

The Application of Production-oriented Approach in Oral English Teaching for Senior High School Students: Taking the Class of "Make a Speech on Adversity" as an Example

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Abstract

The Chinese education system has traditionally been textbook oriented and focuses on rote learning. Distinct drawbacks and issues from rote learning have affected Chinese students' oral English learning. Thus, there is a pedagogical shift to task-based or project-centered learning approaches in recent years, focusing on applied learning. Wen created a distinctive foreign language pedagogy known as the Production-Oriented Approach (POA). The past five years have seen research carried out on the effectiveness and applicability of POA on productive skills in university contexts. However, few applications were carried out on the on high school students. This study thus elaborates a sample oral teaching design of POA, attempting to apply POA in oral English classes at a senior high school to fully mobilizing students' subjective initiative in learning the English language by transforming the traditional input-driven teaching into output-driven teaching.

Keywords

Production-oriented Approach; Oral English Teaching; Senior High School Students.

1. Introduction

English teaching methods have recently undergone tremendous changes through which Chinese teaching philosophy is widely embraced[1]. Among them, Production-oriented Approach (POA), put forward by Professor Wen Qiufang and her team, is a language teaching theory with Chinese characteristics, aiming at addressing the "learning-using division" problem. However, most English teachers trapped in the current examination system mainly focused on the written examination to maximize students' English scores. This led to Chinese high school students achieving good results in reading and writing but the opposite for effective listening and speaking[2, 3]. There are still some problems in junior high school English speaking teaching in China. Firstly, the teaching objectives and results are inconsistent. Some scholars such as Zhang believe that for a long time in junior high schools in China, English has attached more importance to reading than listening, speaking and writing, and "deaf English" and "dumb English" still exist[3]. Therefore, communicative skills such as listening, speaking and writing must be taught. Secondly, the teaching contents are unreasonable. The English teaching contents of junior high schools should be turned to practicality. The repetition of English teaching between junior high schools and elementary schools influences the teaching effect. Therefore, the teaching content must be re-planned according to the teaching objectives. At the same time, the current English teaching in primary, middle schools and colleges must be regarded as an orderly whole. Thirdly, the teaching approaches are improper. Junior high school English in China tends to emphasize on knowledge imparting rather than communicative competence, which is not conducive to the cultivation of students' practical ability. Therefore, the training of practical language skills should be strengthened so that

students have the communicative competence to speak in English. The above three problems are exactly “why to teach”, “what to teach” and “how to teach” English in junior high schools.

Production-Oriented Approach (POA) is a language teaching approach which combines Chinese and Western philosophical ideas along with other instructional approaches. It aims to solve the problems resulted from learning-using separation and marginalization of teacher’s role, and advocates learning-using integration and teacher-led instruction. With the development of POA, some researches on oral English teaching have been conducted to test the feasibility to improve students’ oral performance in an experimental approach, Li compared the different results by using POA and PPP in college oral English teaching for non-English major college students, and found that the experimental group implemented with POA had better scores than the control group with PPP, and POA approach have improved the students’ fluency and complexity significantly[4]. However, the POA class and PPP class had almost the same result in terms of accuracy. Sun conducted an experiment of applying POA[5]. Some other researches focus on the instructional design of POA in oral English to improve the efficiency of the class theoretically[6]. However, these researches did not involve high school English teaching, we are still on the blind side when it comes to the effectiveness of applying POA in high school oral English teaching. In this sense, this study will apply the production-oriented method to high school English listening and speaking instruction by presenting a classroom teaching samples, which will be expounded from the three core teaching stages of driving, facilitating and evaluating, so as to improve students’ listening and speaking ability and enhance the effectiveness of high school English listening and speaking teaching.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Foundation and Teaching Principles of POA

The Production-oriented Approach originates from the output-driven hypothesis from Krashen's input hypothesis and Swain's output hypothesis[7,8]. Input hypothesis is one of the five hypotheses of SLA. By observing immersion teaching, Swain thought comprehensible input could be regarded as a necessity but not a sufficient condition for SLA. In this regard, Park also proposed that if learners want to acquire SLA conditions, they need to combine the comprehensible input language with the actual communication process[9]. Shintani emphasizes that teachers should combine comprehensible input with interactive output to form a complete communication process[10]. In international foreign language education, POA research scholars have made significant and critical observation locally and abroad. Previous Studies on POA Unlike the previous text-centered and input-based English instruction in China, the most distinctive feature of the POA is the “learning-using integration” principle, so the teaching design focuses on engaging students with the immediate use of the language items learned. The POA emphasizes the function of production in language teaching, and the teaching process of POA starts with productive activities and ends with language production, while the input serves as the enable to help students accomplish the productive activities. Different from the traditional language instruction of putting the production activity at the end of the unit, the POA instruction inverted the order with the aim of enabling the students to be fully aware of the difficulties they need to tackle in the productive process and motivating their learning interest and desire. The POA has developed gradually from “output-driven hypothesis” POA system was firstly elaborated in 2015 and revised twice in 2017 [11,12]. In the final version, the teaching principles of POA are “learning-centered”, “learning-using integration”, “cultural exchange”, and “key abilities”, and the teaching hypotheses include “output-driven”, “input-enabled”, “selective learning” and “assessing as learning”. The teaching procedures consist of three phases: motivating, enabling, and assessing. “Production-oriented approach” (POA) is based on the “output driven hypothesis,” which explains that output motivates learners more

than input and also improves their desire to learn a foreign language[13]. The output driven hypothesis is more suitable for social demands as it fosters productive skills such as speaking, writing, and translation. Output focuses both on the process of production and results of output. In early 2014, this hypothesis was revised and called the “output driven input facilitation hypothesis,” and later the production-oriented approach[13]. This method was developed to improve learner’s output such as speaking, writing, interpreting, and translating. POA is based on three principles: firstly, POA is learning-centred which means that instructors employ techniques to activate learning by engaging learners in activities. Secondly, once students have learned new linguistic elements or skills through input-based activities, this learning should be linked and integrated into speaking and writing activities. In other words, students read the text, and use it to complete the output task. The third principle is called the whole-person principle[14]. This principle involves humanistic objectives, namely developing learners’ critical thinking skills, intercultural competence, and autonomous learning. The teaching processes cover three core phases, namely, motivating, enabling, and assessing. [Figure 1](#) shows the framework.

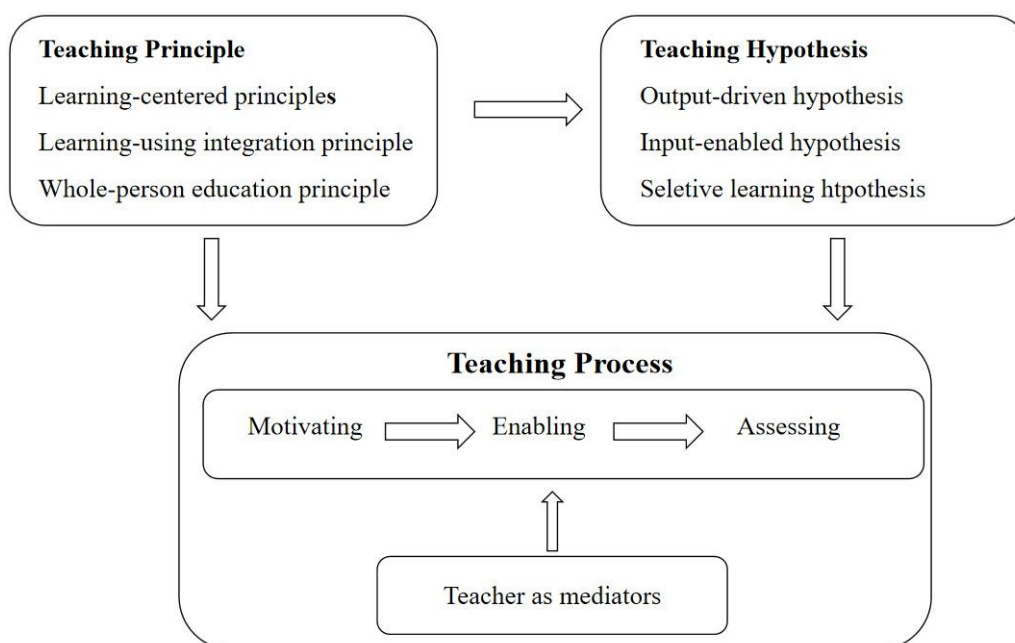


Figure 1. The System of POA Theory

2.2. POA in High School Oral English Teaching

POA pedagogical practice includes three stages: a) motivating learners, b) enabling learners c) assessing learners. In all three stages, teachers play the role of mediator to guide, design and scaffold. In the first stage, instructors should design communicative scenes including cognitively challenging topics to motivate students’ learning. Then, instructors get learners to complete the communicative activities. In this stage, learners become aware of their language capacity or the lack of, and are motivated to develop their language capacity. For instance, the instructor may design the following communicative tasks following the theme of food and beverages. ‘Imagine visiting a food festival in an international college overseas, and your international peers would like to know about the special dishes or Chinese cuisine in your country’. This task encourages learners to use their existing knowledge as well as actively engage with new chunks of knowledge to complete the task. Additionally, they would be familiar with Western and Chinese culture as they complete the task[15]. To complete the output task, learners need input, language, and discourse structures. In the second stage of the POA which is the enabling or facilitation phase, teachers should provide students with

necessary and supplementary input, content, and discourse to complete the output task. For instance, teachers prepared a video about Chinese cuisine and the Chinese New Year festival. It is worth mentioning that teachers should enable activities gradually starting from words, chunks, sentences, and then to a range of texts. Their enabling activities should include role-play, group work, monologue, debate, jokes, stories, and speech. In the POA approach, teachers should gradually reduce their level of scaffolding in the oral classroom. As for assessment, in POA, students are assessed from the motivation stage until the summative assessment stage. There are two types of assessments in POA, instant or formative assessment, and delayed or summative assessment. The former refers to teachers' assessment for selective learning, which helps teachers modify the teaching progress. The delayed assessment refers to assessing the completed tasks. These two types of comprehensive and detailed assessments aim to reflect students' presentation in speaking class and enhance students' learning. Teachers assess students in terms of participation in class, their progress, and their output product. Assessment covers students' critical thinking and use of English language particularly in grammar and collocations. The best methods of assessments are observation, interview, oral communicative presentation, and tests[9]. To date, several studies have confirmed that POA is an innovative transfer of English teaching theories and ideas in China, especially for the younger generation of language learners [16]. Schaller-Schwaneer believes that the generation of POA theory was another innovation in education and a new supplement to eradicate existing problems in oral skills development[17]. POA emphasizes that students can first realize the lack of existing language knowledge and skills through the output to acquire new, targeted language skills. For teacher training, Polio proposed that POA can promote teachers' preemployment training to a certain extent as it can help new teachers to quickly realize the problems that exist in teaching[2]. Zhang applied POA to college English classroom teaching and the feedback obtained from the students were excellent, with significant experimental results[18]. In a follow-up study, Zhang again applied the POA to college English writing class with findings revealing that the language points learned by students using the POA were utilized more frequently in real writing application[19]. To the best of our knowledge, most scholars mainly take college students as core participants in POA. No study has investigated the effect of POA on high school students at schools. Therefore, there is a gap in the application of POA theory in senior high school oral English teaching classes. This study focuses on high school students and tries to expand the POA theory's application and scope to include the Chinese high school students' oral skills development.

3. The Application of Production-oriented Approach

3.1. Content

The materials from Optional Compulsory High School English (2019 edition) is selected as an teaching example. Based on the basic process of "motivating - enabling- assessing", the author chooses the listening and speaking section of Unit 4 Adversity and Courage to elaborate on the procedure.

The listening material of this section is speech, focusing on the topic of adversity, belongs to the theme of "human and self - the right attitude towards life". It is in accordance with the the structure of "introduction of the theme - the point of view - examples of evidence". At the beginning of the speech, two questions are posed to provoke the audience to think and lead to the theme. And then explain common measures to cope with adversity. The structure of the listening materials is is suitable for the language level of the students in the senior two. In order to extend the classroom teaching content and expand the students' knowledge, the author adds video materials with the same theme as supplementary materials. The video emphasizes the positive effects of adversity by introducing the famous saying: "Smooth seas do not make skillful

sailors". Through exploring the theme of adversity, the audio-visual materials in and out of class encourage students to face adversity in life with optimism and perseverance. The following part illustrates the whole teaching procedures to explain how the teacher applied the POA to conduct the oral English class.

3.2. Teaching Procedures

3.2.1. Motivating Stage

We may find it peculiar that in POA motivating is the first phase of the teaching procedures, which makes it different from other approaches. There are three steps in motivating students during a POA design. First, teacher provides a real-life scenario for the students to communicate. The POA assumes that if students realize their weaknesses, they would like to learn more (Wen, 2016). The scenario should create a communicative challenge for the students, then they are instructed to try out the designated productive tasks appropriately, so they may realize what they lack of, then try to make it up. At last, the teacher has to explain what students are expected to gain at the end of the teaching.

Step 1: Teachers present real oral communication scenes, through which the topics are close to students' study and life. The purpose of this lesson emphasizes the communicative function to the audience.

Step 2: Teacher designs listening and speaking communicative activities in line with students' language level, and encourage student to complete the communicative activities to stimulate their learning motivation and output willingness.

Step 3: The teacher explains the listening and speaking output task and asks the students to clarify the type and content of the task.

The teacher first presents the following communication scenes: The foreign teacher of our school is aware that some students on campus have recently encountered difficulties in life, such as failing examinations, strained interpersonal relationships, and stagnant academic performance, and they are not in good mood because of their inability to cope with them effectively, so they are asked to give a speech on the theme of adversity in the oral English class next week. Then teacher ask some questions, including "What is adversity?" "How do you deal with adversity?" ", "What's a positive effect of adversity?. Students will find it difficult to answer those questions due to the limited language knowledge. In this sense, an information gap would appear among them, so the students would be intrigued to learn what is necessary to describe their experience. Finally, the teacher explained the output task: complete a three-minute English speech on the theme of adversity, including the following three points: (1) introduce the definition of adversity; (2) propose measures to cope with adversity;(3) Explain the positive effects of adversity. In this stage, students can be aware of their own shortcomings in both content and language in oral output, so as to actively carry out input learning to make up for the knowledge gap and efficiently complete the task of listening and speaking output. Students clearly define the listening and speaking output task, which helps to selectively focus on the listening input materials to complete the key content required for the output task in the enabling part. This can improve their learning efficiency.

3.2.2. Enabling Stage

Enabling is the second phase of implementing POA in the speaking class, which requires the teacher to give instructions step by step. For this sample teaching, the researcher designed three steps to enable the students. Since they are high school students who know little about ways to autonomous learning, the teacher invites them to set an evaluation standard together. With better understanding about how to finish the task and what needed to be paid attention to, the students can learn whatever they need selectively from the materials provided by the

teacher. As the class proceeded, the teacher pulls back her scaffolding assistance gradually, in order for the students to form their own language.

Step1: Teacher divides the listening and speaking production task into three sub-production activities: content enabling, language enabling and structure enabling,. Then explains the steps and requirements of the sub-production activities.

Step2: According to the design of sub-production activities, teacher guides students to conduct series of meaningful activities, through which they can prepare the content, language and structure necessitated for the final speech.

Step3: Teacher presents real listening and speaking communication scenes, guiding students to apply the content, language and structure acquired through selective learning to sub-production activities, and check students' learning effectiveness.

3.2.2.1 Content Enabling

The teacher presents the discourse framework of the input materials in Table 1, and requires students to fill in the blanks while listening to obtain the core content of the input materials. Then, the teacher set up practical exercises and asked students to complete the task.

Table 1. The Content of the Listening Materials

Category	Content
Definition	Adversity is a <u>difficult or unlucky</u> situation or event, which we all experience throughout our lives.
Common ways	1. To <u>change the way</u> you look at things. (1) You can do this by <u>writing down</u> your problems in detail and putting them in order. (2) <u>Believe in yourself</u> , be <u>positive</u> and accept that having problems is part of life. (3) <u>Focus on the future</u> and what you can do better next time.
	2. To <u>take action</u> (1) You can <u>set realistic goals</u> which you can achieve in a short time. (2) Another ideas is to find someone who can <u>provide you support and guidance</u> to help you focus on your goals.
	3. To <u>develop healthy habits</u> (1) Eat well, <u>exercise regularly</u> and <u>get good quality sleep</u> , which will improve your <u>well-being</u> and <u>increase your confidence</u> . (2) Make sure you spend time with friends and family. (3) Remember to be grateful for all the good things in your life.

(1) Listen and fill in the blanks. The teacher provides the discourse framework of the listening materials and plays the listening materials twice. Students are required to fill in the blanks according to the listening materials.

Table 2. The Content of the Supplementary Video

Category	Content
Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.	1. It is through their <u>struggles against adversity</u> that they <u>arm themselves with skills</u> necessary to <u>ensure safety</u> . 2. The difficulties of life should make us <u>feel better</u> . 3. In the process of dealing with problems and difficulties, we can become more <u>experienced and skilled</u> in life. 4. Instead of <u>panicking or complaining in the face of adversity</u> , we should see adversity as a challenge and more importantly, as a <u>precious opportunity</u> to improve our abilities.

(2) Complete the form. The teacher plays the supplementary video materials. Students are required to watch the video twice and fill in Table 2 about the main content of the video materials.

(3) Oral practice. Teachers ask students to work in pairs and discuss with their peers about the definition of adversity, the coping measures of adversity and its positive effects. By providing scaffolding, the teacher guides the students to output the task in rounds. First, explaining the definition of adversity. Second, figuring out the measures to deal with adversity. Third, thinking about the positive role of adversity.

In this section, the task of filling in the blanks aims to make students recognize the definition of adversity and the proposed countermeasures to adversity, while the completion of the form points to the explanation of the positive effects of adversity. The teacher provides content information tables, guiding the students to understand the general idea of the discourse through listening and reading. Moreover, teacher uses forms to help students process input effectively, Improve output efficiency. On the one hand, the information table shows the information structure of input materials directly, which is convenient for students to store information; On the other hand, the information table organizes the output content points according to the hierarchy structure . On the basis of listening materials in class, teacher provides supplementary video materials to expand students' learning from textbooks, which can enrich teaching content and broaden exploration horizons.

3.2.2.2 Language Enabling

Correctness and appropriateness are the two key factors that the teacher mostly concerns in the enabling stage. Additionally, some “big” words, deserve more credit and slangs should be avoided in the speech. In this sense, teacher should explain the target language explicitly in the combination with the specific context, help students clarify the form and meaning of the target language by word-filling, single-choice exercises, theme paragraph expression and situational production tasks to help them consolidate the form-meaning match and promote the target language . What's more, teachers should allow students to practice the target language repeatedly in flexible and diverse exercises, strengthen the contributing effect, help language production, and realize the transformation of declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge, so as to improve the accuracy of students' oral output and cultivate students' language production ability.

(1) Fill in the blanks. Teacher presents the target language, including single words, short words, and sentence patterns, asking students to choose appropriate words or sentence structures to complete the following two sentences.

_____ adversity, we may panic or complain.
our struggles against challenge _____ arm ourselves with skills.

(2) Single choice. Teacher asks students to choose the right option based on their understanding of adversity.

Adversity refers to a(n) _____ event or situation.
A. easy B. difficult

(3) Topic paragraph expression. The teacher presents another set of words and asks students to use the words to make paragraphs about the positive effects of adversity, and talk about their understanding of "Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.

(4) Scenario output. The teacher asks the students to work in pair and use vocabulary and sentence patterns to play roles based on the given situation. Then students will verbally complete the two tasks of stating common measures to cope with adversity and talk about the positive effects of adversity. The roles were reversed to ensure that each student could complete both language practice tasks.

3.2.2.3 Structure Enabling

Teacher chooses appropriate discourse organization form, guiding students to deeply process input materials, identify discourse types, understand its components and functions of each part. Finally students are able to draw a table according to discourse structure.

Table 3. The Structure of the Speech

Instruction	Adversity(definition)			
Statement	Content		Positive effect	
Supporting details	To change the way you look at things+ examples	To take action+ examples	To develop healthy habits+ examples	The comprehension of “Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors”

Teacher presents listening text materials by asking "What type of text is the passage?", Guiding students to define the listening discourse as argumentative essay. Then according to the structural characteristics of essays, students are guided to summarize the structure of the keynote speech: introducing the theme, clarifying the point of view , giving examples to support. Finally, teachers asked students to draw a table (see Table 4) based on the discourse structure and the relevant content of adversity (definitions, coping measures and positive effects) . In line with the "whole person education" concept of the POA, group cooperation is fully applied, so that students learned from active participation and cooperation which were words, sentences and context.

3.3. Evaluation Section

There are two kinds of assessing in POA: instant assessment and delayed assessment. The difference between them lies in time. Instant assessment influence on their learning. And after the lesson, students are instructed to finish their homework, the content of which echoes with the requirements of transfer assignments. Delayed assessment will come into play.

Step 1: Teacher should firstly formulate a evaluation standards so that students can clearly evaluate the oral tasks and goals.

Step 2: Teacher randomly invites students to complete the listening and speaking output task in class and make instant evaluation. The evaluation involves the activities of sharing their advantages and representative disadvantages, and putting forward suggestions for improvement. Then, according to the evaluation standards, combined with the evaluation process demonstrated by teachers, students adopt self-evaluation and peer evaluation to complete the oral English output results.

Step 3: The teacher gives a summative evaluation, fully affirms the students' efforts and progress in the classroom. Besides, corrective teaching on the common language errors in the students' spoken language output is also necessary. Next, the teacher asked the students to conduct self-evaluation and peer evaluation according to the evaluation form and the evaluation process demonstrated by the teacher. During the process of student self-assessment and peer assessment, teacher walk around the classroom to participate in their sharing.

4. Conclusion

This study thus elaborates a sample oral teaching design of POA, attempting to apply POA in oral English classes at a senior high school to fully mobilizing students’ subjective initiative in learning the English language by transforming the traditional input-driven teaching into output-driven teaching. In the application of POA in oral English teaching, teachers should not only consider the completion of teaching and target tasks but also take care of students’ actual

acceptability and learning efficiency when choosing teaching models and teaching methods; only this way can they make full use of limiting time in class. Students have a desire for new knowledge, which is a unique step in the motivating phase of the teaching model. Students strongly hope to learn new knowledge to complete new communicative topics. In particular, students devote themselves to completing the tasks assigned by teachers and improving their output efficiency after realizing the gap between their own oral English level and output task standards. Last but not least, the entire teaching process complies with the laws of students' physical and mental development. Teaching activities not only reflect the gradual and orderly learning processes but also follow the order of students' learning process. From output task to teacher-student collaborative assessment, students can fully experience the joy and satisfaction of oral output, as well as establish the self-confidence of oral expression, which can decrease students' frustration in oral English learning.

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