

Vietnamese EFL Teachers’ Perceptions of the Production-Oriented Approach

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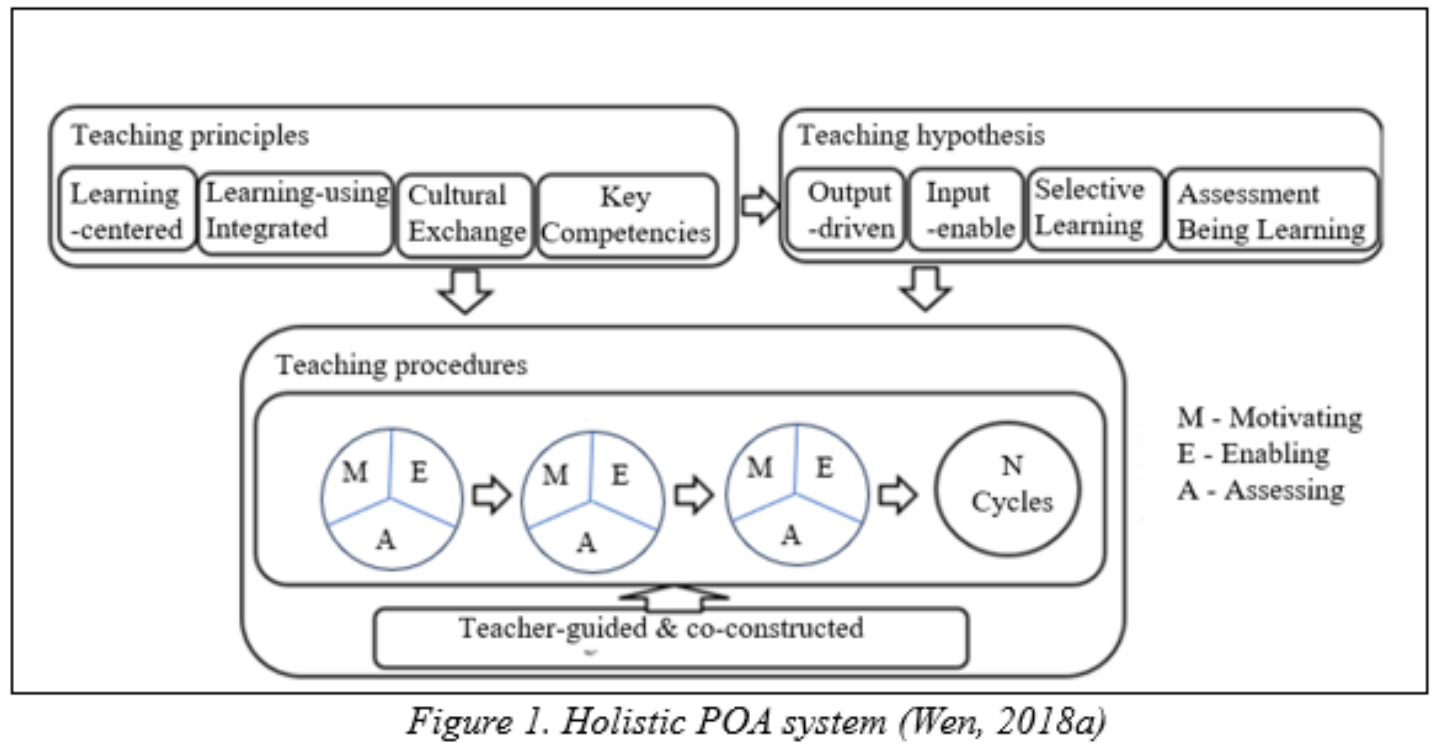
Abstract

Production-Oriented Approach (POA) has recently emerged as a research hotspot in China and expanded to other countries. However, it has not yet been studied in Vietnam. This research aims to explore EFL Vietnamese teachers’ perceptions of the approach. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected by employing a questionnaire and focus group discussions. The findings revealed that the participants expressed positive views about applying POA in Vietnam. They also believed that POA is applicable in their teaching contexts. However, some obstacles were reported to likely hinder the success of POA implementation, such as learners’ overall low level of English proficiency, the limitations of existing teaching materials, restricted class time, and large class sizes.

Literature Review

Background to production-oriented approach

POA was proposed by Professor Wen Quifang at Beijing Foreign Studies University as an innovative context-situated approach. POA has undergone 5 stages of development before the latest version of POA was introduced in May 2018. In this holistic framework, the internal relationship of three components: teaching principles, teaching hypothesis and teaching procedures were taken into consideration (Figure 1).



Research on POA

Numerous studies have been conducted to test the effects of POA on second language improvement. They collectively proved that POA improves learners’ second language skills. Besides, POA has been reported to have positive impacts on other aspects of learners including learning motivation, participation, autonomy and self-regulation.

Along with the positive effects, POA was reported to pose several challenges among practitioners such as being time-consuming for designing tasks, choosing the input materials in various forms and dealing with low-achieving learners.

Research gap

POA has recently attracted experimental studies in EFL settings due to its contextualized innovation. However, little is known about how EFL teachers perceive the approach. This study fulfils the gap by investigating how Vietnamese EFL teachers perceive POA and factors influencing its applicability in different teaching contexts of high schools and universities.

References

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Objectives

This study aims to explore how Vietnamese EFL teachers perceive POA and factors influencing its applicability in their different teaching contexts of high schools and universities.

Methodology

Design: Mixed-methods design

Participants: Twelve teachers including five high school and seven university teachers.

Instruments: A questionnaire with five-point Likert Scale items and focus group discussions.

Procedures: Quantitative data was collected and analyzed with descriptive statistics. Qualitative data was transcribed and further explored the research issue.

Findings and Discussion

EFL Vietnamese teachers’ perceptions of POA

Most Vietnamese EFL teachers found POA feasible to apply in the context of Vietnam although some concerns in the classroom practice were expressed such as textbook adaptation, class time limit and class large sizes.

Table 1. Teachers’ perceptions about applying POA in Vietnam

Items	Frequency					Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
1. POA is overall suitable for the teaching and learning context of Vietnam.	1 (8.3%)	1 (8.3%)	3 (25%)	6 (50%)	1 (8.3%)	3.50	1.09
2. POA has the capacity to be applied to all levels of EFL learners in Vietnam.	1 (8.3%)	5 (41.7%)	1 (8.3%)	4 (33.3%)	1 (8.3%)	2.92	1.38
3. POA needs to be adapted to suit the educational context of Vietnam.	0	0	2 (16.7%)	4 (33.3%)	6 (50%)	4.50	0.67
4. Most commercial English textbooks in Vietnam can be adapted to accommodate POA.	0	0	7 (58.3%)	5 (42.7%)	0	3.42	0.51
5. Class time limit is a major challenge for the effective implementation of POA.	0	1 (8.3%)	0	4 (33.3%)	7 (58.3%)	4.41	0.90

Items	Frequency					Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
6. POA has the potential to address Vietnamese learners’ needs in English learning.	0	0	4 (33.3%)	5 (41.7%)	3 (25%)	4.00	0.85
7. Teachers’ English proficiency level is a major hindrance to the application of POA in Vietnam.	0	1 (8.3%)	1 (8.3%)	8 (66.7%)	2 (16.7%)	3.83	0.83
8. Large class size is a major hindrance to POA implementation.	0	1 (8.3%)	1 (8.3%)	3 (25%)	7 (58.3%)	4.33	0.98
9. It is hard to apply POA in Vietnam due to learners’ low levels of language proficiency.	0	5 (41.7%)	0	4 (33.3%)	3 (25%)	3.17	1.27
10. It is difficult to understand and apply POA.	1 (8.3%)	7 (58.3%)	3 (25%)	1 (8.3%)	0	2.25	0.87

Factors hindering the applicability of POA at high schools and universities

Factors like class time limits and large class sizes were major issues among the participants. Besides, teachers in two teaching contexts expressed additional concerns about classroom conditions, teachers’ insufficient understanding of the approach and the existing materials or textbooks which are not designed based on POA.

Implications and Recommendations

Training sessions and teaching demos should be conducted extensively to ensure the correct application of the approach. It is pivotal to have a top-down policy to encourage the wide application of POA throughout the country. Teachers can apply technologies like AI applications to get support for the preparation and adaptation.

Conclusion

Most Vietnamese EFL teachers found POA applicable in the teaching context of Vietnam despite some obstacles that may hinder teaching efficiency. POA was believed to bring learners more opportunities to showcase their performance in the class. Besides, the teachers’ role as the designer and facilitator in POA can help learners develop 21st Century skills 4Cs such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity.