

English for Specific Purpose and English Teachers' Development: An Exemplary Research on Binzhou University

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Supported by Binzhou University Office for Teaching Research Planning (BYJYZD201501).

Received 12 November 2017; accepted 21 January 2018
Published online 26 March 2018

Abstract

This paper investigates into ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and the development of specified teachers and concerns about their relationship on Binzhou University. For this, we make a questionnaire and interview for specified teachers in Binzhou University. According to the results of the questionnaire and interview this paper analyzes the merits and faults on this aspect for surveyors and suggests the directions for the specified teachers of ESP. I hope this paper could enrich the concerning research for ESP and specified teacher development and provide a certain experience for the same level universities.

Key words: English for specific purposes; Development for specified teachers; English teachers

Song, G. X. (2018). English for Specific Purpose and English Teachers' Development: An Exemplary Research on Binzhou University. *Higher Education of Social Science*, 14(1), 78-82. Available from: URL: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/hess/article/view/10146> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/10146>

1. ESP LITERATURE AND STATUS

ESP (English for Specific Purposes) denotes the relative English for specific profession or subject, which is the English course devised for some aims and need for learners (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). ESP is also a kind of language which includes not only the training on English skills as language but also connects language

skills and major knowledge study with obvious major connotation. With the increasing tendency of world economic integration and exchange in politics, economics and culture between countries in the world, technology English, medical English, legal English, media English, psychology English and business English emerge as the times requires and develops immediately (Ibid.).

ESP study arose in the 1960s abroad and Western scholars argue that ESP combines teaching contents with the demand for the learners closely. Comparing with basic English ESP can solve much more a certain kind of major problem in some fields.

In our country English circle began to focus on ESP from 1970s. In the 1980s the articles on ESP increased and ESP teaching became a hot topic in the middle of 1990s with the upsurge of inter-disciplinary talent development and penetration into English reform. In China, ESP differentiates from general English universally which is the teaching contents at higher stage in college English and used for developing and improving the application ability in the major field.

With the development of ESP teaching and research in the academic field, more and more problems appear, especially exists on development goal, teaching theory, curriculum arrangement, teaching method, teaching material compilation, teacher resource construction aspect, which handicaps the development of ESP and the reform of English teaching.

- a) ESP teaching lacks explicit theory to guide an normative teaching outline which causes curriculum arrangement to go arbitrary and autonomous and does not elaborate the real need of different major students.
- b) ESP teaching lacks adequate teaching resource and faculties. As a qualified ESP teacher he or she should have strong English skills and comprehensive applicable abilities and knowledge about the core subject. Meanwhile

the lack of teaching material hinders the development of ESP.

- c) ESP teaching lacks scientific, reasonable and comprehensive evaluation method. Since ESP is based on specific need and practice as a very strong English teaching activity and values (Shan, 2012), it should have corresponding ways to assess learning result. The old final assessment and paper reading and translation cannot express the characteristics of ESP teaching.

2. ESP QUESTIONNAIRE AND ANALYSIS

In order to investigate into ESP course teachers' teaching knowledge and development awareness and etc. in Binzhou university, we interview 29 ESP courses teachers for ESP knowledge questionnaire from June to August in 2016. Among the surveyed 55.17% is ESP professional teachers, 44.83% is others. 65.52% of surveyors is at 30-39 age, 17.24% of surveyors occupies both at 40-49 age and 20-29 age. Most surveyors are young and middle aged.

Surveyors of 6-10 teaching years occupies 31.03%. More than 3 teaching years occupies 58.62%. That shows the surveyors have a certain teaching experiences. 3 ESP teaching years surveyors occupies more than 68.97%. According to the rank order from the bottom, the percentage order of the surveyors is 10.34%, 72.41%, 17.24%, which represents a high level of scientific research of the surveyors. Among surveyors whose certificate exposes in this way, 68.97% of surveyors get master degree, 27.59% of surveyors get doctor degree, which indicates comparative higher knowledge standard. As for English level, 31.03% of the surveyors get English major master degree, 44.83% of surveyors get CET band six certificate, 6.9% of surveyors get English major band8 certificate, which shows a very much higher English level. On training abroad, 14% of the surveyors have been to England, 3% have been to America, 3% have been to

New Zealand, 3% have been to Canada, which shows ESP teaching group lack more abroad learning experience.

The surveyors engage on market commerce, finance, economics, chemistry(material chemistry, chemical craft and engineer, and application chemistry), biology, applicable electrical technology, communication and information system, computer software, geographical theory, English linguistics(teaching, subtitle translation, translation, curriculum and teaching theory, oral interpretation, English course and teaching theory, English educational teaching), botany, photo electricity information science and engineer, environmental engineer, communication and information system, mathematics and applicable mathematics and ecology, which amounts to 14 majors and covers all the ESP courses. This shows the degree of width of this research.

The result of the questionnaire on teaching method shows that most surveyors choose mixed method, task-based, grammatical translation, flipped teaching, communicative method and automatic teaching, which denotes ESP teaching in Binzhou university proceeds as other main flow course and keep pace with advanced teaching method. In teaching language the result shows that 20 teachers employ bilingual language to carry out teaching, 7 teachers use English, 2 teachers use Chinese, which shows high technique of English level.

In the choice of teaching material, most surveyors appoint or choose their teaching course, few surveyors compile by themselves. The appointed and choice textbooks belong to strong major inclination which does not adjust to the level of the students. While the self-compiled textbooks comparatively close to the need and practical level of the students and they are easily controlled by the teachers.

Meanwhile we investigate three aspects of surveyors' teaching from five degrees, 1 stands for strong negative, 2 stands for neutral negative, 3 stands for neutral, 4 stands for basic affirmative, 5 stands for strong affirmative.

Table 1
ESP Teacher Quality Acknowledgement Investigation Result

Statement	1-percentage	2-percentage	3-percentage	4-percentage	5-percentage
1.Necessity on construction of ESP internet teacher training forum	3.45	6.8	13.79	41.38	34.48
2.ESP teachers should have the ability of information technology	0-0	3.45	10.34	24.14	62.07
3.ESP teachers should have doctor degree	10.34	31.03	34.48	17.24	6.9
4.ESP teachers possessing specific major basic knowledge is enough	3.45	37.93	41.38	3.45	13.79
5.ESP teachers should cooperate with other specific majors teachers	0-0	6.9	3.45	34.48	55.17
6.ESP teachers development should lay down specific ability frame	3.45	0-0	20.69	55.17	20.69
7.ESP teachers must proceed need analysis	0-0	3.45	3.45	44.83	48.28

From the above data, we find most of the surveyors have a certain kind of self-development awareness as ESP teachers and acknowledge the basic quality and system on knowledge and ability. Whereas about Question 3 the

result shows that surveyors lack of knowledge about the statement whether the ESP teachers should have doctor degree. Question 4 on whether the ESP teachers having the major basic knowledge is enough has the same problem.

Table 2
The Result on ESP Awareness for Development Goal

	1-percentage	2- percentage	3-percentage	4-percentage	5-percentage
8.ESP goal emphasizes the effect as tool which is not good for development on humanity quality and intercultural communication	27.59	51.72	6.9	3.45	10.34
9.ESP teaching emphasizes intercourse and types of literature	3.45	17.24	27.59	41.38	10.34
10.ESP curriculum arrangement should satisfy the need of learners	0-0	0-0	13.79	27.59	58.62
11.ESP teaching is bilingual and is not suitable for university teachers	20.69	34.48	10.34	24.14	10.34
12.ESP teaching material aims for developing the students' English comprehensive ability in their profession or subject field	0-0	10.34	3.45	27.59	58.62

The data above shows that most surveyors acknowledge the development goals and aims of ESP. They fully discriminate the ESP teaching from bilingual

course. However, the result concerning Question 11(ESP teaching arrangement should satisfy the need of learners) shows some surveyors need more knowledge on it.

Table 3
ESP Students Awareness Investigation Result

	1-percentage	2-percentage	3-percentage	4-percentage	5-percentage
13.ESP study should be proceeded in famous universities (985 or 211 in China) and it is not fit for normal universities	20.69	41.38	24.14	6.9	6.9
14.ESP can promote learners' interest and efficiency	10.34	10.34	6.9	41.38	31.03
15.Learners can acquire ESP and do not need to study in a certain period	27.59	44.83	13.79	10.34	3.45
16.ESP is hard to carry out for university students with low English level	3.45	24.14	24.14	31.03	17.24

The data above shows that most surveyors have a good identification about the difference between 985 (or 211) as famous universities and normal universities. ESP is suitable for university students. However, the result about Question15 shows that some surveyors need more strengthening.

Additionally we interviewed some teachers and made records as follows.

Interview1:

Question 1: Who is more competent for ESP teaching, major teachers or English teachers?

Answer: Professor Xu whose majors in safety engineering think major teachers are more competent. The reason is that major teachers grasp more major vocabulary with a certain major background while ESP teaching needs a specific background to understand effectively and

translate properly.

Question 2: What kind of English level should an ESP teacher have?

Answer: In my opinion, it is not necessary to practice more pronunciation and grammar. If the study only emphasizes specific major vocabulary and document material reading translation, the teachers are qualified for the teaching with a CET band 6 certificate or bachelor degree. The difference between them is that English teachers have higher level oral English but it can not influence the teaching quality greatly. It needs a high level of English and high level of specific majors as an ESP teacher.

Students have less interest in ESP class. One of the reasons is that the course comes up in the sixth or seventh term during which time the students focus more on

postgraduate examination and have no time to engage on other courses. If ESP course can be arranged as compulsory course, it would be better.

Interview 2: Professor Wang who majored in electronic engineering argues that teachers with major certificate and doctorate degree are fit for ESP teaching. Such teachers possess English and major advantages.

Interview 3: Professor Gao who majored in aviation subject on his own think specific major teachers can be more competent in ESP teaching. Major teachers tend to proceed class by translation method which makes students bored. But it is difficult to learn other majors for English teachers.

The interview shows that some ESP teachers need to improve the awareness on ESP teaching contents. And the arrangement of ESP should be modified.

3. ANALYSIS AND SUGGESTIONS ON ESP QUESTIONNAIRE

3.1 ESP Teaching Material Construction

From the result of this investigation, few surveyors could compile teaching material for their ESP teaching. Most ESP textbooks are not suitable for the ESP teachers and students. ESP teaching material elaborates roadmap and details for teaching and study. ESP teaching material construction should depend on students' characteristics and need to compile. The ESP teacher can organize English teacher and relevant teachers as a compiling group to apply for an ESP project. Compilation should follow five principles: systematic principle, communicative principle, cognitive principle, cultural principle and affective principle (Shu & Zhuang, 2003). Systematic principle means that Foreign language teaching material should introduce target language phonetics, vocabulary and grammar etc. systematically. Cognitive principle demands language material arrangement and exercises devised should focus on language study especially foreign language study law and mental characteristics. Cultural principle means that foreign material should choose variety subject matter and style articles and paragraphs as representatives. Affective principle refers that the language material should be very interesting and could evoke students' interest and activity. Also the choice of ESP teaching material should accord with ESP curriculum concepts which include: (a) Expand the scope of ESP teaching material language data base, complement some material from their daily experience, eg., hot topic and Chinese culture etc., to enrich ESP teaching material and ensure the students' transfer on language ability. (b) Summarize the universality between business and academic database, increasing the degree of adjustment of the text. This statement on connotation of ESP proves that Question 9 (ESP emphasizes intercourse and type of literature.) is incorrect.

3.2 Construction of ESP Teacher Role

ESP characterizes "Absolute Characteristic" and "Variable Characteristic" (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Absolute Characteristic includes the specific research method and activities on majors and the grammar, vocabulary, register, technique, discourse and types of literature should correspond to specific major. This exposes that only possessing major basic knowledge is not enough and proves the statement of Question 4 (ESP teachers possessing specific major basic knowledge is enough) is incorrect. The basic major knowledge as ESP teachers should combine with language knowledge. "Variable Characteristic" includes concerning specific subjects; different teaching method from general English, learners with middle or advanced English level Grade 2 or Grade 3 educators; mostly having presentation with basic knowledge of the language system. This proves that the statement of Question 9 is not right again. The teaching of language knowledge depends on its major contents to present and the major basic knowledge is the focus of teaching. Language teaching also includes teaching techniques and measures. Therefore Question 15 (Learners can acquire ESP and do not need to study in a certain period) is not true. ESP focuses on specific learning and only acquisition is not reachable. Question 3 should be corrected that ESP teachers are qualified with middle or advanced English level not only with doctorate degree.

From the interview, there is a confusion about the ESP teachers' role. The orientation of ESP teachers' role is one of the prerequisites for the three main constructions according to Dudley-Evans and John (1998), Hutchinson and Waters (1987) think that ESP teachers do not need to grasp any specific major knowledge, they just make three points, staying positive towards ESP teaching contents; mastering the basic knowledge of a certain field; acknowledging the knowledge students possess. Actually ESP teachers do not need to become full-fledged talents only make clear their own teaching aims, teaching targets, and getting familiar with teaching contents and model. Secondly, ESP teachers are coordinators who keep a good relationship with learners, governors or investors, and specific teachers but also build a good knowledge construction on their own. Therefore ESP teachers themselves do not need to worry about their storehouse for their specific knowledge. Lastly, ESP teachers are teaching practitioner who should participate in the compilation of the textbook, devise the outline of the ESP curriculum, arrange the course to perfect the history and theory of ESP teaching. Cai (2004) also concludes that basically ESP teaching should be taken by Foreign language teachers and bilingual courses should be taken by specific major teachers.

3.3 The Awareness on ESP Concept Problem

ESP concept suits for, (a) It depends on CBI which drives students from knowledge to contents. (b) The full

development and progress create the possibility for the students from general English study to specific English study. (c) Since specific English as the characteristic of human's cognitive ability and language ability inter-promoted (Gui, 1985, pp.79-80), the English study attaches to specific connotation which makes English learning practical and interesting as a strong motivation for the students (Fan, 1995). ESP is just a kind of teaching method or concept not a way to orientation (Qin, 2003). On the other hand, although the need for specific and academic occupy a certain percentage according to the need analysis, it is never the first appeal (Liu & Zhu, 2013). These concepts also give a good answer to Question 3, Question 4 and Question 15.

3.4 Construction of Teaching Force on ESP

With the development of ESP, society needs more ESP teachers. However nowadays most of the ESP teachers are not specialized who could not satisfy all the needs. We really need to build a high-quality and high-specified ESP teacher group. For this goal, (a) Our university should organize specific training for ESP teachers to clarify the theory on ESP including the differences between EGP and ESP. And also train them one or two specific basic knowledge for each ESP teacher. (b) Build ESP forums for ESP teachers to communicate and exchange on ESP teaching. Build a bridge for ESP teachers and specific teachers to help ESP teachers to be qualified as soon as possible. Also ESP teachers can attend the specific class and cooperate with the specific teachers on project research. (c) Expand more business to cooperate with university, create business-university forum, encourage and arrange ESP teachers to do more practice in businesses, develop their practical experience and major knowledge. On the other hand, strengthen dual major teachers construction, appeal to social talent with relative major background to join our ESP teacher group. These talents can complement ESP teachers' lack of experience and help students improve their relevant adjustment.

CONCLUSION

Through the above analysis on the questionnaire and interview, ESP teachers in Binzhou university have

comparatively comprehensive knowledge and strong self-development awareness. We found some problems, ESP teachers group should be more professional; English teachers should learn more about other major general knowledge, organize and participate in other major training to satisfy ESP courses for other major knowledge; curriculum arrangement and methodology should depend on students' need and interest properly and reasonably. And ESP teachers need more abroad experience to acquire original language and cultures. I hope this report can provide more experience and reference for other same level universities and ESP researchers.

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