

Study on the Output-Oriented Listening for Speaking Approach in Senior High School Oral English Teaching under the Background of Core Competencies

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Abstract: In response to the challenges faced in high school oral English instruction, this study explores the application of the Output-Oriented Approach (POA) combined with the “Listening for Speaking” method in senior high school oral English teaching, under the framework of core competencies. The research investigates how integrating listening comprehension with speaking tasks can improve students' speaking fluency, accuracy, and overall language proficiency. Through a teaching experiment involving senior high school students, the study examines the impact of this integrated approach on students' development in critical thinking, cultural awareness, and communicative competence. The findings demonstrate significant improvements in students' oral English skills, along with increased classroom engagement and motivation. The method also effectively reduced speaking anxiety and enhanced cross-cultural communication abilities. This research contributes to the theoretical development of POA and offers practical insights for high school English teachers to enhance their students' language abilities in line with core competencies. The study highlights the importance of integrating authentic listening materials with meaningful speaking tasks, providing a structured framework for improving oral English proficiency in high school settings.

Keywords: Core Competencies; Listening for Speaking Approach; Oral English Teaching; Output-Oriented Approach.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

In the context of globalization, English has become a crucial tool for international communication, and the ability to speak English fluently is increasingly important for academic, professional, and social interactions. However, in many high schools, especially in non-English-speaking countries, students often face significant challenges in developing their oral English skills. Traditional English teaching methods tend to focus heavily on grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, often neglecting the development of speaking and listening skills. This has led to a phenomenon commonly referred to as “dumb English”, where students may perform well in written exams but struggle to communicate effectively in real-life situations.

The importance of oral English proficiency is further emphasized by the integration of core competencies in education, which aim to equip students with the skills necessary for lifelong learning and global citizenship. Core competencies, such as critical thinking, cultural awareness, and language ability, are essential for students to navigate the complexities of the modern world. In this regard, English education, particularly oral English teaching, plays a pivotal role in fostering these competencies.

To address the challenges in oral English teaching, researchers and educators have explored various pedagogical approaches. Among these, the Output-Oriented Approach (POA) and the “Listening for Speaking” method have gained attention for their potential to enhance both listening and speaking skills. The POA, developed by Professor Wen Qiufang, emphasizes the importance of language output as a driving force for language acquisition, while the “Listening for Speaking” method leverages listening comprehension as a foundation for improving speaking fluency. By integrating

these two approaches, this study aims to explore their combined effectiveness in enhancing high school students' oral English proficiency under the framework of core competencies.

1.2. Research Significance

This study holds significant value for both teaching practice and theoretical development. From a practical perspective, it offers a new strategy for high school English teachers to improve oral English instruction by combining the POA with the “Listening for Speaking” method. This integrated approach not only addresses the common issues of low student participation and speaking anxiety but also provides a structured framework for fostering both listening and speaking skills simultaneously.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the expanding body of knowledge on the POA and its application in language education. By examining the integration of POA with the “Listening for Speaking” method, this study seeks to bridge the gap between input and output in language learning, offering insights into how these methods can be effectively combined to enhance students' oral proficiency. Furthermore, this research aligns with the broader goals of core competencies in education, highlighting the role of language learning in developing critical thinking, cultural awareness, and effective communication skills.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the POA and “Listening for Speaking” method can be integrated to improve oral English teaching in high schools, ultimately contributing to the development of students' core competencies and their ability to communicate effectively in a globalized world.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Core Competencies in Language Education

Core competencies in language education, as outlined in the General High School English Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition, 2020 Revision), emphasize the development of students' comprehensive language abilities, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These competencies are essential for students to effectively communicate in real-world contexts and to develop critical thinking, cultural awareness, and autonomous learning skills [1]. The integration of core competencies into language teaching has shifted the focus from mere knowledge acquisition to the application of language skills in meaningful contexts. In high school settings, this shift has particularly influenced the teaching of speaking, as educators now prioritize creating opportunities for students to engage in authentic communication and to use English as a tool for expressing ideas and solving problems [2].

2.2. Output-Oriented Approach (POA)

The Output-Oriented Approach (POA), proposed by Professor Wen Qiufang, is a teaching methodology designed to address the issue of "separation of learning and use" in foreign language education. POA emphasizes the integration of learning and application, with a focus on output-driven tasks that motivate students to use the language actively [3]. The approach consists of three main phases: motivating, enabling, and assessing. In the motivating phase, students are presented with communicative tasks that highlight their language deficiencies, thereby stimulating their desire to learn. The enabling phase involves selective learning, where students focus on input materials that are directly relevant to the output task. Finally, the assessing phase includes both immediate and delayed evaluations to provide feedback and promote further learning [4]. POA has been shown to be particularly effective in improving students' oral English skills, as it encourages them to produce language in meaningful contexts, thereby enhancing their fluency and confidence [5].

2.3. Listening for Speaking Approach

The "Listening for Speaking" approach is grounded in the idea that listening serves as a crucial input for developing speaking proficiency. By exposing students to authentic listening materials, they can acquire the necessary vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structures needed for effective oral communication [1]. This approach aligns with Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which posits that learners acquire language best when they are exposed to comprehensible input that is slightly above their current level of proficiency [6]. In high school English teaching, the "Listening for Speaking" method can be applied by using listening tasks that are closely linked to speaking activities. For example, students can listen to dialogues or monologues and then engage in role-plays or discussions based on the content they have heard. This not only improves their listening comprehension but also provides a natural context for practicing speaking [2].

2.4. Previous Studies on Oral English Teaching

Existing research on oral English teaching has explored various methodologies, including task-based learning, communicative language teaching, and interactive

approaches. Task-based learning, for instance, focuses on engaging students in real-world tasks that require them to use English to achieve specific goals, thereby promoting both fluency and accuracy [4]. However, despite these advancements, challenges remain in high school oral English instruction. One major issue is the lack of sufficient speaking output opportunities, as many classrooms still prioritize reading and writing over speaking. Additionally, students often experience speaking anxiety, which can hinder their participation and performance in oral activities [6]. Furthermore, the materials used in speaking instruction are sometimes outdated or irrelevant to students' real-life communication needs, limiting their ability to transfer classroom learning to real-world contexts [5].

2.5. Challenges and Limitations in Oral English Teaching

High school oral English teaching faces several challenges, including student speaking anxiety, limited classroom participation, and the use of ineffective teaching materials. Speaking anxiety, in particular, is a significant barrier, as it can prevent students from actively engaging in speaking activities and expressing themselves confidently [6]. Additionally, the traditional teacher-centered approach often limits students' opportunities to practice speaking, as they are more likely to passively receive information rather than actively produce language [2]. To address these challenges, the POA and "Listening for Speaking" approach offer promising solutions. By creating authentic communicative tasks and providing relevant input materials, teachers can motivate students to speak and reduce their anxiety. Moreover, incorporating interactive and collaborative activities, such as group discussions and role-plays, can increase student participation and make speaking practice more engaging and effective [3].

The integration of core competencies, the Output-Oriented Approach, and the "Listening for Speaking" method provides a comprehensive framework for improving oral English teaching in high schools. By addressing the challenges of speaking anxiety, limited participation, and ineffective materials, these approaches can help students develop the confidence and skills needed for real-world communication.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

3.1.1. Target Group and Background

The study was conducted with a cohort of 100 senior high school students at a public high school in China. The students, aged 16–17, were selected based on their intermediate level of English proficiency, as determined by their performance in previous English exams. The class consisted of 50 male and 50 female students, all of whom had been studying English for at least six years. The students' English proficiency levels were assessed using a standardized oral English test prior to the experiment, which revealed that most students struggled with fluency, pronunciation, and confidence in speaking. The class was chosen because it represented a typical high school English learning environment, where students often face challenges in oral communication despite having a solid foundation in grammar and vocabulary.

3.1.2. Teaching Period and Course Structure

The teaching experiment spanned 12 weeks, with two 45-minute English classes per week. The course was divided into

three phases:

Pre-Experiment Phase (Weeks 1–2): Baseline data collection, including pre-tests, surveys, and classroom observations.

Implementation Phase (Weeks 3–10): Integration of the Output-Oriented Approach (POA) and the “Listening for Speaking” method into the curriculum.

Post-Experiment Phase (Weeks 11–12): Post-tests, surveys, and interviews to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching methods.

Each lesson was structured around specific tasks and activities designed to enhance listening and speaking skills, with a focus on real-world communication scenarios.

3.2. Teaching Model

3.2.1. Implementation of POA and Listening for Speaking Approach

The teaching model combined the Output-Oriented Approach (POA) and the “Listening for Speaking” method to create a dynamic and interactive learning environment. The POA framework was applied to motivate students to produce language through output-driven tasks, while the “Listening for Speaking” method provided the necessary input to support their speaking development.

Motivating Phase: At the beginning of each lesson, students were presented with a communicative task, such as planning a trip or discussing a current event. These tasks were designed to highlight gaps in their speaking abilities and motivate them to learn.

Enabling Phase: Students were exposed to listening materials (e.g., dialogues, podcasts, and videos) that were slightly above their current proficiency level. These materials were carefully selected to align with the speaking tasks and provide relevant vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structures.

Assessing Phase: Students were evaluated through immediate feedback during activities and delayed assessments, such as oral presentations and role-plays, to measure their progress.

3.2.2. Classroom Activities

The following activities were implemented to enhance fluency and accuracy:

Listening Comprehension Tasks: Students listened to authentic audio materials and answered comprehension questions, followed by discussions on the content.

Role-Playing: Students engaged in role-plays based on real-life scenarios, such as ordering food at a restaurant or interviewing for a job.

Group Discussions: Small groups discussed topics related to the listening materials, encouraging peer interaction and collaborative learning.

Speaking Practice Exercises: Students practiced pronunciation, intonation, and fluency through structured speaking tasks, such as describing pictures or retelling stories.

These activities were designed to create a balance between input (listening) and output (speaking), ensuring that students had ample opportunities to practice and improve their oral English skills.

3.3. Data Collection

3.3.1. Pre- and Post-Tests

To evaluate improvements in speaking proficiency, pre- and post-tests were conducted using a standardized oral English assessment rubric. The rubric evaluated fluency,

pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and content organization. Students were asked to complete tasks such as describing a picture, answering questions, and engaging in a short conversation. The same rubric was used for both tests to ensure consistency in evaluation.

3.3.2. Classroom Observations

Throughout the experiment, classroom observations were conducted to monitor student participation and engagement. Notes were taken on students’ willingness to speak, their use of new vocabulary and grammar, and their overall confidence during speaking activities. These observations provided qualitative insights into the effectiveness of the teaching methods.

3.3.3. Surveys and Interviews

At the end of the experiment, surveys were distributed to students to gather their feedback on the teaching methods. The survey included questions about their perceived improvement in speaking skills, their level of engagement, and their overall satisfaction with the course. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five students and two teachers to gain deeper insights into their experiences and observations.

3.4. Data Analysis

3.4.1. Statistical Analysis

The pre- and post-test scores were analyzed using paired t-tests to determine whether there were statistically significant improvements in students’ speaking proficiency. The analysis focused on fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and content organization, with the goal of identifying specific areas of improvement.

3.4.2. Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data from classroom observations, surveys, and interviews were analyzed thematically. Common themes, such as increased confidence, reduced speaking anxiety, and improved fluency, were identified and discussed. The feedback from students and teachers provided valuable insights into the strengths and limitations of the teaching methods, as well as suggestions for future improvements.

In conclusion, the methodology combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of the Output-Oriented Approach and the “Listening for Speaking” method in improving high school students’ oral English skills. The structured teaching model, coupled with diverse classroom activities and rigorous data collection, ensured a thorough assessment of the students’ progress and the overall impact of the intervention.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Effectiveness of the Listening for Speaking Approach

The results of the pre- and post-tests demonstrated significant improvements in students’ speaking proficiency after the implementation of the “Listening for Speaking” approach. The pre-test average score for speaking fluency was 2.67 (out of 5), which increased to 3.96 in the post-test ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, pronunciation scores improved from 2.54 to 3.71, vocabulary usage from 2.46 to 3.71, and response accuracy from 2.42 to 3.88. These improvements indicate that the method effectively enhanced students’ ability to produce accurate and fluent spoken English.

Student feedback further supported these findings. In post-

experiment surveys, 79.25% of students reported that the “Listening for Speaking” method helped them feel more confident in speaking English, while 82.69% stated that it improved their pronunciation and fluency. Many students noted that the listening materials provided a natural context for practicing speaking, which made the learning process more engaging and relevant to real-life communication. For example, one student commented, “Listening to real conversations helped me understand how to use vocabulary and grammar in actual situations, and I felt more prepared to speak in class”.

4.2. Core Competencies Development

The “Listening for Speaking” approach also contributed to the development of core competencies, particularly in language use, critical thinking, and cross-cultural communication. By engaging with authentic listening materials, students were exposed to diverse cultural contexts and perspectives, which enhanced their cross-cultural awareness. For instance, discussions about travel plans and cultural differences in listening materials encouraged students to think critically about how language reflects cultural values.

Additionally, the method promoted language use by providing students with opportunities to apply what they learned from listening to speaking tasks. This integration of input and output aligned with the core competency of “learning by doing,” as students were able to internalize language structures and use them creatively in their own speech. For example, during role-playing activities, students demonstrated improved ability to organize their thoughts and express ideas coherently, reflecting progress in both language use and critical thinking.

4.3. Student Feedback and Engagement

Student engagement with the “Listening for Speaking” method was overwhelmingly positive. Classroom observations revealed that students were more willing to participate in speaking activities compared to the pre-experiment phase. Group discussions and role-plays, in particular, were highly effective in encouraging peer interaction and collaborative learning. One teacher noted, “Students who were previously reluctant to speak became more active in group activities, as they felt supported by the listening input and their peers”.

Surveys indicated that 85% of students found the method motivating, with many appreciating the variety of activities and the relevance of the listening materials to their daily lives. A student remarked, “I enjoyed the role-plays because they felt like real conversations, not just classroom exercises”. This increased engagement translated into higher levels of classroom participation and a more positive attitude toward speaking English.

4.4. Teacher Reflections

From the teacher’s perspective, the implementation of the Output-Oriented Approach (POA) and the “Listening for Speaking” method presented both opportunities and challenges. The teacher noted that the method required careful planning to ensure that listening materials were appropriately aligned with speaking tasks. For example, selecting audio materials that were slightly above students’ current proficiency level (i+1) was crucial for maintaining engagement without causing frustration.

One of the main challenges was managing time effectively,

as the method required balancing listening input with sufficient speaking practice. However, the teacher found that the structured framework of POA—motivating, enabling, and assessing—helped streamline the process and ensure that each lesson had clear objectives. Reflecting on the experience, the teacher stated, “The method encouraged me to focus more on student-centered activities, which not only improved their speaking skills but also made teaching more rewarding”.

In conclusion, the “Listening for Speaking” approach, combined with POA, proved to be an effective strategy for improving students’ oral English proficiency and developing core competencies. While challenges such as time management and material selection were present, the positive outcomes in terms of student engagement, confidence, and language skills demonstrate the potential of this method for high school English teaching. Future research could explore its application in other contexts, such as writing or reading instruction, to further validate its effectiveness.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Summary of Findings

This study demonstrated the effectiveness of combining the Output-Oriented Approach (POA) with the “Listening for Speaking” method in enhancing high school students’ oral English proficiency and core competencies. The results from pre- and post-tests revealed significant improvements in students’ speaking fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and response accuracy, with post-test scores showing a marked increase across all categories. Additionally, the method fostered the development of core competencies, such as critical thinking, cross-cultural communication, and autonomous learning, by providing students with authentic listening materials and meaningful speaking tasks. Student feedback further highlighted the motivational and engaging nature of the approach, with many students reporting increased confidence and willingness to participate in speaking activities.

5.2. Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study offer valuable insights for high school English teachers aiming to enhance students’ speaking skills and core competencies. Teachers should design lessons that integrate listening input with speaking output, ensuring that listening materials are relevant to the speaking tasks. For example, using dialogues or podcasts about real-life scenarios can provide students with the necessary vocabulary and structures for meaningful communication. A student-centered approach is essential, where teachers create opportunities for students to actively produce language through role-plays, group discussions, and presentations. This aligns with the POA framework, which emphasizes output-driven tasks to motivate learning.

Incorporating authentic listening materials, such as news clips, interviews, or videos, can enhance students’ engagement and expose them to diverse cultural contexts, thereby improving their cross-cultural communication skills. Additionally, teachers should implement structured feedback mechanisms, such as peer evaluations and teacher-student collaborative assessments, to help students reflect on their progress and identify areas for improvement. By adopting these strategies, teachers can create a more dynamic and interactive learning environment that supports both language development and the cultivation of core competencies.

5.3. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite its promising results, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The sample size was relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study was conducted over a short period, making it difficult to assess the long-term impact of the method on students' speaking proficiency. Furthermore, the study focused solely on oral English skills, leaving room for future research to explore the application of POA and "Listening for Speaking" in other language skills, such as writing or reading.

Future research could address these limitations by expanding the sample size and conducting studies with larger and more diverse student populations to validate the effectiveness of the method across different contexts. Extending the duration of the study, such as implementing the method over a full academic year, would provide deeper insights into its sustained impact on students' language development. Researchers could also investigate the effectiveness of various types of listening materials, such as podcasts, TED Talks, or movies, to determine which formats are most beneficial for enhancing speaking skills. Moreover, exploring how POA and "Listening for Speaking" can be adapted to improve writing, reading, or listening comprehension skills would offer a more comprehensive understanding of their potential in high school English classrooms.

In conclusion, the combination of POA and the "Listening for Speaking" method offers a promising framework for

improving oral English proficiency and core competencies in high school students. By addressing the limitations of this study and exploring new avenues for research, educators can further refine and expand the application of these methods to meet the diverse needs of English learners.

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