

# Comparison between the Shanghai Edition and Starting Point Textbooks of First Grade Oxford Elementary School from the Perspective of “i+1” Theory

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**Abstract**—Krashen believes that there exists a second language monitoring development model in the learning and acquisition process of a second language, which includes the “Acquisition and Learning Hypothesis”, “Natural Acquisition Order Hypothesis”, “Monitoring Hypothesis”, “Input Hypothesis”, and “Emotional Filtering Hypothesis”. This study starts with the core structure “i+1” in the “Input Hypothesis”, and analyzes and compares the structure and content of the representative and universal People’s Education Press (PEP) first grade English textbook (first semester) and the special Oxford first grade English textbook (first semester), exploring the similarities and differences between the two different textbooks and exploring their positive and negative effects on the comprehensibility input of “i+1”. Finally, suggestions for improving the textbooks of both parties have been proposed, which has achieved the goal of optimizing the setting of primary school English textbooks and serving compulsory primary school English classroom teaching.

**Keywords**—Krashen, input hypothesis, textbook comparison, “i+1”

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the action of Multiple Modifications to Single Outline policy under the releasing of New Curriculum Reformation in 2001, English textbooks in China have embraced an era of creativity and variety. According to statistics, there are 23 versions of English texts book admitted by the Chinese Ministry of Education having been adopted to various regions in China. Among them, most influential one is the People’s Education Press (PEP). It has been applied to 13 provinces in China. Another study-worthy version is the Oxford English, which has been solely used in Shanghai. Despite its low rate of usage, its educational effect is fruitful. Shanghai has long been recognized as one of the best English education areas and such reputation undoubtedly has an intimate connection with its daily textbook. Meanwhile, in the area of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Krashen’s Input Hypothesis has been an enlightening guidance for English educators to reflect on [1]. With the equipment of SLA studies and practical cases, pros and cons of above two materials will provide Chinese English education with profound suggestions and sparks for improving elementary teaching strategy.

## II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

In the end of 1970s, Krashen [2] proposed the Monitor model, which is a comprehensive theory, consisting of five interrelated central hypotheses: The acquisition-learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor

hypothesis, the input hypothesis and the affective-filter hypothesis. It is not only the most generalized SLA theories, but also the one has been most extensively applied. Besides the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the input hypothesis is another core theory among above five branches. It emphasizes on the understanding input containing “i+1”: by understanding language that contains input containing structures that are a bit beyond the acquirer’s current level [3]. “I” in this formula can be assumed as the present L2 ability of the learner, while “+1” can be assumed as there exist a mild more challenging difficulties in input material. At the same time, an ideal input should satisfied the learner with comprehend ability, interesting relevance, non-grammatical program arrangement and sufficient input volume.

After the prime proposal, input hypothesis has been examined by tremendous investigators both across the globe. In 1975, Hatch and Wagner-Gough [4] improved the theory through experiments. Their founding suggested that L2 students perform better under a language input competent to their level. Seliger [5] and Long [6] confirmed the credibility of understandable input through classroom observations. In China, input theory has been widely applied to areas of education, SLA, psychology and classroom practise. Scholars attitude towards Krashen’s input hypothesis can be divided into 3 categories: approval, neutral and disapproval, which owns the largest proportion to the least from advocates to protestants [7].

## III. ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOKS

### A. Oxford English

As what has been exhibited in Table 1, there are 4 modules, and 4 projects are entailed in Oxford English text book. As the below chart exhibits, each module is consist of 3 units related to its topic. Within each unit, main learning sections are: 1) Look and Say; 2) Look and learn; 3) Play a game; 4) Say and Act; 5) Listen and Enjoy; 6) Ask a question and 7) Do a survey. Above 7 sections are randomly distributed in each unit. Each module. Within each unit, textbook is designed to teach students English knowledge of 3 genres: Daily expression, grammar and vocabulary. Each unit’s topic is related to the module’s topic, meanwhile all contents of 4 modules are paralleled. English knowledge is transmitted to students through pictures, conversations and songs. No direct perceptive instruction is given except for vocabulary. The generalized learning style tends to be interactive and recreational.

Table 1. Structural analysis of Oxford English

Module/Topic	Entailed Unit	Input strategy	Output mode
1. Communicative skill and self-exploration	1. Greetings	Speaking	
	2. Classmates		
	3. Face (body)		
2. Self-exploration, friends and family	1. My abilities	Singing	Conversation
	2. Family	Role play	
	3. Friends	Game	
3. Social manners	1. Classroom	Recitation	Do a survey
	2. Fruit shop		
	3. Restaurant		
4. Natural world	1. Farm animals		Speaking
	2. Zoo animals		Writing
	3. Park		
Project 1. Self-exploration	Self-recognition		
Project 2. Family and friends	Family and friend	Listening	
Project 3. Food	Food	Draw and say	
Project 4. Animals	Animals		

Table 2. Structural analysis of PEP English

Starter	Lead-in School Life		
Unit/Topic	Entailed Sections	Input strategy	Output mode
1. School		Listening	
2. Face		Grammatical input	
3. Animals	3 Lessons	Reading	Speaking
4. Numbers	1 Review	Repetition	Recitation
5. Colours	1 Story time	Role play	
6. Fruits		Game	
		Singing	
Revision	content	Form	Strategy
1.	Unit1-unit3		Listen
2.	Unit4-unit6	Mind map	Speaking
			Play
Appendix	Content		
1.	Lyrics from unit1 to unit6		
2.	Vocabulary from unit1 to unit6		
3.	General vocabulary		
4.	Daily expressions		
5.	Paper cutting materials		

**B. English (PEP Version)**

English (PEP, one grade starter) is edited by the Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standards [8]. It contains 6 unit, 2 revisions 1 starter and 4 additional diagrams of various topic. Each unit contains a starter, 3 lessons and 1 revision and 1 story section. Lessons are all contextually related to unit’s topic [8]. So does story time. All learning procedures are coordinated and the same in

every unit. Besides revision for each unit, a total and more abstract review will be given after every 3 units, which also represents for mid-term and final term in a semester. After the main learning content, additional learning materials are offered. Through appendixes, students are able to search and learning words dominated by either topics or alphabet order. Entertaining materials as songs and paper cuttings are also attached for the purpose of enjoyment. Input strategies are various and more grammatical input emphasizing. As what has been shown in Table 2, the general learning style tends to be efficient and interactive.

**IV. COMPARISON OF OXFORD TEXTBOOK AND PEP TEXT BOOK BY “1+1”**

**A. Similarities of PEP and Oxford English textbook**

As learning materials for foreign language users, both textbooks focus on daily topics to guide students in English learning. Although two text books own different study structure, they entails similar topic like friends, family, color food and so on. Their contents are of high familiarity. Students can create an immediate link between new knowledge to their daily experience. Such design provides a relaxing atmosphere for student to use their empirical knowledge as “i”, and textbook knowledge as “1” [10].

For structure, two textbooks include sections with various topic but paralleled levels of difficulties. In Oxford version, basic knowledge is all in form of words and conversations. Within each unit, all lessons own equivalent degrees of input intensity. So does PEP textbook. Although multiple topics are imbedded, the similar structure design provide students with both understandable learning frame and new learning materials. Thus, a dynamic balance between learned knowledge, leaned study mode and unlearned knowledge can be achieved. Long term lack of high level new knowledge will lead to the degeneration of child’s efficiency and effect in foreign language [11]. However, such expanded study topic with equal rank can relief this concerns and boost students learning.

**B. Differences of PEP and Oxford Text Book**

The major difference between two studied materials in content is their method of activate input. Most first grade elementary school students are in the preoperational stage, where they can initially use symbols to think and describe things, but cannot fully understand abstract concepts [12]. Oxford English uses simple and short sentences to give instruction. Colorful pictures are simultaneously combined with input materials. Students can receive input not only through target texts but also from instructions. What’s more, Oxford English provides the classroom with a more interactive and fluent education mode. Teachers are able to give lecture through syllabus teaching without stopping for explaining unimportant words in the textbook. Fillmore and Snow [13] observe that consistency and regularity in classroom procedures correlate with higher rates of language learning. The comprehensible content design and paralleled structural design offers a comfortable study environment for both the teacher and students. This achieve the standard of quantity and quality principle, which make sure that the “+” process is a complete procedure without interruption. On the other hand, PEP English’s language in instruction tend to

satisfy educators more. It uses mature and more targeted language which is difficult for beginners to understand. Thus, it violates the “i+1” principle since the input level is higher than the approximate understandable level which can both boost students learning and create no stagnation PEP, on the other hand, includes review sections and appendixes which the Oxford version lacks. Through regular revisions, students can enhance their fresh knowledge. It provides the following study with a solidify basement—new “i”. Instead of rushing to another teaching object, review can ensure the developing “i” is reliable. Therefore, selected “1” can maximize its impact. Educators can effectively use the gap between the learned and strange knowledge and select challenging but acceptable objects to enlarge accelerate the study process. What’s more, the appendixes can be functioned as a vital tool for re-exam students actual learning progress [14]. Nation points out that Chapter 10, “Testing vocabulary knowledge and use”, like some others, is organized around questions that teachers often ask and almost all section headings are questions [15]. Appendixes in PEP textbook play an role as self-reflection on not only the semantic meanings, but also words as groups divided by themes and also a media for reminding students of class. Oxford version only construct a content frame in the beginning of the textbook. Despite a collection of vocabulary in separate unit, specific vocabulary is absent. Such sections can strengthen the basement of existed knowledge, which further contribute to the natural acquisition of new subjects.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

Through the comparison of Oxford English and PEP English, it is revealed that these two English textbooks is half similar and half unique in their contents and structure. Oxford English owns advantages in input method and input quality through “i+1” process for its interactive and students-targeted language. PEP English has strength in its input quantity and reliable basement for “+1” process for its efficient review models and organized vocabulary appendixes. Although they all have individual specialties, editors of these two versions of textbook can learn for each others’ pros and cons to improve both sides textbook quality for the sake of students all over the country. “i+1” provides us with an practical vision to critically analyze different textbooks functions and utility effect. In future, such theory

can also be used in related area of researches, such as classroom studies and so on. It is highly potential.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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