

Exploring language teachers' emotions in the Production-Oriented Approach (POA)

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Abstract

The Production-Oriented Approach (POA) prioritises language production and emphasises integrating input and production to promote language learners' communicative competence. While the cognitive and pedagogical aspects of POA have been extensively studied, the emotional experience of teachers remains underexplored. This study investigated tertiary-level foreign language teachers' emotional perceptions in implementing POA and the interactions between emotional, ideological, and institutional factors in this process. Participants of this study were members of a two-year online language teacher training program. The findings of this study revealed that participants in this study experienced, seemingly paradoxically, a combination of positive emotions of motivation, hope, happiness and enthusiasm, and negative emotions of anxiety and frustration. They enjoyed the change brought up by POA: transforming teaching more scientifically and systematically, stimulating and improving students' motivation, and promoting their academic development. At the same time, they were also plagued by the clash between the high demand from POA and the lack of team and institutional support. In this conflict, teachers demonstrated their struggle to manage their emotion labour while striving for professional teaching and academic development through innovating their teaching. By focusing on foreign language teachers' emotions in a newly developed teaching approach in a local context, this study constitutes an important part of the emotion studies and offers valuable insights into the role of emotions in shaping teaching practice and teacher development.

Keywords: language teachers; emotions, Production-Oriented Approach (POA)

Introduction

Teaching is an emotion-laden endeavour. Emotions act as a powerful catalyst for enhancing or impairing teaching. Foreign language teaching, in particular, involves an emotional rollercoaster (Gkonou et al., 2020) because teachers need to speak and teach a language that is not their first language. Language teachers' emotional experiences are not only interwoven with their agency, identity and professional development but also have implications and consequences on learners and classroom practice. In response to the 'affective turn' in applied linguistics, researchers have been trying to drag emotions out of the shadows and cast light on the role of emotions in language teaching. A number of angles have emerged and been focused on, including specific emotions among teachers such as love (Li & Rawal, 2018), caring (Pereira, 2018), anxiety (Ikeda et al., 2020), frustration (Morris & King, 2018), and ecstasies and agonies (McAlinden & Dobinson, 2021); emotions in relation to other personal factors and character strengths such as belief (Barcelos & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018), faith (Ding & De Costa, 2018), motivation (Dewaele, 2020), resilience (Kostoulas & Lämmerer, 2020) and agency (Miller & Gkonou, 2018); and emotional facets such as emotion labour (Benesch, 2017, 2020), emotional intelligence (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017), emotional competence (Madalińska-Michalak & Bavli, 2018), emotional well-being and regulation (Talbot & Mercer, 2018). The findings of these studies have underscored the importance and complexities of teacher

emotions. Among these studies, emotions relating to general language teaching experiences are more frequently investigated, whereas relatively little attention has been paid to emotions engendered from specific teaching approaches and practices.

The Production-Oriented Approach (POA), proposed by Wen Qiufang (2015, 2018b), is a novel language teaching method designed to improve language acquisition by dynamically integrating language production (output) in the learning process. This approach stresses the crucial role of language production in enhancing learners' language skills and highlights the significance of actively involving learners in producing language in authentic communication settings. Representing a shift from input-focused teaching practices to more interactive ones, POA tends to trigger a variety of emotional responses in teachers, which, in turn, may impact their implementation of the approach. Under this circumstance, this study seeks to explore how tertiary-level language teachers perceive their emotions in applying this approach in their language teaching and how social, ideological and institutional factors influence and interact with teachers' emotions in this process.

Literature Review

Language Teacher Emotion

Language teachers' emotions are frequent and diverse, which emerge from their interactions with students, colleagues, institutions and their teaching context. Language teachers may experience positive emotions such as enthusiasm, happiness, and satisfaction due to favouring potentials (e.g., motivated students) as well as negative emotions, including anger, anxiety, and frustration, as a result of disfavouring factors (e.g., excessive workload). Language teachers' emotions can form their perceptions, shape their beliefs, influence motivation, and affect instructional effectiveness and learner achievement (Gkonou et al., 2020). They also play a pivotal role in shaping teacher identity, efficacy and well-being (Nazari & Karimpour, 2023; Wolff & De Costa, 2017). The negative feelings teachers undergo are likely to aggravate stress, lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout, and even threaten one's professional life (e.g., teacher attrition) (Barcelos & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018). In this case, teachers are encouraged to develop emotional competence and intelligence by undertaking emotion labour and employing emotional regulation strategies (Gkonou & Miller, 2023). Besides this dichotomous view of emotions, the poststructural/discursive approach (Benesch, 2017; Zembylas, 2005) takes into account social, cultural, ideological and political contexts, and power relations in analysing and interpreting emotions. Zembylas (2005, p. 936) argued that emotions viewed through the poststructural lens can "help educators better analyse the complexities of 'emotional rules' (Zembylas, 2002) in teaching and explore the role of emotional practices". Following the poststructural perspective, this study examines the complexities of POA language teacher emotions and the multiple layers of factors that shape their emotions.

Production-Oriented Approach

The Production-Oriented Approach (POA) is an innovative language teaching pedagogy which aims to overcome the weaknesses in tertiary-level English education in Mainland China: text-centred, input-based, and input-output-separated (Wen, 2015). POA starts and ends with production, while input serves as the bridge in between. POA follows the principles of learning-centredness, learning-using integration, cultural exchange and key competency. Teaching hypotheses are the output-driven hypothesis, input-enabling hypothesis, selective-learning hypothesis and assessment for learning. Accordingly, the teaching procedures include three phases: motivating, enabling and assessing. In this teacher-student cooperation process, teachers act as facilitators and consultants who guide, design and scaffold (Figure 1).

POA is currently implemented on a unit-by-unit basis in a course. Each unit is designed with a

major language production objective, which is further divided into several smaller production goals. While following a sequential logical relationship, these goals remain relatively independent and can be completed through a full cycle of “motivating, enabling and assessing” (Wen, 2018b).

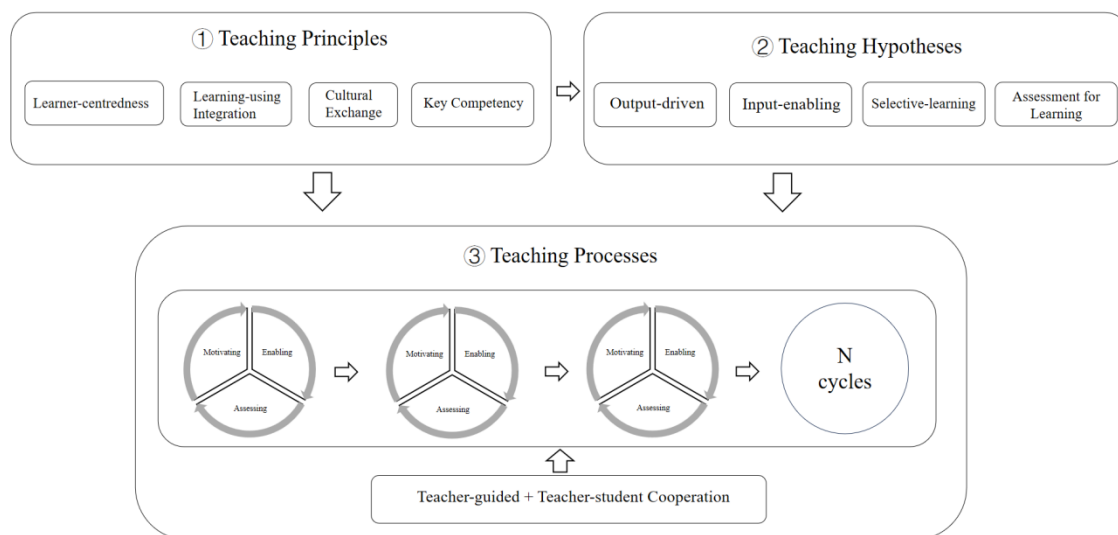


Figure 1. POA theoretical system

In the initial phase of motivating, the teacher introduces communicative scenarios, as in the following example. *You are going to make a speech about what you expect to get from college experience at a workshop which aims to enhance the mutual understanding and communication between Chinese students and international students in your college* (Ji, 2024)². Students are encouraged to try out the cognitively challenging task. The teacher then makes explicit the learning objectives and requirements (e.g., explaining the importance of attending college, understanding better the challenges and opportunities at college, and talking about challenges and opportunities in college life using new vocabulary). In the enabling phase, the teacher divides the large communicative task into several mini-tasks according to the objectives. The teacher then arranges them from less challenging to more challenging, and provides relevant learning materials. Students selectively use these materials to pick up the ideas, language and structures that can be used to practise the mini-tasks. In this process, the teacher gradually reduces the scaffolding until students can accomplish the large productive task independently. An innovative assessment method was proposed in POA — Teacher-Student Collaborative Assessment (TSCA) (Sun, 2017; Wen, 2016). In TSCA, the teacher and students collaboratively set up clear and comprehensible criteria and evaluate a few typical examples of students’ products in class and the remaining ones after class. TSCA enables students to consolidate what they have learned and identify their weaknesses, thus promoting effective learning.

Previous studies of POA

Since its inception, POA has received a wide range of interest and witnessed a surge in research. The ongoing research of POA theory and practice covers a broad spectrum, including 1) the development of the theory (Wen, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2018a, 2018b, 2020b); 2) the design and application of POA in different language courses, such as college English (Yang, 2015), Business English (Xie, 2021), translation (Qi & Sun, 2023), and English for Specific Purposes

² The examples in this paragraph were taken from the college English textbook *iEnglish Integrated Course 1 (Advanced Edition, Smart Version)*.

(ESP) (Yang & Guo, 2022), in non-English language teaching (Cao, 2021; Tang & Hu, 2021), and in different modalities (Zhang, 2022); 3) material development and use (Bi, 2019; Zhan, 2019); 4) the comparison between and combination of POA and other approaches (Wen & Bi, 2020; Zhao & Li, 2021); 5) the effectiveness of POA in language teaching (Sun & Asmawi, 2022; Xuan et al., 2023); and 6) learners (Li et al., 2022) and teachers in POA language teaching (Qiu, 2020; Sun, 2020; Wen, 2020a; Zhang, 2020).

Over the past few years, POA has gradually gained international recognition (Cumming, 2017; Ellis, 2017; Matsuda, 2017; Polio, 2017; Widdowson & Seidlhofer, 2018) and been applied to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts outside China, such as Thailand (Tian, 2019), South Korea (Yin, 2019) and Indonesia (Nur, 2019). A review of the literature indicates that the bulk has mainly concentrated on applying and adapting POA in a variety of language courses. The results suggested that POA is generally suitable for a range of courses in EFL teaching and the approach has proven to be effective in improving learners' language proficiency. Through its emphasis on active production, POA facilitates more meaningful learning experiences, which helps students not only better understand linguistic knowledge but also apply it in real-life contexts. Yet very little research has cast an eye on the practitioners — the teachers who apply POA in the classrooms.

Research on POA teachers

Up till now, there has been only one special issue focusing exclusively on language teacher development in POA. Wen (2020a) constructed a four-level pentagonal pyramid theoretical framework for the development of three experienced POA teachers. The five decisive factors (individuals' self-awareness, self-determination, self-goal, self-action and self-reflection) are at the five points of the bottom pentagon with the environmental factor (professional learning community) at its centre. The four upright levels indicate the four stages of development: exploratory, explanatory, creative and liberating. As teachers' development evolves, individual factors and environmental factors change and interact. Using a self-narrative method, Zhang's (2020) study showed the challenges and achievements in POA practice and revealed the author's professional growth. Through analysing reflective journals, Qiu (2020) also reported her professional development as a novice POA teacher. Similarly, Sun (2020) explored teacher development in Teacher-Student Collaborative Assessment. It can be seen that research on other aspects of teachers is completely lacking. As empirical evidence has been documented that POA could contribute to learners' interest, motivation, enjoyment and satisfaction (e.g., Li et al., 2022) as well as anxiety (Wang, 2019), it is, therefore, crucial to examine what teachers think and, more importantly, how they feel in POA teaching. Understanding and addressing these emotional dynamics is essential for optimising the effectiveness of POA. This study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What emotion(s) did language teachers experience in applying POA in their teaching?
2. What were the factors leading to these emotion(s)?

Methodology

The Participants' Pool

Participants of this study were volunteers from a two-year online language teacher training program (Production-Oriented Approach — Virtual Professional Learning Community [POA-VPLC] 2020-2021) in China. The program aimed to promote language teachers' teaching and research skills by focusing on POA. The program was led by Applied Linguist, Professor Qiufang Wen and her POA team and jointly initiated by the National Research Centre for Foreign Language Education of Beijing Foreign Studies University and Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. The agenda of the program comprised three main phases:

studying and learning POA theory (Phase 1), applying POA in classroom teaching practice (Phase 2), and writing relevant Phase 2 teaching-based research papers (Phase 3). In total, 132 teachers from over 90 colleges and universities (one from a high school) participated in this program. The language they taught included nine different languages (English, Korean, Indonesian, Laos, French, German, Arabic, Japanese and Chinese [to international students]), the majority of which was English. Symposiums and group discussions were organised once or twice per month through the Video Conference Software — Tencent Meeting.

Participants, materials and procedures of the study

The study employed a self-compiled Language Teacher Emotion Questionnaire (see Appendix A, adapted from Miller & Gkonou, 2018) and narrative interviews (Barkhuizen, 2021). The questionnaire contained five questions. The first question was intended to elicit some background information. Questions 2 and 3 asked participants to choose six from 24 emotion words and explain the reasons for their choice. Question 4 asked if they had additional emotion words to add. The final question asked participants' willingness to take part in the following interview. The questionnaire was administered in Phase 3 of the program after teachers had finished POA teaching practice in Phase 2. Forty-two tertiary-level teachers (40 females and two males) completed the questionnaire. Their language of instruction included the above 9 languages, among which the majority was English (31 out of 42). They had an average of 13.3 years of teaching experience and 42 weeks of POA teaching experience. They were named from T1 to T42.

The narrative interviews were intended to elicit reflective stories, so during the interviews, participants were invited to tell the researcher about their lived experiences rather than just being asked direct questions. The interviews were conducted two weeks after the completion of the questionnaire. Nine teachers (all female) in the Questionnaire cohort participated in the interviews. Table 1 presents their basic profile. They had an average of 11 years of language teaching experience. Their length of applying POA in language teaching ranged from 16 weeks to 6 years. Some of them already had POA teaching experience before joining this program. It should be noted that tertiary-level English courses in China mainly comprise two categories. The first is *College English*, which is a compulsory course (the training of four skills) for all non-English majors and normally lasts for two years across four semesters. The second is a variety of English courses for English majors, including basic English courses (the training of four skills) in Year one and two and advanced English courses (e.g., Linguistics, Translation, Literature) in Year three and four (Majors of other languages have similar courses). Teachers of English in Table 1 belonged to the first category and teachers of other languages (Indonesian and German) taught language courses specifically for majors of those languages. Due to space limits, data of four teachers (No. 1, 4, 8 and 9 in Table 1) were presented in detail in this paper. A maximum variation principle was followed to capture the diversity of the cohort and document the uniqueness and shared patterns of these teachers. The data were analysed and coded using Excel and NVivo. The coding themes are presented in Appendix B.

Table 1. Profile of the interviewees

No.	Name	Language of instruction	Years of teaching experience	of POA teaching experience	Qualification
1	Mei	Indonesian	11	1 year	Masters (PhD candidate)
2	Juan	English	9	6 years	Masters

3	Fen	English	15	2 years	Masters
4	Li	English	2	16 weeks	PhD
5	Xin	English	17	4 years	Masters
6	Qi	English	17	2 years	Masters
7	Dan	English	7	2 years	Masters
8	Yun	German	4	2 years	PhD
9	Ning	English	17	2 years	Masters

Results

Emotions experienced by teachers: Results from the Questionnaire

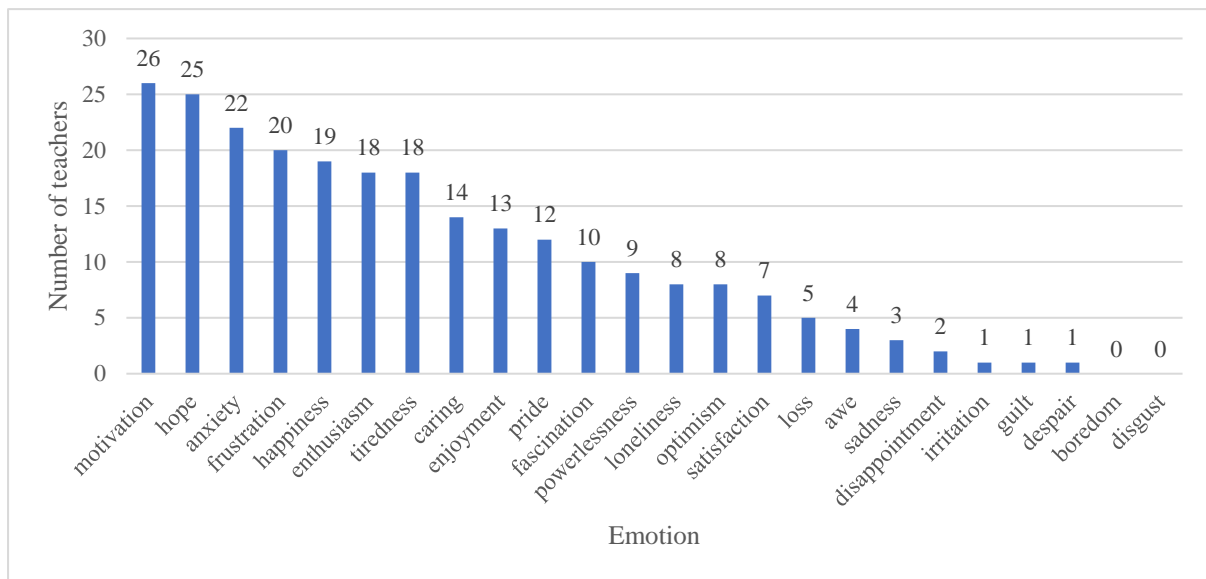


Figure 2. Emotions experienced by teachers (descending order)

The number of teachers selecting each type of emotion is graphically displayed in Figure 2. It is clear that over half of the teachers selected motivation (61.9%), hope (59.5%) and anxiety (52.4%). Other frequently felt emotions were frustration (47.6%), happiness (45.2%), enthusiasm (42.9%) and tiredness (42.9%). In contrast, teachers seldom experienced irritation (2.4%), guilt (2.4%) and despair (2.4%). None of the teachers reported feeling bored and disgusted.

In the answer to question 3 of the questionnaire, the 17 emotion words explained according to the descending order of frequency were anxiety (10 times), hope and motivation (9 times), tiredness and happiness (7 times), loneliness (6 times), frustration, powerlessness, and satisfaction (4 times), disappointment, enjoyment, enthusiasm, optimism, pride (3 times), caring and fascination (2 times), and loss (1 time).

The major reasons for their anxiety were course content (T34), POA design (T1, T4, T26, T28, T32, T39), and effect (T1, T28, T41). They were worried when 1) at the beginning stage they did not know how to adapt the course material and integrate POA into their teaching (T4, T39); 2) at the implementation stage they were not quite certain if their lecture design was strictly following POA theory (T26). They would feel frustrated if they could not think of a good POA teaching plan (T5, T16); 3) POA teaching did not go on smoothly; and 4) the teaching effect did not reach their expectation (T1, T28, T41).

However, they still felt happy, motivated and hopeful for the changes in teaching, students and themselves. First, POA is the localised English teaching theory (T23) and they learned better and more scientific teaching design in this program (T7). As a result, they were less confused about teaching (T15). Second, teachers noticed the changes in students (T37, T42). They reported that POA enabled students to get more involved in classroom activities (T6, T19, T30), thus gaining a higher sense of achievement (T5, T29, T34). They believed POA theory and practice had changed the current teaching situation (T35) and put hope on POA to improve College English teaching (T41). Third, they also gained motivation and hope from peer discussion, help and encouragement within the Virtual POA community (T2, T3, T12, T21, T32, T39).

The feeling of tiredness resulted from the time-consuming and labour-intensive nature of POA. They needed to spend a great deal of time adapting course materials, designing classroom activities and scoring assignments. Especially when the teacher was the only one in the teaching unit adopting POA, a feeling of loneliness would naturally well up in their hearts.

Emotions experienced by teachers: Results from narrative interviews

No. 1 Mei

By the time of the interview, Mei had taught Indonesian to majors of Indonesian for 11 years and had approximately one year (two semesters) of POA experience in a previous POA workshop. In this workshop, she published a journal article based on her experience of employing POA in her teaching. She chose happiness, frustration, enthusiasm, anxiety, motivation and hope in the Questionnaire. She argued that it was hard to describe POA emotions with a few words. It is a microcosm of her academic life, interacting with emotions in life.

- 1 It's an inspiration for early career scholars to get published no matter how hard the trip was
- 2 the leading scholars taught you everything
- 3 sharing between teachers and colleagues
- 4 self-promotion
- 5 positive feedback to students
- 6 continuous pressures
- 7 real and down-to-earth
- 8 long-term planning and development
- 9 move in zigzags and by roundabout ways
- 10 rise in a spiral
- 11 We are not on the same starting line
- 12 part-time PhD
- 13 course arrangement and schedule
- 14 What kind of production matches their proficiencies and satisfies the needs of my research
- 15 multiple difficulties in production
- 16 utilitarian
- 17 shortage of course materials
- 18 coordination

19 input-output ratio

20 People tend to think that knowledge itself is more important

21 enrich the classroom and underscore the key points

22 diversified students

23 teacher-student communication

As Mei herself summarised, two aspects of emotions emerged from her POA experience: positive and negative. However, she argued that they were not binary opposites. “In fact, if a person wants sustainable development, s/he is certain to encounter some negative emotions and s/he needs to coexist with them, resolve them and turn them into positive motivations.” Therefore, she referred to this process as “move in zigzags” (Line 9) and “rise in a spiral” (Line 10). Her feeling of happiness originated from her teaching and academic development through POA (Line 4). Academically, she enjoyed sharing with leading scholars (Line 2), communicating with other teachers and colleagues within the POA community (Line 3) and generating research output (Line 1), while pedagogically she promoted her teaching in a more scientific and systematic way and provided more positive feedback to students (Line 5). She was motivated and enthusiastic to be guided by POA, fit POA into her teaching and report her POA reflection and development. Mei also saw hope in her experience of publishing one POA article in a top-ranking journal in China. She explained, “This is from 0 to 1, a very meaningful step.” Before this article, she always thought about grafting — applying theories or methodologies of the English language to Indonesian language teaching. Her experience of publishing an article based on her teaching experience gave her a sense of reality (Line 7) and hope for long-term development (Line 8).

The feeling of frustration intermingled with anxiety in Mei’s reflection. She identified four major sources of her “negative” emotions. First, the limited scope of students and course resources restricted the application of POA. As a non-lingua franca, only one class of students of Indonesian majors is enrolled every four years in her university and many courses last for only one semester. It is impossible to set a control group and an experimental group with only one class of students, let alone conduct cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. Furthermore, as teaching is split between native Indonesian teachers and Chinese teachers, conducting POA by herself within a set period of time requires coordinating among different teachers and arranging course materials (Lines 18, 19). Second, she had to devote more time and energy to designing appropriate POA tasks and predicting students’ difficulties (Lines 14, 15). As a result, she always had the feeling of “devoted more yet gained little” (Line 19), which also caused her confusion: she loved the POA teaching itself, but the gain was not worth the effort. Third, she also felt stressed compared with other teachers doing POA studies of lingua franca (Line 11), such as English which seemed to have a bulk of literature. Meanwhile, she needed to undertake administrative duties and study responsibilities (Line 12). Fourth, a certain percentage of students held a utilitarian view. They preferred the traditional way of learning — teachers teaching and students taking notes. Due to China’s “One Belt One Road” initiative, the demand gap for high-end foreign language talents in non-lingua franca is increasing. It was easy for students learning non-lingua franca to find a job after graduation. They were unwilling to bother the effort to prepare a lot in POA.

Mei’s narration revealed that POA had shaped her belief in teaching. In the motivating stage, POA encouraged the teacher to design a scenario of real communicative value. It shifted her attention from teaching knowledge (Line 20) to teaching students how to use the knowledge, from teachers’ input to students’ intake. In the enabling stage, the emphasis on targeting students’ production difficulties helped her trim the teaching contents to underscore the key

points (Line 21). Moreover, POA enhanced teacher-student communication (Line 23) as it encouraged teachers to understand what students needed (Line 22).

No. 4 Li

By the time of the interview, Li had been doing her post-doc. Part of her duties included teaching one course to undergraduate students. In the Questionnaire, she had chosen happiness, frustration, tiredness, anxiety, powerlessness and hope. However, she explained that without the restriction of six words, she would add other emotions such as sadness, motivation and caring.

1 reconnected to my alma mater

2 teaching Chinese as a foreign language and teaching English as a foreign language

3 merge POA and classroom teaching practice

4 fixed teaching schedules

5 coordinate with other teachers

6 prepare a lot of teaching materials

7 rules and regulations

8 exam format and requirement

9 professional developments

10 a double degree

11 Students were passionate and enthusiastic about the motivating stage

12 awkward and hard

13 great pressures for students

14 final score

15 promotion and application value

16 teamwork

17 use these principles to guide my teaching

18 the power of motivating

19 service

20 A gentleman should benefit the public when in power

As a graduate of Professor Wen's University, Li felt happy to learn and practise POA. She explained it was a great opportunity to "learn from Professor Wen and reconnect to my alma mater" (Line 1). Before this workshop, she only had a faint idea of POA. She was delighted to gain a deep understanding of the POA theory and practice and felt hopeful for her future professional and academic development (Line 9) on this trip. Nevertheless, the other side of the coin should not be neglected: she was overwhelmed by the emotions of anxiety, frustration, tiredness and powerlessness.

The feeling of anxiety was associated with her current post-doc position. Although Li has a double degree (Lines 2, 10), her major degree was in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. However, part of her post-doc duties and responsibilities was teaching EFL. Li was not confident about EFL teaching, especially when applying POA to the English language teaching. The feelings of frustration and powerlessness were correlated. She felt frustrated

because it was hard to fully integrate POA into classroom teaching practice (Line 3). Courses within her faculty have fixed teaching schedules (Line 4) and exam formats (Line 8). In this mode, teachers did not have much autonomy. They need to coordinate with other teachers of the same course (Line 5). Students were exam-oriented and score-centred. She felt powerless when confronted with these rules and regulations. She also felt tired and exhausted because POA made high demands on teachers and students. It took a great deal of time for her to prepare motivating materials, design enabling tasks and assess assignments, and for students to complete a heavy load of tasks.

Despite these negative feelings she reported, she acknowledged the impact of POA. For example, she would consciously use POA principles to guide her teaching (Line 17) even if she was not strictly following the three phases. Li also emphasised the power of using production to motivate (Line 18) in educational management as she introduced it to her post-doc team. Additionally, she was greatly touched by the POA creator Professor Wen and her team, specifically their caring for foreign language teachers and their mission to promote and advance foreign language teaching in China (Lines 19, 20). However, she restated that the successful application of POA in teaching required the teachers' full preparation as well as the institution's support.

No. 8 Yun

Yun had four years of teaching German to students of German majors. Her POA journey began two years ago when a teacher from her teaching unit introduced POA and conducted POA teaching with her. In the Questionnaire, she selected all positive emotion words: happiness, pride, enthusiasm, motivation, optimism and hope.

- 1 group work and teamwork
- 2 pressure and motivation
- 3 All the efforts are not futile
- 4 systematic learning
- 5 exert a subtle influence on
- 6 compile textbooks
- 7 time-consuming
- 8 a heavy workload
- 9 an appropriate task
- 10 positive feedback
- 11 fragmented teaching content
- 12 help students solve problems
- 13 learning for using not for exams
- 14 study for the sake of application
- 15 put into practice what one has learned
- 16 advocating POA and introducing POA to more people
- 17 International Association for German Studies
- 18 internal motivation and external motivation

Contrary to Mei who felt alone on their POA journey, Yun enjoyed the teamwork in the

teaching unit at her faculty as well as the group work within the POA community (Line 1). The fine division of labour within her unit (three teachers focused on teaching one course: *Comprehensive German*) enabled these teachers to jointly adapt textbooks to POA format, formulate POA lesson plans, conduct POA teaching practice within the course, and collect POA data. At the same time, working and discussing with talented and competent peers gave her pressure but more motivation, happiness and enthusiasm (Line 2) as they set a role model for her. Students' positive feedback also contributed partly to her positive feelings. She felt optimistic and hopeful that she was getting closer to publication (Line 3) on her POA journey. A sense of pride arose when she had the opportunity to learn and practise POA collaboratively and to further export POA at an international conference (Line 16, 17).

Yun believed that POA had a number of implications for her. First, learning and practising POA was not only a comprehensive redesign of the course but also a systematic reorganising of teaching practice and research path. Specifically, POA influenced her imperceptibly in almost every aspect of teaching, such as compiling and adapting textbooks, setting up teaching objectives, and designing classroom activities. Previously, each section of teaching was independent and unrelated (Line 11), but POA integrated them and enabled her to keep reflecting on the objective, content and procedures of teaching. She always bore in mind to make studying and learning serve practical purposes (Lines 12, 13, 14, 15). Second, she admitted that designing appropriate POA tasks and transforming textbooks into POA format was time-consuming and involved a heavy workload (Lines 7, 8) even though they had a team of three teachers. Therefore, in addition to applying POA to their teaching, her team was working on compiling German POA textbooks and attracting more teachers of German to know and practise POA.

No. 9 Ning

Ning had 17 years of teaching experience and was the head of her unit at the time of the interview. She had been following the POA theory ever since its inception. As early as over ten years ago, Ning's university conducted a background survey among graduates and their employers. It was found that the graduates were most impressed by what they had produced during learning while employers also emphasised productive skills such as translating. In a sense, there was a match between students' attention, employers' needs and POA's focus. Ning adhered to one teaching principle: what students have learned in class needs to have a continuation in the future. Ning explained that she experienced mixed emotions using POA and she selected happiness, fascination, pride, anxiety, motivation and hope.

1 learning process

2 teaching is rewarding

3 reorganising teaching

4 formulating and revising teaching plans

5 teaching awards

6 They used to question the meaning of the English subject

7 compact teaching

8 teachers of English majors invited me to teach and supervise their teaching plans

9 provincial-level teaching awards

10 high-ranking journal articles

11 background surveys on the needs of the employers

- 12 focus on reading and translation
- 13 Students were very impressed with what they had done
- 14 teaching innovation projects
- 15 the perfect implementation of teaching plans
- 16 heavy teaching loads
- 17 The effort they devoted was not equal to the scores they got
- 18 What they learn today can be used in the future
- 19 This localised theory, like a guidebook, gives us a direction, an action plan
- 20 teach us how to assess ourselves and others
- 21 experienced teachers and novice teachers

Ning gained happiness in learning POA theory more logically and profoundly (Line 1) and obtained a sense of achievement in POA teaching (Line 2). She was also motivated by reorganising teaching (Line 3), and fascinated by devising and revising teaching plans (Line 4) and monitoring these plans' being perfectly implemented. She was proud that the little-by-little accumulation of innovative teaching with POA had contributed to her multiple teaching awards (Lines 5, 9), securing funding for teaching innovation projects and recognition from teachers of other disciplines (Lines 6, 7, 8, 14).

The emotional highlands were also counterbalanced by the clashes and conflicts. As Ning is the head of her unit, she has greater autonomy in setting up a new course (e.g., *Academic English*) and deciding on teaching and evaluation methods (e.g., using POA). However, when it came to a compulsory course enrolled by a large number of students (e.g., hundreds or over one thousand), it was hard to implement POA throughout the course when teachers of other classes were not adopting this approach. Students were reluctant to devote extra effort to prepare for the production task which could not be reflected in their final score because the final exam was arranged in the standard test format (mostly reading) (Line 17). Similarly, novice teachers were also unwilling to adopt POA because it was demanding and time-consuming (Line 16).

Ning believed that the great change brought by POA was that it offered an action plan or a teaching manual (Line 19). As an experienced teacher, POA freshened her ideas about pedagogical theory and teaching practice. More importantly, the assessment method (TSCA) in POA provided a new perspective for teachers to assess their own teaching and the teaching of other teachers (Line 20). Furthermore, she saw the hope of publishing articles based on her POA teaching in high-ranking journals in China, which may partially relieve her anxiety in the "publish or perish" atmosphere.

Discussions

Teachers experienced a wide range of emotions on their journey of applying POA to their language teaching. Their feelings about themselves, their teaching, their students and their teaching context were complex, sometimes contrastive, and intertwined with social, cultural and ideological influences. In the following, their emotion spectrum was explored within each specific category and domain.

Teaching

Most teachers reported their motivation and happiness in employing POA. They expressed increasing confidence and enthusiasm in POA-revised classroom practice as POA integrated

teaching objectives, teaching plans and classroom activities and enabled their teaching to be more scientific and systematic. Unlike other teaching methods, POA, stemming from China's context, offered precise, targeted and practical solutions to the weaknesses of tertiary-level language education in China. Teachers were hopeful for POA to improve their teaching. Juan, for instance, was clumsy at transplanting task-based language teaching when confronted with the "input-output separation" problem before she got to know POA. She described the POA creator Professor Wen as a "rescuer", saving teachers like her (from third-tier cities in remote provinces) from their predicament in teaching. Some teachers were also happy and proud that POA-embedded teaching gave them a sense of freshness and achievement, brought them a number of teaching awards and secured funding for their teaching reform projects.

While POA encouraged teachers to develop creativity and innovation in their teaching, it required significant efforts from teachers, thus creating extra work and taking excessive time. The teachers admitted that POA design and implementation were very challenging. They needed to carefully prepare and keep restructuring lessons, lectures and the entire course. The process of finding and adapting materials, designing productive tasks, and evaluating students' work left them tired and exhausted. Sometimes the designed lesson plan or instruction effectiveness failed to reach their expectation. This situation exacerbated their anxiety, leading to their self-doubt and concern about their inadequate ability to learn (the POA theory) and teach (applying the theory).

Students

Students who saw the value of authentic communicative tasks were more willing to participate and share their opinions. This positive feedback was bidirectional in teacher-student interaction. The high level of students' engagement and involvement in classroom activities undoubtedly boosted teachers' confidence and motivation. Teachers grew more empathetic to students' learning. They started to think more about students' needs in lesson planning and tried to create more meaningful and engaging lessons. However, applying POA also meant extra effort from the students. The teachers admitted that it was frustrating not getting support from some students. Their motivation to learn a language was more instrumental and they cared more about their scores. If what was taught through POA would not be covered in the exams, they considered POA as "good but not necessary" and "not worth the time and effort".

Team and institution

Teachers felt encouraged and motivated when gathering with fellow POA members in the virtual community. Yet when they returned to their physical teaching environments, there was a general sense of loneliness and frustration sensed by POA teachers. This loneliness and frustration emerged mainly from lacking teammates and institutional support. First of all, it was hard for teachers who had to coordinate their teaching with other teachers to integrate POA into their teaching. For example, when a course was enrolled by a large number of students, the teaching (to different classes) had to be split among a group of teachers (like Li), or when a course was enrolled by just one class, the teaching needed to split among different teachers according to department regulations (like Mei). In this case, teachers had little autonomy as courses had predetermined lecture schedules and exam formats. In addition, lacking comprehensive and systematic support from faculty and institutional levels, teachers reported that they were sometimes powerless in advancing this teaching reform alone. Secondly, even for teachers who had the authority (e.g., head of the unit/department) to start a new course and determine course schedules and assessment methods, they still desired colleagues with similar interests and POA knowledge to form a team and share the extra workload because POA material compilation, teaching planning and implementation required considerable time and effort.

Research

Owing to the sweeping managerial reform in higher education (Huang & Guo, 2019), institutions have prioritised research publication in the appraisal system. University teachers are under constant pressure to conduct research and publish their studies in the prevailing “up or out” culture. However, some teachers in this study found it difficult to conduct research in language teaching as they were burdened with a number of disadvantages, including a lack of academic training, onerous workloads and limited access to research resources. As a result, when teachers were forced to do research, they felt the bifurcation between teaching and research and the divided professional identity between teacher and researcher.

POA has instilled an idea of deriving research from teaching. Teachers did not have to struggle with research topics beyond teaching. POA acted as a medium through which they accumulated a theoretical foundation and learned research methods of language learning and teaching. The perception of unity and synergy of teaching and research in POA helped them partially relieve anxiety, boosted their confidence and imbued hope in them to produce teaching-informed research. Teachers who already had their POA research outputs expressed pride in their accomplishments. Moreover, research evidence generated from teaching brought vitality to teaching. Teachers’ sustained reflection in research provided insights into issues in classroom teaching.

Conclusion

As an emerging teaching approach aiming at resolving problems in tertiary English education in China, POA has become a hot issue among English language teachers and has quickly spread to teachers of other languages. The current study explores the emotional fabrics of language teachers in applying POA in their teaching process.

The findings revealed that a wide range of emotions emerged among teachers, which in turn acted as an agentive power to influence their teaching and research. Teachers’ positive feelings arose from authority influence (admiration and excitement for getting close to leading scholars), surged in the positive effects of POA teaching (motivation, happiness and enjoyment for systematic and scientific teaching rationales, practical pedagogical solutions, positive feedback from students, and fruitful teaching awards), and reverberated as an emerging researcher (hope and pride for engaging in research based on theoretically-driven and empirically-based POA teaching). It was also worth mentioning that POA promoted fairness by enhancing teachers’ visibility and audibility. Teachers from non-lingua franca backgrounds and peripheral universities were greatly encouraged and invigorated. While enjoying the benefits brought up by POA, teachers also showed negative feelings when confronting obstacles in the implementing process: anxiety about imperfect POA design, implementation and effect; tiredness of the heavy workloads of POA (time-consuming and labour-intensive preparation, design and evaluation), and frustration and powerlessness for resistance from some students (of an institutional motivation) and lacking support from the institutions (no team, fixed teaching schedules and exam formats). Despite all these negative feelings, all the teachers interviewed demonstrated a strong determination to continue applying POA in their teaching. Instead of being overwhelmed by their worries and concerns, they began to adopt a series of strategies to overcome the challenges, such as flexibly employing POA (e.g., using only one phase of POA or all three phases in just one unit/lecture) instead of the entire course, forming teams instead of working alone, and compiling textbooks based on POA instead of spending considerable time adapting a variety of existing materials.

The present study comes with some limitations. The data were collected from a small number of POA teachers within the VPLC community, limiting the generalisation of the results.

Additional insights may be gained by including a larger group of teachers collaboratively conducting POA in different cultural contexts. Furthermore, a follow-up longitudinal investigation of participants in the present study mapping teachers' emotional trajectories may further elucidate their emotional fluctuation and evolution. Also, students' feelings were presented through the lens of teachers' emotions. Future studies could incorporate students to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between teachers' and students' emotions. Notwithstanding the limitations, this study has shed more light on the emotional profile of tertiary-level language teachers in their endeavour to engage in and innovate POA teaching and research practice. More guidance and assistance are needed for their emotional comfort on their POA journey (e.g., POA training programs and seminars, teacher-student communication workshops and personalised institutional support).

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Appendices

A. Language Teacher Emotion Questionnaire

Thanks for participating in my research. Please fill out the questionnaire about your emotions in applying the Production-Oriented Approach (POA) in your teaching.

1. Basic Information

Years of teaching experience: _____

Gender: _____

The length of applying POA in teaching: _____

The language you teach: _____

The level you teach: _____

2. These are words about emotions. Please select six words that can best describe your emotional experiences in applying POA in your teaching.

happiness	fascination	frustration
caring	sadness	pride
disappointment	enjoyment	irritation
enthusiasm	tiredness	loss
anxiety	boredom	guilt
powerlessness	disgust	awe
despair	satisfaction	motivation
loneliness	optimism	hope

3. Please select two among the six words you have chosen and explain why you selected these two words.
4. Do you have any other emotion words to add?
5. Are you willing to participate in the following interviews?

B. Coding themes

Dimensions	Specific Emotions	Explanations	Examples
Pedagogy	motivated and enthusiastic	a novel teaching approach; authority influence	1) It is an innovative teaching method. 2) The leading scholar taught you everything. 3) I can learn from Professor Wen. 4) Professor Wen and her team cared for foreign language teachers and I am deeply touched by their mission to promote and advance foreign language teaching in China.
	hopeful	the revolutionisation of tertiary-level language teaching	1) It has revitalised language teaching. 2) Learning and practising POA was a systematic reorganisation of teaching practice.
	happy	successful language outcomes; the effectiveness of teaching; a sense of achievement	1) Students were very impressed with what they had done. 2) Teaching is rewarding.
	proud	attaining teaching awards	The little-by-little accumulation of innovative teaching with POA contributed to my multiple teaching awards.
	anxious	lack of confidence in	I'm not sure I understood POA

		using a new methodology	theory, and that I could apply it properly in my teaching.
	tired and exhausted	heavy workloads involved in preparing, adapting and evaluating POA tasks	1) It was time-consuming and involved a heavy workload. 2) POA made high demands on teachers and students.
Teacher-student Interaction	empathic	adjusting teaching to support students' needs	POA encourages teachers to understand what students need.
	motivated and confident	students' interaction in language production	POA enhances teacher-student communication.
	frustrated	students' lack of engagement	1) It's easy for them to find a job after graduation. For them, it's not worth spending so much time doing all those tasks. 2) Students are exam-oriented and score-centred.
Team and institution	encouraged and motivated	collaboration and support from POA Community	1) It's good to communicate with other teachers and colleagues within the POA community. 2) They set a role model for me.
	lonely	insufficient support from peers in teachers' own university	Teachers of other classes were not adopting this approach.
	frustrated and powerless	institutional constraints and limitations: rigid curricula, standardised assessments, lack of resources	1) We had limited course materials and a limited scope of students. 2) We don't have much autonomy.
Research	stressed	pressure to publish	The "publish or perish" atmosphere
	confident and hopeful	contributing to academic knowledge by exploring new pedagogical possibilities; promoting professional development; and securing funding for teaching reform projects	1) It's an inspiration for early career scholars to get published. 2) This is from 0 to 1, a very meaningful step. 3) Teaching with POA helped me secure funding for teaching innovation projects.