

Challenges and Measures of Production-oriented Approach in Teaching

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Abstract—Nowadays, teachers of College English faced a challenge, such as compression of class time and increasing demand of students, especially in our school, Wuhan Donghu University. With only 48 class hour a semester, students should pass the College English Test Band 4 at the end of sophomore term. What's more, they should also master some practical skills of listening and speaking. Thus, it is urgent that teaching efficiency and teaching methods of College English should be improved. In order to carry out more effective teaching, this paper analyses the application and challenges of applying production-oriented approach in College English teaching in Wuhan Donghu University.

Keywords—challenges and measures; Output-driven Hypothesis; college English teaching

I. INTRODUCTION

Production-oriented Approach (POA) is a theoretical system of foreign language teaching for middle and advanced foreign language learners, which was proposed by Professor Wen Qiufang. Production-oriented Approach is based on Learning-centered Principle, Learning-using Integrated Principle and Whole-person Education Principle. It takes output-driven and input-enabled hypothesis as its core and teachers as its media, so that input learning and output application can be closely integrated and interact organically to form classroom teaching with high-quality learning. The theoretical system consists of three parts, namely, teaching concept, teaching hypothesis and teaching process. These three parts are interrelated, that is, teaching hypothesis and teaching process are decisive shadows of teaching concept. In other words, teaching philosophy determines the orientation and teaching of classroom teaching, learning objectives while teaching assumptions provide a theoretical basis for teaching processes. However, the realization of teaching idea and hypothesis is accomplished by teaching process. That is, the teaching process is the means and steps to realize the teaching objectives and hypotheses. Thus, in implementation of the theory, teachers should pay special attention to the teaching process.

Professor Wen Qiufang put forward the output-driven hypothesis on the reform of English teaching in 2008, and discussed it from the perspectives of psycholinguistics, the application of English on job market and foreign language

teaching. The output-driven hypothesis tries to solve the problems existing in the current English courses and promote the teaching reform of English majors. Through the reform, English majors can get efficient training in speaking, writing and translation skills as early as possible. At the same time, it can broaden their knowledge and cultivate their thinking ability, so the English majors will have an advantage in the future job market. In 2013, Professor Wen Qiufang discussed the feasibility of applying the output-driven hypothesis in College English teaching of non-English majors. Using the output-driven hypothesis, she expounded the teaching objectives, curriculum system, teaching process and teaching evaluation of College English curriculum. She points out the theoretical basis of the output-driven hypothesis, that is, Swain's output hypothesis. Swain's output hypothesis theory points out four functions of output: improving the fluency and automation of language; testing the hypothesis of language; enhancing the awareness of language; discovering the gap between learners' desire and ability; and cultivating the ability of reflection on metalanguage. In 2015, after several years of demonstration, Professor Wen Qiufang further perfected the "output-driven hypothesis" and made it clear that this teaching method was called "production-oriented approach", or POA, and constructed a complete teaching system.

Being different from the "student-centered" teaching method advocated at the end of last century and the beginning of this century, the production-oriented approach advocates that all activities in the classroom teaching should serve the occurrence of effective learning. It holds that the key to teaching is to achieve teaching objectives and promote the occurrence of effective learning, and to design every teaching task and teaching link. Sometimes, the focus is on what the students can learn through this task, not just on the students' speaking proficiency or activities in the process. It breaks the dull teacher-centered teaching method and inefficient classroom pattern and the development of this theory has gone through the following process. This paper mainly discusses the feasibility of implementing this theory in our school, Wuhan Donghu University, in College English course, on non-English majors.

II. THE ADVANTAGES OF INTRODUCING POA INTO COLLEGE ENGLISH CURRICULUM

A. *Implementing This Theory in the School Is Beneficial for the Current Adjustment of College English Curriculum*

In order to adapt to the situation and requirements of the National College English teaching reform, Wuhan Donghu University has reduced its English class hours since September 2014, from 64 to 48 class hours per semester. With 16 class hours shortened, the requirement for comprehensive training of students' listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities has increased instead of decreasing. However, because the teaching method has not changed significantly, English teaching still adopts the "text-centered approach" that is, "warming up the text before the class, learning a lesson in the class, and practicing after the class". The key point of college English teaching focuses on understanding the words, sentences and articles in the text. As a result, students have no strong interest in English learning, the efficiency of classroom teaching is low, and the problem of "separation of learning and application" is more prominent. Therefore, how to stimulate students' initiative and creativity in English learning and improve the teaching effect in a comprehensive way are the key problems to be solved urgently.

POA teaching uses output to drive input. Under the guidance of this framework, College English curriculum can be effectively adjusted to alleviate the pressure brought by the reduction of class hours. College foreign language courses are mainly intensive reading, supplemented by fast reading and listening and speaking. The author believes that the course of listening, speaking and fast reading can be integrated into the POA curriculum system after the class hours are compressed, which is convenient for the arrangement of teaching on the one hand, and also helps students integrate the learning tasks of this course. Both intensive reading, fast reading or listening practice are all language input and language skills training, so we can consider incorporating POA curriculum process.

B. *Students Have the Ability to Complete the Output Task*

Professor Wen Qiufang, the designer of POA teaching system, pointed out that POA is mainly aimed at English teaching for students whose English proficiency has reached the intermediate and advanced level, and it is not suitable for beginners or low-level learners. According to the author's analysis, POA mainly considers that students who can't reach this level are difficult to carry out productive activities of language due to insufficient accumulation of language knowledge and skills, and the design of output tasks is limited. Therefore, the requirement of language output should be postponed and the input of language knowledge should be emphasized first. It was believed that those adult students equipped with certain English foundation should be suitable for the POA framework of English teaching. Although most of the students in ordinary colleges and universities have not yet reached the intermediate and advanced level of English, they have also experienced years of English learning from elementary school, middle school to

senior high school. They have mastered basic vocabulary, main grammar rules and common sentence patterns. While learning more linguistic knowledge, they need to produce activities driven by the revitalization of the knowledge learned, moreover practice and consolidate existing and new language knowledge. I think in our school, most students majoring liberal arts are capable of finishing the task.

The fulfillment of the productive tasks required by production-oriented approach requires the object of completion equipped with mature psychological cognitive ability, the ability to analyze, summarize and summarize problems, the ability to learn experience and test knowledge. In addition, the object of completion also needs life experience and social awareness as well. All these abilities are available to students in first and second year in our school. Thus, teachers should input simple and easy materials and drive their output activities to complete the task successfully and give right evaluation after it was finished and students' English proficiency can be improved in accordance with their level.

C. *Students in Our School Need Some Practical Communication Skills*

POA teaching concept can stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning English, mobilize students' learning enthusiasm, and increase students' language practice opportunities. Since the end of last century, intensive reading has been the main course in College English teaching. Students read, listen and learn under the guidance of the teachers, while the teachers explain the background knowledge, grammar points, vocabulary and the main idea of the text. Students consolidate the knowledge learned in the class by doing word-building exercises, blank-filling exercises, objective selection exercises and translation, supplemented by certain listening exercises. The teaching effect is tested by the ordinary small test, stage test, final examination and CET-4 and CET-6. They are lack of practice English and can't communicate effectively with what they learn. Students do not experience the pleasure of communicating in English and can't make full use of English. They are passive and lack of interest in learning. However, according to College English Teaching Requirements, College English teaching should be able to promote the formation of students' individualized learning methods and the development of students' autonomous learning ability. Thus, in the process of imparting language knowledge and skills, teachers should pay attention to the cultivation of language practical application ability and autonomous learning ability of students. Through the guidance of learning strategies, students can gradually improve the autonomous learning ability.

In traditional teaching practice, teachers are the leaders of the class, input several listening and speaking materials and students accept the materials passively and they are lack for desire for learning and curiosity of learning English. The serious imbalance between the accumulation of college students' English language and the practical application ability is a common phenomenon. The proportion of "teaching" and "learning" far exceeds that of "using", and the

serious shortage of "using" just shows the lack of practical teaching. In the process of foreign language learning, students do not have much real successful experience in foreign language learning besides coping with exams. Therefore, breaking through the traditional classroom model which lacks practice and using output-driven language input to achieve higher quality language output is in line with the needs of College English curriculum, and students' learning enthusiasm as well.

Therefore, production-oriented approach is very suitable for the current adjustment of College English curriculum and the increasing demand on students' English proficiency. Such teaching concepts are not only conducive to the cultivation of language competence, but also conducive to the improvement of innovative ability. On how to implement the course, teachers can consult the basic process of output-driven teaching designed by Professor Wen Qiufang.

III. CHALLENGES AND MEASURES OF USING OUTPUT-ORIENTED APPROACH IN COLLEGE ENGLISH COURSES

A. While Implementing the Production-oriented Approach, Teachers and Students Are Faced with Many Challenges

Production-oriented teaching completely breaks through the traditional teaching method which mainly relies on textbooks and relies on inputting materials. Production-oriented approach, which regards output as the driving force and teaching objective, pays attention to the occurrence of effective learning. Compared with the traditional teaching methods, teachers are the intermediaries instead of the dominant position in the whole teaching process. Teachers' task is to promote the occurrence of learning and test the learning effect. Therefore, teaching is more difficult under the guidance of production-oriented approach. It is a huge challenge for teachers' language proficiency and management ability and the ability to regulate. First of all, teachers should break through the inherent habitual teaching mode and turn self-intoxicated lectures into assistant teaching which can be adjusted at any time with the progress of the course and the individual requirements of students. In teaching, teachers should constantly innovate, constantly develop and excavate new and appropriate language output tasks, search for input materials, and improve the ability of comment and guidance.

In this process, teachers can give full play to the role of the teacher team. Several teachers can form a team and can redesign the teaching task. Under the guidance of the production-oriented teaching method, teachers can take full advantage of the teaching materials being used and can design the actual tasks, and decompose the tasks, and give them to the students before each class. With clear goals and motivation, students begin to learn, using tasks to be completed to drive input in listening and reading. In this process, students will pay attention to useful sentence structures, vocabulary and phrases, as well as opinions and facts in the article. Teachers complete various designing tasks in the teaching process. In addition to the use of textbooks, teachers can also assign useful or interesting

topics for students through the network and other resources, and design task according to this teaching method.

Students may also face many challenges. They should have the ability to arrange the time to complete tasks reasonably; what's more, they need team cooperation, information screening and organization, and expression ability. On the one hand, this teaching method can urge students to actively input language, better grasp language knowledge, and at the same time, it can also check and review the knowledge learned, improve the ability of expression and speculation. In the future career, students themselves should communicate with the other side effectively through English and use the language to persuade the other side. In school, when completing the task, they should not only comprehend the materials, but also need to be able to clearly and systematically tell the information they get. Thus, it is only through continuous practice to reach such level in foreign language. That cannot be satisfied by the traditional teaching method. Therefore, these challenges are meaningful and worthwhile.

B. Measures on Implementation of Production-oriented Approach

As for the advantages of applying the theory in our school, we should implement the theory on the College English classes. Listening, speaking reading and writing ability are required in the various examinations in schools and communicative ability is required in the students' future career. To satisfy those demands, teachers should design the appropriate task to train their abilities. In the teaching process, these four abilities are correlated with each other, so teachers should firstly pay attention to speaking, and then reading. First and foremost, the ability of reading can be cultivated by listening and speaking, so teachers can use the topic of the text and choose topics related to texts to build a bridge from speaking to reading. Teachers can also make use of the situation in the text and select information that is both text-related and potentially communicative. Moreover, the ability of writing can be cultivated by reading, so teachers can inspire students to think and write. The topic of the text can be used as the supporting materials for writing, such as viewpoints, facts and attitudes in the text. The type of text can be used as a model text of a certain style, as an important material for imitation exercises, such as verbs, adjectives in narrative texts, logic in argumentative style.

IV. CONCLUSION

Production-oriented approach is an attempt to construct a theory of foreign language teaching with Chinese characteristics in China, which has certain implications and enlightenment significance for foreign language teaching. Wuhan Donghu University, as an application-oriented undergraduate college, can implement production-oriented approach in College English teaching. It mainly solves the following problems: firstly, students can comprehend the text through finishing the task assigned by the teachers; secondly, students' enthusiasm of learning English can be increased by this teaching method; lastly, students' English proficiency can be improved after application of the theory.

In future career, output ability is the ability students really need to go to the workplace from the point of view of personnel training, which is consistent with the purpose of such application-oriented undergraduate colleges and universities as Wuhan Donghu University. However, this paper only elaborates on the application of the production-oriented method from the theoretical level, while it has not yet been fully applied to teaching practice. So such problems as, whether the output mode can really improve students' output ability compared with the traditional mode of reading class, how can teachers evaluate output more effectively, how to ensure the quality of output and so on, deserve the further consideration in the follow-up study.

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