

# Production-Oriented Approach on ESL Listening and Speaking Teaching in College\*

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**Abstract**—Listening and speaking, as two of the four requisite skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), are the most important factors that influence communication. Nowadays, improving English listening and speaking ability has been called to the front in English teaching and studying. However, it is still found some unsatisfaction in the current listening and speaking teaching. Based on the traditional input & output theories, the college English listening teaching is often characterized by teaching new words and grammatical knowledge, while English speaking teaching emphasizes imitating and repeating too much. In the listening classes, teachers are instructors while students were often acting as passive receivers. Initially, listening was believed as a passive one-way comprehensive process, just like reading. This way of listening teaching severely frustrated students' initiative and hinders students' interest and creativity, which may obstruct students' speaking as well.

With the development of research on listening and speaking teaching process, it was gradually found that listening and speaking was an interactive process in which learners' production played an active and important role. Learning-using Integrated Principle in Production-oriented Approach (POA) laid a theoretical foundation for this discovery. Though researchers had done lots of research based on POA and English learning, few studies were conducted in listening and speaking based on Learning-using Integrated Principle. Therefore, the author tries to expand horizons on "POA on ESL Listening and Speaking Teaching in College".

On the basis of previous theoretic researches, the writer conducts an experiment by teaching English listening and speaking based on Learning-using Integrated Principle in POA. It aims to check whether the theory is effective in improving students' English listening and speaking or not. The author also tries to find out whether there are some differences between high-mark students and low-mark students in using POA in listening and speaking. 60 freshmen from two classes with the similar achievements in English Listening and speaking test, who major in English in Xi'an Peihua University are treated as subjects. The teaching lasts for twelve weeks. POA is used in one of the classes as the experimental group and the other class is the control group taught by common

used method (re-listening and imitating method called by the author in this paper). At the end of this teaching process, the two classes were asked to take the post-test.

After the experiment, it is concluded that POA can improve the achievements of students' English listening and speaking more effectively. And students with high-mark are good at using POA in listening and speaking process.

**Keywords**—production-oriented approach; Learning-using Integrated Principle; listening and speaking teaching

## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, both lecturers and college students have poured more energy into listening and speaking. While teaching college English classes, the author discovers that many students have difficulty in listening and speaking. They are unwilling to express themselves in English and have poor speaking strategies, so they are often taught to use some fixed structures to express some certain ideas. As for listening, they are trained to deal with all types of exams, listening to materials again and again until they can get the key words or useful information. Thus, the author adopts production-oriented approach (POA) and designs tasks that combine listening with speaking so that students listen with a purpose and speak with authentic language.

## II. PRODUCTION-ORIENTED APPROACH

Production-oriented Approach (POA) is a theory proposed by Wen Qiufang (2014), which is a characteristic foreign language teaching theory in China, targeted at medium and advanced foreign language learners. She originally put forward the Output-driven Hypothesis (2008), which emphasized that "the development of speaking, writing and translation abilities is not only the teaching objective, but also the driving source of listening and reading skills". In 2014, Wen Qiufang perfected the Out-driven Hypothesis and proposed the Output-driven and Input-enabled Hypothesis, stressing the interaction between input and output.

With several years' development of the theory, it is generally believed Production-oriented Approach consists of three parts: teaching principles, teaching hypotheses, and teaching-mediated teaching processes. If the system is properly used in college English teaching, especially

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listening and speaking, it will promote the teaching quality and students' English competence.

### III. LISTENING AND SPEAKING CONCERNING PRODUCTION-ORIENTED APPROACH

It is well known that listening & speaking is closely related to POA nowadays. Scholars have done many researches concerning POA and listening & speaking. Generally speaking, the important discovery is Learning-using Integrated Principle based on POA, which emphasizes the combination of learning and using language, in another word, in-put learning(listening) and out-put activity(speaking) should be tied closely.

"In the process of teaching, teachers should joint input and output, promoting the completion of the task, altering the undesirable condition of 'separation of learning and using', in order to realize 'using by learning, and learning by using', and finally achieve the integration of study and application."(Wen Qiufang, 2015:550)

The idea expressed by this sentence demonstrates the importance of Learning-using Integrated Principle in second or foreign language. However, traditionally, in the study of second language, the emphasis has been exclusively on the language to be comprehended, but not on the comprehension including the speaker and the listener. From this perspective, each word, each well-informed sentence, and every well-formed text passage is said to "have" a meaning. Meaning is often conceived to be "in" the utterance or text (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983).

### IV. RESEARCH PROCESS

A number of scholars have proposed that Learning-using Integrated Principle based on POA help people's understanding(learning) and expressing(using) of the world. To be exactly, in listening process, people will understand the topic and expressing their ideas better if they combine input and output process together.

Actually, discovering an effective way to improve students' achievement by employing POA into teaching process is what people should pay attention to. Thus, the author designs an integrated principle (input and output simultaneously) model by taking college students as subjects. The method was named by the author according to the listening & speaking process. Listening & speaking process generally includes listening, generalizing and expressing. Correspondingly, this teaching model includes listening stage, generalizing stage and expressing stage. This teaching method will be tested in this thesis by comparing with a re-listening and imitating teaching method, which is also named by the author based on the feature of such a teaching method.

The aim of this research is to find out whether this teaching method of putting POA into practice is effective or not. In the thesis, the author names this teaching approach as integrated principle teaching method. By this method, the teaching procedure can be divided into listening, generalizing and expressing. Generally speaking, the question is: Is this integrated principle teaching method

effective in college English listening & speaking teaching when compared with the re-listening and imitating teaching methods?

The experiment is carried out in Xi'an Peihua University. Two classes with the similar background of education and achievements are chosen as control and experimental group separately. These two classes are treated with two different teaching methods.

The author uses a pre-test to choose two parallel classes sharing the similar achievements at the beginning of the research. The author arranges post-test to examine the achievements of these two classes after a 12 weeks' study.

Two classes are treated with different teaching methods. Class One is named as the control class and Class Two is the experimental class. The class hour, the content and the teacher for each class are the same.

#### A. *Re-listening and Imitating Method*

In order to help readers have a better understanding of such a teaching method, some historically used method in teaching English are introduced.

Some researchers would like to call it traditional teaching method (Wen Qiufang, 2004; Li Dongmei, 2002; Wang Wei, 2006). However, it is not easy to give a general definition to traditional teaching method. Therefore, the author summarizes the feature of this teaching method, that is, re-listening and imitating.

The typical feature is that the teacher teaches new words, new phrases or new expressions firstly. Then, the teacher gives students a relevant or irrelevant topic to discuss. After the given period of time, some students would be asked to express their ideas, and then the teacher may summarize the ideas from some students, which may help the teacher finish the "lead-in" process (also the speaking in the class). And in the period of listening, students are asked to listen to the tape several times. Their answers are checked after listening. To better explain this teaching method, the author provides an example.

Class one is treated with this method. The teacher conducts the class in following steps:

- (1) New words, phrases and expressions: the teacher extracts the new words, phrases and expressions and explains them to students at the beginning of the class. Several minutes are given for students to remember them.
- (2) Topic-discussion: the teacher gives one or several topics and maybe some fixed structures, and then students can discuss topics with their group members. Several minutes later, student can express their ideas freely, or with fixed structures. In this process, if the students meet some difficulties in making themselves clear, the teacher may give them some hints or fixed structures and ask them to imitate.
- (3) Playing the tape: the tape is played for several times. In the first time, the conversation or the passage is

played uninterruptedly. In the second time, the conversation or the passage is played again but with pauses at the end of each difficult item. Students are asked to listen to the materials again and again until they can understand the content completely.

- (4) Checking the answer: the teacher would ask several students to read their answers to the class, or the teacher may give the answers to the student directly to help students check their answer.

In control class, listening and speaking are split. The teacher emphasizes more on the new words, phrases, expressions or some fixed structures. In speaking, when students cannot express their ideas, the teacher may give them some reminders or some fixed structures to help them imitate some expressions. In listening, when students don't understand the content of material, the teacher tends to play the tape again and again till the students understand the content completely.

### *B. Integrated Principle of Teaching Model*

This Learning-using Integrated Principle is based on POA and common teaching procedure. It emphasizes the interaction between speakers and listeners and the integration of input and output.

Integrated principle based on POA emphasizes the bonding of learning and using language. The input process (listening) and output activity (speaking) should be combined, and promote each other, which may help to overcome some disadvantages in present second or foreign language teaching. Integrated principle proposes to blend language learning and using into a whole, promoting the completion of output task (speaking) through listening to the text.

According to POA, input and output are not isolated and hence it is beneficial to students if we can design tasks that combine listening with speaking.

Based on this consideration, the author divides the procedure into output designing and input material selecting, teaching procedure designing and teaching strategies selecting. Based on POA, output designing and input material selecting should be considered together, while teaching procedure designing and teaching strategies selecting should be considered together.

#### *1) Output designing and input material selecting:*

Driven by all types of English tests, teachers usually assign listening comprehension to students, who apply mechanically fixed method to get the key information. Therefore, students tend to lose their interest with the tediously repeating listening exercises. Wang Chuming (2017) stated that "during the process of language learning, if learners are not exposed to relevant context, then they will not be able to apply what they have studied" , which is true in listening. Thus, when choosing the input material, it is essential to ensure the familiarity and enjoyment of the material so that students are put into an attracting situation. The material includes the recording fragment, the video clip, speech draft, news, etc. After the listening exercises, students

would be required to reproduce different context based on their understanding of the input material. According to the author's teaching experience and students' feedback, it is a good way to deal with the problem that students just passively receiving listening material without reprocessing it, and cannot think actively.

#### *2) Teaching procedure designing and teaching strategies selecting:*

To help students focus on the listening material, the teacher can encourage students to perform, which can help students to understand the content thoroughly. More specific speaking, students can act by taking different roles, drawing a picture according to what they have heard, or describing an instance by the sequence. For example, after the analysis of listening material, students would be given several minutes to draw a mind map briefly based on the conversation or passage, either by themselves or in groups. The teachers monitor the whole process and may discover that some students fail to include important details while others add too much unnecessary information. After students completing the assignment, the teachers select and share several mind maps with others. At the same time, the student or the group would be asked to give a presentation or rehearsal about the conversation or passage. At last, the teacher also shares his or hers relating to the conversation or passage. Thus, students are given the chance to perfect their mind map and their idea, forming a new cycle of input-output.

Output process is an indispensable part of language teaching. However, it is neglected in most studies. Output aims to consolidate what has been learned. Some of these activities may be related to input process (listening) while some may not be related to them at all but totally an independent part of the listening session. Output activities allow the students to "reflect" the passage.

In the author's class, she allows students do a listener-speaker interaction. During this period, they can work cooperatively within small groups to discuss, retell, summarize and so on. Students become more active in discussion and finish the task perfectly.

## V. CONCLUSION

This teaching activity was conducted and lasted for 12 weeks. These two classes were taught with the same text books by the same teacher. Class Two as the experimental group was taught under the integrated principle teaching model based on POA in listening & speaking teaching, which has been stated above. At the same time, the listening & speaking teaching on the control group was carried out with the re-listening and imitating method. The final test was carried out after the students had class for 12 weeks. The tests were taken at the same time which could ensure students in the same state of mind. All of the 60 students took part in the final test. The scores are analyzed with grouped t-test again to see whether there are some differences between the two classes. After the experiment, the author finds that:

Students in Class 2, who are taught with the integrated principle teaching model based on POA, score significantly higher and show great interest in listening & speaking, which proves this teaching model is effective in college ESL listening & speaking teaching.

It is beneficial to students if teachers can build a classroom where they are offered familiar and enjoying listening material, clear listening purpose and diversified speaking task. Then they can improve their listening strategies and ability through teachers speaking assignments and enhance their presentation skills, forming a healthy cycle of input-output.

The better applying integrated principle teaching model based on POA in listening & speaking, the higher achievement students will make. In teaching process, teacher should lead the students to activate or build material related POA.

Therefore the teacher should be well trained to apply POA in listening & speaking training.

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