Taiwanese College Students' Perceptions of Integrating Multimedia into ESP Courses

Ching-Ying Lin[1*]

[1] Department of Applied English, National Pingtung University, Pingtung, Taiwan

[*] Ching-Ying Lin, E-mail: chingyinglin6@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the learning difficulties and the preferred learning strategies among Taiwanese college students while they were taking English for Specific Purpose (ESP) courses. Two different ESP courses are examined: one of the courses is an undergraduate Marketing English course and the other is an undergraduate Hospitality English course, both in a college of liberal arts and social science in the national university in Taiwan. The instructor in the ESP courses adopted the multimedia—integrated instruction. The multimedia—integrated instruction not only provided authentic materials for learners in the target ESP, but also offered students real situational settings and useful activities that based on individual need. The result of the study indicated that students' self-learning effectiveness in both performance and linguistic skills were significantly improved. In addition, they reported satisfaction with the multimedia-integrated instruction. Thus, the multimedia—integrated instruction increase learners' motivation and also offer a solution to learners' problems in the development of ESP courses.

Keywords

ESP, the multimedia—integrated instruction, language learning strategy, learning difficulty

1. Introduction

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) brings a wonderful movement in language education history. It broadens not only English instructors' visions but also language learners' sights. In order to build up and open the perspective of globalization, Taiwanese government tries very hard to promote English education and enhance English proficiency skills (Lin, C. Y., Chang, & Lin, T. Y., 2014). Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991) states those students' roles as English language speakers and writers outsides of the classroom by its grounding in pedagogy. ESP has been gaining attention in Taiwan more than ten years. A new organization (ETA-ESP) was established within English Teachers' Association (ETA) in Taiwan in 2005. Owing to face the greater expectation for college students' English proficiency level; many Taiwanese universities are encouraging their instructors to manage ESP courses to promote students' English proficiency. The goal of the study is to provide the effective instruction of the English language education that meets the professional needs of students. The purpose of this study was to

investigate the learning difficulties and the preferred learning strategies among Taiwanese college students while they were taking English for Specific Purpose (ESP) courses. Three research questions were addressed in the study: (1) What are the learning strategies used in the ESP courses by Taiwanese college students? (2) What are Taiwanese college students' learning difficulties while they were taking ESP courses? (3) What are Taiwanese college students' feedbacks in the ESP courses after multimedia-integrated instruction?

2. Literature Review

2.1 English for Specific Purposes

Many research studies have explored the effects of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approaches in second language learning for the past years (Zoghi & Far, 2014; Zhang, 2013; Chien & Hsu, 2010; Erfani, Iranmehr, & Davari, 2011; Moslemi, Moinzadeh, & Dabaghi, 2011). Zhang (2013) mentioned that ESP text has been a popular activity in English learning. The demands and the needs of English courses for specific purposes have increased, and it includes tourism English, economic English, business English, and legal English, etc. Otherwise, Chien and Hsu (2010) observed that most teachers in Taiwan have been trained and prepared in the areas. The teaching ESP started very early in China but it has developed so slowly. ESP learners did not see the need to read an original text books in English. The ESP instruction becomes bilingual teaching. Most of them related to linguistic competence, literature and cultural knowledge but do not know enough about other professional fields to effectively teach ESP courses alone. In this study, there was a significant improvement in English skills after taking the ESP course.

According to Dabaghi and Akvan (2014), ESP text encourages students to use strategies in order to increase their comprehension if ESP teachers enclosed strategies into everyday class activities. It would help students to perform good reading habits in order to success in academic reading if teachers explicitly teach reading strategies. Tabatabaei and Hoseini (2014) mentioned that while EFL and ESP learners were using collocations in reading passages, it dealt with the effects of language learning strategies. Students should have a base of English language proficiency before attending ESP classes. Choosing appropriate teaching materials and creating practice situations relevant to specific fields of study are all important components of a successful ESP program.

Hatam and Shafiei (2012) addressed that the ESP courses offered to the students good at reading and understanding the technical texts of their major. A good technical translation and it is exclusively incumbent upon the professionals in the field of Mechanical Engineering. It was emphasis on the students and styles to improve their reading ability. Also, it would increase the motivation of the learners to improve their English proficiency. ESP text made the learners explore and construct the knowledge as well as solving problems through acquired knowledge (Moslemi, Moinzaden, & Dabaghi, 2011).

2.2 Learning Strategies

Learning strategies involve the use of particular techniques or methods by the learner to improve the success of their learning. This section would adapt learning strategies of Oxford's (1994). The result of using learning strategies can reveal that the learner's emotion. Ghonsooly and Loghman (2012) conducted a study to improve the relationship between reading anxiety and their metacognitive reading strategy use. A total of 196 Iranian university EFL learners were studied, the students who got the score of questionnaire below 44 were classified to low anxiety group, more than 64 classified to higher anxiety group. Most of the students who were in low anxiety group answered the positive but the high anxiety group answered the negative, the result of the study was the low anxiety learners with use of high frequent learning strategies.

Henia (2003) was aim to explore how metacognitive strategy training influenced learners' declarative and procedural knowledge, and they use of the learning strategies while reading the articles. Henia (2003) probed that consisted of 61 undergraduate biology students. The participants divided into experimental group and control group, and the instruments used by metacognitive strategy training course. The training course contained 10 units and lasted 10 weeks, and further, the instruments add extra vocabulary and grammar practice. The effect of the study was the students did not familiar the contexts and they failed to deal with the tasks because the reading techniques did not strengthen their background knowledge. However, the finding showed that the metacognitive strategy training course did benefit from that. Judge (2012) explored that the language learning strategies of Spanish adults in a business context. The study consisted of 10 participants, all of them were Spanish, non-native English speakers but used English in their work for business communication like delivering presentations, writing e-mails, communication of meeting. The instrument was that asked the participants to share their experience while they engage their tasks of works for business communication. The result of using learning strategies were the cognitive strategies appeared business communication. One of the participants described that he usually use resources for receiving and sending message and that was consist of Oxford's (1994) theory of cognitive strategies.

2.3 The Perceptions of ESP Courses

Krashen (1988) stated that attitude is the indirection that learners' learning in target language. Besides, the positive attitude would make learners accept the useful input in learning English. As Tsao, Wei and Fang (2008) studied that the perceptions of college students in ESP courses. Their study consisted of 24 English teachers and 353 students. The result of the study was the students considered they were not competent enough to handle ESP learning. Most of the participants agreed that the ESP learning combine with professional skills and ESP courses should fifer form EGP courses in its objectives. Liu (2010) probed that the perceptions of college students in ESP course. A total of 972 non-English major undergraduate students participated in the study and a self-designed questionnaire to collect the data and answer the research questions. The perception of the study was that the students described that listening to questions, answering questions, reading English textbooks, and writing English were the

353

necessary to master. Besides, participants reported that listening to terminologies, reading textbooks were the language skills they need to master. Moreover, the participants considered that listening to English questions, and answering questions in conferences, reading textbooks, and writing English to be the most insufficient skills they possessed. The reason why students wanted to master those skills in ESP courses because the companies often give preference to job applicants who are more proficient in English. Also, the detail of ESP courses related to business that is job-related courses. Besides, undergraduates expect that they can acquire the skills needed for future jobs and the teachers would according the expectations to design the ESP course to fit learners' needs.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

Participants in this study were 73 Taiwanese college students from a national university in southern Taiwan. 41 Taiwanese college students were taking Marketing English course. 32 Taiwanese college students were taking Hospitality English course. Both of these two groups participated in the study during their regular class period. After selecting the sample, they were asked to answer an ESP learning questionnaire.

3.2 Instruments

The instrument utilized to collect data on Taiwanese students' use of language learning strategies, Taiwanese students' learning difficulties and Taiwanese students' feedbacks of the multimedia-integrated instruction in the ESP courses. The categories of language learning strategies were based on Oxford's (1990) diagram of the strategy system. In whole, there were two questionnaires dealing with students' learning strategies, learning difficulties and feedbacks on the multimedia-integrated instruction in the ESP courses at the end of the instruction period. 19 items were asked if they have ever used certain strategy in the ESP learning. 14 items used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (I never do this) to 5 (I always do this). Both of these two returned questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

3.3 Procedure

In the first three weeks, the researcher, also the instructor didn't adopt any multimedia-integrated instruction in the ESP courses. In the fourth week, the instructor started to adopt the multimedia-integrated instruction in the ESP courses. The use of various technological resources included the electronic dictionaries, Web 2.0, virtual platform, internet (web), and multimedia and so on. In the end of the semester, each subject was asked to finish the questionnaire dealing with students' learning strategy. In addition, the subjects were also asked to finish the other questionnaire dealing with students' learning difficulties and students' feedbacks of the multimedia-integrated instruction in the ESP courses.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 What Are the Language Learning Strategies Used in the ESP Courses by Taiwanese College Students?

All of the students (n=74) filled out and returned the language learning strategy surveys (Table 1). Generally speaking, 74 (100%) students used creating mental linkages. Most students used high frequency on memory strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and social strategies. Students seldom used compensation strategies and affective strategies.

Table 1. Results of the Questionnaire about Strategy Uses (N=ME:42, HE:32)

Strategy	Item	Major	Frequency	Total Frequency	Percentage (%)
Memory Strategies	Creating mental linkages	ME	41	73	100
		HE	32		100
	Applying images and sounds	ME	35	62	85.4
		HE	27		84.4
	Reviewing well	ME	36	66	87.8
		HE	30		93.8
	Employing action	ME	36	64	90
		HE	28		87.5
Cognitive strategies	Practicing	ME	32	59	78
		HE	27		84.4
	Receiving and sending messages	ME	35	64	85.4
		HE	29		90.6
	Analyzing and reasoning	ME	35	62	85.4
		HE	27		84.4
	Creating structure for input and output	ME	37	57	90.2
		HE	20		62.5
Compensation Strategies	Guessing intelligently	ME	4	8	9.8
		HE	2		6.3
	Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	ME	2	10	4.9
		HE	8		25
Metacognitive strategies	Centering your learning	ME	36	64	87.8
		HE	28		87.5
	Arranging and planning your learning	ME	37	66	90.2
		HE	29		90.6
	Evaluation your learning	ME	35	63	85.4
		HE	28		87.5

355

Affective strategies	Lowering your anxiety	ME	3	5	7.3
		HE	2		6.3
	Encouraging yourself	ME	2	4	4.9
		HE	2		6.3
	Taking your emotional temperature	ME	3	5	7.3
		HE	2		6.3
Social strategies	Asking questions	ME	39	69	95.1
		HE	30		93.8
	Cooperating with others	ME	39	69	95.1
		HE	30		93.8
	Empathizing with others	ME	38	68	92.7
		HE	30		93.8

Note. ME=Marketing English course, HE=Hospitality English course.

4.1.2 What Are Taiwanese College Students' Learning Difficulties while They Were Taking ESP Courses?

The top three of Taiwanese college students' learning difficulties while they were taking ESP courses are lack of background knowledge, inability to comprehend text meaning, and inadequate amount of vocabulary (Table 2). The bottom three of Taiwanese college students' learning difficulties while they were taking ESP courses are inability to understand grammar and sentence structure, lack of vocabulary knowledge, and inability to find the related resources (Table 2).

Table 2. Results of the Questionnaire about Difficulties (N=ME:42, HE:32)

Item	Major	Mean	SD	Rank	*t-test*	*Sig.*
1. Lack of background knowledge	ME	3.93	0.85	1	6.65	0.00
	HE	2.50	0.98			
2. Lack of vocabulary knowledge	ME	4.07	0.85	5	3.11	0.00
	HE	3.34	1.15			
3. Inadequate amount of vocabulary	ME	4.27	0.81	3	6.03	0.00
	HE	2.78	1.29			
4. Inability to comprehend text meaning	ME	3.95	0.76	2	6.22	0.00
	HE	2.81	0.86			
5. Inability to understand grammar and sentence structure	ME	3.51	0.93	6	1.75	0.08
	HE	3.09	1.12			
6. Inability to find the related resources	ME	4.02	0.96	4	5.33	0.00
	HE	2.75	1.08			

Note. ME=Marketing English course, HE=Hospitality English course.

4.1.3 What Are Taiwanese College Students' Feedbacks in the ESP Courses after Multimedia-Integrated Instruction?

The top three of Taiwanese college students' satisfactions while they were taking ESP courses with the multimedia-integrated instruction are improving their writing skills for their ESP courses, helping their related cognition and skills for preparing their ESP courses and improve their translation skills for their ESP courses (Table 3). The bottom three of Taiwanese college students' satisfactions while they were taking ESP courses with the multimedia-integrated instruction are improving my reading skills for my ESP courses, recommending their ESP instructors to use the multimedia-integrated instruction, and improving my listening skills for my ESP courses (Table 3).

Table 3. Results of the Questionnaire about Satisfaction (N=ME:42, HE:32)

Item	Major	Mean	SD	Rank	*t-test*	*Sig.*
1. The multimedia-integrated instruction is helpful to improve vocabulary for my ESP courses.	ME	3.90	0.80	4	4.15	0.00
	HE	3.25	0.44			
2. The multimedia-integrated instruction is helpful to improve my listening skills for my ESP courses.	ME	4.17	0.74	6	3.46	0.00
	HE	3.59	0.67			
3. The multimedia-integrated instruction is helpful to improve my speaking skills for my ESP courses.	ME	4.07	0.79	5	3.65	0.00
	HE	3.44	0.67			
4. The multimedia-integrated instruction is helpful to improve my reading skills for my ESP courses.	ME	3.90	0.80	8	2.28	0.00
	HE	3.50	0.67			
5. The multimedia-integrated instruction is helpful to improve my writing skills for my ESP courses.	ME	4.44	0.67	1	5.72	0.03
	HE	3.56	0.62			
6. The multimedia-integrated instruction is helpful to improve my translation skills for my ESP courses.	ME	4.17	0.70	3	4.58	0.00
	HE	3.41	0.71			
7. The multimedia-integrated instruction helps my related cognition and skills for preparing my ESP courses.	ME	4.41	0.67	2	4.68	0.00
	HE	3.69	0.64			
8. I would recommend my ESP instructors to use the multimedia-integrated instruction.	ME	3.90	0.80	7	3.20	0.00
	HE	3.34	0.65			

Note. ME=Marketing English course, HE=Hospitality English course.

4.2 Discussion

The following conclusions can be drawn with reference to the research questions. The first issue involved the research methodology for identifying the language learning strategies Taiwanese college students used on their own in the ESP courses. Both of these two groups seldom used strategies in

encouraging themselves, lowering their anxiety, taking their emotional temperature, guessing intelligently, and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing. These students were not familiar with using compensation strategies and affective strategies. The second issue discussed was Taiwanese college students' language learning difficulties in the ESP courses. Both of these two groups showed that they didn't think inability to understand grammar and sentence structure led difficulties in learning ESP courses. In addition, students from Marketing English course showed much weaker than students from Hospitality English course in learning ESP courses. The third issue addressed Taiwanese college students' feedbacks in the ESP courses after the multimedia-integrated instruction. All the feedbacks were positive. All the students were satisfied with the multimedia-integrated instruction. Students from Marketing English course showed much more positive attitude on the survey. Both of these two groups showed that they improved much on writing and speaking than reading and listening. They performed better on productive skills than receptive skills after the multimedia-integrated instruction.

5. Conclusion

Using various technological resources in teaching or learning should be more frequently applied within all the ESP courses. The majority of language learners today use different kinds of multimedia resources in language learning. Through the instructor in the ESP course adopting the multimedia—integrated instruction, the multimedia—integrated instruction not only provided authentic materials for learners in the target ESP, but also offered students real situational settings and useful activities that based on individual need. The result of the study indicated that students' self-learning effectiveness in both performance and linguistic skills were significantly improved. In addition, they reported satisfaction with the multimedia-integrated instruction. Thus, the multimedia—integrated instruction increases learners' motivation and also offers a solution to learners' problems in the development of ESP courses.

References

Chien, C. N., & Hsu, M. (2010). A case study of incorporating ESP instruction into the university English course. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *9*, 1885-1888.

Dabaghi, A., & Akvan, M. (2014). Explore the relationship between strategy use and ESP reading test performance of two university majors (humanities vs. science). *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *4*, 121-128.

Dhieb-Henia, N. (2003). Evaluating the effectiveness of metacognitive strategy training for reading research articles in an ESP context. *English for Specific Purposes*, *22*(4), 387-417.

Erfani, S. M., Iranmehr, A., & Davari, H. (2011). Deepening ESP reading comprehension through visualization. *Journal of Language Teaching an Research*, *2*(1), 270-273.

Ghonsooly, B., & Loghmani, Z. (2012). The Relationship Between EFL Learners' Reading Anxiety levels and their Metacognitive Reading Strategy use. *International Journal of Linguistics*, *4*(3),

320-333.

Hatam, A. H., & Shafiei, S. (2012). The Evaluation of the Effectiveness of ESP Courses in Enhancing Technical Translation Proficiency: A Case Study of ESP Course for Mechanical Engineering Students. *English Language Teaching*, *5*(5), 68-78.

Johns, A. M., & Dudley-Evans, T. (1991), English for Specific Purposes: International in Scope, Specific in Purpose. *TESOL Quarterly*, *25*, 297-314.

Judge, J. W. (2012). Use of language learning strategies by Spanish adults for business English. *International Journal of English Studies*, *12*(1), 37-54.

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon: Oxford.

Lin, C. Y., Chang, W. H., & Lin, T. Y. (2014). The Study on Constructing a Curriculum Model of Hotel English for Undergraduate Hospitality Management in Taiwan. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *4*(10), 2001-2007.

Liu, J. Y. (2010). *Investigating College Students' Necessities, Wants, and Lacks in English for General Purposes and English for Specific Purposes* (pp. 1-120). A Master Thesis. Presented to Institute of TESOL, National Chiao Tung University.

Moslemi, F., Moinzadeh, A., & Dabaghi, A. (2011). ESP needs analysis of Iranian MA students: A case study of the university of Isfahan. *English Language Teaching*, *4*(4), 121-128.

Oxford, R. L. (1994). *Language learning strategies: An update ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics*. Center for Applied Linguistics.

Tabatabaei, O., & Hoseini, H. S. (2014). EFL and ESP learners' use of language learning strategies: A study of collocations. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *5*(1), 112-120.

Tsao, C., Wie, A., & Fang, A. (2008). ESP for College Students in Taiwan: Survey of Student and Faculty Perception. *International Symposium on ESP*, 245-262.

Zhang, J. (2013). The ESP instruction: A study based on the pattern of autonomous Inquiry. *English Language Teaching*, *6*(3), 72-77.

Zoghi, M., & Far, L. M. (2014). The relationship of learning styles (synoptic vs ecstatic learners) with ESP students' reading strategies and reading comprehension. *Journal of Social issues & Humanities*, *2*(3), 210-215.