

Opportunities and Challenges of the English and American Literature Movie Appreciation Teaching Mode in the Context of English for Academic Purpose (EAP)

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Abstract

With the development of the internationalization of the tertiary education, the population of oversea students, especially those who come from non-English-speaking countries, increased greatly. In China the development of the integration of economy and the boost of the project of collaborative research among graduates and postgraduates leads to the significant improvement of English level among college students. Traditional teaching mode which emphasizes on the knowledge training (listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating) can meet the demands of neither the social progress nor the language learners. Faced with the ever-changing situation both domestically and internationally, many scholars in China have proposed EAP (English for Academic Purpose) teaching mode. EAP in Chinese higher education is still in the exploration and development stage. This article focuses on EAP teaching mode and takes the course of the English and American literature movie appreciation as an example which aims to explore how the curriculum construction of literature movie appreciation adapts itself to the needs of multi-disciplinary English talents cultivation in the context of EAP under the background of Chinese higher education.

Key words: EAP teaching mode, English and American Literature Movie Appreciation, higher education

I. Introduction

British linguist Jordan once pointed out ESP includes EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and EOP (English for Occupational Purposes). In the 1980s the appearance of EAP is just a branch of ESP when the journal English for Specific Purpose began. Over the past decade, with the development of the globalization of the tertiary education, the population of oversea students, especially those who come from non-English-speaking countries, increased greatly. The reason why students have been keen to learn English is not limited to the language learning. What they really need is to study majors by means of English. What's more, the evident dominance of English publication seems to push EAP out of the border of ESP system. In China the development of the integration of economy and the boost of the project of collaborative research among graduates and postgraduates leads to the significant improvement of English level among college students. Traditional teaching mode which emphasizes on the knowledge training (listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating) can meet the demands of neither the social progress nor the language learners. Faced with the ever-changing situation both domestically and internationally, many scholars in

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China have proposed ESP (English for Specific Purpose) teaching mode. At the same time many “211 project” of the state key universities have explored ways to establish ESP curriculum systems, for instance, Fu Dan University, Shan Dong University, Sichuan University, among which the professional teaching and research team from Fu Dan university makes a great contribution to the ESP curriculum development and textbook compilation. International Forum on Chinese Postgraduate Education was co-organized by Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Center in Ministry of Education and Chinese Society of Academic Degrees and Graduate Education in Beijing in October, 2015. One of the center subjects under discussion is the cultivation of cross-border graduate and quality assurance. Gong Qihuang academician from Peking University attaches importance to collaborative research and joint supervision of postgraduate which play an important role on the long-term cultivation of postgraduates (Wang and Yang, 2016).

Based on the national guiding principle for the training of postgraduates, Northeast Normal University actively carries out cooperation in running schools with top international universities and recommends students to further their study in the first-class universities in the world. In the university I’m working for, the number of students, particularly, those non-English majors, who prepare themselves to study abroad has increased recently, but in reality, most of them have missed the opportunities to further their study due to their failure in IEITS and TOFEL. English teaching and learning only limited to the study of language skills cannot cater for the needs of society and language learners.

Nowadays more and more scholars realize EAP is the indispensable part in the formal education systems (Jordan, 1997, 1-10). There are scholars once explained academic literacy is the underpinning of success in the academic field (Ken Hyland and Liz Hamp-Lyons, 3-6). The research of EAP teaching mode is not limited as a branch of ESP any longer but as the main part. This article focuses on EAP teaching mode and takes the course of the English and American Literature Movie Appreciation as an example which aims to explore how the curriculum construction of literature movie appreciation adapts itself to the needs of multi-disciplinary English talents cultivation in the context of EAP under the background of Chinese higher education.

II. Influential EAP theories and practices

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is referred to as teaching English with the aim of assisting learners’ study or research in that language (Hyland, 2006, 1) Although the emergence of EAP teaching theories and practices is not the mainstream of English teaching and learning field, nowadays it should not be ignored for both the students who are working for the degrees and the teachers who are attending an EAP training program for certificates. Appropriately, EAP teaching mode is still flourishing among the researchers of the language teaching community. Within the field of applied linguistic we have an ESP family among which EAP is a brilliant member. There exists a great deal of overlap between the research of ESP and EAP. The enormous amount of EAP research literature can be divided into 3 categories which concern EAP teaching theories, practices and the integration of both. Benesch discusses the English language teaching in the context of institutional power relation (Benesch, 2001). Hyland introduces resourceful EAP theories and practices with the introduction of the key concepts, illustration of the EAP reading tasks and the description of students-centered activities (Hyland, 2006). Paltridge and Starfield coedited *The Handbook of English for Specific Purposes* (2013) which concretely introduces the history, teaching target, teaching features and strategies of ESP. Flowerdew introduces how discourse studies can have an influence on

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English Language teaching (Flowerdew, 2013). EAP classroom-based teaching practices are either based on the subjects (law, medical, engineering) or on different courses. Scholars from medical college in China explore the EAP teaching method and the interactive education in academic conference (Qu Kun, 2015; Wang Xiaotian & Song Yongsheng, 2016). Some English teachers from professional colleges find out the dilemmas and strategies in legal English and engineering English of EAP courses (Miao Qing, 2014; Bi, Huiying, 2015). Some EAP scholars (Basturkmen, Farr, Tan, 2003) carry out empirical researches about EAP classroom teaching. Journal of English for Academic Purposes is the center of EAP academic communication. From the first national conference of EAP at Birmingham University in 1975 up till now, many international and national conferences about EAP teaching and learning have become the academic frontier for professionals and practitioners. That's why EAP is widely accepted and fast developed. And furthermore, BALEAP (British Association of Lectures in English for Academic Purposes) is the global forum for EAP professionals (Jordon, 2002, p77).

So far, there are few professionals or practitioners who are interested in the exploration of the construction of literature movie appreciation. This article wants to show what opportunities and challenges the course will meet in the context of EAP teaching theories and practice. How can this course in NENU improve students' academic competences? What kind of knowledge and abilities should EAP teachers have in the process of EAP curriculum construction? Of course there is no such thing as one teaching method can fit all subjects and all classes, but is it possible to design a set of general teaching conceptions and training targets which can be consulted when necessary?

III. Exploration of the Teaching Mode of the English and American Literature Movie Appreciation in the context of EAP

3.1 Student analysis

The target audience of this course is non-English major postgraduates of grade one. After four-year-English learning, most of the students lay a solid foundation for language learning. What they really lack is the application of the language. Most of them can deal with the daily communication. Study at the postgraduate level, students need to find out their future research direction in their academic fields. Most of the professional literature is written in English, furthermore, students need to attend English lectures, take notes and write essays. Therefore it is very important for them to look up, read, screen, organize and summarize English literature. Hence students' English proficiency usually decides their future developments. In science and technology, doctor candidates are even required to publish their papers in international journals like SCI. Some students fail to earn the degree not because of their academic capacity but their English level. They cannot use English to express their academic ideas appropriately and effectively. Good presentation skills have become the bottleneck of their professional development.

3.2 Orientation of teaching targets

Professor Cai Jigang from Fu Dan university assumes that EAP especially EGAP is the core of ESP teaching in the context of Chinese college English teaching. The key point of EAP is to develop students' academic communicating ability which includes attending lectures, note taking, reading literature, summarizing arguments and presentation (Cai, 2014; Wen, 2014). Based on this point, the teaching target of the English and American literature movie appreciation is to help students with the language learning and academic skills demanded by their future development.

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- (1) Through the appreciation of the movies, students can know the western culture, understand the difference of cultures, and broaden their cultural views.
- (2) Evaluate the culture differences and conflicts appropriately, and understand the foreign cultures sympathetically.
- (3) Train students' abilities of raising, analyzing and solving questions based on certain subject.
- (4) Pay attention to English learning strategies and the cultivation of critical thinking.

3.3 Teaching content

The English and American literature movie appreciation is one part of college English teaching. Altogether we have 40 class hours and the students who pass the exams can earn 2 credits. We have to finish the course in one semester about 18 weeks long. In such limited teaching hours, we have to carefully select those typical and noble movies which aim to stimulate students' reflexivity and learning perception. We design 6 sections which include history and culture, biography, romanticism, critical realism, contemporary literature and environmental literature. The teaching scheme is one topic for 3 weeks. Because of the limited class hour we recommend some added reading materials online which involve textbooks, ebooks and journal articles. For each unit we divide it into 3 parts. The first part is the main characters. The second part is vocabulary and classical dialogues. The last part is questions to discussions. Since we have no fixed textbook, we recommended some reference books (Liu, 2001; Huang, 2001; Zhang, 2005; Wang, 2006; Zhou, 2012) which are edited by renowned scholars in China to the students.

3.4 Teaching Evaluation

The construction of postgraduate English curriculum system in Northeast Normal University has gone through three stages as formation and development, reform and adjustment, improvement and perfection since 2010. As one of the core courses, English and American literature movie appreciation still needs continuous innovations to accommodate with the education of the interdisciplinary talents. EAP teachers make full use of the informative teaching mode which includes PPT teaching courseware and WeChat website to show students the main characters and classic dialogues. Besides dynamic network classroom is on the way of construction. EAP teachers plan to use campus network platform to upload the courseware, discuss and investigate online, answer questions and collect homework, which makes it possible to build up flipped classroom. According to NENU assessment management system, movie appreciation course yields over 90% satisfaction, which motivates the continuous self-improvement of this course.

About the performance of the students who select this course, we attach great importance to the formative assessment. Besides the credit system, the combination of formative assessment and summative assessment are adopted. The final grade consists of two parts. One is daily work which will contribute 50% of the final course grade. And the other is term examination which will contribute another 50% of the final grade. Since most of the reading materials are given before class, a good preparation of the assignment is the key point of good performance. Daily work also includes ordinary achievement which contributes 30% of the final grade and mid-term exam which contributes 20% of the final grade. The high percentage of daily work shows that we emphasize the learning process, which is a typical process learning assessment. At the same time, oral and written presentation can reflect students' comprehensive competence objectively, which can help students not only to regulate their own learning strategies but also to create a good competition environment.

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Table I. The details of the students' assessment of movie appreciation course

	Oral Presentation	Homework	Papers	Contribution to the final grade	Final grade
Ordinary achievement	30%			30%	
Mid-term exam			20%	20%	
Term exam	15%	15%	20%	50%	

3.5 Inherent problems and Strategies

Although collaborative research and joint supervision create great opportunities to EAP teaching module, there still exist inherent problems which are constantly challenging our wisdom and perseverance. The first challenge is the conflict between the comparatively large size of class member and the reducing class hours even the reducing credits allotted to the movie appreciation course. Usually we have more than 40 students in each class. One class hour equals to one credit. Movie appreciation is two class hours in one week and after one semester which lasts 19 weeks the students who pass the exams can earn 2 credits. Literature movie appreciation courses which involve western history, culture, religion, customs and other areas of civilization include tremendous amount of information and knowledge. Only 2 class hours in one week are not adequate for teachers to carry out the whole teaching plan. What's more, in order to ensure all the first year postgraduates have enrolled the elective system the administrative institution have to enlarge the size of the class when necessary, usually one class have 40 even 50 students, which is very difficult for them to express their ideas in the discussion time. Encountered with this problem EAP teachers make full use of students' self-directed learning ability which can change their role in class from passive receiver to active participant. Movie appreciation teachers create WeChat network platform to convey the background information of the movies. By means of reading these added materials before class then we save more time in class for discussion and the teacher-student interaction. Besides WeChat EAP teachers can use flipped class to bring students enthusiasm into play. Video lectures, podcasts and e-books on line are quietly replacing the traditional face-to-face teaching mode. In a word we want students to look up any materials they need whenever it is necessary.

The second challenge we must deal with, probably the most difficult one, is the mindset of right or wrong answers. The teaching target of movie appreciation course is the postgraduates who are 22 or 23 years old. From elementary school, junior high school to senior high school, they received the education of right or wrong thinking model. If one thing is right, then it can't be wrong. There are no other choices. Many postgraduates are skilled at this kind of way of thinking. Frankly speaking, this either-or thinking model does work in the study of science and technology. Whereas it may not actually be true with arts and humanities. Hence one of the teaching aims of this course is to cultivate students' critical thinking. Critical thinking is defined as making judgments about the truthfulness and worth of the statements or answers to problems (Stancato, 2000, p377). Some scholars think it as connotations of negativity or the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods and making decisions (Walkner and Finny, 1999, pp.531-548). Critical thinking is the main means to help students form the right view of the world and the life. The university where I am serving for is a normal university, which means most of the

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graduates are future teachers, whose way of thinking and seeing things will influence the next generation. Thus one of the teaching objectives of the movie appreciation course is to enable students to take a dialectical and all around view of seeing things. We want students to change their identity, think like the character in the film which we have seen. For instance, in discussing the film *Gone With the Wind*, we divide students into 7 or 8 discussion groups each of which includes 6 or 7 students to discuss the question how you comment the civil war if you were a plantation owner, a black slave, a white northerner, a southerner or anyone in the film you can think about. The choices of social identity will vary from individual to individual. Students may share opinions with each other or argue with others. Students take part in the discussion not only actively but also effectively. There is no right or wrong answers, each of which depends on the social context. After discussion each group is required to give oral presentation of their ideas. As long as they have their own ideas, find proofs to support their ideas and draw a reasonable conclusion, they are forming their own way of thinking gradually instead of blind obedience. Group cooperative learning, autonomous learning skill combined with teachers' instruction, the English and American literature movie appreciation course is on the way of EAP teaching module.

Finally, the last challenge for EAP teachers is to change the roles in class. British scholar Dudley-Evans considers the varied roles of the ESP teacher as instructor, course and materials designer, collaborator and evaluator (Dudley-Evans, 1997). Benesch proposes EAP teacher's role as facilitator or mediator between the subject lecturer and the students. (Benesch, 2001, p xi). The roles EAP teachers should play are dramatically different from those of teachers in traditional class where the relationship between teachers and students are active givers and passive receivers. In the movie appreciation class teachers should provide students with the needed materials before class, plan course schedule and design the classroom presentations. If conditions permit, movie appreciation teachers can also cooperate with other specialists who are expert in western history, culture, religion and other humanistic knowledge. As a result, to be an EAP teacher is not easy, pedagogical experience and language skills are inadequate to be a qualified EAP teacher. Many EAP practitioners (Hyland 2006; Basturkmen, 2002, 31-46, Pecorari, 2006) have been exploring EAP teaching theories and methods among which EAP teachers training is the key issue. Todd discusses the effective approaches of EAP teaching are inductive learning, learner autonomy, authentic materials and tasks, technology and team teaching (Todd, 2003 pp.151-152). To some extent, EAP teachers' roles sound complicated and challenging. Only depending on individual's efforts cannot present the real EAP class. We need the administrative institutions to create varieties of chances to further our study and expand horizons in order to adapt ourselves to the new roles of EAP teachers.

IV. Conclusion

The teaching aim of the English and American literature movie appreciation is to combine language learning with academic skills. For non-English majors, language learning is the foundation and academic skills are the ultimate purpose. The teaching objectives of this course are to train students' abilities of using the language. The abilities of listening, speaking, reading and writing are not restricted to the intercultural communication. For university students in many countries, mastering enough English and the right English to succeed in learning their subject through the medium of English is a matter of great urgency (Hyland and Liz Hamp-Lyons, 2002, p 2). Both teachers and students are non-native speakers in China. What's more, most of the EAP teachers' majors are English literature, linguistics or pedagogics. Interdisciplinary talents are in bad need. At present most of EAP courses in Northeast Normal University are taught by the

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professional teachers with overseas study experiences. As a consequence, the limit of this course lies in its lack of authentic academic tasks. Most of the tasks in class are around art and humanities because the English teachers cannot teach courses related with highly technical and scientific field. Consequently in the near future, the EAP teachers may liaise with the subject teachers to present the real EAP courses.

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Appendix: Teaching Plan of *Gone With the Wind*

Teaching Objectives

A. The Aim of Knowledge

- (1) Enable students to learn some useful words and expressions
- (2) Review the author of the novel and the background of the movie
- (3) Enable students to master the important and difficult points

B. The Aim of Competence

- (1) Enable students to analyze the characteristics of the main characters based on the context
- (2) Learn to find out the arguments to support your viewpoint

(3) Learn to summarize the theme of the film

C. The Aim of Emotion and Moral Education

- (1) Prepare students to own the right judgements of moral beliefs and ethical standard.
- (2) Try seeing things from a different perspective: appreciate the historical event and characters in the film comprehensively and justly

Teaching Contents

Main Characters:

Scarlett O'hara

Rhett Butler---Scarlett's third husband

Ashley Wilkes---Melanie's husband

Melanie Hamilton---Ashley's cousin and wife

Gerald O'hara---Tara's host, Scarlett's father

Charles Hamilton---Scarlett's first husband, Melanie's brother

Frank Kennedy--- Scarlett's second husband

Mammy--- Scarlett's black nurse

John Wikes---Twelve Oak's host

Miss Ellen--- Scarlett's mother

Sue Ellen, Carreen--- Scarlett's younger sisters

Useful words and expressions

cavalier knight barbecue foreman bosom shawl Yankee rascal rabble
arrogance passion for living blockade-running patriot slave auction in
mourning scandalous sacrifice depot tunic surge refugee Confederate
varmint panic dignity siege evacuate parade warehouse ammunition
gallant swaggering typhoid Confederate Bonds famine surrender tattered
Major captured agony corporal velvet intoxicated chandeliers cologne
sanctity speculator quinine beaux Charleston Cross-purpose

We owe him a well-born child. This is our duty.

I never give anything without expecting something in return. I always get paid.

You're throwing away happiness with both hands and reaching out for something that will never make you happy.

The land is the only thing that matters, it's the only thing that lasts.

It seems we've been at cross purpose, doesn't it?

Questions

- (1) Characterize the main character Scarlett. Do you like her? Why and why not?
- (2) What is the attitude of most of the slave owners to the coming war? Are they confident enough to win the war? Is there any difference among them?
- (3) What is the symbolic meaning of Tara?
- (4) How do you comment on Ashley? Do you like him? Is there any difference between Ashley and Rhett?
- (5) Why do most of southerners despise Scarlett after the war?
- (6) What is the theme of the film?

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- (7) Why does Rhett decide to leave in the end? Is there any irrevocable crack between them?
- (8) What do you think of chivalrous spirit in the south before the civil war?
- (9) How do you understand the title “Gone with the wind”?

Teaching Key Points

Exploring the characteristics of the main characters based on the context to understand American culture (race, moral and gender identification)

Teaching Difficult Points

How to evaluate “Gone with the wind” globally

Teaching Design

- (1) Leading in (Free talk and experience some of the activities)
- (2) Pre-reading (Put students into small groups. Ask them to discuss the following: what do you know about the American Civil War? Who was it between? What was it about? How would it feel to be the following people at the time of the Civil War? A plantation worker? A plantation owner?)
- (3) Discussion (Summarize the theme of the film and understand some important details based on the analysis of the dialogues between the main characters)
- (4) Consolidation (Through discussion solve the difficult points to achieve the teaching aims)
- (5) Summary (Summarize the teaching contents and review the important points)
- (6) Homework (Based on the added materials write a paper of no less than 200 words about one of the discussion questions)