



The Input, Output and Interaction Theory in Chinese English Classroom Teaching

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Abstract. In developed societies today, people gradually realize the importance of learning English, but how to master the language flexibly still needs to be explored. This paper argues that there are many problems with English teaching in China and traditional teaching methods are still adopted. Therefore, based on the input, output and interaction theories of second language acquisition, this paper analyzes the contents of these three theories and puts forward some suggestions for improving English teaching methods in China. In view of these three theories, this paper will put forward improvement measures from three aspects of teaching materials, teachers' responsibilities and the teaching environment, so as to improve the teaching effect of English learning.

Keywords: Input hypothesis · Output hypothesis · Interaction hypothesis · English classroom teaching

1 Introduction

In the 21st century, international exchanges of science, technology and culture have become increasingly frequent, international friendly exchanges will also increase day by day, and the field of foreign exchanges will continue to expand. To adapt to the development trend and demand of globalization, the status of English has become higher and higher. In the past 40 years, the spread speed of English in the world is fast, especially in the following aspects. Firstly, the number of people who use this language is increasing. Secondly, the degree of penetration into society is deepening. English is the official language of the countries where 1.4 billion people live the world. One-fifth of the world's population can speak English. 70% of scientists in the world are reading English literature, and 90% of the information in the world's electronic retrieval system is stored in English. Everywhere this language goes, it absorbs the local language and culture and makes itself grow like a snowball. Therefore, in order to adapt to the rapid development of China and keep pace with the international community, it is very necessary for all of the Chinese citizens to pay attention to English and learn English. Among them, English classroom teaching is one of the most intuitive and effective methods in English teaching.

Many Chinese linguists assert that there are two big problems in Chinese English teaching [1–3]. In terms of teaching methods, Chinese teachers still use traditional teaching methods and reform is slow. “Back to the reality of English teaching in China, the

over-emphasis on grammar teaching methods leads to our students' inability to meet basic life communication after six or even ten years of English learning [1]." In terms of teaching content, Chinese teachers still focus on grammatical analysis while ignoring the most important part of language learning, which is communication. "Most foreign language teachers in China still adopt the traditional teaching method with grammar teaching as the main content, teacher's explanation as the classroom center and language knowledge acquisition as the learning purpose [2]." In general, the ideas in second language acquisition theory are of great guiding significance to the innovation of English classroom teaching in colleges and universities in China [3].

Therefore, in order to better improve the level of English teaching in China, Chinese English classroom teaching can combine input, interaction and output theories in second language acquisition to make English classroom teaching more efficient. Krashen put forward the Input Hypothesis to explain how "acquisition" comes into being. He thought that "acquired" comes into being when learners receive language information that is slightly deeper than the known language knowledge and can realize its meaning [4]. Krashen expressed this input theory as " $I + 1$ ". Relevant literature based on the input theory of teaching suggestions for teachers to focus on the content of input materials [2]. The concept related to "input" is "output". Learners need to practice producing "comprehensible output" by using all the language resources they have acquired [5]. According to the output theory, teachers should pay more attention to students' oral output. The author holds that the input and output theory are of great guiding significance to college oral English teaching in China, and puts forward some suggestions [6]. Classroom interaction is the bridge between input and output. Classroom interaction emphasizes the interaction between the language environment and learners' internal mechanism in second language acquisition. At this time, teachers need to give students the opportunity to convert input and output equally. Besides, teachers also need to allow students to make mistakes in this period and correct them in time.

However, some people think that language teaching has little to do with second language acquisition theory. "With the development of second language acquisition research, the gap between second language acquisition research and language teaching has become an indisputable fact [2]." The author believes that the theory of second language acquisition has limitations, without considering social factor and personal differences factor. In addition, the goal of English classroom teaching combined with second language acquisition theory is to further improve students' foreign language learning ability. However, in the actual development process, some college English teachers' own teaching ability and professionalism are not enough high, and they don't know enough about the second language acquisition theory, which leads to the fact that their actual classroom teaching quality has not been effectively improved. This also leads to the poor combination of second language acquisition theory and English classroom teaching. However, in recent years, a group of applied linguists, represented by Ellis, have shown great interest and concern in language teaching, systematically discussed the relationship between second language acquisition research and language teaching practice, and called on linguists to turn their attention to the field of language teaching practice again. "The author believes that the low efficiency of oral teaching has a lot to do

with the input and output of oral materials [6].” “Second language acquisition research has its own rules, which should be fully understood in language teaching [7].”

However, although the above literature have effectively analyzed a single theory, little is known about integrating the three theories into the study of English classroom teaching in China and form a unified and systematic view. Therefore, this article will briefly introduce the theory of input, output and interaction. Based on the theory of input, output and interaction, this paper will analyze the problems existing in Chinese English classroom teaching and try to propose a new teaching model.

2 Reference Theory

2.1 Input Hypothesis

Input theory is an important field in second language acquisition (SLA) research, which has been concerned by many researchers and used to guide L2 teaching. The form of language input can be natural input or formal classroom input. It can be spoken or written. The Input theory was proposed by Krashen in 1982, and its core theory is Input Hypothesis. This theory emphasizes the importance of Comprehensible Input in language acquisition: language input must be considered as “ $i + 1$ ” in order to be effectively acquired by learners. Among them, “ i ” represents the learner’s current level, and “ 1 ” represents the language material slightly higher than the learner’s current level. So the approach is to provide students with adequate input with minimal or no psychological barriers. As long as the input is larger than the student’s current language capacity and the affective filter is low, the student will acquire the language naturally. But learners need comprehensible input rather than simply being exposed to input data. So the input can’t be “ $i + 0$ ”, too close to the learner’s current level is not challenging. Input also cannot be “ $i + 2$ ”. If it is higher than the current level of learners, learners’ enthusiasm for learning will be hit, resulting in affective filter and communication barriers. “If the form of input is already known to the learner, the input can only practice the grammar rules already mastered and cannot improve the learner’s ability [8].” Input theory is also meaningful for textbook compilation and teacher teaching. In order to enhance comprehensible language information, it is necessary to create a variety of real language materials or a realistic learning environment.

2.2 Output Hypothesis

Input theory has greatly promoted the research of second language acquisition. Only when a large amount of comprehensible input is carried out, learners will have sufficient reserve of the target language in their mind, and comprehensible output can be carried out under appropriate language situations. However, the role of pure input in the learning process of learners is limited, because the process of second language acquisition needs to be accompanied by a large number of output exercises. In the output process, learners further enhance the accuracy of acquisition through continuous self-examination and correction of the target language. This process represents that the input is truly absorbed and internalized by learners. On this basis, Swain proposed the language Output theory,

the core of which is the “Comprehensible Output Hypothesis” [9]. It’s stressed that learners must have access to the language they are learning in order to learn effectively. In the process of second language output, learners will reflect on the target language and correct the problems encountered, so as to make the output content more accurate. In fact, Swain’s first study of output was prompted by her discovery that a group of children who had been immersed in their second language for years were significantly less able to express themselves in their second language than native speakers. Children who study French in an immersive French environment are exposed to more comprehensible inputs, but these children still do not speak French well. Swain found that the students’ output in classes was very limited. The class was mostly about the teacher talking, and the students had few opportunities to express themselves in French. Therefore, Swain believes that the reason why students in immersion classes fail to achieve the expressive abilities of native speakers is not because of the limited comprehensible input, but because of the limited comprehensible output. Because output forces the language producer to adjust the order of words, output “forces the learner to switch from semantic processing to syntactic processing.” In Swain’s output hypothesis, the meaning negotiation of language output must convey information in an accurate, coherent and appropriate way [10].

2.3 Interaction Hypothesis

Krashen emphasizes the role of input in second language acquisition and believes that the learner’s internal mechanism is also an important condition for second language acquisition. Long (1981) proposed the Interaction Hypothesis on the basis of Krashen. In his opinion, meaning negotiation in interaction plays an important role in second language acquisition, because it forces learners to focus on the input of the other sides and their own output. Means negotiation refers when it comes to comprehensive problems in conversation, to the process of repeating, changing, and adjusting the speed of speech according to the feedback of the other sides, until the other sides can understand the content of the conversation. In the process of meaning negotiation, if one side is a native speaker, the language acquisition of the other side will be more beneficial. The interaction hypothesis is the most extensive theoretical hypothesis in the field of second language acquisition so far. Meaning negotiation is a special and important form of interaction. Long proposed the expression forms of meaning negotiation for native speakers, including relinquishing topic control, selecting salient topics, and checking comprehension.

3 Chinese English Classroom Teaching

3.1 Problems

Foreign language teaching is a science in which the rules of language teaching are the main content. It covers the theoretical elements of foreign language teaching, the foreign language teaching model and foreign language teaching skills. The foreign language teaching method is also called foreign language teaching, second language teaching or language teaching. In China, English teaching has made great progress in teaching methods, teaching resources and other aspects after various teaching reforms and continuous

exploration of teaching mode, but there are still many problems, especially oral English teaching. The actual foreign language teaching is mainly in the process of English teaching and learning, whether in primary school, middle school or university, teachers lay too much emphasis on the interpretation, understanding and repeated operation of language laws. Although most students have mastered the main vocabulary and grammar points, they are still unable to speak fluently. They have nothing to say about the topic, with stumbling expressions, lack of vocabulary and frequent syntactic errors. It is difficult to improve their oral English level by mechanically copying sentences under the Chinese thinking mode. In fact, the low efficiency of oral English teaching has much to do with the input and output of oral English materials. Some teachers still use traditional teaching methods, with too much emphasis on vocabulary and grammatical accuracy, turning oral classes into intensive reading classes. And some oral English teachers do not provide students with enough oral practice and output opportunities in class, but for their favorite topics to talk about, the oral class has become a listening class. As far as students are concerned, the serious lack of oral English output increases their anxiety and lack of confidence, resulting in the phenomenon of “dumb English”.

3.2 Suggestions

Interesting Teaching Materials

Krashen emphasizes that the input content should be vivid and interesting to reduce students' emotional anxiety, which makes us realize the disadvantages of the traditional classroom teaching mode. Single, rigid and scripted input will only make the learning process boring and easy to cause students' weariness, which is not conducive to English teaching. We should not be completely trapped by the content of the textbook. By carefully selecting movies, songs and interviews suitable for students' level, teachers should create a natural language environment for students and give students the opportunity to access more understandable and interesting language input. In teaching activities, Krashen believes that teachers should provide learning materials at the level of students. According to Krashen's theory, in the selection of teaching materials, the selected materials should be higher than the existing level of learning, which is Krashen's so-called “ $I + 1$ ”. Through the teacher's choice of materials, to avoid the selection of materials and the level of students do not adapt. If the selected material is too high or lower than the learner's level, it will lead to the decline of students' interest in learning, and the inevitable result is that they cannot meet the requirements of foreign language teaching.

Clarify the Role, Responsibility and Teaching Attitude of Teachers

First of all, teachers' careful classroom design and flexible adaptability play a vital role in the efficient and orderly conduct of classroom activities. At the same time, teachers' language is an important part of the input received by students, so teachers must ensure the accuracy of their own oral English, which not only includes the standardization of grammar and vocabulary, but also includes the fluency and idiomatic sentences. Teachers should constantly improve their oral English, increase interaction with students, and provide students with better language input. Secondly, teachers should give appropriate feedback and guidance to students' output, encourage students to speak boldly, and

remind students to pay attention to the language form and language errors they output and correct them in time. Finally, studies on second language acquisition believe that the role of teachers is not only to manage students and judge their learning, but also to be facilitators of learning. After class, teachers should also actively hold English activities, such as English theater, English dubbing exhibition and so on. On the one hand, the change of teaching mode can effectively make the teaching more interesting, and to cultivate and arouse the students' interest in learning English is very important for English teachers, especially in this era of rapid development of science and technology, English teachers should pay attention to cultivate and arouse the students' interest in foreign language learning, so as to improve the efficiency of classroom teaching effect. On the other hand, students can be guaranteed effective output and interaction. Attaches great importance to the cultivation of the ability of language output, really exert the principal role of students, create a communication platform for students, encourage students to participate in the teaching process to the greatest extent their own language to express fully mobilize enthusiasm, make the language learning process become passive to active, change the process of one-way infusion knowledge to the process of interaction between teachers and students.

Change the Teaching Environment

It's important to improve the quality of foreign language teaching in colleges from the perspective of teaching environment. The quality of language environment has an important influence on the effectiveness of foreign language classroom teaching. We recommend creating as realistic a language environment as possible and trying to achieve "natural input". In the future as a result, the specific work in foreign language classroom teaching process, teachers in colleges and universities must first strengthen the foreign language classroom language "input", ensure that the teaching content and objects in the environment that students are exposed to in the course of classroom teaching can be expressed with the existing knowledge of students and the corpus given by teachers, but also increase the comprehensibility of language classroom teaching process, so as to further improve the quality of college foreign language classroom teaching. Secondly, college teachers should further stimulate students' motivation to learn foreign languages through the construction of the environment. At the same time, they should also strengthen the publicity of the importance of foreign languages, help students to further clarify the importance and practicality of foreign language learning, and promote students' enthusiasm and initiative in foreign language learning class. Finally, colleges should encourage students to communicate in foreign languages during the construction of foreign language communication environment, so as to further improve students' language sense and proficiency in foreign language use, and further promote the improvement of college students' foreign language professional quality. An English classroom is like a simulated English language society. Most of the activities in the classroom should be designed to create the activities needed for acquisition, such as movie scene interpretation, film dubbing, full English dialogue. Teachers should also give correct guidance and correct mistakes in time, so that the foreign language learners can imitate native speakers according to the environment and acquire the language naturally and imperceptively.

4 Conclusion

Great achievements have been made in the research and development of second language acquisition, but the current situation of foreign language teaching in China is still worrying. The majority of Foreign language teachers in China still adopt the traditional teaching method of grammar teaching as the main content, teacher's explanation as the classroom center, and acquisition of language knowledge as the learning goal. Some authors point out that the teaching results under this model are not ideal. According to their survey, more than 70% of the students who did not enter the university were tired of study, and even more, more than 60% of the students who were admitted to the university were tired of study [11]. Of course, the reason for weariness is very complex, but there is a reason is not allowed to avoid, is the traditional classroom teaching so that students and teachers are tired, the classroom also became a "dead" "rigid" classroom. This teaching method is woefully inadequate in terms of input and output, but the process of language learning is the process of language input and output. The input and output of language promote each other and play an equally important role in cultivating students' comprehensive application ability. In view of the current situation of foreign language teaching in China, teachers should seriously consider how to incorporate second language acquisition theories, such as input-output theory and interaction theory. This paper puts forward suggestions based on input-output and interaction theory from three aspects of teaching materials, teachers' responsibilities and teaching environment. Interesting teaching materials can make students better accept input knowledge, while teachers' correct guidance and correction as well as appropriate teaching environment can make students better output knowledge. Teachers should provide interesting and rich teaching materials that are slightly above the students' level, not limited to the rigid explanation of words and grammar. The change of teaching environment can not only let students have the purest accent, but also make students fully mobilize their input knowledge, which plays a deeper role in English teaching. Combined with the actual situation of Foreign language teaching in China, a suitable way for Chinese foreign language teaching should be found to break the traditional teaching model, and teachers should provide students with diversified output opportunities with flexible teaching means. However, this paper only studies three theories of second language acquisition theory, and the scope is limited to English teaching in China. Because of certain limitations, this paper only provides one kind of ideas for scholars studying teaching in other countries.

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