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# Film-Aided Foreign Language Teaching Under the Constructivism Theory

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**Abstract:** In this paper, the foreign language teaching using movies is discussed under the constructivism theory. The movie has its characteristics in the foreign language teaching, especially in improving students' interest for foreign language learning, their ability and in understanding the social situation. In this paper, the method about how to arrange teaching activities using movies is presented.

**Keywords:** Constructivism Theory, Foreign Language Teaching, Film

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## 1. Introduction

With the development of the teaching methods, the students as the knowledge object have been given more ways to conduct information process under the constructivism learning theory. The basic idea of the constructivism theory is that students can construct their own knowledge system and actively participate in collaborative exploration activities.

Meanwhile, as a new trend of modern teaching mode, multimedia assisted teaching is reforming the traditional mode of classroom teaching. Multimedia assisted foreign language teaching is a new teaching model under the constructivism learning theory. "Situation", "cooperation", "conversation" and "meaning construction" are the four key elements in the learning environment. Multimedia technology provides convenience to effectively use of this teaching model in foreign language teaching [1]. This paper discusses the teaching of film as the multimedia resources. Psychological studies show that people's memory through different ways of memory effect is different: through the visual memory rate of 27%, the hearing of the memory rate of 16%, while the visual and hearing can be 67%. The film provides language communicative context and visual image for students to contribute to language learning [2]. And though the film the students can study language knowledge not from the traditional teaching mode, but quickly improve the teaching quality and their language skills. So, that the film is very necessary and beneficial to foreign language learning. The

foreign language teachers, as the designers, organizers and managers of the classroom, how to arrange the classroom teaching reasonably, is very important for students. In this paper will be discussed the more details about it.

## 2. Constructivism Theory

Constructivism can also be translated as structuralism, the earliest can be traced back to the Swiss author Piaget. He is one of the most influential psychologists in the field of cognitive development. His theory is full of materialist dialectics, and he insists on the study of children's cognitive development from the perspective of interaction between internal and external factors. He believes that children with the surrounding environment gradually build up the knowledge about the outside world, and finally make the development of their cognitive structure. The interactions between children and environment have two basic processes: assimilation and adaptation. Children through the two processes reach equilibrium with the surrounding environment, when children can use the existing schema to assimilate new information. Children's cognitive structure is gradually constructed through assimilation and adaptation process, and it has been enriched, improved and developed in the cycle of "balance - imbalance - new balance". This is Piaget's basic view of constructivism.

Based on the theory of Piaget, Kolberg made a further research on the cognitive structure and development conditions; Sternberg and Katz think the individual initiative

in the construction play a key role in the process of cognitive structure, and made a careful exploration on how to play the initiative of individual cognition in the process; Viggo J Ki founded the "historical cultural development theory" emphasizes the cognitive learning process under the social cultural and historical background. All of these researches have enriched and improved the theory of constructivism, and created the conditions for the practical application in the teaching process.

From about children's cognitive development theory, its content is very rich, and it can be summarized as: Student centered, emphasizes on the knowledge of the active exploration and discovery of knowledge significance of active construction. Constructivism holds that knowledge is not taught by teachers, but learners in the contexts that the social and cultural background, with the help of the study is the knowledge acquisition process of other people (including teachers and learning partners), man use the necessary learning materials through meaning construction [3]. Because learning is in a certain situation that social and cultural background, with the help of others and achieve through interpersonal collaboration process of meaning construction, so that the learning theory of constructivism "context", "cooperation", "communication" and "meaning construction" is the learning environment of the four elements. The multimedia teaching method based on relying on its own characteristics to help students to accept knowledge and complete the learning process.

### 3. Film's Characteristic

Filme vermitteln ihre Botschaft bekanntlich über das Bild bzw. über Bildfolgen und über den Ton, wobei die auditivgegebenen Informationen die visuellen ergänzen und effektivvoll unterstreichen oder auch konterkarieren, ironischer oder ahnungsvoll zuspitzen können, Daneben verfügt jeder Film über einen... spezifischen Spannungsaufbau, der sich bereits aus der Abfolge und kontextuellen Einbindung der einzelnen Handlungseinheiten ergibt. Durch die Wendungen der Geschichte, das Spiel der Akteure, Schnittrhythmus, Bildkomposition oder Toneinsatz, durch das, was die Kamera gerade zeigt und was ausserhalb des Bildraums passiert, kann die Wahrnehmung des Betrachters, seine Aufmerksamkeit gelenkt oder... bis zur Unerträglichkeit gesteigert... werden.

This passage from the German linguist Korte < Einführung in die systematische Filmanalyse > (U "film analysis entry") is mainly described: the movie is with the help of the moving picture and sound transmission to send the information to the general public. This also includes the three characteristics of the film:

1) Multimedia characteristics: the film is a direct appeal to the visual, auditory art that is an audio-visual art. It employs a wide range of pictures activities and audio to express the ideological content.

2) Moral features: each film has its own meaning. Each director adds his or her personal understanding of the world,

the reality and the others in his own film, forming the moral features of the film.

3) Symbolic features: in general, the director in the film will not directly express personal feelings, most of the time they are always with a certain thing or object to express their feelings.

## 4. The Relationship Between Language Learning and Film

In foreign language learning the hearing, speaking, reading and writing are four basic skills, and from the foreign film can improve the four skills. According to the research results of the body function of science, people to learn and master language usually begin with listening. The dialogue in the film is the real mother tongue, it is means the film is the most direct and effective way to cultivate students' ability of listening and speaking [4].

In addition, the film also helps to strengthen students' understanding of foreign national conditions. Because of the differences in customs, habits, human, environment and other aspects of traditional Chinese and foreign countries, we need to understand the Western culture and values, including the different thinking. The film is the best carrier of this culture, through the film to strengthen the understanding of the national conditions of foreign language, in order to achieve the purpose of communication [5].

## 5. Foreign Language Teaching with the Film

Through the film the teacher can in the classroom create a lively learning environment for language learning. The key is what kind of teaching methods and methods can be used in the foreign language film class. The key issue involved in film-aided foreign language learning is how teachers organize a film class [6]. Here the author shows the following aspects to reasonably organize a class:

### 5.1. Film Selection

In the foreign language classroom we should first choose a short film or classic movie clips. Chinese university classroom time is generally 45-50 minutes, and the general film under normal circumstances for 90-100 minutes. So we must be the film divided into 2 or 3 parts. As for the selection of the film content, according to the preferences of students to choose, mainly to the important information of the film and stimulate the interests of students [7].

### 5.2. Background About Film

Before going to the movies, the teacher introduces the difficult words and the related cultural background about the film to the students. For example, if it is a history movie, introduce the relevant historical background; if there are complex characters in the film, so it is necessary to introduce

the relationship between the characters; if the film is about the foreign culture and custom, the teacher should first explain the cultural context. In a word, it is necessary to help students understand the content of the film before the film, so as to arouse their enthusiasm and initiative [8].

### 5.3. *How the Does the Teacher Organize the Students to See the Film*

First, put the film only through the sound of film. It means, When the teacher is showing the film, there is only sound but no picture. The students can imagine the main content of the film through the sound or dialog of film. Second, the students see the film only through the pictures of film, und they guess the main meaning of the film through the pictures. These two methods are suitable for foreign language teaching. The first method focuses on listening practice and understanding, and the second methods focus on the visual understanding of the students' ability to understand the whole. Of course, the first method is more effective for foreign language teaching. But if you have enough time in class, you can do it in two ways.

### 5.4. *The Question About Film*

First the teacher can give the Students multiple-choice questions, ask the students to find consistent with the movie content; true or false. And after that is the free exercise: such as the recording of the film content, the main characters of the film review, the film's location and the plot of the summary, etc. in addition can also the open questions about the film, such as group discussions, the students can group discussion and elaboration, role play, the teacher can choose a more prominent conflict scene, students are required to reproduce this situation by performing form; movie reviews, students can own interested in film events and figures for comments and ideas.

### 5.5. *After the Film*

Through the above 3 steps students have mastered the basic content of the film, to achieve the purpose of foreign language learning, this time the teacher had better put the film again to increase their impression. Obviously, in the film related information can reach the vocabulary and cultural background in foreign language teaching in the teaching objective [9]; in the process of film screenings, by voice or video playback process of listening and comprehension abilities training of students; by setting reasonable exercises, on the whole process of foreign language teaching effect evaluation, in order to let students know the foreign

languages and culture of the foreign countries.

## 6. Conclusion

Constructivism theory can be used from Film in the foreign language teaching [10]. According to this theory, film is a very good teaching material in foreign language learning, which plays an important role. The teacher should choose the film according to the level of the students, and design the relevant questions about listening speaking reading and writing in the classroom, to make students' English level get all-round improvement; on the other hand, can strengthen their understanding of western customs and culture. At the same time, it should be noted that an important aspect of language communication is the communicative function of language and social environment. That is to say, people learn in a certain social environment.

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