Analysis on ESP Theory-based College English Autonomous Learning

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Abstract

With the formation and development of economic globalization, social enterprises are gradually increasing their requirements for talents. They require college students not only to possess strong professional competence and ethics, but also have certain professional English ability to use it in corresponding working practice skillfully. Therefore, this thesis elaborates the basic connotation of ESP theory, summarizes such problems as the lack of autonomous learning concept, the incompleteness of autonomous learning methods and the lack of English resources by analyzing the current situation of college students’ autonomous learning in English. At the same time, a new college English autonomous learning method based on ESP theory is put forward and elaborated from the perspectives of establishing autonomous learning concept, establishing English evaluation mechanism and promoting the interest of autonomous learning, aiming to enhance students’ autonomous learning efficiency in English, help them better grasp professional English and enhance their overall development potential.

Keywords: ESP theory, College English, Autonomous Learning.

1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

1.1 Research review

English has always been the focus of college study in college period. As the requirements for social talents change, new requirements are placed on college students’ English proficiency (Liu and Dong, 2012). Under this circumstance, the introduction of ESP theory has injected innovative vigor into college English. In current college English learning, the main mode is students’ autonomous learning in English: students combine their actual situations to adjust the content of their English learning, set goals and improve the efficiency of their autonomous English learning (Niu, 2012). When applying ESP theory to help their English learning, students should also form a clear understanding of their major, combine its characteristics to set the content of English learning and form English learning styles with professional characteristics, so as to improve their comprehensive ability during the learning process. The current research literature in this area mainly focuses on the application of ESP theory in college English teaching (Yao and Lu, 2012). Based on this, when analyzing the supporting role of ESP theory in college English autonomous learning, we can study and research the literature to obtain some researching ideas and summarize some researching methods so as to improve the efficiency of English autonomous learning.

1.2 Research aim

This thesis takes the basic connotation of ESP theory as the starting point and explains how ESP theory facilitates college English autonomous learning (Zhan, 2014). In the process of their autonomous English learning, students should set plans for their autonomous learning and combine ESP theory to learn English autonomously on the basis of their own situation and majors. In the process of autonomous English learning, students can master the content of professional English more accurately and improve English learning efficiency, and through autonomous English learning, students can cultivate good English learning habits and timely discover problems in English learning, so that they can talk their problems actively to teachers in class and improve their English proficiency (Wang, 2014). By guiding students to master ESP theory, teachers can change the original English teaching methods. The formation of students’ special English learning mode can greatly alleviate the problems existing in English learning, help them use their professional knowledge to solve the English problems in jobs and promote the overall development of college students in their future employment (Li, 2014).
2. BASIC CONNOTATION OF ESP THEORY

ESP theory refers to English with special characteristics, which means to learn the English of a certain subject so as to achieve to master it (Liu, 2013). The application of ESP theory in college English teaching has changed the current situation of English teaching and promoted the reform of college English. With the guidance of ESP theory, English content is mainly designed according to students’ major and shows the special characteristics of ESP theory. Moreover, this kind of design can greatly motivate students’ interest in English learning in class activities and enable students to fully exert their subjective initiative to learn English well during the learning process (Liu, 2013). At the same time, the content of ESP theory has been continuously enriched and become large-scale and diverse gradually in the course of its development. The formation of its developmental features makes ESP theory more consistent with professional English learning circumstances and can help students select suitable content of English learning based on the majors’ characteristics and students’ goals of learning during the process; moreover, according to the content of English learning designed by ESP theory, students can adjust the content they learn in real time according to change of their English proficiency (Zhou, 2013). Therefore, ESP theory plays an important role in facilitating students to learn English autonomously, which can greatly benefit students and improve their efficiency of autonomous learning.

3. THE EXISTING PROBLEMS IN COLLEGE ENGLISH AUTONOMOUS LEARNING

3.1 The lack of autonomous learning concept and the incompleteness of autonomous learning methods

English is what students must master in college period. However, the number of the class of non-English majors is relatively small in college. In this case, students are required to have certain autonomous English learning ability to master the English of a certain major through autonomous English learning (Li, 2011). However, due to the fact that students have some problems in autonomous English learning, this makes them unable to fully exert their autonomous learning ability in English learning and improves their English proficiency. First of all, students lack autonomous English learning concept in the process. They do not form a correct understanding of English learning after being admitted into college, only focus on learning professional knowledge and neglect learning professional knowledge of English, which is unfavorable to enhance students’ overall ability (Sun and Wang, 2017). Second, students lack appropriate autonomous methods in the process of autonomous English learning. Though ESP theory is of great significance to students’ autonomous English learning, teachers fail to play a guiding role in English teaching or help students form a correct understanding of it. This leads to students’ failure in innovating their autonomous English learning methods according to ESP theory, which is unfavorable to students’ autonomous learning (Zhang, 2016).

3.2 The lack of English resources and the incompleteness of English evaluation mechanism

The lack of guidance about autonomous learning methods makes students unable to use English resources to help themselves with their English learning. And since students don’t have an accurate mastery of ESP theory, they cannot form a correct understanding of the development characteristics of ESP theory or use it to help themselves with their English learning (Wu, 2016). At the same time, students don’t have a complete autonomous learning mechanism in their learning process, so they fail to know the effect of their English learning according to the evaluation mechanism, which is unfavorable to improve students’ English proficiency. Furthermore, the evaluation mechanism is not set up according to the professional characteristics of students’ majors, so it is unable to provide students with professional English evaluation and unfavorable to enhance students’ knowledge of professional English.

3.3 The lack of special English and low autonomous learning enthusiasm

Although students’ autonomous English learning plays an important role in promoting their comprehensive development in their college period, their learning lack certain special characteristics in this process in actual situation, which means students fail to learn professional English knowledge with full consideration of the characteristics of their majors (Tong, 2015). Under such circumstance, students’ English proficiency can’t be improved and their future career development are much affected. At the same time, due to the particularity of English, students can easily have language-learning difficulties in their learning process. In this case, students have a comparatively low interest in English learning, which leads to students’ failure to exerts their subjective initiative to learn systematically and teachers’ failure to play a role in guiding students’ learning interest, helping students understand the importance of autonomous learning and improving their English comprehensive ability.
4. ESP THEORY-BASED COLLEGE ENGLISH AUTONOMOUS LEARNING METHODS

4.1 Establish autonomous learning concept and form autonomous English learning methods

Students’ autonomous learning plays an important role in helping students’ learning in their college period. English is the focus of students’ learning, so students’ autonomous learning plays a vital role in improving their English proficiency. As a result, during the process of students’ autonomous English learning, firstly, they should change their concept of English learning to form a correct understanding, realize the supporting role professional-featured English knowledge has in promoting their self-development, motivating students’ autonomous learning and helping them learn autonomously. In this process, teachers can guide students to form a correct understanding of ESP theory and grasp the specific connotation of it; students can form a systematic concept of autonomous English learning, which can provide concept support for the development of autonomous English learning and promote it to go smoothly. Secondly, students should have their own autonomous learning methods and improve their efficiency of English learning. They should combine ESP theory with their own English learning situation to develop their English learning methods, set goals of English learning and learn knowledge of English systematically according to autonomous English learning methods so as to achieve the purpose of improving professional English ability.

4.2 Establish English learning resources and English evaluation mechanism

In the process of autonomous English learning, students also need corresponding English learning resources to support their English learning. ESP theory has gradually become large-scale and diverse during the course of its development and students can grasp a great deal of English learning resources by applying ESP theory. Moreover, students can broaden their English learning thinking through ESP theory, learn English by various means of learning methods, enrich their English learning resources, simplify the procedures of their autonomous English learning and inject new vitality into the development of English learning activities. At the same time, English evaluation mechanism plays a key role in improving students’ English proficiency. It can help to combine what students learn to classify their knowledge of English so that they can make evaluation according to different professional evaluations in the process of accepting English evaluation; and the basis of different
professions is not the same. Moreover, when evaluating students, English evaluation mechanism not only evaluates students’ English tests but also their daily English and review after-school. By evaluating students’ autonomous English learning comprehensively, students can find the shortcomings in their autonomous English learning and improve the efficiency of their autonomous learning (Figure 1 is a college English autonomous learning evaluation system).

4.3 Improve interest in autonomous learning and form special English learning

Interest in English is the best teacher to guide students’ autonomous learning. Based on this, in the process of students’ autonomous learning, teachers should play a guiding role to arouse students’ interest in English, help students to form a correct understanding of autonomous learning, exert students’ subjective initiative to learn knowledge of English by heart and improve the level and efficiency of their English learning. Moreover, students can form their direction of special English learning through ESP theory in this process. After being admitted to college, students’ goal and direction of learning has changed gradually. In this case, students need to combine the characteristics of their majors in the process of their autonomous learning to form the mode of their special English learning and improve the overall English learning effect.

5. CONCLUSION

The degree of how students master the knowledge of English will affect the development of students in the process of college English learning. In this case, the proposal of autonomous learning can help promote students to better grasp knowledge of English and improve the comprehensive level of English in their learning process. Moreover, students can form a highly efficient English learning method by combining autonomous learning with ESP theory, which enables students to better master knowledge of English and promote their own development.

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