

A Study on the Course Design of English for Urban Rail Transit in Independent Colleges from the Theory of ESP—Take the Order Class in Southwest Jiaotong University Hope College as an Example

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Abstract. English for Urban Rail Transit is an important course for undergraduate students from the Order Class of the major Urban Rail Transit in Southwest Jiaotong University Hope College. This course cultivates students' skills in dealing with subway work by using English so students can meet the job requirements of attendant and prepare for their future job in Chengdu Subway Station as an attendant after graduation. Guided by the theory in ESP, this paper explores the course design of English for Urban Rail Transit from the analysis on course requirements, syllabus design, teaching design, textbook design and teaching evaluation. The whole teaching process is requirement-oriented and students-focused so as to cultivate students' skills and improve the teaching quality of this course.

Introduction to ESP

ESP, namely, English for Special Purpose, refers to English related to particular vocations and subjects and is offered according to the specific goals and learners' needs, such as Technical English, Medical English, Foreign Trade English, Academic English, etc. ESP aims to cultivate students' communication skills using English in work. In 1987, English linguists Hutchinson and Waters had an in-depth discussion on the theory of ESP in the book *English for Special Purpose*. Soon ESP became one of the most popular areas in the study on second language teaching. Hutchinson & Waters believed that ESP is the language teaching and learning idea based on learners' needs. Learners' learning needs determine the learning content and learning methods. Strevens (1998) proposed four fundamental characteristics of the definition of ESP: 1. Course setting should meet learners' needs; 2. Teaching contents should be related to specific subjects and professions; 3. Vocabulary, syntax and discourse structure should be put into the language use in activities related to a specific occupation or profession; 4. ESP is in contrast to English for General Purpose (EGP).

The study on ESP courses overseas started from the 1960s and went through five stages, namely register analysis, rhetoric and discourse analysis, target situation analysis, learning skills analysis and learning-centeredness. The study on ESP course in China began from 1980s with emphasis on teaching theories and teaching practice. At the beginning of this century, the research and practice of ESP in China had developed rapidly, but the promotion of ESP was weak. ESP teaching was often carried out within departments, and ESP teachings were not closely associated to basic English teaching. Teachers also focused on building specialized vocabulary and terminology, failing to cultivating students' language communication skill and writing skill. Therefore, there have been many difficulties and challenges in ESP teaching and practice.

The Course Design Based on ESP

Basturkmen (2006) believes that ESP teachers should carefully consider the following questions: what should be taught in this course? Should it be based on wide-angle teaching or narrow-angle teaching? How is the course taught? Is it based on integrated or analytical teaching? How is the

course designed? Should it be based on traditional learning theory or language for special purposes? Should it be based on text paradigm or cultural communication between different subjects?

Huthinson & Waters (1987) defined ESP course design as: “basically, designing a course is to ask a series of questions in order to provide a theoretical basis for future syllabus design, textbook preparation, classroom teaching and evaluation.” The steps of English course design they summarized are: requirement analysis—teaching objectives—teaching devises—teaching syllabus—teaching methods—teaching evaluation. In the ESP theory course design summarized by Huthinson & Waters, the six parts are closely connected. Jordan (1997) also summarized the steps of ESP course design as follows: requirement analysis — teaching objectives — teaching methods — teaching syllabus—teaching methods—teaching evaluation.

Furey(1984) put forward four factors needed to be considered in course setting: 1. whether it has theoretical basis; 2. whether it meets the needs of students; 3. whether there are conditions for the implementation; 4. whether the teaching can be evaluated. These four factors provide reference for ESP course design. Wang Lijuan (2016) believes that the ESP course design in colleges should consider the four factors put forward by Furey comprehensively while combining their own conditions.

Based on the theories mentioned above, the author will design the course—English for Urban Rail Transit from course requirement, syllabus design, teaching design, textbook design and teaching evaluation.

The Course Design of English for Urban Rail Transit Based on ESP

The contents of ESP courses will involve specialized texts, which are objectivity-oriented and highly knowledgeable. Students are likely to lack interest while learning the course. Therefore, course design should be “learner-centered” to help students transition from language-based English learning to major-based English learning. Meanwhile, teaching methods should be diversified, focusing on cultivating students’ ability in language use, boosting students’ learning enthusiasm and improving the efficiency of classroom teaching.

Introduction to English for Urban Rail Transit

As one branch of ESP, English for Urban Rail Transit is an important professional course for the students from the Chengdu Subway order class (graduates will become Chengdu subway station attendants) in Southwest Jiaotong University Hope College. Driven by work requirements and centered on learners, this course delivers basic knowledge of professional English for urban rail transit, knowledge of subway station attendants, reading and translation, skills of English articles in urban rail transit. This course aims to improve students’ ability in listening and speaking of professional English. Students will work in Chengdu Subway Corporation as station attendants after graduation, including posts of ticket clerks, patrolling and attendants on the platform. This course has the following characteristics: 1. Teaching design is based on the ability and requirements of the post; 2. The teaching contents are closely related to the tasks of subway station attendants; 3. The language learning centers on the English used by subway station attendants; 4. Teaching requires students to effectively combine professional skills with English knowledge. Therefore, this course is highly practical.

Analysis on the Course Requirement

Teachers for teaching ESP courses must clearly understand learners’ learning requirement so as to organize teaching and optimize teaching and learning efficiency. It can be said that the success of ESP teaching depends on whether the course can be successfully designed, which is based on detailed and careful analysis on the requirement of the course and students. To design the course under the guidance of ESP theory, the author investigated the work of attendants in Chengdu Subway and language skills needed for the work and categorized different learning situations based on the professional competence required by the post of attendants. The learning situations are as follows:

Posts	Tasks	Professional Skills	Learning Situations
Ticket Clerks	ticket services: selling tickets, money changing, checking tickets, solving disputes related to tickets	Being familiar with the use of ticket machine and recharge machine; guiding passengers to purchase tickets in English; being able to introduce how to operate the ticket machine in English; guiding passengers in and out of the station in English and checking tickets; and being able to solve disputes between passengers and ticket affairs in English.	1. Guiding passengers to purchase tickets; 2. Being familiar with the use of recharge machine 3. Being able to sell tickets. 4. Recharging, loss-reporting, refunding and paying upon arrival, 5. Checking tickets. 6. Guiding passengers in and out of the station. 7. Handling situations when passengers cannot enter and leave the station normally. 8. Handling problem tickets 9. Handling passenger complaints
patrolling	making an inspecting tour to make sure the station facilities are working, answering passenger inquiries,	Being familiar with the use of ticket machine and recharge machine, showing passengers how to use the station facilities and how to purchase tickets in English, dealing with emergencies in the station in English	1. answering passengers' inquires, 2. monitoring the status of passengers getting on and off the train, 3. dealing with the emergencies in train arrival and train departure, 4. introducing how to use the platform facilities
attendants on the platform	answering passengers' inquiries, guiding security check and dealing with emergencies	Having a strong mental quality, having a knowledge of job skills of station attendants on the platform, having good social etiquette, guiding passengers to ride and transfer in English, being familiar with train routes, being able to introduce the route in English, understanding passenger's intentions, handling platform affairs in English, providing services to passengers in need of help in English, being familiar with security procedures, guiding passengers through security check in English; dealing with platform emergencies in English	1. guiding passengers in and out of the station on the platform, 2. asking the directions of the train, 3. asking the interval times, 4. asking the time of the first train and last train, 5. asking the times of train arrival and train departure, 6. inquiring routes and transfer routes, 7. dealing with situations when passengers lose their belongings, 8. dealing with situations when passengers have sudden illness, 9. helping the old, weak, sick and disabled passengers, 10. routine security check, 11. handling the incident when passengers take the pets onboard, 12. helping passengers to evacuate in case of emergency, 13. dealing with situations when the train is out of service due to malfunctions

The Syllabus Design of the Course

Richard believes that several questions should be answered when designing syllabus: 1. For whom is the course designed? 2. What is the content of the course? What kind of teaching and learning is going to happen in the course? Therefore, the author's answers are as follows: 1. English for Urban Rail Transit is offered for students from Chengdu Subway order class; 2. The teaching content of this course involves professional knowledge in urban rail transit and English language knowledge; 3. This course is led by the teacher with learners as the main body. According to different situations, students can improve their professional knowledge and English skills on the basis of completing different tasks.

The Teaching Design of the Course

The Teaching Objectives.

The teaching objectives of English for Urban Rail Transit in Chengdu Subway order class are as follows: mastering the knowledge of English for Urban Rail Transit and the related professional

knowledge, being familiar with the work of station attendants, using English proficiently to handle the post of ticket clerks, patrolling, attendants on the platform, acquiring the basic skills of English listening, speaking, reading and writing, being able to understand English documents and articles related to Urban Rail Transit, being able to serve foreign tourists in Chengdu subway station and communicate effectively with foreigners, having good cooperation and coordination skills, having a strong sense of responsibility and effectively improving work competence.

The Teaching Methods.

In terms of teaching methods used in ESP courses, teachers should pay attention to cultivating students' communication skill. According to the teaching objectives of English for Urban Rail Transit and the requirement of station attendants, this course adopts task-based teaching method and situational teaching method. According to the job descriptions of different posts of Chengdu subway station, the teacher integrates the knowledge of English for Urban Rail Transit that students need to acquire with different work scenarios, and then asks the students to cooperate to complete the tasks of role playing. In the process of completing the tasks, students can learn English and professional knowledge, deepen their understanding of the posts, cultivate the ability of teamwork, communication and coordination skills, and lay a good foundation for the future job.

The Teaching Modes.

In teaching English for Urban Rail Transit, teachers no longer blindly instill students with traditional knowledge, but design the teaching situation according to the job descriptions, job skills and actual situations station attendants will meet, so that students can actively absorb knowledge, discuss, summarize and apply them. The specific teaching modes are: 1.introducing the background information; 2.summarizing the theory and assigning tasks; 3.inplementing the tasks; 4. Evaluation.

In the first mode, the teacher provides relevant background knowledge, helping students understand the main content and learning tasks, and shows real cases related to the work. Then the teacher puts forward relevant knowledge points and skills. After being exposed to those real cases, students can have group discussions so as to have a deeper understanding of the jobs station attendants do. In the second mode, the teacher summarizes the knowledge and skills that are required by the job, assign tasks, explain the task requirements, and provides learning resources. Then students practice so as to acquire the professional knowledge and job skills. 3. In the third mode, the teacher designs the work scenes, guides the student to carry out the plan and implement the task. Then students cooperate with each other and complete the tasks according to the plan. While implementing the tasks, students can form their own experience and cognition of the job. Finally, the teacher evaluates the tasks completed by students, and guides students to reflect. By reflecting on the tasks, students can consolidate their knowledge they have learned and enhance their abilities.

The Design of the Textbook

In order to ensure the authenticity of teaching English for Urban Rail Transit in Chengdu Subway order class, the teaching materials are self-compiled by the teachers teaching this course. The school authorities have facilitated the cooperation between the Department of Urban Rail Transit and the Chengdu Subway Cooperation. The teaching team of this course has been established. The team has also started to accumulate the corpus related to the industry and study it, making it a practical textbook. Experts have also given much guidance to the textbook. The textbook of this course can fully reflect the idea of course design and follows the job requirements. The content is close to real life scenes, and the reading materials involve the latest technologies in the field of urban rail transit. In addition, the textbook also pays attention to the cultivation of students' communication, reading and translation skills.

The Teaching Evaluation of the Course

When the teaching comes to an end, it is essential to evaluate whether teaching objectives are achieved, to measure the gap between the teaching efficiency and the expected objectives, and to

analyze the reasons for the gap and provide the solutions. Therefore, the quality of teaching in this course can be improved. Combined with the characteristics of English for Urban Rail Transit, the evaluation of this course adopts the “summative evaluation” and “formative evaluation”, which give priority to students’ learning process. Summative evaluation, accounting for 40% of the final exam, is evaluating students’ learning results after learning this course and assessing the teaching quality and students’ level by test scores. Formative assessment consists of two parts. The first part includes class discussion and task performance, accounting for 30% of the final exam. The second part is “real mission simulation”, which requires students to simulate real work situations in teamwork. This part constitutes 30% of the final exam. The teacher grades the students by their use of English, oral expression, and ways of solving the problems. This not only helps students focus on the process of learning, but improve their practical skill and communication skill.

Conclusion

The course design of English for Urban Rail Transit based on the theory of the ESP changes the traditional mode of simply delivering English knowledge. Taking learner as the center, it designs teaching situations according to students’ levels, the job requirements and skills needed for the station attendants in Chengdu Subway. The course design aims to improve the quality of teaching and students’ professional English level. Teachers for this course will continue to improve teaching methods and evaluation, contributing to the construction and development of this course.

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