

The Application of POA in College English Cross-cultural Communication Class

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Abstract: The Production-Oriented Approach (POA), proposed by Professor Qiu-fang Wen and her team, is a foreign language teaching theory in line with China's conditions. It aims to address the prevalent issue of "separation between learning and application" in foreign language instruction. Based on this theory, this paper takes the college English intercultural communication course as an example to explore the feasibility of integrating "POA" into college cross-cultural communication teaching from the aspects of teaching objectives, teaching task design, and teaching process. It aims to cultivate students' awareness and ability of intercultural communication, so as to improve their comprehensive quality and cultural literacy.

1. Introduction

With the trend of globalization, exchanges between countries have become increasingly close, and the cultivation of intercultural communicative talents has become a consensus in foreign language teaching worldwide. To enable students to equip with cross-cultural communication skills, it has become an inevitable trend for college English teaching to strengthen cross-cultural education. However, English teachers in Chinese universities generally "emphasizing repetition over practice" and "prioritizing linguistic knowledge over linguistic communication skills."^[1] Therefore, enhancing the effectiveness of English cross-cultural teaching has become particularly crucial. Professor Qiu-fang Wen's inception of the "Production-Oriented Approach" (POA) aimed precisely at improving the classroom effectiveness of college English teaching in China, and it has now evolved into a relatively comprehensive theoretical system. In recent years, numerous teaching studies surrounding this theory have emerged, multidimensionally confirming the feasibility and efficacy of applying POA in college English classrooms. On the basis of previous research, this paper tries to apply POA theory to the teaching of cross-cultural communication in English majors, aiming to provide evidence for the applicability of POA in intercultural communication teaching for English majors.

2. Overview of intercultural communication

Culture is the sum of the spiritual and material wealth of a nation, such as history, values, customs and habits, and the purpose of conducting cross-cultural communication research is to promote the communication and dissemination between different cultures on the basis of understanding and respecting the cultures of various ethnic groups. At the same time, cross-cultural communication teaching can not only enhance students' cultural awareness, but also shape the gradual formation of students' worldview, and help students understand and solve problems through different perspectives. Language is an important part of culture and plays an irreplaceable role in communication. Intercultural language education is the combination of intercultural education and language teaching, which can improve students' language ability in the process of exercising their intercultural communication skills. "The acquisition of language knowledge is a prerequisite for the realization of intercultural education, and the cultivation of intercultural competence can help to expand the depth of language teaching."^[1]

3. Overview of the output-oriented approach

The "output-oriented method" was further explored and developed by Professor Qiu-fang Wen on the basis of the output-driven hypothesis. Based on the teaching principles of "learning-centered", "learning-using integrated", "cultural communication" and "key competency", as well as the teaching hypotheses of "output-driven", "input-enabled", "selective learning" and "learning by assessing", Professor Qiu-fang Wen divided the output-oriented teaching process into three stages: motivating, enabling and assessing. Contrary to traditional teacher-dominated classrooms, in POA teaching, teachers primarily act as facilitators, stimulating students' interest in learning by creating real-life communicative situations. "Students are motivated to learn when they learn for communication and have opportunities to use the language they have learned."^[2] Teachers guide students through a series of input activities centered on output tasks, fully scaffolding the learning process while also emphasizing the exercise of students' subjective initiative. Finally, the assessment component of POA employs a collaborative evaluation model between teachers and students, "enabling timely problem identification and remedial teaching through joint evaluation of the entire output task."^[3] Therefore, designing cross-cultural communication English teaching practices using the POA aligns with students' cognitive patterns and needs.

4. The Application of the POA in Intercultural communication Class

Given the example of Unit 7, *Cultural Variations in Negotiation Styles*, from the book *Practical Course of Intercultural Communication*, and adhering to the "selective learning" hypothesis, this unit's content materials will be utilized selectively. Recognizing that the unit may lack comprehensive coverage of negotiation language and strategies. The author added some materials about negotiation language and strategies to the design to fulfill the ultimate output task.

4.1 Teaching Objectives

Based on POA's pedagogical theory, there are two types of teaching objectives. The first type is communicative objectives, which refer to what communicative tasks can be accomplished; "the second type is linguistic objectives, which encompass the mastery of specific words, phrases, or grammatical knowledge."^[4] In addition, according to the nature of intercultural communication courses, the author has added a cultural objective. Linguistic objectives primarily focus on students' mastery of words, phrases, and expressions related to the theme of the unit. Communicative

objectives require students to adopt appropriate negotiation strategies and skills when engaging with individuals from different cultural backgrounds and successfully reach negotiation agreements. The cultural objective encompasses students' ability to identify and tolerate cultural differences, particularly between high-context and low-context countries.

4.2 Teaching Task

The final task is presented in the form of a scenario simulation: each group of four people will conduct simulated business negotiations on behalf of high-context and low-context countries. However, due to the complexity and difficulty of this task, it involves negotiation skills and cross-cultural knowledge communication and strategies. Therefore, when designing the teaching process, teachers gradually divide this large task into three levels of sub-tasks. Task 1: Identify the different negotiation styles of high-context and low-context countries; Task 2: Understand the negotiation process and negotiation language; Task 3: Be able to use negotiation tactics appropriately to conduct preliminary negotiations.

4.3 Teaching Procedures

The classroom teaching process is strictly based on the three basic processes of the output-oriented approach: motivating, enabling and assessing.

4.3.1 Motivating

Presenting communicative scenes: First, teachers design scene-driven tasks in the form of cases, "and the designed tasks should meet the requirements of the four elements of the scene-driving scenarios, namely, topic, purpose, identity, and occasion."^[5] As a purchasing manager for a domestic apparel company, this weekend you will be sent to France to attend a raw material sales meeting with raw material producers from all over the world, what negotiation skills will you use if you want to reach a successful agreement? The reason for the design is that business negotiation is something that most people engaged in the foreign trade industry must experience, which requires negotiators to have certain cross-cultural knowledge and negotiation skills, and to have communicative authenticity and cognitive challenge. Teachers design authentic communication scenarios to enhance students' sense of authentic participation and stimulate learning motivation.

Output Task Attempt: Students choose their peers for the above scenario to conduct a preliminary negotiation simulation, and the teacher makes rounds, but due to the lack of relevant cultural communication skills and negotiation knowledge, students experience that it is a difficult task to successfully reach an agreement without knowledge of negotiation styles, skills and negotiation languages in different countries. In order to avoid similar embarrassing situations in future work, students will generate a motivation to learn from the heart, that is, the "hunger" of learning.

The teacher tries to illustrate the output task: the final output task is that the students work in small groups to conduct a simulated international business negotiation, and the students can choose the topic and the country they represent. However, it is important to note that two people from each group should represent high-context and low-context countries. Students' independent choice of topics can give full play to students' independent creativity. At the same time, countries representing different contexts can test students' understanding and application of negotiation styles in countries with different contexts, so as to enhance cross-cultural awareness.

4.3.2 Enabling

"In the enabling process, according to the teaching objectives and output tasks and the principles of POA facilitation accuracy, progressiveness and diversity,"^[6] the teaching materials were arranged from easy to difficult, and a series of micro-facilitation activities were designed. The author follows the POA concept of "learning and application", "decomposing the facilitation activities into specific sub-output activities and organically combines input and productive use, builds scaffolding, and helps students gradually complete a small goal, and then complete the big goal."^[5]

Task 1: Identify the different negotiation styles of high-context and low-context countries.

This sub-task serves as a starting point for input, requiring students to create intercultural awareness by identifying different cultural negotiation styles in preparation for the initial final output task. Before the task begins, the teacher asks the question "Can you spot the difference in negotiation styles between China and the US?" Students then answer the teacher's question by watching a video of the United States business negotiations between China and the United States about "price." In addition, students complete the exercises to fill in the gaps by reading the "Negotiation Atmosphere", "Detail: Depth and Breadth", "Communication style" and other parts of the textbook. Make students aware of the differences between different countries in terms of negotiation style, depth of communication, etc. In addition to this, the teacher asks the question, "What causes these differences?" "Engage students in an in-depth discussion of the cultural factors behind these differences, and make them aware that the necessary cultural knowledge and appropriate negotiation skills are key to overcoming communication barriers.

Task 2: Understand the negotiation process and negotiation language.

In order to complete the final mock negotiation, it is essential to have some knowledge and skills in the negotiation language. First of all, the teacher helps students understand the five processes of a complete negotiation by showing a video that introduces the negotiation process: Preparing the ground, Establishing positions, Exchanging information, Bargaining, Conclusion and agreement. After that, the teacher distributes a language knowledge sheet (as shown in Table 1)^[7] to the students, which contains polite expressions and sentence structures for each link, and students can choose one of the links to demonstrate oral sentence formation while reading the knowledge sheet, so as to further promote the internalization of language knowledge and structure through oral exercises.

Task 3: Conduct preliminary negotiations using negotiation tactics appropriately.

Through the completion of the above two sub-tasks, students have initially mastered the ability to master negotiation strategies and skills, and the next task is how to properly apply these knowledges to business negotiations for businessmen from different countries and cultural backgrounds. It is also a challenge to students' pragmatic skills. In this session, students are required to role-play a brief business negotiation between themselves and their peers in selecting businessmen from countries with different contexts. This activity is a short microcosm of the final task and can lay the groundwork for students to complete the final task.

Table 1: Polite expressions used in various stages of negotiation.

Process of negotiation	Polite Words and Phrases
Preparing the ground	Welcome to__ / Did you have a good journey?
Establishing positions	Do you mind if_? / Could I/we_? / Is that ok? / We would like to know what you think
Exchanging information	What exactly do you mean by...? / Is it clear?
Bargaining	What would you say if we offered you .../We might consider
Conclusion and agreement	Can I just run over the main points again? / We've made excellent progress

4.3.3 Assessing

This unit mainly uses the "Teacher-Student Cooperative Evaluation" (TSCA) to evaluate the final output tasks of students, mainly based on the written output results submitted after the class-business negotiation draft, and the detailed steps are as follows:

Pre-course implementation stage: Based on the nature of the course and the output-oriented approach, the teacher preliminarily sets three negotiation criteria for the negotiation draft by focusing on the content. Criterion 1: Whether the student has completed the complete negotiation process and what needs to be improved; Criterion 2: Whether the student clearly and fluently expressed his or her negotiation demands and what needs to be improved; Criterion 3: Whether the student correctly presents the negotiation style of different contexts and what needs to be improved.

In-class implementation phase: The teacher distributes the evaluation criteria sheet to each group and explains the evaluation criteria and requirements. Students then present an output task – a small simulated business negotiation in small groups. At the end of the presentation, the audience discussed the results with each other as a group and proposed a pros and cons for each group. In-class presentations help to create a real negotiation atmosphere for students, and at the same time, students can learn from each other and complement each other's strengths.

After-class activity stage: Each group improves the completed mock negotiation according to the revised mode of the in-class discussion and resubmits it in the form of a video recording. At the same time, the teacher selected the best video as a model sample for students' reference and learning.

5. Conclusions

Based on the POA teaching theory, this paper explores the teaching design of intercultural communication courses, aiming to improve the effectiveness of teaching and enhance students' awareness and ability of intercultural communication. However, in the future design and practice process, further adjustments and arrangements are needed. Additionally, under the guidance of POA, setting up motivating scenarios, adjusting unit content, and selectively using materials are all challenging tasks, posing a dual test to teachers' professional competencies and information-gathering abilities. In the future, it is anticipated that more scholars will conduct more detailed research on POA, jointly advancing the development of China's indigenous foreign language teaching theories.

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