

Analysis and Reflection on Listening Course based on Constructive Alignment Theory

Chunli Ni

Dalian Polytechnic University, 116034, China

ABSTRACT. *Listening course has been regarded as the most challenging component in second language acquisition. How to build up an effective listening course in the teaching session is of great importance for both the tutors and students. This paper is aimed to analyze and reflect on how to build up college students' language delivery based on Constructive Alignment Theory.*

KEYWORDS: *Listening; Language acquisition; Reflection; Constructive alignment theory*

In terms of progression, listening course is the most demanding one for most Chinese students, which is tailored by teachers to meet the specific language needs of individual students. Aside from the additional benefit of preparing students to deal with exam questions, the listening course also benefits from a strong focus on helping students develop independent learning. This paper is aimed to analyze and reflect on how to build up college students' language delivery based on Constructive Alignment Theory.

1. Post-Session Analysis

Workouts are language learning and language using activities which enhance the learner's overall acquisition process, providing teachers with a variety of ways through which to make this process engaging and rewarding. (Fraida 2002: 95)

Generally speaking, many students have a visual learning style; they learn better when seeing images that correspond to the things being taught. "A picture is worth a thousand words". (Wilson 2008: 65)

According to Butcher, "learning outcomes can be achieved at a range of levels and, perhaps, indifferent ways-there is not just one way to get to a destination."(Butcher 2006:44). I thought it was probably better to pre-teach a number of the words that would be essential to the completion of the set task, as the English level of the group was relatively low, It also gave the students confidence as well as potentially useful information about the topic.

According to Fraida, “Needs were best addressed at the level of classroom instruction, where a teacher could select appropriate techniques and materials to accommodate individuals,” Using discussion of real issues on locations and directions was one of the most common and practical materials, like the map of a local market. In addition, the Communicative Language Teaching methodology I applied seeks to engage the student on a personal level through interaction and personalization. I tried to encourage students to say something about the topic through communication. “listening in CLT has a communicative purpose in that students are expected to use the information they hear, just as we do when we listen outside classroom.”(Wilson 2008:20) Apart from CLT, I applied TPR, Total Physical Response, to encourage those weaker students to develop communicative competence using any means they can--gesture, mime, inter-language, which established a natural atmosphere and visual prompts for the students.

2. Delivery of the session

Pre-listening: Reviewed and practiced the previous lesson’s vocabulary and introduced the topic vocabulary related to locations and directions and the listening activity;

While-listening: Developed skills for listening---labeling the map and identifying the requirements and tips about question type;

Listened to the recording and labeled the map

Students checked with their partner

Listen again for specific information

Pointed out the synonyms and landmarks;

After-listening: Recapped on lesson and assessed students are able to handle the type of questions and set assignment

3. Reflection on planning and execution of the session

Overall, basically followed Biggs’s Constructive Alignment Theory (Biggs & Tang, 2011).In terms of my aims, I felt that with regard to the development and practice of predicting these were achieved and that their awareness of following the directions was raised. I personally believed that teacher talk was also interactive in that it responded to students’ needs and could be very motivating. However, I was pleased that I had adapted the lesson to their needs. Teachers should try to reduce TTT to involve students in teaching activities at most. Keep in mind Christine Nuttall’s axiom, ‘Never say anything yourself if a student could say it for you’.

Becoming a better teacher of listening isn’t very different from becoming a better doer of anything. Below are five tips based on my own practices:

(1) Action research---use methods such as questionnaires, observation, diaries,

case studies, in depth interviewing and experiments.

(2) Experiment----use different materials, textbooks, activities, task live listening. Constantly them.

(3) Become a better listener----listen with the students' ears.

(4) Learn a language teaching methodology---focus on listening.

(5) Categorize my teaching problems and find solutions. Keep a teaching portfolio.

4. General reflection and further development needs

I begin to realize that first “it is important to consider the progression of intellectual demand on students both within a level and across levels within a programme.”(Butcher 2006:46) I will try to reinforce task-based learning by which students can learn more effectively when their minds are on the task rather than on the language they are using in order to achieve it. As (Carless 2009: 66) mentioned that “TBLT (task-based language teaching) are designed to replicate as closely as possible real-world situations that the students might encounter.” Second, “learning is not seen as the means of accumulating knowledge but as the means of becoming a more proficient learner in whatever one is engaged in.” (Gattegno1972:89) Also with the classical Audio-lingual Method, I tend to regard myself “as the primary source of language and of language learning.”(Richard 2000:24) Linus Pauling once said, “The best way to have a good idea is to have lots of ideas” (Wilson 2008: 64). Third, “training students to become ‘strategic’ about listening is one of the most important things that teachers can do to develop their students’ competence in the skill.”(Wilson 2008:34)

In addition, teachers should be aware of the fact that “well-designed activities can help students to understand the listening passage.”(Wilson 2008:81) Such activities provide a focus, showing students what is important about any given passage; allow students to perceive the text’s structure; help them to ‘chunk’ the listening into sections or units of information; provide clues as to how they might respond; keep them concentrating throughout the passage.

References

- [1] Biggs J, Tang C (2011). *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*, SRHE & Open University Press, McGraw-Hill Education, Maidenhead. 4th Edition.
- [2] Butcher C, Davies C, Highton M (2006). *Designing Learning: From Module Outline to Effective Teaching*, Routledge, London. UK.
- [3] Carless, D (2009). Revisiting the TBLT versus P-P-P debate: voices from Hong Kong. *Asian Journal of English Language Teaching*, pp. 49-66.
- [4] Fraida Dubin (2002). *Course Design*, Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press: Shanghai 101.