Effectiveness of Schema-based English Listening Teaching Mode in Secondary Vocational Schools

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ABSTRACT: *The paper discusses how a schema-based English listening teaching paradigm can help Secondary Vocational Schools (SVSs). SVS English instruction has prioritized grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension over hearing. A lack of teacher preparation and large classes with diverse English proficiency has hampered students' English listening experience. To support integrated language learning curricular revisions, the paper emphasizes listening skills for efficient communication. A thorough literature review covers schema theory, schema classification, and listening comprehension. The schema-based teaching model applies pre-, while-, and post-listening stages based on schema theory and Underwood's "three stages" hypothesis. Students' involvement, comprehension, and participation enhance with this technique. Student involvement and comprehension improve with schema-based instruction in an SVS. The study offers pre-listening activities to activate schemas and develop new ones, while-listening tactics to scaffold comprehension, and post-listening activities to solidify learning. Phonetic awareness, prior knowledge, and listening skills remain issues for students. Continuous theoretical knowledge enrichment and new teaching practices are needed to improve students' listening comprehension and language ability.*

KEY WORDS: schema, schema-based English listening teaching, English listening comprehension, integrated language learning

INTRODUCTION

In Secondary Vocational Schools (SVSs), the traditional emphasis on grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension has disproportionately sidelined the crucial skill of listening, resulting in a deficiency in English listening exposure that significantly hampers overall language proficiency. Challenges include inadequate teacher training, teacher-centric methodologies with limited focus on active listening skills, and large class sizes with diverse English proficiencies, further impeding effective listening comprehension.

My firsthand experience in SVSs highlights student disinterest in English due to its perceived irrelevance to future employment. The school's assessment criteria, tying teacher performance to

student pass rates, has excluded listening comprehension from exams, disregarding the critical development of this skill. However, the new curriculum introduces competencies stressing the necessity of listening proficiency for effective communication, urging a shift towards an integrated language learning approach. This imperative is underscored by upcoming English proficiency assessments in Guangzhou, necessitating reforms aligned with New Curriculum Standards and Ministry of Education directives.

This article unravels the intricacies of teaching English listening in SVSs through the application of a schema-based listening teaching model. Grounded in schema theory and influenced by Underwood's "three stages" theory, this theoretical framework offers a nuanced approach across the pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening stages. The subsequent implementation of the model in an attempt reveals a multifaceted approach, with outlined positive shifts in student engagement, comprehension, and active participation. Drawing from these experiences, the article offers insightful suggestions for English educators at SVSs.

Context
The Status Quo of Teaching English Listening
Listening is a fundamental aspect of human social activity and holds a crucial role in language and cognitive development. In the context of English teaching in SVSs, there has been a historical emphasis on traditional approaches, prioritizing grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension over listening skills. Unfortunately, this neglect has limited students' exposure and practice in English listening.

Teachers in SVSs often lack adequate training and effective strategies for teaching listening comprehension. The predominant teacher-led approach focuses on providing answers based on listening materials, with little consideration for exercising students' listening skills or encouraging meaningful interactions. What's more, students in SVSs are grouped into classes based on their majors rather than academic performance, resulting in significant stratification of English proficiency within the same class. Large class sizes and traditional teaching methods further contribute to weaknesses in listening comprehension.

In the case of the prominent SVS specializing in engineering in Guangzhou (which I have been working for over 12 years), student disinterest in English is prevalent due to the perception that it is irrelevant to their future employment. The school's assessment criteria linking teacher performance to student pass rates have led to an exclusion of listening comprehension from exams, aiming to improve overall pass rates. However, this neglects the importance of developing students' listening abilities, resulting in a lack of motivation among students to enhance this skill.

In summary, the challenges in SVSs include a historical neglect of English listening skills, insufficient teacher training, and a testing format that excludes listening comprehension. These issues contribute to a disinterest in English among students and hinder the development of essential language skills. Addressing these challenges requires a shift towards more interactive teaching methods and recognizing the significance of listening in language acquisition.

Challenges of Teaching Listening in SVSs

The English listening proficiency among students in SVSs is marked by several key challenges. Firstly, a considerable number of students lack a systematic grasp of the pronunciation patterns of English words. This deficiency in phonetic awareness hampers their ability to accurately discern and reproduce the sounds of spoken English, thereby affecting their overall listening comprehension.

Secondly, students often face difficulties in understanding English listening materials due to a lack of familiarity with the background knowledge depicted in the content. Moreover, to prevent cultural invasion, the school requires teachers to minimize discussions on foreign holiday cultures and similar topics. This gap impedes their capacity to grasp contextual nuances, idiomatic expressions, and references embedded in the audio materials, thereby hindering their overall comprehension.

Thirdly, a significant proportion of students lacks essential listening skills necessary for effective language processing. These skills include strategies for identifying key information, understanding context, and recognizing patterns in spoken language. The absence of these skills contributes to challenges in extracting meaning from audio content, limiting the students' overall proficiency in English listening.

In summary, students in SVSs often face challenges in English listening due to pronunciation rules, unfamiliar contexts, cultural gaps, and deficient skills. Targeted instructional strategies, practice, and the application of schema theory are crucial for enhancing Chinese learners' active cognitive processing and improving their overall English listening comprehension.

Policy Requirements of Teaching Reform in Recent Years

The New English Curriculum Standard for SVSs (NECSSVS (2020)) introduces four core competencies: workplace language communication, perception of thinking differences, cross-cultural understanding, and independent learning. Proficiency in listening comprehension is crucial for effective communication, aligning with a shift towards an integrated and communicative language learning approach, focusing on real-life scenarios. This aims to better prepare students for practical language use.

What's more, in 3+2 classes (three years in SVSs + two years in cooperative colleges), students must obtain a computer or English proficiency certificate for cooperative college enrollment. The PETS (Public English Test System) Level 1 certificate, assessing listening and speaking abilities, has gained popularity. However, most of the students opt for perceived easier computer skills certificates, neglecting PETS. The upcoming reinstatement of the English proficiency assessment in Guangzhou in June 2024, evaluating listening and speaking skills, emphasizes the urgency of reforming traditional English teaching methods.

In summary, English listening teaching in SVSs requires a departure from traditional methods, increased emphasis on testing listening skills, and a curriculum overhaul in line with the New Curriculum Standards and Ministry of Education reforms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Listening Comprehension
Definition of Listening Comprehension

The act of listening holds utmost significance in the English language, serving as the primary mode of communication. Additionally, it stands out as a principal approach for acquiring language skills and assimilating linguistic knowledge. Anderson and Lynch (1988, p.6) consider that successful listening is "understanding is not something that happens because of what a speaker says: the listener has a crucial part in the process, by activating various types of knowledge, and by applying what he knows to what he hears and trying to understand what the speaker means". According to Brown (1990), listening comprehension involves a sequence of information processing steps, engaging the listener across three communication modes. The ultimate objective during the listening process is the complete understanding of both the literal content and intended meaning conveyed by the speakers. (Brown, 1990)

Modes of Listening Comprehension

The field of listening comprehension is delineated by three distinct modes posited by cognitive psychologists: bottom-up, top-down and interactive. The bottom-up mode elucidates listening comprehension from a linguistic perspective. It posits a linear processing of language, wherein individuals decode phonetic signals, recognize words, and understand phrases or sentences. This traditional teaching mode adopted most often by teachers in our school, however, is critiqued for oversimplifying the listening process by overemphasizing the importance of linguistic knowledge points, thereby falling short in explaining the entirety of listening comprehension.

In contrast, the top-down mode, prevalent in the early 1980s, is epitomized by the macro-processing model. This approach asserts that comprehension relies heavily on the listener's schema and situational knowledge, emphasizing the inadequacy of linguistic knowledge alone. While effective, it tends to overlook the role of linguistic knowledge, placing greater emphasis on the listener's ability to infer or predict based on prior knowledge stored in long-term memory. The top-down mode is considered a high-level process, driven by listeners' prior knowledge and experience.

The interactive mode combines top-down and bottom-up approaches, aiming to boost students' listening fluency by recognizing listening as a complex process involving various elements. Advocated by scholars, it stresses the interaction between listeners and materials, requiring mastery of language knowledge, background information, and situational awareness for success. Emphasizing cognitive processing, the organizational structure should facilitate understanding. As the academic community adopts this model, it underscores that listening comprehension is a dynamic interplay of bottom-up and top-down processes, necessitating a holistic understanding of linguistic and contextual elements. Given vocational students' narrow focus, the mode proves advantageous for developing contextual knowledge in listening amid their language foundation challenges.

Definition and Classification of Schema
Definition of Schema
The term "schema" (plural: schemata or schemas) has its roots in Greek, signifying that which is expressed through images or appearances. Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher, introduced this concept in 1781, highlighting its practical significance by connecting human brain concepts with perceptual objects, forming the basis for cognitive schema. According to Kant (2012), a schema gains practical significance by integrating with familiar concepts and establishing connections. This marks the initial stage of research on schema theory, gaining attention in academic circles.

In cognitive psychology, schemas play a pivotal role, as emphasized by Anderson (2000). He posits that comprehending new information involves the activation of pre-existing knowledge and experiences, termed as schemas. British psychologist Bartlett, in 1933, defines schemas as active organizations reacting to past experiences, laying the foundation for current schema theory research.

Piaget, a prominent educator, integrates "schema" into cognitive development, considering them as frameworks facilitating adaptation and assimilation (1953). This concise concept by Piaget simplifies the understanding of schemas. In 1974, computer scientist Minsky reintroduces schemas, proposing schema theory for understanding human-like machine intelligence.

The 1980s witness the development of Rumelhart's schema theory model, which classifies schemas as hierarchically stored knowledge structures, significantly advancing the theory. Carrell and Eisterhold (1983, p.559) explore the application of schemas in language comprehension, emphasizing that "what is understood from a text is a function of the particular schemata that is activated at the time of processing the text".

Anderson (1984) highlights the educational significance of schemas, describing them as representations for abstract knowledge and influential in acquiring new knowledge. Cook (1989) suggests that schemata reflect typical instances in human brains, aiding quicker recognition of the world.

The evolution of schema theory showcases its multifaceted applications across philosophy, psychology, educational research, and machine intelligence. Domestic scholars' growing interest in studying schema theory reflects its diverse relevance in academic circles. The journey of this concept demonstrates its adaptability and enduring impact across various disciplines.

Classification of Schema
Schemata are extensive knowledge network systems that emerge in the human brain through the development of variations. Schemata exhibit a hierarchical structure, with the main schema containing various sub-schemas of different types. Consequently, many researchers find schemata intriguing and attempt to classify them. In fact, schemata are classified from various perspectives, but there is a widely adopted version among them.

Carrell (1984) believes that schemata play a crucial role in listening comprehension. Schemata can be categorized into three types: language schemata, formal schemata, and content schemata (Carrell,1984).

Linguistic Schema
Linguistic schemata encompass mastery of language elements, including phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar, alongside the application of pragmatics and discourse comprehension. In English listening instruction, language knowledge is foundational for comprehension. Decoding and understanding word organization in spoken or written form are integral to linguistic schemata. Insufficient language knowledge, particularly in vocabulary, pronunciation, and syntax, poses challenges in comprehending listening materials. Carrell and Elsterhold (1983) emphasized the importance of adequate language knowledge for activating relevant schemata, facilitating quicker absorption of new information. Teachers play a key role in enhancing language knowledge, guiding students in mastering specialized vocabulary, phonetic elements, and relevant grammar before engaging in listening activities. Additionally, teaching listening strategies aids in establishing effective schemata for improved comprehension.

Content Schema
Content schemata, considered by experts as repositories of socio-cultural-enriched background information, have generated significant interest. These schemata facilitate the interpretation of intricate texts by framing simple vocabulary or grammar points within cultural and historical contexts, promoting shared assumptions and clarifying information. In listening discourse, scholars underscore the pivotal role of topic familiarity in either facilitating or impeding understanding, particularly for second language learners who find culturally intertwined subjects more accessible. Neglecting cultural background knowledge in language teaching can lead to students acquiring vocabulary and grammar without effective situational navigation. The importance of cultural understanding is evident in interpreting idioms like "Get out of bed on the wrong side," prone to misconstrual without knowledge of its cultural origins.

In conclusion, background knowledge, encompassing content schemata, is integral to the listening comprehension process. The disparity in content schemata between second language learners and native speakers poses challenges, emphasizing the crucial role of teachers in guiding students to connect experiences with acquired knowledge and activate appropriate content schemata, as underscored by Carrel and Eisterhold (1983) and Ma (2003).

Formal Schema
Carrell and Eisterhold's (1983) exploration reveal that formal schema involves comprehending the diverse structures in discourse, including rhetorical, formal, and organizational aspects. These schemata encapsulate inherent discourse types found in genres like newspaper articles, scientific papers, and fables. A grasp of formal schemata assists listeners in predicting and recalling information during listening tests, facilitating efficient comprehension. Recognizing genre characteristics enables swift location of key details across various text types. Cheng and Wang (2000) assert that a robust understanding of formal schemata empowers listeners to capture main content based on diverse genre structures.

Despite their significance, formal schemata are often overlooked in teaching. In listening instruction, it is crucial for educators to familiarize students with the principles governing different listening materials. Practice demonstrates that listeners skilled in using formal schemata can identify key information, enhancing overall listening skills and test scores even without a comprehensive understanding of every word.

Schema-based Listening Process
In addition to the discussions above, teachers should also recognize the scientific procedures in the listening classroom, as the teaching process should be viewed as a holistic communicative approach. Considering the importance and complexity of English listening, many scholars have studied English listening comprehension from different perspectives. Educator Mary Underwood (1989) designed three stages of the listening teaching process based on relevant knowledge from the psychology of listening memory theory, namely the "pre-listening," "while-listening," and "post-listening" stages.

Pre-listening Stage:
The pre-listening stage is preparatory work before the actual listening task. Students stabilize their emotions, make predictions, and connect the material with existing knowledge. Various warm-up activities, such as discussing inferred topics, brainstorming, reading background knowledge, introducing new words, and previewing questions, can be implemented.

While-listening Stage:
In the while-listening stage, learners concentrate on understanding the material without the concern of translation or immediate answers. After the initial listening, teachers provide effective clues, including context, background knowledge, and the relationship between speakers during the second listening. Meaningful teacher-student communication alleviates the challenges of the first listening, and teachers actively address potential difficulties through interaction. Listening tasks encourage positive responses, fostering immediate engagement, and the incorporation of multimedia and authentic materials enriches the class, creating more opportunities for interaction.

Post-listening Stage:
In the post-listening stage, activities that follow involve reflecting on acquired knowledge. These activities may extend from the pre-listening and while-listening stages or function independently. Post-listening practice activities, such as role-playing, retelling, problem-solving, summarizing, debates, interviews, or dramatizations, are essential for language acquisition. Addressing cognitive resource problems through language output, the stage emphasizes the integration of all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), including oral, reading, or writing activities. Teachers actively engage in discussions and collaborative tasks, assisting students in internalizing knowledge and enhancing the dynamism and effectiveness of the listening class.

Research about Schema-based Listening Teaching at Home and Abroad
In the preceding discussions, schema theory enhances listening comprehension through diverse means and progressively motivates researchers both abroad and in China to investigate its application in teaching listening. The author strives to outline certain related studies as follows.

Studies Abroad

Schema theory, with a rich history abroad, has garnered attention for its application in listening teaching. Rivers (1981) notes that language beginners often focus solely on identifying utterances in listening due to insufficient foreign language knowledge. Introducing relevant background knowledge in teaching can encourage students to use received schemata for further processing. Long (1990) applies schema theory to expand schema knowledge, finding that background knowledge significantly influences students' listening comprehension. Bacon (1992) emphasizes the importance of background knowledge, and successful listeners tend to connect with it during utilization, as observed in Bacon's descriptive study. Vandergrift (1998) illustrates that novice-level listeners heavily rely on previous knowledge to interpret unfamiliar linguistic input. Dobson (2001) suggests that students' knowledge scope affects listening understanding and influences their information choices.

Brown (2001) urges training in listening strategies, emphasizing linking input with existing cognitive structures for schema activation. Nunan (2001) advocates developing prediction strategies in English listening class to facilitate comprehension.

Rubin (1994) reviews second language listening comprehension research, highlighting learners' efforts to find an overall schema for rapid speech understanding. Farangi and Saadi (2017) find that schema-activating strategies, like using semantic maps, enhanced students' listening skills and active participation.

Related Studies in China

Since the 1990s, Chinese scholars have increasingly emphasized the application of schema theory to listening comprehension, yielding fruitful outcomes (Pang and Zhang, 2005). Scholars such as Huang (1998) highlights the theory's effectiveness in engaging students in listening teaching, fostering interest in materials, and cultivating positive and effective thinking. The importance of schema infusion, involving linguistic knowledge along with phonetics, grammar, and vocabulary, is emphasized by scholars like Cheng (2018). However, they caution that activating schemas should be done smoothly, considering the multi-layered and repeating nature of schema activation. Shen and He (2016) stress the significance of pertinent schema activation rather than excessive activation, guiding students to better grasp listening materials.

Wang (2015) advocates for connecting cultural background knowledge with listening comprehension in junior high school English teaching. Huang (2018) emphasizes the activation of students' linguistic and content schema to appreciate conversational scenes. Liu's research (1996) on background knowledge and listening strategies highlights the apparent influence of relevant background knowledge on strategy usage. Wang's experiment (2015) demonstrates that schema theory-guided listening teaching significantly improved students' comprehension ability. Long and Wang (2017) proposes a six-step English listening teaching model based on schema theory for independent colleges.

Various master's theses, such as Xiang's (2017) focus on cultural schema in senior high school English listening teaching, Jia's exploration (2018) of background knowledge hindering listening comprehension, and Zhang's (2018) teaching experiment, underscore the wide-ranging contributions of schema theory to facilitate listening comprehension.

The collective efforts of scholars in China and abroad have laid a solid foundation for applying schema theory to enhance English listening. Although more than one scholar has proven schema theory to be practical and effective in university and high school English listening teaching and learning, there is little research proving its feasibility in the English listening teaching in SVSS. Inspired by these studies, this article seeks to implement schema theory in the context of English listening education in secondary vocational schools.

Implication and Suggestion

Implication for My Teaching Context

A teaching method rooted in schema theory, drawing on Underwood's "three stages" theory and the fundamental principles of schema theory is suggested as follows:
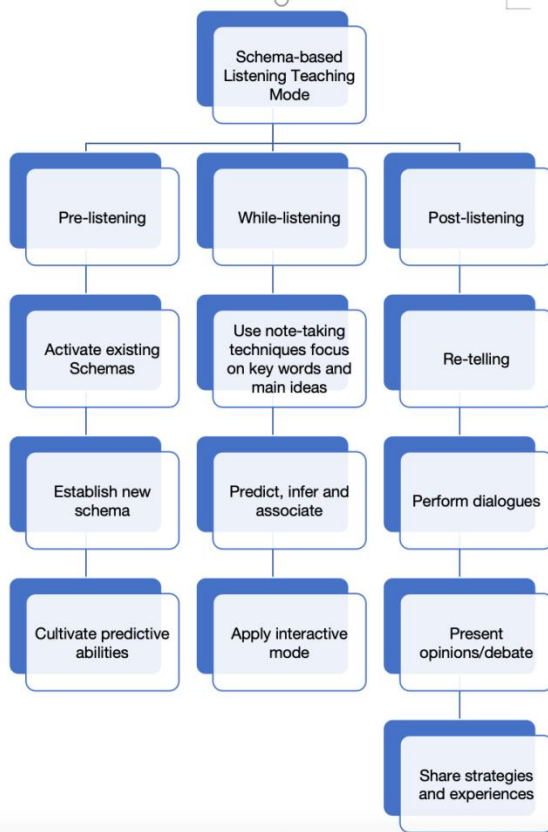

Figure 1. the Flow Chart of Schema-based Listening Teaching Mode

Teaching Design for the Pre-listening Stage

The pre-listening stage, a crucial component in language teaching aligned with Gagné 's instructional theory, emphasizes the significance of effective teaching organization in resonating with learners' internal mental activities (Gagné ,2005). This stage focuses on activating existing schemas, constructing new ones, and fostering predictive abilities for upcoming listening content, underlining the need for guidance from teachers and thorough student preparation.

Firstly, activating existing schemas involves learners assessing potential listening material content based on titles and keywords, connecting the introduction of materials with content schemas to aid comprehension. This approach stimulates interest and encourages active student participation.

Secondly, establishing new schemas is achieved by guiding students to seek background knowledge related to upcoming content, with teachers facilitating discussions on cultural characteristics. This collaborative approach enables students to recall previous knowledge, enriching mental frameworks.

Thirdly, cultivating predictive abilities harnesses the power of schemas for contextual prediction, allowing listeners to focus on potentially useful content. Familiarizing students with reading questions in advance aids in forming general ideas to predict main themes, transforming them from passive to active listeners.

In conclusion, pre-listening activities serve as a foundation for subsequent listening comprehension stages, ensuring students actively acquire background knowledge and engage both "top-down" and "bottom-up" modes of comprehension. Overlooking this stage in traditional English classrooms emphasizes the need for thoughtful pre-listening activity design to enhance the overall listening teaching model.

Teaching Design for While-listening Stage
Traditional classroom training has limitations in enhancing students' listening proficiency, prompting the need for teachers to integrate Gagné 's nine-step instructional approach (Gagné ,2005). The "inducing learning behavior" step becomes integral in the second stage of the listening class, where teachers design activities to train students in essential listening strategies, emphasizing the cultivation and refinement of pertinent skills crucial for boosting listening proficiency.

Firstly, students should use note-taking techniques to capture keywords and main ideas, with teachers guiding them to actively listen, jot down keywords, and summarize main ideas using concise forms. This approach ensures a clear understanding of instructional objectives.

Secondly, students should be encouraged to predict, infer, and associate. Teachers can use questions and choice items to prompt students to activate background knowledge, make predictions, and anticipate potential events before the listening activity. During the process, students utilize various knowledge bases, and teachers guide them to create associations, enhancing associative abilities crucial for improved listening performance.

Thirdly, an interactive mode should be emphasized, recognizing that listening comprehension is inherently interactive. Teachers seamlessly integrate intensive and extensive listening, prompting students to switch between "bottom-up" and "top-down" strategies. Through extensive listening, students grasp main ideas and navigate potential misunderstandings, while intensive listening requires employing "bottom-up" strategies in recognizing vocabulary and details. Teachers guide students through listening stages, addressing questions, and emphasizing key details to adjust the overall pace and process.

In conclusion, the listening comprehension stage is pivotal for students to actively engage and demonstrate proactive involvement. Learning effective notetaking, capturing keywords, and employing interactive listening skills enhances students' ability to grasp materials quickly and accurately.

Teaching Design for the Post-listening Stage
In the traditional listening instruction model, the conclusion of exercises often signals the end of the class, with minimal emphasis on revisiting materials post-class. This approach neglects students' grasp of culturally relevant background knowledge and misses an opportunity to deepen overall impressions of materials and reinforce content schemas.

Acknowledging the characteristics of information processing and memory, the post-listening stage is crucial for transforming new schemas from short-term to long-term memory, integrating them into the listener's knowledge system. Teachers can facilitate this consolidation through activities like retelling content, performing dialogues, summarizing author views, expressing opinions, engaging in debates, and sharing listening strategies and experiences.

These activities not only enhance listening abilities but also boost oral skills, contributing to overall language proficiency. If the pre-listening stage focuses on schema development and the during-listening stage on applying schemas, the post-listening stage emphasizes consolidating and strengthening schemas.

In practical terms, attention must be given to the significant English proficiency stratification among students in SVSs. Higher-achieving students often leverage background knowledge, while lower-achieving students may struggle to construct correct knowledge from background information and actively engage in activities such as retelling, thematic discussions, and role-playing during the post-listening stage.

An Attempt
During the evaluation for an associate senior title last term, I conducted a 40-minute listening class as part of the teaching assessment, employing the schema-based listening teaching model. The content of this class consisted of the listening module from Unit 6 of the textbook (Listening Exercise 1 in Appendix I) and a listening exercise from the workbook for better performance (Listening Exercise 2 in Appendix I). The inclusion of more challenging Listening Exercise 2 is aimed at providing improvement opportunities for students with higher English proficiency while also providing more activities to facilitate schema construction. Furthermore, the class incorporated group activities, pairing students with strong and weak English foundations, aiming to address the deficiencies of this teaching model mentioned in 4.1.3 to fosters mutual assistance and collective improvement. Please refer to Appendix for the entire lesson's instructional design, while the design of listening teaching activities based on schema theory in this lesson will be detailed as follows:

Pre-listening

Activating Existing Schemas:

In Listening Exercise 1, due to the generally weak English foundation of students in SVSs, the mastery of new words' pronunciation, spelling, and meaning takes longer. Hence, the introduction of new vocabulary was forwarded to the pre-class preparation activities. Under the guidance of the Exploratory Practice theory, students were engaged in group activities to create videos presenting how to remember some new words by mnemonic. This addressed students' difficulties and reluctance in vocabulary memorization. The new words for this unit were distributed equally among eight groups, each responsible for shooting videos for eight words. These videos were shared on my English WeChat public account for students' preview. Then in the warm-up phase, a random student was selected using the "Class Optimization Master" application on the computer, then the selected student picked a number from 1 to 9, and the teacher clicked on the corresponding number's icon on the PowerPoint, playing the pronunciation of a word through the speaker. The student then provided the meaning of the word based on its pronunciation. These activates were designed to activate and solidate students' linguistic schema especially for those with weaker English foundation.
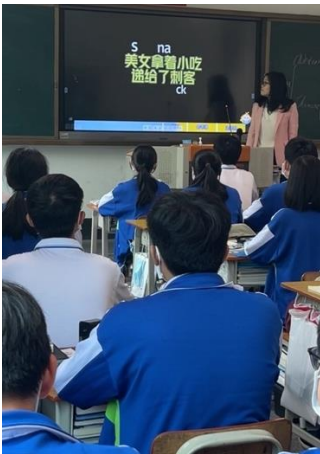
Picture 1: The teacher is representing some excellent Episodes from students' mnemonic videos

Picture 2: the teacher is using "Class Optimization Master" application to select Students randomly

Additionally, a humorous video, role-played by former students in 2018, about the challenges faced by students in a seaside restaurant in New Zealand, unable to understand the English menu or communicate with waiters in English, was shown. This video sparked students' interest in the topic of this lesson and prompted them to consider the differences between Western and Chinese menus.

Picture 3: Students are watching the humorous video.

Listening Exercise 2's pre-listening phase required students to discern whether the dialogue happened in a Chinese or Western restaurant by analyzing information from the form-filling table (Appendix III). This activated students' ability to predict answers based on existing background knowledge. Moreover, students were requeued to guess meanings of words from the table: "well-done," "medium," and "rare" and tell "mashed potato" from "baked potato.", which help students to construct the linguistic schema of the topic.

Predicting and Establishing New Schemas:
In Listening Exercise 1, students were divided into eight groups, each receiving a blank Chinese or Western menu and a set of word stickers (Appendix III). Through collaborative group exploration, they placed stickers corresponding to what they believed were Chinese or Western dishes on the menu. Then group leaders visited other groups, especially those with different menus, to see if the same dishes appeared on both Chinese and Western menus and brought the confusion back for group discussion. This activity stimulated brainstorming within groups and allowed them to deduce the correct answers. Following this, by listening to the audio about placing an order in a Western restaurant (Listening Exercise 1), the Western menu group verified their menu's correctness, while the Chinese menu group used deductive reasoning to confirm their answers.

Picture 4: The two menu posters

Picture 5: Students are pasting food stickers
Onto the menus in group

While-listening Stage:
In Listening Exercise 1, given the difficulty of directly dictating key sentence patterns from the dialogue, scaffolding was introduced by using a key-word cloze test. Students listened for key words, gaining proficiency in the entire sentence. The transition from a top-down mode (judging which dishes would appear on a Western menu based on background knowledge) to a bottom-up mode during listening refines students' listening skills.

Post-listening Stage:
In the post-listening phase of Listening Exercise 1, several commonly used sentence patterns were supplemented, including some from Listening Exercise 2. This step aimed to remove the barrier of sentence patterns for the more challenging Listening Exercise 2 and laid the foundation for oral conversation output assignments. Considering students' interest for video shooting and their stratified English proficiency, two-tiered dialogue video shooting assignments (Appendix I) were assigned post-listening, ensuring students not only grasped but could apply the new words and key sentence patterns from this class in daily situation.

This instructional design of this lesson sought to address the challenges faced by students in the schema-based listening teaching model, particularly those with weak English foundations. By incorporating pre-listening vocabulary activities, humorous video elements, and group collaboration, the class aimed to enhance students' active participation and comprehension during and after the listening exercises.

Effects of the Attempt
The new teaching model has set detailed objectives for each stage in the teaching process and all teaching tasks. Firstly, in the pre-listening stage, students activate schema knowledge in their brains with the guidance and assistance of teachers, thereby establishing and increasing new schemas. They then make predictions and inferences about the listening materials to enhance comprehension. Secondly, during the listening stage, the use of listening strategies and interactive patterns improves their understanding of the content. Students' participation in the classroom has increased, with a noticeable rise in the number of students actively participating in the group work and answering questions. Thirdly, the post-listening stage is a consolidation phase, guided and led by the teacher, allowing students to solidify the latest schemas. In this process, the more willingly students actively participate in the class, the deeper their understanding of new information, and the faster their thinking speed in the process of listening comprehension. Finally, the model not only reflects the learner's cognitive subjectivity but also allows the teacher's guidance to come into play. This teaching model not only focuses on developing students' listening skills but also emphasizes cultivating their oral abilities. The teaching model shifts from a singular focus on listening to the principle of integrating listening and speaking. This not only increases students' enthusiasm but also to some extent nurtures their communication skills.

Suggestions
The schema theory-based teaching model, observed in the previous class, proves highly effective in vocational school English education. Instructors are urged to integrate this innovative listening teaching model into their daily practices. Key insights for vocational school English listening teaching

include guiding students in constructing a comprehensive language schema, emphasizing linguistic nuances for accurate discourse segmentation.

Educators are also suggested to stress the importance of leveraging schema knowledge, empowering students to listen flexibly and participate actively. Providing cultural background knowledge before listening activities is crucial, recognizing the intrinsic link between language and culture.

Furthermore, teachers may guide students through various themes and listening materials, progressing in difficulty. Students should focus on different aspects such as speakers' positions, opinions, contextual dialogues, and relevant details. Instructors are recommended to motivate students to engage with diverse English media, enriching their understanding for effective application during listening tests.

In conclusion, the integration of schema theory significantly enhances traditional teaching models in SVSs, addressing challenges in listening classes.

CONCLUSION

Through the schema-based listening teaching model, students in SVSs can acquire more relevant schema theory and listening strategies. The significance of schema theory in English listening instruction lies not in treating learners as passive information receivers but in emphasizing that teachers should guide students to actively select information based on the teaching context. This enables students to gain new information through the interaction of old and new information. Therefore, after mastering schema theory knowledge, students autonomously apply more relevant schema-based listening strategies during the listening test. In summary, firstly, they develop a habit of creating new schemas in their minds and automatically activate existing patterns. Before listening, they make predictions about the content. Secondly, during the listening phase, they can better grasp keywords and main ideas, use interactive patterns to associate with similar themes or situations, and infer the meanings of new words or the themes of listening materials. Additionally, they often engage in discussions or summaries of challenging information after completing the listening test. Importantly, students cultivate a habit of accumulating background knowledge rather than simply memorizing vocabulary, allowing them to gain more cultural knowledge.

However, schema theory is just one listening teaching model and cannot address all listening comprehension issues. The listening process itself is a complex psychological activity, and students' emotions and learning motivation also impact listening comprehension. Therefore, as English teachers, continuous enrichment of theoretical knowledge in teaching practice is essential to better assist students in overcoming various challenges in English listening comprehension.

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Appendix I Teaching Design of the Attempt Listening Lesson

Topic: <Not Just Tasty!>

Time: 40 minutes

1.Analysis of Students

Knowledge Base: The target audience for this class is first-year students in engineering secondary vocational schools. Engineering students generally have weak English foundations, tend to avoid memorizing vocabulary, lack understanding of phonetics, and struggle to remember word spellings and meanings. They often rely on mechanically imitating the teacher's pronunciation and quickly forget. Therefore, the challenge for students lies in accurately distinguishing sounds in listening, grasping the basic content of dialogues, and understanding expressions in communication. Additionally, there is a certain level of stratification in students' English foundations.

Cognitive Abilities: Students exhibit proficiency in imitation, possess imagination and creativity. Through the integration of the vocabulary association memorization method in previous classes, students gradually learn to explore associative memorization methods for new words independently.

Learning Characteristics: Students are adept at using information technology tools, particularly skilled in video shooting and editing. Compared to mundane vocabulary dictations and exercises, students prefer assignments in the form of videos.

2. Text Analysis

2.1 The Textbook Used in This Class

The textbook adopted for this class is "English Basic Module 1," published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press for the 14th Five-Year Plan. This textbook was developed under the guidance of the new curriculum standards and is designed to cultivate students' core English subject competencies, focusing on themes related to students' future work and life scenarios.

2.2 Role and Position of This Class

This class serves as the second session for "Unit 6 Not Just Tasty!" Following the previous lesson, students should be able to comprehend and discuss topics related to dining in this class. They should be able to analyze various factors considered when choosing a restaurant, appropriately use learned vocabulary and phrases to describe and recommend different dining locations. In this class, students will visit a restaurant of their choice, explore, and understand the different components and serving sequences of Chinese and Western meals. They will comprehend simple ordering dialogues using the vocabulary and sentence structures learned, master basic sentence patterns and vocabulary related to ordering, laying the foundation for the next oral English class focused on ordering.

2.3 Main Content and Teaching Approach of This Class
2.3.1 Understanding the names of dishes in ordering dialogues: Before the lesson, students will shoot videos showing others how to remember new words in this lesson by mnemonics in small groups. Through group cooperation and mutual assistance, the entire class will collectively memorize words, alleviating individual pressure and addressing the difficulty of memorizing words for secondary vocational school students. Prior to the listening exercise, students will collaboratively explore and categorize different dish names on menus into separate sections for Chinese and Western dishes. This step-by-step process helps them predict answers and then check their assumptions during the listening exercise.

2.3.2 Understanding and mastering basic sentence patterns for ordering, comprehending simple ordering dialogues: A scaffold will be built by presenting key sentence patterns with blank spaces for students to fill in. This encourages focused listening and completion. Following this, a summary and extension of relevant sentence patterns will be conducted, and the comprehension level will be assessed through more challenging listening exercises, addressing the issue of stratified English foundations among students.

2.3.3 Adjustments to textbook content: A) Addition of fill-in-the-blank exercises for basic ordering sentence patterns; B) Inclusion of additional commonly used ordering dialogue sentence patterns; C) Integration of workbook listening exercises into the class for enhanced listening skill training.

3. Teaching Objectives
 3.1. Knowledge Objectives
3.1.1 Understand the following vocabularies of food and drinks vocabulary from both Chinese and Western menus in this class.
Mushroom, main course, roast beef, extra, cheese, onion ring,soda, sauce, staple, tofu, sweet-and-sour, pork, cola

3.1.2 Master the meaning and expression of basic sentence patterns for ordering:
     A. Could I take your order now?
     B. What would you like as the ...?
     C. Today we have....
     D. What would you like to drink?
     E. I would like/ I'd like ...(to start with).
     F. But I think I'll have...

 3.2. Ability Objectives
 3.2.1 Understand specific dish names in ordering dialogues through predictive strategies.

 3.2.2 Apply mastered basic sentence patterns to comprehend simple ordering dialogues.

3.3. Objectives of Core Competencies

Perception of Cultural Differences: Develop an awareness of the similarities and differences in the structure and serving sequence of Chinese and Western meals.。

4. Teaching Focus and Challenges

4.1 Teaching Focus: Understanding specific dish names in ordering dialogues through predictive strategies.

Solution Measures:

4.1.1 Before the class, students watch group-shot mnemonic videos related to this class's vocabularies, grasping accurate pronunciation and meanings of relevant dish names.

4.1.2 Prior to listening exercises, engage in collaborative group work to predict answers by posting different dish names in various sections of Chinese and Western menus. Subsequently, verify predictions during the listening exercise.

4.2 Challenges: Applying mastered basic sentence patterns to comprehend simple ordering dialogues.

Solution Measures:

Scaffold the learning process by using keyword-based blank-filling exercises for key sentence patterns. Encourage students to listen attentively and fill in the blanks. Later, summarize and expand on the relevant sentence patterns. Validate comprehension through progressively challenging listening exercises.

5. Teaching Strategies

Under the guidance of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach and the Exploratory Practice Approach, along with considerations of the learning characteristics and professional traits of engineering students, a group-oriented exploration is facilitated. Employing the mnemonic method through collaborative group investigations, students discover personalized word memorization techniques. The process is documented in videos shared among the entire class, fostering mutual assistance to overcome challenges in word memorization.

Aligned with the principles of the Approximate Development Zone and Schema theory, scaffolding techniques are employed. These include activities such as pre-listening group predictions using menus, sentence pattern exercises with listening comprehension blanks, etc. These approaches alleviate students' apprehension toward English listening, progressively lowering difficulty levels and aiding students in achieving learning objectives step by step.

6. Teaching Aids and Methods

Multimedia, Smart Whiteboard, Menu Posting Game, Posters, Class Optimizer (Random Roll Call), Word-guessing Game

7. Teaching Procedures

Teaching Segments	Teaching Content	Student Activities	Teacher Activities	Purpose the Design
Pre-class Activities	Videos about remembering new words in this lesson by mnemonic.	Watch the two videos dealing with remembering new words in this lesson by mnemonic shot by two groups in this class, which have been uploaded by T onto her Wechat offical account "换个姿势学英文", and manage to remember the spelling, pronunciation and meaning of those new words.	1. Two weeks before, T divided the class into 8 groups, and each group is in charge of making a video about how to remember 8 new words respectively. 2. T uploaded the 8 videos onto her Wechat official account. 3. T ask the Ss to watch the two videos by group 4 and 5 which include new words in this lesson.	Divide these 64 unit words into 8 groups of tasks, with each group responsible for shooting a mnemonic video for 8 words. Through this collaborative group exploration method, alleviate the burden of word memorization for students, addressing the difficulties faced by engineering students in remembering word pronunciation, spelling, and meanings.
Warm-up 8 mins	1."Good Memory"-word guessing game. 2.A video shot by students in 2018 about ordering food in a sea-view restaurant in New Zealand.	1.The selected student picks a number and answers the meaning of the word based on the recording. 2.Summarize the problems and reasons why people in the video have so many misunderstandings when ordering food in the restaurant.	1.T randomly selects a student by "班级优化大师" and asks him/her to pick a number on the PPT，then plays the recording on the number. 2.T plays the video and asks the Ss to think about what problems the two Ss in the video encounter and the reasons.	1.Students randomly selecting numbers to listen to word pronunciations and guess word meanings is an effective check on pre-class vocabulary learning activities and lays the vocabulary listening foundation for this lesson's listening dialogue. 2.By introducing funny ordering videos filmed by former students, we bring in the theme of this lesson, motivating students to continue filming English learning videos and also making them realize the importance of mastering basic vocabulary and

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				sentence structures for ordering.
		Listening 1(Basic Level of Listening Practice)		
Pre-listening 5mins	Team work: "Fill in a Menu" (Either Chinese or Western) (Prediction before Listening)	1.Each team pastes some pieces of paper with names of food onto different columns of either a menu for western or Chinese restaurant. 2.Then team leaders go to check the answers of any other team with different menu to find out whether the same food is pasted onto both western and Chinese menu. 3.Team leaders come back to the team, report what they've found and discuss with team members.	1.Hand out posters of menu to each team. 2.Walk around the teams to monitor the progress.	1.Assist students in extracting detailed content from listening dialogues through pre-listening prediction strategies. 2.Foster students' independent deduction skills by engaging in group cooperative exploration and perceiving differences in answers from different groups. 3.Enable group peer evaluation through group leaders visiting other groups.
While-listening (9mins)	1.Listen and Check your Prediction (4mins)	1.Ss listen to the recording and check their team menu. 2. A volunteer comes to the front to present his/her answer by the "Pick and Throw" Game.	1.Play the recording once. 2. Ask a volunteer to present his/ her answer.	1.In the Western cuisine ordering dialogue, the Western menu group verifies their answers, while the Chinese menu group confirms theirs through the process of elimination. 2.Using the teacher-created game "Pick and Throw" to enhance students' classroom engagement, while the feature of not being able to throw incorrect answers into

				menu section bars helps students reflect and revise their answers in real-time.
	2.Listen for Sentence Patterns of Ordering Food and Drinks(5mins)	1. Ss fill in the blanks. 2.Volunteers come to the front to present the answers.	1.Play the recording twice. 2.After checking the answer together, T plays the video of the recording once.	Based on the theory of Approximate Development Zone, scaffold the basic sentence patterns of ordering by blanking out core words, assisting students in mastering the entire sentence.
Post-listening (4mins)	Key Sentence Patterns for Ordering Food. （4mins)	Ss listen and take notes	T explains the table of key sentence patterns.	Expansion and supplementation of ordering sentence patterns: 1.Compensate for the relative simplicity of ordering sentence patterns in the original listening text. 2.Incorporate sentence patterns for the next step of advanced listening exercises, eliminating sentence pattern obstacles for students to understand the advanced level of listening exercises. 3.Lay the foundation for sentence patterns in the coming speaking class.
Listening2 （For Better Performance）				
Pre-listening 3mins	New words and Answer Prediction	Ss look at the table and answer the questions.	T ask Ss to think about the following 3 questions: 1. Can you guess whether the dialogue happens in a Western or Chinese Restaurant?	1.The first question assesses whether students have a solid grasp of the structure of Chinese and Western menus and whether they can predict from the information provided whether the conversation takes place in a Chinese restaurant or a Western restaurant.

			2.Guess the meaning of "well-done"、 "medium "and "rare". 3.What's the difference between "mashed potato" and "baked potato"?	2.Mastering the strategy of predicting the meanings of new words clears obstacles for listening comprehension.
While-listening (4mins)	Listen and tick the correct answers.	Ss listen to the recording and tick the correct answers.	1.T plays the recording twice. 2.T ask the whole class about the answers.	Adjusting the listening exercises from the workbook to in-class supplementary practice: Considering the stratification of English proficiency among students in the class, after most students have mastered the basic listening tasks related to the lesson texts, we aim to enhance listening skills to prevent instances where average and high-achieving students feel unchallenged.
Post-listening (3mins)	Differences of Diet Structure between Chinese Menu and Western Menu(4mins)	1.volunteer comes to the blackboard to tick the answers. 2、Ss discuss the differences in groups and present their answers.	1.T explains the answer and play the recording again. 2、T leads the Ss to summarize the differences in groups.	Perception of cultural differences: By comparing the differences between Chinese and Western menus, students can perceive the similarities and differences in the structures and serving orders of Chinese and Western cuisine.
Summary and Homework (4mins)	1. Summary and Self - evaluation. 2. Homework with Stratified Difficulty Level.	1. Ss tick on the self-evaluation form. 2. Ss listen and take notes.	1. Ask the Ss to do the self-evaluation form to check what they have learned in this lesson . 2. Assign homework catering to stratified English level of the Ss. Tiered Assignment (Choose Assignment A or B based on your situation):	1.Students assess their own grasp of the lesson through a self-assessment form. 2.Leveraging students' English proficiency levels and their interest in video recording, tiered video shooting assignments are established.

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			Pair up in teams: A. Present a video of a conversation of "ordering food in a restaurant" onto the Class Optimization Master app. B. Based on the introductory video of this class, utilize the ordering sentence patterns from this class and the supplemented sentence patterns provided in the handout from the Listening exercise 2. Design a conversation video about "ordering food in a restaurant" and upload it to the Class Optimization Master app.	
Blackboard Design	Menu ⎯ Western restaurant ⎯ starter / main course / drinks ⎯ Chinese restaurant ⎯ cold dishes / staples / hot dishes / drinks			

Appendix II The Text Materials

Listening Exercise 1 from Textbook

4 🎧 **Listen and complete.** 听录音，填写琳恩和乔的点餐单。

Waiter: Good evening. Could I take your order now?
Lyn: Yes. I'd like the vegetable soup to start with.
Joe: Um… for me, the cream of mushroom soup.
Waiter: What would you like as the main course?
Lyn: Roast beef, please.
Joe: I'd like a burger with extra cheese, onion rings and a potato salad.
Waiter: What would you like to drink?
Lyn: Just a glass of orange juice.
Joe: I'd like a large soda, please.

Tip
吃西餐的顺序和中餐很不一样，你注意到了吗？

Table B1

Starters:
vegetable soup   1

Main courses:

Drinks:

5 **Work in pairs.** 两人一组，根据下列菜单练习点餐。

MENU

COLD DISHES		STAPLES	
Cucumber in Sauce	¥ 8.00	Rice	¥ 2.00
Fried Peanuts	¥ 10.00	Dumplings	¥ 20.00

HOT DISHES		DRINKS	
Scrambled Eggs with Tomatoes	¥ 12.00	Cola	¥ 8.00
Mapo Tofu	¥ 18.00	Tea	¥ 10.00
Kung Pao Chicken	¥ 25.00	Juice	¥ 12.00
Sweet-and-sour Pork	¥ 28.00	Milk	¥ 10.00

Listening Exercise 2 from Workbook

4 **Listen and tick.** 听录音，勾选点菜单。

The Man's Dinner Menu	
New York steak	1. ☐ well-done ☐ medium ☐ rare
	2. comes with: ☐ mashed potatoes ☐ a baked potato
	3. ☐ salad ☐ chicken vegetable soup

Handouts 讲义

一、根据你的小组任务选填中餐菜单或者西餐菜单。

Menu of Western Restaurant

Starters:

_____

Main courses:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Drinks:

_____

_____

Menu of Chinese Restaurant

Cold Dishes:

_____

_____

Hot Dishes:

_____

_____

Staples:

_____

_____

Drinks:

_____

_____

Fried peanuts	cream of mushroom soup	a glass of orange juice
Mapo tofu	a large soda	onion rings
vegetable soup	tea	cucumber in sauce
roast beef	rice	a burger with extra cheese
dumplings	Kung Pao Chicken	a potato salad

Appendix III

Handouts for the Attempt Lesson

二、听录音补全对话（每空一词）

Waiter: Good evening. Could I _____ _____ _____now?

Lyn: Yes. _____ _____ the vegetable soup to _____ _____.

Joe: Um… for me, the cream of mushroom soup.

Waiter: What _____ _____ _____ as the main course?

Lyn: Roast beef, please.

Joe: _____ _____ a burger with extra cheese, onion rings and a potato salad.

Waiter: What _____ _____ _____ to drink?

三、点餐句型总结

Waiter/Waitress	Customer
1.Could I take your order now?/Are you ready to order?	1. Yes, I'm ready to order.
2.What would you like as the... 3.What can I do for you?	2.I'd like to have … to start with./I'd like ….
Today we have…(two seafood specials)	1.That sounds nice. 2.But I think I'll have the…
Would you like to have anything else?	I'd like…./Can I have…?

Students' Self Evaluation Form
学生自评表

一、我听懂以下单词：（在符合的单词前面打勾）

□ soda

□ extra　　　□ cheese　　　□ tofu

□ pork　　　□ staple　　　□ sauce

□ roast beef　　　□ onion ring　　　□ cola

□ mushroom

□ sweet-and-sour

□ main course

二、我能听懂以下句子：（在符合的句子前面打勾）

□ Could I take your order now?

□ I'd like the vegetable soup to start with.

□ I'd like….as the main course.

三、我能掌握以下内容：（在符合的内容前面打勾）

□ understand simple dialogue of ordering food in a restaurant;理解参观点餐的简单对话；

□ understand the differences of diet cultures between China and western countries;理解中西方的饮食文化差异。