

Original Article

A Study on the Continuation Writing Task Teaching in Senior High School from the Perspective of a Production-oriented Approach

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Abstract - For many years, topic writing has been used as the composition form for the Chinese College Entrance Examination, which is controversial because it is not conducive to the development of students' imagination and thinking ability. In recent years, continuation writing task (CWT) as a new writing item has been included in the Chinese College Entrance Examination in some provinces, attracting great attention from a large number of in-service teachers. A variety of teaching methods have been applied to the English class of CWT in senior high school. This study employs the questionnaire to learn about the current writing motivation of senior high school students, to integrate the Production-oriented Approach (POA) into CWT teaching, to improve the writing motivation of senior high school students and to promote the development of writing teaching.

Keywords - Production-oriented approach, Continuation writing task, English writing teaching, Senior high school, Writing motivation.

1. Background

In the process of English learning, learners should not only master the three skills of listening, speaking and reading but also constantly enhance their writing ability, which reflects learners' ability of comprehensive knowledge using (Yao, 2019). As a result, writing ability plays an important role in foreign language learning.

National English Curriculum Standards for General Senior High School (2020 revised edition) (hereinafter, *Standards*) is oriented to the core competencies of English subject and makes different requirements of expressive skills for senior high school students in these three-course categories: compulsory, selective compulsory and optional. Moreover, it points out that language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing in teaching should supplement and facilitate each other. Meanwhile, developing learners' language skills through a great deal of special and comprehensive language practice activities can lay the foundation for one's real communication. *Standards* also put forward requirements of English writing teaching throughout senior high school to improve and enrich writing teaching methods and develop writing teaching (MOE, 2020).

Besides, CWT, as a new question type of English writing, was adopted for the first time by several provinces in the Chinese College Entrance Examination in 2021 (Wang, 2022). An interesting story is selected with a moderate degree of language difficulty and erased its

ending, and then the learners are required to continue to write and complete the content (Wang, 2015). CWT holds many advantages; for instance, it creates new content based on the understanding of the original text, interacts with the original text through repeated reading and can be applied to English teaching, which makes up for communication opportunities with native speakers and also promotes accurate expression of foreign language (Wang, 2016).

Therefore, CWT teaching under the guidance of POA is essential for learners and teachers to improve the former's writing motivation and enrich the latter's English writing teaching methods in senior high schools.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Related Studies on POA in China

Production-oriented Approach (POA) was first proposed by Wen Qiufang (2008), and its archetype is Output-driven Hypothesis, which aims to reform the English professional skills curriculum. Then, POA was extended to college English teaching (Wen, 2013). Moreover, it was revised into an "Output-driven, Input-enabled Hypothesis" at the beginning of 2014 (Wen, 2014). In October 2014, it was officially named POA at the 7th International Conference on English Teaching in China. Wen Qiufang (2015) established the theoretical system of POA in 2015, which includes three parts, teaching concept, teaching hypothesis and teacher-mediated teaching process. In the current domestic



research on POA can be divided into three categories: literature review research, theoretical system research and teaching practice research. In the research literature review, Wu Lingqin (2018) summarized and reviewed the development process of POA and found that there were relatively few empirical studies on the rationality of output task design. Huang Xianghui and Zhang Wei (2019) reviewed the relevant empirical studies of POA and pointed out that the diachronic and dialectical studies of POA are new research directions in future. Yang Cen and Guo Suihong (2020) prospected the future development of POA by reviewing current related studies. In the research of theoretical systems, in addition to contributions made by Wen Qiufang and her team, many experts and scholars have also contributed. Zhang Wenjuan (2015) adopted the unit teaching case model to implement the enabling link and enrich the system of that. In the research of teaching practice, Huang Zhen (2015) discussed the role of POA in reading teaching for college English majors. Zhang Wenjuan (2017) conducted teaching experiments in college English classes and proposed that the teaching process should integrate learning and application. Zhang Lingli (2018) verified the effectiveness of POA in improving students' English language learning ability and motivation.

2.2. Related Studies on POA Abroad

Wen Qiufang (2016; 2017) published two English papers, which were the initial results of POA going abroad, and aroused the attention of foreign English teaching researchers on POA and related research. In the research of theoretical systems, Rod Ellis (2017) suggested that the POA research team should train teachers in curriculum design and implementation combined with current relevant teaching practices. He also advised that teaching material should create language situations at the end of the unit. Alister Cumming (2017) put forward some suggestions on the research direction of POA, including appropriately expanding the research object of POA, that is, expanding from middle and advanced English learners (whose English level is around CET-4) to English beginners. Charlene Polio (2017) pointed out that teachers should follow the teaching principles of POA to solve the problems in teaching and believed that POA theory could promote the development of pre-service teachers. Based on his understanding of POA, Li Hongyue (2019) believed that student-centered English teaching should be persisted in output-oriented college English teaching. In the teaching practice research, Lantu (2020) applied POA to English writing teaching in a college, proving that POA effectively promoted students' writing ability.

2.3 Summary of Previous Research on POA

According to the literature analysis above, there are few pieces of research on POA in foreign countries; most of them are carried out in theory but few in practice. The number of POA research in China has increased dramatically in recent years, the scope of research objects

has also expanded, and great achievements have been made in the theoretical system, teaching practice and results, the trial and adaptation of teaching materials and so on. However, there are few empirical studies, and the research objects mainly focus on college students. Therefore, this study uses the questionnaire method to learn about the senior high school students English writing motivation and combines it with CWT from the perspective of POA to discuss how to improve students' English writing motivation and develop English writing teaching.

3. Research Design

3.1. Research Method

The questionnaire design of this study refers to the Diagnostic Test of Learning Motivation questionnaire of Professor Zhou Bucheng from East China Normal University and the questionnaire on English writing motivation in the master's thesis of Xia Xue (2021) from Huaibei Normal University. It is modified according to the needs of this study, and the reliability and validity are tested by SPSS 25.0. This questionnaire uses a five-level Likert scale and is based on the motivation theory of John B. Biggs (1987), which divides motivation into surface motivation, deep motivation and achievement motivation.

3.2. Research Questions

- 1) Why do some in-service teachers pay much attention to CWT?
- 2) How to apply CWT combined with POA to English writing?

3.3. Research Participants

The research participants come from a class in Grade Three in a Yibin high school in Sichuan province. Through questionnaire investigation, the writing situation of learners can be analyzed. There are 43 students in this class, so 43 questionnaires have been sent out. Among them, 39 have been received, and 37 are valid.

4. Findings and Discussion

The reliability and validity are analyzed by SPSS 25.0, and both are greater than 0.6, indicating that information can be extracted, as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

According to the research, as shown in Table 3, learners' writing motivation can be analyzed. Question 1 to 5 reflects surface motivation. Most students write in English because of homework requirements, accounting for 62.16 (43.24% agree and 18.92% totally agree). Regarding practice writing for test requirements, 48.65% agree, and 21.62% totally agree. There are 43.24% of the students hope to avoid English writing.

Table 1. Reliability Analysis

| Reliability | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Alpha | number of terms |
| .678 | 16 |

Table 2. Validity Analysis

| KMO and Bartlett's Test | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy | | .721 |
| Bartlett test of sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 352.330 |
| | df | 120 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

Furthermore, question 6 to 10 reflects deep motivation. Most of the students worry about writing failure, accounting for 64.86%, and believe that good writing ability brings confidence, 83.78% in total. There are 70.27% of the students practice English writing for a good grade. Question 11 to 16 is about achievement motivation. 45.95% of the students think that pleasure and satisfaction can be obtained from English writing, and 29.73% of that is uncertain. Many students believe that interesting writing can cultivate creative power and that a sense of accomplishment can be produced after completing writing successfully, accounting for 67.57% and 81.08%, respectively. There are 51.35% of the students desire to be better than others in writing, and 78.38% of that support importance of English.

According to the analysis above, these learners finish English writing mainly due to needing to learn tasks and

exams and a lack of interest in writing. Therefore, it is difficult for them to practice English writing actively and consciously. They worry about failure in writing but believe that good writing competence can generate confidence in learning English well, and many of them practice English writing to get a good grade, so the teacher needs to appropriately reduce their surface motivation and transform deep motivation into achievement motivation. Learners hope that English writing can be more interesting, which would motivate them to write. In addition, they usually obtain a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment after finishing writing and agree that writing is an important part of English learning. Therefore, these learners have certain achievement motivations, hoping to improve their writing ability to promote English learning. The teacher should help learners enhance achievement motivation and create a good attitude of pursuing success and facing failure.

Table 3. Frequency Analysis

| Frequency Analysis | | | | |
|--|------------------|-----------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Questions | Choices | Frequency | Percentage(%) | Cumulative percentage(%) |
| 1. I write an English composition because it is assigned by the teacher. | Totally disagree | 2 | 5.41 | 5.41 |
| | Disagree | 9 | 24.32 | 29.73 |
| | Uncertain | 3 | 8.11 | 37.84 |
| | Agree | 16 | 43.24 | 81.08 |
| | Totally agree | 7 | 18.92 | 100.00 |
| 2. I practice English writing because it is a required part of the exam. | Totally disagree | 7 | 18.92 | 18.92 |
| | Uncertain | 4 | 10.81 | 29.73 |
| | Agree | 18 | 48.65 | 78.38 |
| | Totally agree | 8 | 21.62 | 100.00 |
| 3. I often wish to avoid writing English compositions. | Disagree | 15 | 40.54 | 40.54 |
| | Uncertain | 6 | 16.22 | 56.76 |
| | Agree | 9 | 24.32 | 81.08 |
| | Totally agree | 7 | 18.92 | 100.00 |
| 4. Writing brings me a sense of fear, and I just want to finish it quickly. | Totally disagree | 2 | 5.41 | 5.41 |
| | Disagree | 18 | 48.65 | 54.05 |
| | Uncertain | 8 | 21.62 | 75.68 |
| | Agree | 9 | 24.32 | 100.00 |

| Frequency Analysis | | | | |
|---|------------------|-----------|--|---|
| Questions | Choices | Frequency | Percentage(%) <input type="checkbox"/> | Cumulative percentage(%) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I enjoy learning English, so I like writing in English. | Totally disagree | 4 | 10.81 | 10.81 |
| | Disagree | 11 | 29.73 | 40.54 |
| | Uncertain | 13 | 35.14 | 75.68 |
| | Agree | 8 | 21.62 | 97.30 |
| | Totally agree | 1 | 2.70 | 100.00 |
| 6. Even if I prepare carefully, I still worry about failure. | Totally disagree | 2 | 5.41 | 5.41 |
| | Disagree | 5 | 13.51 | 18.92 |
| | Uncertain | 6 | 16.22 | 35.14 |
| | Agree | 20 | 54.05 | 89.19 |
| | Totally agree | 4 | 10.81 | 100.00 |
| 7. Good writing ability makes me feel more confident in learning English well. | Totally disagree | 1 | 2.70 | 2.70 |
| | Disagree | 1 | 2.70 | 5.41 |
| | Uncertain | 4 | 10.81 | 16.22 |
| | Agree | 19 | 51.35 | 67.57 |
| | Totally agree | 12 | 32.43 | 100.00 |
| 8. I have a lot of experience in writing and can be actively engaged. | Totally disagree | 2 | 5.41 | 5.41 |
| | Disagree | 11 | 29.73 | 35.14 |
| | Uncertain | 15 | 40.54 | 75.68 |
| | Agree | 8 | 21.62 | 97.30 |
| | Totally disagree | 1 | 2.70 | 100.00 |
| 9. I practice writing hard to improve my English and get good grades. | Disagree | 5 | 13.51 | 13.51 |
| | Uncertain | 6 | 16.22 | 29.73 |
| | Agree | 17 | 45.95 | 75.68 |
| | Totally agree | 9 | 24.32 | 100.00 |
| 10. Writing tasks can be fun only if we are earnest. | Totally disagree | 1 | 2.70 | 2.70 |
| | Disagree | 5 | 13.51 | 16.22 |
| | Uncertain | 8 | 21.62 | 37.84 |
| | Agree | 19 | 51.35 | 89.19 |
| | Totally agree | 4 | 10.81 | 100.00 |
| 11. I regard English writing as a competition; participant in and win it. | Totally disagree | 1 | 2.70 | 2.70 |
| | Disagree | 10 | 27.03 | 29.73 |
| | Uncertain | 12 | 32.43 | 62.16 |
| | Agree | 12 | 32.43 | 94.59 |
| | Totally agree | 2 | 5.41 | 100.00 |
| 12. I get a lot of pleasure and satisfaction from English writing. | Totally disagree | 3 | 8.11 | 8.11 |
| | Disagree | 6 | 16.22 | 24.32 |

| Frequency Analysis | | | | |
|---|------------------|-----------|--|---|
| Questions | Choices | Frequency | Percentage(%) <input type="checkbox"/> | Cumulative percentage(%) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Uncertain | 11 | 29.73 | 54.05 |
| | Agree | 14 | 37.84 | 91.89 |
| | Totally agree | 3 | 8.11 | 100.00 |
| 13. Interesting writing can motivate my creative power. | Totally disagree | 1 | 2.70 | 2.70 |
| | Disagree | 4 | 10.81 | 13.51 |
| | Uncertain | 7 | 18.92 | 32.43 |
| | Agree | 15 | 40.54 | 72.97 |
| | Totally agree | 10 | 27.03 | 100.00 |
| 14. Each time, I can get a sense of accomplishment after successfully completing my writing. | Totally disagree | 2 | 5.41 | 5.41 |
| | Disagree | 1 | 2.70 | 8.11 |
| | Uncertain | 4 | 10.81 | 18.92 |
| | Agree | 22 | 59.46 | 78.38 |
| | Totally agree | 8 | 21.62 | 100.00 |
| 15. I strongly desire to be better than others in writing. | Totally disagree | 1 | 2.70 | 2.70 |
| | Disagree | 9 | 24.32 | 27.03 |
| | Uncertain | 8 | 21.62 | 48.65 |
| | Agree | 12 | 32.43 | 81.08 |
| | Totally agree | 7 | 18.92 | 100.00 |
| 16. I think writing is important, which has a significant impact on learning English well. | Disagree | 3 | 8.11 | 8.11 |
| | Uncertain | 5 | 13.51 | 21.62 |
| | Agree | 14 | 37.84 | 59.46 |
| | Totally agree | 15 | 40.54 | 100.00 |
| Overall | | 37 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

5. Implications of the Study

5.1. Advantages of CWT

CWT was first proposed by Wang Chuming (2005), an expert on second language acquisition, and it is the development and improvement of his writing teaching method, "Length Method", which is carried out in college. CWT is to write based on reading articles, which as a new form of writing, closely combines reading and writing. Specific language input can motivate learners' effective language output to achieve reading-to-write and improve learners' language competence. For CWT teaching, the teacher needs to select reading material, cut off the end of it, and then students read the rest of the text, use imagination based on their understanding of the text, and continue to write. There is no limit to the choice of reading material. It can be in any style, as long as certain length, has consistent and interesting content, concise and authentic language, and is suitable for students' reading levels (Wang & Qi, 2013). The main purpose is to improve students' English writing ability by continuing to write.

In the process of CWT, learners must exert imagination, which is the source of innovation, so CWT helps cultivate innovative thinking ability. Writing based on reading can keep the memory fresh and reduce imitation in order to integrate comprehension with output. Students can directly use these words that appear in the reading material when they encounter language difficulty of expression. Learners immediately use the newly learned words, learn well and remember not only firm but also easily have a sense of accomplishment, finally enhancing interest and motivation in foreign language learning. CWT makes it difficult for learners to copy, and if plagiarism occurs, it is easy to be detected.

Moreover, It is suitable for foreign language learners at different levels, and the difficulty of reading materials is relatively flexible and adaptable. The easiest ones can be used to train primary school students. The most difficult ones aim at training graduate students. With the improvement of learners' reading comprehension and

writing ability, the difficulty of reading materials can be adjusted continuously to promote learning (Wang, 2012).

As a result, CWT can promote learners' writing motivation and increase writing interest, even cultivating one's innovation and creativity.

5.2. The Brief Introduction of POA

The theoretical system of POA, a teaching theory with Chinese characteristics, is formed based on the Language-output Hypothesis in Second Language Acquisition and the curriculum theory. The most prominent feature of POA is to enhance the foreign language learning effect by output driving input (Li, 2021). The teaching philosophy of POA emphasizes "Learning-centered theory", "Learning-application integration theory," and "Holistic education theory". The teaching hypothesis of POA includes output-driven, input-enabled and selective learning. The teaching process of it is composed of three stages: motivating, enabling and assessing, in which the teacher should play an intermediary role appropriately. The role here is shown as a guide, design and scaffolding, etc. (Wen, 2015).

First, the teacher takes the continuation writing as a motivating method to create realistic scenes according to students' age characteristics and developmental needs, challenges their output ability, and stimulates their intrinsic interest and motivation. Then, the teacher takes input activities as means of enabling, designs abundant and diverse activities to help students grasp the key information, language features and discourse features of the original text, and finally obtain the content, language and discourse structures to complete continuation writing (Bi, 2020). In the end, the teacher regards assessment activities as means of promoting learning and teaching, carries out remedial teaching for the typical problems existing in students' continuation writing works, and lets students modify their writing to promote the writing quality and cultivate their ability of self-evaluation and modification (Xu, 2018). Hence, these three stages of the teaching process are the basis for designing and practising CWT teaching.

5.3. CWT Teaching Procedures Under the Guidance of POA

5.3.1. To Stimulate Learners' Motivation and Interest

Unlike traditional teaching methods, motivating as the primary link of POA starts from the beginning of a new unit or a new lesson, including three steps: the teacher presents communicative scenes, students try to produce, and the teacher introduces teaching objectives and output tasks (Wen, 2015).

In motivating, output as a driving force will stimulate learners' motivation and interest. So the teacher should create authentic and meaningful output situations and output tasks, and students attempt to complete production tasks before learning to realize their shortcomings, finally

prompting students and teachers to truly achieve synergy on the goal of learning and teaching (Bi, 2020). Furthermore, the teacher, as a facilitator in the real situation, needs to encourage students to try to achieve productive expression from receptive comprehension so that students can be aware of the insufficiency of their language capacity, desire to learn and have a clear cognition of learning objectives (Xue, 2021). More importantly, the output situation should be a foreign language communicative situation students might encounter in the future to strengthen the connection between students' internal needs and the topic context. Likewise, output tasks should have authentic cognitive challenges and mental space for students to stimulate their intellectual curiosity and thirst for knowledge (Bi, 2020). Then, the teacher clearly states teaching aims and output tasks, namely, obtaining information related to the topic through various channels to finish CWT (Fu, 2022). As the bridge between continuation writing and reading, the design of output tasks is pretty important. So the teacher should ensure that CWT should be not only practical and communicative but also closely connected with students' study and life, and reading text should have enough clues, clear logic, and fresh language resources. The difficulty degree of CWT should be suitable for students' language levels (Xue, 2021).

5.3.2. To Achieve Synergy of Comprehension and Output

The enabling part includes three steps: the teacher describing output tasks, students learning and receiving guidance and inspection from the teacher, and students practicing outputting content and receiving feedback from the teacher. In order to reduce the difficulty of output tasks and narrow the distance between output and input learning, a large output task is often decomposed into several sub-tasks, and the three steps of the enabling part might be repeated in turn around each sub-task (Wen, 2015).

Standards suggest that the teacher should add viewing, speaking and writing activities in reading training, such as graph prediction, table information extraction, discussion and continuation writing, to avoid independent training of a single skill (MOE, 2020). Hence, the teacher in the enabling part can integrate activities of viewing, listening and speaking into the text reading to help students master the story's context and lay a solid foundation for CWT. Firstly, the teacher needs to describe the output task to confirm that students clearly understand the procedures and requirements of that (Wen, 2015) and students can observe pictures of the text and predict the content under the teacher's guidance, then read the text and complete information sheet of the structure according to the hint of who, what, where, when, why and how, and check if their predictions are correct. This can not only arouse students' interest in learning but also help them grasp the six elements above and understand the outline of the text (Fu, 2022).

In addition, *Standards* emphasize that taking advantage of the Concept of English Learning Activities can cultivate learners' ability to learn and apply, which includes three kinds of activities: learning and comprehension, application and practice, and transfer and innovation (MOE, 2020). The Concept of English Learning Activities is helpful for students to obtain, analyze and integrate the main information and significant details in text from multiple perspectives, and finally effectively helps students to clarify trends of plots and emotional changes of main characters, which lays a good foundation for CWT (Fu, 2022). So the reading circles can combine with English learning activities to bring about good effects on teaching. Students are usually divided into different groups, and each group member plays a different role. They read the text independently, complete their own role task and fill in the role sheet, and then have a group discussion (Luo & Zhang, 2020).

After fully learning about a given text's content and emotional changes, students continue to comprehend implicit content under the teacher's guidance, for instance, by guessing the main characters' behaviors through content they already know. Then the teacher can provide some questions based on what might happen with students to discuss. In the meantime, some relevant materials can be prepared for students to make up for the language expression they lack. The teacher finally indicates important vocabulary and phrases of the text and offers the first sentence of CWT. In this way, students can find writing direction based on the analysis of content and emotional changes above, and compensation of background and expressive knowledge will help them to expand their writing ideas (Fu, 2022).

5.3.3. To Improve the Depth of CWT Works

The assessing part aims to know students' task completion condition, examine students' learning outcomes, provide remediation for difficult points and common problems, and encourage them to revise their writing (Bi, 2020). Revision is essential to promote learning, in which students process the same content deeply, which is varied repetition that can expand the depth and breadth of thinking (Sun, 2017).

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Assessment of output can be divided into the immediate and delayed assessment. The former means the inspection of two steps in enabling part, and the latter indicates that students submit final products after extra exercises under the teacher's guidance and receive an assessment from the teacher. Moreover, the delayed assessment includes four steps: the teacher and students study evaluation standards together, the students handing in the results of the output, the teacher and students evaluate in class, and the teacher and students evaluate after class (Wen, 2015). Before assessing, the teacher should clearly state evaluation criteria; for instance, the teacher should give out assessment criteria sheets to students (Fu, 2022). It would be better to adopt the way of teacher-student collaborative assessment (TSCA) when written works are evaluated in class. Speaking of procedures, the teacher in class first sends original compositions to students to evaluate, students propose their own revision methods, and the teacher discusses with students about the reasons for revision (Sun, 2017; Wen, 2015). After class, students will make self-revision according to TSCA and evaluation criteria. The teacher will check the revision and select excellent works for students to learn from each other (Fu, 2022).

6. Conclusion

CWT can cultivate students' writing motivation as a new writing item and promote the integration of comprehensive and expressive skills. Furthermore, POA, as a local teaching theory in China, plays a vital role in improving the quality of CWT teaching in senior high schools. Therefore, CWT teaching is an integrated learning cycle under the guidance of POA, and motivating, enabling and assessing are indispensable in teaching. This study analyzes the writing motivation of senior high school students through a questionnaire method and explores how to combine CWT teaching with POA. However, the number of research objects in this study is insufficient; on the other hand, more research methods should be included. As a result, future research is suggested to increase the number of research participants and use various research methods.

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