

Application of Register Analysis in College English Teaching

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Abstract. Language is a tool of social communication. Due to different communication situations, language will produce various variants in different degrees in the process of actual use. An important task of college English teaching is to combine the corpus provided by textbooks to guide students to analyze and identify register marks and improve language appreciation, so as to cultivate students' ability to use language properly and effectively, that is, the ability to correctly select register.

1 Introduction

Language is divided into refined and vulgar, and the style of the language must be consistent with the situation in which the language is used. In formal occasions, the corresponding formal style language is usually used, and in informal occasions, the corresponding informal style language can be used. This is the basic law of language use. Whether the language is properly used directly affects the progress of communication, and the use of the wrong register often hinders the realization of the purpose of communication, at least leaving a laughing stock, and at the most serious damage to the smooth progress of communication. The traditional prescribed grammar generally indicates the correctness and error of the language out of the environment of language use. The concept of register is proposed to avoid this tendency. It observes the laws of language use in different communication environments. Using the correct language does not only mean choosing words and making sentences according to grammatical rules, but also means choosing the appropriate style according to the needs of the environment. With the improvement of the overall level of English teaching, college students have accumulated a considerable amount of vocabulary, mastered a lot of grammatical knowledge, and possessed certain language application ability. However, due to the lack of a natural environment for language acquisition, and the emphasis on grammatical rules in English teaching in my country rather than on language description, there is no time to take into account style and rhetoric knowledge [1]. As a result, students' English expressions are not authentic and inappropriate register misuse. It can be seen that under the premise that the number of students' English learning is increasing, it is more necessary to pay attention to strengthening the quality of their English learning. An effective approach is to introduce register analysis into the process of college English teaching to make up for the inherent deficiencies in the process of students' English learning.

2 The theory of register analysis

Register refers to the variants of language that are differentiated according to different usage occasions and environments, and refers to the language variants that are used in a specific language environment and have certain language characteristics. Foreign linguists' research on style and register began in the 1960s. American linguist divided language into five levels according to the formality of language: frozen style, formal language Formal style, consultative style, casual style and intimate style. Halliday and Hasan [2] analysed register on the basis of functionalism theory, and they pointed out that there is a very close relationship between the use of language and the context of its use. Discourse field, mode, and tenor are three variables of situational context, which contribute to the formation of different situational types, resulting in different discourse types, that is, register [3].

In different language application contexts, English grammar, vocabulary, format and other aspects have their uniqueness. Register (discourse field, mode, and tenor) determines the appropriateness and coherence of the language environment and its use. Native speakers have the ability to select registers in common communication situations, but for students from non-English speaking countries, the choice of registers is not an easy task, because students from non-English speaking countries are often separated from English communication Learning English in a non-real situation, without the register discrimination ability that naturally occurs during language acquisition. Choosing the wrong register and confusing different registers are the most common mistakes foreigners make when learning another language [4]. Chinese students have two common mistakes in distinguishing English registers, and they tend to go to two different extremes. One is that the daily language is full of books. They believe that formal, elegant, and gorgeous words are high-level

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language and can be used regardless of the occasion. Another situation is that the stylistic awareness in written expression is weak, and the colloquial tendency is quite obvious. When correcting students' compositions, teachers have a feeling that most of the students' compositions are simple in words and loose in structure. From the perspective of style, the degree of formality is low, and colloquial text structures are quite common. With the improvement of English teaching level, college students have a relatively solid foundation in vocabulary, grammar and reading after learning English in primary and secondary schools. College English teaching is a new starting point, and it should reflect a new level. One of the differences between college English teaching and basic English teaching in primary and middle schools is to let students understand the principle of appropriate language use, improve language appreciation, and cultivate register discrimination ability.

3 Application of register analysis in teaching

The current college English textbooks all pay attention to extensiveness and diversity in the selection of materials. One is to pay attention to the diversity of themes, involving various aspects of language culture, politics, economy, science and technology, art and religion; Articles in different aspects such as formal style, general style, written style, spoken style and even theoretical style. Therefore, teachers can rely on the stylistic examples in textbooks to teach students relevant stylistic knowledge and cultivate their register recognition ability.

3.1 Analyzing and comparing text register markers

It is impossible and unnecessary for college English teaching to set up a special course of stylistics like the teaching of English majors. The teaching of stylistic knowledge is mainly carried out through the analysis and teaching of text content. Teachers introduce to students the identification of register markers and the classification basis of style through examples of pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax and discourse structure, so that they can recognize and master the basic style types. Generally speaking, articles on the subject of negotiation or daily communication are more colloquial and less formal. For example, the article "A Busy Weekday Morning" in the second unit of the first volume of *New Horizons College English* describes that Sandy had a dispute with his parents because of listening to pop music. The register marks of discourse, sentence structure, words and even phonetic level are very obvious. First of all, the structure of the article is very scattered. The full text is less than 700 words, but it consists of 26 natural paragraphs. Secondly, the sentence pattern is short, the language is concise, and there are many simple sentences and omitted elements. From the point of view of vocabulary, the appellation pragmatics use "daddy", "mom"; to express pause and transition use "Yah", "uh-huh" and other filling words; the selection of

other substantive words is also quite colloquial, such as cosmetics "make-up" instead of "cosmetic"; the phrases "click on", "blasted forth" and so on also have a strong colloquial color. In addition, the use of slang such as "bug", "stuff" also adds to the article colloquial flavor.

Relatively speaking, written language uses more elegant words, and the sentence structure is compact and well-organized, reflecting a higher level of language use, and the formality of the style is naturally high. The political essays, legal documents, contracts, and scientific and technological documents selected in college English textbooks have typical written style. For example, in the eighth unit of the fourth volume of *College English*, there are two texts related to environmental protection, which are popular science articles. The register mark of the text is mainly manifested in two aspects of vocabulary and sentence structure. There are three characteristics in the vocabulary of this text. One is the use of a considerable number of "long words" and "big words", such as "accommodation", "humanistic", "moderate", "livelihood", etc. Most of these words come from French and Latin, and the style is strong. The second is that there are many compound nouns, such as "greenhouse effect", "human disaster", "temperature range", etc. The advantage of compound nouns is that they can make the text compact and neat. At the same time, a large number of nominalized words are used in order to increase the information content of the text. Third, the use of prepositional phrases makes the article appear well-organized, logical and standardized, such as "in the name of", "on the grounds of", "to the point of", "in part" and other less used words in everyday language. From the point of view of sentence structure, each sentence is very complete without any omissions. There are especially many compound sentences, and the proportion of passive voice sentences is high. By analyzing the stylistic characteristics of the vocabulary and syntax of the text, students can gain a glimpse of the leopard, gradually acquire the ability to distinguish stylistic styles, and strengthen their stylistic awareness in the process of language application.

In most cases, what the students are fascinated by is only the common style, that is, the neutral style, that is, a style between the formal style and the informal style. The vocabulary of this style has a wider range of adaptation. It can be used in different styles and is the common core of the language [5]. Common language style is the mainstream of teaching content and the blueprint for students to choose phrases and sentences when writing. However, after all, language is alive and needs to reflect all aspects of social life, so there are various types of styles. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to analyze the stylistic features of the text starting from the register marks in the text, so that students can have a more direct feeling and understanding of the oral and written styles, informal styles and formal styles in combination with the corpus.

3.2 Distinguish and analyze the stylistic differences of synonyms

The identification and analysis of synonyms is the tradition of English teaching in our country, which runs through the whole vocabulary teaching. Most students are used to this teaching mode in middle school. This teaching method that emphasizes vocabulary analysis often stays at the superficial meaning of words, ignoring the analysis of the connotation and style of words. As a result, they only pay attention to the accumulation of words in language expression, and seldom consider the appropriateness of language use. In fact, an important reason why there are so many synonyms in English lies in the differences in styles endowed by different etymologies. The difference between synonyms derived from English native, French, Latin or Greek is usually a difference of style. English native words are mostly used in daily life, French words are mostly used in literary works, Latin words or Greek words are mostly used in academic works. English native words are simple and popular, close to conversational or colloquial style; French words, Latin words or Greek words are more bookish and mostly formal. The difference in style and color can determine the different usage occasions of synonyms [6]. For example, the difference between "begin" and "commence" can only be distinguished clearly in terms of stylistic meaning. "Begin" is the daily language of the nation, while "commence" is of Latin origin and is a formal official or academic term. Therefore, the inappropriateness of the sentence "He commenced to work" lies in the incoordination of style. H. W. Fowler made a detailed analysis of the usage of "commence" in the book *Modern English Usage*. He thinks that "commence" is suitable for the "beginning" of a certain historical event, religious activity or grand ceremony, such as: "commence hostilities", "commence operations and church ceremonies", etc. In the fifth unit text of *New Vision College English (Volume I)*, "commence the moves" is used to describe the author's "starting a historic jump" at the Olympics.

Obviously, the stylistic analysis of words is an important means to distinguish synonyms. The stylistic color of words is based on etymology. Unfortunately, there is no etymology or style annotation of related words in the list of new words in the current college English textbooks. In view of this situation, it is necessary for teachers to combine the analysis of synonyms in vocabulary teaching to briefly introduce some etymological knowledge to students and to distinguish the style categories of synonyms.

3.3 Pay attention to the register characteristics of practical style Pay attention to the stylistic characteristics of rational language and common sayings

Due to the diversity and extensiveness of the materials, some rational words and common sayings often appear in college English textbooks. At this time, teachers should not only guide students to pay attention to the correspondence and collocation relationship between

these words and other words in semantics, but also guide them to analyze the stylistic features, so as to prevent students from abusing slang and colloquialisms only in terms of meaning. For example: "have a ball" means "have a good time", "have another fish to fry" means "have many other things to do", "I'm broke" means "I have no money", etc. etc. Although each group of words has the same meaning, the former is slang and belongs to the informal style, so it can only be used in very casual occasions; the latter belongs to the common style and has a wider range of application. "Belongs to the common core part of the style, it is a common style and is suitable for all occasions; while "Cheers" in English has three expressions, that is, three styles: "bottoms up" (informal style), "cheers" (common style), "propose a toast" or "mire our glasses" (formal style); some students learn the expression "bottoms up" and use it everywhere regardless of the occasion, causing "register confusion" or "inappropriate choice of style" error.

Slang and colloquialisms come directly from daily social life. They not only permeate the style of daily conversation, but also appear in large numbers in popular literature and art. If used properly, slang and colloquialisms can add vividness and imagery to language, giving people a refreshing feeling. However, they change rapidly and have a high degree of colloquialism, and are considered to be the most unstable elements in the vocabulary, so they are difficult to grasp in use. When Chinese students learn English, they lack a natural language communication environment, and it is even more difficult to use slang and colloquialisms appropriately. For non-English majors, they should generally be required to avoid using rational language in their writing to prevent equating slang, colloquialisms and general synonymous expressions.

3.4 Pay attention to the register characteristics of practical style

In order to highlight the characteristics of English as the language of foreign-related communication, some college English textbooks particularly emphasize the practicality of communication content, and subtly integrate some business letters, thank you letters, notes, business cards, contracts, brochures, advertisements, job resumes, etc. In the exercises after the lesson, as a procedural language, the register characteristics of various practical styles are very obvious. Register analysis is the key to guide students to understand practical discourse. In some occasions, if you do not carry out register analysis on words and sentence patterns, it may cause obstacles in understanding and inappropriate expressions. For example, the complimentary close of a letter can be in the form of "yours lovely", "yours truly", "yours sincerely", "yours faithfully", etc., but their usage is strictly limited in register. The first three items are used for correspondence in the circle of acquaintances, while "yours faithfully" is used for official documents. Many students also use "yours lovely" when writing job resumes, which is a very inappropriate way of speaking.

Practical English has its specific stylistic features and structural patterns, often manifested as a condensed stylistic structure. Whether it is the title, the beginning, the body, or the end, there is a standardized pattern, and the use of words and sentence structures is relatively fixed. The formality of the style is higher, and the words are more elegant. After a certain example analysis, students will master it. However, there is a problem in teaching that students are not particular about their wording when writing in practical English examples, regardless of style, and cannot reflect the style characteristics required by practical writing. Therefore, the teaching of practical style should highlight the analysis and induction of register characteristics.

4 Conclusion

Register analysis has multiple teaching significance. First of all, introducing register analysis into college English teaching can improve students' language appreciation level and learning interest, and avoid monotonous and boring classroom teaching situations to a certain extent. The analysis and excavation of text register marks will stimulate students' enthusiasm for inquiry learning and enable them to deepen their understanding and thinking of foreign cultures on the basis of superficial language learning. Secondly, the linguistic analysis of synonyms can get rid of some entangled embarrassing situations in vocabulary teaching, so that students have a feeling of enlightenment in the process of vocabulary learning. More importantly, the English learning of non-English major students should be combined with their own majors. Most students will enter professional English learning after two years of basic English learning, such as business English, accounting English, journalism English, legal English, Computer English, medical English and so on. All types of professional English have their own lexical features, syntactic structures, and discourse frameworks, that is, different stylistic features. Professional English learning requires students to have a relatively solid language foundation and a certain ability of register analysis, and register analysis in college English teaching paves the way for their subsequent professional English learning.

Acknowledgment

This article is the research result of visiting scholars from Shaoguan University.

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