



Application of Production-oriented Approach in College Integrated English Teaching -under the Background of Curriculum Ideological and Political Education

Ma Shuning

Inner Mongolia Honder College of Arts and Sciences, Huhhot, China

Email: shuningm@163.com

Abstract: The Production-Oriented Approach, a foreign language teaching method with Chinese characteristics founded by Wen Qiufang, has been developed over the past decade with the goal of enhancing the quality of English instruction in higher education settings across China. This paper aims to apply this theory to the teaching framework of ideological and political education within integrated English courses and subsequently evaluate its effectiveness. A specific case study, centered on the text “Spring Sowing” from a Contemporary College English Reading course, demonstrates the practical implementation of ideological and political education using the POA. The paper describes the teaching design of this unit within the POA framework, encompassing the motivating, enabling, and assessing stages. Additionally, students’ feedback following the implementation of this teaching approach highlights its positive impact on linguistic advancement, thematic comprehension, and appreciation for farmer-related themes. The study’s findings demonstrate that a college integrated English course based on the POA seamlessly integrates language knowledge with ideological and political elements, resulting in a noticeable enhancement in teaching quality and efficacy. It demonstrates the feasibility and effectiveness of incorporating ideological and political education within English language instruction using the POA framework, offering valuable insights for future curriculum development and implementation in Chinese higher education.

Keywords: Production-Oriented Approach, ideological and political education, integrated English

1. Introduction

In May 2020, the Chinese Ministry of Education issued the *Guidelines for the Construction of Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Institutions*^[1], which emphasized the need to comprehensively promote ideological and political education in universities and make the most of the nurturing role of every course. In the process of advancing comprehensive ideological and political education in the curriculum, many universities are actively engaging in the exploration of incorporating ideological and political elements into their foreign language courses. Various methods are tried by foreign language teachers in their classrooms to imbed the ideological and political education into daily teaching activities. In the current context of ideological and political education development in higher education institutions, this study employs the Production-Oriented Approach to explore how to seamlessly integrate ideological and political elements into college-level English instruction. The goal is to genuinely incorporate the objective of moral and intellectual development into the curriculum, thus aiding students in enhancing their cultural literacy, establishing their right values, and cultivating their patriotism and cultural identity. The intention is to offer valuable insights for the integration of ideological and political education into university-level English courses.

2. Production-Oriented Approach and Ideological and political education

2.1 An Overview of Production-Oriented Approach

The Production-Oriented Approach, put forward by Wen Qiufang, comprises three main components: teaching principles, teaching hypotheses, and the teacher-mediated teaching process^[2]. These elements provide a comprehensive framework for enhancing English language education at the tertiary level. Firstly, POA corporates the core principles that guide the teaching process such as Learning-Centered Principle, which emphasizes the importance of purposeful classroom activities designed to ensure effective learning for students; Learning-Using Integration Principle, which stresses providing opportunities for students to actively practice these elements in activities focusing on productive skills such as speaking, writing, translation, and interpreting; and Whole-Person Education Principle, which encourages students’ autonomous learning and the development of cultural awareness, rather than language proficiency only. Secondly, teaching hypotheses of POA revolves around teaching strategies, consisting of Output-Driven Hypothesis, which places emphasis on language output in the learning process; Input-Enabling Hypothesis, which suggests that all materials should be related to the main productive activity to provide maximum input; and Selective Learning Hypothesis. Thirdly, teaching process consists of three stages within the POA framework: motivating, enabling, and assessing.

[Received 10 Oct 2023; Accepted 17 Dec 2023]; Published (online) 31, December, 2023]



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Specifically, in the motivating phase, the teacher introduces a communicative scenario designed to pique students' interest and readiness for communication. Learners engage in productive activities, revealing gaps in their linguistic knowledge, motivating them to acquire missing elements. Then, during the enabling stage, the teacher explains linguistic forms, enabling students to understand and use them. Students read, listen, and practice the linguistic elements, while the teacher provides support and guidance as needed. In the final assessing phase, students and the teacher collaboratively establish assessment criteria. Students submit assignments that are evaluated by the teacher and, subsequently, by themselves.

Currently, numerous educational experiments in China related to POA have contributed valuable practical insights and instructional lessons for shaping the theoretical framework. These studies vary in their focal points, with some studies focusing on the interpretation of the theoretical principles of POA^{[3][4][5][6]}, which make it clear of the teaching concept, teaching assumptions and teacher-mediated teaching process of POA; some concentrating on the implementation of specific aspects within the teaching process, such as motivating, facilitating, and assessing stages^{[7][8][9]}, which demonstrate the model of how to apply POA in classrooms step by step; Others delving into exploring the application of POA within particular courses or individual units^{[10][11][12]}, in which writing courses with specific output aims are mainly discussed. However, limited research concerning POA focus on integrated English course especially at college level, let alone imbedding the ideological and political education into the course design based on POA theory.

2.2 Ideological and Political Education in Integrated English Course at College

Ideological and political education is of great importance in foreign language teaching in college level. In the process of teaching integrated English courses, it is vital to incorporate the core terminology of humanities disciplines, fostering effective communication. It is essential to move beyond passive acceptance of knowledge solely from Western languages, cultures, literature, sociology, and philosophy. Instead, we emphasize the incorporation of traditional Chinese culture, the richness of ancient civilization, and the essence of our value system. This integration serves to highlight the significance of our cultural heritage.

Meanwhile, college-level education is a pivotal period for the formation of one's worldview and values. Integrated English courses are typically undertaken by freshmen and sophomores at college, who are in a phase when their worldviews are in the process of taking shape. Therefore, ideological and political education elements should be seamlessly intertwined with language, literature, society, and cultural themes present in the teaching materials. These elements need to be closely linked to students' real-life experiences. By connecting humanistic knowledge with individual experiences and real-life situations, we aim to bridge the gap between abstract concepts and tangible understanding. This approach ensures that students not only gain knowledge but also internalize it. During classroom instruction, this connection between humanistic knowledge and real-life experiences empowers the effective integration of ideological and political education into foreign language teaching. By relating ideological and political education to students' personal lives and individual experiences, we promote a deeper understanding that facilitates the internalization of these concepts.

Ideological and political education within integrated English courses should establish a strong connection with students' personal lives and individual experiences. This approach serves to expand students' perspectives and enhance their analytical, appreciative, and evaluative abilities during the learning process. It is well echoed with the teaching philosophy of POA, which includes learning center theory, learning and application integration theory and whole person education theory. Thus, this study tries to incorporate the ideological and political education with POA teaching in college-level integrated English courses. Section 3 demonstrate an implementation case in detail.

3. Practical Implementation of Ideological and Political Education based on POA: A Case of *Spring Sowing* in Integrated English Course

The author chose the text *Spring Sowing* from Contemporary College English Reading in integrated English course to explore the integration of ideological and political education in various aspects of teaching under the guidance of the Production-Oriented Approach. The research question of this study is (1) how the course is designed based on POA (2) how the ideological and political elements are incorporated in the POA teaching stages (3) what are the feedbacks from the students on the implementation of the ideological and political education based on POA.

In the following sections, the author will illustrate the teaching objectives and teaching procedures within the framework of POA in detail, aiming to present the whole picture of implementing the ideological and political education in a designed course based on POA.

3.1 Teaching Objectives

The teaching objectives of the selected lesson cover the following two aspects:

1) Language Knowledge and Skills Objectives:

- a. To be able to use vocabulary related to the unit's theme, as well as additional vocabulary, to describe the appearance, psychology, language, actions of characters, and the settings where the story takes place.
- b. To be able to analyze and summarize the "peasant image" in the story materials, and to collect and analyze data to compare and contrast the "peasant image" from both historical and contemporary perspectives, as well as from both

domestic and international perspectives (the traditional agricultural conditions and the modernization of agriculture, as well as Ireland and China mentioned in the text).

c. To be able to vividly depict character images and logically advance the story’s plot.

2) Moral Education Objectives:

a. To be able to recognize the positive aspects of the peasant image and the valuable qualities of peasants.

b. To understand and appreciate the love of the land by the peasants as well as the significance of the land to the peasants in the story.

c. To have a profound understanding of the importance of advancing agricultural modernization and accelerating the construction of a strong agricultural nation.

3.2 Teaching Procedures based on POA

1) Motivating Phase

Prior to the teaching of the unit Spring Sowing, the teacher initiated an overall motivating task. Students were assigned the task of writing about “One Day of Farming” and were encouraged to share their work on the public platform of the Foreign Language Institute.

Through the analysis of students’ initial attempts, the teacher had identified some common problems in students’ writing, such as the absence of detailed character descriptions, a lack of vibrancy in depicting character actions, emotions, and dialogues, as well as the need to enhance the prominence of the farmer image.

Guided by the overarching motivating task “One Day of Farming”, four sub-motivating tasks have been designed for different class sessions as: Task1 “Character portrayal through appearance, actions, and psychological activities”; Task 2 “Setting the scene and advancing the storyline through descriptions of time, place, and surroundings”; Task 3 “Constructing characters and the story through character actions and relationships”; and Task 4 “Displaying character images and highlighting the story’s theme through character dialogues”.

This study focuses on the motivating task 4, and in the following enabling phase, activities were primarily designed specific to motivating task 4.

2) Enabling Phase

By analyzing students’ attempted writing outputs, main problems were diagnosed as: insufficient specificity in character descriptions, lack of vividness in portraying character actions, psychology, and dialogues, and insufficient emphasis on the peasant image. To help students make improvements in these aspects, activities were designed as presented in the following table.

Teaching Steps	Enabling Activities
Step1: Revisiting Character Portrayal and Reviewing Story Context	Activity 1: Display students’ painting work and summarize features of character images.
Step 2: Focusing on Dialogue Skills and Understanding Character Development	Activity 2: Play the roles of the peasants (the old and the younger) in the text, then discuss and analyze the dialogues to identify “what the old peasant is like”.
	Activity 3: Filling Blanks to practice using various verbs to replace the general verbs like “say” with specific verbs like “call”, “mutter”, “reply”, “wheeze”, “grumble”, etc.
Step 3: Focusing on Dialogue Content to Explore the Theme	Activity 4: Understanding the theme by doing True or False exercise, and encourage students to find out evidence to their answers. a. The old man is satisfied with Martin and Mary’s work. b. The young couple "paid no heed to the old man" because what he said was wrong. c. The younger generation is not as hardworking as the older generation.
	Activity 5: Brainstorming and group discussing on “the similarities and differences between Martin and Martin’s grandfather, understanding how the times are changing and how the "changed" and "unchanged" aspects of the peasant image and qualities are reflected (e.g., how "hardworking" for peasants has different standards in today's world compared to the past). Further, guide students to recognize the importance of "agricultural modernization" and "building a strong agricultural nation" for ordinary people.
Step 4: Summarizing Dialogue Writing Skills to Depict the Character Images	Activity 6: Summarize different dialogue forms and features by doing the given exercises, and help students aware the significance of using dialogue writing skills in portraying character images and

and Enhance the Theme by Linking to Extended Reading	driving the story’s plot. Activity 7: Assign homework: Download and read an excerpt from “Understanding Contemporary China - English Reading and Writing Course” and complete the corresponding discussion questions on the daily assignment platform, aiming to reiterate the unit’s theme, “Deepening Understanding of Peasant Image and Qualities; and the Importance of Agricultural Modernization”.
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Table 1: Teaching Plan under POA

3) Assessing Phase

After the enabling phase, students were asked to finish motivating task 4. Specifically, students were required to write a dialogue for the farmer characters working in the field. Through this dialogue, they were expected to showcase the characters’ personalities and reveal the theme they want to highlight.

The output is the core of the Production-Oriented Approach (POA), and timely and effective evaluation of students’ output results is particularly crucial^[7]. In the assessing phase, under the guidance of the POA, the TSCA (Teacher-Student Collaborative Assessment) method, which involves self-assessment, peer assessment, group evaluation, and teacher assessment, was employed. With the teacher’s guidance, students conducted self-assessment and peer assessment within their groups, taking the criteria as effort, progress, personal cognition, emotional development, values, and other aspects into evaluation. Based on their self-assessment and reflections, students promptly adjust their learning goals. Peer assessment and group evaluation play a positive role in complementing strengths and learning from each other’s strengths.

Regarding the overall task output, teachers guided students to evaluate their written works based on criteria such as the accuracy and variety of vocabulary usage, the fluency of expression, the vivid and precise portrayal of character dialogues, and the students’ understanding of land, farmers, and agricultural development. This evaluation integrated language knowledge and language skill assessment with ideological and political education assessment. The assessment of language knowledge and skills is predominantly explicit, while the assessment of ideological and political objectives is primarily implicit. Moral education and character development are continuous and cumulative processes. Although objectively evaluating the effectiveness of ideological and political education in the short term is challenging and requires long-term tracking and assessment, explicit indicators are present in assessing students’ output tasks.

For instance, the portrayal of characters and the viewpoints expressed in character dialogues about agriculture, farmers, and rural development included criteria such as the accuracy and fluency of vocabulary and sentences, and whether the expressed opinions align with ideological and political education objectives. The multidimensional assessment provided more objective feedback, enhances the integration of ideological and political objectives with language objectives, and facilitates the promotion of learning through evaluation. Through this stage of collaborative assessment between teachers and students, the interaction between teachers and students, as well as peer interactions, was further strengthened, achieving the goal of promoting learning through evaluation and contributing to the realization of ideological and political education objectives.

4. Students’ Feedback

The comprehensive excellence of a course should extend beyond considerations of teaching situations and designs; it must also be assessed through course evaluations. In this section, students’ feedback on the teaching of the selected unit Spring Sowing is presented. Immediately after the teaching of the unit, an after-class questionnaire feedback with both open-ended and closed ended question items are provided to and finished by the target students. 65 students are involved in the class and feedback written, who are sophomores majoring in English. In the after-class feedback file, students are required to reflect and evaluate their learning experiences and outcomes as usual, only with more detailed evaluation on the POA teaching stages and the effectiveness of the ideological and political teaching.

After the instructional period of the unit, where the POA and ideological and political education were seamlessly integrated, students actively engaged in the teaching evaluation process. They provide scores based on the established evaluation criteria. The results from students’ evaluation indicate that 76% of the students believe that after learning during the POA enabling and assessing stages, their learning concerning language has become more systematic and precise, promoting better English writing. Student A mentioned in feedback that previously, depicting characters was always challenging, but now I understand that using specific words can better reflect character traits. Student B is also pleased with the transition from a lack of expression in the wording of the attempted writing in the motivating phase to learning through the POA method, progressing from words to sentences, and then to dialogues. He said, “although the completion may not be perfect, I have finally found a direction and know how I could depict my characters in writing vividly by careful wording”.

More importantly than linguistic progress, 91% of the students recognize the importance of emphasizing thematic ideas in writing. Student C emphasized in feedback that after the enabling phase lesson, his understanding of the

images of the two farmers in the text, the young and the elder, somehow deepened, “this understanding led to my efforts in portraying the modern image of Chinese farmers in my writing, emphasizing typical farmer qualities such as kindness, simplicity, diligence, and enthusiasm.

Student D also mentioned, “in the process of evaluating classmates’ writings, I discovered that each student’s perspective on “farmers” or “the farming land” was unique, providing me a comprehensive understanding of the farmers’ lives and the hardships they face in cultivating the land. At that moment, I felt deep appreciation for the hard-earned happiness in today’s lives. I tried to express my appreciation in my writing by vividly depicting my farmer characters, praising farmers and urging everyone to love the land and appreciate our fortunate lives”.

It’s evident that there’s a heightened acknowledgment of the value in helping students understand more about “farmers” and “farming”, and the learning experience of the course has proven to be enriching from students’ feedback. An integral aspect of the course activities involves providing students with ample chances to express their thoughts and fostering a thinking environment. If students are unable to fulfill the activities as specified and adhere closely to the guidelines, the teaching and learning process will be significantly less effective and won’t support the implementation of the POA and ideological and political education. Consequently, the outcome is a direct consequence of proactive engagement.

5. Conclusion

To enhance college English education in China under the background of college curriculum ideological and political construction in the new era, this study tries to apply the Production-oriented Approach to the teaching design of ideological and political education in integrated English courses and examined its effectiveness. Empirical evidence demonstrates the feasibility and practicality of the approach, offering a tangible pathway for seamlessly incorporating ideological and political elements into College English instruction. The POA theory with Chinese characteristics has significantly enhanced students’ learning outcomes, particularly when considering ideological and political evaluation. As a result, there has been a noticeable improvement in the quality of students’ outputs.

Nevertheless, owing to the initial exploration of POA theory and the implementation of curriculum ideological and political concepts in College English teaching, there are still some shortcomings in the harmonious integration of theory and practice and the assessment of ideological and political impact. These aspects require gradual refinement in practical teaching moving forward.

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