

# The Application of Schema Theory in English Listening Teaching for Chinese English Major Undergraduates

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i3/22166>

DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i3/22166

**Published Online:** 19 July 2024

## Abstract

English listening comprehension remains a challenging skill for Chinese English major undergraduates, largely due to the traditional teaching method that view students as passive recipients of information. In China, the prevalent style of English listening instruction—characterized by explaining vocabulary, playing recordings, completing listening exercises, and checking answers—dominates English listening classes. Unfortunately, this instruction method has achieved little in enhancing Chinese English majors' listening abilities, as it does not encourage them to actively engage in the listening comprehension process. Such a monotonous teaching model causes students to become bored and gradually lose interest in English listening classes. Addressing this issue, this paper proposes integrating schema theory into English listening instruction to develop a Schema Theory-Based Teaching Approach, aimed at improving listening comprehension abilities and stimulating interest in listening classes among Chinese English major undergraduates. Schema theory underscores the significance of background knowledge or mental frameworks, known as schemata, in understanding listening materials. Activating relevant schemata before listening tasks can enhance comprehension. Based on a systematic literature review, the paper identifies the existing research gaps and proposes the conceptual framework of the Schema Theory-Based Teaching Approach. This teaching approach emphasizes not only the activation of schemata prior to listening but also the consolidation of schemata in the post-listening stage and the expansion of schemata after class, in order to fully enrich students' mental schemata. Moreover, the introduction of diverse and engaging activities in both the pre-listening and post-listening stages aims to revitalize the conventional, tedious listening classroom, boosting students' enthusiasm and interest for learning. The approach aims to improve listening comprehension abilities and foster interest in listening classes among Chinese English majors.

**Keywords:** Schema Theory, Schema Theory-based Listening Teaching Approach, Chinese English Major Undergraduates, English Listening Teaching

## **Introduction**

Listening is a pivotal skill in communication, essential for effective interaction and understanding. Research by Professor Paul Rankin reveals that listening plays a paramount role in our daily language use, constituting 45% of our communication activities, followed by speaking (30%), reading (16%), and writing (9%) (Yang, 2020; Li, 2011). These figures underscore the dominance of listening in language practice and highlight its importance in successful communication. However, in China, many English majors struggle with listening comprehension, often due to traditional teaching methods that limit students' active engagement and interest in listening classes. To address this issue, this paper proposes the application of Schema Theory in English listening instruction for Chinese English majors and the development of a Schema Theory-Based Teaching Approach. By integrating schema theory into English listening instruction, the paper aims to enhance Chinese English Majors' listening abilities, boost their engagement in listening classes, and finally improve their proficiency in cross-cultural communication.

## **Problem Statement**

For a long time, influenced by behaviorist theory, many Chinese English educators have treated listening as primarily a passive activity, centered on receiving information. In China, the prevalent style of English listening instruction—which involves explaining vocabulary, playing recordings, completing listening exercises, and then checking answers—has taken precedence in English listening classes. This method, however, fails to actively engage students in the listening process. It positions the teacher as the main information provider, which consequently situates Chinese English learners into a passive stance throughout their educational journey. This inactive style of listening instruction has numerous drawbacks that require immediate reflection and overhaul. Peng and Zhang (2020) observed that in the traditional university English listening classroom, teachers often lead, overlooking the students' individual roles and varying listening aptitudes. It fails to inspire motivation or pique students' interest. Improving listening skills simply through repetitive listening and practice can cause students to develop a psychological aversion, leading them to lose interest in such exercises. As a result, many students lose faith in improving their English listening abilities, with their enthusiasm greatly diminished, and some even abandon English listening studies entirely (Jian, 2015). Shen (2020) argued that traditional teaching philosophies and methods no longer meet the evolving demands of modern education. In teaching English listening at the university level, educators should shift their teaching perspectives, positioning students at the heart of the instructional process and respecting their leading roles.

In conclusion, traditional listening teaching methods exhibit limitations that can impede students' learning progress. To overcome these challenges, it is imperative for educators to investigate more interesting and effective teaching strategies. This study applies schema theory to the English listening teaching for Chinese English majors, establishing an innovative Schema Theory-Based Teaching Approach aimed at enhancing both the listening abilities and interest of these students.

## **Literature Review**

### **Introduction to Schema Theory**

Schema theory is a conceptual framework from cognitive psychology that elucidates how our background knowledge and experiences shape our perception, understanding, and recollection of new data. Initially introduced by Bartlett in 1932 and further elaborated by

Rumelhart in 1980, this theory posits that individuals create mental schemata or frameworks which help in processing and interpreting incoming data. A schema represents an organized structure of knowledge about various concepts, occurrences, or contexts Rui (2020) and comprises an intricate network of related concepts, characteristics, and associations, establishing our comprehension of specific areas. These schemata are formed via experiences and education, acting as cognitive blueprints that influence our perception, memory, and understanding. According to schema theory, when new information is presented, we access relevant schemata in our memory to contextualize it (Li, 2021). These mental frameworks aid in interpreting the new data by offering a contextual backdrop. The assimilation of new information is contingent upon the schemata already present in our minds (Shao, 2012). We employ our existing schemata to bridge gaps, draw conclusions, and anticipate outcomes based on what we already know. The activation and amalgamation of these schemata enable us to process and retain new information with greater efficiency.

### **The Application of Schema Theory in English Listening Instruction**

The application of schema theory in language education is substantial, highlighting that comprehension is achieved by linking new data with existing, pertinent knowledge frameworks or schemata. In the context of listening, learners activate their relevant schemata to understand and interpret spoken language (Rumelhart, 1980). Carrell (1983) posited that adept listening comprehension is reliant upon the listener's proficiency in employing the right schemata, which aid in the deciphering and understanding of oral language. Various studies affirm that invoking one's accumulated knowledge or past experiences significantly bolsters the ability to comprehend spoken language effectively (Carrell et al., 1988).

Recent studies have confirmed the beneficial impact of schema activation on listening comprehension across various learner populations. Sadighi and Zare (2006) demonstrated that EFL students' listening comprehension improves with topic familiarity. Similarly, Bakhtiarvand and Adinevand (2011) found that cultural familiarity boosts Iranian EFL learners' listening skills. Bao (2016) validated that a schema theory-based teaching approach enhances listening comprehension among Chinese English majors by integrating background knowledge. Moreover, Keshmirshakan (2019) showed that activating schematic knowledge benefits Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension.

To effectively apply schema theory in listening instruction, Huang Ying (2013) recommends that teachers develop students' lexical, syntactical, and cultural schemata. Additionally, Yang Xi (2018) has shown that pre-listening vocabulary activities can significantly aid junior school students' listening comprehension. These findings collectively advocate for the integration of schematic knowledge activation in listening teaching to improve comprehension.

The existing research primarily focuses on activating schemata before listening, with not enough attention given to schema consolidation during the post-listening phases and schema expansion after class. It is critical to recognize that simply activating schemata may not ensure the most effective language learning outcomes. The richer a person's schemata are, the stronger his or her listening comprehension ability becomes. Beyond just activating existing knowledge structures, it is crucial to provide learners with opportunities to reinforce and expand their schemata through post-listening activities and continuous learning outside the classroom. Moreover, while much of the related research concentrates on enhancing learners' English listening abilities, there is a significant gap in studies aimed at stimulating students' interest in listening sessions. Further research is necessary to address this aspect.

### **Research Gaps**

Upon reviewing the existing literature, the author of the paper has pinpointed the following research gaps in applying schema theory to English listening instruction. These gaps can be articulated as follows:

Firstly, prior studies have primarily concentrated on the activation and construction of schemata during the pre-listening phase Sadighi & Zare (2006); Bakhtiarvand & Adinevand (2011); Yang (2018); Keshmirshekan (2019), with insufficient attention to the consolidation of schemata in the post-listening phase and the expansion of schemata in the after-class phase.

Secondly, although much of the research on schema theory-based listening instruction is devoted to improving learners' English listening abilities, there is a significant lack of focus on fostering students' interest in listening courses.

To bridge these gaps, the author proposes an innovative Schema Theory-Based Teaching Approach by applying schema theory to the English listening instruction of Chinese English major undergraduates, aiming to enhance both their listening abilities and interest in listening classes. This approach is structured into three phrases: before, during, and after class, with the 'during class' phrase further subdivided into pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening stages. Beyond emphasizing pre-class preparation and schema activation before listening, this approach also places a strong emphasis on conducting post-listening activities for schema consolidation and after-class activities for schema expansion. The goal is to enrich students' schemata, particularly linguistic and content schemata, and ultimately improve the listening comprehension abilities of Chinese English major students while cultivating their interest in listening classes.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study focuses on the application of schema theory in English listening instruction for Chinese English major undergraduates. Schema theory suggests that individuals categorize knowledge into mental frameworks known as schemata, which aid in the assimilation and interpretation of incoming information. Within the realm of listening comprehension, the activation of pertinent background knowledge, or schemata, can enhance the understanding and memory of auditory information. It is theorized that the broader and more varied an individual's schemata are, the better he can understand listening materials. Thus, in the domain of English language education, Enriching and expanding students' schemata is pivotal for boosting their listening comprehension abilities and overall language competence.

When it comes to teaching English listening, instructors should not only activate students' pre-existing schemata before playing listening materials but also pay attention to how they can enrich and expand the schemata in students' minds, namely linguistic schemata, content schemata, and formal schemata. Linguistic schemata pertain to the understanding of English vocabulary, grammar, and phonetics; content schemata relate to the background knowledge and cultural understanding regarding the topic; whereas formal schemata deal with recognizing the structure and organization of the listening material. Addressing these three types of schemata can significantly improve students' ability to grasp and interpret the listening materials.

Thus, in addition to activating students' pre-existing schemata before listening, it is crucial for teachers to prepare students to preliminarily construct the needed schemata, especially the cultural and linguistic schemata associated with the listening material, prior to the listening classes. Before engaging in listening sessions, students need to establish

pertinent linguistic and content schemata in their minds. In this way, students can effectively activate the relevant schemata during the pre-listening stage, adopt interactive information processing modes of listening comprehension, and fully understand the listening materials in the while-listening stage. Moreover, after the listening activity, it is essential for teachers to assist students in reinforcing the newly established schemata from the listening material to avoid memory loss. Recognizing that the schemata developed in listening classes is inadequate for English majors, students should be encouraged to proactively broaden their schemata and increase their language exposure outside class to boost their language skills and listening comprehension capabilities.

It is important to note that, teachers should pay more attention to the construction of cultural schemata in students' minds. Cultural schemata are a subset of content schemata, focusing exclusively on the beliefs, values, customs, traditions, social norms, and practices of a specific culture. In the context of English language learning and listening comprehension, cultural schemata help learners understand and interpret spoken language by providing a cultural context that enables them to make sense of the underlying meanings, references, and allusions embedded in spoken discourse. Familiarity with the cultural schemata of the English language can significantly facilitate the comprehension of listening material. The following is the detailed introduction of schema theory-based listening approach.

#### **Before Class: Preliminarily Constructing the Needed Schemata**

Before each listening session, the instructor provides learning materials to the students via an online platform, enabling them to build the necessary schemata in advance of the class.

Numerous scholars have highlighted the critical role of activating the pre-existing knowledge structures, or schemata, in listeners' minds prior to engaging in listening activities. In the context of EFL or ESL learners, such as those in China, a common issue is the lack of sufficient and relevant schemata that could be activated for effective understanding of listening materials. Thus, it is imperative that teachers assist students in building or constructing the schemata required for upcoming listening sessions. In the days leading up to these classes, educators should thoroughly analyze the listening materials to identify potential barriers to listening comprehension, such as complex vocabulary and sentence structures, unfamiliar topics, or novel text formats and styles. Following this analysis, teachers are advised to distribute preparatory learning materials, enabling students to acquaint themselves with the content.

Regarding the linguistic vacancy (the absence of necessary linguistic schemata for text comprehension), instructors should extract and introduce new vocabulary and complex syntactic structures to the students beforehand. For addressing content vacancy (lack of background knowledge) and formal vacancy (unfamiliarity with text formats or styles), teachers could devise targeted questions that prompt students to conduct internet research, thus aiding them in acquiring pertinent information and context. For example, when the listening material is a short story of Louis Armstrong, a very famous jazz musician, the teacher can design the following questions. "What do you know about Louis Armstrong? What is his major achievement?" "What is Jazz?" "What are the characteristics of a short story?" "What is its narrative structure?" etc. Through searching for information on internet, the students can preliminarily construct the needed schemata.

Even when the listening material is not linguistically challenging or the topic is somewhat familiar to the students, it is also beneficial to highlight and review key terms and concepts that resonate with the main themes or topics, as this can stimulate the activation of

existing knowledge structures, preparing students for the forthcoming listening exercise. It is crucial for educators to adjust the preparation time based on the listening material's difficulty level, the novelty of the content, and the students' familiarity with the topic.

Beyond individual study prior to class, students are also recommended to participate in collaborative learning activities with their peers, whether online or offline. This cooperative learning enables them to combine their knowledge and resources effectively, and to collaboratively overcome any challenges they face in their preparatory work.

### **In Class**

The in-class phase can be segmented into three distinct stages: pre-listening, during-listening, and post-listening, each with its specific objectives.

#### **i. Pre-listening Stage : Fully Constructing and Activating the Needed Schemata**

##### **Step 1 Lead-in**

When the class begins, the teacher utilizes multimedia resources to present images or showcase brief videos related to the listening material. Leveraging both visual and auditory stimuli helps to arouse students' interest and aids in providing a more holistic understanding of the topic.

##### **Step 2 Group Discussion**

Subsequently, the instructor will allocate five minutes for students to partake in group discussions concerning the learning materials. These discussions might encompass aspects like word pronunciations, phrase interpretations, and any questions the teacher has preassigned. Following this brief discussion period, the educator will proceed with a review to assess understanding.

##### **Step 3 Checking, Evaluating and Summarizing**

Following group discussions, the instructor will assess if students have adequately developed their schemata. To evaluate students' linguistic schemata, the instructor might select a few students from each group to read and explain the key words and phrases or to create sentences using similar grammatical structures, paying close attention to their pronunciation and offering corrections as necessary. For evaluating content and formal schemata, the teacher will ask each group to present their answers or thoughts to the entire class. At the beginning of the listening class, it should be communicated to the students that their engagement in reading, responding to questions, and participating in group activities will influence their overall grade, which serves to boost their motivation. Upon completing this evaluation, the instructor should provide a recapitulation of the session, highlighting essential and challenging points, and addressing any areas the students may have missed. This approach ensures that students have fully constructed the needed schemata required for the forthcoming listening task.

##### **Step 4 Pre-listening Prediction: Let students make predictions before listening**

###### **Activity: Group Brainstorming**

In the pre-listening phase, it is crucial for the instructor to encourage students to utilize all accessible known information to form predictions. This skill of making pre-listening predictions is fundamental to mastering English listening comprehension. Before listening, the students should predict the topic and general content of the listening material, what

questions will be asked after listening, which of the options is the correct answer, what is the proper word or phrase to fill in the blanks, etc. With the help of the known information, the listeners should activate their schemata in minds to make some guesses or expectations. The known information mainly includes the title of the listening material, the direction of the listening exercise, the words and phrases in the table or form, the multiple-choice questions and options, the background information and the key words and phrases the teacher has provided, etc. For example, the following is one of the listening tasks from the textbook "Introduction to English Listening," authored by (Minglun and Yuping, 2017).

- A In this part you are going to hear a passage about Louis Satchmo Armstrong, one of the most famous jazz musicians in the United States. Listen carefully. Choose the correct answer to each question you hear.*
1. a. England.  
b. New Orleans.  
c. New England.
  2. a. A famous family.  
b. A rich family.  
c. A poor family.
  3. a. Only a few people.  
b. Only important people.  
c. Many people.
  4. a. Jazz music.  
b. Classical music.  
c. Rock music.
  5. a. After he became an adult.  
b. When he was a boy.  
c. When he was in the school band.
  6. a. His great happy smile.  
b. His sad and slow songs.  
c. His wonderful jazz music.
  7. a. Speech.  
b. Horn.  
c. Music.
  8. a. It tells us of the famous jazz musician Louis Armstrong.  
b. It tells us how Louis came to play his horn.  
c. It tells us how people loved Louis and his horn.

Figure 1. Excerpt from "Introduction to English Listening," authored by (Minglun and Yuping, 2017)

All the information provided above is what students can use to make predictions. Since they have already constructed sufficient schemata about Louis Satchmo Armstrong by researching the musician's information before class and discussing it in group activities, it becomes relatively easy for them to make predictions. Based on this known information,

students can readily activate their schemata to predict the general content of the listening material, anticipate the questions that will be asked, and determine which options might be correct, among other things. Thanks to the preparation before class and group discussions at the beginning of the listening class, most students have already fully developed adequate schemata and are now very familiar with this musician. They know that Armstrong was a celebrated jazz musician in the US, born in New Orleans on August 4, 1901, that his father abandoned the family shortly after his birth, and that he lived in poverty, enduring a challenging childhood. Therefore, they can easily predict that the first question might be, "Where was Louis Armstrong from?" or "What was Louis Armstrong's hometown?" when they encounter the phrase "New Orleans," which instantly activates their content schema. Similarly, for the second question, before listening, most students believe that option C might be correct because they anticipate the question "What kind of family was he born into?" given that the phrase "poor family" activates their content schema about Armstrong's difficult early life. In fact, most of their predictions or guesses turn out to be correct. Therefore, before listening, the teacher should not only assist students in constructing the necessary schemata but also instruct them to carefully read the known information, be attuned to it, and make informed predictions or guesses by activating the relevant schemata.

During the group brainstorming, invite each group to share their predictions with the rest of the class. This should be an open and respectful discussion where every prediction is considered without criticism. The teacher should make students write down or record their predictions. These predictions can then be revisited after the listening activity to see which were correct and which were not. This will provide an opportunity for reflection and critical thinking. The aim of this activity is not just to identify who makes the most accurate predictions, but to encourage students to fully activate their schemata, realize the importance of background knowledge, and engage actively in the upcoming listening process.

## **ii. While-listening stage: Constant Schema Activation and Construction**

### **Step 5 Active Listening: Make students adopt interactive listening mode when listening**

In the while-listening stage, teacher should have students listen to the material attentively. Throughout the whole listening process, students constantly activate existing schemata and construct new ones. The while-listening stage is the most difficult one to control because the students merely depend on themselves to receive and comprehend the information in the whole process. Before starting listening, the teacher should remind the students to adopt interactive listening mode, using a combination of bottom-up and top-down processing mode flexibly and freely. Bottom-up mode is the process in which the listeners makes use of their linguistic knowledge or schemata to understand the meaning of the listening material. Top-down mode is the process in which the listeners make use of their background knowledge or content schemata to understand the heard information. During the whole listening comprehension process, the two modes interact and complement each other as well as the interaction between the listener and listening material. Therefore, in English listening instruction, teachers should not only encourage students to accumulate linguistic knowledge but also inspire them to expand their background knowledge. This should particularly focus on areas such as English culture, history, literature, social life, and customs, which frequently feature in English listening materials and assessments in China.

### **iii. Post-listening stage: Consolidate the Schemata**

#### **Step 6 Answer Checking and Post-listening Reflection**

Following the listening activity, the initial task is to check the answers. Subsequently, the teacher should initiate a discussion among the students regarding their pre-listening predictions, prompting them to contemplate their prior assumptions. During the discussion, it is crucial to identify which predictions are correct and which are not. At this point, the teacher should stress the significance of employing predictions to aid listening comprehension and underscore the necessity of continually modifying their presumptions to align with the actual content during the listening process.

#### **Step 7 Post-listening Reviewing**

After the Answer Checking and Post-listening Reflection, it is imperative for the teacher to aid students in reinforcing and consolidating the schemata they have newly acquired from the listening material. This entails guiding the class through a recapitulation of the content listened to, a step often overlooked in traditional listening instruction. Nonetheless, review processes are as crucial as the preparatory ones, acting to solidify and affirm the newly acquired schemata.

At this point, the type of listening material should guide the choice of review activities. For instance, if the content is a narrative, students could be prompted to retell or summarize the story, utilizing key words and phrases from the listening text to reflect its narrative structure. Each group could then select a representative to share their summary or retelling with the entire class.

Conversely, if the material is an interview, students could be motivated to engage in role-playing exercises, using vital terms and phrases to recreate the dialogue. Representatives from each group could perform their role-plays for the whole class. Through these activities, students can revisit the content they've just heard and reinforce the newly constructed linguistic schema, content schema, and formal schema. Moreover, various post-listening review activities can significantly enhance students' interest in listening classes.

In summary, when conducting a listening class, the teacher should adhere to the seven steps: Step 1: Lead-in; Step 2: Group Discussion; Step 3: Checking, Evaluating, and Summarizing; Step 4: Pre-listening Prediction; Step 5: Active Listening; Step 6: Answer Checking and Post-listening Reflection; and Step 7: Post-listening Review. By following these steps, the teacher ensures comprehensive pre-listening preparation, effectively constructing and activating the necessary schemata in the students' minds. During the listening phase, the combined emphasis on both bottom-up and top-down processing modes allow students to predict, process, and continuously refine their understanding, providing a holistic learning experience. Various post-listening activities focus on reinforcing and consolidating the newly established schemata from the listening material, and they can significantly enhance students' interest. The seven steps for in-class listening instruction are shown in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1

*Seven Steps for In-Class Listening Instruction*

Seven Steps for In-Class Listening Instruction	Pre-listening Stage	Step 1: Lead in
		Step 2: Group Discussion
		Step 3: Checking, Evaluating, and Summarizing
		Step 4: Pre-listening Prediction
	While-listening Stage	Step 5: Active Listening
	Post-listening Stage	Step 6: Answer Checking and Post-listening Reflection
		Step 7: Post-listening Reviewing

**After Class: Expanding the Schemata**

After class, teachers can assign homework, ask students to maintain a diary, and utilize language learning apps to continuously expand their schemata.

**i. Homework**

In addition to encouraging students to continue memorizing key words and phrases to reinforce their already constructed linguistic schemata, teachers should also urge students to broaden these schemata, especially their content schemata. The role of content schemata in listening comprehension is frequently underestimated by many Chinese students. At times, these students may comprehend every single word in the listening content yet fail to capture its overall essence due to insufficient relevant background knowledge. Thus, it is imperative for English teachers in China to expand students' background knowledge, which is often tested in listening assessments, in a planned way. For instance, after students have listened to the story of Louis Armstrong, the teacher could assign the following homework: "Aside from Louis Armstrong, please research and write a brief introduction for at least three internationally acclaimed musicians, composers, and artists, such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Frederic Chopin, Elvis Presley, Vincent van Gogh, and Pablo Picasso, detailing their nationalities, principal accomplishments, and notable works." This assignment enables students to acquaint themselves with more distinguished cultural figures, thereby broadening their schemata. More critically, teachers should emphasize the essential function of background knowledge in enhancing listening comprehension, encouraging students to actively expand and augment their background knowledge routinely.

**ii. Maintaining a Listening Diary**

Emphasizing in-class time alone is insufficient; students should also actively expand their schemata after class. Each student can set a plan for the new term, conduct effective autonomous learning, and document their learning progress. To support this autonomous learning journey, maintaining a listening diary can be an invaluable strategy. In their listening diary, students should document every listening activity they undertake. These activities can be diverse, ranging from listening to podcasts, watching movies or TV shows in English, listening to English songs, participating in English conversations, or using language learning apps, among others. Each entry should include the source of the content, its title, the date, and the duration of the activity. However, the diary should be more than just a logbook. It should also be a space for reflection and analysis. After each listening activity, students should detail their understanding, noting key points, new vocabulary, and notable language

structures they have encountered. By maintaining a listening diary, students can continuously enrich and expand the schemata in their minds.

### **iii. Utilizing Language Learning Apps**

Many students face difficulties with listening comprehension in English due to incorrect or inaccurate pronunciation. Therefore, it is crucial for students to actively develop accurate pronunciation (which belong to linguistic schemata) outside the classroom. Utilizing language learning apps can be an effective strategy for vocabulary memorization. By following the pronunciation guides in these apps, students can correct their mispronunciations, thus enhancing and expanding their linguistic schemata.

To sum up, the Schema Theory-Based Teaching Approach not only emphasizes fully activating the existing schemata in students' minds before listening but also stresses the importance of having students engage in pre-class previews to initially construct relevant schemata. During the class, through group discussions, teacher-led question checks, evaluations, summarizing, and brainstorming activities, the approach helps students further fully construct and activate the needed schemata before listening. Additionally, after listening activities, answer checking and reflection, activities such as role-playing, retelling, or summarizing the main points are utilized to consolidate the newly constructed schemata from the listening material. Moreover, post-class activities such as use homework, maintain listening diary and language learning apps are also employed to guide students in actively expanding their schemata after listening classes.

Throughout the entire process, from preliminary schema construction in the pre-class phrase, to complete schema construction and activation in the pre-listening stage, interactive listening in the while-listening stage, schema consolidation in the post-listening stage, and schema expansion in the after-class phrase, students' linguistic, content, and formal schemata are significantly enriched and expanded. This leads to an improvement in their listening comprehension skills. Moreover, the diverse and engaging activities in both the pre-listening and post-listening stages transform the traditional, monotonous listening classroom, increasing students' interest in learning. Below is the detailed conceptual framework of the Schema Theory-Based Teaching Approach.

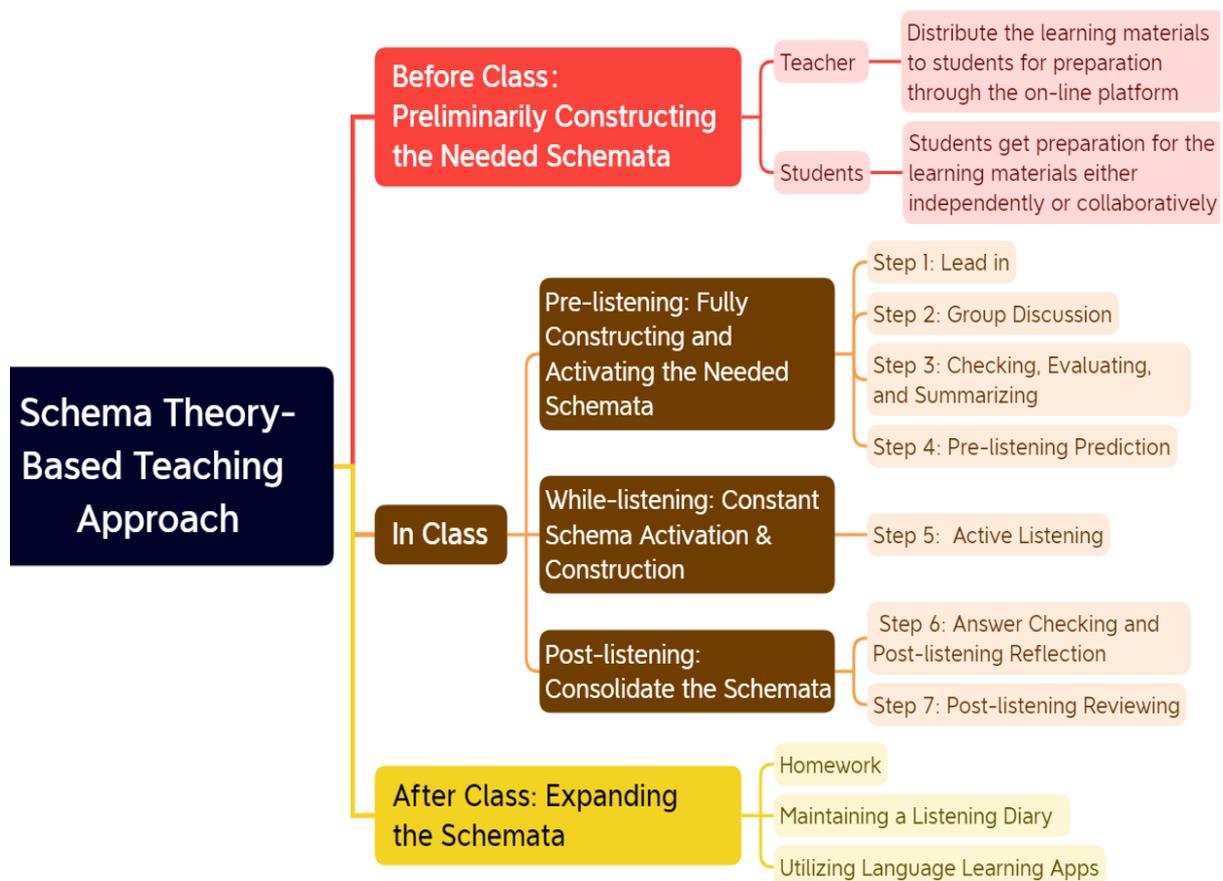


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of Schema Theory-Based Teaching Approach

## Conclusion

Based on the systematic literature review, this paper identifies the research gaps in previous studies, which necessitate the development of a new conceptual framework: the Schema Theory-Based Teaching Approach. By integrating schema theory into English listening instruction, this approach emphasizes the active construction, activation, consolidation, and expansion of students' mental schemata. Such a teaching approach not only aims to improve students' listening comprehension abilities but also seeks to foster a more engaging and stimulating learning environment, thereby increasing their motivation and interest in listening classes. The primary objective of this study is to contribute to the field of English listening instruction by filling the existing gaps in the literature and offering valuable insights into effective teaching strategies for listening instruction among Chinese undergraduates majoring in English. This study aims to move beyond outdated traditional teaching method to enhance Chinese English majors' listening comprehension abilities and interest in listening classes.

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