

Innovation and Practice of English Language Teaching for Doctoral Candidates in Institutions of Higher Education

Zhan Ying, Li Yali, Xue Yuanyuan

Xi'an High-tech Research Institute, Xi'an, Shaanxi, 710025, China

Keywords: Practice path; doctoral English; teaching innovation

Abstract: Nowadays, the internationalisation of higher education has become an important development direction, and the requirements for talent cultivation have been gradually improved. In this context, the construction and implementation of traditional English courses for doctoral students in universities can hardly meet the needs of doctoral training. In order to achieve scientific education and consolidate the development foundation of internationalisation of higher education, it is necessary to actively innovate doctoral English courses, scientifically make up for the shortcomings of traditional doctoral English teaching, and then ensure the quality teaching effect and improve the English teaching level of doctoral students. Based on the current situation, this paper will analyse the problems existing in the optimization of doctoral English courses in colleges and universities, and put forward specific measures in order to provide reasonable reference for the innovative teaching of doctoral English in the future.

1. Introduction

It is found that China's postgraduate education system is divided into doctoral and master's degree programmes, of which doctoral degree represents the highest level of education. At present, the trend of globalisation has been very obvious, as doctoral students need to have strong international communication ability, which can help the development of national economy and society. Based on this, the Ministry of Education has issued a relevant guidance document, in which it is pointed out in the Graduate English Syllabus (for non-English majors) that the cultivation of doctoral students' English proficiency needs to be emphasised at this stage, so as to ensure that they are adept at using English as a tool of communication, and to carry out better research and international exchanges, and then to meet the requirements of the education and cultivation of high-level talents and to make contributions to the development of the country. Under the requirements of talent cultivation in the new era, colleges and universities should formulate efficient English teaching plans according to the development needs of the country, clarify the objectives and specific contents of doctoral English teaching, so as to ensure that doctoral students have the ability of international communication and the ability to apply English.

2. The Necessity of Doctoral English Course Innovation

2.1. Changing Students' Perception of English Learning

By increasing the content of international communication and other practical training in doctoral English teaching, it can change doctoral students' cognition of English learning, improve their English communication ability, and make them clear about the positive significance of English learning for individuals and the country. In teaching practice, practical training courses such as academic papers and conference speeches can also be added to improve students' communication level.

2.2. It can realise the change from single classroom to diversified and three-dimensional classroom

Through the innovation of doctoral English courses, students' practical experience and knowledge can be enriched from the perspective of "communication", and a highly efficient English innovation education model can be constructed by focusing on students, making use of the basic teaching method of "student report + student seminar" to make up for the deficiencies of traditional teaching and giving full play to the diversified and three-dimensional teaching. The basic teaching method of "student report + student seminar" is used to make up for the shortcomings of traditional curriculum teaching and give full play to the teaching advantages of diversified and three-dimensional classrooms. In addition, in terms of teaching content innovation and enrichment, we can increase the content of courses such as Chinese-English Comparative Translation to enrich the teaching content of the course, in-depth comparison of Chinese and Western cultures, so as to enhance the students' national and cultural self-confidence, to ensure that the doctoral students' strong language skills, and thus meet the needs of high-quality personnel training and education [1].

3. The main ideas of doctoral English programme innovation

At present, the innovation of doctoral English curriculum has been imperative, in order to ensure the implementation of the effect of English teaching, it is necessary to clarify the direction and focus of the teaching reform, so as to eliminate the practical problems in English teaching and improve the quality of English teaching. First of all, the teaching content of practical English should be increased. In reality, it is important to improve the doctor's comprehensive application of English, especially oral expression and writing ability, to ensure that English becomes an effective practical tool to ensure the development potential of doctoral students. Secondly, focus on the application of pedagogy with fun. Because of the lack of innate language environment in English learning, it is difficult to learn, so in the teaching practice, we need to take the way of fun teaching methods to effectively relieve the learning pressure, to ensure that the doctoral students have more energy to participate in scientific research activities, and at the same time, catalyse the enthusiasm of the doctoral students to learn [2]. Finally, the flexible setting of English courses. In order to adapt to the needs of English teaching under the new situation, it is necessary to ensure that the teaching form and means of diversity, set up a flexible English course, to ensure that students can combine their own needs to make up for their shortcomings, to ensure the effectiveness of English teaching.

4. Analysis of the Current Situation of English Teaching in Colleges and Universities

4.1. Old English Teaching Mode

English teaching for doctoral students is very different from ordinary English teaching, and it is necessary to improve the teaching quality requirements and standards. Combined with the reality, it can be seen that some doctoral students have a single form of English teaching, and they are used to adopting the traditional way of word memorisation and reading comprehension to deepen students' learning memory. In this mode, students will gradually become bored, which is not conducive to the strengthening of the effect of English teaching. According to the survey results, most of the doctoral students hope that they can have more practical training such as dissertation writing and oral practice during their study, so as to guarantee their English application ability. However, the reality is that students spend more time on theoretical knowledge and less time on practical exercises, so they are not interested and the pressure of learning is heavy.

4.2. Oral communication ability needs to be improved

According to the results of the survey, China's traditional English teaching attaches relative importance to the study of grammar and reading, and the practical training content of oral communication is relatively small, resulting in a relative lack of English language environment, such a teaching mode will make it difficult to improve the students' oral English level as well as their ability [3]. In the case of poor oral communication ability of doctoral students, it is usually difficult for students to participate in international academic exchanges, which in turn directly causes the effect of academic exchanges to be affected.

4.3. Thesis writing ability needs to be strengthened urgently

It has been observed that doctoral students are required to engage in extensive reading, translating, and synthesizing of foreign academic materials as part of their daily research activities in order to stay abreast of the latest academic developments. Consequently, there exists a higher demand for English proficiency among doctoral students. Moreover, doctoral students are also expected to present their research findings in the form of well-crafted literature to be published in international journals, making their English writing and translation skills pivotal for their academic advancement. However, the current state of English writing training for doctoral students lags behind, as it fails to integrate with the publication process of academic papers. This deficiency in training results in subpar writing abilities among doctoral students, which impede their capacity to efficiently partake in international academic exchanges and, consequently, hampers their future academic progress.

5. Effective implementation path of English teaching for doctoral students in colleges and universities

5.1. Innovative English Teaching Methods for Doctoral Students

In view of the problem of poor teaching effect of English courses for doctoral students caused by the old teaching mode, the reality is that we need to actively innovate the teaching method, to ensure the advancement and effectiveness of the English teaching method for doctoral students, so as to scientifically stimulate the enthusiasm of doctoral students to learn English and create a good learning atmosphere. Specific measures include: first, the implementation of project-driven teaching

method. During the actual teaching period, we should clarify the goal of English teaching for doctoral students in the new period, improve the English teaching design with the background of international academic exchange, thereby guaranteeing the effectiveness of teaching and promoting the enhancement of students' learning initiative. In practice, the English Course for Academic Exchange can be used as the teaching material to strengthen students' ability training and focus on the cultivation of students' English speaking ability. The classroom adopts the effective measures of individual presentation and group discussion to drive students to carry out in-depth learning by tasks and mobilise students' enthusiasm. To enhance doctoral students' practical English skills, several measures should be implemented. Firstly, it is crucial to intensify oral training for students and facilitate a comfortable environment which encourages regular oral practice. By doing so, the desired learning outcomes can be achieved with less effort. In addition, homework assignments should be revamped to ensure effective English oral communication and writing practice. This approach will also help to improve the overall teaching efficacy. Secondly, there is a need to augment the teaching content related to Chinese and Western cultural comparisons. This not only enhances the English teaching standards but also fosters students' learning confidence and strengthens their intercultural communication abilities. Moreover, to address the inadequacy in practical English skills, the curriculum needs to incorporate Chinese-English translation training, thereby enabling students to internalize their knowledge and deepen their understanding of both cultures. Emphasis should also be placed on strengthening the training of Chinese-English comparative translation and increasing the content of English-Chinese writing and rhetoric. This diversification will assist students in breaking free from Chinese thinking patterns and developing effective writing habits, ultimately improving their academic communication standards. Thirdly, students should be guided to establish cultural confidence by incorporating Chinese and Western cultural comparisons and promoting traditional Chinese culture within the English learning process. This approach subtly ingrains a positive outlook within doctoral students and encourages substantial engagement with English literature to gain a more profound understanding of international culture. It is imperative to promote and enhance the influence of Chinese culture in international interactions. Fourthly, the incorporation of ideology and politics into the curriculum is essential to guide students in establishing correct cultural values. This approach will enable future academic exchanges to better position the students within the Chinese market and improve the influence of their work. Furthermore, inviting experts and scholars to deliver high-quality lectures on advanced academic concepts contributes to the enhancement of the teaching experience. Lastly, a combination of extracurricular academic resource construction and targeted teaching reforms are necessary to facilitate the construction of a comprehensive teaching platform and help doctoral students overcome English learning difficulties, ultimately enhancing their communication abilities. Regular updates through channels such as the QQ group and WeChat group will ensure timely information sharing and support the progression of the doctoral students.

5.2. Provide speaking courses for doctoral students

In view of the actual problem of weak speaking ability of doctoral students, optimisation measures should be taken in real-life teaching to increase the content of practical training in speaking, guarantee the construction quality of the courses, and improve the interest of doctoral students in English teaching. Combined with the real experience, if we want to enhance the practical ability of students and improve the oral proficiency of doctoral students in a short time, we can set up oral courses for doctoral students in accordance with the actual situation of the students, so as to cultivate the students' multiple abilities. The teaching of international cooperation and communication can be strengthened, and diplomacy can be invited to participate in the teaching if

necessary, so as to optimise the content of the teaching materials and the speaking courses. In addition, the spoken English courses of applied English can be added according to the ability level of the students, so as to clarify the realistic requirements of the spoken English teaching for doctoral students. The oral course curriculum can adopt the teaching mode from shallow to deep in practice, enriching and perfecting the course content one by one to ensure that oral communication involves all aspects of daily life and work. Fully integrating on-campus and off-campus resources, a good pure foreign language environment can be created in which doctoral students can hone their oral communication skills. In order to effectively reduce the learning pressure, various forms of cultural exchange activities can be organised, and the assessment content can be adjusted to help the sustainable development of doctoral English courses.

For example, in practice, campus classroom exercises can be held in simulation of international academic conferences to enhance the enthusiasm of doctoral students to speak English and strengthen their practical ability, so as to provide a guarantee for future academic exchanges and English teaching. In order to scientifically strengthen the teaching effect, we can boldly innovate and optimise the classroom teaching mode, and launch a series of practical activities inside and outside the classroom, such as "Simulated International Academic Conferences for Doctoral Students", which will help the doctoral students to accumulate experience and practice their academic communication ability, and at the same time, improve the standard of English teaching. In the specific activities, doctoral students can learn about the implementation process of the academic conference from various perspectives, such as submitting abstracts, emails, checking in at the conference, communicating in groups, and reporting research results. During the whole process, doctoral students can try to communicate in English, using contextual teaching to stimulate their interest in English learning, optimise their learning experience in real simulated contexts, and help them appreciate the charm of international academic exchange.

5.3. Provide more elective courses on English thesis writing for doctoral students

In addition to the above measures, additional elective courses on English dissertation writing should be set up for doctoral students, so as to enhance their ability of academic communication and dissertation writing. Combined with the current teaching situation, it can be seen that in the English teaching of doctoral students, the training of English writing still stays at a single level, which is not sufficiently combined with the real needs of doctoral students. For this reason, in the innovative English teaching mode, an elective course on English thesis writing for doctoral students can be specially set up in combination with the future development needs of doctoral students, so as to ensure the comprehensive improvement of doctoral students' English ability. In the elective course, more practical writing training should be carried out to improve the English writing requirements of doctoral students in specific situations. Meanwhile, high-quality teaching evaluation should be carried out, and students' mutual evaluation should be introduced into the teaching evaluation system to ensure that doctoral students can make progress among themselves and improve the comprehensive strength of English application.

6. Conclusion

In summary, under the background of the comprehensive implementation of quality education, the talent cultivation of doctoral students has put forward high requirements. In order to adapt to the situation of the era of international cultural exchanges, it is necessary to pay attention to the innovation and optimisation of the English teaching of doctoral students, to stimulate the enthusiasm of doctoral students in English learning and to consolidate the foundation of the English teaching of doctoral students by improving the teaching process and optimising the teaching

experience. In reality, the current situation of English teaching for doctoral students can be improved with the help of targeted measures such as innovating English teaching methods for doctoral students, opening oral courses for doctoral students and adding elective courses for doctoral students' English dissertation writing, so as to provide quality guarantee for the cultivation of high-quality talents.

References

[1] Zhou Dan. *Exploration on the Innovative Practice of Blended Teaching Reform of Core Courses of English Majors in Applied Undergraduate Colleges and Universities--Taking Comprehensive English as an Example*[J]. *Overseas English*, 2023, (12):129-131.

[2] Gu Shan, Song Xingjian, Gao Jing. *New ideas and practical paths for the innovative development of English teaching in colleges and universities under the perspective of curriculum politics*[J]. *Journal of Liuzhou Institute of Vocational Technology*, 2022, 22(04):109-113.

[3] Xu Qiong. *Exploration of teaching reform and practice innovation of English curriculum in colleges and universities under the new situation*[J]. *Curriculum Education Research*, 2019,(51):103-104.

[4] Liao Fei, Gong Wei, Wu Jing. *A case study on the innovation of "curriculum politics" in the teaching and practice of college English in applied colleges and universities*[J]. *Overseas English*, 2019,(18):109-110.