The Content-based Instruction in Campaign English Teaching
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Keywords: ESP theory, Content-based instruction, Campaign English teaching.

Abstract. Based on the theory of ESP, the teacher should employ the content-based instruction, through which students can complete different learning tasks with full input of rich knowledge and language at the same time a large quantity of language output activities are put into practice. What is more, the teaching method is able to tap the students’ potential of independent thinking ability and self-study, cultivate the cooperative spirit among students, and strengthen the interactivity between the teacher and students.

Campaign English is opened for the military cadet based on the reality and the current international political and military situation, abiding by the curriculum standard of college English and the college English course teaching standard for military colleges. Its deep reason is to cultivate the talents with high quality so only the college English is far away from enough. At this critical moment, campaign English is especially important. According to Wang, an intensive English education direction change is urgently needed, which means only teaching and learning of college English is not enough and the direction should be transferred to EGP+.

Literature Review

The full name of ESP is “English for specific purpose”, which means it is a diversified concept because its approaches are widely used in the international community nowadays. And also it is purpose-oriented, in other words, the reason why the students learn English is that they need the language in their study or the career. And it can be simplified as “the specific learners study a subject with the help of English”. So it is strongly purpose-loaded. The scholars have expressed the opinion that all the language varieties shared the same core. Actually all the language varieties are based on a fixed and public grammar. The language core includes all the vocabulary and sentence structures which can be used in all the situations. Their view goes like this, the learners of language should have a command of about 2000 words for the general usages and then based on the learning objectives, the vocabulary learning can be led to a more academic field. So the efficiency of specific English is quite high because what they learnt is the academic and career related language structure. According to Strevens (1988), English for general purpose and specific purposes are two divisions which are mutually related and independent. The teaching of ESP should be independent and cannot follow the path of college English teaching.

Content-based Instruction

The content-based instruction, as a matter of fact, is a kind of communication teaching method. It supplies real and meaningful content to create the real communicating situation to cultivate the actual language using ability so as to fulfill the purpose of “learning for using”. This teaching method is originated from the bilingual teaching experiment named immersion proposed by the Canadian scholar Lambert in the 60s of 20th century. Based on this, Krahnke (1987) gave the explicit definition that it is a kind of language acquisition based on the teaching of content to the information. From this definition we can see that this acquisition is learnt not from isolated and content-excluded learning.

Since 1980s, content-based instruction is widely used in a great variety of aspects such as ESP, professional English and the immersion education program. A lot of scholars home and abroad did a lot of researches about the practicability of the content-based instruction in the foreign language teaching from the perspective of theory, and also the application of content-based instruction in the
college foreign language teaching. However, very little has been done in the field of campaign English reading teaching. In the paper, on the basis of ESP, the practicability of content-based instruction in the campaign English is studied.

**Features of Campaign English Texts**

Compared with EGP, campaign English boasts of distinct features in the aspects of meaning, syntax as well as content, which can be defined as English for specific purpose. From the aspect of meaning, there are a lot of advanced vocabulary and proper names in the campaign English and furthermore some words have different meanings in campaign English, which demands a high accumulation of vocabulary. For example the word intelligence is generally understood as “智力”, and the abbreviated form IQ, intelligence quotient is understood as“智商”. Another example is classified whose general meaning is “分类的”but in the campaign English, classified is used as adjective, and its meaning is“机密的，秘密的”for example the sentence“那些信息是机密的”can be translated as “the information is classified.” From the aspect of syntax, long sentences with complex grammatical structures play a dominant role in campaign English, especially the compound clause, such as attributive, object, subject clause as well as the omission. What’s more, every sentence is quite informative, which poses a great challenge for the students to understand.

From the aspect of content, in the campaign English are all the real situation material featured with distinct time, knowledge as well as being critical. Four main topics are involved: peace-keeping operation of United Nation, anti-terrorism, the balance of asia-pacific and the refugee issues, each of which are heated in the current international community, at the same time, are closely related to the identity of military cadet and their future career life. Exposures to these main topics will make the students get a deeper insight into the present political situation and international military so that students’ horizon can be broadened and strategic thinking-mode can also be cultivated to strengthen their military quality.

**The Application of CBI in the Campaign English**

**The Practicability of CBI**

First of all, it is suitable for the students. Because generally the campaign English is opened in the second term of the sophomore and it is mainly aiming for the students in the second years of college, which means it demands a good command of English basics and grammars. The students who have passed CET4 have gone through lots of practices in four basic skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Therefore, they have had an excellent language basis for the campaign English and at the same time, their cognitive ability is comparatively mature and the competence of independent thinking and study to a large extent have been improved.

Secondly, the special identity of military cadet determined the direction of English learning, which is quite different from local universities. For the military cadets, four basic skills of English are just fundamental and laying a solid basis for the further English learning of specific learning. Their international horizon should be cultivated and the fostering of their strategic thought with critical ability. Only by this way can the military cadets be qualified to meet the requirements of new times.

Thirdly, it can meet the needs of the students’ high interest and motivation and nearly all the students bear the strong hope that they can broaden their horizon, cultivate their critical thinking ability to really get a good command of political and military knowledge with the assistance of English rather than just the repetition and memorization of English words, phrases as well as the sentences.

**The Process of CBI**

The main objective of campaign English is to foster the English reading comprehension and improve their learning skills including skimming and scanning as well as information location.
Content-based instruction boasts of the feature of flexibility so there is no fixed methods or activities for the students and teachers to follow. On the basis of the relevant theory of ESP and content-based instruction, a teaching process is arranged in the paper as follows:

The first step is to determine the content of the unit and ask the students to search for the related information and compose the report paper. This is also the first stage when the students should make the preparations. The topic of antiterrorism is decided for the first place and the students are classified into groups, each of which include five students. What’s more, proper instructions should be given to the students and also students should be reminded to specifically collect the information about religious disputes. During this period, students should be encouraged to make full use of modern technology and media resources with teamwork spirits. They should brainstorm about the information to make judgements, selection and integration. After this stage, every group should compose an English research paper. When it is necessary, related pictures, videos can also be complemented.

The second step is the in-class discussion. After the language and knowledge preparation, a second stage should be arranged to hold the class discussion. There is a representative for every group to stand on the stage to deliver a speech and then all the other students discuss about the content of the speech. During the process of discussion, students should be encouraged to question, criticize and complement and the teacher should be objective to listen to the students’ opinions and offer suitable evaluation and correction. At the same time, teachers should direct the students rather than beat their passion.

Now it is the time for the third stage, which is also the teachers’ evaluation and suggestions. Based on the reports and speeches from groups, teachers should give the feedbacks and evaluations in the aspects of perspectives, content, logic as well as language. The most important is that the teacher should instruct students to find out the background information related to the topic articles and further more encourage the students to have a deep reading about the articles and also figure out the solutions to the problems following the articles.

The last step is to assign the extended reading for the students to read on their own to further broaden their horizon and increase their language input at the same time, cultivate the students’ language sense.

Conclusion

The objective of content-based instruction is to learn about the content with the help of language in order to achieve the purpose of “learning for using”. Therefore, in the teaching process, methods and flexibility should be paid attention. Based on the theory of ESP, the teacher should employ the content-based instruction, through which students can complete different learning tasks with full input of rich knowledge and language at the same time a large quantity of language output activities are put into practice. What is more, the teaching method is able to tap the students’ potential of independent thinking ability and self-study, cultivate the cooperative spirit among students, and strengthen the interactivity between the teacher and students.

References