

The Analysis toward the Actuality of Tour English Teaching in Higher Vocational Institutes and Suggestions

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Abstract. With the development of international tourism, it's increasingly important for the students in vocational institutes to master a foreign language. For the most part, Tour English is taught for students majoring in Tourism Management. Although it is a great demand of tourism industry and emphasis is paid by vocational institutes, the teaching effectiveness is not always satisfying. So it is well worth a discussion about the case.

Key words: Vocational Institutes; Tour English; Teaching.

1. Introduction

With the continuous development of foreign-related tourism activities, the requirements of professional quality of practitioners have been further promoted. One of the most important aspects is the higher requirement of mastering a foreign language. Much attention has been paid to professional foreign language teaching in many Higher Vocational Institutes. Tour English is usually opened as one of the required courses for the students who major in tourism management. During the process of teaching, schools have paid much attention, teachers have accumulated some experience in teaching and students also have made considerable effort, but the teaching effect toward this course is not always satisfying. Although most students can pass the terminal examination and become an employer in tourism, but not many of them can apply English as a tool in their work. Employers often have to retrain these so called professional students. This shows that there are still many problems in tourism English teaching in higher vocational Institutes.

2. Characteristics of Tour English Teaching in Higher Vocational Institutes

The English level of the students is one of the key elements which determine the effect of tourism English teaching. It is hard to imagine that the students who are not good at English can learn Tour English very well. Practicality is another characteristic of tourism English Teaching in higher vocational Institutes. For students who will engage in tourism industry, they will have more opportunities to use foreign languages, especially English. The higher the level of English, the greater possibility of improvement they will have. Thirdly, the teaching contents of tour English are complex. The skills about guide service, travel service management, hotel service and management are all included. In addition, students have to master the knowledge about history, culture, architecture, art, religion, food and so on. No wonder it's hard to increase the effect of tour English Teaching in Higher Vocational institutes.

3. Analysis about Tour English Teaching and Studying

3.1 About Teaching Arrangement

The courses of Tour English are usually opened in one or two semesters in most higher vocational institutes. A few schools will open the course in three or more semesters. Students will have four classes per week. Such arrangement will not guarantee the teaching and studying time and it will directly affect the effectiveness of teaching. During the semesters without English courses, few students will keep on learning Tour English.

Table 1. Courses of English Opened in Some Higher Vocational Institutes

Institute names	Semester	No. of Courses
Wuxi Vocational Institute of Commerce	1st	4
Najing City Vocational Institute	2nd	3
Guanxi City Vocational Institute	1st	4
Guandong Scientific Vocational Institute	2nd	4
Guangdong Foreign Language Art Institute	1st	4
Hengdiang Movie and Television College	1	4

3.2 About the Selection of Teaching Content

The selection of teaching content is varied and the standards are not unified either. Higher vocational institutes and teachers do not always take into account the differences between students in selecting teaching content. Textbooks on Tour English are also varied. All of these make it more difficult for teaching and learning as well.

3.3 About Teachers

Most teachers who teach Tour English in higher vocational institutes engaged in teaching directly after graduation. Although they have mastered English language skills, most of them lack the experience of engaging in tour industry. In the process of teaching, it may be difficult for them to from the perspective of industry demand. There is a lack of teachers from tour industry and expert teachers.

3.4 About Teaching Methods

The teaching methods applied by teachers who teach Tour English may be single. Some teachers apply the methods such as combined teaching of theory and practice, multimedia, scene simulation and so on, but simple classroom teaching is difficult to achieve ideal teaching effectiveness. Students seldom have the real chance to use English.

3.5 About Teaching Resources

Tour English is a required course for Major of Tourism Management in higher vocational institutes, but it is not listed the as the core course. Therefore, the investment to Tour English is not as much as other professional core courses. Less attention is paid to English teacher training. Only a few higher institutes have built the teaching resource platforms of Tour English. The low frequency of using the platforms is another problem we need to solve.

3.6 About Assessment Methods

Most higher vocational institutes combine the written and oral examinations in Tour English teaching. Most students will pass the terminal examination of the course. It can be understood as that teaching goal has been achieved, but the actual fact is that few student can really use English as a tool while working in travel industry. The imperfect assessment system will directly influence the teaching effectiveness.

3.7 About Students

The ability, attitude of students in higher vocational institutes toward English learning are not so satisfying. Some students don't realize the importance of learning Tour English well. Some students lack confidence in learning Tour English. Some students are not willing to learn Tour English actively, independently and purposefully. All these make the teaching and learning of Tour English difficult.

4. Suggestions

4.1 Strengthening the Cultivation of Teachers

The teaching ability and level of teachers will directly affect the effect of the teaching of tourism English in higher vocational institutes, so much attention should be paid to the cultivation of teachers. Higher vocational institutes should encourage teachers to practice in tourism enterprises, sent teachers to study abroad, create a relaxed condition for the personal development of teachers, improve teachers' teaching enthusiasm and encourage teachers to carry out teaching reform and innovation and so on. The assessment of teachers' teaching should also be strengthened. It is also necessary to employ the experts in the tourism field as the external teachers.

4.2 Setting Reasonable Teaching Objectives

Higher vocational institutes should carry out widely industry research, combine the requirements of the industry with the methods of teaching and the actual situation of students to set reasonable teaching objectives. The objectives of Tour English are set usually as follows: knowledge objectives: after learning Tour English, students should master corresponding professional tourism knowledge, new words and expressions; Ability objectives: students should achieve self-teaching ability, be able to carry out tour reception and service work in English, possess the ability of listening, speaking, reading and writing. In fact, such objectives for students who major in tourism management seem somewhat high. But in order to adapt to the demands of the development of the society and the tourism industry, these objectives are not really high. It is not desirable to reduce the teaching objectives of the course to cater to the students.

4.3 Selecting Suitable Teaching Methods

During the teaching of Tour English, teachers should adopt a variety of teaching methods and try to get the students involved in. The role-play teaching method is quite desirable. Of course, teachers should pay attention to those whose English is not good and often encourage them. Teachers can arrange for students to visit hotels, travel services and scenic spots, invite industrial experts to give lectures to students. Teachers can also carry out the English singing contest, Tour English knowledge competition, professional vocabulary contest, English tour guide presentation contest, English speech contest, set up English corner and encourage students to use English for communication.

4.4 Selecting Suitable Teaching Content

The teaching content of tour English should focus on the work of the tourism industry. Although tour English mainly focuses on the basic necessities of food, accommodation, travel, tour, shopping and entertainment, attention should be paid to the specific job the students will engage in after graduation. Teachers should teach students how to teach themselves after class, how to widen their vision in Tour English learning.

4.5 Setting up Teaching Resource Platform

The establishment of tourism English teaching resources platform will enhance the teaching effectiveness greatly. Of course, lots of manpower and financial resources are also needed. The teaching resource platform should be conducive to the teaching of teachers and the learning of students. The content should be rich, innovative and practical. At the same time, teachers should maintain and renew the platform.

4.6 Perfecting the Assessment System

The assessment of Tour English should include both teachers and students. The assessment should be comprehensive, reasonable, fair and scientific. Teacher should adopt flexible and diverse forms to assess the students besides a paper.

4.7 Combining Professional Certificates with Teaching

Teachers should combine professional certificates with Tour English teaching. It can not only improve the practicality of the course of Tour English, but also can improve the pass rate for professional certificates. Such certificates are: English Tour Guide Certificate, Tour Leader certificate, Hotel English Certificate, etc.

5. Summary

In short, to improve the teaching effectiveness of tour English vocational institutes needs the effort of schools, teachers and students as well.

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