An Innovative Research on Students' Evaluating Mechanism in Bachelor's Degree Program of Business English

Chuan-yu ZHANG

Shandong Women’s University, No. 2399, Daxue Road, Changqing Distric, Jinan City, 250300

Keywords: Business English, Students, Evaluating mechanism, Research.

Abstract. The term of “Business English Major” firstly appeared in “List of Undergraduate Majors Set in Higher Education Institutes Approved by the Ministry of Education (2006)”, being juxtaposed to the “English Major”. By the year of 2016, the amount of colleges and universities approved to set “Business English Major” has climbed to 293. Meantime, we should see the shortcomings of students’ evaluating mechanism set for this major. This paper gives some solutions as following: strengthening the accumulation of materials of process assessment, reforming the traditional teaching modes, alternating the theoretical study in the school and practical training at the practice bases, building diversified student evaluating mechanism.

Introduction

The Development of Business English

Business English, belonging to the category of ESP (ESP=English for Special Purposes) [1], is one of the functional variants of English. From the prospective of concept, the major of Business English is to realize the fusion of “business knowledge module+English language skills module”. In 1990s, the Business English Major had been set in lots of higher professional institutes and foreign trade concerned colleges.[2] The “List of Undergraduate Majors Set in Higher Education Institutes Approved by Education Department (2006)” firstly appeared the “Business English Major”, being juxtaposed to the “English Major”. [3]Until 2015, the amount of colleges and universities approved to set “Business English Major” climbed up to 293.

The origin of Business English can be originated from the 15th century, William Caxton [4] from England printed and issued an English-French dictionary in 1483 which was edited under the circumstances of overcoming the language disability during the trade process between England and other countries in Europe. It contained drilling conversations and useful business vocabulary. According to Howatt’s research, the England had established schools to teach business English specially in the mid-term of 16th century. [5] In 1553, Meurier explained the form and writing of business letters in his book Business English. In 1950s, Business English was separated from English literature and English writing gradually. [6] After entering into 20th century, the Business English has stepped into an rapidly-developing era. [7]

The Statement in this Article

There are 293 higher educational institutes approved to set Business English major in the past decade which meant the social demand of Business English talents is rising strongly. Meanwhile, there was an imitating behavior in the process of establishing a major among many higher educational institutes. In fact, the Business English was an “exotic product” that it had many unresolved matters as following: duplicate curriculum provision, weak teaching staff, simple and single practical mode with low efficiency, unprogressive students’ evaluating mechanism. The most important reason is that the Business English was imported from foreign countries, it was lack of strong groundwork in China, especially theories and research.

This paper is going to talk about one of the most important prospects among the problems--unprogressive students’ evaluating mechanism.
The Weakness of Students’ Evaluating Mechanism

THE writer was and is working in the Business English Teaching and Research Office all the time and know about Business English students’ evaluating mechanism very well. Usually they use testing paper and request the students to answer it in a certain period, for instance, 1 hour or 2 hours except outdoors evaluating prepared for outdoors gym courses. After 2010, the Teaching Affairs Administration have pushed evaluating revolution, and regulates the constitution of grades consisting of 10 percentage of common behavior plus 20 percentage of mid-term test plus 70 percentage of final examination. It doesn’t really change the students’ evaluating mechanism well, and is lack of quality education concept.

Students Evaluation Speaks too Highly of Scores

Evaluating students’ practical skills with scores only is contrary to personal cultivating concept put forward by modern vocational education system. The higher educational institutes usually use forms of oral test, written test, paper-writing and lab-operation. Among these forms, closed-book exam is adopted mostly. Furthermore, this type of evaluation speaks too highly of textbooks, theories and teaching materials, the students may recite the target points or topics mechanically given by teachers. Generally speaking, closed-book exam cannot evaluate students’ real knowledge and misguide their study process.

Going over Exam-Papers is Lack of Inspection

To talk about the formula again, the former 2 items are too easily affected by teacher’s mood and interest. At present, some colleges have established Office of Teaching Quality Inspection, but it works over formally and is demanding quality controlling system and standard, unable to judge the whole process of teaching according to the class-listening records.

Learning is Lack of Substantial Practice

The final exams occupy a heavy percentage and emphasize traditional testing mode, it violates the spirit of Quality Education and developing mode of personalization, and is going against to dig students creating potential and practical ability. [8] Business English is in the range of functional languages, emphasizing students’ real practical skills, thus processing tests and inspection are both important very much.

The Arrangement of Tests is Unreasonable

The final exams are usually arranged in the end of each semester which results in a situation of “loose at first but afterwards tight “, most of students objectively have a heavy pressure in the preparation work two weeks before exams. During a whole teaching term, usually 18 weeks in total, the teachers always give very few tests to the students which results in students’ relaxing study. On the contrary, about two weeks before the final exams, the school comes into a special situation that all the students are preparing for the coming exam. The classrooms and reading-rooms are full of students. In fact, this assault learning mode is no good to assign the leisure time and study time, and is not able to strongly aster the knowledge in time, furthermore, it is harmful to the long-term development and physical health of students.

The Solution of Problem-- Deepening the Reform of Students’ Evaluating Mechanism

The research of students’ evaluating mechanism in higher educational institutes is mainly shown in some academic papers rather than very few books. E.g., Tan Ya-li’s An Analysis of the Current Situation of Building Modern Students’ Evaluating Mechanism in Higher Educational Institutes, Li Li’s An Analysis of Teaching and Evaluating Situation and The Reform Thoughts, Liu Yang-yang’s The Basic Issues of Students’ evaluating Mechanism in Higher Educational Institutes, and the Master’s Degree paper written by Hu Hui-min, The Management and Research of Curriculum
Provision in Higher Educational Institutes. Meantime, the concept of “All-around-development Students’ Evaluation” proposed by Han Li-fu has very important reference value in building a new students’ evaluating mechanism.[9]

“All-around-development Students’ Evaluation” not only emphasizes the result of assessment, but also the process of evaluation.

Strengthening the Collection of Processing Assessment Materials

The Business English Undergraduate Program aims to cultivate composite, applied talents with a solid foundation in English, an international perspective and humanistic qualities, and a good command of the relevant basic theories and knowledge in linguistics, economics, management, law (international commercial law), etc., are familiar with international business rules and practices, has English application ability, business practice ability, cross-cultural communication ability, speculative and innovative ability, independent learning ability, can engage in international business work.[10]

Reforming the Traditional Class-Teaching Mode

Creating a Situational Teaching Mode in Class. For instance, the course of Applied English, unit 4, the reading and writing of English recruitment advertisement, the students get a homework of writing a short and brief English recruitment advertisement for Shandong Women University after having heard several examples. It requests the students not only respect to all the elements of recruitment ads but also control the length of writing with clear statement. This semi-open problem gives enough imagination and space to students and helps them form a real language applying ability and effectively stimulate their interest in learning.

Another example of International Trade Practices course, one of the in-class discussion is to solve a case of FOB (Free on Board): design a complete operating process for exporting 1000 tea sets to Japan. This issue absolutely practices students' practical skills especially in trade application.

Utilizing the Brain-Storming Method. Brain-Storming method, sometimes called the Intellectual Stimulation method, was initially proposed by Adam Osborne from America (the founder of Modern Creation Science) which was an effective method to train the creating ability of a big group, not a single person.[11]

Utilizing Brain-Storming method in teaching usually does like this: the teacher set the problem, the students (in separate groups) solve the problem without any limits, eventually the teacher comments the answers with respect and confirmation, not True or False. The teacher should encourage students to use divergent thinking and innovative thinking.

Advocating Some Courses to Move Away from the Classroom. For example, Business English Conversation, Import and Export Process and Operation, Business Negotiations, Escort Interpreting, Business Etiquette, these courses should create actual scenes to practice their skills except for the in-class theories and practices. Further, the teacher might bring students to the enterprises, factories, firms, etc., and organize an imitating on-site class. The co-operating unit also assign some experienced staff to provide assistance in need.

Carrying on Theoretical Study and Training in the Practice Base

Usually the higher educational institutes take “3.5+0.5” mode and “3+0.5+0.5” mode of out-of-school practice for four-year undergraduates. They have some identical characteristics that students may plan his or her study and employment very well, and the schools can uniformly organize the teaching plan. But meanwhile they have advantages that students’ theories they learned will deviate from the real application. Besides, some theories are brand-new when you learn and outdated in 3 or 4 years.

This paper suggests the schools to take “1+0.5+0.5+0.5+0.5+0.5+0.5” practice mode or “2+0.5+0.5+0.5+0.5” practice mode which means the students may alternately go to the practice base for half a year and come back to school for half a year after having studied basic theories in
school intensively, and these modes help them to combine the theories in book with the practical skills. In other words, the schools should set the curriculum provision in accordance with the need of enterprises. In reverse, students are more easily to find out their shortcomings in study.

**Attempting to Build a Polynary Students Evaluating System**

**Using Diversified Evaluating Forms**

To evaluate a student’s grade in a certain semester should start with usual in-class performance (e.g., answering, attendance, group discussion, being late or leaving early), after-class homework, social practice report, investigation report, imitating operations, program design, practices, etc.. And of course, the final exam is very necessary.

**Evaluating Students at Different Times**

For most theoretical courses, we can evaluate students several times in a semester, not by final exam only. According to scores they get at different times, we can give students a comprehensive grade, that would be reasonable and scientific.

**Conclusion**

The higher education advocates the student-oriented mode, and it is not just words. The schools not only regard the students as the center, but also provide them the essential educational resource and learning modes. The schools should supply more choices to students in many aspects as following: study time, teaching mode, study stuff, and learning method.

“All-around- development Students’ Evaluation” is based on the various need of students and consistent with the standard of “All-around-development Educational Value”, and it is also in accordance with the request put forward by the State Council that “Guiding some undergraduate institutions transform into applied technology institutions”.[12]

**References**


