

Research on the Teaching Model of Comprehensive English for Preschool Education Major in Higher Vocational Colleges Based on English for Specific Purposes

Yihui Zeng^{1,*}

¹ Institute of Foreign Language and Tourism, Quanzhou Preschool Education College, Quanzhou, Fujian 362000, China

*Corresponding author. Email: 423213991@qq.com

ABSTRACT

Following the teaching philosophy of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), this paper makes clear ESP teaching goal of training qualified preschool bilingual teachers, enriches ESP teaching content that integrates language knowledge and vocational skills, innovates ESP teaching methods that highlight students' dominant position, and launches ESP evaluation system combining the professional characteristics of preschool teachers to discuss the application of ESP teaching model in "Comprehensive English" for preschool education major in higher vocational colleges. The above practice is conducted in a bid to better the teaching quality and effect of the course, thus cultivating more qualified preschool bilingual teachers that meet the needs of the society.

Keywords: *English for Specific Purposes (ESP) theory, Teaching model, Higher vocational college, Comprehensive English for preschool education major.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The booming preschool education and English learning at younger age in China prompt preschool bilingual education a public focus. Activities concerning preschool bilingual education are carried out in full swing all over the country, making the cultivation of qualified preschool bilingual teachers a top priority. Comprehensive English for preschool education major in higher vocational colleges, a distinctive professional English course, is supposed to satisfy students' demand in English learning, and impart teaching skills for preschool English teaching. Only in this way the goal to integrate English teaching and the characteristics of preschool education industry can be realized, better serving students and training eligible preschool bilingual teachers for the society. The existing traditional teaching model for Comprehensive English for preschool education

major in higher vocational colleges can no longer meet the requirements in English knowledge and vocational skills needed by future positions. As a result, how to strengthen Comprehensive English for preschool education major, improve teaching quality and teaching effect, and foster more qualified preschool bilingual teachers has become an urgent issue for English teachers at all levels. The author holds that the transformation of traditional English teaching mode, coupled with the construction of ESP-based teaching model for Comprehensive English for preschool education major in higher vocational colleges, contributes to the establishment of new and effective teaching model, which is also of practical significance to cultivate qualified preschool bilingual teachers who can meet the demand of the society in the new era.

*Fund: This paper is the 2016 Young and Middle-aged Teachers Research Project in Fujian Province (Special Research Project of Foreign Language Teaching Reform in Colleges and Universities) (JZ160050).

2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE TEACHING PHILOSOPHY OF ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (ESP)

English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which emerged in the early 1960s, was defined by Hutchinson & Waters as "an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning." [1] It was proposed to distinguish it from English for General Purposes (EGP). The former, related to a specific occupation or discipline, is an English course set up based on learners' specific learning purposes and actual needs, aiming to cultivate and improve learners' English language application ability in their professional fields, such as Business English, Tourism English, Preschool English, Architectural English, etc. ESP-based English teaching sets up teaching content based on the actual needs of learners, integrating what they learned with their occupation. Appropriate teaching methods are applied, the learner is viewed as focus, and specific teaching objectives are established. The teaching philosophy of ESP is to combine occupation with English, highlighting professionalism and practicality, and emphasizing the promotion of learning by use, the application of knowledge, the combination of learning, which coincides with the characteristics and purposes of higher vocational education.

Comprehensive English for preschool education major in higher vocational colleges is a professional English course combining preschool education major and public English, which is interdisciplinary and practical. The reasonable application of ESP teaching concept in actual teaching process and the construction of a teaching model that covers English and preschool characteristics facilitate the integration of English theoretical knowledge and preschool professional skills, and make such insight running through the whole teaching process. The move will greatly better the quality and effect of teaching and cultivate more qualified preschool bilingual teachers that satisfy the society.

3. CONSTRUCTION OF ESP-BASED TEACHING MODEL OF COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH FOR PRESCHOOL EDUCATION MAJOR IN HIGHER VOCATIONAL COLLEGES

ESP teaching, an inevitable direction of China's higher vocational education reform and development, emphasizes students' dominant position, and takes vocational ability as focus. The main guideline of vocational ability and professional quality is followed to highlight the cultivation of students' English language ability. Given the status quo of Comprehensive English teaching for preschool education major in higher vocational colleges and the characteristics of ESP teaching model, the latter is introduced into the former for teaching reform, thus developing English teaching model featuring preschool education in higher vocational colleges.

3.1 ESP Teaching Goal Is Made Clear to Train Qualified Preschool Bilingual Teachers

According to *Basic Requirements for Teaching English Courses in Higher Vocational Education*, "Higher vocational education cultivates professional personnel in the fields of technology, production, management and service. English courses are supposed to impart students with solid language foundation, as well as the ability to apply language, especially the one to deal with daily and foreign business activities with English." [2] Therefore, the goal of English teaching in higher vocational colleges should emphasize the cultivation of talents, fostering students' English application ability in occupation, and reflecting their professionalism and practicability. The smooth operation of the course cannot be realized without clear teaching goals, which is the starting point and destination of classroom teaching. Besides, teaching goals affect the determination of key and difficult points, the organization of teaching content and the choice of teaching methods to a certain extent. [3] ESP-based English courses are actually the ones that focus on specific occupations and majors, serving as a bridge to promote the connection between students' major and future career. As a result, the insight that English learning serves major and career should be reflected in teaching goals, that is, to cultivate students' English application ability in specific

professional fields, which is exactly in line with the purpose of higher vocational colleges. Only by clarifying ESP teaching goals and offering more targeted English courses based on students' career demands can English teaching goals in higher vocational colleges be realized.

In terms of talent training orientation, *Comprehensive English for Preschool Education Major*, a professional course featuring theory and practice in Quanzhou Preschool Education College, takes into account local economic development, industrial demands and students' employment needs, as well as the characteristics of the major, thus establishing the talent training goals that serve both the local economy and the college. Preschool education major (covering English) is supposed to cultivate technicians with all-around development of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetics and labor education who can be engaged in child education and management at the front line of preschool education for kindergartens, nurseries and other preschool education institutions. As for professional knowledge, they should master modern ideas and methods on preschool education, the cultural knowledge and professional knowledge required for child care, education and management, as well as the essential professional skills of "speaking, writing, playing, teaching, singing, dancing and drawing" [4]. Regarding knowledge of other subjects, English, work ethic, awareness of inheriting traditional culture, innovation and entrepreneurship consciousness, and the spirit of reflection are also required. Considering such talent training goals, the teaching goals of *Comprehensive English for Preschool Education Major*, the core course of the major, is set to provide solid foundation of English professional knowledge and basic skills of preschool English teaching needed for preschool bilingual teachers.

The traditional teaching model of *Comprehensive English for Preschool Education Major* is still limited to the simple impart of language knowledge and skills, emphasizing students' test-taking ability over "employment-oriented" principle. The training of students' basic skills in preschool English teaching has not received due attention, resulting in the mismatch between the students cultivated and the basic requirements of most employers for qualified preschool bilingual teachers. Therefore, ESP-oriented English teaching must follow students' actual requirements, clarify specific direction and goals of English learning based on reality, and design teaching syllabus and teaching content that

is more scientific, reasonable and normative for *Comprehensive English for Preschool Education Major*. After comprehensive and systematic learning and training, students are equipped with basic knowledge of English, strong practice ability, vocational ability, comprehensive quality and career sustainable development ability. Students then can successfully complete preschool English teaching and English education research in future work, and become qualified preschool bilingual teachers that meet the requirements of personal development, social development and regional economic development.

3.2 ESP Teaching Content Is Enriched to Integrate Language Knowledge and Vocational Skills

ESP teaching content, an important classroom teaching resource, serves as a carrier for teachers to impart knowledge and skills to students. The feasibility of ESP teaching model can be realized and the quality of English teaching can be improved only when ESP teaching content suitable for various majors in higher vocational colleges is researched and explored. *Comprehensive English for Preschool Education Major* in Quanzhou Preschool Education College is a vivid example. In order to select and develop appropriate content, the college first investigated social market demand for preschool bilingual teachers, and then took into account students' individual needs and the requirements of preschool education to prepare for students' future career. The integration of English learning and vocational skills training in preschool education ensures the symbiosis between teaching content and talent training goals, and the professionalism, pertinence and practicality are also emphasized, thus making ESP teaching more practical and modern.

First, the smooth launch of ESP courses cannot be separated from ESP materials that fully reflect the characteristics of higher vocational education. Given the talent training goals of preschool education major and students' learning situation, the series of *Comprehensive Preschool English Course* published by Fudan University Press was selected. The content of the textbook is comprehensive and diversified, which effectively integrates the knowledge of English education and preschool education. The five major areas of preschool education, health, language, society, science and art, are selected as the themes. In addition to the training of such basic language skills as English

listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, students' preschool vocational skills including English speaking, singing, playing, acting are also covered. Students' English language knowledge learning can be satisfied, preschool education professional knowledge can be expanded, and the development of vocational skills in preschool education can be promoted. In addition to the cohesion between ESP and EGP reasonably using existing ESP curriculum, ESP theory should also be utilized. According to students' foundation and actual demand, and the development of China's preschool education, existing ESP teaching content is optimized, school-based materials that highlight professional characteristics are developed and constantly improved and innovated in practice. English teachers of the course group and veteran kindergarten teachers have fully considered students' situation and practical needs, developed school-based textbook *Training Guide Manual of Preschool Comprehensive English* featuring preschool teachers through school-enterprise cooperation combined with the development trend of the industry, which has enriched the ESP teaching content. Real and interesting materials and practical and simple language are employed in this textbook to integrate children's English songs, children's English stories, children's English games into daily simulation teaching. The teaching of basic English language knowledge and the training of vocational skills in preschool education can be organically combined. Students' vocational ability can be enhanced in language learning, and the mechanical and boring nature of pure language learning can be remedied, which is helpful to improve students' learning attitude, stimulate their interest in learning, improve their learning efficiency and meet their needs for professional development. Finally, the enrichment of ESP teaching content must not be limited to the use and development of traditional, single textbook, modern multimedia technology must be used for digital attempt to achieve online and offline comprehensive three-dimensional development of supporting teaching resources. Modern multimedia and information technology provide massive online resources for education and teaching. Teachers should integrate all kinds of high-quality teaching resources, take the opportunity of curriculum reform, strengthen the construction of granulated resources, promote the sharing of micro-courses, MOOCs, network teaching platforms, so that students can break the limitations of time and space, learn anytime and anywhere and interact online and offline. The digital and three-

dimensional ESP teaching resource platform runs through the teaching process in an all-round and multi-level way through the diversification in form and the complementary in content. This stimulates students' initiative and enthusiasm in learning, keeps their knowledge systems up-to-date and keeps them interested in the ESP content.

3.3 ESP Teaching Methods Are Innovated to Highlight Students' Dominant Position

Classroom teaching, a basic form of English teaching in higher vocational colleges, directly determines students' mastery of the language. [5] It is always an important task for English teachers in higher vocational colleges to find efficient teaching methods. Traditional EGP teaching method which is too simple and boring is dominated by teacher's theory teaching, neglecting the actual needs of students. As a result, active and effective thinking and participation lack, making students the passive recipient of the knowledge, and leading to unsatisfactory teaching effect. According to the above definition of ESP, ESP teaching concept emphasizes that students' learning needs determine all the teaching content and teaching methods, that is, it is student-centered and highlights the principal position of students. The teaching goal based on the actual needs of students determines that ESP teaching must take students as the main body and organize and conduct colorful classroom teaching activities. ESP teaching itself is vivid, innovative and interesting, and innovation is the key to it. Only by constantly innovating ESP teaching methods and making the classroom lively, active and interesting can teachers effectively stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning, improve their initiative, and then cultivate their English application and practice ability. However, the implementation of innovative ESP teaching methods is not as simple as it sounds. On the basis of studying and analyzing the original teaching methods, English teachers in higher vocational colleges should have the courage to make new teaching attempts and continuous improvement in combination with students' professional characteristics, learning needs and interests.

First, the course should be combined with professional characteristics in the classroom teaching process to increase interest. ESP emphasizes the organic integration of language acquisition and professional learning. Therefore, Comprehensive English teaching for preschool

education major should be based on students' future job, adopt rich and vivid classroom teaching forms combined with their learning characteristics, in a bid to integrate English theoretical knowledge learning and preschool skills training, laying solid foundation for students to engage in preschool English teaching. For example, when teaching pronunciation and intonation, teachers can combine related English chant, English children's song and tongue twisters to let students sing, so as to cultivate a more standard and authentic accent and language sense. Teachers can design flexible classroom teaching activities based on text theme when teaching, guide students to write English pantomime or children's English stories for role-play, and let students write handwritten newspaper, make cards, make teaching aids, etc., to cultivate their creativity, imagination, hands-on ability and teamwork ability. Such ESP teaching activities are student-centered and focus on the cultivation of ability, which not only improves the richness, interest and practicality of the course, but also enables students to expand their vision of preschool major and directly feel the use of English in the process of using English to complete tasks related to preschool major. In teaching process, students give full play to their subjective initiative, actively participate in classroom interaction, conduct a lot of repeated language practice independently, realize the transition from "I am forced to learn" to "I want to learn", apply what they learn, and completely change the unfavorable situation that they cannot learn well and do not want to learn.

Secondly, this course combines online and offline teaching to permeate ESP learning in workplace and develop students' vocational skills. One of the main features of ESP teaching theory is the authentic tasks, which is also the soul of ESP teaching theory. [6] Therefore, based on the concept of ESP, English teaching of higher vocational colleges should be career oriented, design the teaching situation based on real work tasks to introduce workplace into class, ask students to simulate real career situation, then develop the integrated use of English language ability, and strengthen their ability to engage in preschool English teaching. Thanks to the booming network information, ESP teaching can make full use of modern information technology, combine the advantages of traditional classroom teaching and digital and network learning, highlight the dominant position of students, give play to the guiding role of teachers, enrich teaching methods and improve the teaching effect. Taking the

simulated teaching of children's English stories, one of the tasks of preschool English teaching skills training in the English language application module of the five fields of preschool education, as an example, the organization form of "golden lesson" teaching activities integrating online and offline is designed. First, the teacher designed the pre-class task micro-video in advance, and assigned the homework online in advance to ask the students to preview, so as to guide the students to get familiar with the story content and find the relevant information. Secondly, teaching micro-videos can be played offline and explained in detail in combination with courseware, so that students can understand the general idea of the story, imitate the audio, and read the story aloud. At this time, teachers should also timely guide and correct the pronunciation and intonation of students when reading the story. Then, the teacher continued to play the relevant case teaching micro videos offline. On the one hand, the teaching case was supplemented and explained in combination with the video content; on the other hand, students were guided to conduct an exploratory discussion of the case, and students were reminded to collect suggestions during the process of answering questions and solving problems for students. Finally, the students carried out group cooperation and children's English story simulation teaching training according to the revised opinions. In addition, expanded micro-video learning resources related to the subject can be added online, such as "How to Tell a Story?" Such after-class micro-video learning materials allow students to expand their learning and strengthen the learning effect. The online and offline dual-class teaching is helpful to guide students to think about how to design English teaching activities for children, and combine in-class demonstration and after-class practice, so that they can master the preschool English teaching skills while learning English professional knowledge.

The innovative ESP teaching method changes the traditional teaching mode centered on "teaching" by teachers, and constructs a learning mode centered on "doing" by students, which highlights the dominant position of students. Students are encouraged to "learn by doing", "listen by doing", "look by doing" and "talk by doing", improving their initiative and enthusiasm in learning. They can finally acquire professional English knowledge and vocational ability, so that talents trained by higher vocational education can better meet the market demand.

3.4 ESP Evaluation System Is Launched by Combining the Professional Characteristics of Preschool Teachers

Due to the long-term copying of traditional English teaching model, Comprehensive English for preschool education major in higher vocational colleges lacks characteristics, failing to launch a scientific and reasonable evaluation system. Traditional college English assessment enjoys single criteria and simple form. The content of the examination is mostly related to the key knowledge of the textbook, but almost has nothing to do with the students' future job. In this mode, teachers usually give students a given range and students memorize by rote, ignoring the cultivation of students' ability and reducing their initiative and enthusiasm in learning. Therefore, only by improving the single evaluation mechanism and

building a scientific and reasonable ESP evaluation system can teachers realize the effective implementation of ESP teaching and improve the teaching quality. The diverse demands for English proficiency by different majors and industries require ESP evaluation system and ESP proficiency test based on majors and industries. [7] ESP teaching emphasizes the characteristics of the industry and focuses on integrating professional knowledge into language learning. The evaluation system should pay more attention to the comprehensive ability of language use that students need to master for the future job. Taking Comprehensive English for Preschool Education Major as an example, the construction of ESP evaluation system should combine the characteristics of preschool teachers, pay equal attention to oral and written tests, and organically combine the formative assessment with the final assessment. (See "Figure 1")

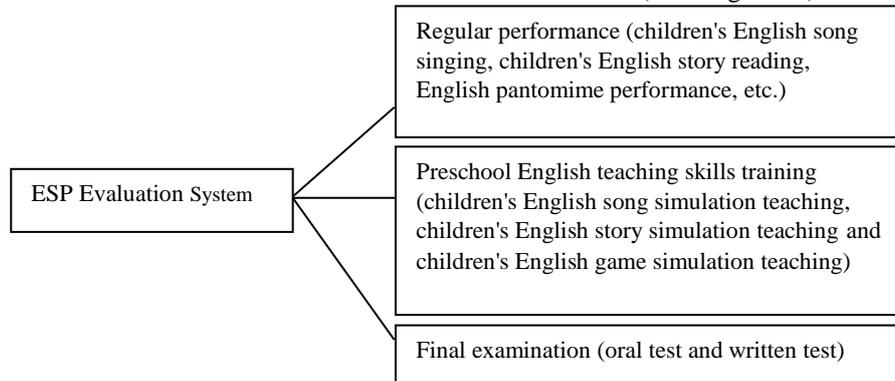


Figure 1 ESP Evaluation System.

"Figure 1" reveals that the evaluation method of "preschool English teaching skills training" has been incorporated into the ESP evaluation system, which combines the characteristics of preschool teachers and highlights the principle of "practicality" of ESP English. The training of preschool English teaching skills enables students to apply theory to practice, transform their own roles, and gradually strengthen their professional ability to engage in preschool English teaching. Children's English song singing, children's English story reading, English pantomime performance, etc. have also been included in regular performance, further highlighting industry characteristics. As for the evaluation of regular performance, students' self-evaluation, peer evaluation, group evaluation and teacher evaluation are adopted, focusing on students' usual comprehensive performance and the cultivation of students' professional ability. The final exam is composed of two parts: oral test and

written test. The former focuses on the relevance of preschool English teaching content and mainly examines students' oral expression, while the latter focuses on English professional basic knowledge, mainly examining students' ability to apply English knowledge. In a word, the ESP evaluation system combines online and offline results, adopts "diversified evaluation, formative assessment, and final assessment", and realizes the integrated assessment of "attitude, theory and skills". Students' mastery of English knowledge and their ability to use knowledge are both reviewed, which evaluates students' English comprehensive ability and professional skill more scientific and reasonably, making the results more real, objective and comprehensive to reflect their professional ability. In this way, the overall development of students can be promoted, improving the quality of professional talent training.

4. CONCLUSION

ESP-based teaching model for Comprehensive English for preschool education major in higher vocational colleges focuses on students' learning needs and job requirements, and highlights students' dominant position. In addition, this model takes into account the characteristics of vocational ability and the organic combination of English education and preschool education. By clarifying ESP teaching goals, enriching ESP teaching content, innovating ESP teaching method, constructing ESP evaluation system, students' interest and enthusiasm in learning are stimulated, thus improving teaching quality and effect. Practice proves that such model greatly improves students' English application ability and preschool English teaching skills, and satisfies the demand of the current job market for preschool bilingual teachers, cultivating more excellent preschool bilingual teachers. However, the process of combining ESP theory with teaching practice still has flaws, such as unfavorable cultivation of ESP teachers and poor experience of teachers, which requires further exploration. Perseverance, exploration, coupled with focus on the characteristics of the college and the needs of major and curriculum, are must for an innovative road for Comprehensive English for preschool education major in higher vocational colleges.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper is independently completed by Yihui Zeng.

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