



EXPERIMENTAL TEACHING ON COLLEGE ENGLISH INSPIRED BY INPUT HYPOTHESIS AND OUTPUT HYPOTHESIS

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Ever since the rapid development of globalization, English has become the international working language, and its growing importance requests higher standards of English teaching. Since 1960s, first language acquisition theories have been applied to second language acquisition and foreign language teaching. The booming of the study on second language acquisition has made it the most active subject in applied linguistics. Input Hypothesis raised by Krashen and Output Hypothesis raised by Swain are the most important theories to find out the relationship between input, output and second language acquisition, which is a key problem in the study.

1. Theoretical Statement of Input Hypothesis and Output Hypothesis

Krashen (1977, 1985) puts forward a set of hypothesis about second language acquisition and believes that humans acquire language only by understanding messages or receiving comprehensible input. According to him, to move from stage “i” to “i+1”, acquirers must understand input that contains structures a bit beyond their current level of competence. However, for college English teaching in Chinese vocational schools, it is very difficult for teachers to define “i”, which can be largely contributed to the ambiguousness of the concept. If the input is too simple for students, it would be insufficient for students to learn; if it is too difficult to be understood, it would be frustrating for students.

Later, Swain (1985) put forward the Output Hypothesis and was convinced that output, in some circumstances, stimulated language acquisition by forcing learners to

process languages syntactically. Both comprehensible input and output are needed for second language acquisition. In producing the target language vocally or subvocally learners may notice a gap between what they want to say and what they can say, leading them to recognize what they do not know or know partially. Producing output can also test learners’ comprehensibility of the target language, which is the purpose of language teaching.

2. Problems of Current College English Teaching in Chinese Vocational schools

Vocational schools in China are established to cultivate students with expert working skills, and English is generally regarded as a tool of international communication. Students are supposed to be educated to be able to read English materials of their field and communicate with future foreign counterparts. However, students are also required to pass standard tests, such as CET-4 and CET-6 (College English Test). Therefore, some problems still exist in current College English teaching in Chinese vocational schools because of those contradictions.

First and foremost, as Chinese being the official and native language for most people, it is rare for Chinese students to have the opportunities to use English as a communicative language. Besides classroom activities, students have little access to the language in a daily occasion, not to mention comprehensible input. However, we can not call it conscious input if comprehensible input just comes from classroom input and communication with other learners.



Second, due to the long history of examination-oriented teaching methodology in China, most students are highly driven by passing tests instead of mastering and using the knowledge with a vague understanding of the importance of English in their future career. Meanwhile, failures from examinations can easily lead to anxiety and frustration.

Third, results of Entrance Examination (a nationwide and standard test in China) always show wild inconsistencies among students enrolled in vocational schools, which is rare in other colleges and universities in China. Take students enrolled in Nantong Institute of Technology in 2014 for example, of all the 1194 students, the highest score in English is 84 while the lowest is only 35. Therefore, college English teaching becomes especially difficult due to the great differences.

Last but not least, most Chinese students are more willing to listen, read and write than to speak. Therefore, after years of preparation, in the school year 2013-2014, we chose one class to do the experimental teaching. We tried so many methods to encourage students to talk that we even threw the textbooks and tests away. Our attempt was proved to be quite successful in students' willingness to talk. However, we neglected that input was as important as output. Without enough input students can only repeatedly use structures and words they already know instead of using new phrases and expressions. Besides, without sufficient exercises, students made handful of mistakes in reading and writing.

3. Application of Input Hypothesis and Output Hypothesis in College English

Based on the analysis of advantages and disadvantages of Input Hypothesis and Output Hypothesis and current problems in college English teaching, we find out that listening and reading is as important as speaking and writing. Only a balance between input and output can be proved to be efficient in teaching. Input and output from classroom teaching is far from enough.

Therefore, the following suggestions are made to do the work.

First, hierarchal teaching is quite necessary although we are totally aware of its deficiency. We could divide the students into three levels, and each level has its corresponding teaching schedules, steps textbooks and specially-designed activities. The division could be based on the results of Entrance Examination and our entrance exam. After all, we should teach students in accordance of their aptitude.

Second, we should provide more opportunities for students to use English, both in classroom and after class. According to our previous research, free-style speech is highly effective. Students could choose their interested topics, collect information, work on their paper and finally make the performance. When making their speech, they should also answer all the questions related to the content raised by students and teachers. The whole process perfectly illustrates input-taking in-output. Besides, group discussion and role-play, together with annual national writing competition and speaking competition, are also proved to be able to bring the same effect.

Third, after class, "Second Classroom" activities could be taken into consideration. "Second Classroom" activities should be related to students' majors and hobbies. For example, Automobile Marketing majors could go to sell cars to foreigners in 4S shops; Tourism majors could work as guides for foreigners in travel agencies, and etc. These activities are more acceptable for students for their practicability, participation and enjoyment. Of course, the organization of these activities should be under careful schedule and preparation.

4. Experimental Teaching

To test if the above statements are effective, we make the following experimental teaching.

4.1 Subjects

We choose the freshmen from Class 1401 (39 students), 1402 (40 students) and Class 1404 (38 students) of Business



Administration Department as our subjects. The selection of the subjects is determined on the results of Entrance Examination in English and our entrance test and the average scores of the three classes are quite similar. Class 1401 is used as the control group while Class 1402 and 1404 experimental group.

4.2 Research Design

We divide Class 1402 and 1404 into three classes (Level A, B, and C). To better explain the four classes, the following table is made.

	Students' number	Average score of Entrance Examination (120')	Average score of entrance test (100')
Class 1401	39	61.57	72.19
Class Level A	26	65.10	79.85
Class Level B	33	55.58	62.41
Class Level C	29	44.43	51.09

In Class 1401, passing CET-4 and CET-6 is the priority of teaching and studying, so all the 80 periods of class are spent in exercising and tests. However, in Class Level A, we rescheduled the teaching plan and aimed to cultivate students' ability

to use English in commercial working occasions, so we divide the course into 10 parts as the following table shows.

Contents	periods
1. Company Establishment	6
2. Business Exhibition	6
3. Contacting and Reserving	6
4. Receiving Guests	6
5. Agenda	6
6. Business Negotiation	12
7. Signing Contract	6
8. Sightseeing and Farewell	6
9. Claim and Arbitration	6
10. Performance	20

Each part contains an assignment, including group discussion, speech, situational dialogue, contract writing, claim writing etc. In the final part "Performance", all the students are supposed to work as a team and make a situational play and perform it. As for tests, students are encouraged to prepare it in their spare time. Apart from that, students are arranged to visit a foreign trade department of a local company for a week and are required to write a report after the visit.

In Class Level B, students are supposed to spend 60 periods on all these

parts and 20 periods on tests. In contrast, students in Class Level C should spend 60 periods on tests and only 20 periods on Part 1-4.

4.3 Testing and Scoring

After one term's teaching and studying (March, 2015- June, 2015), all the students from 4 classes attended the final-term exam and CET-4 examination, both containing listening, reading and writing tests. Besides, all of them participated in the oral test after the final-term exam. National English Competition for College Students, together with National English Writing



Competition, English Speaking Competition and English Speech Competition in Jiangsu Province, has attracted some of the students after months of training. The following data

vividly illustrates the differences of the performance of the four classes.

	average score of final-term exam (100')	Average score of CET-4 (710')	Average score of oral test (100')	Number of attending writing competitions	Number of attending speaking competitions
Class 1401	85.14	424.19	82.66	28	4
Class Level A	88.01	434.82	94.18	20	6
Class Level B	79.24	413.49	89.55	12	3
Class Level C	77.91	392.85	72.47	0	2

4.4 Analysis

From the above data, it can be easily inferred that although test-oriented teaching is highly efficient in helping students passing exams, our experiential teaching proves to be effective as long as plenty of input and output exercises have been designed. However, students from Class Level A are more willing to attend competitions than those from Class 1401, which can be largely contributed to the constant exercises in and after the class.

It could be also inferred that the hierarchal teaching can best suit the need of vocational school students. If we compare the scores of Class Level C in the Entrance Examination and entrance exam at the beginning of the term and the scores in final-term exam and CET-4 at the end of the term, we can see that students in this class have made great progress. Meanwhile, students

with similar scores in the Entrance Examination and entrance exam in Class 1401 (the last 13 ones in academic achievement order) did not perform as well as they do. According to our statistics, their average scores are 76.82 and 389.48.

However,

5. Conclusion

Input and output are inseparable in the process of English learning. Only the application of both Input Hypothesis and Output Hypothesis could help promote the college English teaching in Chinese vocational schools.

In our future research, we will focus on the replenishment and perfection of our experimental teaching, in the hopes that our methodology could be helpful to college English teaching to other vocational schools in China.

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Xu Heng, Wang Fei-yan. *Experimental Teaching Inspired by Input Hypothesis and Output Hypothesis at College English.* “Input Hypothesis” is the core of Krashen’s language acquisition theory, which is proved to be of substantial influence among second language educators in China. But we can find the impracticability and one-sidedness of “Input Hypothesis”. In 1980s Swain put forward “Output Hypothesis”, maintaining that output plays an equal important role in the process of SLA. Analyzing “Input Hypothesis” and “Output Hypothesis”, the paper puts forward combination of these two hypotheses in English teaching at vocational college, so as to advance students’ English acquisition, which is proved by experimental teaching.

Ху Хенг, Ванг Феи-ян. Коллежларда инглиз тилини ўқитишда тажриба сифатида ички ва ташқи таъсир усулларида фойдаланиш. Мақолада кўрсатилган усулларнинг тавсифи берилиб, коллежларда инглиз тилини ўқитишда ҳар иккаласидан биргаликда фойдаланиш маъқуллигини кўрсатиб ўтади.
