

# Reflection on Foreign Language Teaching With SPOC\*

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With the growth of application in the terminal on the Internet, the cyber teaching mode has been more and more available in the various teachings because the online education is not only highly efficient but also transforms the traditional foreign language teaching, where SPOC (small private online course) has played more and more important role. The essay is expected to deliver the reflection on foreign language teaching mode with SPOC and gives some advice for foreign language teaching.

*Keywords:* SPOC, foreign language teaching, teaching mode

## Introduction

It is well known that the cyber teaching mode has been more and more available in the various teachings both in China and abroad because the online education is not only highly efficient but also transforms the traditional foreign language teaching, where SPOC (small private online course) has played more and more important role and enjoyed more advantages than the teaching efficiency of MOOC (massive open online courses). This paper will discuss such issues as the development of the traditional foreign language teaching and MOOC in China, the development of foreign language teaching with SPOC in China, and the optimization of the foreign language teaching with SPOC. The essay is expected to deliver the reflection on foreign language teaching mode with SPOC and gives some advice for foreign language teaching.

## The Development of the Traditional Foreign Language Teaching and MOOC in China

Traditionally, the foreign language teaching job is carried within one class with the distribution of knowledge as the purpose. In such a traditional class, the teacher is the very guide of the whole teaching process since the teacher has been leading the lecture from the beginning to the end and then the one-way teaching style could not arouse the active learning of the students. Hence the teacher will not be working actively and the students will not be satisfied at the learning in the classroom nor being enthusiastic about the learning affairs. So, as the new trend, many college teachers are making every effort to develop the new teaching mode with MOOC to take the place of the traditional teaching mode where only the teacher, text book, and classroom are the focus for the students.

Over the foreign language teaching process governed by the university teachers, this is evident that the teachers work as so many roles as guide, manager, researcher, and so on in the traditional teaching process where everything is in the arrangement of the teachers including teaching step, teaching content, and the schedule of the teaching even (Bransford, 2002). So it has been a habitual conception for the foreign language

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teacher that one hour of teaching is the end of the teaching task which has almost ignored such important stage in the teaching process as the preview and collection of the learning materials, whose consequence is to weaken the role of the students in the teaching process. In this way there is a gap between the teachers and students which is not helpful to consider the students' suggestion and the students will lose the leading position in the process of teaching.

MOOC is an online open course on a large scale. But the problems of MOOC in the foreign language teaching in China are also open to us now. The first trouble is with the distribution of educational resource. Few of universities are able to establish MOOC and make it into effect and the number of the course in MOOC is small. On the contrary, it is only less than a few years since MOOC came into being in the world, but in Europe and America there are 277 universities and organizations setting MOOC as is much different from China that has 30 universities to set MOOC (HE & CAO, 2015). Moreover, in contrast to millions of subjects in MOOC in Europe and America, there are only hundreds of courses in MOOC in China. What caused such situation above is due to the internal development within MOOC. There should be more reasons or elements outside MOOC. First of all, the production of courses in MOOC is different from the opening class in the traditional views in that there should be much fund investment and post updating and maintenance. However, Chinese universities and organizations cannot afford to pay for such a great investment one hand and it indeed takes much innovation of system in university and courage of the managers of schools to transform the traditional teaching mode on the other hand.

### **The Development of the Foreign Language Teaching With SPOC in China**

SPOC is short for Small Private Online Course which is much similar to MOOC as an online course for which any learners can apply on the Internet and there are such features as the number of the users is small, the registration of the users of SPOC is completed only if they are university students, and the users not only can use the video frequency and exercise online, but also can enjoy supplementary learning online or offline (LUO & SUN, 2014). However, in contrast to MOOC, the advantage of SPOC is including the freedom of learning mode, the monitoring to users while in learning, the rate of attendance of the learners, and the validation of learners' identification. However, the disadvantage is what follows like whether the efficiency of the education is enough or not, that is to say, the teachers of SPOC should pay more time and energy to the teaching task than that in MOOC while the learners of the course in SPOC are a lot fewer than that in MOOC in number. But for this disadvantage, SPOC could help the teachers involve in the learning process of the users completely. For example, it helps the teachers correct the homework and promote the intercommunication and discussion among the students and even the teachers can help the learners with their subjects face to face.

SPOC is helpful for the foreign language teaching and it has been recognized that SPOC is more advantageous than MOOC in the way of operation mode, teaching form, teaching procedure, and teaching construction (XU & JIA, 2014). As for the operation mode, SPOC demands the small scale of less than 500 users and special access to the system for the users, which can simplify the management of learners, improve the interaction between the teachers and learners, inspire the learning motive of the students, and enhance the completion of the courses and efficiency of the study. In teaching form, SPOC is much dedicated to the composite teaching mode that helps mix the advancement of MOOC and face-to-face teaching together. In order to deal with different teaching objectives, teaching content, and features of learners, it is positive to get the content and technique of MOOC and face-to-face teaching together and transform the current class into the flipped classroom.

The shift of teaching mode must result in the consequential change both in teaching procedure and teaching construction. Therefore, SPOC is to transform MOOC and work aiming at certain group of learners in small scale. It has made use of such resources of MOOC as online evaluation system and communication system and achieved a new learning model getting the online study and traditional classroom teaching together.

Such hybrid learning model has supplied the application of MOOC with new ideas and methods. Hence, the new model of SPOC can put the advantage of face-to-face teaching and online learning together systematically and maximize the teaching result.

Flipped classroom is deemed as the most efficient means for such hybrid learning. What is the most worthwhile to mention is that SPOC helps most the flipped classroom as an excellent open educational resource because the features of SPOC like “small scale” and “specialization” are the beneficial conditions to start flipped classroom. In this way, SPOC is able to maximize the sharing of educational resources and enjoy the best teaching effect based on the platform of MOOC. This is why the teaching practice of flipped classroom based on SPOC is much necessary.

In 2012, Harvard University embarked on development of MOOC and founded its own online learning program of HarvardX hoping to better the teaching effect with online courses mixed into the traditional classroom teaching. And then some of the faculties in Harvard made a trial of SPOC including flipped classroom, asking the students to decide the time and place to watch video frequency, answering the questions in class, and supplying the learners with more rich learning experience.

For the first time, Berkeley of California University got SPOC into effect in the course of Cloud calculation and software (XU & JIA, 2014). In Spain, University of Carlos III of Madrid started the trial class of SPOC which lasted five weeks. In Netherlands, Leiden University began with the SPOC trial in the course of Islam in the West in 2014. In America, MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) set up with the trial of SPOC and flipped classroom. Some universities carried on with the hybrid teaching on campus and approved the credit the students got in the SPOC class and the effectiveness of teaching and the pass rate of the course can best account for the importance of mixing of SPOC and flipped classroom.

### **The Optimization of the Foreign Language Teaching With SPOC**

It is of much instruction to optimize the foreign language teaching with SPOC and it is achieved with the help of the double platforms, which refer to the platform of SPOC and that of flipped classroom.

Firstly over the designing of the basic data of the course, the basic data in designing of the course must ensure the expectation of the different learners applying for the given course. It is clear that the basic data should be made up of such various contents as the syllabus, the introduction of the learning objectives, the planning of the timetable, the accumulation of the basic knowledge, the standard and means of the assessment, the management of the credit and the distribution of the certificate. As for the designing of the syllabus and learning objective, they should be brief and definite and they must be planned based on the teaching activity of the teachers and what matters most lies in their pattern in designing which should in good match with the content the teacher will deal with.

Secondly over the designing of the learning content, there are five topics to transform study including the pattern of memory and knowledge, the solution to the problems and reasoning, the preliminary basis, metacognition and self-adjustment along with the cultural experience and participation in the community. As for the learning content, it is best to summarize in that the focus in SPOC should be the nuclear knowledge

while necessary instruction should be found in this process. But it is the most important in the flipped model class that the learners are able to get good experience of learning. The designing of the learning content is mainly concerned with the solution and research of the question, reflection on the knowledge in SPOC and cultural experience and even the cultivation of the emotion, helping the students form desirable habit in study, all of which are helpful to better the effect of the study (XU & JIA, 2014).

Finally in terms of the designing of the interaction in the teaching program, the module of interaction is of much importance in the designing of the flipped classroom based on the SPOC, in that it is a lot helpful in promoting the in-take and internalization, the development of the learner's disposition, and the ability of self-teaching of the learners. The interaction in the teaching contains such ways as the interaction in the forum of SPOC, the interaction based on the other means like the micro blog, QQ, the public number of WeChat, Wiki, and BBS, also it is including the interaction in the flipped classroom either between the teachers and the students or between the students. The teachers are able to supply the students with the different instructions that fit for the different students while guiding the interaction either between the students or between the students and the resource of the learning.

### Conclusion

Realistically speaking, due to the utilization of the cyber device, the growth and development of SPOC in the foreign language teaching is the unavoidable consequence of the traditional teaching mode and the growth of MOOC, which both suffer some shortages and disadvantages. Though MOOC has ever been much popular at a time, it meets many problems which cannot be solved completely. Hence a new replacement of MOOC, SPOC has come in time, as it improves the working efficiency of foreign language teaching.

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