

A Study on the Relationship between Phonetic Knowledge Learning and Listening Strategy Development in High School English Listening Acquisition

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Abstract: *The English listening test for the college entrance examination not only tests the mastery of basic phonetic knowledge, but also tests the ability of candidates to apply listening strategies. This article attempts to discuss the relationship between the mastery of phonetic knowledge and the application of listening strategies in the process of high school English listening acquisition. It is believed that in high school English listening teaching, it is necessary to consciously avoid the negative aspects of the relationship between the two and focus on the positive aspects that are conducive to the development of students' listening acquisition.*

Keywords: *High School English Listening, Phonetic Knowledge, Listening Strategies, Dialectical Relationships*

1. Introduction

English listening acquisition includes the accumulation of basic English knowledge and the skills and strategies used in the process of English listening acquisition to improve phonetic knowledge and application ability, namely the learning of phonetic basic knowledge and the development of listening strategies. Due to the exam oriented nature of the college entrance examination listening exam, exam strategies have become an indispensable and unavoidable dimension in the acquisition of listening skills. The use of listening strategies plays a role in the college entrance examination and English listening teaching, such as predicting the main idea based on phonetics, inferring situational development, and learning strategies for reverse listening teaching. There is a dialectical relationship between the learning of phonetic knowledge and the development of listening strategies, which is interdependent and mutually influential.

2. The characteristics of English listening comprehension exams and the categories of listening strategies

2.1. The characteristics of English listening in the college entrance examination

The purpose of the college entrance examination listening test is to test the listening ability of high school students, reverse engineer English teaching, and differentiate and select talents from universities. Due to the large number of candidates and complex listening test procedures in China, the form of the college entrance examination listening test is a written answer test. In addition, the varying levels of development in English teaching in different regions also result in differences in the question types for the English listening test in China's college entrance examination. For example, the test questions in examination areas such as Shanghai, Beijing, and Tianjin include two parts: objective multiple-choice questions and subjective fill in the blank questions. The national English listening test adopts an objective multiple-choice test format. In general, China's college entrance examination adopts imitative listening recording materials and a written answering test form to test students' language practical application abilities in understanding the overall context, details, and context inference. The form of written answers cannot fully cover the development of real-life situations, and there are shortcomings in the understanding of situations in written test forms. For example, in real-life communication, context can

be judged based on the speaker's expression, body language, etc. In the written answer test, candidates need to infer the speaker's situation and discourse development based on the listening recording content. At the same time, the written answer itself has some characteristics, such as students can infer and guess the context development based on the question requirements and vocabulary information of alternative answers.

The listening test for the second level of the new curriculum standard college entrance examination is one of the listening questions for the college English exam. In recent years, the main characteristics of the college entrance examination listening are: moderate speaking speed, generally 150-155 words per minute; Speech can better reflect principles such as authenticity, communicative competence, and practicality; The materials for listening originate from daily life, and the principle of emphasizing the authenticity of the materials generally revolves around topics such as daily life, culture, education, real-time, humanities, and popular science; The test question setting requires candidates to master the use of discourse and be able to use social language communication strategies. The form of the college entrance examination listening test is difficult to fully imitate actual communication scenarios, but it is also necessary to evaluate the level and ability of the candidate's listening learning. Therefore, the preparation for the college entrance examination listening not only considers the reserve of phonetic knowledge in the exam, but also cannot ignore the important component of skills and strategies that appear in the exam. The use of skills and strategies, also known as listening comprehension strategies, in the listening test plays a certain role in the college entrance examination listening, and there is a dialectical relationship between interdependence and mutual influence with the learning of basic phonetic knowledge.

2.2. Category and generation approaches of listening strategies

The role of English listening strategies in listening comprehension cannot be ignored, and related research focuses on topics such as listening learning strategies and listening exam strategies. O'Malley and Chamot believe that learning strategies consist of metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio affective strategies. [1] Wen Qiufang divides learning strategies into management strategies and language learning strategies. [2] According to the classification of learning strategies, Wang Yu believes that English listening strategies can be divided into metacognitive strategies, formal strategies, semantic strategies, mother tongue dependent strategies, and socio affective strategies based on these two foundations. [3] The metacognitive strategy originated from Flavier, also known as reflective cognition or hyper cognition, which refers to the learner's understanding of the knowledge they are learning and their ability to control, monitor, and regulate this process. So, the metacognitive strategy of listening refers to the learner's understanding of the development of acquisition methods for listening ability, as well as the regulation and evaluation of its process. Meaning strategy refers to the inference, association, and prediction of listening materials by learners. The use of this strategy generally occurs in listening tests, and some middle school teachers in China have conducted research and discussions on listening materials, student listening lesson preparation, discourse, context, and other aspects. Teacher Wu Changlin discussed the pre exam prediction strategy, mid exam prediction strategy, and post exam prediction strategy for the college entrance examination. [4] Teacher Yuan Feng analyzed the problems in high school listening exams from three perspectives: language ability, listening materials, and candidate psychology, and proposed corresponding coping strategies. He also put forward some ideas on the use of listening strategies. [5] Social strategy refers to simulating a real learning environment during the listening process. The social strategies used in our country are relatively simple and singular, and many teachers often advocate the use of multimedia to simulate the training environment of listening learning. Emotional strategies refer to teachers paying attention to the negative emotions generated by learners in listening learning, and enhancing students' motivation for listening learning through emotional care. The mother tongue strategy is to carry out listening learning based on the close relationship between the mother tongue (Chinese) and the second language (English). Of course, there are many different strategies for listening learning based on different perspectives, which will not be elaborated here. However, regardless of the criteria and basis for dividing listening strategies, we cannot ignore the dimension that "certain listening learning strategies have a significant impact on English listening performance." [6]

3. The role of English listening strategies in the college entrance examination

From the perspective of the goals of listening learning, listening strategies involve both listening acquisition strategies and listening test taking strategies. The author mainly discusses from the perspective of test taking ability. In listening test strategies, candidates often use semantic strategies,

starting from discourse, semantics, and word meanings. According to empirical data analysis, Cai Wei et al. believe that “the most commonly used knowledge by participants is the contextual clues provided by the sentence where the target word is located, while utilizing both contextual and background knowledge.” [7] In the English listening section of the college entrance examination, the commonly used test taking strategy by candidates is the discourse context strategy. Our discussion in this section also focuses on the role of discourse context strategy in the college entrance examination.

3.1. Reverse high school listening teaching

In recent years, the number of words, interfering information, and interfering items in the listening materials for the college entrance examination have increased. 11 years ago, the number of listening materials was less than 1000, and by 2017, it had exceeded 1000 words. The increasing difficulty of listening has increased the training requirements for candidates to grasp the general idea of discourse and extract and infer information. The mastery of phonetics knowledge testing and the use of listening strategies in the college entrance examination listening test. The changes in the listening test for the college entrance examination also reflect the requirements of the examination syllabus: understanding the main idea and general idea; Obtain factual and specific information, such as time, location, people, events, etc; Infer the conversation background, character relationships, etc. to understand the speaker's intention, viewpoint, or attitude. The problem-solving approach for the listening test questions in the college entrance examination tests students' ability to grasp the overall contextual framework, lock in and extract useful information, infer the development of context, and construct contextual scenes in recorded materials to examine their basic listening skills. Eliminating interfering information and selecting the correct answer require students' ability to process information and judge context. Given the demand for exams, high school English teaching emphasizes the accumulation and training of basic English knowledge, and also requires students to learn and master the necessary listening comprehension strategies in exams. Guided by the wind vane of the college entrance examination, strategic learning in high school listening teaching has become an important part of teaching. When English teachers guide students in listening exercises, they often require them to listen to pre reading materials, predict the development of listening situations based on known information, speculate on the main idea, and other situations, which are all manifestations of discourse strategies used in listening exams.

3.2. Predicting the main theme of exam materials

The listening test for the college entrance examination requires students to answer the questions mentioned in the paper based on the listening materials. The format of answering questions in the national paper is to choose the correct answer from three alternative options. Students are required to construct virtual dialogue scenarios based on written information and recorded materials through written answers. The ability of candidates to process and process basic phonetic knowledge framework and grasp the main idea is required to test their mastery of discourse context strategies. The requirements for exam questions and alternative options become the “clues” for candidates to predict the main idea of listening materials. Based on the discourse context visible in the test paper, candidates can predict the main idea of the materials in the exam. The feasibility of this “prediction” stems from Hu Zhuanglin's “Cohesion and Coherence in Discourse”: for a meaningful and acceptable discourse, it can exhibit a certain degree of cohesion in various levels of language (such as word meaning, vocabulary, syntax, phonetics, etc.), so that the speaker's intended expression runs through the entire discourse during the communication process, thereby achieving the communicative purpose. [8] Any language must have meaning within its context, and in the listening materials for the college entrance examination, whether it is dialogue or monologue, it will definitely form a context. Candidates can also infer the main idea of the context based on the contextual clues provided on the test paper. Taking the 2016 college entrance examination listening exam as an example. In the 18th question of the tenth material, the central words “tube line” and “London” that appear in the question and alternative options, “different line” and “tube map” in the 19th question, and “wrong direction” in the 20th question. Based on these key contextual information, we can infer that the content of the monologue is roughly about discussing the London Underground. In today's program, we are talking about London Underground trains. By comparing the first sentence in the material, we can easily find the coherence and consistency between the contextual information of the keywords and sentences and the main idea of the material discourse.

3.3. Inferring the direction of contextual development

Inferring the development of some details in listening materials based on artistic conception is also a

reflection of the role of listening strategies in listening tests. For example, in determining the inflection of sentence linking relationships based on the conjunctions but and how in the discourse; Based on and, so, infer the relationship between the continuation and development of sentences, and so on. In addition, the reader's tone, viewpoint, attitude, etc. can be determined based on the changes in pronunciation, tone, and intensity in the material. In summary, "through the use of connected words, people can understand the semantic connections between sentences, and even predict the semantics of subsequent sentences logically through the preceding sentence." [8] We take the March 2017 National English Level 2 Test as an example. Firstly, discuss the semantic inflection relationship of inflectional vocabulary. In the second paragraph of the material, the question is "What does the woman ask for?" In the material, a woman is asked "Do you have a large size?" and her answer is "Yes, but not the color.". When we hear "but", we can determine the inflection of the relationship between the second sentence and the previous sentence, which makes it easy to determine that women need the same "size" but different "colors". Examples of transitional relationships based on sentence context appear in the second, fourth, sixth, seventh, and tenth paragraphs of the material. Secondly, we will discuss the development relationship between sentences. Taking the first paragraph of the material as an example. The question requires "What is the woman going to do?" In the material, a woman answers the question and says, "I've got a meeting at ten O'clock, so I have to go to my office now.". The word "so" in the material directly connects the previous context of "meeting at ten o'clock" to "going to the office". It is not difficult to determine what a woman will do based on the context of the relationship. This type of use of sentence context based on so, and is reflected in listening materials 4, 8, 9, and 10. Finally, we discuss the development of inferring contextual changes in speech. In Material 10, the boy told the girl that the vacation plan is not for travel, but for working for a company. The girl's return is "A company? What's that? What do you do?". The rising tone of the girl's voice shows surprise towards the boy's response and also changes the development of the context. These types of words used based on pronunciation and interjections include "red?", "sure", "oh", "wow", "yeah", and "uh", among others.

4. The relationship between phonetic knowledge and listening strategies

4.1. Phonetic knowledge and listening strategies are components of listening acquisition

Obviously, in listening learning, the learning of phonetic knowledge must start with basic phonetic knowledge. Even in some special situations, such as children immigrating to English speaking countries, they may miss out on learning phonetics in basic school education. However, listening acquisition always starts from the most basic stage and gradually transitions to a more advanced stage. For example, the process of English learning and development goes from learning phonetics to learning vocabulary and gradually transitioning to learning simple sentences, and so on. In regular phonetic learning, students should also start with basic phonetic knowledge and gradually transition to higher-level listening knowledge learning. For example, from learning phonetics to learning word pronunciation, then to learning short dialogues, learning short texts, and ultimately transitioning to a more advanced learning stage, and so on. Of course, each stage of English knowledge is accompanied by different levels of listening strategies, and the development of these strategies gradually progresses from the most basic to the more advanced stage. Only when learners have a certain foundation in both phonetic knowledge and listening strategies, can listening learning be integrated and mutually promoted. Therefore, we cannot ignore any part of the learning of phonetic knowledge and listening strategies in the process of listening acquisition. "During the teaching process, listening teachers should not only provide students with opportunities for listening practice, but also strengthen listening strategy training." [9]

4.2. Phonetic knowledge is fundamental while listening strategies are a more advanced skill

Both beginners and English learners with a good foundation will use listening strategies in listening communication. The application of listening strategies exists in communication and exam taking. Any listening learner will use listening strategies, with the difference being that learners with high listening proficiency use more advanced learning strategies, while low-level learners use more basic and commonly used listening strategies. "The high group tends to use more social, emotional, monitoring, reasoning, and grammar strategies, while the low group tends to use mother tongue and vocabulary dependent strategies. Various listening strategies are arranged in order of frequency of use, which are: meaning strategy, social, emotional strategy, mother tongue dependent strategy, formal strategy, and metacognitive strategy." [7] In the listening section of the college entrance examination, the commonly used test taking strategy by candidates is the discourse context strategy. The discussion in this section

also focuses on the role of discourse context strategy in the college entrance examination.

4.3. The two are interdependent and mutually reinforcing

Both are important components of listening comprehension, jointly promoting the development of listening comprehension. The accumulation of phonetic knowledge can promote the development of learners' strategies to a higher level, which in turn makes phonetic knowledge learning simpler and more effective. As discussed earlier, basic knowledge of phonetics is a prerequisite for listening learning, and discussing the development of listening strategies without basic knowledge of phonetics is meaningless. For example, the use of intonation, linking, and conjunctions in listening can help learners determine the context, but basic knowledge of the pronunciation and pronunciation of real words cannot be mastered, fundamentally lacking the foundation for the development of listening ability. Similarly, lacking certain listening strategies makes it difficult for phonetic knowledge to be efficiently developed. Assuming we systematically and scientifically plan our phonetic knowledge learning, the foundation of English can be rapidly accumulated in a short period of time, forming the foundation for listening learning. Once listening strategies can be effectively and appropriately applied to listening learning, the listening level of learners will be effectively improved. For example, in the initial stage of listening learning, learners can effectively apply metacognitive strategies in listening learning, continuously formulate and adjust learning plans, and effectively accumulate basic knowledge of phonetics. After receiving positive feedback, learners will have a positive attitude towards listening learning strategies, consciously strengthening their learning and adopting new learning strategies in listening learning, promoting the development of listening phonetics knowledge.

4.4. The two influence and constrain each other

According to the previous text, we know that the interdependent and promoting relationship between basic knowledge of phonetics and the application of listening strategies is based on the conditions for effective use of listening strategies. If the prerequisite is a negative and unscientific relationship between the two, the process of mutual development between the two will become difficult and difficult to reconcile, thereby inhibiting the development of the learner's listening level. Assuming that learners do not have a scientific plan for listening learning in the early stages of learning, resulting in the inability to find learning "small goals" at each stage of learning, learners learning aimlessly, leading to low learning efficiency. This situation is the inhibitory effect of errors in the use of listening learning strategies by learners on speech knowledge learning. Similarly, if learners cannot effectively break out of their "insider" perspective during the learning process, fail to see the improper use of strategies during the learning process, and fail to adjust the development direction of listening learning strategies in a timely manner, then phonetic knowledge learning will fall into a dilemma. This is caused by the lack of metacognitive strategies in listening learning among learners. From the opposite perspective, assuming that there is no foundation of phonetic knowledge, the use of listening strategies will be hindered. For example, learners with lower levels of phonetic knowledge are unable to master certain phonetic and language background knowledge, making it difficult to comprehensively mobilize and use high-level listening strategies in listening comprehension; And learners who have a solid grasp of phonetic knowledge can more effectively mobilize various listening strategies to promote learning. This is because "language proficiency is an important factor affecting knowledge use; low-level participants mobilize more background knowledge, while high-level participants are better at using language knowledge and comprehensively applying various related knowledge." [7]

5. Conclusions

Basic knowledge of phonetics and listening strategies are two important components of English listening acquisition, and they are interdependent and mutually influential. In the teaching of high school English listening, we should not only attach importance to the learning of phonetic knowledge, but also emphasize the learning of interdependent listening strategies in the process of phonetic learning; Consciously handle the relationship between the two and avoid the mutually restrictive parts; We should actively utilize the positive aspects that promote each other and facilitate the development of learners' listening abilities, in order to help students learn effectively. Some of the wording in the article lacks rigor, and we hope that scholars will not hesitate to provide guidance. In future research, further exploration of deeper levels of phonological knowledge is needed, such as the role of intonation, group division, and the use of related vocabulary in listening learning.

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