



Analysis of ESP Instructing and Innovation of College English Teaching

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Abstract

In contemporary society, with comprehensive promotion of global economy, there is an urgent need for well-rounded talents in a wide variety of professional fields, which undoubtedly set a higher goal for the broadly-based education. The innovation of English teaching in higher education plays a significant and active function in the process of cultivating all-rounded talents. At present, EPS instruction has been penetrating into the innovation of English teaching education actively.

Key words: ESP instructing; College English teaching; Innovation

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INTRODUCTION

for the integrated development of economic globalization and widespread use of English as the accepted international language of technology and commerce, there is a growing need for well-rounded talents in the market. However, there are serious problems existing in English instructing in most of Chinese educational institutions. Instructors put more emphasis on EGP teaching but ignore ESP teaching, which is an obvious

unbalanced state between ESP English instructing and EGP English teaching for a long period. Under such circumstances, it seriously restricts the innovation of English teaching and is not conducive to effectively train well-rounded English language professional talents with high efficiency and professional qualification. To a certain extent, it has also influenced the comprehensive development of Chinese education service for economy. The paper illustrates the current situation and innovation of Chinese English teaching within the framework of ESP theory in order to give some hints in college English reform and cultivate comprehensive graduates qualified for the ever-changing and more challenging talent markets in the near future.

1. AN OVERVIEW OF ESP INSTRUCTING

Since the appearance of ESP theory in the 1960s, it has aroused great attention in English teaching process. Different scholars have defined ESP instructing in various ways, among which Holme (1996, pp.3-4) explain the relationship of ESP and General English as the following: it is in the nature of a language syllabus to be selective. The General English syllabus is based on a conception of the kind of reality that the student has to deal with in English.....Consciously or unconsciously, all sensible course designers must begin by trying to assess students' specific needs. ESP is simply a narrowing of this needs spectrum. Reflecting from the view point of Holme, it is concluded that ESP courses are narrower in focus than ELT (English Language Teaching) courses, cause it is advocated to be "narrowing down the spectrum". Actually the development of ESP was believed to be brought about by two inseparable components with the development in the fields of linguistics as the first one and the expansion of demand for English to suit particular needs as the second one (Hutchinson & Waters, 2002, p.8).

2. PROBLEMS OF ESP INSTRUCTING IN PRESENT ENGLISH TEACHING

2.1 Less Effective ESP Teaching Pattern

Nowadays the basic theoretical knowledge still remains the key in most ESP instructing process, it is believed to be lack of attempt and verification for the cultivation of applicable ability of students. At present, there is one kind of deviation phenomenon in the ESP teaching of China, the majority of English teachers use the EGP teaching pattern for ESP curriculum teaching. The traditional teaching method of so called “indoctrination” with teachers translating English into Chinese word for word, explaining and analyzing critical points according to curriculum teaching requirements is still popular in the classroom without obvious change. It is not surprisingly to see that the conventional way of teaching is not conducive to explore the full potential of students. This kind of traditional teaching pattern is very hard to cultivate outstanding graduates adapting to the needs of modern social development, moreover, it couldn’t effectively impel the students to improve their all round ability of learning English with five skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and interpreting. In addition, this kind of one-way transmission teaching method that focuses on the teachers and ignores subjective initiative of the students will create one kind of dull learning environment, which is not conducive to the development and exertion of initiative and enthusiasm of students to learn English actively. In the long run, the students will have the mind of being fed up with studying, which has an evident negative impact on the effect of English instructing of teaching result being far from satisfaction consequently. Under such circumstances, the English level of students can’t reach a certain required level, which will lead to the fact that the graduates are less qualified for the knowledge economy and the employment of students in the market economy to be disadvantageous.

2.2 Less Emphasis on ESP Instructing

In contemporary English teaching process, there is a serious phenomenon in most colleges, that is, the English instructors usually lay too much stress on EGP teaching while ignore ESP teaching. For example, for students the school authorities will probably not set up specialized ESP teaching curricula while for teachers it will carry out few ESP training, as a result, it lacks the necessary academic exchange between EGP teachers and ESP teachers. In addition, the talent training pattern adopted by most of the schools in China currently is 2+1 combined pattern that is not conducive to the development of students in an all-around way, which would largely reduce the time for students to learn English in school. However, in order to guarantee the setting of time for learning general courses, colleges constantly reduce the class hours of ESP courses, moreover, ESP courses have been defined as elective

courses and examination courses by most of the schools. Generally speaking, there are four-period class hours per week and the specific time for class is different, therefore, it is hard to ensure the teaching quality and teaching efficiency of ESP courses.

2.3 Less Pertinent Teaching Materials

The content of teaching materials should serve for the teaching objective and keep consistent with teaching objective at any moment, the training objective of talents is to cultivate excellent professional compound talents with high professional qualification. In terms of occupational skill talents training, English working skills and social service skills covered by the content of ESP teaching materials should be adopted according to current demands for English professional positions. However, most of editing work for the content of Chinese ESP teaching materials is done by the teachers who don’t fully comprehend the ESP teaching objective and EGP teaching contents required by ESP courses, as a result, the content of ESP teaching materials lose the essence of ESP instructing, and lack necessary pertinence and practicability, which is difficult to meet the needs of students and leads to the fact that the content of ESP teaching materials deviate from annotation of theoretical knowledge to a large extent. The content of teaching materials like these is also universal existence in college English instructing, the contents that are lack of pertinence and effectiveness are often dull and obsolete or too profound to understand, which is too difficult for students to grasp and apply. It is hard to improve the application competence of students in the process of learning ESP courses in the long run.

2.4 Few ESP Teaching Staff and Relatively Weak Teaching Quality

At present, there are some problems existing in the components of ESP teaching staff. On the one hand, few professional teaching staff of ESP can’t guarantee the needs of students for academic learning; on the other hand, relatively weak teaching quality of ESP teachers can’t effectively train compound talents with high skills and high quality. The nature of ESP teaching requires that English teachers should bear both solid professional basic knowledge and strong English competence, however, the ESP teaching staff in most colleges is composed of teachers who pay more attention to EGP as well as specialized English teachers who emphasize certain specialized fields of English. Therefore, two problems appear considering all these factors: (a) Although teachers of specialized course have solid professional knowledge, most of them lack the ability of language teaching, they often prioritize the teaching of professional knowledge in terms of ESP teaching and apply the traditional teaching method of “word for word translation” in passage explanation, while ignore instructing students with pronunciation, grammar, sentence pattern and

other high-skilled knowledge; (b) It is generally known that the English teachers should have solid basic skills of language, deep understanding of the nature and characteristic of English, but recently most English teachers lack of necessary understanding of society and necessary professional background, so they can't grasp and comprehend career knowledge of certain professional fields. They often apply the traditional English teaching method in view of the explanation on job professional knowledge so that the explanation on critical knowledge points breaks away from actual requirement for improving comprehensive skills of the students. To conclude from what has been discussed above, it is safely to insist that no matter which problem exists, ESP teaching quality will be greatly influenced negatively and need to be improved urgently.

3. COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING INNOVATION

3.1 Integrating ESP Teaching Pattern With EGP Teaching Mode

It is commonly assumed that students have mastered the basic knowledge of pronunciation and grammar, reached a certain level of English in the aspects of listening, speaking, reading and writing, grasped certain quantity of vocabulary in their mind during their studying in junior middle school and senior high school. Therefore, after entering colleges, the instructing point of English in college should be shifted from basic grammar knowledge to the practical features of language with the purpose of rendering students adapt to the needs of rapid social development. The Practical skills of English and overall English level of the students can be ensured as a whole at the same time. Since as freshmen, college students in their first year of study are in the stage of pursuing proper learning habit to adapt to college English study, it is the key period for them undoubtedly. They are in the transition period from senior high school to college, they are still influenced by the EGP educational pattern, what's more, college life is happier and more relaxed compared with the study in senior high school. It is more likely that students will slacken their efforts to learn English to some extent. Therefore, in order to consolidate the foundation of English and further improve their language competence, it is appropriate for the English teachers to continue applying EGP teaching pattern in their daily instructing process, carrying on intensive training for the students based on the basic knowledge level and basic skills of the students. Meanwhile, it is more proper to conduct some valid and pertinent ESP teaching methods or measures combined with actual life of the students to train oral communicative and other professional skills of the students. The communicative competence, basic English knowledge as well as application ability of the

students will be improved greatly to certain extent after accomplishing the first year of courses in college, which can lay a solid foundation for the change of English teaching method in their sophomore year. Moreover, in the sophomore year of study, the teachers should carry on ESP teaching according to students' professional needs, which normally uses the module teaching method or the professional module of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Regarding the setting of each module, it shall introduce different teaching contents or activities according to the characteristics of different specialties and create a real scene and context for the students to practice English as much as possible. The students can integrate into some interesting professional context, which can effectively improve their comprehensive English ability. In the junior year and senior year, the teachers can establish some specific and effective elective courses combined with ESP and EGP instructing objective according to the will of students who have already born some ideas in their mind about certain career prospect and social roles after graduation. The students will take English as an elective course according to their interests and future job prospect. With the rational implementation of instructing as was mentioned before, the teaching quality and teaching effects of ESP will be improved effectively probably.

3.2 Adopting More Practical and Rational ESP Teaching Materials

With fierce competition in contemporary society increasing gradually, the content of ESP teaching materials should be chosen cautiously with the consideration of the following elements: it shall fully take the supply and demand relationship between students and current social market into consideration, strengthen the pertinence and practicability of the ESP teaching materials, enable the content of ESP teaching materials to be close to requirements for skills of social work position and professional field as far as possible, offer vocational English skills guidance when the students leave the campus to pursue social jobs in the future, and thus contribute to the effective employment of the students. Therefore, English teachers should comprehend strictly the difference between ESP and EGP in aspects of vocabulary, grammar, structure for the teaching content of ESP curriculum, pay more attention to the basic knowledge and professional skills that have been grasped at the stage of EGP, and then promote the students to convert their understanding ability effectively and rapidly. Only in this way can be the cultivation of students covert from basic learning of language knowledge to grasp the application of professional skills. The purpose is to improve the competitive power of skills when the students get a job. It is beneficial to shorten the transition period for the students to enter into society and adapt to position requirement with the relatively short period

of time. In addition, with regard to the setting condition for specialty in different colleges, it is hard to satisfy the requirements of different specialties in different colleges for the universal ESP teaching materials, so the content of ESP teaching materials should be of diversity and richness. Therefore, it requires the teachers who compile ESP teaching materials of colleges and universities shall fully understand the objective of talents training from different specialties, the demands for language as well as the students' ability to accept learning from different specialties. The outline makers are supposed to compile the teaching materials with pertinent and practical characteristics according to actual demands. It shall be close to the actual requirements of the students, meet the students' needs to study as well as adapt to the demands of social development for talents, and then train the students' ability to practice and use English effectively and efficiently.

3.3 Adopting More Innovative Instructing Concept of Teachers

Along with the growing international development of China, the ability to apply English in practical situation has become an important talent assessment factor. The English talents graduate from colleges and universities must be able to adapt to the requirements of modern social and economic development, thus training high-skilled compound talents to meet social needs becomes a key factor in modern society. Therefore, it requires the teachers to keep pace with the times and update their teaching concept in ESP English instruction. With regard to the rapid development of modern market economy and employment status of the students, the innovative and creative ESP teaching concept should be ensured to fit into the future talents market. During the teaching process, the teachers shall change from the traditional so-called "indoctrination" teaching concept to the innovative teaching method of motivating the initiative of the students and carry out enthusiastic "students-oriented" classroom. It is believed that with the problems being found accurately at first and solved effectively later, the instructing effect of ESP courses will be more and more satisfying. At the same time, with the initiative and interest of the students being activated, it can also supply the teachers with more time to arrange the class period rationally, thus enable the teachers to update teaching concept and attempt new teaching methods. It is believed to promote the skills of the students effectively and make both the teachers and students go forward together. In addition, the teachers shall actively create real language environment for the students, because the students can feel the charm of language and connotation of language in its true sense under the authentic language environment, rapidly strengthen their language competence as well as promote the development of the students in an all-round way.

3.4 Creating More Specialized and High-Effective ESP Teaching Staff

At present, the shortage of ESP teaching staff and relatively weak teaching quality are regarded as the main factors restricting the high-effective development of ESP teaching in universities. The ESP instructing is mainly conducted by specialized teachers and teachers of General English, lacking of professional and high-effective ESP instructing. Even though some colleges and universities have professional ESP instructors, teaching quality is still far from satisfying with relatively weak instructing effect. In order to improve ESP teaching quality of China and provide teaching guarantee for the students, it should vigorously create excellent, high-effective and specific ESP teaching staff, reasonably integrate valid resources of professional teachers and public English teachers, do enough research on the content of ESP curriculum teaching materials, organize rational ESP activities involved by the students initiatively so as to help them learn from each other as well as take advantage of their potentials. By complementing advantages of individuals, it can strengthen the building power of ESP teaching staff, at the same time promote teaching quality effectively, which provides resources, powers and talents for the establishment of high-effective ESP teaching staff and a sound environment of professional ESP teaching. In addition, the colleges and universities can open the class for training ESP professional teachers, offer great opportunities to the excellent English teachers of relatively better English skills for vocational studies, or invite enterprises with rich experiences and leaders of the industry to open course of lectures in colleges and universities under the feasible situation in order to offer possibility to strengthen the building of the teaching staff.

CONCLUSION

The application of ESP instructing pattern is an effective measure for improving the teaching quality of English, which is of great and practical significance in terms of college English teaching reform. The paper mainly describes the application of ESP in college English teaching as well as the value of ESP in the innovation of English teaching method, then puts forward the idea of integrating the ESP teaching and the EGP teaching, creating specific measures for English teaching method of China, and giving reference to the English instructing in colleges. It is widely believed that at present, the innovation of English teaching patterns in universities and a better way of training all-rounded English talents with comprehensive skills are the main issues need to be stressed in the practice of English instructing. What's more, the application of ESP teaching theory can

effectively help the development and implementation of ESP instructing. Although the simple research and exploration of the paper may have some restrictions to some extent, the research value and exploration of the paper can not be ignored. Sincerely hope this paper can be able to offer certain significance and reference to a number of investigators.

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