An Exploration of IELTS Writing Teaching Based on the Production-Oriented Approach

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Abstract: In response to the common problems in college English writing teaching, such as the separation of learning and application, students' low interest in writing, and difficulties in expression, this paper, based on the theoretical framework of the production-oriented approach (POA) proposed by Professor Wen Qiufang, designed and implemented a set of IELTS writing teaching plan. This plan takes "motivating, enabling, and assessing" as the core teaching process, and selects typical IELTS argumentative essay topics (such as food diversity) to create real communication scenarios. In the motivating stage, diverse inputs are used to stimulate students' interest and expose their language weaknesses; in the enabling stage, language knowledge, viewpoint generation, and text structure are focused on for targeted input and training; in the assessing stage, a combination of teacher-student cooperation and peer evaluation is adopted to guide students to identify and correct deficiencies in language use. The research results show that the POA model can effectively enhance students' writing interest, active learning awareness, and writing ability, particularly in overcoming vocabulary poverty and material shortages, as well as improving language accuracy and expression richness. This provides an operational theoretical basis and practical path for improving the teaching effect of IELTS writing.

Keywords: Production-oriented approach; IELTS writing; Teaching practice

1. Introduction

English is the most widely used official language in the world. Writing ability is one of the five basic skills of English learners, which can fully reflect the comprehensive English ability of English learners. Writing a beautiful English article has high requirements for learners' thoughts, vocabulary, grammar, language organization, and appropriateness.

Research shows that for most English learners, English writing is the most difficult. At the same time, in the study of college English majors, English writing has consistently been a weak area, and learners generally face challenges in writing, including incoherent expression, poor logic, single structure, lack of interest and confidence, and even a fear of writing. In addition, the domestic English writing teaching mode still has the

problem of "ignoring output and paying attention to input," resulting in poor teaching effects and an inability to effectively improve students' writing levels.

To solve the problem of the separation of learning and application in English teaching, Professor Wen Qiufang put forward the theory of "learning-applying integration," which is a part of the Production-Oriented Approach (POA). Based on this approach, this study designed a college English IELTS writing teaching scheme around the three core teaching phases of motivating, enabling, and assessing.

2. The theory of production-oriented approach

As an English teaching model based on the "output-driven hypothesis," the POA theory derives from the effect of output in language learning. In 2014, at the 7th International Seminar on English Teaching in China, POA was officially named and established as a complete teaching theoretical system. The theory includes the teaching principles, teaching hypotheses, and teacher-mediated teaching process, in which the teaching process emphasizes three core phases: motivating, enabling, and assessing[1].

POA theory places special emphasis on the active participation and practical output of students in the teaching process. In the motivating phase, students find potential problems and obstacles in time through initial output attempts, to stimulate them to make targeted and effective input in subsequent learning. In this process, the input materials provided by the teacher are closely integrated with the output tasks of the students, ensuring that the input can effectively promote the improvement of the students' language understanding and ideation ability[2].

The hypothesis of "output-driven" and "input-enabled" is one of the core theories of POA, which points out that students first try to produce in real communication situations, and then solve the problems encountered in the production process through input materials. This way can help students find and make up for their shortcomings in practice, so as to better complete the task of language production. Through this output-driven learning process, students can experience the practical application of language learning, improve their interest in output and enthusiasm, and effectively reduce the negative impact caused by writing anxiety.

Under the framework of POA theory, the final phase of teaching is assessing, which is not only the feedback of students' achievements but also carries the function of promoting students' further learning. Through the cooperative evaluation between teachers and students, students can identify the blind spots in the use of language in the process of self-reflection, and improve them in subsequent learning, forming a virtuous learning cycle. The practical application of this theory, whether in the theoretical research of college English writing teaching or practice, has important historical and practical significance, which is helpful in effectively improving students' writing ability and language application level.

3. IELTS writing teaching practice based on the production-oriented approach

In this study, the author chose the topic of the IELTS essay "In many countries, people eat a wide variety of food today. As a result, they eat food from other regions rather than local food. Do you think the advantages of development outweigh the disadvantages?" to conduct teaching practice. This topic is realistic and communicative. With the advancement of globalization, people in more and more countries and regions are beginning to know and enjoy food from other countries and regions. This phenomenon not only reflects the change in people's lifestyle but also has a profound impact on social culture, health, and economic development. Students already have a certain cognitive basis for food and cultural diversity, but they still need further

language input and skills improvement in terms of material collection, viewpoint statement, and the accuracy and richness of language expression [3].

3.1. Teaching practice: Motivating

In the teaching process based on the POA theory, the motivating stage is the beginning of the whole teaching process. At this stage, teachers create specific communication scenes and discussion topics, provide diversified input materials combined with an intelligent teaching platform, encourage students to choose learning content independently, and then guide students to initially complete the output task [4].

In practice, the author designed the following teaching process: First, by presenting pictures and videos related to the diversity of food culture, the teacher led the students to discuss "How do people find and eat food from other regions in the context of globalization?" Students are also asked to list some words related to this topic, such as "cultural diversity," "traditional food," and "foreign cuisine," so as to create a communicative scene. Then, the teacher played videos related to the food culture of different countries, and the students obtained relevant topic vocabulary from the videos and conducted group discussions on "the impact of food diversity on health" and "the impact of eating foreign food on traditional food culture" [5]. The main purpose of this session is to stimulate students' interest in the topic and make them aware of the difficulties and shortcomings they may encounter in the process of language expression.

On this basis, teachers further define the teaching objectives and output tasks, including: firstly, communicative objectives, that is, students can clearly express and demonstrate their own views; secondly, the language goal is that students can master the vocabulary, phrases, and sentence patterns related to food diversity, and be familiar with the relevant discourse structures. In this process, the first output task requires students to work in small groups to create "pros and cons" mind maps that demonstrate the social, economic, cultural, and health impacts of food diversity. The second output task is for the group to select representatives to present their views on the pros and cons of food diversity to the class and suggest possible solutions [6]. Ultimately, students will write an argumentative essay on food diversity, addressing the impact of globalization on food culture and the pros and cons it brings. In this motivating session, the author aims to break the single brainstorming mode of traditional IELTS writing classes, help students accumulate materials, and stimulate students' "sense of need" for task completion by enhancing their interest [3].

3.2. Teaching practice: Enabling

The enabling stage is the core phase in the teaching process. At this stage, teachers help students master language forms, viewpoint expression, and structure construction through targeted teaching activities, so as to better complete output tasks and improve learning results [7].

In the enabling process, the aim is to help students overcome the common problems of poor vocabulary and insufficient materials in IELTS writing, further improve students' language ability and prepare for the final production task. For this purpose, the author selected an article on food diversity and the impact of globalization as input material to help students form personal opinions, master relevant language, and understand the application of the article structure. This part mainly focuses on three aspects: language, viewpoint, and structure [5].

First of all, in the language enabling stage, students will read globalization, dietary habits, cultural exchange, etc., and learn the core vocabulary involved in the article; and through filling in the blanks matching questions and other activities to deepen the understanding and application of these words. At this stage, teachers use concept test questions (CCQ) to confirm students' mastery of these words [4]. Secondly, in the

perspective-making stage, the teacher asked the question "If you are a protector of food culture, how do you view the diversity of food brought about by globalization?" Guide students to extract key ideas from the text, and encourage students to use newly learned vocabulary to express their own opinions, in order to enhance the fluency and variety of their language expression. Finally, in the structure enabling stage, teachers help students analyze the structure of the article, including background introduction, article theme, examples, details and solutions, and then draw a mind map to help students understand the logical framework of the article. In this process, students need to pay attention to the logical connectives in the essay, such as "for example," "as a result," "therefore," and use the newly learned vocabulary and connectives in group discussions and short statements [8].

In addition, students will analyze another argumentative essay related to food diversity and its impact on health, learn its structure, and copy it in preparation for the final writing task [6]. Through this series of activities, students can not only improve their language skills, but also organize ideas reasonably in specific writing tasks, and enhance the accuracy of critical thinking and expression.

3.3. Teaching practice: Assessing

The assessing stage is the last phase of the POA teaching process, which aims to promote the consolidation and strengthening of knowledge through the feedback of students' output [9]. At this stage, teachers accurately assess students' performance and help them find weak points in their learning, so as to improve them in subsequent learning.

For the design and evaluation of the output task, the author adopts specific evaluation standards and methods, aiming at improving students' writing ability and language application level. In the first output task, the author designed an evaluation table and asked students to evaluate each other. The evaluation criteria mainly included the number of new words used and whether the displayed content covered the five key points in the mind map (cause, consequence, influence, solution, etc.). The grading range is set at 1–10 points to ensure that students are able to fully express their opinions and make proper use of newly learned vocabulary and phrases during the presentation [9]. For the second output task, the teacher evaluates the student representative's presentation and records the vocabulary and grammar problems that arise during the presentation. After the presentation, the teacher will list these questions on the blackboard, and guide the students to revise and reflect on themselves, so as to deepen their understanding and memory of language knowledge. This process not only helps students identify their shortcomings in language use but also encourages them to deepen their mastery of language structure in the process of correcting mistakes [7].

Finally, students will write an argumentative essay on food diversity and its impact, graded using a collaborative assessment approach. In the scoring process, students will evaluate each other according to the four IELTS scoring criteria, select the article with the highest score in the group, and submit it to the WeChat group. In this section, the teacher makes detailed comments, with special emphasis on grammar errors, and helps students better understand and correct them through examples put forward by students themselves. In addition to grammar errors, teachers will also comment on each of the other three criteria (task response, coherence and cohesion, and vocabulary resources) to ensure that students can comprehensively improve their ability in the writing process [3].

Through the above three teaching phases, the output-driven teaching mode not only effectively helps students improve their language ability and writing skills, but also promotes students' active learning and participation in communication and writing tasks, and finally achieves remarkable teaching effects.

4. Conclusion

This study explores the practice of IELTS writing teaching based on the POA theory, aiming to improve students' writing ability through three core phases: motivating, enabling, and assessing. Through the creation of real communication situations, to stimulate students' interest in writing, and through carefully designed teaching activities to help students overcome the lack of vocabulary and materials and other problems. The research shows that the POA model effectively promotes students' active learning and language production, especially in improving the accuracy and richness of language expression. Through the cooperation between teachers and students, students can find and correct the deficiencies in language use in a timely manner. In the future, the application of the POA model can be further expanded to other English writing fields, and the teaching design can be optimized with a variety of technical means to promote the comprehensive improvement of students' language ability. In addition, exploring how to flexibly use POA in different language learning environments will provide a broader development prospect for English teaching.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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