

Teaching of English Writing Based on Production-Oriented Approach

Lun Wang, Jingyi Sun

Jingdezhen Ceramic University, Jingdezhen, 333403, China

Keywords: Production-oriented approach, Writing, Teaching

Abstract: Wen Qiufang's Production-Oriented Approach is a linguistic theory emphasizing the students' output practice. Writing is a task that requires the students to output what they have learned and produce a composition; therefore, Production-Oriented Approach is very appropriate to be applied in writing teaching. With drive of the writing production task, the students' all-around motivations for learning can be aroused, and they are bound to produce satisfactory writings.

1. Introduction

Based on Canadian linguist Swain's theory of "Output Hypothesis", Professor Wen Qiufang from Beijing Foreign Studies University established Production-Oriented Approach. In order to convert the conventional means of English teaching, which emphasizes too much on language input, Wen and her team have experimented on English teaching oriented toward language output (Wen, 2008). Wen has found that the conventional teacher-centered teaching mode makes the students deficient in practical language usage, thus the students are especially lack the capability of speaking, writing, and translating. In order to develop the students' all-around competence of a foreign language, the teacher should pay more attention to the students' ability of language output. At first, Wen named her theory as Output-Driven Hypothesis, but this hypothesis did not define the role of language input, and the teacher cannot decide the amount of language input in class; therefore, Wen changed her theory into "Output-Driven and Input-Facilitated Hypothesis"(Wen, 2014). In 2015, Wen finally decided her theory as Production-Oriented Approach, and she made several revisions to her approach for the following years. By now, the Production-Oriented Approach has been ripe and has been applied in foreign-language teaching in many colleges.

2. Application of Production-Oriented Approach in English Teaching

Language acquisition is not a tough task for most students, but it needs amounts of practice. If the teacher focuses on language input only, the students can only practice listening and reading, and their learning interest will not be stimulated. With the requirement for language output (i.e. language production), the students will practice their speaking, writing, and translating. So their all-around linguistic abilities are practiced.

As to applying Production-Oriented Approach for English teaching, the teacher should first assign a certain production task for the students, and the production task must be a little difficult for

the students to accomplish. On the one hand, the students can regard the production task as the learning target, and endeavor to achieve the target. On the other hand, if the teacher gives the students a production task to do, the students' learning interest can be aroused. It is much better than the "duck-stuffing" input of the language. Then is the time for the students to accomplish the production task. Before the students set out doing the task, if it is necessary, the teacher can input some related information or linguistic knowledge to facilitate the students to finish the task. After the students have completed the task, they will find their deficiency in such aspects as vocabulary, grammar, sentence pattern, discourse structure, stylistic knowledge, etc. The students will then be very careful for these deficiencies, and their learning efficiency will be significantly enhanced accordingly. Next is the time for the teacher to input some knowledge to help the students to overcome their deficiencies. Finally, the teacher and the students together evaluate the production task, to help the students to make further progress. After the whole language output and input process, the teacher can ask the students to do the same production task again, to drive the students to produce a better production, to make them strengthen what they have learned, and to add to their learning enthusiasm.

3. Teaching of English Writing Based on Production-Oriented Approach

English writing is normally regarded as the toughest task for many students, because in the traditional way of English teaching, language output like writing is not frequently practiced. With Production-Oriented Approach applied in English writing teaching, the impossible writing task for many students may change into a possible one.

This paper analyzes the application of Production-Oriented Approach to the teaching of English writing to verify the promoting effect of the theory. The research content is divided into four aspects: production-oriented preparation, production process, production evaluation, reproduction practice. In the production preparation stage, the teacher provides corresponding language materials and relevant knowledge to help with the output. During and after the production, the teacher can give the students objective and targeted evaluation, so that students can clarify their shortcomings and improve their writing quality and writing output efficiency. Finally, the teacher asks the students to write again for the same production task, to make them realize their progress and enhance their writing confidence and enthusiasm.

3.1 Production-Oriented Preparation

This process is conducted by both the teacher and the students. It is a learning process accomplished by the collaboration work of the teacher and the students.

3.1.1 Devising the Production Task

The teacher, according to the unit learning objective, devises a production task for the students. The task should be a little tougher than the former one, in order to make the students achieve further progress. The production task should conform to the learning objective, should be interesting for the students, and should be close to their daily life or future job, so as to arouse the learning interest or motivation of the students'. For example, the teacher can ask the students to write a composition about campus life, about a campus fashion, about the opinion of a tide, about a popular star, about a kind of future life style, about a kind of interpersonal relationship, about the comment of a social phenomenon, etc. Driven by these interesting topics, the students will have many words to write. But the teacher should set the designated words and time for the composition, and ask the students to use as many multi-syllable words and sentence patterns as possible.

3.1.2 Input Before the Production Task

While applying Production-Oriented Approach in English writing teaching, the teacher should act as the guide for the students. The teacher should assign the production task to the students before the class, to make them prepare for the unit study. The preparation includes the background information of the task, the grammar, the language points, the discourse structure, the stylistic feature, etc. At the beginning of the class, the teacher can let the students make presentations to let them have an overall knowledge of the production task.

If it is needed, before the students set about the production task, the teacher can input some crucial information to facilitate the completion of the production task. The input information should be both inspiring and interesting. For example, under the context of Chinese government advocating the strategy of “Chinese Culture Going Global”, the teacher can assign such a writing task as “The Influence of Chinese Ceramics”. Because most students are not familiar with ceramics, the teacher should impart some ceramic knowledge to the students, such as ceramic types, ceramic drawing, ceramic history, ceramic technology, ceramic kilns, etc. After the students have acquired some knowledge of ceramics, they can focus on one aspect to write about the influence of Chinese ceramics. The information input before doing the production task is significant for the students and it is a process for the students to accumulate materials and ideas for the writing, and then it may make the writing task less tough for them to complete.

3.2 Production Process

In this process, the students are asked to accomplish the production task according to their present English writing level and their respective understanding of the production task. After the production has been accomplished, the teacher should input some related information as for their deficiencies of the production.

3.2.1 Production Completion

After the production task has been assigned and the input information has been acquired, the students can begin with the production process. This process is accomplished mainly by the students themselves, to let the students aware of their deficiencies in writing. The students may vary in their proficiency in writing, but the teacher must ensure that all the students should complete the production task. After the production task accomplished, if there is time, the teacher can hold a short-time peer comparison, by asking the students to look at their peers’ writings to find the gap among each other. Only by viewing at their respective productions can the students realize their respective writing levels. Then they will wake up to their shortcomings and have the spur to strive on.

3.2.2 Input after the Production Task

After the students have completed the writing production task, it is the teacher who should undertake the role of enhancing the students’ writing capability. The teacher should first investigate the students’ productions, and then find their writing deficiencies, such as grammar, background knowledge, sentence pattern, sentence variety, discourse structure, logic, style, etc. Towards these deficiencies, the teacher should input the related knowledge to make the students enhance their overall writing abilities.

3.3 Production Evaluation

Evaluation plays an important part in education. There are normally two kinds of evaluations for a course: the formative evaluation and the summative evaluation. In terms of a single production task, the teacher can conduct immediate evaluation and delay evaluation.

3.3.1 Immediate Evaluation

Immediate evaluation means that the teacher makes evaluation while the students are doing the production task. In the class, the teacher can conveniently find the deficiencies of the students' and when the teacher finds the inappropriate point in a student's writing, he can immediately tell the student to correct it, and this is very efficient for the student to complete the production task as required. However, the immediate evaluation should be carried out for the students' significant deficiencies such as the mistaken theme, the inappropriate structure or logic, the wrong style etc. not for the insignificant deficiencies such as spelling mistakes, false tenses, wrong prepositions etc., because the flow of writing should not be disturbed by the insignificant evaluations.

3.3.2 Delay Evaluation

Delay evaluation means that the teacher and the students together make evaluation after the students have finished the production task. The teacher can arrange peer evaluation to make the students aware of the strengths of other students' and the weaknesses of their own. From the angle of teaching, the teacher's evaluation can be more inspiring than the peer evaluation, as the teacher is normally more experienced and qualified than the students. The teacher should make the evaluation serve as the spur for students' promotion in writing and he should provide insights for the students' later writing.

3.4 Reproduction Practice

After all the three above processes have been carried out, it is necessary for the teacher to ask the students to reproduce the same production. As the students have realized their deficiencies and have received the related language input and have made evaluations for their former production, they are bound to produce a better production for the second time. So reproduction practice can enhance their overall writing capability and with the better production, the students' learning interest and self-confidence can both be greatly elevated.

4. Conclusion

Professor Wen Qiufang's Production-Oriented Approach regards language production as the teaching objective and all the following teaching process is oriented towards the production practice. As compositions are the production of the students', Production-Oriented Approach is especially applicable in the teaching of writing. With the four procedures of production-oriented preparation, production process, production evaluation, and reproduction practice, the students can make their productions as perfect as possible. Not only have the students acquired knowledge based on Production-Oriented Approach, but their interest in writing has also been increased. As a result, the teaching efficiency is enhanced and the students' language proficiency is promoted.

Acknowledgement

This essay is funded by the Education and Teaching Reform Project of Jingdezhen Ceramic University, NO: TDJG-19-Y51.

References

- [1] Anderson J. Acquisition of cognitive skill[J]. *Psychological Review*, 1982, (89): 369-406.
- [2] Brown, H. D. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*[M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2001.
- [3] Hanaoka O. Output, noticing, and learning: an investigation into the role of spontaneous attention to form in a four-stage writing task[J]. *Language Teaching Research*, 2007, (11): 459-479.
- [4] Harmer, J. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*[M]. New York: Longman, 1988.
- [5] Izumi S. Comprehension and production processes in second language learning: In search of the psycholinguistic rationale of the output hypothesis[J]. *Applied Linguistics*, 2003, (24): 168-196.
- [6] Izumi S. Output, input enhancement, and the noticing hypothesis[J]. *Studies of Second Language Acquisition*, 2002, (24): 541-577.
- [7] Krashen. S. D. *The Input Hypothesis: Issue and Implications*[M]. London: Longman, 1985.
- [8] Levelt W. *Speaking: From Intention to Articulation*[M]. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989.
- [9] Li X. Y. & Cui Y. H. On the strategy of strengthening the speculative ability of college English writing through “Production-Oriented Approach”[J]. *Journal of Baicheng Normal University*, 2019, (7): 80-84.
- [10] Scovel T. *Psycholinguistics*[M]. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- [11] Swain M. Communicative competence: some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development[A]. In G. S. & Madden C. (eds). *Input in Second Language Acquisition*[C]. Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1985: 235-253.
- [12] Swain M. Three functions of output in second language learning[A]. In G. C. & Seidlhofer B. (eds). *Principles and Practice in Applied Linguistics: Studies in Honour of H G Widdowson*[C]. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995: 125-144.
- [13] Wen Q. F. “Output-driven and input-facilitated hypothesis”: an attempt to construct the theory of college foreign language teaching[J]. *Foreign Language Education in China*, 2014, (2): 3-12.
- [14] Wen Q. F. Chinese characteristics of “Production-Oriented Approach”[J]. *Modern Foreign Languages*, 2017, (3): 348-358, 438.
- [15] Wen Q. F. Constructing the theoretical system of “Production-Oriented Approach”[J]. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 2015, (4): 547-558, 640.
- [16] Wen Q. F. Output driven hypothesis and English-major curriculum reform[J]. *Foreign Language World*, 2008, (2):2-9.
- [17] Xu Q. *Research on application of “Production-Oriented Approach” in writing teaching for English majors*[D]. Changchun Normal University, 2020.
- [18] Xue L. R. & Bao H. C. Research on English writing teaching mode based on “Production-Oriented Approach”[J]. *Journal of Kaifeng Institute of Education*, 2017, (2):81-82.
- [19] Zhang L. L. *The effect of “Production-Oriented Approach” on non-English majors’ English writing*[D]. Shanxi Normal University, 2018.
- [20] Zhang X. X. & Gao Y. A study on the application of “Production-Oriented Approach” in college English writing teaching[J]. *Journal of Hunan Industry Polytechnic*, 2019, (4): 79-83.
- [21] Zhang Y. Y. A practical study of “Production-Oriented Approach” in college English writing teaching[J]. *Journal of Jilin Business and Technology College*, 2020, (6): 123-125.