

# A Study on the Adaptability of Industry English in Higher Vocational Colleges--Taking the Textbook Construction of English for Water Conservancy Industry as An Example

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**Abstract:** *The orientation of vocational colleges determines that the courses they offer should conform to the school running policy of "service oriented and employment oriented" and highlight the characteristics of vocational education. Under the general trend of reform, the English course teaching requirements for higher vocational education has incorporated industry English teaching into the public English Teaching of higher vocational colleges. Many higher vocational colleges have also changed the general English (EGP) teaching situation that did not have a clear career direction in the past, and have successively carried out the teaching reform of English for special purposes (ESP).*

**Keywords:** Vocational Colleges; Industry English; Adaptability; Study.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Taking the construction of English teaching materials for water conservancy industry in our university as an example, this paper analyzes the adaptability of industry English in Higher Vocational Colleges from the aspects of the definition of industry English, the demand analysis of industry English, industry English teaching materials, the current situation of industry English teachers and so on.

## 2. DEFINITION OF INDUSTRY ENGLISH

### 2.1. English for special purposes and general English

English for specific purpose, abbreviated as esp. English for general purpose, abbreviated as EGP. These two concepts are corresponding to each other. EGP emphasizes the part that English, as a language, needs to be used in all walks of life and daily life, which is called universal. ESP came into being in the 1960s with the economic development (the emergence of new production methods and the rapid expansion of Global trade), the development of educational psychology and applied linguistics. As for the concept of ESP, many foreign scholars have defined it, but it is generally accepted that it is defined by Hutchinson and Waters.

"ESP is a language teaching method in which all decisions related to content and method are based on the learner's reasons for learning. "[1]

### 2.2 Industry English and ESP

The concept of English for occupational purposes (EOP) was first put forward in the reform of Public English Teaching in Higher Vocational Colleges since 2008. As the name suggests, industry English refers to the English knowledge related to a certain industry. Specifically, it is to make English teaching content close to a certain industry, and its teaching purpose is to cultivate students' communicative ability to use English in a certain industry. English for special purposes can be divided into academic English for special purposes and professional English for special purposes according to the scope and purpose of English use. the former refers to the English used in the academic research field, and the latter refers to the English used in the professional field. Industry English can also be called English for special purposes.

Professional English is to teach professional courses in English. For example, architectural English, medical English, electrical English, etc.

### 3. DEMAND ANALYSIS OF INDUSTRY ENGLISH

Needs analysis is the starting point of ESP curriculum. It completely distinguishes ESP from EGP in practice. Demand analysis is the theoretical basis for the practical development of Vocational English teaching. As the carrier of Higher Vocational English teaching, the research on industry English teaching materials should also take the needs analysis as the starting point, carry out the target situation analysis and learner analysis, so as to lay a foundation for the targeted design of teaching materials.

First, it is the target situation analysis, which analyzes the demand for ESP teaching from the social demand, that is, the industry demand. Secondly, it is the analysis of learners to understand the impact of their learning attitude, learning experience and requirements on learning. Thirdly, it is the analysis of the current situation, focusing on the current language level, learning obstacles and gaps of learners, so as to carry out curriculum setting, textbook selection and design effective teaching methods.

Social demand for English in water conservancy industry (i. e. industry demand)

Since the tenth five year plan, our country has carried out international cooperation and exchanges in water conservancy in an all-round way. our country 's water conservancy projects using foreign capital have grown rapidly, intergovernmental exchanges and cooperation have been continuously strengthened, and our country has actively participated in international organizations and major international water affairs activities. In the second half of 2010 alone, the national development and Reform Commission approved the use of foreign loans for water conservancy projects: the Asian Development Bank Loan Project for the reinforcement of dangerous reservoirs in Shandong Province, the Austrian government loan project for Zhoucun waterworks Co., Ltd. in Zibo City, Shandong Province, and the Nordic Investment Bank Loan Project for Gansu Dayu water saving Co., Ltd.

With the deepening of cooperation and exchange of various projects at home and abroad, there are further requirements for the English application ability and level of water conservancy talents. English application ability has become a necessary ability for water conservancy project construction and management personnel. the following lists the English needs of the water conservancy industry with the water conservancy major in higher vocational education as an example.

According to the teaching requirements for English courses of higher vocational education, the teaching requirements for English courses of Higher Vocational water conservancy industry are divided into three parts: first, the basic requirements for Industry English; Second, special requirements for Industry English; Third, general workplace ability requirements.

With reference to the talent structure and training characteristics of the water conservancy industry, the basic English requirements for the water conservancy industry are as follows:

Be able to master basic vocabulary, idiomatic expressions and professional terms of water conservancy projects, management and services; Be able to understand official documents and letters of common water conservancy project construction, technology, management, service, etc; Be able to translate water conservancy project construction scheme, contract, bidding documents, equipment/product description, project report, memo, e- mail and other relevant professional materials with the help of dictionaries, networks and other tools;

Be able to write letters, memo and e-mails related to water conservancy projects, management and projects; Be able to carry out daily conversation and communication, and express clearly; Be able to basically understand and make career related dialogues or statements.

(1) The special English requirements for water conservancy industry are as follows:

Employment direction: water conservancy engineering technology and management

Typical Occupation: Water Conservancy Engineer, supervisor, technician, assistant project cost engineer

(2) Learning situation design: carry out classroom activities at the stage of water conservancy project construction design procedure, including feasibility study, preliminary design, bidding, design and construction drawings. Take

the implementation and management process of water conservancy project construction as the learning context, including construction plan, construction scheme, construction log, supervision log, etc. (special requirements for Industry English): be able to communicate simply and effectively with project managers, engineers, owners and other relevant personnel on the construction process of foreign-related water conservancy projects. Be able to read simple engineering drawings, construction plans, construction logs, contracts and other technical data of foreign-related water conservancy projects. Be able to write simple construction plans, construction schemes, construction logs, supervision logs, etc.

(3) The major employment directions of water conservancy include: municipal institutions, technical services of water affairs departments, water conservancy equipment and product sales, water conservancy project management, water affairs activity organization, etc. the basic and special requirements of English for the water conservancy industry are not described one by one. Students' needs for English in water conservancy industry

(4) The English level of vocational college students is generally not high. the vast majority of students only have the English level of ordinary secondary schools and below, and their English level is uneven, with obvious high and low grades. the vocabulary is relatively small, English cultural background knowledge is scarce, and the ability to use the language is very poor. Generally, newly enrolled students have a strong interest in learning. They also listen carefully, take notes and do homework in class. However, after a semester of study, students are not satisfied with teaching. the reasons are: first, teachers' classroom teaching methods are relatively simple; second, the classroom atmosphere is relatively dull. Most students prefer the communicative teaching method. Nearly two thirds of the students think that learning English well depends on their own efforts, while the teacher plays a guiding role. Other students reported that the main reason why their English level is not high is that they are not interested in learning English at all and have no motivation to learn it, although they know that learning English well is very important for them. Some students even said, "if it weren't for the discipline of the school, I wouldn't have come to English class. "

Therefore, their language environment is extremely deficient. Although they have a good desire to communicate in English, their English listening and speaking level has not been significantly improved due to various reasons. Misjudge your own level and dare not face the reality. Lack of learning skills, often get twice the result with half the effort. Emphasize professional courses and ignore basic courses.

From the current situation of students' learning, teachers and teaching, it can be concluded that there is a great distance between students' needs for professional English in theory and practice. Of course, the current situation of students' learning is an unavoidable and impossible reality. As for the construction of teachers and other software and hardware related to teaching activities, each of our teaching workers, leaders of our relevant departments and the whole society should make long-term unremitting efforts. At present, the most urgent and realistic problem in front of us is how to develop a set of English teaching materials for water conservancy industry suitable for Higher Vocational Water Conservancy students.

## **4. VOCATIONAL COLLEGE INDUSTRY ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS**

### **4.1 Overview of domestic ESP teaching materials for Higher Vocational Education**

Generally speaking, the current higher vocational English for specific purposes (ESP) textbooks used in our country are still not separated from the subject standard system of ordinary undergraduate courses. Most of them are "compressed version and secondary version" of undergraduate college textbooks. the content is too much and difficult, there is enough theoretical knowledge to instill, but the setting of practical training projects is insufficient. the teaching content lacks professional pertinence. In terms of updating teaching content, it failed to link up with career development in time, let alone moderate foresight. After investigation, LiuJie (2008) believes that the ESP teaching materials for higher vocational education have the following problems: the quantity is seriously insufficient, the content is divorced from the reality of career development, the status of practical teaching is not prominent, and the teaching materials are single. Gao Jiaxia, zoudehu, Ge Shili, Guo Xi and other domestic scholars have not given high evaluation on the existing Vocational English textbooks. the principles of textbook compilation are still in a state of divergent opinions. Some scholars have put forward suggestions for improvement from the content, difficulty, form and other aspects of the textbook.

**4.2 Research on ESP textbooks by foreign scholars Carter7(1983) believes that ESP textbooks have three macro public characteristics:**

Authentic materials, purpose oriented, suitable for self- study. [2]

Salenm. salman8(2001) understood the characteristics of ESP teaching materials from a micro perspective as follows:

The content based language teaching is characterized by rich professional terms, habitual format, frequent use of passive voice, more long and complex sentences and less nonsense. [3]

## **5. ADAPTABILITY ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH TEACHING MATERIALS FOR WATER CONSERVANCY INDUSTRY IN HIGHER VOCATIONAL COLLEGES**

### **5.1 Current situation of English teaching materials for water conservancy industry in Higher Vocational Education.**

Among the 30 Higher Vocational Colleges in the water conservancy industry in China, two have offered English courses in the water conservancy industry. Zhejiang Water Conservancy College and Shandong Water Conservancy Vocational and technical college. According to the results of the survey, the satisfaction with the use of teaching materials is not great. the practical English for water conservancy majors compiled by Zhejiang Water Conservancy College has only been used for one term. the basic course of hydraulic English prepared by Shandong hydraulic vocational and technical college in 2013 is in use. According to our current understanding of the use of these two textbooks, the main problems are: they are relatively monotonous, and they are basically carried out in the order of textbooks, so it is difficult to give full play to them. They believe that if the professional vocabulary of the water conservancy industry is removed from this textbook, it is not fundamentally different from ordinary English textbooks. the training objectives are the same as the listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation required by ordinary English teaching. And because the textbook does not design listening exercises, this textbook can not help students improve their listening. Not enough interactive exercises and practical projects were designed, and more than half of the students just read the text in the given role-playing situational dialogue, without real dialogue exercises. the textbook has rich written practice forms. Reading comprehension, completing dialogue, sentence translation and so on help students lay a good foundation for language application. However, these are the practice forms commonly used in general English teaching. Therefore, there is no essential difference between professional vocabulary and general English textbooks.

### **5.2 Current situation of professional English teachers in Higher Vocational Colleges**

Teachers know little about industry knowledge, and some even teach while learning, which is not systematic and scientific at all. As a result, the teaching content can not be carried out freely, the amount of information provided in the classroom can not meet the needs of students, let alone stimulate students' interest in learning, and the teaching effect is greatly reduced. Lack of familiarity with industry knowledge leads to inaccurate or even wrong expression of professional terms in teaching, students question, teachers' teaching ability and their interest in learning is frustrated. Professional teachers' pronunciation is not standardized and lack of language teaching methods when teaching professional English. In terms of the choice of teaching methods, half of the teachers still use the translation method to teach, focusing on the explanation and translation of vocabulary and sentences, which does not reflect the characteristics of Vocational English and can not really meet the requirements of modern vocational English teaching. From the perspective of scientific research, the scientific research of Vocational English teachers is basically in its infancy, and the annual average number of papers published is small. Few teachers have presided over projects above the provincial level and college level, and few teachers have participated in the compilation of industry English textbooks.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Vocational english does not reflect the characteristics of vocational english and can not really meet the requirements of modern vocational english teaching. Of course, it can not meet the social demand for industry english.

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