

# On the Lexical Characteristics of Electronic Business Course and the Application of Task-based Teaching

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**Abstract**—With the development of electronic business, the teaching of the course is becoming more and more important. The paper tries to explore the characteristics of the business English and illustrate how to teach the subject on the basis of task-based teaching strategy. It's summarized that the method can better help students understand, master and apply the vocabularies and that the set communication purposes and effects can be reached with the methods employed.

**Key words**- *electronic business English; vocabulary; task-based teaching; method; application*

## I. INTRODUCTION

English used in Electronic Business is one for Specific Purpose (ESP) and the course is a comprehensive interdisciplinary merged with other subjects, mainly based on language. Majors in the course, besides language proficiencies in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating and capability in communication, should have a good command of international trade routines, laws and theories in modern business affairs, acquire a solid knowledge and skills and bear rather competitive power in implementing commercial tasks. In 1950s or 60s, business English training gets popular among the staff engaged in foreign affairs as talents who serve for the state are very scarce. With the continual development of reform and open policy the relevant education in higher schools and social education systems grows prosperous, though as a curriculum it starts a little bit late compared to those specially-designed for post-graduates and doctor candidates in western-European countries. According to incomplete statistics, there are all together about hundreds of colleges have set corresponding majors, which as well as a required course taken by social training institutes. The prompt developing process caused a series of problems, such as lack of realization of the characteristics of business English and proper teaching methods and theories. The two points will later be introduced in my dissertation as follows.

## II. LEXICAL CHARACTERISTIC OF ELECTRONIC BUSINESS ENGLISH

Electronic Business as introduced above is a newly-arisen subject involving many other fields like computer science and technology, internet, marketing, logistics and administration. Therefore, the glossaries are very rich, bearing distinct commercial and network traits, such as intranet, digital certificate, internet marketing. Besides, it also concerns fields like ad., bank, stock, retail, tourism and press like registration, tariff, cancellation, rate sheets. In addition, some economic terms all frequently appear, such as Price Index, demand curve, inflation,

fluctuation, Gross Domestic Product, etc.

### A. Typical combination of affixes

1) *To combine a new word with E, short for Electronic.* The typical examples are those like e-cash, e-marketplace, e-commerce website company, e-logistics, e-procurement, electronic money, electronic catalog and electronic delivery.

2) *To invent a new word with online*, for example, there are many phrases as Advertise online, Book-store Online, purchase Online, Reseller Online, Commercial Online Service, Consumer Online, Goods Online, online publications and Place Online, etc.

3) *To form a new one with cyber*, like Cyber banking, Cyber economy, Cyber marketing, Cyber investigate for Consumer, Cyberspace and cyber shopping, etc.

### B. Non-typical combination of affixes

New vocabularies are formed with two words or more in a certain sequence. They are generally called compounds translated into Chinese literally like “easy-to-use” to “易用的”, “store-and-forward” to “存储转发”, “return-on-investment metric” to “投资回报体系” and “click-and-mortar” to “混合经营”.

### C. Noun combinations

If a noun is used to modify another noun, then it'd be called “noun combination”, which frequently occur in E-business English and achieve an ideal communicative effects without employment of too long sentence structures, such as quantity discounts, theft and fraud losses. Some of the new combinations may appear to show their meanings like Internet procurement system and Transport level protocol reliability, which are easy and clear even to green hands. However, most of the combinations features E-business English, as Theft and fraud losses, Distribution logistics and purchase order tracking.

### D. Abbreviation combinations

Abbreviation combinations come into being as the commercial competition gets more and more fierce and traders all exert themselves trying to improve efficiency when communicating with customers. Thus, simplicity grows into the nature of the language, convenient and filled with huge information like SET abbreviated for Secure Electronic Transaction, ISDN for Integrated Services Digital Network and EOS for Electronic Ordering System.

Besides, there are also some special abbreviations for online use only, like ASAP abbreviated for As Soon As Possible, RFC for Request For Comments and RFI for Request For Information.

It is undoubted that E-business glossary employs distinct net features as discussed above, but in practice,

numbers often take the place of corresponding English terms. Thus, new combinations arise with the mixed arrangement with both number and letters, novel and easy to spell and memorize, such as B2B for Business-to-business, C2C for Consumer-to-consumer and B2C for Business-to-consumer.

#### *E. Same word with new connotation*

Many general English words are given new special significance during the process of electronic commercialization, for instance, drive is originally meant to drive a car but now to drive a computer in both hardware and software way.

### III. E-BUSINESS ENGLISH AND TASK-BASED TEACHING METHOD

#### *A. Theoretical background*

The teaching method derives from communicative method in 1980s, which turns the basic ideas in language use into feasible approaches emphasizing that students should implement all types of tasks related to real life, learning and working by virtue of class aiming to make the class education target authentic and to cultivate their proficiencies to apply the language. To be specific, through the task students can naturally acquire their skills in English during the listening, speaking, reading and writing activities where they take part with the language they just learn and try to use in the process.

Numan define communicative tasks as a class activity where students should understand, practice, or communicate with the target language, while others like Bygate, Skehan, Swain stress the meaningful expression in the process of carrying out one certain mission. Krashen has distinguished two different concept, learning and acquisition. Learning means to acquire language consciously through class teaching; acquisition is the unconscious command of language through communication. He points out that language acquisition is the result of practice in communicative activities but not the pure learning and drilling of the skills. Meanwhile, he thinks that to grasp language students should be given understandable input which cannot go too much but to some extent beyond his or her current comprehension. thus the acquisition will naturally follow. What students need is not the simple language forms but comprehensible input and the opportunity of output. According to the theories above, the foreign language class should have various activities or tasks changeable. Students can practice or communicate in the process of completing their individual tasks. Hence, the acquisition is gained.

#### *B. The procedure to implement*

Willis has put forward three steps on implementing the method. Step one: pre-task. Instructors assign tasks. Step two: task-cycle. Students begin to carry out tasks including planning and reporting before the class. Step three: post-task. Students can analyze how other groups implement their tasks through electronic data and practice language difficulties under the instruction of guiders.

#### *C. Specific application of the method in E-business English teaching*

“The New Cambridge Business English Course” (mid-level) is a textbook combining commerce and English, easy to be practiced. According to the actual need, the course try to cultivate students’ listening, speaking, reading and writing proficiency adopted in the live commerce and daily situation. The significance of feasibility and activeness of students are stressed in the teaching.

Now Unit 10 “market disaster” in the book will be taken as an example to illustrate the point on how to apply the method in the teaching process. First of all, instructors introduce a task to be implemented and divide students into four groups. The first group is assigned a mission background that Hover gives clients two-times free tour to America and Europe if their purchases are over 100 pounds worth. The promise attracts two times applicants as predicted leading to the dismissal of three senior managers and loss of 19,000,000 pounds.

The second group is given that a large computer hardware retail company locate themselves at the bottom of the market price. In order to suppress rivals and attract customers, it even offers a service “Purchase This Year, Payment Next Year” without any interest. Unfortunately, the serious currency problem forced the company to quickly go bankrupt before its debts are due.

The third group’s is that Brother Lewis hurries to put its product into market aiming at competitor’s newly-produced powders. Though the company has poured one million pounds in the market investigation, the commodity has a fatal defect that it may damage clothes, which has to be withdrawn from the market and reformulated.

The forth group’s is that the director of Coca Cola decides to change the taste of the Cola, the first time in 99 year’s history. He says, “The best becomes better.” However, about two thirds of the 1.5 billion people prefer the original taste. The company has to offer the old one under the name of classical Coca.

After the initial assignment, students start to carry out schemes on learning and reporting forms, formal or recorded or summed as PowerPoint. At the next stage, instructors may point out some defects and put forward improvements which definitely cannot clearly demonstrated in regular class where guiders only make explanations on marketing vocabularies or require students to finish relevant exercises. Through the implementation of task-based teaching methods we find that students can step by step master the target marketing words during the learning and communicative process, due to that they can have mutual discussions once their task established and that instructor can immediately point out their problems and make demonstrations. The practice verifies that students’ comprehensive proficiencies get conspicuously improved after they attend such class education with the methods mentioned.

#### *D. The Necessity of the method*

The task-based teaching method has its advantages in the E-business language teaching as learners are regarded as the main body and valued most in the learning process in which several groups are divided for respective, active,

creative and target learning. What's more, students should get prepared before the class according to contents to be taught, for example, they may discuss, consult many files or instructors in order to complete their tasks. In addition, they should report to the class that surely may activate their desire to win. The task-based pattern totally transforms the regular modes that teachers are focused into a new one that students are centered. One point should be emphasized that tasks designed by instructors should be close to textbooks, their actual understanding and cognition.

#### IV. ENDING

Above all, E-business has its distinctive language characteristics. With the development of E-commerce, the relevant glossary may become more abundant. The task-based teaching method not only helps to learn the features and laws of E-business English but also can facilitate the learning of connotations and the proper use of the language when "driven" by tasks.

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