

现代教育技术与自主学习

——提升英语学习者听说技能有效性之行动研究（英文版）

Modern Educational Technology and Learner Autonomy
——Action Research on the Effects on Listening and Speaking Abilities
of Learners of English as a Foreign Language

刘翔虎◎著



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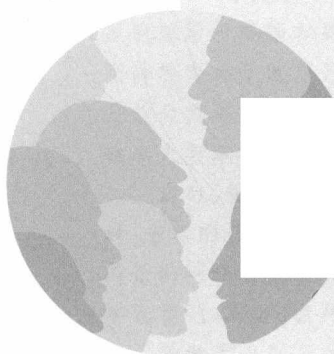
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内容提要

本书主要探讨如何有效地把现代高科技与自主学习的理念相结合,来解决中国学生多年来在英语学习及教师在大学英语教学方面的难题,如“费时低效”及“聋哑英语”等。本书通过运用行动研究方法论,选取中国东北某高校非英语专业 102 名学生为研究对象,在课堂上采用计算机辅助英语教学模式,并在课外鼓励学生运用计算机、网络等新媒体手段,开展多种形式的自主学习,来提高其英语听说能力的实证研究。其主要研究成果如下:在每个行动研究的教学循环的 6 周时间内,学生能有效地运用计算机辅助教学环境及英语学习网站资源等当代高科技手段,大幅度提高其英语听说技能、自主学习能力和学习策略等。更为重要的是在计算机辅助教学的环境下,产生了新的英语听力教学模式,即运用现代高科技手段与自主学习理念相结合,短时间内(一学期)使学习者的英语听力能力,实现从中级到高级水平的转化。

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前言



20 世纪 70 年代末期,中国的科学技术、经济和教育等诸多领域都远远落后于英国和美国等西方发达国家。为了改变其落后的局面,中国政府实行了改革开放政策。但若要学好先进的科学技术,学好英语是最为重要的前提。因此在中国,掀起了一波又一波的英语学习高潮。我本人有幸赶上了第一波浪潮。

当时,物质匮乏,学校里也缺乏如录音机等必要的教学设备。同时,合格的英语教师凤毛麟角,大多数的中小学英语老师只受过短期的英语培训或靠收听英语广播讲座学习一些英语来教学生,真可谓是“现学现卖”。那时,教师发音错误较多,学生模仿其发音也导致发音错误。由于那时无力购买录音机等学习设备,尽管我花了大量时间学英语,但听力及口语仍然很薄弱。随着中国经济状况的好转,录音机等学习辅助工具再也不是奢侈品。但其缺点是看不到讲话人的图像,久而久之使学习者枯燥乏味。1997 年我参观了清华大学的多媒体语音实验室,这对我在英语教学方面的启发颇大。于是,我购买了一些多媒体光盘等英语资料,帮助我的学生提高听力及口语水平。随后的一年内,我的原工作学校又安装了互联网,这给英语教师及学生提供了更好的英语学习工具。

为了进一步探索中国英语教学改革,尤其是有效地解决困扰中国英语学习者长期存在的问题如:“费时低效”及“聋哑英语”,我于 2003 年远赴英国留学,以访问学者身份从事相关英语教学研究,并于 2005 年 10 月开始在英国埃克塞特(Exeter)大学攻读教育专业硕士及博士学位,师从 Keith Postlethwaite 教授(牛津大学博士)和 Sarah Rich 博士(埃克塞特大学博士)。两位导师,治学严谨。当我在研究中遇到困难时,他们总是给予鼓励和支持。尤其是 Postlethwaite 教授为我博士论文的顺利完成,倾注了大量的心血。本书在我的原博士论文(约 12 万字)的基础上,修改后完成。对两位导师的辛勤付出,我无法用语言来表达我内心的感激之情!

本书主要探讨如何有效地把当代高科技与自主学习的理念相结合,来解决中国学生多年来在英语学习方面及大学英语教学方面的难题,如“费时低效”及“聋哑英语”等。本研究课题运用行动研究方法,选取中国东北某高校非英语专业102名学生为研究对象,在课堂上采用计算机辅助英语教学模式,并在课外鼓励学生运用计算机、网络等新媒体手段,开展多种形式的自主学习,来提高其英语听说能力的实证研究。本书主要结论如下:

(1)面对快速多变的新媒体出现,教师提升学生自主学习能力是提高其学习效率的首要条件。

(2)本书的教学实验已研究证实:自主学习理念与新媒体(如:计算机与网络等)教学手段的融合运用可以大幅度提高英语学习效率。

(3)运用现代高科技手段与自主学习理念相结合,短时间内(一学期)使学习者的英语听力程度,实现从中级到高级水平的转化。

(4)基于当代教育信息技术背景下,运用以学生为中心的教学方法能有效地提高学生的英语听说能力。

(5)本研究的方法论为行动研究,它有助于提升教师的职业发展以及有效地提高大学英语教学质量,对大学生综合英语水平的提高也更具有普遍的应用价值。同时,行动研究方法论也是外语教师有效地开展教育科研的最佳途径之一。因为对于大多数英语教师而言,在繁重的教学工作之余,很难有充足时间从事理论研究,因此,教师运用行动研究方法理论,在教学实践中既可以教书育人,又能从事教育科研,可谓一举多得。

本书的读者对象为大学及中学英语教师和应用语言学专业的硕士、博士研究生,以及其他对计算机辅助英语教学、第二语言习得和外语教学法感兴趣的读者。

我除了要向上述提到的两位导师表达诚挚的谢意之外,还要感谢英国埃克塞特大学其他任课教师,以及丁广韵和林欣颖等同学。此外,本书的出版获得了渤海大学社科项目资金*的支持,在此一并致谢。最后,我要感谢父母亲(尽管他们未能等到此书的出版,就已撒手人寰,谨以此书纪念他们)、妻子和女儿,还有兄弟姐妹及亲朋好友们的鼓励 and 大力支持。

本书是我的呕心沥血之作,它的付梓了却我渴望为中国英语教学的改革研究探索的心愿。希望本书能对英语教师的教学有所启迪和借鉴,也期望此书能对英语学习者效率的提高有所帮助。限于本人的学识水平,书中存在的错误与不当之处,敬请本研究领域里的专家学者、教学同仁及读者不吝赐教和批评指正。

刘翔虎 谨识

2018年2月写于渤海大学外国语学院

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Preface



Very large numbers of university students in China study English alongside their degree programmes. Dr Xianghu Liu's book is based on his research into innovative uses of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in support of such students' learning of English. The book focuses especially on the role of CALL in the development of the students' speaking and listening abilities. This development is crucial if the students are to progress in academia through engagement with the literature in their subject specialism that is written in English, and with subject-specific conferences conducted in English. It is crucial if the students are to gain employment (especially with Sino-foreign enterprises), and if they are to enjoy, to the full, travel outside China. Despite this evident importance of English language learning, there is a problem in Chinese English language teaching of what Liu calls low efficiency, "deaf and dumb" English — a style of English teaching that does little to develop students' speaking and listening and therefore leaves them unable to participate fully in an English language environment, despite their years of hard work in attempting to learn the language.

The insights for English language teachers that the book provides, mark a clear way forward. They show ways in which teachers can use CALL to make desirable changes to their practice. In particular, Liu advocates the use of student-centred teaching activities in a multimedia computer teaching environment — innovations that change the teachers' role in the classroom and shift students' expectations away from being passive receivers of instruction in English, and towards being active learners who have some personal responsibility for their own learning.

These same insights are important for teacher educators who seek to share up to date pedagogical ideas with newcomers to the teaching

profession, and with experienced teachers who seek further professional development. They are also important for policymakers who shape the context which both enables and constrains the teaching and learning, and with those responsible for assessment who can directly influence priorities in teaching and learning by their own decisions and what is assessed, and how that is done.

This in itself would be enough to recommend the book to a very wide readership. But the book has another idea to offer its readers. Liu's research was designed as a piece of action research in which the teacher designed new teaching approaches by reference to the latest literature, and by thoughtful engagement in their details of their own context; then put these approaches into action in his own teaching; then carefully assessed the outcomes of the innovation (looking not just to confirm his expected outcomes, but also to challenge his assumptions by revealing unexpected outcomes that could be the starting point for another round of enquiry). Through this approach Liu is able to suggest well-grounded practical innovation, but also to provide new insights into educational theorizing. Teachers, teacher educators, assessment specialists and educational researchers have much to gain from embracing this action research approach, as well as from acting on the particular pedagogical innovations that Liu's use of this methodology has enabled him to reveal.

I am delighted to have been asked to write this preface to a book that I think is a powerful contribution to the field. I warmly recommend it.

Dr Keith Postlethwaite MA (Cantab); PGCE; DPhil (Oxon);
Retired Associate Professor of Education
Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter, UK
March 2018

List of Acronym



AR	Action Research
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BEC	Business English Certificates
CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CET	College English Test
CMC	Computer Mediated Communication
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Special Purposes
FL	Foreign Language
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IT	Information Technology
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MC-Q	Multiple-Choice Question
RQ	Research Question
SD	Standard Deviation
SL	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TOEIC	Test of English for International Communication
VOA	Voice of America
wpm	Words per minute

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First, I begin by presenting background information on English Language Teaching in China. Then, I will discuss the importance of using CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), including the problems of learning English in China, the possible solutions and the rationale of this study. Additionally, the purposes of this study will be presented. As CALL is succinctly defined as “the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning” (Levy, 1997: 1), this study makes a great effort to integrate the effective use of CALL into my teaching and my students’ English language learning so that they can make greater achievements within the shorter time. Finally, an overview of this book will be briefly introduced.

1.1 Background Information on English Language Teaching in China

1.1.1 Brief Information on English Language Teaching in Higher Education in China

The history of teaching English as a foreign language in China dates back to 1862, when the first English class was taken at the Tong Wen Guan (the Imperial Tongwen College) in Beijing (Ruan & Jacob, 2009). Since then, it has continued for over one hundred and fifty years. More recently (in 1978), when the Chinese government adopted the open policy to the outside world to develop the Chinese economy and modernize the country in terms of agriculture, industry, science and technology, it realized the great importance of English language teaching in all levels of schools, colleges and universities. Part of the argument was that China must learn advanced science and technology from Western developed

countries such as the UK and the USA. Since much of the research literature is written in English, and many key conferences in these fields are conducted in English, English is a crucial bridge in reaching that goal. Since then, English has become one of the obligatory courses for all levels of educational organizations from primary schools to universities in China (Note: because of the shortage of qualified English teachers in rural primary schools, English was not taught until late 1990s there.).

In this book I will mainly talk about English language teaching in China's higher educational institutions for non-English majors, which is also called "College English Teaching". College English is a compulsory course for non-English major undergraduate students in China. It was first taught in the early 1980s and it quickly became one of the most important courses in the Chinese higher education systems (Ruan & Jacob, 2009). According to the recent "College English Teaching Syllabus" (Ministry of Education, 2007), there are three requirements (basic requirement, high requirement and higher requirement) in different higher educational institutions in different areas. Among them, the basic requirement, in terms of listening and speaking skills and vocabulary, is as follows (stated in terms which are translated from the syllabus mentioned above):

Listening: The students can understand lectures and daily English conversations in English or get the main ideas of authentic radio/TV programmes of English speaking countries at 130 — 150 words per minute (wpm).

Speaking: The students can discuss or communicate on certain or some daily topics in English or make a short speech after preparation on a familiar topic with clear expressions and pronunciation.

Vocabulary: The students should know or be familiar to at least 4,795 words and 700 phrases, including 2,000 active words that can be applied skillfully in both speaking and writing.

Of course, the "high requirement" is more than the basic requirement quantitatively. For example, the required listening speed is 150 — 180 wpm. The known words should reach at least 6,380 words and 1,200 phrases, including 2,200 active words. Regarding the "higher requirement", the students can basically understand radio/TV programmes in English-speaking countries and get the main ideas or grasp main points. They can also understand native English speakers at normal speed or understand their major courses in English. They can also present their research papers orally in international conferences fluently and participate in discussion in their majors. The known words should reach at least 7,670 words and 1,870 phrases, including 2,360 active words.

Meanwhile, the above requirements are basically matched with the syllabus for the College English Test (CET) (Bands 4 and 6) for non-English major in China (See

Syllabus for College English Test, 2006). The undergraduates for non-English major courses in China, who have finished the College English Courses Bands 1 to 4 (usually the second-year students), take the CET 4. Those, who have passed CET 4 and have completed the College English Courses Bands 5 to 6 (usually the 3rd year students) sit for the CET 6. Those students who have reached the level of the test requirements can take the corresponding level of the test earlier. CET 6 is the highest level English proficiency test for non-English majors, but no other test bands except CET 4 and CET 6 are held in the nation-wide country (for more information on CET 4 and CET 6, please see Section 3.3.1, Chapter 3). In addition, CET 4 is nearly equal to the “basic requirement” and CET 6 is nearly equal to the “high requirement”, but “higher requirement” has surpassed CET 6 a little bit more. However, the listening speed of CET 4 just reaches the minimum of the basic requirement (130 wpm) and that of CET 6 just reaches its maximum (150 wpm). Therefore, the listening requirement of CET 6 is less than its corresponding requirement. In other words, if a university student passes CET 6, his or her listening skill will have reached intermediate level (around 150 wpm). However, the normal speech rate on average for British English in terms of radio programmes, conversation, interviews and lectures was 175 wpm (Tauroza & Allison, 1990). It is therefore likely that the student will struggle to use English effectively with a native speaker.

1.1.2 The Use of CALL in Higher Education in China

Firstly, CALL is used in language classroom teaching. At present, many universities and colleges in China, especially leading universities, have installed modern technology such as the computer and the Internet in the majority of classrooms. Teachers can use Power-point to present their teaching content, or to show pictures related to that content, on large screens in the front of classrooms. Similarly, video programs can be shown on large screens. Also, there are some loudspeakers on the classroom walls, which enable students to hear audio/video files more clearly.

Secondly, more modern technology for language learning is available for university students in China. For students, almost everyone owns a laptop computer, mobile phone and a digital media player such as MP3 and MP4. In addition, in college or university dormitories, there is an internet connection so that they can get access to the internet conveniently. Also, the majority of present college English textbooks in China are accompanied with CDs or DVDs or video/audio files so that students can watch or listen to them out of class by using computers. Furthermore, there are some English language learning websites which suit Chinese college students as they make their preparations for the CET (College English Test) Bands 4 and 6. An example is the Hujiang English website.

Thirdly, virtual course learning tools are established in most of Chinese colleges and universities. These include the Blackboard Academic Suite (also called a Blackboard

learning system or Blackboard Platform). The key functions of Blackboard Platform are as follows (Southworth, Cakici, Vovides & Zvacek, 2006): ① Students online are allowed to chat in their target language in real time with their peers or teachers in order to practise their spoken language or improve communication with others. ② Both students and teachers are permitted to create a discussion thread and reply to ones already created. Some students get rapid feedback about the difficult points that they encountered from their teachers or their peers. ③ Teachers can upload articles, e-books, assignments, video/audio files, etc. in relation to the course contents for students to browse/download. Students can obtain more supplementary materials from the Blackboard Platform in order to support their language learning out of class and promote their autonomous learning abilities. ④ Online testing is available. Posted quizzes and exams allow students to access them online very conveniently. Also, students' assignments or homework are permitted to be submitted online. Their teachers can assess their written work and give them their marks or feedback on their assignments.

Besides the above technology and CALL environments, there are some autonomous language learning centres available for students in most colleges and universities in China. They own many computers which are connected to the Internet, in order that students can learn English autonomously out of class. On the whole, in present China, college and university students can get access to the good CALL environments in English language learning. However, one of the most important issues is how to make full and effective use of the above technology and the CALL environments in order to improve their English study.

1.2 The Reasons for the Importance of the Use of CALL in China

1.2.1 The Problems of Learning English in China

China not only has the largest population in the world—1.3 billion, but also the largest number of the EFL (English as a foreign language) learners in the non-native English-speaking world. It has recently been estimated by some experts of language teaching that approximately 300 million learners in China are learning English, including nearly 23 million college students who are studying compulsory courses (Liu & Yu, 2006).

It is interesting to consider why there is this astonishing number of English learners in Modern China. I argue that there are three primary reasons. One is that China lags far behind Western countries such as the UK and the USA in areas such as advanced science and technology, economics, and education. Therefore, China needs a large number of highly talented people in those fields. In order to learn advanced scientific technology and

gain management experience from the Western countries, Chinese people must master the English language as a first step so that they can get access to the professional and research literature in those fields.

The second reason is that jobs in China have always been highly competitive because of its large population. In China, there are three kinds of foreign-invested enterprises: Sino-foreign joint ventures, cooperative businesses and exclusively foreign-owned enterprises. In these enterprises, the working language is English, not Chinese, so the English proficiency of Chinese staff should be at a very high level to communicate with the foreigners easily. As a result, if a job seeker's English proficiency is better than that of the others, he/she can have more opportunities to get better jobs and salaries.

The third reason is that many students would like to go abroad for further study in the developed English-speaking countries such as the UK and the USA so that they can return to China to find better jobs when they complete their studies in these countries. These factors offer a strong motivation for learners to learn English. Therefore, it has been seen that English study is more important than any other foreign language learning in China.

Despite the prominence and importance of English language learning in China, today's learners still meet a number of learning and teaching problems, in particular the so-called "time-consuming, low efficiency" and "deaf and dumb English" problems, which have not been solved completely (Ruan & Jacob, 2009). The "time-consuming, low efficiency" approach (also called "inefficient learning strategies") means a learner has spent a lot of time learning English but he/she has made a little progress. "Deaf and dumb English", also called "limited listening and oral ability", means a learner can only read and write; however, he/she can neither understand nor speak English. The existing language learning problems have prevented not only the learners' improvement of oral communicative abilities but also the promotion of their comprehensive language abilities. In other words, these two problems for Chinese students' English language learning have led to lower learning efficiency and weaker communicative abilities.

1.2.2 The Cause of the Learning Problems in Teaching English in China

From my teaching experience, I have identified four possible primary reasons for the learning problems in teaching English in China.

First of all, the majority of English teachers in China still use traditional teaching methods, such as grammar-translation teaching method, which focuses on translating texts and teaching grammar in class. This teaching method is especially common in some middle schools in rural areas. In their classes, they still teach students grammatical knowledge, other language knowledge, and techniques/tips to take English examinations so that they can ensure their students to achieve higher scores in the entrance examinations to Chinese higher education institutions. This has been confirmed by recent