

On The Teaching Reform of ESP Course: Hotel English

Wei Duan^{1, a}

¹Yinxing Hospitality Management College of CUIT Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China

^a503133677@qq.com

Key Words: Hotel English; ESP Teaching Reform; Task-based Language Teaching Model

Abstract: On the basis of real teaching practice ,this paper puts forward several detailed teaching reform measures to ESP course : Hotel English, in order to improve the English proficiency of students in the hotel world. These measures are: setting up a clear course direction and goal, building “oral task +professional knowledge” teaching model, applying the teaching approach mainly consisting of reproducing+creating hotel senses for the students and guiding them to do self-drilling, implementing “oral+written”final examination measure and putting emphasis on class performance .After realization of these measures, the result shows that these series of teaching reform measures work well and enhance the students’ professional language ability effectively.

1. Introduction

With the quick development of Chinese economy and the tendency of globalization, China becomes more and more popular among the foreign visitors. It is widely believed that in the recent 20 years, Tourism industry in china is about to rise sharply around the world. As a result, the hotel industry is growing in a very fast speed too, which requires that all the staff are strong in language ability, especially strong in English Listening and speaking. In order to meet the needs of the market, build the capacity of competition for the students whose major is hotel management, a lot of efforts should be made to improve the students’ ability of using English in the real hotel working environment in which oral communication with the foreign guests occurs frequently.

So far, the author have been teaching Hotel English for about 5 years in an independent college. During the past 5 years, my colleagues and I have done a lot of teaching experiments and researches, trying to make the course more practical, establish a suitable teaching model to fit both the market’s request and the students, find a best teaching approach, and provide the students a best preparation for their future work.

2. Literature review

Hotel English belongs to ESP courses: English for Specific Purpose. ESP is a movement based on the proposition that all language teaching programs should be tailored to the specific learning and language use needs of identified groups of students. It originated in the 1960s in the west world and became an important part of English as second language teaching in the 1970s and 1980s, probably as a direct result of the introduction of communicative teaching curricula. Its main drive was practical, driven by the increasing numbers of people around the world who needed English for clearly defined reasons. “It is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning.”(Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters: 1987). In an ESP course, learners are trained to use language in certain context; teachers are concerned with designing appropriate courses for various groups of learners. Thus, course design is often a substantial and an important part of ESP teachers' workload. Designing a course is fundamentally a matter of asking questions in order to provide a reasonable basis for the subsequent processes of syllabus design, materials writing, classroom teaching and evaluation. It has been proved by 150 researchers (Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters: 1987) that there are three factors affecting ESP course design. They are language descriptions, theories of learning, and needs analysis.

3. The recent status of Hotel English teaching in China and some related comments

Theories in ESP field have been developed for many years. The idea of ESP has also been introduced to China for years. But it seems that the idea has been neglected in the College English Syllabus. Hotel English course is just classified into vocational education area. However, in recent years, a lot of universities, colleges, independent colleges, vocational senior middle schools set up the course—Hotel English for their students who major in Hotel and Tourism Management, in addition, some private training schools provide similar courses to their trainees according to the market needs, and many hotels arrange professional English training programs to their staff periodically too. To most universities, colleges and schools, the purpose of popularizing this course is to equip the students from the language angle, make them get use to the future hotel work soon. So the emphasis of the course should be put on how to increase the students' English ability in the real hotel working environment. However, questionnaires from HRs of most hotels in China show that many graduate students who have been trained by the course are relatively stronger in using working English than those who haven't been trained, but the majority of them still can't meet the needs of hotel, which requires a better teaching model and course design. Different schools may have different teaching

models, different levels of students, and different teaching results. In a word, the present teaching models and measures of Hotel English in school do not keep up with the market's demand, which can be seen in these ways: Teaching only focus on reading and writing; teaching model is too traditional to be flexible; teaching time is not arranged reasonably; drilling time is limited; teaching contents are too theoretical; single teaching measure can't attract students' interest. Immediate reform should be done to make the course more practical.

4. Teaching reform measures of Hotel English Course in details

4.1 Setting up a clear course goal

A clear course goal is absolutely necessary. Many schools no matter vocational schools, colleges or universities open Hotel English for their students in order to provide the hotel professional talents with practical English ability to qualify the real work. In the hotel world, practical English ability can be communicating with the foreign guests fluently in English, handling the working conversations professionally in the front desk, guest rooms, restaurants etc, dealing with regular English forms, documents and materials proficiently and so on. Under this goal, improving the practical English ability of students should be regarded as the most important thing.

4.2 Building “oral task +professional knowledge” teaching model

Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) that originated in the 1980s is, in fact, a further development of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Both CLT and TBLT are influential approaches in second language teaching nowadays. CLT emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language, while TBLT stresses the importance to combine form-focused teaching with communication-focused teaching, the students can learn and use English positively through finishing tasks with clear and definite goals. It shares the belief that language should be learned as close as possible to how it is used in real life, so it simulates all kinds of activities in our daily life: studying, working, entertaining etc, links language teaching and the learners' future life together, and details social life activities into specific “tasks” that should be completed by the students. Cultivating the students' ability to deal with these “tasks” becomes the teaching purpose of TBLT. On the basis of the course goal of Hotel English, Building “oral task +professional knowledge” teaching model is the realization and development of TBLT in Hotel ESP course practice.

Oral task refers to task-formed oral exercises related to hotel industry, including impromptu oral drillings in class and oral assignments after class. Ordinary oral exercises focus on single language

drilling that can easily make the students feel boring and tired, but task-formed oral exercises are fine designed, closer to the real social life, through which the students are encouraged to accept challenges to enhance language ability actively. Examples are as follows: impromptu oral drillings in class can be role-plays, in which students are divided into several groups. There are two forms. Form one, give every group a situational conversation in English and ask them to memorize it and act it in the way of role play, scores are noted down according to their performance; form two, give every group a working situation in hotel, ask them to make up a conversation under the given situation and requirements, perform it and scores are recorded too. The oral assignments after class vary in different forms, for instance: Divide the students into several groups, give every group a written dialogue in Chinese or a recorded conversation in English, ask the students to translate it from Chinese to English or from English to Chinese, arrange the two editions showing them in PPT, and perform it, videoing or recording the whole process. At last, the teacher can select several works of the students as examples to lead class discussion. Comments, Scores are taken too. Another example: Design a questionnaire to do a survey about the foreign guests' opinions on hotel service in China. The students may finish the interview in groups; try their best to find interviewees who can't be reused. The video or sound record of the interview should be handed in; note-taking of the whole process and reflections are also needed. In the end, class discussion based on the task is necessary; evaluation, comments are collected. Oral tasks like this are drilling-oriented, which can fully develop the students' initiative, increase their confidence in speaking English, and bring a sense of achievement to them. They may even become longing for more tasks.

Professional knowledge indicates the specific knowledge related to hotel industry, including skills of handling commonly seen working conversations in English and industrial information, which may be acquired by the students through studying situational dialogues and reading materials about hotel industry under the guidance of teachers. Conversations are chosen carefully, all come from the real hotel working environments:ture, various, and practical, which may serve as a solid base for the oral tasks, while Reading materials are classified in the light of different departments in hotel, giving detailed introduction to every division. They usually provide information about job obligations, department functions, frequently used English documents and forms etc, which can serve as a perfect supplement for the oral tasks.

In building "oral task +professional knowledge" teaching model, the emphasis should be put on designing oral tasks. Practical, creative and rational oral tasks are needed to stimulate the students' studying interests, so up-to-date improvements are absolutely necessary. However the role of

professional knowledge can't be neglected, we may apply this teaching procedure: “key points explanation+drilling—drilling—key points explanation—drilling” namely, The teacher only explains the key points of professional knowledge to the students, drilling is realized by the students finishing oral tasks, therefore oral tasks are very important. This teaching model stresses the students' participation, gives them more rights and confidence, what's more, guide them to future career success.

4.3 Applying the teaching approach mainly consisting of reproducing+creating hotel senses for the students and guiding them to do self-drilling

This kind of teaching method reflects both the TBLT and oral or situational language teaching approach, shorts for Situational Approach (SA). SA is developed by British applied linguists in the 1930s to the 1960s. It relies on the structural view of language. Both speech and structure were seen to be the basis of language and, especially, speaking ability. This was a view similar to American structuralists, such as Fries. However, the notion of the British applied linguists, such as Firth and Halliday, that structures must be presented in situations in which they could be used, gave Situational Language Teaching its distinctiveness. The concrete teaching process of TBLT+SA can be: Reproducing hotel senses and explaining the real working conversations+ assigning impromptu oral drillings in class(form one)—Creating hotel senses and assigning impromptu oral drillings in class(form two)—explaining the key points of supplementary reading materials about hotel industry—assigning oral tasks as homework.

Going over the whole teaching process, the first two steps are more difficult and important than the last two steps. Because they involved in joining both teaching and students' drilling together. Carrying out teaching according to the classification of department can be one solution. Step one: When teaching, try to imitate real hotel senses for the students by using hi-tech equipments or if possible make full use of The Hotel Working Skill Training Lab, a place offering simulated hotel senses for teaching, give out detailed sense and role description, explain conversations under the given sense, focusing on the professional terms and useful expressions, and then lead the students to role play the conversations which they have learned. Example one : Play a video or sound record of guests' check-in in the front desk for the students; introduce the background and roles; explain the professional terms and useful expressions in the conversation such as: Registration Form, Confirmation Notice, I hope you'll enjoy your stay with us and so on, list the conversation in PPT; replay the video and sound record for several times; let the students be familiar with the conversation; at last, assign impromptu

oral drilling in class (form one) : students act the conversation of guests' check-in in the way of role play, scores are noted down according to their performance. Step two: On the basis of step one, create a simulated hotel sense for the students by using multi-media equipment or The Hotel Working Skill Training Lab; put several roles into the sense; describe the roles and sense in details; fix topic and requirements of the conversation; provide several terms and useful expressions; and ask the students to make up a situational conversation under requests. In order to reproduce and create senses actually, teachers should do a lot of pre-class preparations such as: sorting out different conversations, collecting materials related(videos, sound records and writings), designing senses instructions and role descriptions, distributing drilling time etc.Example two: After the students finishing example1, play a silent video of foreign guests' check-in for the students; explain the background and roles; offer dialogue requirements, professional terms and expressions; and assign impromptu oral drilling in class (form two): ask the students to make up a conversation under the given check-out situation and requirements, dub the video or perform it and scores are recorded.

The last two steps strengthen and supplement the first two steps: explaining the key points of supplementary reading materials about hotel industry can help the guests master the running status of very department in hotel, developing their professional accomplishment; assigning oral tasks as homework, adding various forms of oral drilling can raise the students' interests and enhance their communicative ability in English.

4.4 Implementing “oral written” final examination measure and putting emphasis on class performance

According to the course goal and teaching character of Hotel English, the final examination should focus on oral test, trying to see the professional oral skills of students. Written test serves as assistance aiming at examining students' familiarity of professional knowledge. Some sample subjects in oral test: Dialogue Making (role-play), Professional Terms Explanation, Situational Questions, and Topic Statement. All the subjects should be finished by the students without preparation. Subjects for reference in written test: Term Translation, Reading Comprehension about hotel industry, Dialogue Completing, Gap filling for English Forms. The proportion of oral and written test can be seven to three. In addition, putting emphasis on class performance and converting it into the final score is necessary.

5. Conclusion

The teaching of Hotel English must fit the whole industry, embody ESP course feature: Under the guidance of practice, providing hotels with practical talents should be regarded as the course goal. A lot of facts tell us that the teaching reform measures mentioned above are very effective. They make the class colorful and improve the students' professional language ability unconsciously.

References

- [1] Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters. *ESP A learning - centered approach* Cambridge University Press (1987).
- [2] *ESP Essential Language Teaching Series*. Macmillan Publishers Ltd. *ESP in Perspective*: 1984. JoMcDonough (1984).
- [3] Bachman, L. "Some Reflections on Task-based Language Performance Assessment." *Language Testing* 19(2002): 453-476.
- [4] Chen, Hui. "An Analysis on the Present Situation of High-ranking Hotel Employees' Foreign Language Service Level in Changsha and Its Coping Strategy." *Knowledge Economy* 16(2018):67-68.
- [5] Chen, Chen. "The Application of Task-based Teaching in the Intensive Reading Class of College English." *The Science Education Article Collects* 12(2017): 159-160.
- [6] Ellis, Rod. *Planning and Task Performance in A Second Language*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: JohnBenjamins Publishing Company, (2005).