

A Study on the College Students' English Application Ability under the Framework of "Output-Driven Hypothesis"

Mojun Du

School of Foreign Languages, East China Jiaotong University, Nanchang, China

dumojun@163.com

Keywords: College English; Output-Driven Hypothesis; English Application Ability

Abstract. Improving the comprehensive application ability of college students is the goal of college English teaching in China. In order to cultivate students' English comprehensive application ability, language input is both a purpose and a means to promote input and absorption. The enhancement of the output concept can not only promote the students' ability to express English, but also improve the efficiency of students' input and output, so as to achieve the goal of improving students' English application ability comprehensively.

Introduction

"Output-driven Hypothesis" is a foreign language teaching theory based on Swain (1985) "Output Hypothesis" (Wen Qiufang, 2008). Although the two theories suggest that the output can promote the development of L2 competence, the "Output-driven Hypothesis" is only for senior learners, and only applies to formal foreign language classroom teaching; and "Output Hypothesis" is only for "immersion" teaching, that is, pay attention to create a English learning environment. The "output-driven hypothesis" considers the output to be more powerful than the input when it comes to the foreign language ability, emphasizing that the output includes not only spoken English and written one, but also the oral translation. It advocates the use of functional English Mechanism to clarify the positive role of output towards language development. For this new teaching theory, domestic scholars have not yet carried out in-depth discussion, and did not find the relevant monographs. The Chinese research network CNKI shows that the current research only focuses on the initial skills of non-English majors and college English teaching(2009), Luo Hairong 2011), Huang Qifa (2009), and the comprehensive study of college English teaching has not yet started, Zhang Jingwei (2012) have conducted relevant research on college English writing skills, but the theory of "Output-Driven Hypothesis" hasn't been widely applied in College English context. It is a systematic and effective application of the output skills of college students' future workplace. Some foreign scholars have also begun to pay attention to the positive role of Output-driven Hypothesis, such as Levelt (1989) proposed to speed up the presentation of knowledge to procedural knowledge transformation, with the hope of promoting the improvement of language fluency. Hanaoka (2007) argues that learners can increase the fluency through the internal monitoring system, which is the potential driver for language development. Domestic and foreign research shows that the "Output-driven Hypothesis" is the future trends of foreign language teaching for the senior learners.

College English Teaching Method Innovation with Output-Driven Hypothesis

Over the years, China's English curriculum and teaching practice has always been emphasizing the knowledge input, supplemented by the output. This method of teaching is influenced by Krashen's input hypothesis theory. The input hypothesis theory holds that the comprehensible input is the only condition for the second language acquisition. The output is only the natural result of the input, which has no direct effect on language acquisition. However, the teaching effect which is based on the input hypothesis theory is not very satisfactory. On the analysis of the reasons for the unsatisfactory practice of the Canadian French immersion curriculum, Professor Merrill Swain presented the output hypothesis in 1985. Swain pointed out that although the comprehensible

language input has an important role in language acquisition. In addition to accept the comprehensible input as much as possible, the L2 learner also need to achieve the lingual use of accuracy and fluency through the meaningful language output.

On the basis of these researches, Professor Wen Qiufang puts forward the output-driven hypothesis theory based on the analysis of the function of English use in the workplace and recognition of the psychological mechanism of the second language acquisition. The hypothesis consists of three sub-hypotheses: first, the perspective of psycho-linguistics argue that output is a greater driving force than input towards foreign language development. Second, the hypothesis proposed that speaking, writing, and translating training have more social function than the training to listening, reading skills in workplace, especially oral and literal translation skills. Third, from the perspective of foreign language teaching, the hypothesis that output-oriented comprehensive teaching method is more effective than individual skills training, more in line with the future employment needs of students. In 2013, Professor Wen Qiufang also explained the "output-driven hypothesis" in conjunction with the development of college English teaching at a seminar held in Beijing. The basic idea is that the output is the target as well as the means, which is the means to promote the input and absorption. The output-driven can improve the output capacity and improve the efficiency of the absorption input.

By linking the theory of "output-driven hypothesis" to English teaching, it can be found that language output is not only at the end of the input-absorption-integration-output line process, but in the input-absorption, absorption-integration and the integration-output chain. In other words, the English teaching process should make full use of the role of language output feedback to promote students to obtain useful and positive language input. In the integration process, L2 learners try to overcome the problems and difficulties of using the language, focusing on the internal link between the meaning and its form. Through the repeated meta-language reflection and the constant use language, the L2 learners will achieve the purpose of accurate use of the language ultimately.

The five basic skills of language are mutually reinforcing and interrelated. The improvement of comprehensive skills is not a combination of several skills, but a mutual promotion relationship. Therefore, it's necessary to consider the integrated application of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. College English course will eventually highlight the students' ability to speak, write and translation skills rather than simply reading and listening skills. Listening and reading are the basis of output skills, no longer as a separate teaching objectives to assess. Because of the various language competence, the curriculum design need to be hierarchical, allowing students to have more choices. Students can choose to balance the development of their output skills based on their English proficiency and interest, or focus on learning a certain language skills, that is, to write and translate. Based on the output-driven hypothesis as the theoretical basis of college English teaching, the goal is to cultivate students' English comprehensive application ability, so language input is both the purpose and the means to promote the input and absorption. In the form of classroom teaching, "teacher centered" activities should be transformed into student centered. Teacher's task is to provide students with the opportunity to use language, and strive to create a real "output" atmosphere.

Several "Output"-Driven Teaching Model

Using EAP teaching model and the use of task-based teaching method. The purpose is to strengthen the teaching of academic English ability, pay attention to students' communication ability, reflect the task in the real life, and explore the possibility of guiding students to focus on how to complete the task. It is a kind of English teaching method which can train students' English ability by integrating the language teaching, learning language form, mastering language skills and developing language ability through the activities of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. This purpose of teaching methods is rather clear, that is, to stimulate students' interest in learning, and to combine the teacher's leading role and the main role of the students effectively together, which enable students to better the use of language ability by completing the various tasks in the process of gradually. The following are several output-driven teaching model to be proposed:

Table 1 Classroom instruction design based on Output-driven speaking:

Teaching activities	Student activities
Storytelling, listen to the story (listening)	Take notes (writing) Repeat the story (speaking)
Repeat the news (watching)	Repeat the news (speaking)
Keynote speech Relevant literature Review (reading)	Record points (writing); Classroom lectures (speaking)
Debate, information-searching (reading)	Write text (writing); Participate in the debate (speaking)

Table 2 Classroom instruction design based on output-driven writing

Teaching activities	Student activities
Listen to the report (listening)	Write the summary while listening to the point of recording points (listening, writing) Write a case analysis (writing) Write summary (writing)
Read the file, write a summary (reading)	Mark the focus (writing); Write summary (writing)
detective story (reading)	Record important clues (writing); Write case analysis (writing)

Table 3 Classroom instruction design based on Output-driven translation

Teaching activities	Student activities
Read the original report (reading);	Translate the instruction manual (translation) Translate the original copies (translation)
Read the original (reading)	Translation of the original news (compiling)
Reading the introductory information (reading);	Read the relevant information (translation) Foreign affairs reception (interpretation)

English teaching which is based on the "output-driven hypothesis" transforms the traditional "teacher-centered" model into fully student-centered participation model, students are both classroom participants and the dominant force of classroom activities. The position of the teacher is changed from "the interpreter of knowledge" to the organizer of the activity, guiding the student to complete the established task. Students' enthusiasm and initiative have been fully aroused. With the teacher's assistance and guidance, the student complete the task of language output. At the same time, language skills have been trained and improved greatly.

Traditional Teaching Mode and Output-Driven Teaching Mode Contrast:

Traditional teaching is completely teacher centered. The traditional classroom teaching model is a teacher-centered teaching model. This type of teaching model formed a one-way inculcation. With the gradual growth of information needs of L2 language learners, they have not satisfied the passive acceptance of one-way information but want to participate in it. Here are the characteristics of traditional teaching mode:

Table 4 Classroom instruction design based on Output-driven translation

	Traditional Teaching Mode	Output-Driven Teaching Mode
Classroom Patterns	Teacher-centered Student in low-participation	Students-centered; Interactive teaching
Classroom form	Single	Diversified
Teaching methods	Knowledge input	Knowledge output
Teacher role	Single role	Multi-roles
Classroom atmosphere	Boring, lack of interactive	Frequent interaction;lively

Therefore, L2 learners calls for a change from passive acceptance to active commitment. They hope to be the master of the classroom. Here are the characteristics of output-driven teaching mode:

The Role of Teachers Change

The key to the success of the output-driven teaching model is the equal relationship between teachers and students. Harmonious teacher-student relationship can enhance students' self-confidence, so as to maintain the best learning state, and to improve classroom participation initiative, enthusiasm and creativity. In the traditional teaching mode, the teacher is the leader in the classroom, the goal is to teach and instill language knowledge. Students are always in a passive acceptance status. Taking notes, or listening to the teacher is the main content of the class. There is little interaction in the classroom, few exchanges between teachers and students. This teaching method is not conducive to cultivate students' cognitive ability and the ability to solve practical problems. The output-driven English teaching model will be able to focus on the ability to improve the students' comprehensive English application ability. English instructors should actively determine their role in teaching, change the knowledge of the organizers into the classroom organizers of activities, guides and coordinators, the students as the main body of the classroom. Teachers encourage students to ask questions boldly, making them have the courage to answer questions. Their goal is to promote their active initiative, active participation and participation in language output of the practical activities.

In the output-driven teaching mode, the teacher is the director of the classroom, but also the actor. He not only decide the output of the task, the distribution of student roles, but also bear the role of actors. Therefore, the teacher should give up the authority of teachers, students must cooperate and participate in the classroom activities. In the design of teaching activities, teachers should consider how to effectively participate in student group activities, to help students to master effective learning methods to improve the English output ability in a relaxed and pleasant classroom atmosphere. In the classroom activities, teachers also offer a timely help for different levels of students with a variety of output help and counseling, help students to complete the output task.

In addition, teachers should shoulder the role of "commentator". It is the most basic task for teachers to find students' problems and evaluate students' learning outcomes. In the output-driven teaching mode, the teacher, as an assessor, should make an objective, fair and comprehensive evaluation based on the actual performance of students. For the student's mistakes, teachers offer more guide, less criticism. To be good at discovering the progress of students, to guide students in the current language level and help them to make further improvement.

Thus, the output-driven teaching model put forward higher demands on the teacher. First of all, the teacher should get to know the students' English level thoroughly, and understand the students' learning ability and learning motivation, find out their strengths and weaknesses, so as to dig out their potential, but also to motivate their enthusiasm to learn the classroom teaching activities. Only

you can motivate the enthusiasm of students in learning and students will take the initiative to achieve the desired classroom results.

Conclusion

"Output-driven hypothesis" concept can not only promote the students' ability to express English, but also improve the efficiency of students' input and output, so as to achieve the goal of improving students' English application ability comprehensively. The output-driven teaching can help to change the phenomenon of "input over output" in College English teaching, which can effectively improve the students' comprehensive application ability in order to meet the needs of future career development and communication skills. Output-driven teaching methods also help to create hunger, stimulate curiosity, and improve the student's learning initiative and enthusiasm effectively, so that college English teaching activities are fully interactive and energetic.

College English teaching is a language teaching, and language is to reflect the society. Society is constantly evolving, which requires that language should also make the appropriate adjustments to meet the needs of society. Our society should be harmonious and improving, education and teaching should also pay attention to harmony in order to be helpful. The output-driven teaching model keeps a well balance between teaching and learning, which helps to create the input and output harmony. This kind of teaching mode has the effective help to improve college students' English application ability.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by Jiangxi Social Science Project for 2015 (15WX202), Jiangxi Teaching Reform of Higher Education Project for 2013(JXJG-13-5-14).

Reference

- [1] Swain, M. Output Hypothesis: Its History and Its Future [J]. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 2008(1).
- [2] Krashen, S. 1985. *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications* [M]. London: Longman.
- [3] Swain, M. 1995. Three functions of output in second language learning [A]. In G. Cook & B. Seidlhofer (eds.). *Principles and Practice in Applied Linguistics: Studies in Honor of H. G. Widdowson* [C]. Oxford: OUP. 125-144.
- [4] Wen, Qiufang, 2014. Production-oriented approach to teaching Chinese adult learners[R]. A Keynote speech at the 7th International Conference on English Language Teaching in China. October 23-26. Nanjing, China.
- [5] Nunan D. *Second Language Teaching and Learning* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2001.
- [6] Swain M. The output hypothesis: Just speaking and writing aren't enough [J]. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 1993, 50(1):158-164.
- [7] Tyler R W. *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* [M]. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949.