The Development of Production-Oriented Approach

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Keywords: Production-Oriented Approach (POA), Output-Driven Hypothesis, Dialectical Research Paradigm (DPR), Teacher-Student Collaborative Assessment (TSCA), Theoretical System

Abstract. In 2007, Professor Wen Qiufang put forward output-driven hypothesis, which was developed into output-driven, input-enabled hypothesis in 2014, and into Production-oriented Approach (POA) in 2015. The theoretical system of POA, which was firstly formed in 2015, was revised in 2017, and further revised in 2018. Starting with brief introduction of POA and analysis about the influences of three important International Forums on Innovative Foreign Language Education in China, this paper mainly talks about the development of POA, and falls the progress into five stages, whose innovations are elaborated in this paper. In the end, the paper poses some problems of POA to be solved in the near future.

1. General Introduction of Production-Oriented Approach

POA is a new approach with Chinese characteristics for teaching foreign languages in colleges and universities. On a theoretical basis of Output Hypothesis by Swain, Professor Wen Qiufang put forward output-driven hypothesis in 2007. With the joint efforts of Professor Wen and the other related scholars and experts, output-driven hypothesis was developed into Output-driven, Input-enabled Hypothesis in 2014, and the theoretical system of POA was firstly introduced in 2015, which was revised in 2017 and further revised in 2018.

POA has been widely used in university English teaching, and has been proven effective to improve students’ linguistic competence, especially to improve students’ speaking and writing ability.

Because of the good teaching effects and the great influences from important international forums, there will be more and more applications and related researches of POA in the future.

2. Three Important International Forums on POA

POA has gained its popularity and has been improved much in recent years, which has been mainly influenced by three important international forums.

The First International Forum on Innovative Foreign Language Education in China was held in Beijing Foreign Studies University on May 15th, 2017. The theme of this forum was Appraisal of the POA, and the aim was to promote the application of POA to university English teaching and to optimize the theoretical system of POA. With the discussion of experts from home and abroad, the forum had great influences on foreign languages teaching in China.

The second international forum, with a theme of POA in Different Cultural Context, was held in University of Vienna on October, 13th, 2017. This forum brought together scholars with different language cultures, and introduced POA to Confucius Institutes, which would in turn improve Chinese teaching in foreign countries. On the forum, Professor Wen shared the background, motivation and development of POA, and illustrated the theoretical system and characteristics. The research group reported the achievements of applying POA to university English teaching and Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL).

The third international forum, with theme of Dialectical Research Paradigm and Production-oriented Approach, was held on May, 12th, 2018. This forum continued the discussion of innovation and development of POA. Dialectical Research Paradigm (DRP), a new research
paradigm, was put forward to test the validity of POA, DRP integrates the philosophical and academic thoughts of both China and western countries, and aims at solving the systemic problems in foreign language teaching. The theoretical system of DRP is made up of philosophical stance, systemic problem, research goals and research procedures. Philosophical stance contains ontological beliefs and epistemological beliefs. Systemic problem is the start point of DRP and the main problem needs to be solved. Research goals are made up of a number of cycles, which include briefing theory, improving practice and interpreting meaning. Research procedures are made up a number of cycles, which include learning, theorizing, practicing and reflecting interpreting. The theoretical system of DRP is shown in Figure 1. DRP has been applied to POA in several aspects. For example, Ms Qiu Lin from Beijing University if Chemical Technology applied DRP and established an effective enabling model, which can improve and enable teaching effects. Associate Professor Sun Shuguang from Beijing Sports University applied DRP and optimized the theoretical system of Teacher-Student Collaborative Assessment. Ms Bi Zheng form Beijing Foreign Studies University applied DRP and summarized effective ways to improve enabling by correctly using teaching materials.

Figure 1. Theoretical System of DRP.

3. The Development of POA

According to the author, the development of POA falls into five stages as follows:

3.1 Stage One: Output-Driven Hypothesis

In 2007, Professor Wen put forward Output-driven Hypothesis, which was based on Output Hypothesis by Swain. There are differences between the two. Firstly, the target students are different. The target students for Output-driven Hypothesis are the language learners with middle or high language levels, while the target students for Output Hypothesis are all the language learners. Secondly, the learning environments are different. The learning environment for output-driven hypothesis is only the formal foreign language teaching class, while there is no limitation for the environment of output hypothesis. Thirdly, the demarcations of output are different. The output skills of Output-driven Hypothesis include speaking, writing, interpreting and translating, while the output skills of Output Hypothesis don’t include interpreting and translating. According to Output-driven Hypothesis, output has more effects than input, and should be used as starting point and ultimate objective for language teaching, which is thought good to activate students’ inert knowledge and to motive students to learn new knowledge. Output-driven Hypothesis has been
adopted by many university teachers to improve students’ speaking, writing, interpreting and translating, and has been proved quite effective.

3.2 Stage Two: Output-Driven, Input-Enabled Hypothesis

At the very first beginning, Output-driven Hypothesis mainly focused on improving students’ English skills. Later, it was tested to teach college English and received good results. And in 2014, Output-driven Hypothesis was developed in Output-driven, input-enabled Hypothesis. The followings are the features of this hypothesis. First, input is a means to enable students to finish their output tasks. Both teachers and students should select the important input materials and focus on them. Second, input should be linked well with output, and no gap between them is better. Third, it is required to take all the five English skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, interpreting and translating) into consideration. Forth, the output tasks in this hypothesis should aim at improving students cross-cultural communication abilities and their abilities to study and work in English. Fifth, this hypothesis emphasizes the important roles of teachers. According to the requirements of this hypothesis, teachers are not only facilitators, consultants and helpers in the class, but also designers, organizers, leaders and directors.

3.3 Stage Three: The Establishment of POA in 2015

With the joint efforts of Professor Wen Qiufang and related scholars and experts, Output-driven, Input-enabled Hypothesis developed into Product-oriented Approach, whose theoretical system (Figure 2) was finally formed in 2015. POA is made up three components, namely teaching principles, teaching hypotheses, and teaching procedures. In the theoretical system of POA in 2015, there are three principles (Learning-centered principle, Input-output integrated principle, and Whole-person education principle), three teaching hypotheses (Output-driven Hypothesis, Input-enabled Hypothesis, and Selective Learning Hypothesis), three teaching procedures (Motivating, Enabling and Assessing). In this system, teaching principles are the guiding thoughts and determines the teaching objectives, teaching hypotheses are the theoretical bases of each procedures and need to be applied to teaching procedures; teaching procedures are the means to achieve the principles and to test hypotheses. During the three procedures, teachers play a mediate role.

![Figure 2](image.png)

Figure 2. The Theoretical System of POA in 2015.

3.4 Stage Four: The Revised POA in 2017

With further researches and practices, the theoretical system of POA was changed as Figure 3 in 2017. Compared with the former system, the new system has several differences. First, Assessment Being Learning Hypothesis was added. This hypothesis requires students to assess themselves and classmates in the process of learning, which in turn can improve their learning. Teacher-students Collaborative Assessment (TSCA) is adopted to achieve the new hypothesis. TSCA is good to solve the problems of mono-assessment and the difficulties of heavy assessment tasks in class. There are
three phases for TSCA: pre-class, in-class and after-class. Before class, teachers should set several assessment examples. In class, students think independently, then communicate in pairs or groups and assess the classmates, during which teachers should guide the students and share the prepared assessment criteria. After class, students assess themselves and their partners according to teachers’ guidance to supplement TSCA. Second, teachers should play their guidance role in teaching procedures. Guidance role has clearer meanings for teachers, and can better guide their teaching. Third, the arrows among teaching procedures were changed from one-way arrows to two-way arrows. This change indicated that the three procedures are interconnected with each other with no strict boundaries. It also means that the teaching procedures make up a cycle, which illustrates the complexities and dynamics of teaching procedures.

![Diagram](image)

Figure 3. The Revised Theoretical System of POA in 2017.

### 3.5 Stage Five: The Further-Revised POA in 2018

On the third International Forum on Innovative Foreign Language Education in China, which was held in Beijing Foreign Studies University on May 12th, 2018, the theoretical system for further-revised POA (Figure 4) was introduced. There are several changes for this new system. First, Whole-person Education Principle was taken place by Multi-cultural Principle and Core competencies-targeted Principle. Improving students’ linguistic competence and cross-cultural communication competence are the overall goals of university English teaching, which can be better complied with by multi-cultural principle. Core competencies-targeted principle can guide teachers and students to select and concentrate on the proper abilities, which may include critical thinking ability, self-study ability, cross-cultural communication ability, academic ability, and professional ability, etc. Second, teaching procedures are made up many cycles of motivating, enabling, and assessing. This change indicated that every teaching objective can be divided into many sub-objectives, every teaching task can be divided into many sub-tasks, which can be achieved by many cycles of motivating, enabling and assessing. Third, teaching procedures need teachers’ guidance and the co-construction of both teachers and students. In class, both teachers and students are important, and they should join in all the teaching procedures.
4. The Problems of POA to Be Solved

After more than ten years’ development, POA has achieved great progress, but there are still some problems to be solved.

First, the application of POA to teaching interpreting and translating needs to be researched. According to POA, the production has different meanings with output, for the former includes speaking, writing, as well as interpreting and translating. But until now, almost all the researches and applications of POA are about speaking and writing. Whether POA is good for teaching interpreting and translating, and how does POA affect interpreting and translating teaching needs to be researched.

Second, a convenient way to record and calculate the assessment numbers is needed. The assessing of POA is very comprehensive, and TSCA has been heralded as a brand-new assessment. The author has found it is a big task to deal with so many number records, especially in a big class with many students. The author thinks it is possible to utilize advanced network techniques to help teachers to deal with the number records, which needs further researches.

Third, more researches about DRP need to be conducted. Many teachers are not familiar with DRP, a new research paradigm originated along with the development of POA. Therefore, more researches about DRP need to be conducted. For example, what are the differences between DRP and the other research methods, how to apply DRP to researches, and how does DRP affect foreign language teaching.

5. Conclusion

This paper clearly divides the development of POA into five stages and elaborates the innovations of each stage, so as to help readers to understand more about POA, and to promote the researches and applications of POA on foreign language teaching. In the last art of the paper, the author puts forward some problems to be solved in the near future, hoping that more experts can join in so as to further promote the research and applications of POA.

Notes

[1] This article is one of the research achievements of the project research The Application of Production-oriented Approach (POA) to Teaching Oral English for English Majors in Higher Vocational Colleges (18SB0701), funded by Ministry of Education in Sichuan Province and Sichuan Vocational and Technical College.

[2] Full acknowledgment and copyright is given to the source, permission of the publication has been granted by the author.
References


