

The Application of Production-Oriented Approach in Business English Reading Class

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Abstract: The Business English reading course is an essential course for Business English major and business-related majors in the higher vocational institute. Business English students in China are in urgent need of an effective teaching approach for enhancing their English communicative competence to fulfil employers' requirements to support their internationalized business operations and as well as developing talents that could accelerate the economic development of the country. Therefore, the objective of this research is to develop a production-oriented approach (POA) for business English-major students' English reading classes toward improving their reading ability such as comprehension, analytical skills, and ability to apply reading content in a practical business context.

Key words: Business English Class; Production-oriented approach (POA); reading; teaching approach; ability

Introduction

With the rapid development of globalization, the demand for Business English professionals in the job market has shown a continuous upward trend in China. Therefore, Chinese people pay more attention to business English learning. The development of Business English education also conforms to the

demand of social, economic and cultural development for high-end compound English talents, conforms to the spirit of English major reform, and enhances students' employment competitiveness. The Product-Oriented Approach (POA), as an innovative teaching methodology, has not only opened up new avenues but also infused fresh impetus into

Business English instruction.

1 The definition of POA

The Product-oriented Approach is a foreign language teaching theory proposed by Professor Wen Qiufang and her team for reforming the English teaching method in China. It is the first English teaching concept combining with the Chinese characteristics, its purpose is to overcome the disadvantages of paying more attention to learning than application, and paying more attention to application than learning in the process of English teaching. The production-oriented method is based on the concept of the 'production-driven' hypothesis^[1].

The POA consists of three essential components including a) teaching principles, b) teaching hypothesis, and c) teacher-mediated teaching process. The teaching principles of the POA set that language learning should be 'language-centered learning-using integration', and 'whole-person education'. The teaching hypothesis of the POA posited that English teaching should be 'output-driven', 'input-enabled', and 'selective learning'. In return, the processes of English teaching include three stages that consist of motivating, enabling, and assessing.

2 The processes of Production-Oriented Approach

2.1 Motivating

In traditional foreign language teaching activities, before starting, we need to show the main purpose to readers. So the purpose is to enable students to learn text better. However, the production-oriented method is different from the traditional teaching method, placing the "drive" of

production at the beginning of the new unit.

Creation of the real business scenarios :

According to the theme of the business reading materials, the author suggests that the teacher can create the relevant business scenarios which are definitively match with the actual business situations. For instance, the teacher can stimulate the students' learning interest by simulating the real negotiations process during the whole class. The teacher can encourage students act as the representatives of different types of companies to help them to have a deeper understanding about the process of signing of business contracts. So as to let them to know the importance of correct understanding of business terms^[2].

Set output tasks: In the created business scenario, the teacher can set specific output tasks for students. The tasks can be oral presentation, such as views and responding in simulated business negotiations; or written expression, such as writing business emails, reports, etc. Taking the business contracts as an example, the teacher can require students to analyze the rights and obligations of both parties according to the contract terms, and present them in the form of a written business report. By setting clear output tasks students can clarify their learning goals and read with tasks^[3].

2.2 Enabling

In Business English class, the main task of the teacher is to build scaffolding, and the teacher should guide students to use various reading strategies flexibly in the reading process, organically integrate reading and skimming methods from the actual text, quickly and effectively obtain key information, and

then combine specific context to master business discourse.

2.2.1 Analyzing the reading materials

During the process of completing the output tasks, students are bound to encounter difficulties in terms of language knowledge and business background information. At this point, teachers can guide students to conduct in-depth analysis of the reading materials. Firstly, they help students understand the main idea, structure and logical relationship of the article. For example, in the reading of business reports, they analyze how the report raises questions at the beginning part of the report, how to conduct arguments in the middle part and draws conclusions at the end. Secondly, teacher can explain key words, phrases and sentence patterns of the reading material , especially the relevant business terms . For instance, when explaining the reading materials related to international trade, teacher need to explain what is “FOB (Free on Board) ”and “CIF (Cost, Insurance and Freight) ” in detail.

2.2.2 Provide language support

In addition to in-depth analysis of reading materials, teachers should also provide targeted language expression templates and examples based on students' specific output tasks. For instance, when writing business emails, teachers can offer students common opening and closing expressions, and demonstrate the standard formats and examples of different types of emails (such as inquiry emails, complaint emails, reply emails, etc.). Moreover, it is recommended that teachers encourage students to engage in imitation exercises, gradually mastering the

expression skills of business English through repeated practice.

2.2.3 Collaborative Group Learning

Teacher can organize students into collaborative groups to share their reading insights and encountered issues, and collectively explore solutions. During the collaborative process, students can learn from each other, inspire each other, and enhance their problem-solving abilities. For example, when analyzing business case reading materials, group members can analyze different perspectives and then collectively summarize the best solution^[4]

2.3 Evaluation

The third step is to complete the final evaluation. Effective evaluation plays an essential part in business English reading teaching process. In this paper ,the writer divide it into two types.one is teacher's evaluation and the other type is the self-evaluation and peer evaluation by students.

2.3.1 Teacher's Evaluation

Teachers can conduct a comprehensive evaluation of students' outcomes, including language accuracy, content completeness, logical coherence, and the application of business knowledge. During the evaluation process, teachers not only point out students' problems and shortcomings but also provide specific suggestions for improvement. For example, for business reports written, teachers can evaluate whether the structure of the report is reasonable, whether the data references are accurate, and whether the language expression is standardized, and provide modification suggestions for its existing problems.

2.3.2 Self-evaluation and Peer Evaluation by

Students

Teacher can guide students to conduct self-evaluation and peer evaluation, allowing them to further improve their self-aware and the ability to evaluate others during the evaluation process. When students evaluate themselves, they are required to reflect on their completion status against the requirements of the output task ,such to summarize their strengths and weaknesses. When students evaluate each other, they are encouraged to learn from each other and draw on each other's strengths to improve . For example after students complete their oral presentations, teacher need to organize students to evaluate each other, allowing other students to evaluate from the aspects of fluency of expression, the richness of content, the use of body language, and other aspects.

3 The Practical Significance of POA in Business English Reading Class

3.1 Enhancing Students' Learning Enthusiasm and Pro activity

POA stimulates students' interest in learning and desire to express themselves by creating real - life business contexts and setting specific output tasks, which drive students to learn. Students are no longer receiving knowledge passively while completing these tasks, but actively reading, thinking and exploring, which improve their learning enthusiasm and proactivity.

3.2 Strengthening Students'Language Application Ability

Traditional Business English reading teaching focuses on the input of knowledge and students often have fewer opportunities to practice the language, while POA emphasizes

the integration of learning and applying by driving, promoting and evaluating and students' comprehensive language application ability is promoted by constantly practicing. For example, students have had a deeper understanding of the format and expression of business English emails and mastered them after finishing business email tasks.

3.3 Cultivating Students' Business Thinking and Cross-Cultural Communication Ability

Business English reading materials involve a large amount of knowledge related to business and cross-cultural communication.

With POA, students produce tasks by analyzing and discussing the reading materials and completing tasks related to actual business scenarios. While completing the tasks, they can not only master business knowledge, but can also gain business thinking and cross-cultural communication ability. Taking Simulated Business Negotiations as example, students have to know about the business culture and negotiation styles of different countries so as to have a better communication and negotiation^[5].

4 Conclusion

The practice of POA in business English reading class provides a beneficial attempt for the reform of business English teaching.

By organically integrating the three stages of motivating, enabling and evaluating, students' learning enthusiasm and initiative have been enhanced, their language application ability has been strengthened and their business thinking and cross-cultural communication skills have been cultivated. However, while applying POA, teachers also

need to make constant adjustment and improvement of the teaching method according to the students and the teaching effect, so as to better leverage the advantages of POA and enhance the quality of business English reading teaching.

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