Research on English Vocabulary Teaching in Senior High Schools Based on the Production-Oriented Approach

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ABSTRACT. *For the sake of further exploring the solution to the "separation of learning and using" in senior high school English vocabulary teaching, based on the theoretical basis of the Production-oriented Approach (POA), the current situation is analyzed, which points out the "monotonous" problems in traditional teaching. According to the definition of POA, the author puts forward a new vocabulary teaching model. The exploration of this model shows that adopting a new form of "motivating-enabling-assessing", can mobilize students' learning initiative, closely integrate input and production, and improve the efficiency of students' direct conversion of receptive knowledge into application ability driven by production.*

KEYWORDS: *The production-oriented approach (poa), Senior high school english teaching, Vocabulary teaching*

1. Introduction

Vocabulary is the building material of language and the smallest language unit that can be used independently. The amount of vocabulary affects the development of students' comprehensive abilities, including the overall understanding of the article and effective communication. You cannot make sentences without vocabulary, just as you cannot build up a house without building materials. The famous British linguist Wilkin said, "*Without grammar very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed*[1]." In the "*General Senior High School English Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition 2020 Revision)*" (hereinafter referred to as "*the New Curriculum Standard*")[2], it points out that the content of the English curriculum is the basis for the development of the core competences of students in English subjects, and it also raises the requirement of students' ability in the aspect of vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, the importance of vocabulary teaching needs to be paid more attention to by senior high school English teachers.

2. Current Status of Vocabulary Teaching

In the "New Curriculum Standard", it is clear that the way to teach vocabulary under the guidance of key competences is not rote memorization or fixed practice, but to promote students' deeper understanding and more flexible use of learned words under authentic context. Under the guidance of students' various activities, students are familiar with vocabulary collocation and build a vocabulary network to expand vocabulary and promote the transfer and internalization of knowledge.

However, in view of the current situation of senior high school English vocabulary teaching, the following problems can still be found:

3. 1 "Monotonous" Teaching Purpose

In traditional teaching, students are required to memorize a large number of vocabulary and complicated usage in order to cope with exams. This focuses on letting students master a large number of unfamiliar vocabulary in a short time. However, indoctrination teaching ignores students' receptive abilities, makes students feel afraid of difficulties and loses interest in English vocabulary learning. Teachers usually implement the view of "practice makes perfect", which makes it difficult for students to understand how to use and why to use in English vocabulary learning[3]. Out of the authentic context, it is tough to improve the application ability.

3.1 "Monotonous" Teaching Activity

Under the limitation of traditional vocabulary teaching methods, teachers focus on the pronunciation and definition of words, ignoring the flexible usage of them. The design of teaching activities is rarely meaningful. Generally, it starts with vocabulary in textbook appendix. Teachers read new words, explains the meanings of the words in Chinese and English, give related phrase collocations and derived words, and then highlight some words and give some examples. Then they design fixed exercises to consolidate what they learned (such as: filling in the blanks, matching, spelling). It is obvious to find that in the whole class, teachers basically input new knowledge throughout the whole teaching process, and there are few interesting activities, while students concentrate on taking notes and doing exercises. Without meaningful activities in an authentic context, promoting the production and helping students internalize knowledge proves hard.

3.2 "Monotonous" Assessing Method

The way to test the mastery of students' vocabulary is generally done in class through simple exercises and dictation after class. Teachers believe that students' ability to complete this simple test is a sign of mastery of vocabulary, but the fixed and programmatic recitation of words does not give students targeted feedback and evaluation, which easily restricts students' vocabulary learning to rote learning. This

leads that students neglect the flexible use of vocabulary, and it is difficult to build a complete vocabulary network, thus reducing their desire to learn English.

To sum up, the "monotonous" traditional vocabulary teaching can no longer meet the requirements for students' comprehensive qualities in the new era. "Monotonousness" makes teachers and students ignore the importance of "production", especially in the authentic context. This leads students into plight, rather than improve students' vocabulary using level. In response to the phenomenon of "separation of learning and using", the author proposes senior high school English vocabulary teaching based on POA[4]. The "POA" will activate the teaching atmosphere with production as the starting point and goal, and let students selective learning based on students' weaknesses,which promotes the initiative of students, and builds a teacher-student collaborated assessment system with instant assessment and delayed assessment to promote the transfer and internalization of students' vocabulary learning.

4. Description and Explanation of the Poa

Influenced by Krashen and Swain, in order to solve the problem of mismatch between input and output capabilities, Professor Wen Qiufang and his team combined the characteristics of Chinese students and current situation of Chinese teaching, put forward the POA theoretical system[5].
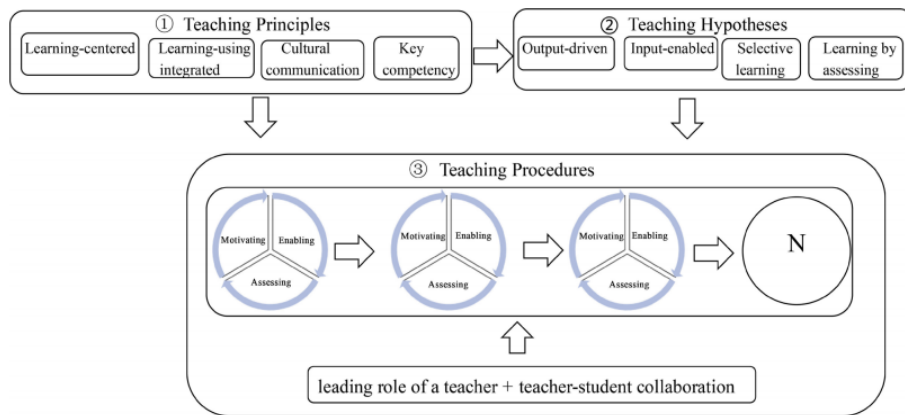

Fig.1 The Fifth Stage: Re-Revised Poa (Cited from Wen, 2018)

After more than ten years of continuous improvement and modification, the POA theoretical system includes three parts: teaching principles, teaching hypotheses, and teaching procedures. By setting up reasonable production tasks to encourage students to study purposefully, and then promoting language learning and language output through purposeful input, POA's "output-input-output" sequence replaces the

traditional "input-output" sequence. It can be said that the POA theory is proposed in response to the special circumstances of our foreign language education[6]. POA is not simply an improvement of teaching design, but also a great improvement in the relationship between teachers and students

The teaching principles in the POA system plays a guiding role and leads the overall teaching direction; the teaching hypotheses provides a theoretical basis for the teaching procedures under the leadership of the teaching principles; the teaching procedure is the specific step that realizes the teaching principles and teaching hypotheses. The teaching principles include four aspects: the learning-center principle, the Learning-using integration principle, the cultural communication principle and the key competency principle. Among them, the "key competency principle" means that the ultimate goal of foreign language teaching is to improve students' six key competencies (linguistic ability, learning ability, speculative ability, cultural ability, innovation ability and cooperation ability), which is in line with the content of key competences in *the new curriculum standard.* The teaching hypotheses include four parts: Output-driving hypothesis, Input-enabled hypothesis, Selective-learning hypothesis and Learning by assessing hypothesis. The teaching procedures consist of three core parts: one is "motivating". Teachers design appropriate communication context and tasks with "potential communicative value" to inspire students' enthusiasm for completing tasks, enhance their motivation for learning, and guide students into the "Hunger state"; the second is the "enabling", in which combining productive goals and students' abilities,students need to select the materials by themselves under the guidance of the teacher; the third is "assessing". It is divided into instant assessment and delayed assessment. Teachers play the role of "scaffolding" in the entire teaching procedures. From a vertical perspective, teachers subdivide a large productive task into several small tasks. When arranging the tasks, teachers gradually increase the difficulty according to the level of the students to help students continue to study further. From a horizontal perspective, teachers need to provide different levels of help when students complete each task. The teaching procedures in the new POA system realize the interaction and circulation of the three core parts in the form of a circular chain. Small cycles drive the whole cycle, so as to achieve the teaching objectives.

5. Teaching Procedure Based on Poa

Based on the relevant theories of POA, this research constructs a new vocabulary teaching model[7]. In this model, production is the end, the starting point, and the process. The teaching model focuses on production, designing teaching activities that conform to the concept of English learning activities. Now take *Unit 2 Wildlife Protection*, from *the compulsory textbook of "General High School Textbook English* issued by *the People's Education Edition of 2019*, as an example to discuss the vocabulary teaching model based on POA theory.

5.1 Theme

This unit focuses on the topic of wildlife protection. This lesson learns vocabulary related to wildlife protection. Teaching design is carried out according to the three links of "motivating - enabling - assessing". The teacher designs the context which has the communication demand, exercises the students' spoken language ability and enhances the student productive level.

5.2 Teaching Objectives

Through teaching this class, students learn to use vocabulary related to wildlife protection, including parts of speech, definitions, phrases, etc., and students can be familiar with debate about wildlife in English, in order to improve their oral expression skills and vocabulary mastery. At the same time, it can also improve students' strong awareness of animal protection.

5.3 Teaching Process

The teaching model is divided into three stages: pre-class, while-class, and post-class integrated the theory of POA. The following is the specific teaching procedures:

6. "Motivating"-- Production is the Starting Point

The "motivating" part is divided into three teaching steps: "teacher presents a communicative context"; "students try to complete communicative tasks"; "teacher explains teaching objectives and productive tasks"[8]. The teacher first creates an authentic communication context for the students, and then the communication task should be difficult and challenging, but not too hard. This task should make the students "willing to say something and have something to say" in the process of completing the task. Students will find that they are lack of abilities, so "hunger" is felt and stimulate them to drive to learn. At this time, the teacher releases the productive task to allow them to further clarify the teaching objectives.

In the lesson preparation stage, teacher can record a micro-lecture of about 10 minutes, which tells how the various challenges have brought to the brink of extinction from the perspective of wild animals . After watching on the Xuexitong platform, students have to complete two corresponding questions: 1. Who caused most of these challenges? 2. If you are a worker in a reserve, what will you tell others about the current situation of these animals? 3. What do you think is the real protection of wild animals? By watching the micro-lecture, students can better enter the teaching context preset by the teacher. When completing the productive task, the students would realize that their vocabulary is insufficient and the words are not satisfactory when expressing, which inspires students' enthusiasm for learning. At the same time, teachers conduct online tutoring and evaluation on the difficult points raised by students.

7. "Enabling" -- Production is the Process

In the "enabling" part, teacher should design it closely following the concept of "Learning in use, using in learning". In the enabling part, the text is no longer the center of teaching, but the contributing material of the auxiliary productive task. All the teaching activities of the teacher should focus on the productive task and take it as the center to achieve the learning, so as to reach the aims of learning. In this part, the teacher's task is to "check" and "guide". The "check" is simply check the completion of the students' tasks. The "guide" means that the teacher will act as a "scaffolding" during the completion of the tasks, guiding the students to select more appropriate input materials for the productive tasks, and conduct a series of selective learning to facilitate the better completion of the tasks[10].

While teaching, the teacher first reviews the completion of the tasks assigned to the students, summarizes the vocabulary questions raised by the students before the class, and answers again to help students clarify their learning goals. Then the teacher leads the students to enjoy some pictures about the key vocabulary of this unit. After enjoying it, the teacher turns off the multimedia and let students try to recall what they just saw and write it on the draft paper. After that, students need to search for the corresponding type of vocabulary from the textbook and have a group discussion to summarize the types of target vocabulary . Taking the difficulty of completing tasks into consideration, teacher can subdivide the tasks into several small tasks, and then use a variety of teaching activities to consolidate what they learned, including giving students examples, comparing synonyms and antonyms, and doing performances, so as to make the abstract words vivid and independent words connected in series. Then the teacher analyzes the task and emphasizes that the vocabulary is the basis of communication, guiding the students to pay attention to the details of words. Furthermore, by providing the students with several articles about wildlife protection, students are guided to extract useful information from the materials with questions, and make mind maps. At the same time, the teacher briefly analyzes the key points in the materials to help them accumulate the necessary vocabulary. Afterwards, based on the material information and the vocabulary learned, the teacher put forward the debate question "Which is one more important, the interests of human beings or the protection of wild animals?" The students are divided into two sides to debate. In the process of production, students creatively use the words they have learned to express their critical opinions. The audience are asked to record the debaters' opinions and their suggestions, which can help students learn from each other. Finally, the teacher summarizes the meaning of the debate theme, immediately evaluates the students' presentation, and points out the students' advantages and improvement.

The author designed this part from the three aspects of details, linguistic usage and framework, with the purpose of satisfying the conditions of gradualness, precision and diversity. "Dual-master" teaching methods ,which is both teacher-led and student-led, is focused on helping students build vocabulary networks more quickly and using vocabulary for effective production.

8. "Assessing" -- Production is the Result

The assessment in traditional English teaching is basically monotonous, which cannot effectively stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning English. The "assessment" of POA is divided into "instant assessment" and "delayed assessment", both of which are "teacher-student collaborated assessment". It is advocated that the assessment of productive results should give play to the subjective initiative of multiple subjects, encourage students to participate, and improve students' positivity[9]. In addition, the assessment methods are diversified. Instant assessment refers to when students complete basic productive tasks, teachers make instant assessment and remedial teaching, which enables teachers to take great effect and effectively control the rhythm of the lesson. Delayed assessment means that students are required to complete the corresponding paper assignments and other tasks after class, and then give them to the teacher for unified correction and evaluation, and then conduct mutual assessment by students. This can save class time and pay more attention to grasping the key points in teaching tasks, which appreciates the allocation of time to achieve complementary advantages.

In this lesson, in the process of students' production, the teacher can make "instant assessment " on the students. As for students' performance in the process of selective learning and debate tasks, the teacher must affirm the students' desire for expression and vocabulary mastery, but also point out the obvious mistakes in the use of vocabulary to correct and remedial teaching. After class, the teacher assigns homework on the learning platform, "Please use the vocabulary learned in this class to record a speech, the topic is what we should do to protect wild animals?". Based on the frequency , accuracy of the target vocabulary and the logic of the speech content, students are allowed to conduct group evaluations. After the students' peer assessment and self assessment, teacher will conduct scoring and targeted assessment in order to achieve the purpose of review and migration. When students assess each other, they are reminded of the "identity conversion". They play the role of teachers at this time, helping students understand the error-prone points of other students, for the sake of encouraging them to learn from each other and improve their learning initiative.

8.1 Teaching Reflection

In general, after applying the POA teaching model, the author found that the teaching atmosphere has changed significantly. Students' laziness and negativity in English learning have been greatly improved. First of all, unlike previous monotonous and boring teaching tasks, POA adopts a cyclic task chain to gradually guide students to effectively production. In addition, under the POA model, teachers construct authentic communication contexts, arrange activities with communicative purposes, and provide effective input materials, for the purpose of helping students transform receptive knowledge into productive knowledge. Finally, the assessment method of POA is changed from teacher-centered assessment to teacher-student collaborated assessment, with the aim of realizing "learning by assessing" and

improving the effectiveness of student learning. When using the POA model, The concept "production is the starting point; production is the process, and production is the end" has always been closely linked to the teaching procedure. In the motivating part, productive tasks guide students to realize their own shortcomings and arouse students' "sense of hunger". In the enabling part, with the aid of input materials, the productive task chain is continuously deepened from easy to difficult, and students expand their own accumulation of new knowledge in the authentic communicative context created by the teacher. In the assessing part, the assessment of students is no longer limited to fixed exercises and examinations, but in the practical use of students' linguistic abilities. When students express their critical opinions, it is not difficult to find that their comprehensive abilities can be improved, under the guidance of the new curriculum standard.

9. Conclusion

Vocabulary teaching plays a very important role in second language teaching, which is the foundation of English learning. Only by laying a good foundation can we conduct in-depth English learning. This article points out the three "monotonous" problems in traditional senior high school English vocabulary teaching. Aiming at the students' problems of "separation of learning and using", the author designed a POA-based vocabulary teaching model. POA advocates the teaching concept of "integration of learning and using". The students' "learning" and "using" are closely combined, and the innovative teaching model of "motivating-enabling-assessing" is used[10]. The gradual task improves students' linguistic abilities and stimulates students' interest in English learning, which should be in line with the actual level of the students, and ensure "effectiveness". In the authentic communicative context, with the support of productive materials and the guidance of teachers, POA helps students transform receptive knowledge into productive knowledge, which is conducive to promoting the overall development of students. Therefore, in the era of rapid development of modern information, more excellent senior high school English teachers can make much attempts based on POA, with the aim of getting out of the dilemma of input and production, and promoting students' improvement of comprehensive ability.

Acknowledgement

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