaget and others. This theory is a good way for students to become initiative and constructive by associating knowledge with the real life. Constructivists believe that learning is always combined with background of social culture. A set of new cognitive learning theory was produced after the constructivism theory and SLT. SLT is an approach developed by British applied linguists Albert Sydney Hornby in the 1930s to the 1960s, and which had an impact on language course which still being used today. According to Hornby, SLT is a method in the teaching process that teachers create a certain situation to introduce certain emotional color to a vivid image of the main scene. It attracts students to experience a certain attitude and helps students to understand the material. Hornby thought the core of SLT is to stimulate the students' emotion. In China, the study of SLT began in 1978 by Li Jilin. There are many books focus on SLT wrote by Li Jilin and some experiments about SLT were created. Undeniably, the researches of SLT have promoted the educational development in China. It's also made important contributions. In order to promote the development of SLT and enrich the theory and practice, Li Jilin pointed that the new methods for research should surmount traditional methods, broaden the range of study and intensify the content of study. There are some researchers' focuses on the study of SLT in English too. Wangqiang is a representative teacher in this field. Emotional and cognitive activity interaction principles are also used in SLT. The

emotion takes three functions which contain motion, strengthening and adjustment for learners to cognizance new things.

2.2 The Application and Revelation of SLT from Five Forms

The Chinese educator Li Jilin put forward that there are five forms of SLT which are lingual description, role-playing, visual illustrations, game adoptions and musical affection.

2.2.1 Lingual Description

Wu jinye has been put forward a principle that is language and situation should be combined in English teaching. SLT pays more attention to connect intuitional material objects with lingual description. The lingual description refers to using slide show, power point or some material objects to show text details, and teacher gives explanations or offers tapes in the meantime to help students understand contexts well. It plays an important part in guiding students to cognize new things that teachers give some lingual description to students when the situations appear. The lingual description makes students be personally on the scene so that helps students improve the sensory ability. Lingual description is also a kind of teaching skill that is a fusion of feeling with the natural setting. It offers a kind of so comfortable and pleasant atmosphere for students that help satisfying teachers' desires on strengthening teaching results and students' aspires of learning more knowledge. This teaching skill has special functions in English teaching at middle schools for helping students to cultivate sensibilities, open and enlighten thinking and develop imaginations.

For instance, teacher describes such a situation, in which a man who lies down on the road with many blood and near a motorcycle, and one car lies across the road near motorcycle. There are many people gather round there. Students start to imagine this situation after teacher's description. The more details teacher talks the better students understand. Then teacher can try to invite voluntary students to establish some dialogues based on this situation. It is better for both of teacher and students to offer more vivid language description during students understand teaching content. In students' book for junior students at middle school, unit seven

(see figure1) is "how do you make a banana milk shake?" It's a good method to guide students to make a banana milk shake by lingual description when the teacher tells students "how to make a banana milk shake", he firstly tells students peel about three bananas and cut up them. Secondly, students put the bananas and ice cream into the blender. Thirdly, pouring the milk into the blender. Next, students turn on the blender. The last step is drinking the milk shake. Students listen to teacher's description to image or make it after class. The following is the picture to show the steps to make banana milk shake:

How do you make a banana milk shake?

Step 1: Peel about three bananas.

Step 2: Cut up the bananas.

Step 3: Put the bananas and ice cream into   the blender.

Step 4: Pour the milk into the blender.

Step 5: Turn on the blender.

Step 6: Drink the milk shake.

2.2.2. Role-playing

Role-playing refers to the changing of learners' behaviors to assume a role, either unconsciously to fill a social role, or consciously to act out an adopted role. Depending on how a role-play is designed and set up, it can be used for a wide variety of purposes. Frequently, role plays are used to offer a chance to practice the language of particular situations, they can also be used to practice particular areas of grammar, sets of vocabulary, functional language and even features of pronunciation. They may not even have a specific language focus and can be used to provide opportunities for students to practice their speaking and listening skills. Role-plays are simple but important way of extending the range of useful practice.

For example, teachers use the theory of Presentation Practice Production (PPP, see figure2) model to lead activities of talking role-play in English classes. According to Wang Qiang, the theory of PPP belongs to Task-based approach and comes from the theory of Constructivism.   There are three main stages

Presentation, Practice, and Production, which help students learn more efficiently. The presentation stage involves explaining the aims of the lesson so that students know what they will learn. It is also during this stage that the teacher explains the new language, including both meaning and form, and how to say or write it correctly. A good presentation will be understandable, interesting and in a context the students can understand, such as a song, game or story. In a good practice stage, language will also be in a context which children understand. It is at this stage that error correction is the most important. The final stage is the production stage. It helps motivate children to communicate with the new language. Children should have the opportunity during this stage to experience with the language, for example they can use the names of animals to make a story. The teacher doesn't need to correct too much during this stage, but observe the students and give feedback at the end. Not all lessons need all three stages. This is simply one way to help children learn new language in an enjoyable and effective way.

There are three main points in this form. The teacher uses this PPP cycle to lead an activity of talking role-play in Unit 1 My name's Gina (see figure 3) from the book *Go For It* which is a textbook for grade seven in the first term at middle school.

In the presentation step, the teacher gives students a self-introduction. Teacher says "My name is Sally and nice to meet you!" Students say "Nice to meet you, too." Teacher presents teaching material in this step. The teacher should give more simple introductions to more single students to motivate students to use it even if many students have already known the teaching material. Then teacher guides students to read the conversation. In the practice step, the teacher lets students do some controlled dialogue practice by pair work or group work. Student A says "My

name is …" Student B says "I'm …Nice to meet you." Student A says "Nice to meet you, too." This step is to practice according to teaching material. In the production step, the teacher gives students free time to find other friends in whole class for playing different roles. At this step, students have free time to use English language to help them find new friends in the classroom. They must learn to produce new sentences to get more information by their former knowledge.

According to this typical lesson, role-playing can be one part of PPP model. Every talking activity should be based on a situation, so that students can use new knowledge naturally to reach the final goal of the teaching.

There are many good reasons for using role-plays in class. First, role-plays help students cope with real-life situations, commonly used expressions, force them to think "on their feet". Second, role-plays help students work together as a team or group, and communicate in order to understand each other, because role-plays are not simple acts of reading or reproduction the information from a piece of paper. Third, role-plays can be adapted to the needs of the students. They may use specific vocabulary for specific situations, as learning English is sometimes done for a specific purpose. Fourth, role-plays give students more responsibility in their learning. Fifth, role-plays offer students the chance to evaluate their learning progress and their level of English. In a word, Role-play is a useful tool not only for developing language skills, but also for increasing sociocultural knowledge and intercultural awareness.

There are two points should be paid more attention in this teaching model. The activities of participators are for all students. Role-play activities are not only for the excellent students, but also for ordinary students. At the beginning, teachers must pay more attention to students' interests about English. In activities, teachers should ensure that everyone has the role, all have a discourse, so that every student's English ability has been a different increase in each role-playing activities. The reflection and conclusion of teachers should be in time. It's better for teachers to give conclusion and evaluation in time after the show is finished, and point out advantages and disadvantages. Encouraging students to get better achievements is also necessary and important at this time. Teachers can set some simple prizes for inspiring all students.

2.2.3 Visual Illustrations

As a discipline, illustration sits somewhere between art and graphic design. Of course, for many practitioners it can feel closer to one end of this spectrum than the other, but in the search for an all-embracing descriptive term, illustration is frequently referred to as a graphic art.

Illustrations take different function in different fields. There are three advantages of using illustrations that are arousing students' interests, improving ability of understanding, and offering special situation and topics. In the pattern of visual illustrations, picture is the main method for revealing content in classes. That is to say teachers try to simplify and visualize the texts by different pictures to reappearance the details of texts. Illustrations, barbolas and stick figures can be used to reappearance the texts. Illustrations play a significant role in English teaching at middle schools. First, illustrations draw students' attention in their sensory perception so that turning the ABSTRACT lansigns into concrete and substantial situation. The useful illustrations are same as an intelligible set of directions for students to understand texts. Second, illustrations that come from the daily life give students confidence and dependability for learning. To a certain extent, illustrations stir students' blood to the situations which they are familiar with and increase students' interests for English. Third, illustrations aid students to exorcise the strangeness in foreign languages and build common situations. No matter what the level of students likes illustrations could be power resources for students in English learning.

In a word, the function of illustrations is used far beyond their real value. Board drawing is a necessary method, too. Combined with real objects, gestures, or mime, board drawings can avoid a lot of lengthy explanation in the students' understanding or translation.

For example, there are some features in this illustration above (see figure4). Students can understand the words and meaning from the picture better. Students can understand people's mood from the facial expression in the first line. In second line, movements can be represented by visual action. The prepositions are presented by

the relationship between bird's nest and two birds. There is another example in books which is for junior two students at middle school. The title of this unit is what's the matter? It's better for teacher to use this visual illustration to explain the matters of each person. For instance (see figure 5), the girl with number one is using a handkerchief to over her nose. The doctor knows that she has caught a bad cold. In addition, the boy with number two is clutching his stomach with his hands. So the doctor knows that the boy has a stomachache. The visual illustration offers concrete form to an ABSTRACT concept to help students to understand texts easily. In short, visual illustrations play a vital part in SLT.

2.2.4. Game Adoptions

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English offers a definition for "game" that is an activity or sport in which people compete with each other according to agreed rules. "A basic skill in teaching English as a foreign language is to be able to prepare, set up and run a single classroom activity, for example a game or a communication task or a discussion."This is the method that teacher try to turn the boring language into vivid and receptive to understand by using some appropriate games in English teaching. In this way, teacher creates the abundant situations for language communication so that students can band games and knowledge together.

The game adoptions in English teaching emphasize the students' entity in teaching and learning process. This issue is at the heart of SLT, a concept which has been defined from three perspectives.

First perspective, which applies usefully to situations in which students can specify discernible needs for learning English, is that of asking students to contribute to the overall design of course content and the selection of learning procedures. Second perspective on learner-centeredness is that of students contributing to the design of language learning activities (Clarke 1989b), an idea which would certainly ensure that the purposes of games were well understood. The idea has been taken up by Campbell and Kryszewska who describe it as "learner-based" teaching and state its main principle.

The third perspective on learner-centeredness is that of encouraging learners to take on a greater degree of responsibility for their own successful learning, not only by contributing to course or activity design in the ways described above, but also by continuing their learning outside class.

In short, there are some advantages for using games in English teaching at middle school. Firstly, it increases the motivation and enthusiasm for learning English so as to increase efficiency of learning. Secondly, it syncretizes the relationship and narrows the gap between teacher and students. The sense of trust and friendliness can be established during the teaching process. Thirdly, it rallies all students in the whole class. The games adoptions require all students join together cooperate with others. It is a good way for students to achieve that they understand and cooperate with others during the games adoptions in learning process. Games have become crucially important for English language learners and teachers not only because they provide enjoyment and relaxation, but also encourage students to use their language in a creative and communicative manner. In many games, students are required to cooperate to achieve the goal and most students enjoy cooperation and social interaction. It is believed that when cooperation and interaction are combined with fun, successful learning becomes more possible. To conclude, no matter how differently games are described, one cannot underestimate their pedagogical value both in teaching and learning a foreign language.

For example, the game "Making New Words" was usually used in English teaching to create more interesting situations at middle school. Firstly, the teacher writes A to Z all 26 letters on cards and per card with two letters. Then teacher mixes all cards together and gives the rules about this game. Secondly, teacher divides students into some groups. Lastly, each group draws out 10 cards to reform new words. The more new words students reformed the better they are. For, example, if students choose those letters: A C E F J K M O P F D S T Q L N X W Y Z, so they can   be   reform: "me" "face" "map" "fact" "mop" "ten" "pea" "fast" "most" "steam" "pop" and so on. Teacher gives some gifts to students for encouragement when the game is finished. There is another example in books which is for junior three students at middle school. The title of this unit is "You're supposed to shake hands" (see figure

6)

The goal of this unit is to learn what do people do when they meet for the first time? Guiding students to learn the customs form different countries. The first step, dividing students into three groups stand for Korea, Mexico and Brazil. The second step, the teacher combines lingual description and role playing to a game so that lead students to learn different customs for greeting for the first time. For instance, Korean is supposed to bow. Brazilian is supposed to kiss. Mexican is supposed to shake hands. The third step, the teacher gives a question "what are people in Korea supposed to do when they meet for the first time?" Then students of Korea group are supposed to bow. All students practice in this way to master this point.

According to the teacher's experience there are some points should be paid more attention in English teaching. At first, good discipline is ensuring the efficiency of teaching. Secondly, teacher should pay attention to property of participation, that is to say, teacher makes sure that every student participates in the game and has their own roles. Thirdly, flexibility and direction of games' chose are important. The last point is purposiveness. It's better for teacher to know the goals of games and try to reach the goals and guide students to get some revelations after finishing games. Therefore, it is important that teachers should not see games as time fillers or tools designed for fun only, but integrate them into their foreign language teaching programs. It is possible to come up with many descriptions proposed by various researchers about the nature of games.

2.2.5. Musical Affection

"Songs on tape, video or perhaps played on guitar in the classroom are often used as a 'filler' activity to change the mood or peace of a lesson."Sometimes teacher creates active situation by playing music to help students understand details better. The music not only can be chosen in the tape or video, but also sung by teacher or students even created by teacher. Teacher can choose different kinds of music according to different situations in order to reach the teaching goals.

For instance, teacher plays a song be What You Wanna Be which sung by Darin Zanyar before teaching the new words of occupations. Then teacher choose some

students to say what occupations they have heard in this song. At last, teacher repeats the words such as "doctor" "actor" "lawyer" "singer" slowly and point out the occupations that mentioned in the song. After that, teacher gives expatiation about those occupations.

There is another example for explaining SLT by musical affection (see figure 7). Unit six is "I like music that I can dance to" in the students' book for junior three students at middle school. The target is to master the simple relative clause in this unit. So it's a good method for teacher to play lyric music, classical music, jazz or other kinds of music to students. Different music offer different situations for students. So it's easier for students to learn boring grammar in a relaxed atmosphere.

There are some advantages were summarized by using music in English teaching. Based on the rhythm and rhyme of music, students enjoy acoustically about the situation by listening music. Students get away from the single and unattractive atmosphere by enjoy music. At the same time, they remember the new words in a buoyant mood in special situation.

However, there are two points should be paid attention according to experience when using music in English teaching. Firstly, the teaching content and situation should be harmonious. Secondly, it is significant for teacher to control the time of playing music. Neither too short nor too long of playing time should be.

2.3. The Application and Revelation of SLT from Three Steps

According to Li Jilin's point, there are three steps to use SLT. The first step is to choose suitable situation according to the questions, that is to say, using questions drag students into situation. The second step is to optimize situation. In other words, this step is giving some introductions according to students' performance. The last step is to apply situation, that is to say, solving problems by utilizing the situation. The writer gave an example from Mr. Zhang who teaches at a middle school to explain the steps of using SLT in English teaching about direction prepositions, for example, "in" "on" "above" "below". The second example is also from a teacher Miss Li who teaches the spoken English by using role-playing.

2.3.1. Choosing Suitable Situation According to the Questions

There are many situations can be chosen in SLT. Situation should be used in teaching process depends on the questions from students. At first, teacher analyses the questions raised by students. Then teacher try to use different methods to create appropriate situation based on the complexity of questions. Sometimes in order to answer one question, one or more methods can be combined to create one kind of situation. For example, Mr. Zhang knows about that some students can not use direction prepositions correctly in their compositions. So Mr. Zhang decides to use illustrations to explain the prepositions. So he prepared visual picture which contain the meaning of prepositions before class. In the second example, Miss Li want teach students to master dialog about bargaining transaction. So she prepares some fruits and price list.

2.3.2. Giving some Introductions According to Students' Performance

In this step, teacher guides students go into the situation and experience for themselves after deciding which situation will be used. It's better for teacher to give some introductions about the situation to students. In the first example, Mr. Zhang shows the first pair of pictures for students in front of class. Then require students to distinguish and remember those two illustrations.

In the second example, Miss Li prepares the dialogs and separates students into two groups. Group one plays as fruit-seller and group two is buyer. Group one says "Can I help you?" Group two says "Yes, I want to buy some apple." Group one says "Welcome, how about I choose for you?" Group two says "Good idea. Thank you. I need three kilograms" Group one says "Here you are." Group two says "How much will it cost overall?" Group one says "Fifty yuan". The last is farewell.

2.3.3. Solving Problems by Utilizing the Situation

Following those pictures, Mr. Zhang invites students volunteer to find this kind of things in classroom to describe "in", "on" and other words. Some students try to use chalks and boxes of chalks to explain those prepositions. Some students put

themselves into this situation and express they are staying "in" the classroom. Students understand the preposition better after this class. In a word, different situation can be used for salving different problems. In the second example, Miss Li leads students to take roles and practice dialog in an active atmosphere. It's a good way for students to remember the content in a special situation. The real purpose of using many methods to create situations is to salve problems that exist in students' learning process so that students can learn and master new knowledge efficiently.

2.4. The Revelation of SLT in English Teaching at Middle Schools

In accordance with all analysis above, there are some advantages of using SLT in English teaching at middle schools. The creation of situation can accelerate the link between English and things. It helps to understand the language they are learning. SLT is used in English teaching is to be in line with students' mental characteristic. For instance, most of students at middle schools are interested in some new things that stimulus to the sense organs. Those kind of thins draw more attention of students. Linking listening, thinking, speaking and doing together are unique method in SLT. For example, the dialogue teaching, which should pay more attention to the overall structure, makes the classroom lively and also makes the language expressing accurately and natural. It is a good way for making a big achievement that SLT offers an active atmosphere of learning for students. So it is an efficient method to use SLT in English teaching at middle schools.

There are some disadvantages in using SLT in English teaching. For example, it's bad for some students who are too shy to join in the role-play to use this method if teacher can not think over students' personalities and assign the role unreasonably. So learning in this way, even though the students can speak English fluently, there are some grammatical and structural errors that prevent students to master the language. Teacher should learn different teaching methods and try to use them to salve practical considerations. So it's better for all teachers to keep learning all the time.

According to all analysis in this paper, there are three main suggestions for teachers who want to become more and more professional in teaching. Firstly, it is necessary for English teacher to know about students' questions before teaching.

Secondly, teacher must try to know different teaching methods well and advance in teaching standard. Thirdly, teacher keeps learning and summarizing are significant processes for English teaching.

3. Conclusion

According to this paper, SLT makes it possible for students to understand ABSTRACT theory easily in the texts by adopting vivid language, role- playing, visual illustrations, game adoptions and music affection to create different situations. This method increases students' cognition efficiently. Starting off from the center of the textbook, the teaching form is depending on the teaching content and questions from students. Teacher establishes situation group by group surrounding the teaching goals in the whole teaching process. SLT inquires the situation which is substitute to make the students feel easy and enjoyable, pleasant and peaceful, and fresh from all aspects. Students can join in the situation so easily and comfortably that promoting their mentality activity expansion deeply. During the daily practical teaching, there is a key point is proved that the most important condition to get a better teaching effect is a bright and lively classroom atmosphere. That is to say, while the students' emotion is rising up they are deeply and easily accepting the learning knowledge. In short, considering the characteristics in English teaching at middle schools nowadays, SLT can be regarded as an adoptable teaching method.

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