

ACTION RESEARCH OF PSPT METHOD BASED ON LEXICAL CHUNK IN ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

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The teaching method PSPT is defined as an English teaching method which is extracted from the consecutive interpretation process to deconstruct and reconstruct sentences on the theoretical basis of lexical chunks to realize the retelling and recitation of English texts. The abundant input of the lexical chunks can facilitate the processing of language. However, the innovative method must be applied, adjusted, and improved in practice. This action research reports the application of PSPT in ESP classes as well as the survey and evaluation of it. Based on the survey result, the optimistic changes in oral expression of the learners can be observed. Therefore, it is proved that the PSPT method based on lexical chunks is sufficient and is worth spreading in ESP classes.

Key words: PSPT method, ESP Classes, lexical chunk, action research.

Introduction

Action research was coined by Kurt Lewin in 1944. In action research there is a spiral of steps composed of “a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action”. This action research takes the same process for the problem-solution in ESP classes which specifically refers to tourism English in the context of Chinese college classes of undergraduate learners in the major of Tourism Management.

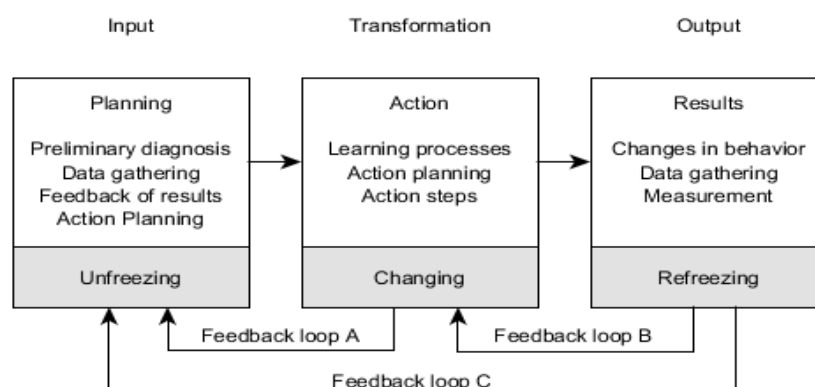


Figure 1. Systems model of action-research process³

Tourism English here refers to the professional English course in terms of the introduction of famous scenic sites as well as the cultural and historical heritages. The teaching goal of the course is to prepare the learners to orally interpreting the tourist attractions. Therefore, a lot of oral practices and retelling are needed in tourism English class. However, in the teaching, it was found that the

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_research

enthusiasm of students to participate in oral practice is generally not high, and a big percentage of students are easily absent-minded. Through some interviews with the learners, the reasons are as follows: first, in the retelling exercises, some students feel difficult and have to give up; second, they do the retelling like reciting which is a heavy memory burden. It leads to a low learning efficiency of the class and learning burnout of the students. “Knowledge is always gained through action and for action.”⁴ The author’s rich experiences in the consecutive interpretation tells that the notetaking in CI could be used to assist the class retelling training. The input and output of lexical chunks will reduce the memory burden to a great extent. Based on the problem of the class, the method of PSPT was put forward and used in class practices.

1. PSPT Method

PSPT is the abbreviation of the initial letters of points (of information), sentence, paragraph and text. It is defined as an English teaching method which is extracted from the consecutive interpretation (hereafter as CI) process to deconstruct and reconstruct sentences on the theoretical basis of lexical chunks to realize the retelling and recitation of English texts⁵. The method combines the input and the output of lexical chunks in the process of the retelling or recitation.

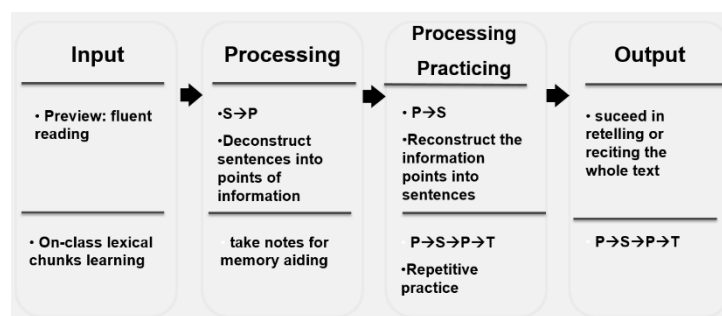


Figure 2. PSPT method flow chart⁶

2. The Theory Basis of PSPT

PSPT is based on the lexical chunk. Becker first proposed the concept of chunk in 1975. “Language memory, storage, output, and use are not measured in individual words, but in fixed and semi-fixed patterns of plate structures, which are the smallest units of human language communication.” From the perspective of prefabricated structure, Sinclair (1991) holds that lexical chunks are “Chunks or prefabricated structures that have been stored in the brain and are extracted as

⁴ Torbert, William R. (1981). Why Educational Research Has Been So Uneducational: The Case for a New Model of Social Science Based on Collaborative Inquiry. In Reason, P.; Rowan, J. (eds.). Human Inquiry. John Wiley and Sons. pp. 141–151. ISBN 978-0471279365.

⁵ Yanlin Wang.(2018).Innovation on English Teaching Method PSPT Based on Lexical Chunk Theory and Consecutive Interpretation Process..(eds.)Proceedings of 3rd International Conference on Modern Management,Education Technology,and Social Science(MMETSS 2018) (Advances in Social Science,Education and Humanities Research,VOL.215) (pp.143-146).Atlantis Press.

⁶ Yanlin Wang.(2018).Innovation on English Teaching Method PSPT Based on Lexical Chunk Theory and Consecutive Interpretation Process..(eds.)Proceedings of 3rd International Conference on Modern Management,Education Technology,and Social Science(MMETSS 2018) (Advances in Social Science,Education and Humanities Research,VOL.215) (pp.143-146).Atlantis Press.

a whole when used”. Wray (2002) defines a chunk as “A series of coherent or incoherent words or other units of meaning, stored in memory as a whole, which can be directly extracted without grammar generation and analysis”. Generally, on class lexical chunk can be simply explained as a group of words that are commonly found together.

3. Research Design

3.1 Research method

This study adopts Lewin’s spiral cycle of action research, which consists of planning, action, observation and reflection. Action research is highly practical, situational, dynamic and reflective, and its theoretical basis is “Reflective rationality”. Its basic assumption is that complex practical problems need specific solutions, these approaches rely on practitioners to discover in context (Loewen, 2015). Researchers are not only practitioners of action, but also researchers and observers, through each round of action to observe and reflect, and as a basis for improvement, to explore a more effective way of using PSPT in teaching practice.

3.2 Research Objectives

The overall objective of this study is to improve the class effect of tourism English, enhance students' interest in learning and improve learning efficiency.

The specific objectives of this study are to optimize the process of PSPT teaching, to find the promoting factors and weakness of the method, and to explore the best model of PSPT teaching method.

4. The application of PSPT method

The PSPT teaching method was proposed by the author from 2006 to 2007, and was used in the first round of English tour guide qualification examination training courses in Gansu Province from 2007 to 2008.

The analysis of learners is as follows: the class is made up of students who apply for English tour guide qualification certificate and the number of students in class is between 30 and 60. Some of the students have English tour guide experiences with English, the estimated vocabulary is around 4000 or 5000. The class atmosphere is generally active. Due to the need of obtaining the English tour guide qualification certificate, the whole class presents strong learning motivation.

4.1 Planning

The whole plan is composed of the following five steps: 1) The students are required to preview the new words in the text before class, and read the passages fluently. 2) According to the class size, the students are divided into several groups to form different cooperative teams, so as to facilitate the evaluation of classroom effect. 3) The teacher explains the language points and gives the alternative expressions in retelling, and encourages the students to use different alternative expressions, which are reflected in the teaching evaluation. 4) The teacher and the student list the information point sentence by sentence together, and retell the exercise; 5) Evaluate the feedback based on the students' retelling effect.

4.2 Action

Sub-task 1: preparation of notetaking

The teacher should teach the students how to make interpretation notes and guide them to grasp the information points sentence by sentence. Then transfer the information points into sentences, according to the English grammar order, so as to facilitate the restoration of information in the sentence reconstruction. Take the following text as an example, the information points of each sentence in the paragraph are as in Table 1:

Gansu is called “Gan” or “Long” in abbreviation. The name of Gansu came from the initial Chinese characters of the two ancient cities “Ganzhou” (present Zhangye) and “Suzhou” (present

Jiuquan). The ancient Silk Road and the new Eurasian Continental Bridge run across the whole province.

Table 1: Deconstruct and Construct of Sentences

Information points	Sentences in target language
GS : G/L	Gansu is called Gan or Long in abbreviation.
Ming←Shouzi , Gu, Ganzhou (Zh-ye), Zh (JQ)	The name of Gansu came from the initial Chinese characters of the two ancient cities “Ganzhou” (present Zhangye) and “Suzhou” (present Jiuquan).
Gu SR&New Er – GS	The ancient Silk Road and the new Eurasian Continental Bridge run across the whole province.

Sub-task 2: the preparation of the students before class

Before the PSPT training, students are required to preview new words and long sentences in advance and read the text aloud and fluently so as to ensure the classroom effect.

Sub-task 3: teachers' explanation

In class, lexical chunks should be learned as key parts and some similar expressions of the lexical chunks must be provided to the learners so they could have enough choices when retelling. As for some long sentences, teachers should help students to transform into short sentences suitable for oral expression, to adapt to the students' memory of the text

4.3 observation and reflection

At the beginning it is not easy for the students to get the information points, and take proper notes, it needs time to practice. Some students list the information points as detailed as possible to integrate the complete sentences which makes the notes lengthy. The whole process intends to Recitation takes precedence over recitation. The students tend to use the expressions in the original text and seldom use the substitutable phrases however the teacher should courage the students to use the substitutable phrases in the training to form their own language expressions, and in the explanation of the substitutable chunks, practice the use of substitutions in the original text, asking students to take notes.

According to the problems in the previous class, attention should be paid to the recognition, explanation, teaching and learning of lexical chunks in the stage of lesson plan design. It is necessary to cultivate students' lexical awareness, which will enable them to learn lexical chunks independently and actively. At the beginning of the course, there are 2-6 preparation periods for students to understand and study the notes and lexical chunks of consecutive interpretation, in case students take notes and input lexical chunks when applying the PSPT method.

PSPT training can reduce the memory burden in retelling or reciting the texts. In the consecutive interpretation, note-taking can lighten the burden of memory, reproduce complete information of the source language, and help the comprehensive analysis and processing of sentences, the information points are activated by the visual input of the notes, and the information output process is completed.

In the PSPT training, the interpretation notes of these roles can play a better role. Compared with consecutive interpretation, PSPT training has no strict time limit and can easily grasp information points and adjust the order of information points. After one-month training, most of the students in the class are able to complete 1000-1500-word English text retellings in two class hours (50 minutes/class).

5. Evaluation

In the course of Tourism English, the author tests the students' retelling. Using the method of PSPT, in two hours to recite 1000 words of the tour guide speech. More than 80% (26/30) of the students were able to complete the retelling of the tour guide's speech, although the students' pronunciation and fluency varied. The author made two pre-tests and two post-tests, and compared the average of pre-test and post-test. The authors found that the scores shown in Table 1 clearly showed the progress made by the students and the level of the class.

Table 2. Comparison of the scores of the tested students.⁷

Test frequency	Highest score	Lowest score	Average
Pre-test	84	45	73
Post-test	91	62	82

In different rounds of the PSPT method, three surveys were carried out in different semesters, and it can be concluded that this method is effective in improving classroom participation and efficiency. The survey used five-point Likert scale. A total of 83 questionnaires were distributed and all were valid.

As can be seen from the data in Table 3, students' overall evaluation and acceptance of the method is optimistic. The data in item 2 ($m = 4.128$, $SD = 0.653$) showed that students' participation was most consistent. Data in item 2 showed that they agreed that the method freed them from the hard work of repetition or memorization. The standard deviation in item 3 indicates that some students are not sure whether the method can directly improve classroom efficiency. The data in item 4 showed that students tended to accept the method.

Table 3. Acceptance and evaluation of PSPT⁸

Item	Mean	Standard deviation
1.PSPTcan reduce the retelling or reciting difficulty	3.874	0.716
2.PSPTcan promote my class participation	4.128	0.653
3.PSPTcan improve the class efficiency	3.643	1.473
4.PSPT suits me, I will adopt it in self-teaching	3.852	0.957

6. Conclusion

In the action, pre-and post-test and questionnaire analysis were used to evaluate the teaching methods of PSPT. The investigation proves that PSPT can reduce the difficulty of reciting texts, let students master the learning content effectively, and improve the participation of students in class. The success of reciting or retelling the text can stimulate students' sense of achievement and interest

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⁸² Yanlin Wang, Innovation on English Teaching Method PSPT Based on Lexical Chunk Theory and Consecutive Interpretation Process [C] MMETSS2018, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, volume 215, Atlantis Press. 2018: 134-137

in learning English. When using the PSPT teaching method, it compresses lexical chunk learning, sentence deconstruction analysis, method introduction and reinforcement exercises into the class to achieve the learning goal.

Input and output, teacher-student relationship, language form and meaning are the core concepts in language teaching. The understanding and handling of these relations form the basic standpoint of language teaching. The shift of epistemology from objectivism to constructivism, from cognitive construction to social construction, can rationally explain the changes in the status of input and output, teacher-student relations, linguistic forms and meanings in teaching. In the practice of classroom teaching, it is significant to deal with the three pairs of relations in a balanced way, to combine theory with practice, and to reflect on classroom practice.

The PSPT is suitable for teaching classes that improve students' oral ability by retelling or reciting paragraphs or texts. Teachers can use this method to help students retell or recite the whole text or a few paragraphs. Consider the use of the PSPT in a writing class. It can be used to recite some classic texts or beautiful prose. Recitation has attracted great attention of many scholars and teachers (Yinglian Ma, 2014). Recitation is an efficient input and has obvious help to the acquisition and consolidation of lexical chunks and writing ability (Liming Deng2007). Accordingly, the teacher can apply the PSPT to retell or recite in different classes.

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