Application of POA in English Listening and Speaking Instruction: A Case Study

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Abstract: This paper explores the application of the Production-Oriented Approach (POA) in the teaching of Viewing listening and speaking courses at undergraduate level. Traditional English teaching methods often lack interactivity, diversity in resources, and timely feedback. To address these shortcomings, this study emphasizes the need for innovative teaching models that bridge the gap between language knowledge and practical application. By implementing the POA framework, which integrates Motivating, Enabling, and Assessing, this study illustrates a case from *New College English* to demonstrate how POA enhances student engagement and language proficiency. The study highlights how authentic tasks, interactive exercises, and formative assessments contribute to effective language skill internalization and output. The findings suggest that adopting POA in English listening and speaking courses significantly improves students' practical language abilities, making it an essential approach for meeting the demands of higher education in a global context.

1. Research Background

In 2017, the Ministry of Education released the *College English Teaching Guidelines*, explicitly stating: "English, as the most widely used language globally, is an essential tool for international communication and for the exchange of science, technology, and culture. [1]" In response to the *New Liberal Arts* initiative, the Ministry of Education has set forth innovative requirements for the college English teaching, particularly in application-oriented undergraduate institutions. Traditional college English teaching primarily focuses on developing fundamental language skills and foreign language application abilities, covering aspects such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation. However, with the accelerated pace of globalization, this singular approach no longer meets the demands for high-quality foreign language professionals in the new era. Therefore, there is a pressing need to shift from the traditional "teacher-centered" model to a comprehensive and practical teaching model that emphasizes the full learning cycle—transitioning from "teacher-centered" to "student-centered," and ultimately to "application-centered."

The Production-Oriented Approach (POA), as an innovative teaching theory and practice framework [2], effectively guides the reforms of teaching models and promotes updates and improvements in teaching practices. According to Professor Wen Qiufang's "Learning-Using Integration" concept, in listening and speaking courses, "learning" refers to "listening," which is input-based learning, and "using" refers to "speaking," which is output-based learning. This paper

constructs a new teaching model guided by POA, demonstrating how it enhances learning outcomes and skill development through a case study.

2. Current Issues in English Listening and Speaking Teaching

2.1. Lack of Interaction in Teaching Methods

In traditional English listening and speaking courses, most instructors adopt a teacher-centered teaching approach. While this method allows for systematic transmission of language knowledge, it often lacks interaction and practical opportunities, making it challenging to effectively stimulate students' active learning and practical application skills. The focus tends to be on language theory and exercises, neglecting interactive activities like speaking practice, role-playing, and situational simulations. The lack of sufficient interactive practice and situational simulation. This lack of interactivity hinders students' proficiency in real-world communication, underscoring the need for more interactive teaching methods.

These limitations highlight the need for more interactive and practice-oriented teaching methods to enhance students' practical language application abilities and communication proficiency. Larsen-Freeman (2018) points out that many teaching methods remain entrenched in traditional models, lacking innovation and change, which makes language teaching struggle to meet the demands of modern education. Innovative teaching methods, such as task-based instruction and project-driven learning, can more effectively promote the enhancement of students' language abilities [3].

2.2. Limited Diversity in Textbooks and Teaching Resources

Current textbooks often fail to reflect the latest language usage and real-world application scenarios, limiting students' exposure to authentic language contexts. Furthermore, some courses may rely heavily on written textbooks, while lacking a rich array of audiovisual materials, interactive tools, and real-world application examples. This heavy reliance on written materials, with insufficient audiovisual content, affects the richness of the learning experience and hampers students' practical language skills. The shortage of authentic contextual materials may limit students' adaptability to actual language environments.

2.3. Delayed Feedback in Teaching Assessment

Traditional assessment methods are generally limited and heavily reliant on final exams, classroom quizzes, or standardized tests. This singular assessment approach may not fully capture students' abilities and progress in real-world language use. For example, traditional written tests often fail to effectively evaluate students' oral expression abilities and actual communication skills. Kane and Kesselman emphasize the necessity of diversifying assessment methods in language teaching, arguing that a single assessment approach cannot adequately reflect students' abilities in practical application. This narrow approach often overlooks oral expression and communication skills, highlighting the need for more comprehensive assessment methods that include oral exams and project-based evaluations [4].

3. Theoretical System of POA

The Production-Oriented Approach (POA) is a foreign language teaching theory with distinctive Chinese characteristics, proposed by Professor Wen Qiufang and her team at Beijing Foreign Studies University. The POA theoretical system comprises three core elements: (1) teaching principles, (2)

teaching hypotheses, and (3) a teacher-mediated procedure [5]. These three core elements collectively form a comprehensive teaching framework. POA addresses the issue of "separation between learning and application" in foreign language teaching, where there is often a significant gap between the language knowledge students acquire in the classroom and its practical application. It emphasizes enhancing students' language application abilities by organically integrating the three processes of "Motivating, Enabling, and Assessing" to meet the dual objectives of instrumental and humanistic education. Throughout the teaching process, the teacher's role in bridging language input and output is particularly crucial, aiming to facilitate effective learning outcomes. By creating authentic contexts and simulated scenarios, students are guided to be "output-driven," which boosts their intrinsic motivation and ignites their desire to learn. (Figure 1)
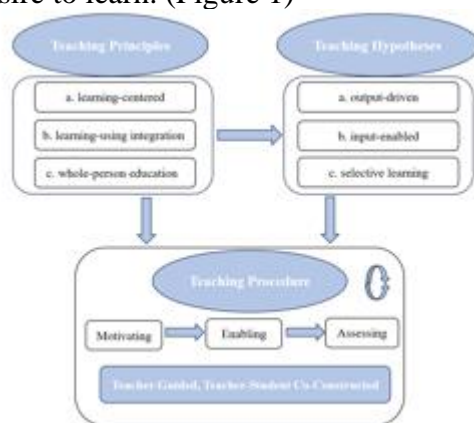

Figure 1: Theoretical System of POA

4. Application of POA in Teaching: A Case Study

4.1 Teaching Design

The case study focuses on Unit 5, *Describing Things and Places*, from the *New College English* textbook. The teaching objectives for this unit are as follows:

(1) Knowledge Objectives: To master core vocabulary and common expressions related to describing things and places; to learn and apply common sentence patterns and grammatical structures for describing things and locations; to understand the cultural norms of describing places and objects in different contexts.

(2) Skills Objectives: To improve students' ability to listen to and comprehend others' descriptions of things and places, with particular emphasis on identifying key information and details; to enhance fluency and coherence in oral expression through practice and interactive activities.

(3) Affective Objectives: To stimulate students' interest in learning descriptive expressions by engaging them with topics closely related to daily life, thereby enhancing their motivation to learn.

An analysis of first-year translation students at Xi'an Fanyi University reveals a need to improve their practical language skills, particularly in listening and speaking. It reveals that they generally have a weak foundation, particularly in English listening skills. While these students possess a certain level of vocabulary and grammar knowledge, their practical language application abilities, especially in listening comprehension and oral expression, still require significant improvement.

4.2 Practical Application of the Teaching Model

Nassaji discusses the application of POA theory in language learning, emphasizing the positive impact of process-oriented approaches on student motivation and language acquisition. He points out

that process-oriented teaching can significantly improve students' language abilities by providing more opportunities for interaction and practice [6].

Based on the POA framework, the teaching process design for the *New College English* Unit 5 Describing Things and Places is as follows:

4.2.1. Motivating

The teacher begins by introducing Xi'an's cultural and historical significance, focusing on its natural scenery and rich food culture, to create a task-driven scenario that sparks students' interest. The teacher can lead students on a "tour" of Xi'an's famous attractions, such as the Terra Cotta Warriors, and the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda, as well as introduce local delicacies, using video and images to spark interest.

Then teacher clearly defines the learning objectives for this task, which include mastering the use of descriptive language, such as adjectives, prepositions, and time adverbs, through describing Xi'an's natural scenery and food. Additionally, the task aims to cultivate students' awareness of cross-cultural communication, teaching them how to describe things vividly and accurately in different cultural contexts.

4.2.2. Enabling

Input Enrichment: The teacher provides various language input, including exercises from Scene 1 in the textbook. These materials cover core vocabulary, sentence patterns, and expressions for describing locations, as well as relevant cultural background knowledge, such as the differences in temperature and lifestyle between the northern and southern regions of China.

Interactive Practice: Students engage in group discussions and role-playing exercises, sharing their impressions of Xi'an's attractions and food, and attempting to describe them in simple English. The teacher may ask guiding questions such as, "Which place in Xi'an do you find most beautiful, and why?" or "What local food would you recommend to a foreign visitor, and how would you describe it?" During these discussions, the teacher intervenes when necessary, providing guidance to ensure students use appropriate descriptive language in real-life contexts. The teacher could set up a scenario simulation where students role-play hosting foreign tourists in Xi'an. In small groups, some students act as tourists asking questions, while others, as guides, describe a particular attraction or food in English. This interactive practice helps students apply language in real-life contexts, enhancing their expression and cultural communication skills. Chou emphasizes that interactive teaching methods, such as group discussions and role-playing, provide students with more opportunities to use the language in practice. These methods help students internalize what they have learned in real contexts, improving their oral expression and listening comprehension abilities [7]. The enabling stage plays a crucial role in the POA teaching approach, as it allows students to effectively translate language knowledge into practical application through enriched input and interactive practice.

Continuous Feedback and Improvement: During the enabling interactive practice and task execution, the teacher offers timely and specific feedback. During this link, the teacher should gradually reduce their guidance, focusing more on assessing whether students can effectively apply the selected learning outcomes to the output tasks. The teacher should evaluate students' learning achievements from multiple perspectives, using a sound assessment mechanism to promote students' learning motivation. This approach not only fosters communication and learning among students but also helps them recognize their strengths and weaknesses. Throughout this process, the teacher's guidance and feedback are crucial to ensure that students continuously improve and enhance their language expression skills in practice. Through well-designed tasks and exercises, students will gain ample practice opportunities in the classroom, ultimately achieving effective language output and

continuous improvement.

4.2.3. Assessing

The assessing phase emphasizes the integrated evaluation between teachers and students, using assessment to promote learning. Assessment is not merely conducted after the motivating and enabling phases but is integrated throughout the entire teaching process to ensure alignment with the objectives of each phase. During classroom activities, teachers continuously assess students' performance through observation, questioning, and immediate feedback. Teachers design evaluation tools that include teacher feedback, student self-assessment, and peer evaluation, making the assessment process quantifiable and collaborative. After the assessment, teachers provide detailed feedback, including both praise for students' strengths and suggestions for improvement. Specific and targeted feedback helps students recognize their strengths and areas for improvement in their subsequent learning.

The design of this teaching model is based on the three stages of the POA framework: motivating, enabling, and assessing. It drives students' learning motivation through real-life tasks, facilitates knowledge internalization through enriched input and interactive practice, and enhances students' language application abilities through diversified assessment methods. This process not only emphasizes students' language learning outcomes but also focuses on the development of skills and the consideration of individual differences during the learning process. It aims to improve the effectiveness of classroom teaching and help students achieve language output in real-life contexts.

5. Conclusion

The *College English Curriculum Requirements* emphasized that "the goal of college English teaching is to develop students' comprehensive English application abilities, particularly listening and speaking skills [8]." This study demonstrates that applying the POA framework in listening and speaking courses significantly enhances student engagement and practical language skills. By focusing on task-driven learning and interactive practice, POA addresses the shortcomings of traditional teaching methods and meets the demands of modern education.

References

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