

RESEARCH ON THE TEACHING EFFICIENCY OF ESP FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LINGUISTIC ECONOMICS

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ABSTRACT: *ESP, English for special purposes, is a new development of College English teaching in China, which is helpful for the future development of students' language skills and future career. But because of the unsystematic ESP teaching pedagogy and insufficient theoretical supports, there are many problems which affect the teaching efficiency of ESP courses. In this paper, the author firstly gives the literature review of the research on the Linguistic Economics and introduces the teaching practice of the ESP courses in China. Finally, from the perspective of linguistic economics, the author analyses the problems which affect the teaching efficiency and proposes several pieces of suggestions with the purpose to facilitate the ESP teaching practice and improve the teaching. The paper tries to explore the new ways of improving the teaching efficiency of the ESP courses, but due to the limitations of the research ability, it is far too enough to elaborate the issues clearly, more issues need to be addressed in the coming research.*

KEYWORDS: Linguistic Economics, ESP, Problems in Teaching, Teaching Efficiency, Teaching Strategies

INTRODUCTION

English plays a very important role in the curriculum system in China. English is a compulsory course for students at all levels. In recent years, there has been an increasing question and complaints on the effects and meanings of English teaching, which has posed a huge challenge to the present English teaching system, especially with the popularity of the mobile internet. Many research has pointed out that time-consuming Basic English courses cannot satisfy the growing needs for students' English skills in a rapidly changing society. Fortunately, the concept of ESP was put forward, which has aroused great repercussions in the field of education in China. In particular, English teaching in higher education in China has encountered great changes and innovations, and the proportion of ESP teaching in the whole teaching has gradually increased in this situation. It is urgent for us to improve the teaching efficiency of ESP from the perspective of language economics, to promote the sustainable development of ESP teaching in China, and to train a large number of qualified English professionals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this part, the author would firstly give a literature review about the recent studies on the Linguistic Economics and a brief introduction on the ESP courses and teaching practice in China.

Linguistic Economics

Presently, the world is in an era of globalization, the topics about the language diversity embody huge economic and political implications internationally. Many topics, such as the international labor mobility, international trade, social embodiment of migrants, the issue of social and political democracy in countries with multi-languages, and the multinational corporations' competitiveness all have a linguistic dimension; yet the classical and professional economists in general would neglect the language as a variable in their research (Zhang, 2016).

Linguistic economics is an emerging field of study concerning a range of topics such as the effect of language skills on income and trade, and the costs and benefits of language planning options, preservation of minority languages, etc (Michele 2014). It is also relevant to analysis of language policy.

The German sociolinguist Florian Coulmas is the pioneering and main researcher of the linguistic economics internationally. He argues that "the many ways in which language and economy interact, how economic developments influence the emergence, expansion, or decline of languages; how linguistic conditions facilitate or obstruct the economic process; how multilingualism and social affluence are interrelated; how and why language and money fulfill similar functions in modern societies; why the availability of a standard language is an economic advantage; how the unequal distribution of languages in multilingual societies makes for economic inequality; how the economic value of languages can be assessed; why languages have an internal economy and how they adapt to the demands of the external economy. (Coulmas, 1992).

Emergence and development of Linguistic Economics are in recent three or four years, so its establishments and theoretical research of related propositions are still in the early stages. Linguistic Economics has not constructed a complete theoretical framework, especially in China (Wang 2014). Over the past decade, scholars have different opinions on the achievements of this field, despite a large number of research results. There are some doubts and confusion about Linguistic Economics, and its basic problems, such as its research objects, range and methods.

One of the main applications of Linguistic Economics to foreign language teaching is to study the problem of "time-consuming and inefficient" language learning in China based on the theories of rational choice and human capital of economics (Cai, 2013). Research viewpoint focuses on foreign language education, teaching and education reform, its specific studies include the following three parts: foreign language education policies at national and local levels, economic guidance value of foreign language education reform, a must of foreign language education following the economic laws of market (Su&Huang 2013). Specifically, it studies the language learning motivation and educational resources, main contents, methods and techniques in foreign language education and research, public investment in language education and personal costs of foreign investment benefit analysis, foreign language teaching adaptability of the market economy, language settings, educational reform programs, foreign language education, regional economic development and other issues (Yang 2015).

The concept and nature of ESP

ESP mainly refers to the targeted and practical English courses aimed at some specific professional occupations. English for Special purposes (ESP) is an English course offered by colleges and universities for non-English majors. In general English education courses, the main

purpose is to help students master five basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. The purpose of the teaching is to improve the students' comprehensive ability and to help them pass CET-4/6 successfully, but the teaching of general English is not fully targeted. ESP, as a newly-developed English course, is considered as a kind of teaching idea or teaching method. The content and method of teaching, which is closely related to a certain professional subject, is set up with the aim of students' learning as its starting point. English courses are offered according to the needs of learners. ESP is mainly divided into two forms: academic English and Workplace English. The ultimate goal of academic English learning is to lay a solid foundation for students to carry out academic research and exchange activities in professional fields, and to help students prepare well in these fields and aspects and to enable students to conduct oral and written English expressions and academic exchanges skillfully. The offering of Workplace English is mainly for the professional needs of students, which is closely related to the specific and professional subjects, such as tourism English, medical English, law English and so on.

METHODOLOGY

Problem Identification

Among all the topics and theory of Linguistic Economics, the author would choose the the most important theory of cost-benefits to discuss the ESP teaching practice. Although ESP courses are widely offered and fully stressed in the English teaching curricula in many Chinese universities, there are lots of problems in the teaching system, which have greatly undermined the students' learning motivation and teaching effects of the ESP. The author next would like to analyse the common problems existing in the teaching of ESP courses in Chinese universities, with the purpose of defining the problems and offering the applicable solutions and strategies to enhance students' learning motivation and facilitate the improvement of teaching efficiency of the ESP courses.

The unclear course orientation of ESP

As for the ESP courses and teaching practice, the academic circles in China have not yet formed a unified general concept and orientation. Different people have different understanding of ESP courses. From the perspective of the current teaching situation of higher education in China, there is a huge difference of ESP courses offered among different universities. The ESP courses carried out by different colleges and universities emphasize the meaning of "special use", which determines its practicability and specificity. The purpose of ESP teaching is to realize the concept of applying learning to practice, and to complete the core education system of "close to the profession and close to the market, and to improve the students' professional ability and comprehensive quality". It is not sound or correct to consider ESP as an upgraded version of general English, or as a "coping style" of major English. This is the common problem in the current ESP teaching in China, which has seriously affected the quality of ESP teaching.

The widely provided but unrefined ESP textbooks

The textbooks are very important to the study of the course. In order to improve the teaching quality and teaching efficiency, It is necessary to have scientific and reasonable teaching materials, so as to promote the smooth development of teaching activities. However, at present, the ESP teaching materials in colleges and universities in China are too broad and incompetent.

The content of the teaching material is mainly compiled according to the previous thinking, in which all aspects of the professional content are involved. But there are some common problems, such as: the content is not focused, the positioning is not accurate, the degree of the difficulty is relatively low, The relationship between the major and profession is not so close, all of which have seriously affected the teaching efficiency and teaching quality.

The old teaching mode without innovation

The teaching of ESP has strong demands for professional practicality. Specifically, in teaching practice, on one hand, teachers should constantly motivate students to improve the breadth and depth of students' learning contents and help them have a better Professional and practical understanding of the contents of ESP courses; on the other hand, teachers should continue to enrich the teaching contents and bring the timely market dynamics of ESP into teaching practice, To help students master the frontier of professional development and take better control of the contents of their studies. From the current situation of education, the teaching of ESP is still based on the traditional mode of education in China's colleges and universities. The classroom teaching mainly inculcates some professional vocabulary and sentences to the students. The articles instructed in class ignore the students' main position and real needs, and at the same time, the market demands of professional English and the needs of students' professional development are not taken into account, all of which has made the teaching effect of ESP unsatisfactory.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In the last part, based on the observation and the literature study on the ESP teaching, the author has illustrated the problems existing in the ESP teaching system from the the class orientations, conception and the content of the ESP teaching practice in China. All of these problems and shortcomings of the ESP courses have sharply decreased the motivation for students and teachers' involvement into the course, all of which are against the basic principles of the economics and the learning rules of the the course itself from the perspectives of the Linguistic economics.

Firstly, economically speaking, ESP teaching should satisfy the real needs of the students and future career development. The demands from students are not fully emphasized and respected. the rules of the Economics indicate that effective supplies of the products and service to the demands are the guarantees of mutual benefits. Many researchers (Cai,2012;Xi,2014;Wang,2015) in China have carried out the study and investigations on the needs analysis of college English among different scopes and groups. Most of the research indicates that most people totally agree with the view that college English education in China has made great progress and contributed to the cultivation of talent training in China, however most interviewers and researchers indicate that there is still a long way to go and problems to be solved in the reform of college English teaching. One of the most obvious and serious problems is college English education fails to respect the students' real needs in the future career and the demands from the rapidly changing situations of globalization and internalization, especially the general direction of the Chinese foreign policy, for instance, the 'Belt & Road', knowledge and general cultural introduction of these countries should be offered in English courses.

Secondly, individualized and characteristic university-based ESP education should be offered. Among the 1000 universities and colleges, which could offer undergraduate education and above, English generally is instructed in all of these universities with fixed teaching materials, same conception and similar guidance and examination systems. Economic rules tell us that the changing market situations and consumers' particular demands could only be satisfied with the better and individualized and personalized service, only in this way can the industry can survive and prosper. The author believes that the diversified ESP courses with university characteristics are the only way for the development and progress of ESP teaching in China. Such as the university where the author is presently working for is nationally famous for the major of the Textile Engineering, nowadays, there is a huge demand for the graduates with excellent English proficiency to do business with western countries or the graduates who could employ English to communicate with researchers outside China and do research or write papers in English. However, only college English course and one ESP course (English for International Trade) is offered to more than 2000 students in the school of Textile Engineering.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

From the analysis above, it is clearly reflected that the present situation of ESP in higher Education in China has seriously affected the English teaching efficiency, which results in a large number of waste of educational resources. in this case, We urgently need to adopt appropriate strategies to change the current situation and improve the teaching efficiency of ESP courses. After the problem analysis based on the linguistic economics, the author proposes several strategies for improving the efficiency of ESP Teaching from the perspective of Linguistic Economics.

Course orientation of ESP and its relation with Linguistic Economics

Curriculum orientation is very important for a course, which may directly affect the teaching effects of the course. ESP has a relatively short history in the field of education in China. Participants of teaching practice are in two minds about its understanding and orientation. English learning especially occupies a large proportion in students' daily study, therefore, ESP courses are often regarded as the professional application of general English. Consequently, many students and universities do not believe that the study of ESP courses is important. In students' daily learning, many believe that they just need to know a few professional words and phrases. The ambiguous orientation and unclear differentiation from the general English course make the ESP courses become an auxiliary course or an elective courses in many colleges and universities in China. So the first step to improve the teaching effect of ESP is to define the curriculum orientation of ESP courses. Firstly, a better and deep understanding of the connotation of ESP courses may help to understand the purposes of ESP courses, thus to improve the teaching efficiency and quality effectively. Secondly, teachers and schools need to let students know and understand that ESP serves the students' all-round development and helps them to improve their vocational ability. It is mainly to teach students how to use English. It is to reveal the rules of English use and the essence of English in a certain field or occupation. Therefore, only by making students realize the professional nature of ESP and the market dynamics. Only by making ESP a tool to help students' professional development, can we better promote the development of ESP curriculum and improve the teaching efficiency and the quality of teaching. Referring to the linguistic economics, it is unavoidable to talk about the concept of human capital, which is a core theory of linguistic economics, first put forward by

Schultz. The core idea of human capital is the emphasis of both quantity and quality. The development and innovation of ESP teaching cannot be separated from the guidance and guidance of language economics. The ultimate goal of ESP courses is to promote students' competitiveness in the job markets and cultivate the qualified talents with English proficiency. Therefore, the design of ESP curriculum teaching depends on the relevant core concepts of language economics, such as human capital. On one hand, designers of the curriculum should concentrate efforts not only on the richness and practicability of the course contents but on the improvement of the quality of talent training.

The content of ESP textbooks

Textbook is an important part of teaching activities, which is the basis of the teaching activities. The scientific arrangement of textbook is the guarantee of the efficiency of teaching. Presently, the ESP courses in colleges and universities are mainly aimed at non - English majors. ESP courses are a part of major courses to help them improve their professional abilities and qualities. However, due to the shorter development history of ESP courses in China, the writing and editing of the textbooks is of great difficulty. Presently the textbooks used in the ESP courses are not unified. In particular, the contents of these teaching materials are wide - ranging but with insufficient precision and depth, mainly some superficial content. This kind of textbooks may seriously affect the teaching efficiency. The compilation of the textbooks should consider the following two Points: Firstly, the professional adaptability and the rule of study in the textbook compilation, the structure of the order and the textbook should meet the needs of the students as much as possible. Secondly, design and compilation of the ESP contents should be based on the real situations.

Reform on the teaching mode of ESP

Judging from the current teaching situation of ESP in colleges and universities in China, we observe that many colleges and universities are still using the traditional classroom education models and methods to inculcate knowledge and theory to students. Students' subjectivity and initiative are ignored, and a large number of educational resources are wasted. Therefore, in order to change the current pattern. It is necessary to make the changes in two aspects: on one hand, the teachers should change the teaching concepts of ESP from the teacher-centered to the student-centered. The teaching of the ESP is to serve students' career development. Students should become the center and focus of teaching activities, and teachers' teaching activities should focus on students to formulate corresponding teaching strategies and teaching methods. Remember to keep students' passion and initiative Instead of simply inculcating; on the other hand, teachers should try to achieve the development from single teaching to diversified teaching. ESP teaching can not be simply inculcated. Instead, we should adopt diversified teaching models and teaching methods to achieve harmonious coexistence between students and teachers, and realize the full integration of teaching and learning. From the perspective of linguistic economics, ESP plays an important role in the development of students' professional development and personal competence. However, due to the short history of ESP teaching in China, the teaching conditions and policy measures are not so perfect, which has seriously affected the teaching quality. Therefore, we should change the concepts in time and raise the ESP teaching to a higher level and status to convince the participants involved in the ESP courses to fully realize the value and significance of ESP. only in this way can students' enthusiasm and enthusiasm for learning be fully enhanced, and the efficiency of teaching can be fundamentally improved.

Practice-led classroom teaching

Practice-led classroom teaching is the most important strategy for improving the efficiency of ESP classroom Teaching. ESP courses generally include: medical English, tourism English, legal English and other English disciplines directly linked to occupation. The most important feature of these professional English is the practicability of the professional English, which is mainly reflected in the field of its application. Specialization mainly refers to the direct link between the contents of the course and the specific profession. In view of this situation, colleges and universities that offer ESP courses should try to establish an internship base that corresponds to one's own professional practice and exercise. such as: affiliated hospitals, travel agency, etc. Colleges and universities that have the strengths can gather their own departments for joint talent training, which is established to improve the teaching efficiency of ESP in an all-round way and students can master knowledge in practice and exercise. For example: a cooperative teaching relationship between the Department of Foreign languages and College of Tourism.

Teaching Strategy based on Cost-benefit Analysis Theory

In view of the problems existing in ESP English teaching, we must pay close attention to the requirements of the Ministry of Education on language teaching and the relevant investment mechanism from the perspective of language economics. The policy we suggest in the ESP specialty construction and funds input should follow the primary principles of practicability and the timeliness. The main funds should be put on the language training and internship base outside the universities, and more efforts should be put on the innovation of teaching method and improvement of the efficiency inside the campus. This is helpful to the promotion of the four constructive strategies mentioned above. It also guarantees that our strategies will not become empty talk.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, the author tries to explore the field of ESP teaching from the perspective of linguistic economics, and proposes several pieces of suggestions on how to carry out the teaching practice more efficiently. But it is far too enough to prove its efficiency in teaching theoretically and practically, more research and practice should be done later.

Linguistic economics not only provides a new perspective for the evaluation and planning of foreign language education policies, but also provides a more scientific and systematic framework. It also provides a theoretical basis and research method for foreign language needs survey, which can solve many problems of current foreign language education planning in China. Nowadays, the trend of economic globalization and diversification cannot put back, the linguistic economics should become a research direction of foreign language education planning. But it should also be acknowledged that the study of linguistic economics in China is at a preliminary stage. Most of the research lies on the introduction of the theory outside China. Some achievements have also been made, but most of them are lack of systematic theoretical basis, and the scientific nature of investigation and research also has some shortcomings to a certain extent. How to carry out more scientific research on the basis of a systematic and comprehensive theory has become an urgent problem to be solved in China's foreign language education planning.

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