

The POA Theory Cannot Be Widely Adopted in the Ideological and Political Teaching Design of College English Courses

-- Take the New University English Comprehensive Course 2 (2nd Edition) - Unit 6 as an Example

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Abstract

Production-Oriented Approach (POA) is a foreign language teaching theory with Chinese characteristics proposed by Professor Wen Qiufang. Since the POA theory was proposed, it has been widely used in the ideological and political teaching design of college English courses. But is the POA theory widely applicable? This paper takes the ideological and political teaching design of Unit 6 of the New University English Comprehensive Course 2 (2nd Edition) as an example, and shows that the teaching design of this unit should not be based on POA theory, but should be based on PBL (problem-based teaching) theory to achieve the best design effect. Therefore, the ideological and political teaching design of college English courses cannot all adopt POA theory.

Keywords

POA; Ideological and Political Courses; PBL; Instructional Design.

1. Introduction

College English has played an important role in university education for many years, but traditional teaching methods are still used in most university English classes, resulting in students performing less than the expectations of teachers, and students finding college English classes boring. Therefore, the teaching effect is not satisfactory. In this context, Professor Wen Qiufang proposed a teaching theory with Chinese characteristics, namely Production-Oriented Approach(POA). With the introduction of this theory, more and more research on foreign language teaching has been carried out, and the author browsed the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) and searched nearly 2,000 articles with the theme of "POA". The general research directions of these literatures are divided into three categories. The first type is the exploration and reflection of the application practice based on POA theory; The second category is to demonstrate the feasibility or validity of the POA theory; The third type is POA theory is used in specific ideological and political teaching design. However, there is no literature to explain whether POA theory can be widely adopted in the ideological and political teaching design of college English courses. Therefore, based on my own experience in the Ideological and Political Teaching Design Competition, the author found that the POA theory is not applicable to the ideological and political teaching design of all college English courses.

2. Conceptual connotations

2.1. Production-Oriented Approach (POA)

"As a foreign language teaching theory with Chinese characteristics, the Production Oriented Approach (POA) consists of three parts: teaching philosophy (Learning Centre Approach, Learning and Using Approach, Whole Person Education Approach), teaching assumptions

(output-driven, input-enabled, selective learning, and assessment-enhanced learning), and the teacher-mediated teaching process (driving, facilitating, and evaluating). The fundamental purpose of POA is to overcome the drawbacks of "separation of learning and use" in Native Foreign Language Teaching (NFLT), and to truly consider how to teach from the students' perspective and with the purpose of learning, so that the students can "Learning by using", "Learning for using", "Learning to use" and "Learning for success". [1] Figure 1 shows the three parts of the POA theory system and their relationships. The "teaching concept" is the guiding idea of the other two parts; the "teaching hypothesis" is the theoretical support of the "teaching process"; the "teaching process" is the realisation of the "teaching concept" and "teaching hypothesis"; and the mediating role of teachers is reflected in the "teaching process". The "teaching process" is the realisation of the "teaching philosophy" and "teaching assumptions", while the intermediary role of the teacher is embodied in all aspects of the "teaching process". The teacher's mediating role is reflected in all aspects of the "teaching process". [2] POA generally consists of three phases in the implementation process. In the driving stage, the teacher should stimulate students' interest in learning or activate students' background knowledge, make students feel that the topic to be discussed or completed is cognitively challenging, and create a kind of pressure and motivation within them to learn, and then make the students clear about the communicative and linguistic goals, and make them clear about the type and content of the output tasks. In the facilitation stage, the teacher describes the output task to the students, divides a total output task into several sub-tasks, then guides the students to selective learning of each sub-task and to produce the content, linguistic form and discourse structure required for each sub-task, and finally the teacher guides the students to carry out the "output practice" of each sub-task, each sub-task has the same mode of operation. Finally, the teacher guides the students to carry out "output exercises" for each subtask, each of which has the same mode of operation and needs to be repeated, thus contributing to the realisation of the total output task. In the evaluation stage, the teacher should evaluate the students' "output exercises" from multiple perspectives and using multiple evaluation systems. Evaluation can play a facilitating role in teaching and learning. From the teaching design point of view, if we want to achieve the best design effect, then a unit of the total output task must be through the "Motivating, Enabling, Assessing" model, and divided out of each sub-task must be for the gradual improvement of the total output task for the service, that is, the output of the previous sub-task will be used as a drive for the output of the next sub-task. Eventually the output of the total task will be realised. Of course, the realisation of each sub-task must also follow the "Motivating, Enabling, Assessing" model.

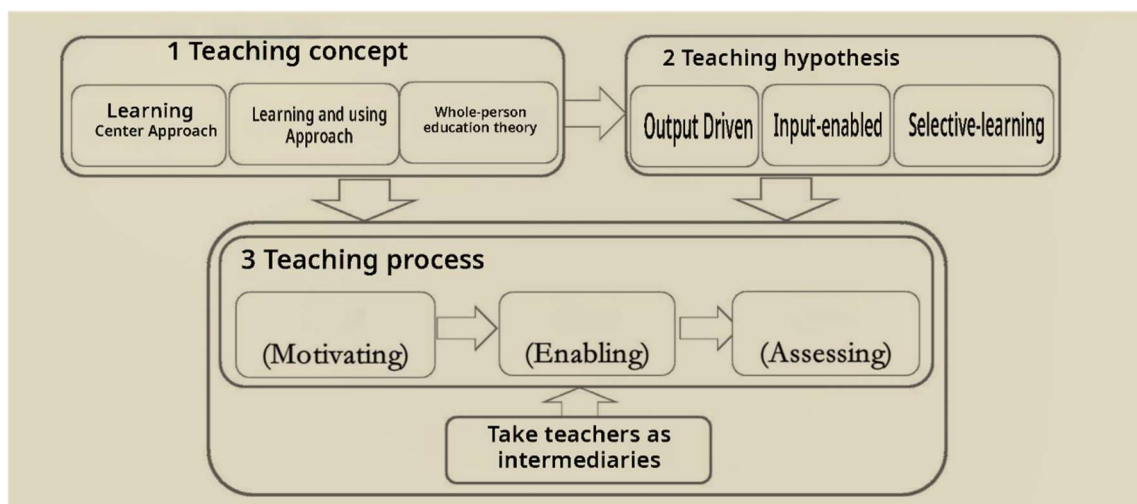


Figure 1. Theoretical system of POA

2.2. Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

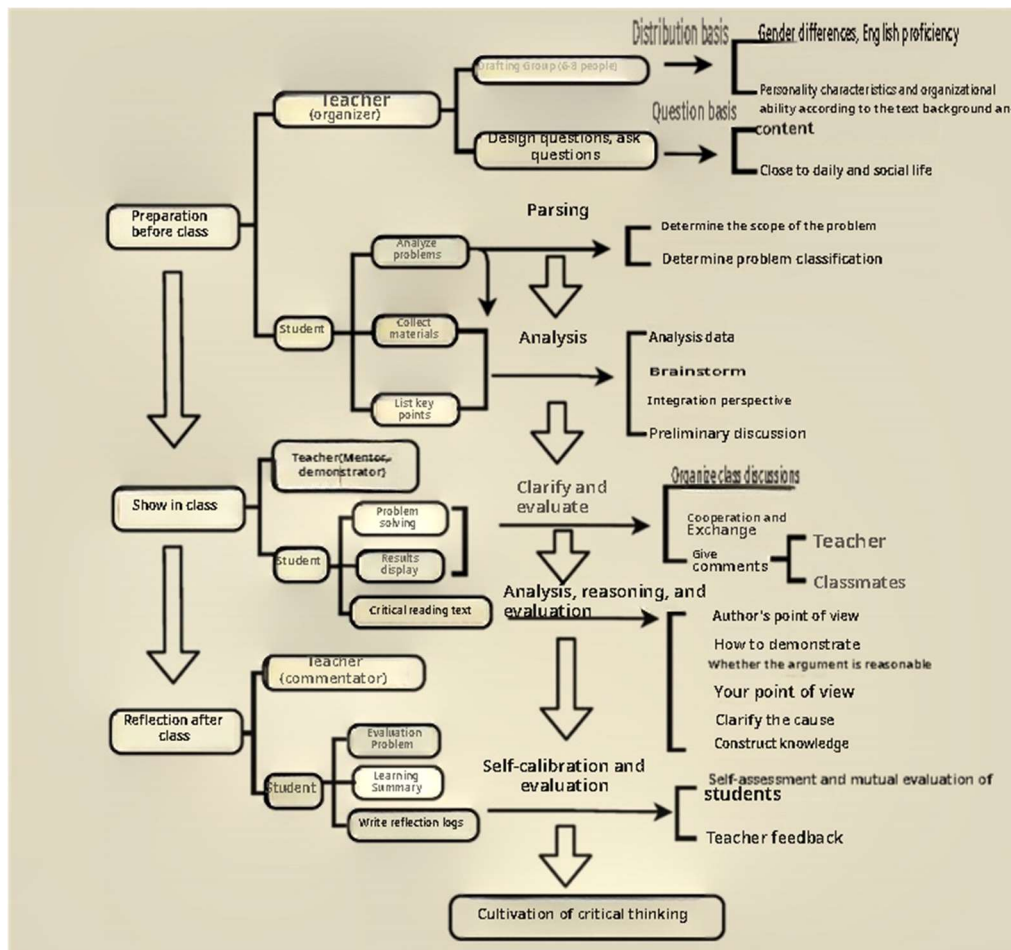


Figure 2. Schematic diagram of PBL teaching operation process[6]

PBL (Problem-based learning) was proposed by Barrows, a professor of neurology in the United States, and was initially applied in the field of medical education. After that, PBL was gradually applied to the teaching design of other disciplines. Blayney pointed out that the basic principle of PBL is that the starting point of learning should be a problem or issue that the learners want to solve. PBL teachers not only need to create a situation in which the students can acquire basic knowledge, but also train their oral presentation skills.[3] Antoniotti sees the PBL model as a problem-situation based, learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.[4] Domestic researcher Liu Rude believes that PBL teaching mode is a problem-centred teaching method. Problems are the triggering points of students' learning, and students think and cooperate to solve the problems, construct the knowledge system step by step, and finally solve the problems and acquire knowledge.[5] It can be seen that the PBL teaching model is to put students in a specific problem situation. Students solve problems in small groups and acquire knowledge in the process. The specific implementation process of PBL teaching model is shown in Figure 2. This figure shows that the implementation of the PBL teaching model consists of three main parts: pre-class preparation, in-class presentation, and post-class reflection. In the pre-class preparation stage, the teacher, as the organizer, draws up the group, designs the problem and presents it. Students work together to analyse the problem, collect materials and make a PPT for presentation according to the problem proposed by the teacher. In the presentation stage, students initially come up with a solution to the problem through independent learning and cooperative discussion in the preparation stage, and the teacher serves as a mentor and demonstrator to help the students solve the problem and successfully complete the

presentation of the results. In the post-lesson reflection stage, the teacher should give the evaluation criteria, according to which students should carry out the problem assessment and learning summary of the lesson, write a reflection journal, such as their own gains and shortcomings, and then carry out mutual evaluation by members of the group, and finally the teacher will give a written evaluation and feedback.

2.3. Similarities and Differences between POA and PBL

Based on the above analysis of the conceptual connotations of POA and PBL, we can see the similarities between these two teaching theories, i.e. they are both oriented towards achieving a goal, which can be the output of a total task or the solution of a problem. In the process of achieving a goal, students can combine their existing knowledge with their classmates' discussion and the teacher's guidance to achieve the acquisition of new knowledge. The whole process will not be as boring as the traditional teaching model. However, there are differences between the two theories of teaching and learning. POA theory is mainly based on dividing the output of a total task into a number of related sub-tasks, which means that each sub-task is for the purpose of perfecting a goal, and each sub-task is for the purpose of improving a goal. That is to say, each sub-task serves to refine the task of facilitating the realisation of the total output. The output of the previous subtask will serve as a driver for the output of the next subtask. Eventually the output of the total task is realised. So each sub-task presents a certain degree of correlation and progression. And PBL theory is to solve a total problem as the main line throughout. From the pre-lesson preparation stage to the post-lesson reflection stage of each lesson, in order to achieve the solution of the total problem, the sub-problems that need to be solved in each lesson are different, and these sub-problems are all for the achievement of the solution of the total problem, which can be without presenting relevance and progressivity.

2.4. Ideological and Political Teaching Design for College English Courses

In his speech at the ideological and political work conference of national colleges and universities in December 2016, General Secretary Xi pointed out, "Enhance the affinity and relevance of ideological and political education, so that all kinds of courses and ideological and political theory courses go in the same direction and form a synergistic effect." [7] Then the concept of curriculum ideology and politics came into being. In 2018, the Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Accelerating the Construction of High-level Undergraduate Education and Comprehensively Improving Talent Cultivation Capabilities required that ideological and political education be carried out throughout the whole process of high-level undergraduate education, and that curriculum ideology and professional ideology be strengthened. Instructional design originated from the analysis of learning elements under the guidance of educational theory, and landed in the reasonable solution of teaching problems in practice, which is a key link in promoting the reform of university foreign language teaching. [8] The ideological and political design of foreign language curriculum should attach importance to creating a unique learning experience for learners' personality development and value formation in language learning, so that they can feel the infiltration of ideological and political teaching objectives in the silent language learning, and realize the unity of explicit foreign language learning and implicit ideological and political education. [9] Ideological and political content and teaching content should not be separated from each other, or the content of ideological and political content should be added to the curriculum content, and political thinking should not be for the sake of political thinking. Therefore, when teachers are faced with the teaching design of college English ideological and political courses, among the numerous teaching theories and methods, can they only choose the prevailing POA theory to achieve the perfect integration of ideological and political content and teaching content and achieve the best teaching design effect?

3. Teaching Process

3.1. Learning Situation Analysis

The target students are first-year non-English major students, whose English level is level 3 in China English Proficiency Scale, and their English foundation is relatively large. Students' listening and reading ability is relatively strong, but their oral and written output ability is weak. Students have a good attitude towards English learning, and most of them hope to promote their own development and career planning through English learning. However, some students are not self-disciplined, study enthusiasm is not high, there is no clear learning goals and direction. Their cultural background is similar, and they have a certain cognition and understanding of Chinese traditional culture. But the intercultural consciousness is weak, the intercultural communication ability is weak. Students have strong teamwork ability, most of them can participate in team activities and complete related activities; However, in general, students have weak critical thinking ability and lack the ability to view an event correctly.

3.2. Teaching Content Analysis

The theme of Unit 6 in the new College English Course 2 (Second edition) is innovation. The unit is divided into four main parts. Firstly, it introduces innovation and innovative thinking through two articles: "The Coolest Little Start-Up in America" which depicts the protagonist's journey from idea to company establishment, embodying the concept of innovation from inception; and "Packages Cycled in a Loop", describing how Loop company recycles waste as an innovative service to address non-recyclable plastic packaging, aiming for a greener world. Secondly, it explains reasoning skills including concrete case reasoning, causal reasoning, analogical reasoning and deductive reasoning. Thirdly, students engage in role plays and class presentations related to innovative projects and business plans. Lastly, students self-assess their learning or class performance based on teacher-provided evaluation criteria.

3.3. Teaching Objective

According to the philosophy of College English Ideological and Political courses, we have formulated the teaching objectives of this unit mainly from the following three aspects. The first is language goals. Students can use the relevant vocabulary of this unit to analyze and discuss the important factors of innovation success; Ability to understand the development process of innovation; Can understand three logical reasoning techniques. The second is the skill goal. Students can improve their critical thinking ability in the process of forming innovative thinking. Ability to write business plan; Persuasive speech using three logical reasoning techniques. The third is the goal of education. Through discussion and practical activities, students can think about new ideas and problem-solving methods under the guidance of teachers, and cultivate their innovative thinking and innovation ability; Develop students' critical thinking and analytical skills through discussion and analysis; Develop students' critical thinking and judgment skills by guiding them to evaluate and compare different viewpoints; Through activities such as project cooperation, students' teamwork awareness and ability are cultivated, so that they can play a role in the team and solve problems together; Through teaching, students are guided to think about the impact and responsibility of innovation on society, and cultivate their sense of social responsibility and citizenship.

3.4. Can the Teaching Design of this Unit Adopt POA Theory?

If the teaching design of this unit is carried out according to the POA teaching concept proposed by Professor Wen Qiufang, a total output task should be determined according to the teaching objectives. Combined with the teaching content of this unit, the author and team members determined that the total output task was that students could use three reasoning skills to make a speech related to innovative content to convince angel investors. According to the rules of

POA theory, in order to achieve the total output task, it is necessary to decompose the total task into related and progressive sub-tasks, and then each link realizes the output of each sub-task in accordance with the mode of "motivating-enabling-assessing", and finally gradually improve the output of the total task until the total task is produced. According to the teaching content of this unit, we determined three sub-tasks, namely, understanding the concept of innovation and innovative thinking, writing a business plan, and using logical reasoning skills to make persuasive speeches. However, through the analysis of these three sub-objectives, it can be seen that these three sub-objectives seem to serve the output of the total task, but there is no particularly large correlation and no progression, more like three independent and unrelated tasks directly serve the output of the total task. Therefore, using POA theory to carry out the teaching design of this unit can not achieve the best effect, nor can it achieve the perfect integration of ideological and political content and teaching content.

Through reading excellent teaching design cases related to POA theory, we found that the total output task runs through the whole teaching, and each sub-task serves to gradually improve the output of the total task, so that a perfect closed loop can be achieved with coherence. Figure 3 is a case of excellent instructional design.

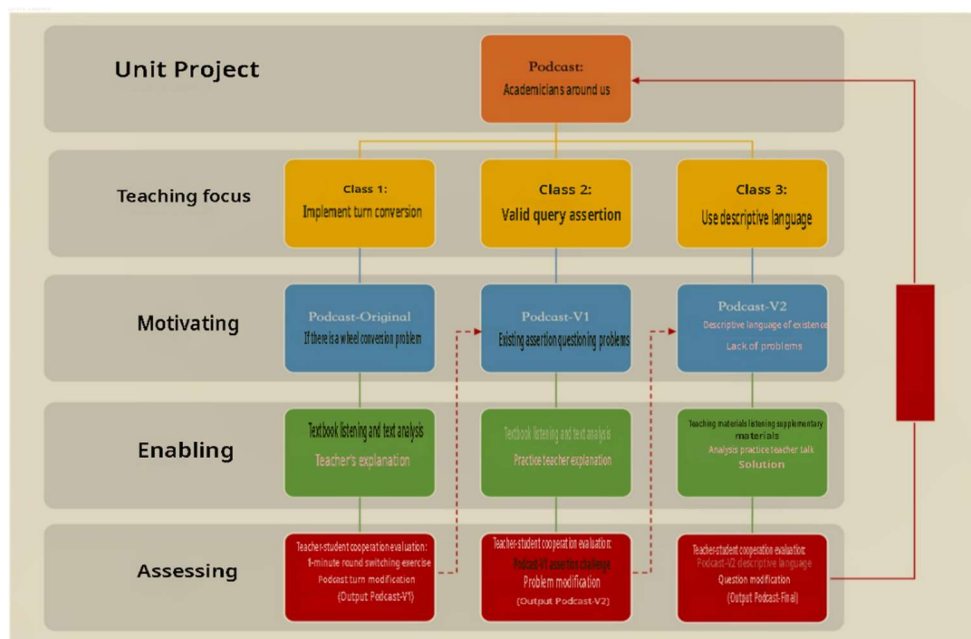


Figure 3. Unit teaching design

As can be seen from the figure, the production of the total output task podcast is divided into three sub-task outputs: realizing conversation turn conversion, effectively questioning assertion and using descriptive language, and the language goal, knowledge goal, skill goal and education goal run through each teaching link. Logically, the output of each lesson will be used as the driving force for the next lesson (as shown by the dotted arrow in the figure), which will be linked to each other and finally realize the effective promotion of unit projects.

4. Teaching Design based on PBL

Combined with the above analysis of PBL teaching theory, the problems to be solved in this unit are: writing a business plan and making a speech related to innovation. According to the teaching content, we divided the whole unit into four periods. The specific teaching process is shown in Figure 4:

Class hours	Key points	Details	Task	Evaluation
Class 1	Language input	Vocabulary and sentence exercises; Timeline of innovative company development; Basic qualities of innovators	Write a business plan for your innovation Business Plan	iSmart; Evaluation of teacher-student collaboration
Class 2	Critical thinking	Play the role of innovator in different stages of innovation (Carrot Capital business plan challenges and recurring service items)	Shoot the first video of innovation speech One version	iSmart; Evaluation of teacher-student collaboration
Class 3	Logical reasoning skills	How to use induction, deduction and analogical reasoning to make your speech more Persuasive	Shooting and creating with logical reasoning skills The second version of the new Speech Video	iSmart; Evaluation of teacher-student collaboration
Class 4	Simulation competition	Participate in simulation competition to improve your comprehensive ability	Will be the final business plan and video Upload to TikTok	iSmart; Evaluation of teacher-student collaboration

Figure 4. Specific teaching process

From the figure, we can see that the sub-problems that need to be solved in each lesson are different, and these sub-problems serve to achieve the solution of the overall problem, without showing correlation and progression. In this process, in order to enable teachers to better play the role of scaffolding, we also adopted two teaching methods. The first is TBLT (Task-based teaching Method). Domestic scholar Lu Ziwen (2008) defined the English expression of TBLT as Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT). [10] It means that teachers make students learn through the process of completing tasks. There are three main tasks for students to complete in this unit. Task1: Prepare a business plan to foster a mindset of innovation and development; Task2: Shoot a video presentation about innovation; Task3: Participate in the simulated innovation and entrepreneurship competition. Through the completion of these three tasks, students can learn to write business plans and make presentations on innovative content. The second is CBLT (Content-based Language Pedagogy), which refers to a method of organizing language instruction around the content taught, rather than around the language project itself. The so-called content mainly refers to the subject knowledge content that uses the second language to communicate. [11] This unit mainly applies this teaching method to the content learning of Articles A and B, so as to gain a comprehensive understanding of the development of innovation.

5. Conclusion

POA theory is a teaching theory put forward by our country, which accords with the actual situation of English teaching in our country. Although it is relatively popular at present, especially applied to the ideological and political teaching design of college English courses, we can not blindly use it. We must first analyze the teaching content and choose the most suitable one among many teaching theories in order to achieve the best teaching design effect.

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