

# A Production-Oriented Approach to ESP Material Development in Vocational Education in China

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## Abstract

This study explores a Production-Oriented Approach (POA) to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) material development in vocational education. Following the release of the National Vocational English Course Standards (2020) and amidst growing national focus on vocational education in China, the development of vocational textbooks that integrate the Course Standards guidelines with ESP curriculum and everyday teaching practices has emerged as a critical aspect of vocational education. However, current ESP textbooks often fail to meet the guidelines delineated in the Course Standards for vocational English teaching. This study proposes using the Production-Oriented Approach (POA) as a comprehensive solution for developing effective ESP materials.

POA is a foreign language education theory with distinct Chinese characteristics, developed and rooted in the realities of foreign language teaching in China through critical adaptation of second language acquisition theories and practices. This approach considers the specific use of language, content requirements, and non-cognitive learner characteristics—such as motivation, attitudes, strategy use, and moral development—in communicative production within real-world contexts as a consistent guiding principle for designing teaching objectives, instructional materials, teaching activities, and assessments.

The POA-based ESP textbook design encompasses needs analysis, content selection, and linguistic features. In this approach, authentic workplace tasks serve as both the starting and ending points. These tasks are derived from a needs analysis based on the Course Standards, insights from vocational students, and linguistic features informed by research. Simultaneously, they juxtapose pedagogical flow, learner motivation, and a focused, in-depth learning process.

A unit from the developed textbook and its classroom application exemplify this approach, integrating language learning, workplace-specific skills, cultural and moral education, and fostering learner autonomy.

The study demonstrates that POA effectively streamlines the key processes in ESP material development and use, aligning needs analysis, workplace skills, and language instruction in a cohesive framework. This research provides a practical and theoretical foundation for ESP textbook development in vocational education.

**Keywords:** Production-Oriented Approach; English for Specific Purposes; material design; vocational education