

EXPLORING THE APPLICATION EFFECT OF SCAFFOLDING INSTRUCTION IN KOREAN LISTENING TEACHING IN UNIVERSITY IN SOUTHWEST CHINA

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ABSTRACT – Korean listening teaching is one of the most important parts of Korean teaching in universities in China. However, some universities still adopt the old listening teaching mode, and there are many problems in listening teaching, and the teaching effect is not satisfactory. Therefore, Korean listening teachers constantly introduce new and effective teaching methods to solve the problems in listening teaching. This study aims to explore the application effect of scaffolding instruction in Korean listening teaching. This qualitative case study interviewed four Korean listening teachers from Chengdu Institute Sichuan International Studies University, and described their thoughts and experiences. The findings of this study showed that scaffolding instruction can solve some problems in Korean listening teaching. According to the teachers, the application of scaffolding instruction can make the abstract and boring learning content lively and interesting, strengthen the teaching effect of listening, give full play to students' learning enthusiasm and initiative, and improve students' listening ability. Significant constraints were found, including inappropriate teaching materials, limited teaching time, insufficient human resources, teaching skills and training. In addition, the most disturbing aspect is the attitude of students and the lack of support from university, such as the necessity of readjusting curriculum and policies. e.

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INTRODUCTION

After entering the 21st century, with the trend of global economic integration, a large number of Korean enterprises have increased their investment in China and gradually moved their factories from the eastern coastal areas of China to the central and western regions. As a medium of communication between China and South Korea, Korean has been used frequently, and its economic value has been fully reflected (Jin, 2017; Li, 2019; Yi, 2020). The market economy and its development have higher and higher requirements for the Korean language level of employees and the quality of Korean education and teaching in universities in China (Xu & Wu, 2016).

Most of the Korean teaching in universities in China starts from scratch. Korean listening teaching is an important part of Korean teaching, and also a comprehensive skill course. Students' listening level is an important index to measure their foreign language learning ability and the teaching quality of Korean majors in universities (Wu, 1998; Zhang, 2007; Song, 2007). According to the research of Tian Le (2016) and Gong Jingyuan (2022), at present, many universities in China still follow the previous and old listening teaching mode, which is in sharp contrast to the requirements of the continuous improvement of the market economy, and it is difficult to achieve the goal of training Korean talents meeting the market demand within four years (Wang, 2013; He, 2022). According to the research of Ma Xiaoyang (2017) and Chen Xiaoyu (2019), there are some problems in the traditional listening teaching mode: a) the whole listening teaching process is dull and boring, and the teaching method is single, which makes it difficult to arouse students' learning initiative; b) students are prone to difficulties in listening practice; c) students' listening ability is slowly improved, and their grades are not satisfactory. Therefore, aiming at eliminating the problems of the traditional teaching mode, scaffolding instruction is introduced into Korean listening teaching to improve the effectiveness of Korean listening teaching and the teaching efficiency of Korean listening and the learning efficiency of students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

With the research of constructivism theory, scaffolding instruction has attracted more and more attention in the field of education and teaching theory and practice at home and abroad (Gao, 2010). Scaffolding instruction can maximise and optimise the learning effect (Liu Ying, 2005), and can significantly improve students' listening level (Hu, 2006; Wang, 2016). The research and practice of scaffolding instruction in China mainly focus on English teaching, but there is little research on Korean teaching, especially Korean listening teaching methods (Jia & Jin, 2010; Wang, 2018; Jin & Yu, 2021).

The goal of Korean education is to achieve interpersonal communication, and Korean listening course is very important in Korean education (Kim & Bae, 2013). Nan Cheonwoo (2014) investigated the teaching status, curriculum and teaching methods of 152 schools offering applied Korean majors in China, and found out the common problems in listening teaching of applied Korean majors, and explored the teaching methods that met the particularity of students and social needs in China. However, due to the influence of Korean education objectives, research on listening teaching methods in South Korea mainly focuses on designing teaching links that can stimulate students' interest and stimulating teaching content that is consistent with life scenes (Qu, 2008; Wang, 2011; Liu, 2019). According to the research of Choi Jihye (2009), using movies as a medium is a very effective method of Korean listening teaching. Learners can not only improve their listening skills but also learn strategies for dealing with various situations in life. Kim Younghee and Bae Yoonkyung (2013) studied the effects of applying various listening training methods in the teaching process, so as to improve the Korean listening level of junior college students in China.

The research on Korean listening teaching in colleges and universities in China is mainly concentrated in higher vocational colleges and independent colleges (Qi, 2019), with the aim of cultivating applied Korean professionals. Drawing lessons from the application of teaching methods in English listening teaching, there are few related researches involving scaffolding instruction, mainly exploring how to solve problems in classroom teaching, how to design more efficient classroom teaching links and how to improve students' test scores (Piao, 2010; Cui, 2011; Wang, 2018). Liu Suzhen (2015) focused on the application of task-based teaching methods in Korean listening classes in higher vocational colleges and explored effective ways to improve the quality of Korean teaching in higher vocational colleges. In addition, Liu Suzhen and Lu Tingting (2010), combined with the practice and observation of foreign language listening teaching in recent years, put forward that targeted classroom teaching methods such as shorthand and retelling can enhance the foreign language level and language application ability of Korean majors and improve the quality of Korean listening teaching.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher used a qualitative case study for this research. The qualitative study is a method used by researchers to define or deal with problems. They can gain keen insight by finding problems, understanding events, analysing human behaviours and opinions and answering questions. This study aimed to know and understand teachers' thoughts and experiences, so qualitative study is most appropriate. Because the phenomenon it explains depends on one's interpretation of his own experiences in each setting (Stake, 2010).

The case study is very suitable for identifying and explaining the difficulties faced by individuals, organisations or institutions in a certain situation, and it can properly and smoothly achieve the research objectives. In addition, it allows an in-depth examination of trends by using various kinds of evidences obtained from interviews with relevant people and analysis of documents and artifacts (Yin, 2009). As the research questions focused on teachers' ideas and experiences, and the purpose of the research is to explain rather than predict, the researchers systematically collect data and materials after selecting the research objects, conduct in-depth research, and explore the situation in the real life. Therefore, qualitative case studies are very suitable for this research. Because it provides insight into the topic through the investigation of phenomena in their real-life contexts, which is particularly useful when the boundaries between phenomenon and background become blurred (Yin, 2009).

Participant

The researchers used purposive sampling to choose participants. Because the purpose of this study is to understand the application effect of scaffolding instruction in Korean listening teaching in universities in Southwest China. The participants of this study are four Korean listening teachers from Chengdu Institute Sichuan International Studies University, all of whom have more than 5 years of experience in teaching Korean listening. The four participants included two males and two females. One male participant, aged 29, is lively and cheerful, with a small gap between the students' ages and closer to them. Another male, 38 years old, is serious, with a big age gap with the students, and keeps a distance from them. One female participant was 28 years old, cheerful, and close to the student's age. Another 41-year-old female is strict with her students, unsmiling, and has a big age gap with them, keeping her distance from them. Therefore, from the perspective of Korean listening teaching and experiences, age, gender and individuality, the purposive sampling is more practical.

Data Collection

The researcher collected data through semi-structured interviews. Affected by the COVID-19 epidemic, the school where the participants are located switched to online teaching in early December 2022, and the researcher interviewed the participants through video conferences. The interviews were conducted through the video conference function of the Tencent conference application, and the interviews were recorded through the screen recording function of the application.

A semi-structured interview is an open-ended and informal interview. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with four participants and recorded their words in order to understand their thoughts. Through these records, the researcher learned about the experience of Korean listening teachers in universities in Southwest China via applying scaffolding instruction and reflected on and explored the possibility of applying scaffolding instruction in university foreign language teaching. In addition, semi-structured interviews combine the advantages of structured interviews and unstructured interviews, allowing participants to be asked different interview questions in specific situations to get the best answers (Camfield, 2014).

Each interview with participants by the researcher was one-on-one and lasted 60 to 90 minutes. Each interview began with open-ended questions which related to the participants' personal experience in scaffolding instruction application. The reason for these questions is to encourage participants to have a deeper understanding of their general views on scaffolding instruction. Then, in order to thoroughly grasp the theme and get a deeper understanding of participants' reactions, the researcher sought challenging or creative reactions through follow-up questions (Adams, 2015). Follow-up questions enabled the researcher to study participants' experiences in more depth. According to Westcott and Littleton (2005), interviewers should explore challenging or creative solutions through follow-up questions in order to fully understand the interviewees' thoughts on applying scaffolding instruction in Korean listening teaching in colleges and universities.

Data Analysis

Before recording the video verbatim, the researcher distributed the recorded video to the participants, and the participants listened to it twice. The transcript matched the video content, and the researcher sent it to the participants, who made some modifications. During this process, no participants commented. Then, the researcher translated the transcript into English. This study used thematic data analysis to determine the theme or pattern. According to Boyatzis (1998), this is a strategy for identifying, evaluating and reporting themes or patterns within data. It organises and interprets data sets with the least amount of rich detail. However, it often goes beyond this and explains many aspects of research (Brown & Clark, 2006). Therefore, thematic data analysis methods are appropriate because they can answer such questions: What are Korean listening teachers' thoughts and opinions on scaffolding instruction? What is their motivation for using or not using scaffolding instruction? The thematic data analysis used in this research followed six procedures recommended by Braun & Clarke (2006).

In the first stage, the researcher read the transcript several times in order to get familiar with the participants' answers. In the second stage, after reading and rereading the whole transcription data set, the researcher formed the data into codes. Next, the code was extended and connected to provide ideas for the next stage. In the fourth stage, the researcher analysed the code, themes and subthemes and gave a theme map containing two themes. In the fifth stage, the researchers determine and develop the essence

of each theme. Although themes and sub-themes are mainly descriptive, they are also explanatory in some aspects (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The final stage of the analysis is to insert selected conclusions into the analysis narrative to construct a coherent report.

In this study, four participants were selected for data collection. The researcher has chosen participants with more than 5 years' experience in Korean listening teaching to ensure that they have a broad vision and enough experience in the research field. All participants are listening teachers from the Korean major of Chengdu Institute Sichuan International Studies University.

Teachers' View on the Application of Scaffolding Instruction.

The finding showed that all Korean listening teachers thought that scaffolding instruction has a good application prospect and supported the continued application of scaffolding instruction in Korean listening teaching. In addition, by expounding the advantages of scaffolding instruction in Korean listening teaching, teachers have expressed their positive views on the prospect of scaffolding instruction applied to other courses and majors. Table 3.1 illustrates the participants' reactions to their views, the factors that help them to understand, and the benefits of scaffolding instruction.

Teachers' understanding of scaffolding instruction is very important because when scaffolding instruction is applied, the thin line that separates conceptual understanding usually leads to different goals and methods. Some participants relied on the classic understanding of scaffolding instruction, which includes five steps: a) setting up scaffolding, b) enter the situation, c) independent exploration, d) cooperative learning, and e) effect evaluation. Most teachers seemed to know some key features of scaffolding instruction. Their comments revealed the basic understanding of the subject and provided a clear picture of the application of this teaching method. This first finding also clarified the core view of teachers on scaffolding instruction. This may affect other outcomes.

Table 1. Theme from participant's responses

Theme 1	Sub Theme	Teachers' Answer
	All teachers believe that scaffolding instruction is beneficial to Korean listening teaching. Their reaction is positive and encouraging.	<i>"Scaffolding instruction is appropriate and important for improving the teaching efficiency of Korean listening." (P1)</i>
	Scaffolding Instruction	<i>"Scaffolding instruction builds a conceptual framework for students' understanding of knowledge ... and promotes students' further understanding of problems." (P1)</i>
Teachers' views on exploring scaffolding instruction and the factors that help teachers understand this concept.	Teachers set up scaffolding	<i>"Teachers build a conceptual framework around the current learning theme according to the requirements of the 'zone of proximal development'." (P2)</i>
	Students enter the situation.	<i>"Teachers introduce students into certain problem situations by asking questions, showing pictures or videos, playing songs, etc." (P3)</i>
	Teachers's leading role	<i>"Before students' independent exploration, teachers can inspire and guide students by demonstrating or introducing the process of understanding similar concepts ... In the process of students' independent exploration, teachers should prompt students at the right time." (P4)</i>
	Students are the subject of exploring knowledge and experience.	<i>"For complex problems, teachers can set up a 'scaffolding' conceptual framework for students to climb along the scaffolding, thus completing the construction of complex conceptual meaning." (P2)</i>
	Students conduct group consultation, discussion and cooperative study.	<i>"As a result of the discussion, it is possible to increase or decrease the originally determined attributes related to the currently learned concepts, and the arrangement order of various attributes may also be adjusted, and the original complicated situation with conflicting opinions and diverse</i>

	<p><i>attitudes will gradually become clear and consistent. On the basis of sharing the collective thinking results, a more comprehensive and correct understanding of the currently learned concepts will be achieved, that is, the meaning construction of the learned knowledge will finally be completed. "(P3)</i></p>
Evaluation of Learning Effect	<p><i>"... .. including students' personal self-evaluation and individual learning assessment of study groups. Students evaluate autonomous learning ability, contribution to group cooperative learning, whether the meaning construction of the learned knowledge is completed, etc " (P4)</i></p>
Traditional teaching mode of listening has influenced the improvement of students' ability and achievement.	<p><i>"Under the traditional listening teaching mode, most of the time in classroom teaching, teachers explain the contents of teaching materials and recording materials, and students listen to lectures and take notes. Although there are a lot of listening exercises, most of them are in a single form of 'playing recorded materials-doing questions-answering '. Students thought that this teaching mode was too boring." (P3)</i></p>
Past experiences	<p><i>"When I was learning Korean, the forms of listening courses were very rich. Teachers adopted scaffolding instruction, encouraging us to use the words and grammar we have already learned, to learn independently, and to explore the meanings and usages of new words and grammar." (P2)</i></p>
Mobilise students' initiative in learning.	<p><i>"The application of scaffolding instruction can make abstract and boring learning content lively and interesting, strengthen the teaching effect of listening, and give full play to students' learning enthusiasm and initiative." (P4)</i></p>

The first theme is Korean listening teachers' views on scaffolding instruction. Four participants held positive and progressive views on scaffolding instruction. They emphasised the positive role of scaffolding instruction in solving the problems existing in the traditional Korean listening teaching mode, stimulating students' interest in learning and improving the efficiency of listening.

The factors that influence teachers' views are different. Two teachers mentioned that human nature loves to play, and applying scaffold teaching in Korean listening teaching can change the traditional boring teaching mode and stimulate students' enthusiasm for autonomous learning. The other two teachers explained that their past learning experiences helped them to view scaffolding instruction. Another factor that plays a vital role in teachers' understanding of scaffolding instruction is that all teachers firmly support scaffolding instruction as a teaching technology, which brings various benefits to students, for example, improving students' interest in Korean listening and improving their listening ability and achievement. This is basically consistent with Liu Suzhen's research (2015).

Experience in Exploring the Application of Scaffolding Instruction.

The second theme of this research revealed the basic teaching situation of teachers and the existing experiences of the application of scaffolding instruction in Korean listening teaching. When the teachers answered the follow-up questions, they all talked about their existing experiences in the application of scaffolding instruction, including how to popularise it, the role of experience, and their ideal Korean listening classroom learning. Table 3.2 summarises the experience and practice of teachers in the application of scaffolding instruction in Korean listening.

The researcher observed the application of scaffolding instruction in Korean listening classes by four teachers. The researcher carefully designed the interview questions to reveal the current teaching methods and practices of four Korean listening teachers. From the interview and analysis of teachers' experiences in the application of scaffolding instruction in Korean listening, it can be seen that most of the participants tend to be positive in their views on scaffolding instruction. However, through

interviews during classroom observation and the review of teachers' lesson plans, their teaching design was more inclined to the classic concept of scaffolding instruction. All teachers have fully implemented the five steps of scaffolding instruction. Besides, most teachers agreed to assign scaffolding assignments or exercises after class. In addition, from the observation point of view, the application of scaffolding instructions also has certain limitations. The main problem is that the current Korean listening textbooks are not designed according to the five steps of scaffolding instruction. Teachers must screen out the content suitable for scaffolding instruction for students and add some extracurricular content.

Table 2. Summarisation of teacher responses to their experiences.

Theme 2	Sub Theme	Teachers' Answer
Experiences in exploring the application of scaffolding instruction.	Two teachers mentioned that they used scaffolding instruction every time. The other two teachers said that they would use scaffolding instruction every week, but they would make adjustments according to the textbook content.	<i>"Because I teach freshmen, scaffolding instruction is applied in every class. I will apply it from the introduction before class to the assignment. Because some of the contents in the textbook are not suitable for scaffolding instruction, I always screen the contents when preparing lessons." (P1)</i> <i>"Junior students are preparing for TOPIK exam, so every week I take a new class and do a mock exam practice. In the new class, I will choose some contents and apply scaffolding instruction." (P4)</i>
	All the teachers agreed that the design of teaching steps is essential to ensure the smooth progress of the scaffolding instruction.	<i>"Before class, teachers need to prepare lessons carefully, select content suitable for scaffolding instruction from textbooks, and carefully design teaching steps to ensure smooth and orderly classroom teaching." (P3)</i>
	All four teachers agreed that teachers' guidance and students' independent exploration should trade-off.	<i>"At first, teachers gave more guidance and help, and then gradually decreased, giving more and more time to students to explore by themselves. Finally, we should strive to achieve that students themselves can continue to climb in the conceptual framework without the guidance of teachers." (P1)</i>
	Two teachers mentioned that there are some difficulties in applying scaffolding instruction in the listening teaching of freshmen. Two other teachers mentioned that it is not difficult to apply scaffolding instruction in listening teaching in junior year.	<i>"Because Korean teaching starts from scratch, freshmen have not mastered many words and grammar, and there are many difficulties in applying scaffolding instruction." (P1)</i> <i>"Junior students have accumulated more than two years of vocabulary and grammar, and it is possible to implement scaffolding instruction, so I have no difficulty." (P3)</i>

When answering interview questions, most teachers connected their past learning experiences with their students, and used examples to confirm the information provided. It was found that the teaching design of the four participants completely implemented the five steps of scaffolding instruction. What needs to be pointed out is that the teaching design of several classes is not natural enough, and the scaffolding is insufficient.

Therefore, these research results support an interesting theory, that is, teachers' views on what scaffolding instruction means, especially when there are differences if not complete contradictions, and their reactions and practices are consistent in many aspects. Although 4 participants seemed to appreciate the value of these experiences, 2 participants did not implement scaffolding instruction in every class, which is consistent with the research that teachers' attitudes are more suitable for development than their behaviours (Ernst, 2014). Everyone constructs reality because of his own experiences and perceptions of these events (McClintic & Petty, 2015). Similarly, teachers' attitude towards scaffolding instruction will also influence their actions and behaviours in Korean listening

classes. According to their various teaching experiences both inside and outside the classroom, four participants described the learning situations and changes different from those in the literature.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is not to summarise the data but to understand the views and experiences of Korean listening teachers in the application of scaffolding instruction. These findings can guide the research on Korean listening teaching in universities in China in the future, thus influencing and promoting the development of Korean teaching. According to the research of Piao Chenxia (2013) and Rong Rong (2014), the application of scaffolding instruction in Korean listening teaching can solve some drawbacks of traditional teaching mode, but it can't guarantee that scaffolding instruction is fully applicable to Korean listening teaching. Although a lot of thought and effort is still needed in the teaching materials, teaching contents, teaching methods and teaching steps of Korean listening teaching to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Korean listening teaching (Yu, 2009; Jia & Jin, 2010; Li, 2011; Lan, 2016). However, the attitudes, experiences and reasons that restrict Korean listening teachers' application of scaffolding instruction in universities in China are valuable findings which can help to guide the future Korean listening teaching research and formulate the development plan for Korean major (Wang, 2018; Ma, 2019).

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