

A Review of Research on English Listening Teaching in High Schools of China

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Abstract:

The development characteristics of research related to high school English listening teaching in China include: weak research foundation, high participation of frontline teachers, diversified research directions, and strong policy orientation. This article provides a review of interdisciplinary research, research related to the new curriculum standards, and research directions on regional listening teaching. It proposes thoughts on the development of listening teaching from the aspects of quality education, assessment and evaluation, and individual characteristics.

Keywords:

High School, English Listening Teaching, Literature Research

1. Introduction

The research on listening teaching in China began in the 1980s. With the deepening development of listening teaching, academic research on high school listening teaching has also made certain progress. The practice of high school English listening teaching requires theoretical guidance, and relevant research has certain practical significance for listening teaching. This article provides a review of research on high school listening teaching in China, aiming to provide theoretical references for the study of high school listening teaching. The research data mainly comes from China National Knowledge Infrastructure Database (CNKI), with a period from 1982 to the present. The keywords of "high school English listening teaching" were searched, and relevant articles were collected and sorted out. With "high school" and "listening teaching" as the themes, the literature method was adopted to select articles related to high school listening teaching. The review is mainly conducted from two dimensions: research characteristics and research content.

2. Characteristics of Research on High School English Listening Teaching

2.1. The research foundation was weak before 2000

From the perspective of research quantity, scope, and depth, there is an overall upward trend in the development of high school listening teaching research. Firstly, in

terms of the number of research papers, there have been 13 related papers on high school listening since 1989. After 2000, a total of 2569 related papers were collected and organized. From the perspective of research scope and content, before 2000, high school listening teaching research focused on the call for the development of listening teaching and some general, teaching experience based initiatives. For example, Zhang Qining discusses the arrangement and emphasis of listening teaching in different stages of school, and puts forward the viewpoint of emphasizing specialized training in the first and second years of high school and comprehensive training in the third year [21].

2.2. High school teachers become the main force of the research

After 2000, listening gradually became an important assessment part of the college entrance examination, and research on high school listening received more attention. Since 2000, the number of research papers on high school listening teaching has shown a trend of increasing year by year. High school teachers have summarized their experience in improving listening teaching effectiveness from teaching practice and developed it into papers, which have achieved certain results in terms of quantity. For example, Bu Suhua elaborated on strategies to improve the quality of listening teaching from multiple dimensions, including learning phonetic knowledge, applying listening strategies, and training methods. [20] Ren Jing analyzed the reasons that affect listening teaching from the perspectives of teachers and students, and proposed corresponding countermeasures from these two angles. [7] Most studies have added new research directions to listening teaching research from the perspective and experience of frontline teaching, put forward opinions on high school listening teaching, and promoted the development of high school listening teaching.

2.3. Research directions show a trend of diversification

The research scope and dimensions of high school listening teaching are constantly expanding, and diversified development has become a significant feature. Related research is no longer based on experience, but focuses on a specific aspect of teaching, exploring themes that are more specific and have theoretical guidance significance. For example, analysis of influencing factors in listening teaching, theoretical construction of practical teaching, analysis of current problems in listening teaching, interdisciplinary research, etc. From the perspective of cultural awareness, some scholars believe that cultural differences may affect the development of listening teaching, and enhancing the introduction of English culture is one of the strategies to improve the level of English listening. [15] The rapid development of the Internet and other era products has provided more auxiliary functions for teaching, especially for the teaching of listening and speaking in English. From this perspective, the application of multiple networks and media in listening teaching is a key focus of research. [18] A regional listening study was conducted on high school listening teaching and related areas in specific regions, and suggestions were made for the development of high school English listening in rural areas, ethnic minority areas, and certain provinces and cities. For example, research has been conducted on the problems and causes of English listening teaching in rural high schools. [6] The research on high school English listening reflects the current situation of high school listening teaching more deeply and widely, from experience summary to theoretical exploration, from appeal to empirical investigation and data analysis, and scientifically and objectively proposes measures to promote the development of high

school listening.

2.4. Clearly characterized by policy orientation

From 1980 to 1983, listening scores were included in the total score of the college entrance examination in proportion each year, with scoring ratios of 30%, 50%, 70%, and 100%, respectively. At that time, listening exams were not nationwide and had little influence, so there was relatively little research on listening teaching. In 1996, General High School English Teaching Syllabus requires the cultivation of students' English communication skills, especially listening and speaking abilities. In 2000, China's Education Ministry issued Notice on Gradually Adding Listening Tests to the Foreign Language Subject of the National Unified Examination for Enrollment in Ordinary Higher Education Institutions, which stipulated a transitional plan for adding listening to the English college entrance examination. The Examination Center of the Ministry of Education provides test papers without the listening section, as well as test papers with a 13% and 20% listening score ratio, for various provinces and regions to choose from; Improving listening test papers in 2001 and 2002; In 2003, it was required to use test papers that included listening comprehension; In 2005, the examination center provided one set of listening and one set of non listening test papers for each province to choose from. In 2000, the English college entrance examination in Jiangsu Province began to add a listening test section, and since then, listening tests have gradually been carried out in various regions. In 2004, the Ministry of Education revised the Senior High School English Curriculum Standards, requiring that the formation of comprehensive language proficiency be based on the integration of language skills, language knowledge, emotional attitudes, learning strategies, and cultural awareness. Language skills and knowledge are the foundation of comprehensive language proficiency. Subsequently, listening tests became an important component of the college entrance examination English, and related papers also focused on researching new curriculum standards.

3. Overview of Research Content, Dimensions, and Themes

3.1. Interdisciplinary related research

Interdisciplinary research is a major direction in high school listening studies. Combining metacognitive strategies, image-based teaching, cognitive psychology schema theory, pragmatics discourse theory coherence theory, activity-based teaching method, interaction theory, self-efficacy, formative assessment, input hypothesis theory, attribution theory, cohesive phonological behavior theory, level model and other theories, this paper elaborates and analyzes the current situation of listening teaching development, and proposes measures and suggestions to improve the current situation of listening teaching development in Chinese high schools. For example, based on the research results of blended learning and metacognitive strategies at home and abroad, relevant studies adopt a questionnaire survey method to collect data on the current situation of teachers' teaching and students' learning in high school English listening teaching, and analyze the questionnaire survey through SPSS to objectively reflect its current situation and analyze the existing problems.[1]

The development of the internet has provided a vast amount of learning resources for listening teaching. Effectively and reasonably utilizing internet resources to enhance students' listening abilities is a major research trend in high school listening teaching. As early as 2004, research proposed a teaching model for English listening

classes based on the online environment, which should focus on cultivating students' learning strategies, guiding them to choose appropriate materials according to their own level, and improving their ability to search, integrate, and communicate information. Chang Yun believes that using modern technology to assist listening teaching is beneficial for effectively organizing listening classes, displaying listening learning materials with both audio and text, stimulating students' interest in listening learning, and promoting the improvement of listening abilities.[19] Chen Tingting believes that multimedia should be reasonably applied in English teaching, maximizing its advantages, promoting students' language knowledge and skills learning, cultivating their cross-cultural communication awareness, and inspiring students to actively participate in learning practice, thereby improving teaching quality and achieving excellent teaching results. [12] In addition, the integration of modern teaching models such as micro videos into listening teaching is also a new research direction. Many studies have advocated for the use of emerging technologies to assist English listening teaching. For example, teachers in Tenghai District and other areas have specifically proposed the practical application of micro videos in high school listening teaching from five aspects: teaching scenario creation, content explanation, task types, operation types, and excessive emotions. [3]

From the perspective of classroom teaching, the new listening teaching model advocates paying attention to the individual differences of students. The diverse teaching modes are in line with the personalized development of students and provide more references for listening teaching choices. Research calls for the reform of listening teaching methods and proposes specific listening teaching practice models that subvert traditional teaching concepts, such as exploratory teaching method, multimodal teaching method, activity-based teaching method, scaffolding teaching method, schema teaching method, flipped classroom, micro video teaching method, etc. Chen Lei stated the superiority of the flipped classroom teaching model and proposed a specific plan for implementing the flipped classroom in high school listening classes. [5] Flipped classroom deconstructs the traditional listening teaching mode and reconstructs a teaching mode that is conducive to the development of learning personality. Scaffolding teaching starts from the principle of "student-centered" and advocates the transformation of the role of teaching leaders in classroom teaching, establishing the concept of auxiliary roles as student service providers. Some teachers believe that the scaffolding teaching model can help stimulate students' interest in learning, enhance their learning motivation, and improve their English listening skills. [11] The task-based teaching method places students at the center of teaching and aims to cultivate their self-development and promote their English language proficiency as the teaching principle. The application of task-based teaching method in listening classes is conducive to transforming the traditional teaching mode of "emphasizing knowledge explanation and neglecting ability cultivation", meeting the requirements of cultivating students' application ability, and improving their comprehensive language application ability. The cognitive listening strategy training model of task-based teaching theory has a promoting effect on students' listening comprehension level, positive emotions, awareness of strategy use, and its superiority compared to traditional teaching. [14] In addition, task-based teaching method conforms to the requirements of students' listening learning rules and follows the objective practical requirements of English communication function. Related research tends to implement the teaching philosophy of "student-centered", highlighting the important role of students in listening teaching, and advocating teaching models that are conducive to students'

personalized development.

3.2. Research on Listening Requirements in the New Curriculum Standards

High School English Curriculum Standards has standardized the requirements for English education in Chinese high schools, and the guiding suggestions on listening teaching have also received attention from a large number of teaching workers. Research on listening teaching from the perspective of the new curriculum standards has become a major component of related studies. The Standard requires emphasis on common foundations and the construction of development platforms; Provide multiple options to meet individual needs; Optimize learning methods and enhance self-directed learning abilities; Pay attention to students' emotions and improve their humanistic literacy; Improve the evaluation system and promote students' continuous development. These teaching concepts have put forward reform requirements for the traditional English listening teaching mode, catering to the needs of English teaching in the new era. Around the concept of self-directed learning, English teachers and scholars have proposed various models that are in line with students' self-directed listening teaching and learning, meet the needs of personalized teaching development, and are also derivative extensions of the principle of self-directed learning. Zhou Haiming proposed an interactive English listening teaching model, which transforms learning into a "student-centered" and teacher guided activity. The goal of high school English teaching under the background of the new curriculum reform is to cultivate compound talents with English creativity and communication skills, so English listening teaching based on interactive mode is more important. [13] Teng Lifang also holds a positive attitude towards students' self-directed learning mode, affirming the promoting effect of communicative teaching method on high school listening teaching. Communicative approach listening teaching is very effective in improving high school students' English listening ability and academic performance, and also has a certain promoting effect on enhancing students' communicative ability. [16] Dai Yuanfang proposed the practice of task-based teaching method in listening teaching, and pointed out that implementing task-based teaching method in high school English listening is extremely beneficial for improving students' English listening level. [17] The concept of "providing multiple choices and adapting to individual needs" in the new curriculum standard is also a research focus of high school English listening teaching. Based on this concept, more and more new listening teaching models are constantly emerging. There are differences in students' personalities, and teaching modes also have their own characteristics. The concept of personalized teaching can promote students' autonomous learning, enhance their interest in learning, and has practical significance for improving the listening teaching mode. It is worth advocating and practicing.

The shortcomings, reasons, and measures in teaching under the new curriculum standards are the main research dimensions, and most related studies are based on the theoretical summary and exploration of teachers' teaching experience. Miao Changping summarized the current situation of high school listening teaching as follows: replacing teaching with listening, with low teaching effectiveness; Lack of design and simplified teaching; The requirements are vague and lack hierarchical goals; Guidance errors lead students into misunderstandings. He proposed to carefully design listening teaching activities before, during, and after listening, and required the cultivation of students' skills such as pre listening prediction, listening acquisition, judgment, induction, and recording. Through post listening activities, students can

improve their listening level and ultimately develop their comprehensive language proficiency. [10] Listening strategy teaching is the guiding principle of the new curriculum standard, which teaches students the skills of answering questions before, during, and after listening. It belongs to the category of answering strategies and can improve the scores of listening exams. The essential requirement of the new curriculum standard is to implement measures that are conducive to the development of listening skills in the teaching process, starting from the goal of improving listening skills rather than the purpose of “exam strategies”. The strategy for improving listening ability should be implemented in “listening training”, which proposes a scientific learning strategy for the planned listening training in high school for three years. In addition, the methods of listening teaching should be based on appropriate listening materials, cleverly designed question types, and students’ interests. Regular and scientific listening training can effectively improve students’ listening abilities.[9] The most advocated strategy for high school listening teaching is to improve test scores through effective preparation. Developing students’ learning strategies is beneficial for improving their listening abilities and developing their practical language skills.

There is not much research on the cultivation of humanistic literacy and listening evaluation system in listening teaching under the new curriculum standards. From the perspective of the new classroom concept, these two dimensions are important aspects of English listening teaching and deserve more attention in research. From the perspective of learning objectives, learning knowledge and skills, understanding humanistic backgrounds, and establishing values are all key aspects of English learning that require sufficient attention from English teachers. The evaluation system can provide feedback on teaching deficiencies, which is crucial for improving and reforming the English listening teaching mode of the system.

3.3. Research on Regional English Listening Teaching

Research on the teaching, status, and development of regional high school listening is a major direction, especially focusing on high school listening teaching in rural and minority areas with lagging listening. In addition, case studies in a certain region have also received attention. The research on listening teaching suggestions and reform methods in areas with lagging listening teaching has also followed.

After adding listening exams, research on high school listening teaching in rural areas mainly focuses on the current situation and proposed measures for teaching development. Overall, research suggests that there are shortcomings in basic teaching infrastructure, teacher quality, listening skills, and teaching methods. Teachers should first clarify the teaching objectives and adopt listening teaching content that is suitable for students' foundation. In the classroom, they should not only innovate teaching strategies but also pay attention to basic strategies. They should also adopt interactive and evaluation strategies in teaching, and cannot ignore the cultivation of students' listening learning strategies. [2] Exam taking skills training reflects the reality of weak foundation in rural high school listening teaching. In order to meet the requirements of the college entrance examination listening, exam taking skills have become a teaching task. The reasons for the lagging development of listening teaching in rural high schools are multidimensional, and there are some problems in schools, families, and students themselves. [6] From the perspectives of students and English teaching, Xiong Wei conducted questionnaire surveys and interviews with teachers and students respectively to gain a deeper understanding of the development status of listening

teaching in rural high schools. From the perspective of teachers, there is little practice in English listening learning and training. From the survey results, it can be seen that rural high school English teachers are very lacking in receiving professional training in English listening teaching; Student dimension: Weak family material conditions and students' listening foundation, weak interest in English learning, poor English learning environment, and lack of confidence all affect the development of rural high school students' listening ability. The lagging development of listening teaching in rural high schools, especially in junior high school English listening teaching, needs to be addressed through regional listening education equity.

In fact, the development of listening teaching in rural high schools in China lags behind the pace of urban development. It is an objective phenomenon that high school teachers in urban areas have higher professional quality, complete hardware infrastructure, better student foundation, and better listening foundation than in cities. However, there are also certain problems in the development of high school English listening teaching in areas with better economic foundations. There are also related studies on listening teaching in urban high schools. Gao Hong believes that the problems in high school listening teaching in urban areas are: the main purpose of listening training is to cope with the college entrance examination; The teaching method of listening is single and does not meet the learning requirements of students; The selection of listening materials does not match the students' basic abilities; The development of listening skills is more severely lacking compared to other basic English skills. Listening teaching is deeply influenced by the baton of the college entrance examination, and the lack of correct understanding of the importance of listening teaching by teachers is the reason for the problem. [8] The development of urban listening teaching has advantages such as material foundation and environment, but the drawbacks of deviating from exam oriented education exist in both rural and urban listening teaching. It is urgent to integrate the concept of quality education into teaching practice and attach importance to students' practical and language proficiency.

Listening teaching in ethnic minority areas is also one of the research focuses. Ban Haifeng pointed out that the factors affecting high school English teaching in ethnic minority areas include insufficient teaching staff, outdated teaching concepts, and insufficient interest in English learning among students. [4] The problems in listening teaching for high school students in ethnic minority areas are mostly consistent with those in rural and economically underdeveloped areas, without highlighting the factors that affect the acquisition of English listening skills by ethnic minorities. It is meaningful to conduct in-depth research from the perspective of language acquisition theory and explore the influence of ethnic language and culture on listening acquisition.

4. Conclusion: Questions and Reflections

With the gradual emphasis on listening teaching in high schools and the continuous reform and innovation of teaching models, relevant research has entered a steady development stage, which has provided practical guidance for listening teaching. With the deepening of research and the development of listening teaching, many new research directions are worth considering.

4.1. Research on exam oriented teaching strategies affects the development of quality education

Currently, there is a constant criticism of the proposition of exam oriented education in teaching, and the quality education of “learning for application” is more highly respected. The basic attributes of English language communication determine the teaching objectives of practical application. However, some calls aimed at “coping” with listening exams through test taking skills still exist, which goes against the original intention of improving communication skills and quality education. For example, some studies have proposed that “predicting scenarios” and “finding answers at fixed points” for listening exams are techniques for preparing for exams that can help students “score high”. In communication, so-called skills cannot help students improve their listening and expression abilities, or acquire language communication skills. Compared to the “exam oriented strategy”, more emphasis should be placed on research and thinking related to the development strategies of listening learning, such as enhancing cognitive and learning strategies.

4.2. The setting of listening ability assessment question types needs to be improved and enhanced

Some deviations in listening teaching research reflect some problems in current listening ability testing and assessment. For example, in some regions, all listening questions in the college entrance examination are multiple-choice questions, and only options A, B, and C are selected for the PETS Level 2 test, making it difficult to objectively assess students’ listening abilities. Research comparison shows that the setting mode of fill in the blank questions in the Beijing and Tianjin college entrance exams can better reflect students’ abilities, test discrimination, and have more validity and reliability. The “baton” of the college entrance examination has a significant reverse effect on teaching, and the scientific setting of question types has a positive guiding significance for frontline teachers’ teaching adjustments and related research guidance. Scientifically setting up the types of listening test questions for the college entrance examination, continuously improving the listening evaluation system, reversing high school listening teaching, and guiding teachers to pursue pure teaching research and models.

4.3. Research on personalized listening teaching needs to be explored

The standard requires English teaching to adapt to personalized development. The concept of “one syllabus, multiple textbooks” is in line with this requirement, and some studies have analyzed the effects of listening textbooks. Personalization requires not only adherence to the individual learning characteristics of students, but also the recognition of the objective reality of regional differences and imbalances in listening teaching development.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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