

## On EOP Teaching for English Majors --Based on the Practice of English Department, Tianhua College

Qin-Pei FAN

No. 1661 North Shengxin Road, Shanghai Normal University Tianhua College,  
Shanghai, China

39312543@qq.com

**Key Words:** EOP teaching for english majors, EOP teaching method, Need analysis.

**Abstract.** This thesis aims to investigate EOP teaching for English Majors in English Department, Tianhua College, especially the problems during the process of EOP teaching. After that, some suggestions are provided to improve EOP teaching. Questionnaire analysis, quantitative analysis, and document research are mainly adopted together with interviews, discussions as well as analysis of recruitment requirement. The author concludes: 1.The EOP teaching contents and methods should be adjusted to meet the needs of the society. 2.Various teaching methods should be adopted, and case study in English should be encouraged and promoted in order to practice specific English for the improvement of teaching efficiency. 3. EOP teacher training should be enhanced.

### Introduction to EOP Teaching Background and Significance

Are English majors as purely linguistic personnel satisfying social needs? How to cultivate the compound English professionals that the market needs? The Ministry of Education serves to meet the requirements of social and economic development in accordance with the teaching of English majors, and formulates the 2000 edition of the *Syllabus for English Majors in Colleges and Universities*. It classifies the English professional courses into three types of training: English professional skills, English professional knowledge and related professional knowledge. "The relevant professional courses refer to other courses related to English majors, namely, courses on foreign affairs, economy, trade, law, management, news, education, science and technology, culture and military affairs." [1] These courses are well beyond the scope of traditional English language and literature. It is in this context that the English majors EOP teaching is based on and form the teaching mode for Compound English professionals.

### Current Situation of EOP Teaching

According to Jordan, business English is divided into two categories: "EGBP (English for General Business Purposes), and ESBP (English for Specific Business Purposes)." [2] EGBP is suitable for business English major junior students. The curriculum is designed to be close to ordinary English, mainly on language skills plus general business background knowledge. It focuses on developing students' ability to use English in general business environment. EGBP teaching is mainly based on language skills, such as the Business English Course. EGBP is suitable for business English major senior students, who should not only master the basic skills of English, but also to know more about and be able to communicate in the business subject. In the high grade teaching, in addition to English language skills, knowledge of professional disciplines is included in the syllabus, such as International Trade Practice, Foreign Trade Correspondence, International Finance and Marketing, E-commerce and Business Management...etc.

### Need Analysis

Need Analysis is based on EOP teaching purpose and pertinence, which aims to satisfy learners' motivations and goals. EOP teaching design is mainly to cultivate compound English professionals to meet the needs of the society. In the past, the cultivation of English Majors focused on listening,

speaking, reading, writing and translation, but ignored the fact that English is a tool for communication. The subject attribute of information has not been given due attention in the teaching process. Teachers in the choice of teaching materials, and students in the choice of learning materials is more casual about the content, but more serious about whether the material is suitable for language learning, for example: the difficulty of teaching materials (the proportion of new words), the organization of language, the structure of the article. Teaching materials range widely such as economy, science and technology, literature, art, news, etc., but the professional knowledge accumulation is ignored, so that all subjects have been read, but the students are still unable to meet the requirements of higher-standard communication work in a professional subject.

### **I: Society Need Analysis**

In April 2017, the author searched jobs for English majors on one of the most popular job hunting website 51job [3]. For all the 283 positions for English majors: the majority are in the education field (English training); 73 positions are in such areas as machinery / equipment / heavy industry, furniture / home appliances / toys, cars and spare parts, luxury goods, clothing / textile / leather, and the general qualifications for these positions (assistant, salesperson, interpreter, order supervisor, customer service) are “P / I production, ERP orders and order change processing, bill processing statement processing, can independently develop customer, understanding of foreign trade processes”; 10 positions are in such areas as accounting / auditing, finance / investment / securities, banking, insurance and the general qualifications for these positions (Junior finance, administrative assistant, foreign trade commissioner / assistant) are: “assist the financial budget, audit, supervision, in accordance with the timely preparation of all financial statements submitted to the relevant departments of the requirements for companies and government departments, the audit contract, make account form, responsible for the export and import order tracking, documentation, logistics and documentary work related to the content.” It is obvious that the requirements for the English major graduates are: industrial professional knowledge and good language.

### **II: Learner Need Analysis**

The author investigates 53 graduates (non-teacher) of 110 English majors who graduated in 2006 through "EOP Teaching Questionnaire" (hereinafter referred to as the questionnaire), with effective recovery of 41 questionnaires. These graduates have been working in the society for 4 years, so they not only have a better understanding of the society's need for English majors, but also are studying continuously in order to meet constant challenges from work. 95.12% of them agree with EOP teaching. They generally believe that graduates need to understand some of the industry background as well as the related operational processes, and also to be familiar with some of the relevant English expression. 70.73% of them use English as their working language. One thing to note is that the English they use in work is closely related to the industry. Therefore a conclusion can be drawn from the questionnaire survey: English is only a communication tool, while professional knowledge is relied on more in daily work. For English majors, English is their strong point, while the professional knowledge of business requires them to continuously learn and improve in the course of their work.

## **Current Situation and Suggestion to Problems**

### **I: EOP Course Design**

In Tianhua College, 4 years teaching is divided into two stages, namely: the lower grades (freshman and sophomore) and the higher grades (grade three and grade four). The main task of the lower grades teaching is to cultivate students' ability to use the language in the business environment, for example: the basic knowledge of English and the comprehensive and strict training of basic skills. EOP course offered in the lower grades is: Business English. The main task of teaching in the higher grades is to continue to lay a good foundation of language skills, learn English professional knowledge and related professional knowledge, improve the ability of comprehensive use of

English communication. EOP courses are: Intercultural Communication in Business, International Trade Practice, Business Correspondence. In the questionnaire, when the graduates answer the question: "What kind of knowledge should be prepared? Please recommend courses and reference books." Many recommend such courses as the Macro and Micro Economics, Accounting, International Finance. The reference books they recommend focus on the foundation of professional knowledge.

## **II: EOP Teaching Method**

EOP teaching is a combination of business expertise and practice, English language knowledge and skills, cross-cultural knowledge and skills. Combined with the objective demand of society and the students' subjective need, the practical EOP teaching methods suitable for independent college English major students are Discussion-based Teaching Method, Task-based Teaching Method and so on.

*Discussion-based Teaching Method* Teachers are to guide and inspire students thinking, and students under the guidance of teachers are to carry out conscious thinking to explore activities. Students' learning is always in the positive state of "problem-thinking-exploration-solution". In the high-level ESBP teaching, some courses are highly specialized. Taking into account the basis and learning effect of independent college students, in the process of introducing basic concepts teachers should use bilingual teaching or Chinese to introduce concepts into English case analysis to improve understanding. For example, in the course of International Trade Practice, the discussion method is used for case analysis. Students who discuss the case in English will reflect their understanding of the basic concepts of the specialized courses and the degree of mastery of the professional English. If the students can further discuss the different opinions, a strong external stimulus will be formed, and a high degree of interest and attention can be stimulated, therefore resulting in autonomy and exploratory learning.

*Task-based Teaching Method* Based on the following five aspects: first, the task is based on meaning. Secondly, the problem should be solved through language communication. Third, the task is similar to that of the real world. Fourth, finish the task first. Fifth, evaluate the tasks according to the results. In teaching Business English, International Trade Practice, Foreign Trade Correspondence, teachers use task-based teaching method. For example: in teaching International Trade Practice, cases are designed to clarify responsibilities and obligations of the parties in the FOB, CIF, CFR and FCA, CPT, CIP and other terms and conditions. The students play the buyer and the seller of the tasks assigned, analyze the case, and through rational debate to safeguard their own interests. Finally, the teacher will play the role of the arbitration institution to evaluate the performance of the students. The whole case analysis is conducted in English. In a word, in EOP teaching, teachers should use many teaching methods such as heuristic, discussion, discovery, research and so on.

## **III: EOP Teacher Training**

The EOP courses require teachers to have a solid foundation of English language, good professional knowledge and practical experience in business. Teachers are the prerequisites for achieving professional training objectives. However, the common problems faced by colleges and universities are that the number of teachers who can be competent for EOP teaching is not enough, and the gap of teachers in independent colleges is larger. Teacher training therefore is of vital importance. According to the practical experience in EOP teaching for Business English majors of Shanghai Normal University Tianhua college, the author thinks that EOP teacher training can be carried out from the following three aspects:

Teachers who have expertise or interest in professional knowledge should be organized to take part in training or be sent to the relevant institutions for systematic theoretical construction. Trainings on the E-commerce, Foreign Trade Practice, Accounting, etc. can quickly and efficiently improve EOP teachers' professional practice ability and grasp the direction of teaching in a short period of time.

Strengthen the cooperation and communication with enterprise experts who have rich practical experience. EOP teachers should seek advice from them, get the case materials, understand the needs of the society for English majors, and adjust the teaching content.

With department or the course team as a platform, EOP teacher can build a workshop to regularly prepare for lessons, ask questions, solve problems, share teaching resources, and improve EOP teaching.

To sum up, EOP teaching aims to foster compound English professionals, and the curriculum should pay attention not only to language skills but also to professional practice in English in business direction. According to the analysis of the social demand for English majors and their demand for personal development, combined with the Shanghai Normal University Tianhua College English EOP teaching practice, the author suggests that EOP teaching should: 1. Through need analysis, teachers should adjust the teaching content and train students to adapt to social needs. 2. Adopt flexible teaching methods, proper increase of case analysis, the professional English learning, the professional English can be used to improve the teaching effect. 3. Strengthen EOP teacher training.

## **References**

- [1]. ELT Advisory Board under the Ministry Education, Syllabus for English Majors in Colleges and Universities [M]. shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2000.
- [2]. Jordan, RR. English for Academic Purposes: A Guide and Resource Book for Teachers [M]. Cambridge University Press, 1997.P.xvii-xx
- [3]. Information on [www.51job.com](http://www.51job.com)