

# Teaching Reform and Practice for English Major in Applied Undergraduate Colleges and Universities

Jianbo Xu

College of Foreign Languages, Xiangnan University, Chenzhou 423000, Hunan Province, China

jingle5132@163.com

**Keywords:** Applied colleges and universities, Undergraduate, English major, Teaching reform and practice

**Abstract:** With the deepening of higher education reform, the English major education in applied colleges and universities has changed from the cultivation of examination-oriented ability to the cultivation of practical application ability. Although the initial results have been achieved, there are still some outstanding problems in the curriculum, which have become a bottleneck restricting the future education reform for English major. Based on the author's learning and teaching experience in applied colleges and universities, this work first analyzes the problems in the teaching process for English major, and then puts forward the possible solutions to carry out the teaching reform and practice.

## 1. Introduction

In the *Outline of National Medium-and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010/2020)*, it points out that we should be proficient in relevant foreign languages, familiar with international rules with an international vision, and good at grasping opportunities and striving for active international talents in global competition. Therefore, applied colleges and universities must fully consider their own teaching purposes and specifications to determine the talent training objectives for English major and formulate the quality requirements of talent training. For this purpose, this work attempts to analyze the common teaching problems for English major in applied colleges and universities, and then tries to find possible reform paths for the teaching reform.

## 2. Problems in the Teaching process for English Major in Applied Colleges and Universities

### 2.1 Unclear Curriculum objectives

English majors in applied colleges and universities are different in terms of enrollment, but there is still a significant gap in enrollment scale, admission criteria and teacher staffing in specialized teaching. However, in practical teaching, applied colleges and universities do not set up courses according to these differences. English major courses are often trained every semester or every stage, and there is no unified and systematic training teaching plan. There is a lack of communication and contact among various disciplines, and there is no unified method to train applied talents of English majors. This is obviously inconsistent with the development of English major education in applied colleges and universities, and it is even more impractical, making it difficult to achieve good results in teaching. It can be seen that defining the curriculum objectives and making them suitable for the cultivation of applied talents have become the forerunner of the teaching innovation for English major in applied colleges and universities in the new period.

### 2.2 Unfeatured course setting

English major in applied colleges and universities has offered English skills courses, English professional knowledge courses and some other related courses. However, the curriculum has no characteristics and is somehow out of touch with the needs of the industry, which is a major

drawback for English major teaching in applied colleges and universities at present. Many applied colleges and universities set up English major courses, most of which revolve around the main courses. This kind of course emphasizes strong theoretical and technical ability, which can strengthen students' basic English ability, but it is divorced from social practice and social ability demand, so it is difficult to improve the knowledge of English related fields. Although the teaching materials of related professional courses are more flexible, it is lack of planning and class hours are limited, so it is difficult to improve the cultivation of quality stars. On the other hand, teachers still follow the teaching mode of "Language Center" and "Text Center" when they teach English. Under this kind of teaching mode, the English classroom basically revolves around the teacher as the center. At the end of the whole class, the focus is on the teaching of language knowledge, and students passively accept language knowledge, lack the opportunity to practice language skills, and even the language communication activities are almost zero.

### 2.3 Impractical arrangement of course content

For the curriculum content of English major, it should not only reflect the basic requirements of English courses, but also keep up with the current situation of subject development to meet the needs of the current economic globalization and regional economic development trend. However, at present, the course content of the English major in the applied undergraduate college is seriously disconnected from the development trend of globalization, and the course content is still mainly set up with knowledge education, resulting in that the module for cultivating students' social practice ability is seriously insufficient. The content of this kind of curriculum, which is mainly based on the dissemination of theoretical knowledge, is seriously lack of sense of the times, lack of practicability and pertinence. This kind of curriculum content has been gradually derailed with the development needs of the society, which is not conducive to the sustainable development of students and is seriously inconsistent with the requirements of the society for English professionals in the new period.

## 3. Teaching and Practice Reform Solutions for English Major in Applied colleges and Universities

According to the thoughts to train applied talents, this work put forward the possible solutions for English major teaching and practice reform, as shown in Fig. 1.

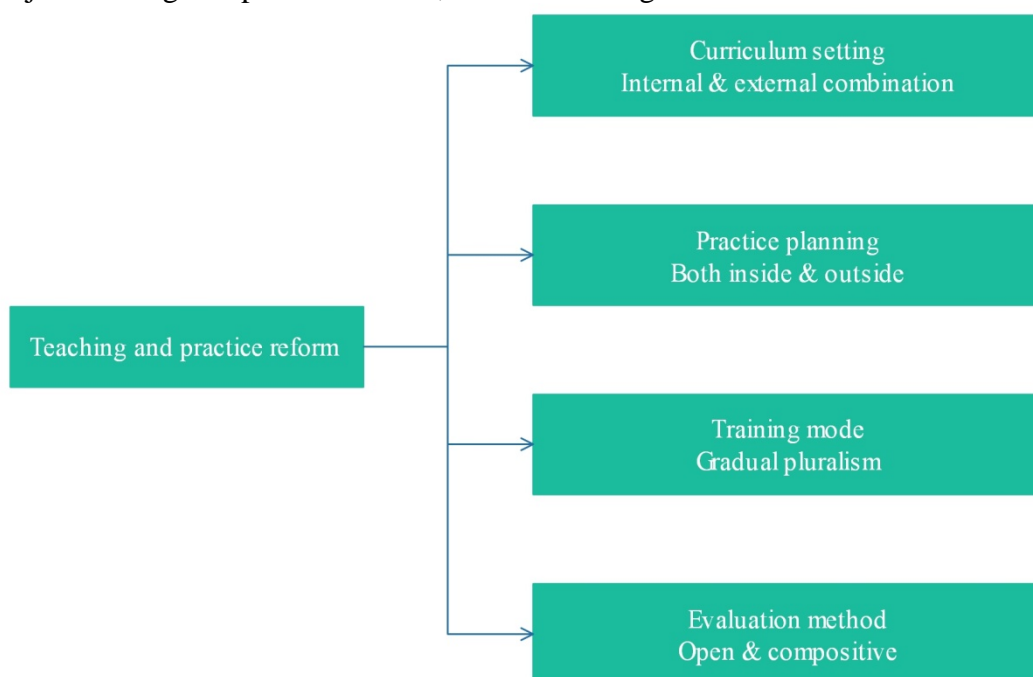


Figure 1. The possible solutions for English major teaching and practice reform

### **3.1 Curriculum setting: Internal & external combination**

The most important thing in the cultivation of applied talents is to cultivate more high-quality talents with strong adaptability and innovation ability. The "internal and external combination" of curriculum setting refers to the combination of knowledge and ability in curriculum arrangement, the combination of internal and out-of-school curriculum vision, and the combination of planned and unplanned curriculum. Setting up innovation courses to form innovation modules (e.g., new courses, like *Introduction to Professional Innovation*, *Advanced Mathematics of Liberal Arts* in the training plan). Introduction to Professional Innovation can make students understand professional learning, research and application, and stimulate their learning interests; Advanced Mathematics in Arts can take into account the interest of students future employment. At the same time, the original curriculum should be reformed, such as *Selected Reading of British and American Literary Works* replaces *Selected Reading and Creation of British and American Literature*, and/or *English Recitation and Speech* replaces *English Speech and Debate*. The traditional technical courses based on language training are relatively simple, and students lack the training of deep learning and speculative ability. Speculative language skills class can avoid simple retelling, memory and imitation, emphasize the output of foreign languages on the basis of independent thinking and discussion, debate, and thus realizing the dual improvement of language skills and speculative ability.

### **3.2 Practice planning: Both inside & outside**

Practice mainly includes two aspects: inside and outside the school. The former includes English corner, online question answering, English competition and foreign language park activities outside the course. Also, it is necessary to carry out various practical activities, such as English drama competition, English vocabulary competition, English speech contest, English dubbing competition, English horn and reading salon, to cultivate students' speculative and innovative ability. These activities will be integrated into the credit system of innovative practice, and the students who participate in the activities and achieve certain achievements in the form of innovative practical credits. The latter includes post practice, cooperative education and so on. Application-oriented training focuses on out-of-school practice, so that students are able to go to society ahead of time. Interpretation, tour guide training and advanced oral training are carried out in the second semester focusing on students to engage in simulation practice outside the school. At the same time, organize students to participate in international animation festival and other activities to train students' interpretation ability. In addition, we should actively promote and improve the construction of practice bases and build a number of practice bases for English major.

### **3.3 Training mode: Gradual pluralism**

Follow the principle of people-oriented to try a variety of training methods. The first is to adopt the way of professional diversion after the big class of teaching. This kind of training method cooperates with the big class enrollment. The advantage is that through the study of basic English courses, students will further clarify their own interests, development direction and social needs. The second is to try the "set meal system", "binding customization" and "cooperative system" for talent training. "Set meal system" refers to the establishment of a course selection package with clear employment direction and specialized ability on the basis of the credit system, so as to realize the effective supply of courses and training. "Binding customization" refers to the realization of the integration of compulsory courses and optional courses by restricting the excessive arbitrariness of students' course selection, especially to improve the comprehensive quality of students' major and humanistic quality, which is mandatory under certain conditions. "Cooperative system" refers to cooperative education, cooperation with enterprises and institutions outside the school, regular participation in post practice to improve students' vocational adaptability. These training methods not only accord with the direction of modern educational reform and development, but also provide a variety of alternative paradigm for improving students' quality and ability.

### 3.4 Evaluation method: Open & composite

The English major curriculum should adopt a diversified, multi-level and multi-dimensional formative evaluation and summation evaluation system. The concrete includes: (1) The diversified examination form. In addition to the closed volume written examination, the professional course examination can also adopt a certain proportion of oral examination, investigation report, course paper and open volume examination and so on; (2) Increasing the proportion of the usual score and popularizing the portfolio evaluation to realize the multi-stage of the evaluation. The total evaluation result is composed of the usual score, the mid-term score and the final result, and increases the ordinary score. In the proportion of the total evaluation results, the composition of the usual results has a variety of items; (3) Changing the role of evaluator from a single teacher evaluation to a combination of teacher evaluation and student self-evaluation, which provides students with the opportunity and ability of self-cognition. The self-reflection, self-monitoring and self-evaluation ability involved in students' self-evaluation can not only improve the academic development of students, but also promote the cultivation of ability.

### 4. Summary

At present, foreign language researchers are more aware that the social demand for English talents is diversified, and the traditional English major education has been unable to live up with the rapid development of social needs. Applied colleges and universities must fully consider their own teaching purposes and specifications to determine the talent training objectives for English major and formulate the quality requirements of talent training. This work explores the problems in the talents cultivation for English major in applied colleges and universities, and put forward some possible countermeasures for the reform. It will help to better serve the needs of society and promote the sustainable development of foreign language subjects and foreign language teaching in China.

### References

- [1] Zhang, Z.. (2007). Towards an integrated approach to teaching business english: a chinese experience. *English for Specific Purposes*, 26(4), 0-410.
- [2] Chowdhury, R., & Kabir, A.. (2014). Language wars: english education policy and practice in bangladesh. *Multilingual Education*, 4(1), 21.
- [3] Mccloskey, M. L., Orr, J., & Dolitsky, M.. (2006). Teaching english as a foreign language in primary school. Case studies in tesol practice series. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Inc, 250.
- [4] Neuman, S. B., & Gambrell, L. B.. (2014). Editorial: disruptive innovations in reading research and practice. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 50(1).
- [5] Alsup, J., Emig, J., Pradl, G., Tremmel, R., Yagelski, R. P., & Alvine, L., et al. (2006). Reconstructing english education for the 21st century: a report on the cee summit || the state of english education and a vision for its future: a call to arms. *English Education*, 38(4), 278-294.
- [6] Dover, & Alison, G.. (2013). Teaching for social justice: from conceptual frameworks to classroom practices. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 15(1), 3-11.
- [7] PG Noble. (1997). Stones in the road: the impact of standards-based reform on local policy, programs, and practice. *Curriculum Development*, 15.