An empirical study of production-oriented approach in college oral English teaching

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Abstract: This paper conducts teaching research for non-English major students, tests the teaching effect of "production-oriented approach" (POA) in college English teaching with qualitative and quantitative methods, and studies the problems for attention in the process of effective implementation. Through research, it is found that compared with the traditional teaching methods, the production-oriented approach creates a brand-new and authentic communicative context with the teaching mode of "motivating-enabling-assessing", which greatly increases the opportunities for students to learn and use the language, and at the same time mobilizes their learning enthusiasm and improves their learning efficiency.

Key words: production-oriented approach; college English; empirical study

1 Introduction

The College English Teaching Guide (2020 edition) issued by the Ministry of Education clearly points out: "The teaching goal of college English is to cultivate students' English application ability, enhance their cross-cultural communication awareness and communication ability, develop their autonomous learning ability and improve their comprehensive cultural literacy, so that they can effectively use English in their study, life, social interaction and future work, and meet the needs of national, social, school and personal development [1]." According to the *Guide*, the fundamental goal of English teaching is to apply what you have learned. However, after studying for many years, most students still can't use English accurately and fluently for daily communication, let alone write beautiful articles. The reason is that with the decrease of class hours and heavy teaching tasks, teachers still follow the traditional teaching mode in the teaching process, emphasizing input over output, emphasizing teaching over practice, emphasizing text explanation over the use of authentic language scenarios, which leads to the separation of learning and application. Teachers focus on language input in the classroom, ignoring language output, leading students to passively accept a lot of "inert knowledge", which cannot be activated in time and effectively used in real scenarios, and cannot be transformed into language proficiency, and flexibly applied to daily communication. Language is the medium of communication. Only by applying the learned language knowledge to communication can learning be meaningful and its value be realized. College English is a course that integrates practicality, authenticity and pragmatism, emphasizing the practicality of language. Wen Qiufang, a professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University, puts forward a production-oriented approach (POA for short), a foreign language teaching method with Chinese characteristics, regarding the phenomenon of "separation of learning and

application" in English teaching in China. The teaching concept is "the integration of learning and application", the teaching process is "motivating-enabling-assessing", and the emphasis is on "output-input-output" teaching. The author tries to apply the "output-oriented approach" to college English teaching, and carries out comparative experimental teaching through quantitative and qualitative methods to test its teaching effect in college English, and at the same time discusses the problems that need attention in the teaching process.

2 POA theory

The production-oriented approach (POA) was founded by a team led by Professor Wen Qiufang of Beijing Foreign Studies University, aiming at overcoming the two major drawbacks of "separation of learning and application" and "separation of literature and teaching" in foreign language teaching in China [2]. The theoretical system of POA has been developed for more than ten years, and it has become a brand-new and mature theoretical system of foreign language teaching with Chinese characteristics, which consists of three parts: teaching concept, teaching hypothesis and teaching process [3]. Among them, teaching concept is the guiding ideology of POA theory, which determines the design of teaching process, the selection of teaching content and the determination of training objectives; Teaching hypothesis is the basis for compiling textbook exercises and designing classroom activities, which should be tested by teaching practice; Teaching process is the embodiment of teaching idea and the concrete implementation of teaching hypothesis.

The teaching concept of POA takes "the integration of learning and application" as the core, emphasizing that language learning is for use, so that students can closely link language learning and language application, making learning and application integrated and mutually reinforcing. The teaching process of POA is composed of several circular chains of "motivating--enabling--assessing". "Motivating" is the starting point of the POA, and its main task is to let students try to output, stimulate students' learning enthusiasm; The main task of "enabling" is to help students "cut a way through when confronted by mountains and build a bridge when blocked by a river", and provide scaffolding for students to complete output tasks; "Assessing" is an immediate evaluation of the enabling activities, or delayed evaluation. In the process of evaluation, teachers' evaluation, group mutual evaluation and teacher-student cooperation evaluation can be carried out.

3 Research design

3.1 Research object

This study took 46 students majoring in tourism management in my school as the research object, and the author divided them into two groups on average, namely the experiment group and the control group. In order to ensure the high reliability of the experiment, the author collected the data of the oral test scores (the topics were selected from the oral test questions when English majors entered the school), and made a preliminary grouping on the basis of data analysis. The full score of the oral test is 100. After the test, the statistical software SPSS21.0 was used to conduct an independent sample T-test on the test results. The results showed that the scores of the two groups of students were almost the same, and their oral expression ability was almost the same, so as to ensure the effectiveness of the grouping.

3.2 Research methods

This experiment adopted qualitative and quantitative methods for empirical research. Firstly, the quantitative data of students' poor grades before and after were compared and analyzed vertically and horizontally with statistical software SPSS21.0, and the effect differences between traditional teaching mode and output-oriented method were obtained; Secondly, in the form of questionnaire, the students in the experimental group were investigated for satisfaction, recognition and characteristics. Third, focusing on the keywords in student evaluation and teacher-student cooperation evaluation, some keywords (such as "serious and responsible", "rigorous", "interesting" and "difficult") were proposed

from qualitative data for decoding analysis to learn about the evaluation information of teachers and students on POA, and point out specific issues that need attention in the effective application of the production-oriented approach.

3.3 Research process

The author adopted the production-oriented approach and the traditional teaching method to discuss the topic "Introduce a city or town in China to foreign tourists and record it as a video" in Unit 5 of *New Horizon College English Viewing, Listening and Speaking Course 1*. The goal of this experiment was to introduce a Chinese city in English, communicate with tourists, and master and actually use relevant language knowledge (basic vocabulary, basic phrases and sentence expressions, tourism management professional vocabulary, etc.).

3.3.1 The teaching process of experimental group

First, motivating. "Designing tasks with potential communicative value and stimulating students' enthusiasm for learning is the starting point of the production-oriented approach [4]." First of all, the teacher required students to watch the video on Wuhan, explained the professional characteristics of tourism, and listed some knowledge points such as vocabulary, phrases, and sentence patterns and so on. Then the teacher asked students to design an output task and try to output in groups: the students were asked to play roles and simulate introducing their hometown to foreign tourists. After the initial attempt, students deeply felt their lack of English language application ability and communication skills. The teacher deliberately created a "sense of hunger" for students to stimulate their strong desire and enthusiasm for learning. Second, enabling. The experimental group further divided the output task assigned by the motivating link into three sub-tasks, and then the teacher explained the steps and requirements of the task to students. The three sub-tasks were guide words, video recording, editing and dubbing. The 26 students were divided into four groups to introduce four different places respectively. Then, teachers played the role of scaffolding to guide students to selectively learn input materials and make scientific and reasonable choices around output tasks. Finally, the teachers asked students to read or watch the input materials carefully before class, and select the basic vocabulary, professional vocabulary, phrases, and sentence patterns when completing the output task. The tasks were then extracted and submitted to the website. Teachers would check immediately, put forward suggestions for deletion or addition, and give feedback to students in time, and finally determine the language materials needed to complete the output task. In the process of completing the output task, students could communicate with teachers in the WeChat group at any time, got timely guidance in a scientific manner, and gave quick feedback on existing problems. After careful preparation, the students successfully completed the output task, and finally showed and shared it in class. Through the motivating and enabling process, it can "make a transition from duplicative use of language to creative use of language", which makes students' language application ability reach a qualitative leap [5]. Third, assessing. In this link, the form of teacher-student cooperation assessing（TSCA） is adopted to evaluate students' production tasks. The teacher gave the evaluation criteria, and then teachers and students completed the evaluation together in the order of "students' personal thinking--pair/group discussion--large-class communication guided by teacher--teachers participation in evaluation" [6]. After class, students watched the video again, conducted group self-evaluation and mutual evaluation according to the evaluation standard, and submitted the evaluation results on the Internet, which were then checked and summarized by the teacher. At last, on the basis of the teacher's feedback, the students revised it again and submitted the video.

3.3.2 The traditional teaching process of the control group

In order to ensure the consistency and fairness of the experiment, the experimental group and the control group used the same topic and the same input materials. The teacher adopted the teaching mode of input first and output later, and its teaching process is: theme introduction → analysis of examples→ explanation of key words and expressions → group

activities → completion of after-class exercises → evaluation. The differences between the two groups are as follows: Firstly, there is no "motivating link", just a brief introduction. Secondly, there is no "selective learning" of teacher-student interaction before class, but only the key words and expressions that students got from case analysis, without considering whether the input materials are related to the output tasks. Thirdly, the students didn't give full play to themselves, but the teacher gave a subjective explanation. Fourth, in the evaluation link, only the teacher carried on the traditional evaluation in the classroom.

3.3 Questionnaire design

After the completion of the teaching, the teacher made an overall evaluation of the production-oriented approach by questionnaire. The questionnaire investigates from three aspects: teaching satisfaction, learning gains, recognition of production-oriented approach and its characteristics. 26 questionnaires were sent out and 26 valid questionnaires were collected.

3.4 Subsequent processing

The evaluation words at each stage of the learning process were screened and sorted, labeled accordingly, coded and classified after open decoding, and a number of students were interviewed at the same time.

4 Result analysis

In this experiment, the oral English scores of the students in the experimental and control groups before and after the unit teaching were compared and analyzed using SPSS 21.0 statistical software. It was found that there was not much difference in the oral English scores of the two groups before the experiment, but both improved after the experiment. The average score of the experimental group increased by 8.6 points after the experiment, and the average score of the control group increased by 3.7 points. Obviously, the improvement of the oral English level of the experimental group was very greater than that of the control group after completing the output task.

Through questionnaire survey, the results show that five students in the experimental group are "average", while the other 21 students are "satisfied", "very satisfied" and "basically satisfied", and the satisfaction rate is 80.77%. For the learning gains in this unit, 65.38% of the students thought that they have gained a lot; 23.08% of the students thought that they have gained something, mainly in vocabulary, professional knowledge and sentence expression. On the contrary, 7 students said they were "uncertain" and 19 students said they were "approved" and "very approved", and the recognition rate reaches 73.08%. As for the characteristics of the production-oriented approach, students felt "useful", "interesting", "stimulating learning desire", "mobilizing enthusiasm" and "liking" and so on.

Through the analysis of the evaluation word cloud, five key words were obtained: practicality, enthusiasm, application of learning, harvest and difficulty. Production-oriented approach is output-oriented, follows the teaching order of "output--input--output", adopts the teaching mode of "motivating--enabling--assessing", and runs through the whole teaching process with the teaching concept of "integrating learning with application" and organically connects "output" with "input", which is completely different from the traditional teaching mode. "Only when learners use language creatively can they acquire language to the maximum extent", "closely combine language output with language input, organically combine language understanding with language output, and effectively combine language imitation with content creation " [7]. In the end, with the guidance of completing the output task, students could use English in a simulated real environment, organically activating the inert knowledge they have learned but not used, promoting students to creatively process, remember and practice the copied knowledge into their own knowledge, and greatly improving the language application ability and language output efficiency.

Through this comparative experiment, compared with traditional teaching, the production-oriented approach can

create a real communication environment, further stimulate students' desire and enthusiasm for learning, improve students' language application ability and language acquisition efficiency in spreading urban cultural exchanges, significantly improve the teaching effect and make the classroom atmosphere active.

5 Issues to be noted in production-oriented approach

5.1 Fully consider the difficulty of inputting materials

In the motivating part of the implementation of production-oriented approach, teachers should guide students to be familiar with the input materials, explain the difficult materials in detail, and guide students to select materials useful for output tasks for learning and deep processing.

5.2 The difficulty of the output task should not be too high

It should be based on the actual level of students and consistent with the two teaching objectives of "communication" and language in the syllabus. At the same time, the design of tasks can be closely related to students' real life. For example, recording videos and editing are things that students are currently enjoying a lot, and are present in their daily lives almost every day.

5.3 Teachers play a good scaffolding role

In the enabling process, teachers must grasp the "degree" of playing the role of "scaffolding" and should "adapt to the dynamic development law of students' language ability, emotion and cognition according to students' nearest development zone". The role of teachers' "scaffolding" needs to maintain a dynamic balance with students' autonomy.

5.4 Adopt various evaluation methods

In the assessing process, various evaluation methods can be adopted, and the evaluation methods can be determined according to the actual needs, highlighting the key points. The evaluation of students requires the guidance of professional teachers, "making evaluation an opportunity to review, consolidate and strengthen new knowledge, leading to qualitative changes and leaps in learning".

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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