

Reform of Education Mode for Higher Vocational Business English under College-enterprise Cooperation System

Yanhong Du

Guangzhou Vocational College of Science and Technology, Guangzhou, Guangdong, China

ABSTRACT: Due to its numerous drawbacks, graduates educated under the current higher vocational business English system find it hard to meet the demands of social and economic development nowadays. As a result, it is imperative for us to exercise a transformation to make current vocational education system service-centered and occupation-oriented. This thesis, from the perspective of college-enterprise development and issues in current business English teaching practice, centers on exploration of the new ideas, content and significance of cooperative modes, trying to direct towards the innovation and transformation of business English teaching so as to educate application-oriented talents qualified for social needs.

KEYWORDS: College-enterprise cooperation; higher vocational business English; application-oriented education

1 INTRODUCTION

With the fast development of economic globalization, there is a rapid growth in the social demand for versatile and application-oriented graduates who are both proficient in English and experienced in business activities. Under this circumstance, quite many vocational colleges in our country have set up a series of programs related to business English since then. Higher vocational and technical education, born to run on the principle that high-skilled professionals are supposed to be trained in line with the practice of production, construction, service and management demanded in front-line work, has therefore become an “essential force for training high-skilled talents”.(Mycos 2013) The 2002 *State Council's Decision on the Rapid Development of Vocational Education* prompted that efforts should be made to push forward “the new education mode that focused on the cooperation of college and enterprise and the combination of work and learning”.(Ministry of Education 2005) Ministry of education, in 2011, gave in its *Several Opinions* a clear requirement of “advancing the educational reform of work-learning combination, college-enterprise cooperation and post practice” .(Baidu 2011) All these statements play an important role in guiding higher vocational and technical colleges to upgrade and revise their training modes in business English.

The form of school-enterprise cooperation dates back as early as to the German Dual System in the 19th century, by which schools worked hand in hand with enterprises to train people tailored to the latter's real needs in workshops. In 1906, Herman Shneider from America, for the first time, carried out the work-learning mode in Cincinnati University, initializing later growth in modern school-enterprise cooperation system. In 1985, Shanghai University of Engineering and Technology and Waterloo University worked together to pioneer this mode in the form of work-learning substitution within certain intervals in China. In recent years, a lot of domestic vocational colleges have been directing their efforts to this practice and have achieved a lot too. Based on such researches done at home and abroad, this mode was widely adopted in foreign vocational education system long time ago; it has bore some fruits in engineering education in China. However, little has been achieved in liberal arts programs, especially in language teaching and learning researches, leaving us with a not-so-great result that “college-enterprise cooperation has not yet gone as deep and far as it should have reached”. (Xiao 2012) As far as this is concerned, it's a great challenge for higher vocational colleges to deepen their research and practice in this education mode in accordance with real situations of local economy and colleges themselves.

Driven by the global economic development, the business English programs of domestic vocational

colleges have advanced a lot. Since their graduates are educated directly to meet professional requirements and job skills used in different fields, corresponding teaching plans are adopted. However, there exists a huge gap between teaching activities and job requirements, so does a gap between graduates' mastery of specialized knowledge and job skills, leading to a big failure in meeting social needs for high-skilled and application-oriented people. As a result, it is necessary for higher vocational colleges to put first teaching reform that demands a perfect balance between work experience and teaching activities.

2 PROBLEMS

The old educational system with a short history, derived from previous planned economy, has imposed enormous difficulties and problems on the development of college-enterprise cooperation system, bringing down the expectation that the cooperative system should cultivate application-oriented people effectively. Here comes the most terrible phenomenon that the traditional system pay more attention to theory rather than practice, including the severe lack of practice, more on the explanation and memory of theory and knowledge, less on the drills of students' real abilities and comprehensive qualifications, classroom teaching out of actual business environment, green-hand teachers with little business experience shortly after their graduation, and one-sided measurement of test results as students' major standard for excellence and qualification. Thus this traditional and inflexible teaching and assessing mode forces students to focus their efforts on words and grammar rules instead of practice, producing lots of graduates who are terribly weak in listening and speaking.

All in all, it mainly results from the unreasonable design for business English program which distracts teaching from real working environment, forming a big gap between school education and social needs. For example, graduates are found weak in applying what they have learnt at college to real business tasks and are not qualified for jobs demanding certain skill and experience due to their terrible practical ability. Under this circumstance, based on the German Dual System, a market-directed and application-oriented mechanism, it is urgent to push forward the college-cooperation and work-learning combination mode that runs on the principle of "complimentary advantage and common development" (Wang 2006) to produce senior high-skilled graduates with a wholesome personality.

3 THOUGHTS

Through means of telephone conversation, questionnaire and face-to-face interview, we pool together corresponding data and make an analysis with regard to the social needs for business English professionals and our current training mechanism so as to have a knowledge of our students' career orientation and preparation for job qualifications. In this way, while taking successful cases done at home and abroad for reference, this college will further, on the basis of work-learning combination and college-enterprise cooperation mode, its research effort into such operating mechanism, including specialty education goal, program structure, course design, teaching methods, and evaluation standard, etc. In a word, much attention will be given to create a special college-enterprise cooperation mode suitable for the development of local economy and our college's real situations by exploring a great balance between theory and practice, training experienced graduates for business world.

4 CONTENT

4.1 *Objectives*

We have made a survey of our cooperators, graduates and post-replacement interns to gather data about business English majors' career orientation and related workflow in real situations and break down their qualifications for specific job requirements, setting goals of knowledge, ability and qualification respectively for business English professionals.

4.2 *Workflow-based course system design*

We, according to requirements of foreign business activities, work hand in hand with experts to determine job cluster, which is then divided into a series of workflow further. Our work-learning combination system is built upon typical job task, real job requirement, and professional qualification, centering around five core specialized courses.

4.3 *Course design based on professional ability and qualification*

Old textbooks, designated by some education authority, are limited in content and upgraded slowly. Under this education system, students have no choice but become too dependent on teaching materials and acquire knowledge from their teachers passively. Such bonds must be removed to remedy the phenomenon that classroom teaching lag far behind real business needs by improving students' practical abilities and qualifications demanded by their future jobs. We must attach equal attention to

theory and practice plus skill and knowledge through college-enterprise cooperation, timely responding to changes of knowledge, theory, technology and methods in certain fields.

4.4 *Teaching activity design based on typical project tasks*

Traditional English teaching activity is only confined to explanation of language points and grammar without taking communication and usage into consideration. Even though students do remember a lot of words, have a mastery of grammar, and get contact with large numbers of language materials, they find themselves weak in use and communication. So we have to break the bond and reform the traditional, unitary, inflexible teaching mode that isolates theory from practice. On the contrary, it is imperative to design the course system from overall and unit-specific angles respectively in line with job requirements. Meanwhile we are supposed to take real project tasks as the media, students the main participants, and teachers the directors to make our teaching materials project-directed, teaching procedures workflow-oriented, and teaching environment situation-like. Only in this way can we make a real combination of theory with practice, realizing a final unity of teaching, learning and working.

4.5 *Assessment system design based mainly on formative evaluation*

Having been driven by the traditional examination-oriented system for a long time, its evaluation standards focus too much on the mastery or memory of knowledge and exercise a lot of emphasis on the final results of both teaching and learning, tending to confine to the teaching-dominated principle that is aided by learning. Students are examined and evaluated mainly in the form of written tests which take their test results as the final standard, failing to give attention to their gradual development and progress in the long run. The outdated system not only make one-sided assessment of students' career skills but also goes against the ability-oriented vocational education principle. Due to its severe drawbacks and limitations, various kinds of assessments must be introduced to break the whole evaluation into different modules and make a comprehensive and detailed assessment. In conclusion, attention must be directed to students' acquisition and development of real skills and progress in business environment, making a perfect balance between theory and practice so as to become really qualified for business activities.

5 MEANING

Firstly, it's a great step for us to adopt college-enterprise cooperation mode to educate application-oriented graduates. To bring up creative and experienced talents eligible for real business activities, we will make a survey of market needs to establish the system of course planning, teaching materials and process and corresponding evaluation standards. Secondly, this mode mainly focuses on the principle that we will use research to make up for drawbacks in teaching activities, filling the gap between these two. Research and teaching affect and depend on each other. The cycle from theory to practice and back to theory again makes a perfect fusion of research and teaching, leaving teachers with an up-to-date reform on their teaching aids, modes and methods. Thirdly, it is an important means to improve students' practical abilities, which can only be enhanced and improved in real business atmosphere. College-enterprise cooperation can combine theory with practice, consolidate and deepen what have learned, facilitate and accelerate the change from theory to practice, and better the quality of vocational education, producing graduates more qualified and competitive for their future jobs. Fourthly, it can push forward the construction of business English program. The cooperative mode can improve the conditions and enrich the resources of practice and teaching. At the same time, efforts are made to compile teaching materials oriented for practice, set up related courses adaptable for job requirements, educate "dual-mastery" teachers who are proficient in theory and experienced in practice, and establish training bases.

However, owing to the divergence between teaching and working environments and different pursuits of school education and enterprise's profits, enterprises are usually unwilling to cooperate with and throw a wet blanket on vocational colleges, giving rise to a phenomenon that "colleges' effort is given a cold shoulder while government, enterprise and school fail to make an integration of their resources and facilitation." (Ye et al. 2011) So government is supposed to introduce a series of policy and regulation providing a point where both college and enterprise can share the same interest, encouraging and guiding enterprises to support the cooperation. In this way, colleges and enterprises are to become the main bodies that make full use of their own advantages and make up for each other's needs so as to expand the scope of their cooperation

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The thesis is the interim result of the project from Guangdong Academy of Education---Research on Education Mode for Business English Professionals

in Higher Vocational College under College-enterprise Cooperation System. (Project Number: GDJY-2014-B-b031)

REFERENCES

- [1] Baidu Website. 2011. *Several Opinions from the Ministry of Education on Promoting the Reform and Innovation of Higher Vocational Education and leading its development*. http://wenku.baidu.com/link?url=QT22R43GZ6l2w6O4BapykYqxZVtyl_ZUXLSBkOqVI1wonVXKSavX9TA4VV3pZ2MqrOR6vtnO0aPDKAPHdQNqtHz8UBp4EDmbwfAIzCLN10W
- [2] Ministry of Education Website. 2005. *The State Council's Decision on the Rapid Development of Vocational Education*. http://www.moe.edu.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/moe_1778/200710/27730.html
- [3] Mycos Institute, Shanghai Academy of Educational Sciences. 2013. *The 2012 Annual Report on Professionals Training Quality for Higher Vocational Education in China*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [4] Wang N.H. 2006. *Studies on Theories and Development Strategies of Enterprises-universities-researches Integration*. Fujian Normal University Master Degree Thesis.
- [5] Xiao C.P. 2012. Analysis on Motivation and Encouragement Mechanism of Enterprises' Participation in College-enterprise Cooperation. *Vocational & Technical Education Forum*. 34:77.
- [6] Ye J.M. et al. 2011. Studies on Measures and Strategies of Solving the "Five bottleneck" in College-enterprise Cooperation---Practice of "University-Industry Community" Construction in Hangzhou Vocational and Technical College. *China Higher Education Research*. 12:72.