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Bridging Input and Output: A Comparative Study of Free Voluntary Reading and the Production-Oriented Approach in Chinese EFL Writing Instruction

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Abstract:
This study compares the efficacy of Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) and the Production-Oriented Approach (POA) in bridging input and output for Chinese EFL writing instruction. Through a mixed-methods empirical study involving 57 third-year English majors, the research first implemented FVR, revealing significant theoretical acceptance but poor practical engagement due to time constraints, material irrelevance, and insufficient self-regulation. Subsequent adoption of POA incorporated output-driven tasks to motivate input consumption and scaffold prewriting processes. Results demonstrated POA's superiority in enhancing engagement, topic relevance, and linguistic transfer. However, challenges persisted in strategy internalization and procrastination. The findings highlight POA's structured accountability and learner-centered design as effective countermeasures to FVR's limitations, though explicit language scaffolding and technological integration are recommended to address residual gaps.

Keywords:
Production-Oriented Approach (POA), Free Voluntary Reading (FVR), prewriting strategies, output-driven tasks, Chinese university students

1. Introduction

Among the four English language skills, Chinese students' speaking and writing abilities are significantly weaker. [1] Even in high-level English tests like the TEM-8, their essays often contain numerous basic grammatical errors, exhibit a limited vocabulary, and demonstrate simplistic sentence structures and expressions. [2] In addition to these linguistic issues, students struggle with brainstorming for topic-related ideas, advancing clear thesis statements, and logically connecting them with adequate support. [3, 4] As for the support they do use to prove or illustrate their ideas, they rarely engage in critical evaluations of them or question the credibility of their sources. [5]

The causes of these issues are manifold, with a predominant factor lying in the prevalent "product-focused approach" to teaching English writing in many Chinese universities: instructors elucidate writing techniques, assign topics, and correct students' compositions, with a primary focus on structure, vocabulary, and gram-

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mar. Yet, students often find themselves ensnared by the same errors in subsequent writing tasks. [6] For example, in a private Chinese university where I teach, English majors are subjected to this "product-focused approach" throughout their freshman and sophomore writing courses which prioritize sentence skills, essay structure, and patterns of essay development. This teaching method is hailed by many teachers as a good way to prepare students for English tests because it often focuses on exam-oriented writing templates. [7] The "model essay imitation method" or the "template filling method", while capable of enhancing test-taking abilities in the short term, stifles students' critical thinking and creative expression, trapping them in a passive state of writing for the sake of writing. Moreover, there is often a disconnect between the linguistic knowledge students receive and its practical application, rendering them unable to transform their input of vocabulary and syntactic knowledge into effective writing output. [3,8]

In this context, an increasing number of Chinese writing instructors have come to adopt the writing process approach, shifting their primary focus away from the final product to providing scaffolding for students in each step of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing.[1, 9, 10]

The prewriting stage holds critical importance in the writing process, as it serves as the foundational phase where writers not only formulate their central thesis and major points but also generate substantive evidence to support them. [11] During this stage, students engage in input-driven activities—such as reading relevant materials, listening to related discussions, and reflective thinking—to explore the topic holistically. Rather than relying solely on preexisting knowledge or hastily assembling ideas, this exploratory process allows learners to synthesize new information with their linguistic repertoire, thereby enriching both content depth and language proficiency. Consequently, the writing task transcends its conventional role as an assessment tool and transforms into a dynamic learning opportunity, enabling students to expand their subject-matter expertise while systematically enhancing their English academic writing skills.

When addressing the facilitation of topic-related input in EFL writing instruction, two pedagogical approaches have garnered significant attention for their emphasis on input-driven language development: Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) and the Production-Oriented Approach (POA). At the core of FVR lies Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), a practice where learners engage in self-selected recreational reading without external assessments or accountability.[12] Proponents argue that FVR's strength resides in its ability to organically enhance language input through immersive, interest-driven exposure, a mechanism so potent that Krashen boldly asserted, "the alternatives to free reading as a means of developing high levels of literacy look weaker than ever". [12] Empirical studies across diverse contexts have validated FVR's efficacy in improving vocabulary acquisition, grammatical accuracy, and writing fluency, as prolonged engagement with comprehensible input fosters subconscious language internalization .[13]

However, despite its theoretical promise and global recognition, FVR's application among Chinese university EFL learners remains conspicuously underexplored, with scant empirical evidence to substantiate its effectiveness in this specific demographic. This research gap not only reflects systemic challenges—such as rigid curricula prioritizing exam-oriented writing templates over autonomous learning—but also underscores a critical misalignment between FVR's foundational principles and the institutional realities of Chinese higher education. For instance, while FVR thrives on unstructured, self-directed engagement, Chinese students often struggle with the autonomy it demands due to deeply ingrained passive learning habits shaped by test-centric

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pedagogies. [3] Furthermore, the absence of accountability mechanisms in FVR may also exacerbate procrastination among learners lacking intrinsic motivation. These potential limitations highlight the necessity of adopting complementary frameworks like POA.

While FVR advocates learner autonomy, POA is often implemented with a teacher's meticulous design and guidance. POA adopts three hypotheses. The output-driven hypothesis is to motivate students by starting with productive tasks, making them aware of their language gaps and driving their desire to learn. The input-enabled hypothesis ensures that input materials are carefully selected to enable students to complete these tasks effectively, bridging the gap between learning and using language. The selective learning hypothesis focuses students' attention on the most relevant linguistic elements needed for production, enhancing learning efficiency and ensuring targeted language acquisition. Together, these hypotheses create a structured, goal-oriented approach that integrates learning and practical language use. [3]

As an educator who firmly believes in the power of reading, I have long been eager to cultivate a love for reading in my students and enhance their English writing abilities through extensive reading. So, a few months back, I launched FVR in my class. I was hopeful it would engage students and boost their writing skills, but also prepared with an alternative approach-POA, just in case FVR did not deliver as expected. Therefore, the goal of this research is to try out both FVR and POA in the English majors I teach in a Chinese university, and figure out which approach has the better effects and if it is feasible to integrate them and develop more effective strategies for teaching EFL writing.

2. Empirical Study

This empirical research aims to determine whether Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) or the Production-Oriented Approach (POA) is more effective in enhancing the efficacy of language input during the prewriting phase for Chinese English majors. The study adopts a two-phase experimental design: the first phase implemented FVR over a one-month period, while the second phase applied POA for an equivalent duration. Data were primarily collected through questionnaire surveys to evaluate pedagogical outcomes, followed by a comparative analysis of the two methodologies to assess their respective impacts on learners' input processing, engagement, and linguistic resource acquisition in prewriting tasks.

2.1 Participants

The empirical study was done with 57 third-year English majors at a Chinese university. Before enrolling in the advanced English writing course I teach, they have already completed both the elementary and intermediate English writing courses. They possess a foundational understanding of basic writing methods and techniques. However, a learning needs questionnaire conducted at the beginning of the semester revealed that they still face the following challenges in English writing: making grammatical errors (86.67%), lack of depth or originality in ideas (80%), insufficient vocabulary/Inaccurate word choice (70%), lack of effective support or argumentation for ideas (60%), and slow writing speed/time management difficulties (33.33%).

2.2 Procedures, Results, and Discussions

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2.2.1 Phase One: Encouraging FVR

Step 1: Introduce students to the concept of FVR. Present reliable academic research data to demonstrate the various benefits of this method, including increased vocabulary, improved grammatical competence, enhanced writing skills, and reduced writing apprehension and writer's block. [12]

Step 2: Explain the core principles of implementing FVR: students are free to choose input materials that interest them, they can abandon unfinished materials without penalty, and teachers do not test or reward students for their reading activities.

Step 3: Provide students with a wide range of input materials following the FVR guidelines. These materials include reading resources such as children's picture books and chapter books, young adult novels, literary works with lower language difficulty, popular fiction, practical non-fiction, as well as entertaining videos, educational or practical speeches, podcasts, and interviews. Additionally, encourage students to search for and acquire other input materials based on their personal interests and English proficiency levels, and introduce them to methods and resources for finding and accessing these materials.

Step 4: Conduct a survey to assess students' level of agreement with this learning method and their motivation to practice it.

Question 1: Do you agree that FVR can effectively improve English writing skills?

Table 1. Students' responses to Q1

Options	Percentage
strongly agree	87.7%
somewhat agree	7.0%
disagree	5.3%

Question 2: How much time are you willing to dedicate daily to English language input (e.g., reading, watching videos)?

Table 2. Students' responses to Q2

Options	Percentage
≤30 minutes	10.3%
30-60 minutes	31.0%
60-120 minutes	34.5%
120-180 minutes	17.2%
≥180 minutes	6.9%
Average	1 hour and 22 minutes

Step 5: One month later, conduct a follow-up survey to understand students' engagement with FVR.

Question 3: In the past month, how many reading materials or videos recommended by the teacher or discovered by yourself have you engaged with?

Table 3. Students' responses to Q3

Numbers	Percentage	
	Texts	Videos
0	88.1%	40.5%
1	7.1%	35.7%

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2	4.8%	23.8%
≥3	0%	0%

Question 4: What factors have hindered you from engaging with the reading materials or videos recommended by the teacher?

Table 4. Students' responses to Q4

Factors	Percentage
Lack of time	52.63%
The materials are too difficult	10.53%
Lack of interest in the topics of the materials	24.56%
laziness or procrastination	63.16%

The experimental process in phase one aimed to evaluate the adoption and impact of FVR among students. While theoretical acceptance of FVR was high, practical engagement revealed significant discrepancies, highlighting both potential benefits and systemic challenges.

87.7% of students strongly agreed that FVR could improve English writing skills (Q1), aligning with Krashen's assertion that comprehensible input drives language acquisition. [12] This indicates strong initial buy-in and awareness of FVR's theoretical benefits, which is also confirmed by the fact that students expressed willingness to dedicate an average of 82 minutes daily to language input (Q2). However, after one month, 88.1% had not engaged with any recommended texts, and 40.5% had not watched any videos (Q3). This gap between intent and action suggests structural barriers outweighing motivation.

First of all, despite students' expressed willingness, institutional schedules or workload pressures likely obstructed consistent practice. FVR requires unstructured, self-directed time, which may conflict with rigid curriculums. Second, the absence of external accountability (e.g., tests, rewards) aligns with FVR principles but risks low adherence in cohorts lacking self-regulation skills. Third, materials may not have aligned with students' intrinsic interests or cultural contexts, reducing the "compelling input" necessary for sustained engagement. Last but not the least, while only 10.53% reported difficulty, even marginally challenging materials can deter learners if they lack scaffolding.

The limitations of FVR revealed in Phase One underscore its inherent challenges in practical implementation, despite its theoretical promise. First, FVR's reliance on unstructured, self-directed time clashed with institutional schedules and rigid curricula, rendering consistent practice unfeasible for many. Second, the absence of external accountability mechanisms, though aligned with FVR's autonomy principle, exacerbated procrastination among learners with underdeveloped self-regulation skills (63.16%). Third, generic or culturally misaligned materials failed to sustain engagement, as 24.56% reported disinterest. Finally, even marginally challenging materials deterred learners without scaffolding, despite only 10.53% explicitly citing difficulty. These limitations prompted the adoption of the POA in Phase Two.

2.2.2 Phase two: Addressing FVR Implementation Challenges Through POA

Step 1: Identify Topics of Student Interest

Research in phase one revealed lack of interest in the topics of the materials (24.56%) as one of the important reasons students did not engage in the input activities. It even outweighed the impact of the difficulty of

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the materials (10.53%). Therefore, students should have a say in determining the topics for their writing and exploration.

Based on societal issues of concern to English majors, eight broad essay topics were proposed. Through whole-class voting, four topics of highest interest were selected.

Table 5. Rankings of Interesting Topics

Rankings	Topics	Percentage
1	Physical and mental health	84.55%
2	Gender equality in China	69.92%
3	Social media	66.67%
4	AI and the future of English majors	63.41%
5	Environmental sustainability	34.15%
6	Globalization vs. cultural identity	29.27%
7	Globalization vs. cultural identity	29.27%
8	Urbanization and rural-urban divide	22.76%

Step 2: Motivate Input Through Output Tasks

After deciding on the most popular essay topics, students were asked to complete a freewriting exercise in which they wrote nonstop for 15 minutes about physical and mental health (topic 1). They were encouraged to jot down whatever came to mind about the topic without worrying about spelling, grammar, logic or coherence. It helped overcome writer's block and generate ideas and details for further exploration. [11] After freewriting, the final output task and the sub-tasks in the prewriting stage were assigned:

(1)Final Output Task: Submit a 400-word English essay on physical and mental health within four weeks.

(2)Sub-tasks in the prewriting stage: Explore the topic, gather information, perspectives, and linguistic expressions, and draft an outline including a thesis statement, sub-arguments (major points), and supporting details.

From the perspective POA, the freewriting activity served as a priming mechanism in the motivational phase as it effectively stimulated students' motivation to learn more about physical and mental health by exposing gaps in their linguistic and conceptual understanding of the topic. [3] The subsequent final output task of a structured 400-word essay output establishes clear directional parameters, transforming the spontaneous brainstorming into purposeful language acquisition. But this assignment could be daunting to some students, so the sub-tasks of information gathering, linguistic resource collection, and outline drafting were designed to enable students to complete the final task. The relationship between freewriting (preliminary output) and the final essay (polished production) embodies POA's output-driven hypothesis: communicative needs generated during freewriting directly motivate selective language input, repositioning writing as both a catalyst and outcome of learning.

Step 3: Curate Input Materials Aligned with Interests

Students should possess decision-making autonomy not only during the topic selection phase but also in choosing specific input materials so that these resources align with their needs and interests. Therefore, students were divided into eight groups, with two groups assigned to collect English-language input materials

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(texts, audio, videos) for each of the four topics. Selection criteria included: students' needs and interests, availability of English text/subtitles, credibility of the sources, moderate linguistic difficulty, provision of useful, engaging, and informative perspectives, and public accessibility.

Step 4: Provide Extensive Input Materials

Due to students' limited knowledge and experiences, the instructor should also search for topic-related learning materials to not only supplement student-collected materials but also censor them to avoid misinformation. Eventually, For the topic "physical and mental health", students received 73 texts and videos covering subtopics such as diet, nutrition, sleep, exercise, stress, anxiety, relationships, procrastination, time management, positive psychology, and learning strategies.

Step 5: Design Output-Driven Input Activities

According to common issues identified in freewriting products (sleep deprivation, unhealthy eating habits, procrastination), I selected 1 article, 2 podcast excerpts, and 7 curated video clips from interviews on "sleep" and "habit formation", designed input activities (e.g., fill-in-the-blank exercises, discussion questions) based on them, and guided students to complete the activities in two class sessions.

The input exercises (e.g., fill-in-the-blank, discussions) were designed to systematically address gaps identified in students' freewriting by providing: (1) topic-specific knowledge (e.g., sleep science concepts), (2) argumentation frameworks, and (3) topic-related vocabulary essential for drafting evidence-based outlines. This approach exemplifies "targeted input scaffolding" in POA– materials are curated to resolve learners' self-identified deficiencies (e.g., insufficient lexical precision or causal reasoning skills), ensuring immediate applicability to their output goals. [4]

Step 6: Prewriting Task Completion

Students were given one more week to read/view other health-related input materials that interested them, choose a specific essay topic, and draft an essay outline to fulfil a sub-task in the prewriting phase.

Given time constraints, classroom instruction focused on two high-priority subtopics under "physical/mental health" – "sleep" and "habit formation". These subtopics were selected based on their recurrence in students' freewriting and students' inability to explore them (e.g., vague claims about sleep deprivation, limited causal analysis of procrastination). While these subtopics addressed the majority's immediate needs, students retained autonomy to finalize their essay topics from 73 curated texts/videos covering diverse health-related themes. To scaffold self-directed exploration, explicit instruction was provided on two metacognitive strategies:

(1) Guided Note-Taking: Systematically document (a) source thesis/major arguments, (b) critical supporting evidence (e.g., statistics, case studies), and (c) topic-specific lexical chunks (e.g., "delayed gratification," "neuroplasticity") for later integration into outlines.

(2) Questioning: Generate and answer analytical questions (e.g., Why do people know what they should do but don't do them?) to deepen engagement and identify transferable concepts.

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This phase operationalizes POA' s "selective learning"principle: by training learners to filter, analyze, and repurpose input materials aligned with their unique output goals, the process transforms passive content consumption into strategic resource curation. [3] The teacher's focused instruction on "sleep" and "habit formation" served as a model for interrogating complex health topics, while the open-ended material bank encouraged differentiated exploration—ensuring scaffolding without compromising learner agency.

Step 7: Evaluate Learning Outcomes

One week later, students submitted their essay topics and outlines. I conducted another survey to assess the impact of POA-aligned input activities on the prewriting phase with the following questions.

Question 5: How helpful were the input materials on "sleep" and "habit formation" in the following aspects?

Table 6. Students' responses to Q5

Metrics	Not helpful at all	Slightly helpful	Moderately helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
Providing new information related to the topics	0%	0%	16.67%	46.67%	36.67%
Stimulating reflection or attitude shifts	0%	0%	26.67%	43.33%	30%
Generating ideas for the outline	0%	6.67%	43.33%	43.33%	6.67%
Supplying linguistic expressions	0%	6.67%	63.33%	23.33%	6.67%

Question 6: To what extent do you agree with the "input-to-output" writing training method (improving writing through reading/viewing materials)?

Table 7. Students' responses to Q6

Options	Descriptions	Percentage
Disagree	Not helpful at all	0%
Somewhat agree	Helpful when there are clear links between materials and tasks	36.67%
Strongly agree	Input materials always provide ideas and language resources	63.33%

Question 7: To improve writing, which three areas require more effort? (Select three)

Table 8. Students' responses to Q7

Aspects	Percentage
Increase language input	90%
Expand vocabulary/phrases	63.33%
Practice writing frequently with error logs	63.33%
Study grammar	53.33%

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Participate actively in writing classes	30%

Question 8: After the in-class training, did you apply the demonstrated strategies (guided note-taking and self-questioning) to explore health-related materials beyond the two classroom subtopics ("sleep" and "habit formation")

Table 9. Students' responses to Q8

Options	Percentage
Yes, I used both strategies consistently.	19.2%
Yes, but I primarily used one strategy.	38.7%
No, I explored other health-related materials, but did not use these strategies	35%
No, I focused only on the classroom-provided materials ("sleep" and "habit formation").	7.1%

Question 9: What challenges did you encounter when independently preparing your essay outline using self-selected materials?

Table 10. Students' responses to Q9

Options	Percentage
Difficulty identifying credible/appropriate sources aligned with my topic	5.5%
Difficulty in comprehension of the materials	15.6%
Time constraints in synthesizing large volumes of information	21%
Struggles to apply note-taking/questioning strategies effectively	17%
Lack of motivation/procrastination	26.2%
No significant challenges; the strategies supported autonomous learning.	14.7%

Survey results in this phase shows that the output-driven input guided by POA demonstrated significant success in bridging input consumption and output production during the prewriting stage. Key strengths include:

(1)Enhanced Relevance and Engagement.

Writing topics selected by students themselves are more likely to ensure intrinsic motivation, which aligns with POA's emphasis on learner needs. [3] Moreover, materials were tailored to subtopics identified in free-writing (e.g., sleep, habit formation), directly linking input to output tasks. This contrasts with FVR's unstructured approach, where 88.1% of students disengaged due to vague relevance.

(2)Structured Scaffolding

There were two types of prewriting sub-tasks, one for input, the other for output. Fill-in-the-blank exercises and discussion questions (Step 5) provided explicit frameworks for processing input which addresses FVR's lack of accountability, while the outlining requirements (thesis, arguments, details) channeled input into actionable output, reducing the "blank page anxiety" common in FVR.

(3) Measurable Impact on Prewriting

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This output-driven input activity had a positive effect on students' performances in the prewriting stage, as 83.34% of the students found materials "very" or "extremely helpful" in providing new information, 73.33% reported materials stimulated reflection or attitude shifts, and 50% acknowledged support in generating outline ideas, though linguistic expression support lagged (30% of students thought it was very/extremely helpful). Because of these benefits, 100% of students endorsed the output-driven input guided by POA, with 63.33% strongly agreeing it provided ideas and language resources.

However, implementation of POA in the prewriting stage still has its limitations. First, it was difficult to supervise students' autonomous learning when they were encouraged to explore the learning materials outside of classroom. Data indicates partial strategy adoption with only 19.2% consistently using both note-taking and self-questioning, while 38.7% applying only one strategy. A notable 35% explored materials without using taught methods, suggesting a strategy-preference mismatch or insufficient internalization.

Key barriers included motivational issues (26.2% procrastination) and time constraints (21%), highlighting cognitive-affective demands of self-directed learning. While 14.7% faced no challenges, 17% struggled with strategy application, signaling procedural gaps. Minimal source-identification issues (5.5%) validate the curated resource bank's relevance, yet 15.6% comprehension difficulties suggest students need not only materials of difficult levels but also more grammar counseling. Current adoption of POA in the prewriting did not provide adequate linguistic support for students, which can also be seen in the fact that 63.33% of students rated materials only "moderately helpful" in supplying linguistic expressions. Furthermore, 53.33% prioritized grammar study, which could suggest that POA's task-oriented approach underemphasized explicit language rules.

Solving these problems requires the teacher to develop more sentence-skills activities based on the input material, but it may cause the problem of heavy workload and possible burnout on both the teacher's and students' parts. Curating and supplementing 73 materials (Step 4) are labor-intensive, while designing scaffolding activities targeting all out-put tasks can be extremely consuming.

3. Conclusions

The empirical study shows POA effectively addressed critical limitations observed in FVR implementations, demonstrating distinct advantages across four key dimensions.

First, motivational engagement, a persistent weakness in FVR, was significantly enhanced through POA's output-driven framework. While FVR suffered from low adherence—88.1% of students ignored recommended materials due to a lack of urgency—POA integrated concrete tasks (e.g., essay writing, outline drafting) that created immediate accountability. This alignment of input consumption with tangible output goals fostered sustained participation, as students recognized the direct relevance of materials to their academic objectives.

Second, material relevance, a recurring issue in FVR, was systematically improved. In prior FVR implementations, 24.56% of students reported disengagement due to generic or uninteresting materials. POA countered this by centering input curation on student-selected topics (e.g., physical and mental health, chosen

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by 84.55% of learners) and involving learners in resource collection. For instance, students participated in gathering the 73 topic-specific texts and videos, ensuring alignment with their interests and academic needs. However, while this participatory approach to topic and material selection enhanced relevance, it did not fully guarantee that all students' individual preferences were met. In this regard, FVR theoretically holds an advantage, as its unrestricted autonomy allows learners to pursue materials tailored to their unique interests. Yet, empirical evidence from Phase One revealed a critical flaw in FVR's unstructured model: despite the freedom to choose materials, 88.1% of students failed to engage with recommended resources due to a lack of motivational drivers. Without explicit output tasks or accountability mechanisms, even highly personalized materials were often neglected, as learners struggled to self-regulate their input consumption. Thus, while POA's collaborative curation may not achieve perfect individualization, its structured integration of output goals and peer-driven accountability compensates for FVR's motivational deficits, demonstrating that guided autonomy—rather than complete freedom—optimizes material relevance and engagement in academic contexts.

Third, structural accountability, absent in FVR's autonomy-centric model, was embedded into POA's design. FVR's lack of structured tasks led to procrastination among 63.16% of students, who struggled with self-directed engagement. POA mitigated this through guided activities such as fill-in-the-blank exercises and discussion questions, which scaffolded input processing and enforced consistent participation. These activities not only reduced procrastination but also provided measurable benchmarks for progress, addressing FVR's reliance on intrinsic motivation. However, data in phase two indicated that even out-driven input was still unable to eliminate procrastination, as 26.2% of students reported it as a major challenge hindering their input. This is a problem which future research should try to address.

Finally, linguistic transfer, a neglected area in FVR, was prioritized under POA. While FVR emphasized broad input exposure without explicit language application, POA integrated targeted linguistic objectives. For example, 63.33% of students identified vocabulary and phrase acquisition as a priority in post-intervention surveys (Q7), reflecting POA's success in highlighting practical language use. By framing input materials as tools for output production (e.g., making an outline for the essay), POA encouraged deliberate attention to lexical and syntactic patterns, thereby bridging the gap between passive input consumption and active language application. However, there is still room for improvement, since 42.1% of students did not apply necessary learning strategies when reading/view materials on their own (Q8). These students are more likely to rely on AI tools to generate essay outlines instead of creating them as a result of their learning.

In summary, this study demonstrates that the POA offers a more effective framework than FVR for enhancing prewriting engagement among Chinese EFL learners. By integrating student-selected topics, output-driven tasks, and structured input activities, POA addressed FVR's critical limitations in motivation, material relevance, and linguistic transfer. While POA's guided autonomy fostered accountability and idea generation, its underperformance in explicit language scaffolding highlights the need for hybrid models that combine output-driven goals with targeted linguistic exercises. Future research should explore technology-enhanced scaffolding (e.g., AI tools for vocabulary annotation) and longitudinal studies to assess POA's sustainability across diverse learner cohorts. Educators are advised to adopt POA's structured input-output synergy while supplementing it with focused language practice to address writing skill gaps comprehensively.

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