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An Application Research of Krashen's Input Hypothesis to English Listening Teaching in High School

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Abstract: Listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing are crucial for every English learner. As one of those skills, listening plays an important role in daily communication and interaction. Moreover, listening is considered a receptive skill, and the process of input runs through the whole process of language learning. However, in the current educational setting, high school English listening is often not sufficiently emphasized. Krashen's Input Hypothesis focuses on the comprehensibility, interest, relevance, and sufficient amount of language input, which is important and necessary for English language learners, and which has implications for English listening teaching. This thesis attempts to reveal what problems exist in the English listening classroom and how teachers can teach English listening efficiently from the perspective of Krashen's Input Hypothesis.

Keywords: Input Hypothesis; listening teaching; high school English

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Among the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in English, listening is at the top of the list. River proposed that in daily life communication, 40%-50% of the time is spent listening, 25%-30% speaking, 11%-16% reading, and about 9% writing, which shows the importance of listening in language learning [1]. It can be seen that "listening" is the most commonly used language skill. In addition, "listening" develops before "speaking", and it is a necessary language skill for people's daily communication, which can give learners a large amount of language input, and it is also one of the indispensable conditions for language learning. However, experts, scholars and teachers pay less attention to listening classroom instruction and testing than to other language skills [2].

From the actual learning process, listening is an item that must be tested in the college entrance examination, so its importance is self-evident. The English curriculum has been updated according to the *English Curriculum Standard for General Senior Secondary Schools (2020)*, which changed the previous way of categorizing language skills from being described separately for listening, speaking, reading, and writing to elaborating on them at two levels, namely comprehension skills and expressive skills. The purpose of teaching is to develop students' English language skills, that is, to enable students to understand the information, opinions, emotions and attitudes conveyed in oral and written discourse through listening, speaking, reading, viewing and writing activities. Students are also able to utilize their knowledge to create new discourse according to different purposes and audiences. Listening, as an indispensable part of high school English teaching, is an important way for students to improve their language proficiency, and also a concrete practice to promote their overall development and core competencies.

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1.2. Purpose and Significance of the Study

This is a study of high school English listening teaching based on Krashen's Input Hypothesis, and its main purpose is to explore how to effectively combine the Input Hypothesis with high school English listening teaching according to the problems in high school English listening teaching, so as to improve students' listening ability and learning interest.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Krashen's Input Hypothesis

Stephen Krashen, an American linguist, put forward a theory of second language acquisition in the 1980s, which still has great influence today, and fully explains language acquisition and language input.

2.1.1. Basic Theory

The theory of second language acquisition is divided into five parts, namely, the acquisition-learning hypothesis, natural order hypothesis, input hypothesis, affective filter hypothesis and monitor hypothesis.

The input hypothesis, as the most important part of Krashen's theory of second language acquisition, analyzes the process of language learning and how it can maximize the effects of language learning. According to Krashen, formal classroom instruction is effective when it is the main source of comprehensible language input. In other words, when learners cannot understand in the natural language environment, classroom teaching can provide suitable comprehensible language input according to the learners' level. This viewpoint fully affirms the importance of classroom teaching in foreign language teaching, enriches the theory of foreign language teaching, and provides a reliable basis for language acquisition. At the same time, Krashen emphasizes that sufficient language input is the primary condition for language acquisition. Ideal effective input means that the difficulty of the language material can be understood by the learners, but also higher than the learners' current language level, which is the "i+1" model [3].

2.1.2. Domestic and Abroad Studies of the Input Hypothesis

Krashen's Input Hypothesis has drawn wide attention in the international academic community ever since it was first proposed. A large number of scholars and researchers from different countries have carried out extensive investigations, theoretical debates, and empirical studies on this framework. In his study, Gregg stressed the crucial role of sufficient exposure to language input for the success of foreign language learning, while further emphasizing that comprehensible input constitutes an indispensable condition for effective language acquisition [4]. At the same time, he warned that when input is excessively simplified, it may become an obstacle that limits students' opportunities to develop deeper language competence. Swain, from another perspective, argued that language learning depends not only on receiving input but also on producing output, and she highlighted that output—such as daily communication and the practical use of expressions—functions as a necessary complement to input [5]. Ellis suggested that neither comprehensible input nor the surrounding language environment alone can decisively determine second language acquisition, pointing instead to the significance of the learner's internal learning mechanisms [6]. Consistent with this viewpoint, Schutz also acknowledged the importance of cognitive factors, yet he reaffirmed that the input hypothesis continues to play a pivotal role in explaining second language acquisition and, moreover, provides valuable guidance that can assist foreign language learners in practice [7].

Since Krashen's Input Hypothesis was introduced into China, some experts and scholars, especially front-line teachers, have studied this theory. Research shows that to maximize language input in the classroom, two main measures should be taken. First, teachers need to provide comprehensible input materials for students at the right time.

Second, teachers need to effectively utilize classroom teaching aids and improve the setup of various aspects of listening. Krashen's input hypothesis provides a guideline for lesson preparation, suggesting that listening materials should be selected according to students' abilities and levels and should be of moderate difficulty. At the same time, some viewpoints argue that Krashen's input hypothesis overemphasizes the importance of input for foreign language learning, neglecting the process of language input and the influence of the external environment on language learning. Therefore, this theory still needs to be optimized and improved in the teaching process [8-10].

2.2. English Listening Teaching

Scholars of the traditional learning theory of English language teaching believe that learners' acquisition of language knowledge begins with the teacher's explanation, but in recent years, academics have given different definitions of English listening instruction based on in-depth studies of their theories.

2.2.1. Definition

English listening teaching is defined as the ability to provide comprehensible input, promote the construction of language knowledge, help students use English to communicate effectively, guide them to experience the joy of successful communication, enhance self-confidence in learning, and increase interest in learning English. According to the English Curriculum Standard for General Senior High School, teachers should provide ample speech practice activities in listening instruction so that students can effectively understand the speaker's attitude, intention, and emotion with the support of speech knowledge [11].

2.2.2. Domestic and Abroad Studies of English Listening Teaching

Since the end of the last century, foreign experts and scholars have realized the importance of listening in teaching and have carried out in-depth research on it. Among them, the most popular and recognized theories are those of O'Malley and Chamot. According to them, metacognitive, cognitive, and social and emotional strategies are widely used in learners' second language learning process. In addition, some other experts and scholars believe that listening strategies should be applied in the classroom [12]. They believe that language teachers should teach foreign language learners some basic listening strategies and skills [13,14]. With the development of science and technology, computer-assisted multimedia teaching is becoming popular in developed countries. Mendelsohn especially supports the use of multimedia as an aid in foreign language teaching. He believes that teachers should not only help students to practice listening, but also teach them ways of learning that allow them to access useful sources [15]. Rubin and Mendelsohn obtained the following conclusions through their experiments [15,16]. Playing video or audio recordings to students can greatly improve their comprehension of listening materials and enrich listening skills in the learning process. Although many experts advocate the introduction of multimedia into listening teaching, some scholars hold a different view. Rogers and Tschimer believe that multimedia is not omnipotent. To play the role of multimedia effectively, the theoretical foundation of foreign language listening and acquisition of foreign language learners must be consolidated [17,18].

Domestic research on listening strategies began in the 1980s. Early studies on foreign language majors and non-foreign language majors confirmed the effectiveness of listening strategy training in improving students' listening comprehension. Later research demonstrated the effectiveness of combining the training of metacognitive strategies with listening instruction. At the same time, computer-assisted multimedia teaching began to enter the classroom and developed rapidly. The feasibility of applying multimedia to foreign language listening teaching was proven in both theory and practice. Moreover, studies

explored “controlled learning” and “cooperative learning,” two widely recognized learning methods. Recent research emphasized that understanding the components of listening comprehension is crucial for adopting effective listening teaching strategies, which can increase teaching effectiveness [19,20].

3. Strategies for Applying Input Hypothesis in High School English Listening Teaching

3.1. Problems in Teaching Listening in High School

Many scholars have also analyzed the current situation.

Previous studies have pointed out several main problems in English listening teaching in high schools in China. First, the teaching process is rigid, unable to stimulate students' interest in learning, and the classroom lacks vitality. Second, the selection of input materials is often restricted to textbooks, which does not align with students' daily life and lacks appeal. Third, teachers often dominate the classroom, leaving students with limited opportunities for active participation. Fourth, listening instruction is mostly confined to the classroom, resulting in insufficient listening input outside class. Fifth, students do not master listening strategies and have underdeveloped listening skills. Additionally, the time allocated for English listening teaching in high schools is currently insufficient [21,22].

In addition, most teachers adopt the traditional listening teaching mode, in which teachers display key vocabulary and sentence patterns on the blackboard and mechanically play audio-answer pairs. The whole process is tedious and uninteresting, and the cultivation of listening strategies is neglected in the classroom, so that students only learn passively without mobilizing their initiative. Finally, teachers only use the listening exercises in the supporting exercises to test the students' listening level, which lacks scientific measurement standards. Under such a teaching situation, students cannot develop the habit of thinking about listening process.

3.2. Implications for English Listening Teaching

Krashen's Input Hypothesis emphasizes that language acquisition is most effective when learners receive input that is comprehensible, engaging, relevant, and abundant. This principle provides valuable guidance for high school English listening instruction in China, particularly in terms of selecting teaching materials and designing lesson plans. By applying the Input Hypothesis, educators can create learning environments that maximize students' exposure to meaningful language input, thereby enhancing listening skills and fostering greater motivation. The following sections outline practical strategies for integrating these principles into classroom teaching [23].

3.2.1. Focus on the selection of listening materials

When choosing listening materials before class, the principle of comprehensible input should be followed. First of all, teachers should choose some listening materials that are more interesting and related to students' real life. Interesting and realistic listening materials can attract students' attention to a greater extent and mobilize their learning initiative. In addition, interesting listening materials can reduce students' anxiety to some extent. Secondly, teachers also need to follow the principle of “i+1”, materials selected by the teacher can neither be too difficult nor too simple. Listening materials that are too difficult will inevitably weaken students' enthusiasm for listening learning, as they tend to generate anxiety, frustration, and a sense of helplessness, ultimately diminishing learners' confidence in their own abilities. However, if the materials are overly easy, they are equally unsuitable, since content that is too simplistic cannot effectively support the long-term goal of gradually enhancing listening comprehension. For this reason, teachers should carefully select materials that require a moderate amount of effort—those which students can understand after actively engaging with them—so that learners are neither

discouraged nor bored, but rather guided to make steady progress step by step. In addition to appropriate difficulty, the quantity of listening input is also of great significance. According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, the core principle of language acquisition lies in receiving a sufficient amount of comprehensible input, meaning that only when students are exposed to a large volume of meaningful listening materials can they internalize linguistic patterns and improve fluency. Hence, guaranteeing an abundant supply of listening resources becomes a necessary prerequisite for promoting listening development. Since material selection is the very first stage of implementing effective listening training, teachers must devote adequate attention to this process so as to ensure that classroom listening activities can be conducted more efficiently and produce better learning outcome [24].

3.2.2. Expanding the introduction of background knowledge

According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, improving the comprehensibility of language input serves as an essential way to advance students' language acquisition. The addition of linguistic and cultural background information can assist learners in achieving a deeper understanding of the target language. Each listening activity may encompass political, economic, cultural, and historical dimensions. Before engaging in practice, students are advised to acquire preliminary familiarity with the content, which enables them to carry out listening tasks more effectively and enhances the overall efficiency of practice. Hence, teachers should continuously enrich their knowledge base and reinforce their competence so that they can provide more effective pre-listening instruction to their students [25].

3.2.3. Maximizing multimedia resources and diversifying listening teaching approaches

Krashen's Input Hypothesis suggests that high-quality language input should capture learners' interest and maintain relevance. Accordingly, in listening instruction, teachers should fully leverage multimedia resources by incorporating English short videos, film excerpts, songs, and other types of audio materials to enrich students' learning experience. Teachers should give greater attention to the audio-visual integration of instructional approaches, not restricted to textbook content. They also need to break the monotony of listening pedagogy, fully activating students' different sense channels, strengthening the intuition of teaching, and making the learning outcome clearer, quicker and more effective. This instructional approach can build a language environment that is closer to real communication than traditional classroom settings and effectively enhance learners' motivation. At the same time, it facilitates students' transition from passive listening to active participation in the listening process, which is more conducive to strengthening the effectiveness of language input [26].

3.2.4. The combination of intensive and extensive listening

The traditional listening classroom adopts the teaching mode of "recordings - questions - answers", which is not enough for listening learning, and this will restrict the teaching effect of English listening. In most of the high school English listening classes, teachers will require students to pay full attention, and the high intensity of students' learning will easily lead to fatigue and even resistance. Hence, on the basis of intensive listening practice, it is also important to incorporate an appropriate amount of extensive listening. The materials do not need to be excessive, and the listening speed can be moderately adjusted, either faster or slower. The content should remain varied and engaging, with an emphasis on authentic English that closely relates to students' study and everyday life. It is also possible to make appropriate treatment of more difficult listening materials in the textbooks and convert them into generalized listening. While creating a positive and active atmosphere, subconsciously increasing the amount of input is more conducive to the improvement of students' listening level and enhancing their interest in listening [27].

3.2.5. Strengthen the guidance for students' listening strategies

The conventional listening classroom applies the model of "recordings - questions - answers", which is insufficient for listening development, and this will limit the effectiveness of English listening. In most senior high English listening sessions, teachers will expect students to maintain full concentration, and the heavy demand of students' study will often cause fatigue and even resistance. Therefore, on the basis of intensive listening tasks, an appropriate amount of extensive listening should be added. There is no necessity for excessive material. The pace may be slightly faster or slower. The content is abundant and diverse, and the main emphasis is on authentic English that is closely related to students' study and daily life. It is also advisable to suitably adapt more challenging listening passages from the textbooks and turn them into generalized listening. By fostering a lively and positive atmosphere, subconsciously enlarging the amount of input is more beneficial to the advancement of students' listening proficiency and stimulating their interest in listening [28].

4. Conclusion

To summarize, teachers should firstly grasp the difficulty and authenticity of the listening materials. This is the most important step before the listening training, which is related to the implementation of the next steps. Teachers need to choose the materials that are interesting and fit the actual life. Then, for those more difficult to understand, teachers should give an appropriate background introduction before class to enhance the comprehensibility of the listening training materials. In addition, teachers should strive to improve their classroom design and utilize online resources to provide students with a rich and interesting classroom. In addition, extensive listening practice is an important supplement for students to improve their listening level, so teachers must pay full attention to it and provide students with suitable extensive listening materials. Finally, teachers should give students guidance on listening strategies so that they can master listening skills faster and more efficiently.

In short, while improving themselves, teachers have to try their best to create a good classroom atmosphere so that students can improve their listening skills in an interesting listening classroom.

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