A Study on Teaching Design of Senior High School English Writing Based on POA

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English writing is a vitally important component of English learning and teaching. However, the present situation of English writing teaching in the senior high school is not ideal. Both teachers and students stress little importance on English writing. PWP (pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing) teaching model is often adopted in the writing class by the teacher. Even though PWP has a set of clear procedures to make sure that the class proceeds smoothly, its teaching effect still needs to be improved. There still exists a series of problems in the process of English writing teaching in senior high school. Production-Oriented Approach (POA) is a new English teaching theory with Chinese characteristics put forward by Professor Wen Qiufang and her research team on the basis of the status quo of English teaching in China. This article attempts to apply POA to senior high school English writing teaching and has a discussion about how to do teaching design guided by POA to make up for the shortcomings of current English writing teaching. The study on teaching design is based on a teaching case given and analyzed in this article. This article also makes a general summary of advantages of senior high school English writing teaching design under the guidance of POA.

Keywords: POA, senior high school, English writing teaching design

Introduction

In this new era, English as a communication tool has become more and more important and popular. It is essential for English learners to acquire English writing skills and have the ability to write well.

Some requirements on writing are made in the English curriculum standards for senior high schools in China. However, according to the research papers I studied and my internship experience in a senior high school, findings are that nowadays many senior high school students are facing a lot of problems in the process of learning to write English compositions successfully, which makes an impact on the all-round development of language learning (Pan, 2020). Actually, there are only a few English writing lessons for high school students, during which teachers tend to adopt PWP model to teach. Here, PWP refers to pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing. Sometimes, teachers directly teach some words, phrases as well as sentence structures and then offer some related topics to students to write, during which students show little interest. In the process of teaching and learning, students cannot convert input into output well. Sometimes, input is not enough and comprehensive. They are still accustomed to make use of the previously established vocabularies, syntactic...
structures, and writing skills to write compositions. What they learned from classes is of little avail because they lack awareness to make full use of the input or they just have not access to enough input knowledge while writing. The reason for this is that they do not absorb knowledge fully in the class owning to the lack of production practice. What’s worse, sometimes their production bears no close relationship with input and the time span between learning and using is relatively long so students are inclined to forget what they have learned in the class soon. That timely feedback appraisals to students’ compositions are absent is another noticeable problem. It’s time to make changes.

**Production-Oriented Approach (POA)**

Nowadays, more and more people in China are involving themselves in learning English. Great importance has been placed on English learning and teaching. After explorations and attempts for a long time, POA is established by the Chinese scholar Wen Qiaofang with her research team (2015) based on the present situation of English teaching in China. POA is primarily based on the problem of separation between language learning and language using (Wen, 2017), mainly targeted at intermediate and advanced foreign language learners.

The POA theoretical system consists of three parts which are teaching concepts, teaching hypotheses, and teaching processes. These three parts are related with each other. “The teaching concepts are directions or guidelines of the other two parts. The teaching hypotheses are theoretical support of the teaching processes while the teaching processes are particular realizations of the other two parts” (Wen, 2015, p. 548).

The teaching concepts cover Learning-Centered Principle, Learning-Using Integrated Principle, and Whole-Person Education Principle. “Learning-Centered Principle advocates that all of the activities in the class ought to serve the happenings of effective learning” (Wen, 2015, p. 549). Learning-Using Integrated Principle advocates that learning and using should be integrated in the process of teaching. The time span between learning and using should not be too long (Wen, 2015). Whole-Person Education Principle holds the idea that education aims to cultivate students to be a full-developed person. Not only knowledge objectives but also humanistic objectives should be set in foreign languages’ teaching (Wen, 2015).

The teaching hypotheses are comprised of Output-Driven Hypothesis, Input-Enabled Hypothesis, Selective Learning Hypothesis. “Output-Driven Hypothesis advocates that output is the driving force as well as the goal of language learning” (Wen, 2015, p. 551). It is a new concept different from the traditional idea because it insists that the teaching order should be output-input-output. Input-Enabled Hypothesis goes that even though the teaching process begins with output, better learning effect can be obtained if appropriate input is provided at proper time (Wen, 2015). Selective Learning Hypothesis refers to the selection from the input material for in-depth learning according to the output demands (Wen, 2015).

The teaching processes involve three stages, motivating, enabling, and assessing.

**Teaching Design of Senior High School English Writing Based on POA**

This thesis aims to apply POA to senior high school English writing teaching and analyze a chosen case to see how to do teaching design in a more effective way. It will try to show clear and complete teaching steps through a case, which are presented in Table 1.
### Table 1

*Teaching Procedures of Senior High School English Writing Based on POA*

| Phase                     | Procedure                          | Teaching content (a case)                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Motivating phase**      | Presentation of a communication scene | Nowadays, more and more foreigners are interested in Chinese culture. The Spring Festival is coming. Oscar, one of your foreign friends, wants you to write an email in English to introduce the Spring festival in China to him. |
| Attempt to finish the communicative activity | Students are aware of the lack of related words, phrases, sentence structures and arrangements to express their meanings, thus leading to “a sense of hunger” and students’ strong desire to learn. |
| Description of teaching goals/production tasks | Communicative goal: to write an email in English to make the foreign friend well know the Spring Festival in China. Linguistic goal: to master the related words, phrases, sentence patterns and skills of paragraph arrangements needed to achieve the communicative goal. |
| **Enabling phase**        | Detailed description of production tasks | To make students clearly know every specific step to attain the communicative goal.                                                                                                                                        |
| Selective learning/input  | Based on the situation of students’ attempts to finish the communicative activity in the first phase, selected ideas, language forms and discourse structure are provided for students. |
| Production practice       | Students rewrite the email after input under the guidance and check of the teacher.                                                                                                                                     |
| **Assessing phase**       | Teacher-student collaborative assessment | Pre-classTeachers: carefully marking some typical students’ compositions handed in as samples and other compositions in a quick way.                                                                                   |
|                           | In-classStudents’ personal thinking—group discussion—teacher-guided class discussion—teachers’ summative evaluation of the samples.                                                                                         |
|                           | Post-classStudents’ self-evaluation and peer-evaluation.                                                                                                                                                                 |

**Motivating Phase**

The main task of the motivating phase is to effectively arouse students’ awareness of their shortcomings while doing the communicative activity and stimulate students’ initiative for learning. This phase contains three steps.

The first step is presentation of a communication scene. According to what will be taught in the English writing class and language ability of the students, the teacher constructs a proper communication scene. The communication scene in this teaching design is as follows, targeted at senior high school students. The Spring Festival is coming. Oscar, one of your foreign friends, wants you to write an email in English to introduce the Spring Festival in China to him. Before presenting the scene, the teacher can tell students that more and more foreigners are interested in Chinese culture at present and one of the main objectives of learning foreign languages is to spread Chinese culture, thus making students become more serious toward the given communicative activity and do better. After presenting the scene, the teacher can ask students to have a discussion about how to write the email within groups to stimulate students’ enthusiasm for the task.

The second step is students’ attempts to finish the communicative activity given in the first phase. Students are asked to write the email in English to introduce the Spring Festival by themselves after the discussion. By doing this, students can know that it is not easy to write the email and they are facing difficulties
in this communication scene. They begin to realize their lack of the related words, phrases, sentence patterns, and skills of writing to help complete the email. Some even will find that they lack knowledge about the Spring Festival. In this way, pressure is generated in students and their desire to learn is strengthened, thus listening to the class more carefully.

The third step is description of teaching goals and production tasks. The teaching goals are classified into two types: the communicative goal and the linguistic goal. The communicative goal refers to that students can finish the communicative activity successfully. The linguistic goal refers to that students need to master certain language knowledge and writing skills used for fulfilling the communicative goal. In this teaching design, the communicative goal is to write an email in English to make the foreign friend well know the Spring Festival in China. The linguistic goal is to master some certain English expressions concerning the Spring Festival, writing skills, and the mail format, all of which serve the communicative goal. Production tasks can be divided into in-class tasks and after-class tasks according to the time point. The former refers to the production tasks carried out at the same time while learning input material. The latter means the production tasks that students are required to finish after class. According to the difficulty level, production tasks include two types: for review and for transfer respectively. The former requires students to link all the subtasks done in the class together smoothly while the latter requires students to finish new tasks by using the abilities cultivated in the class. In this teaching design, an in-class production task is involved for review, which is writing the email well. After-class production tasks for transfer can also be arranged to help students consolidate what they learn in the class. Bear in mind that after-class tasks should be carefully checked by the teacher as well in a feasible way.

Enabling Phase

Enabling phase is a vitally important stage in the process of teaching to help students to be able to finish the above task. This phase involves three steps.

The first step is that the teacher makes a detailed description of the above production task. The whole production task is divided into several subtasks and each subtask should be told clearly to students to promote them to finish this whole production task. In this teaching design, the whole production task is writing an email to introduce the Spring Festival to Oscar. The subtasks are as follows. First of all, students learn how to express their meanings in English to well introduce the Spring Festival to a foreigner by acquiring related expressions. Secondly, students make use of those expressions to form complete sentences and pay attention to the structure of the writing to finish the email successfully.

The second step is selective learning or input. Input materials provided for students in this step are carefully chosen based on the communicative goal to serve the happenings of effective learning. In this teaching design, the input materials are offered to students based on the problems students have while making attempts to write the email in the second step of the first phase. This step aims to offer proper input materials to help students solve those problems or difficulties to finish the production task excellently. Here, the input materials may be background information about the Spring Festival, English expressions to describe this festival, skills of writing an email, and some sentence patterns etc. Each student chooses what they need from the input materials to finish the task under the guidance of the teacher.

The third step is production practice. After the input materials in the second step, students are supposed to be able to finish the production task better. In this teaching case, students are asked to rewrite the email with the
input materials. During the process of rewriting it, the teacher is responsible for checking and guiding students who still have difficulty in writing the email well to make sure that each student masters what has been taught in the class to finish the writing task.

**Assessing Phase**

Assessment is extremely critical and essential as for students’ progress in English writing. Senior high school teachers always ignore the importance of it during teaching. POA advocates Teacher-Student Collaborative Assessment (TSCA) to focus on the evaluation of students’ writing (Wen, 2016). The assessing phase fully demonstrates how to do TSCA, which contains three steps.

The first step is done before the class. The teacher chooses several emails or compositions handed in after rewriting as samples and seriously marks them before the class. Other compositions that have not been chosen as samples should also be marked in a quick way to find out the common mistakes and shortcomings existing in these writings and then remind students to do correction in the class by some specially designed exercises. This makes preparations for the next step.

The second step is finished in the class. To begin with, the teacher shows the chosen samples marked before the class to students and ask them to read as well as think carefully personally. Then try to lead them to have a group discussion about the merits and demerits of the several compositions. After group discussion, the teacher needs to involve himself/herself in the activity to have a class discussion about the samples. At last, the teacher makes a summative evaluation about the chosen sample based on the above discussions. By doing this, students have a clear understanding of evaluation criteria to help them evaluate compositions better after class. In addition, the exercises designed before the class based on the drawbacks of students’ writing should be presented in the class to help students make progress. The teacher and the students both take part in the formulation of evaluation criteria here in the process of discussing. Therefore, the evaluation criteria are supported by both of them.

The third step is conducted after class. Students are required to do self-evaluation and peer-evaluation of their emails or compositions carefully. The teacher would be better to check whether they do it or not. Furthermore, it is also advisable to make use of the machine to do evaluation to correct some basic mistakes.

After the three steps finished, it is believed that students will gain a lot.

**Advantages of Application to English Writing Teaching in Senior High School**

The teaching design done under the guidance of POA possesses its own advantages because POA contains some new concepts different from ideas involved in traditional teaching. It can be said the new concepts are definitely the advantages of senior high school English writing teaching design based on POA.

One of the new concepts lies in the beginning of the teaching process. Traditional idea is used to putting input as the beginning procedure. On the contrary, POA puts output as the beginning part. Output first can be said more reasonable and effective.

The second new concept is regarding teachers as directors. According to POA, teachers should be directors in the process of teaching, playing the role of scaffolding and guiding students to pick up knowledge step by step. In this way, teaching and learning efficiency will be enhanced.

The third new concept is integration of language learning and language using. Learning and using should be closely related. What students learn in the class should be relevant to their production to some degree.
Another new concept of POA is selective learning. Input materials are selected based on the communicative goal and students’ performance of finishing the communicative activity at the first time. Each student chooses what they want from the input materials and learn it deeply under the guidance of the teacher.

The last new concept stated here is TSCA, Teacher-Student Collaborative Assessment, constructed in POA to do assessment. Timely feedback on students’ compositions is well done under TSCA. Both the teacher and the students have the opportunity to do evaluation. They cooperate and make the writings more perfect step by step.

Conclusion

The study illustrates a senior high school English writing teaching case designed under the guidance of POA. Through the teaching design given in this study, readers are supposed to know how to design an English writing class for senior high school students.

Actually, some steps in the above teaching model can be challenging and quite difficult for teachers to take in the real life, such as what kind of communication scene is proper for presentation and how to choose input materials. While applying POA to English writing teaching, teachers are supposed to think over these questions carefully.

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