

## Analysis of the Problems in College Postgraduates' Public English Teaching and Exploration of the Improvement Strategies

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**Abstract:** At present, learning and using English has become a craze. As the main channel for training and transporting talents for the society, colleges and universities should conform to the requirements of the times and cultivate more talents who use English comprehensively. Its teaching goal is to cultivate students' comprehensive English application ability, especially listening and speaking and translating ability, so that they can communicate effectively in English in their future study, work and social interaction, and at the same time enhance their autonomous learning ability and improve their comprehensive cultural literacy to meet the needs of China's social development and international communication. With the increasing number of graduate students, with the acceleration of China's internationalization process and China's accession to the WTO(World Trade Organization), the society has put forward higher requirements for the overall quality of graduate students, especially the quality of foreign languages, so how to do a good job in the teaching of graduate English in the new period is particularly important. This paper deeply analyzes the problems existing in ELT(English Language Teaching), and based on the correct teaching theory, puts forward some strategies to improve the teaching effect.

### 1. Introduction

Economic globalization and internationalization of science and technology are becoming new features of the times. In order to adapt to this change and improve international competitiveness, many countries in the world have begun to take measures to strengthen foreign language education, especially ELT, whose obvious purpose is to cultivate first-class talents with strong international competitiveness [1]. With the continuous expansion of enrollment in colleges and universities, the number of students is increasing year by year. English teachers in most colleges and universities have heavy teaching tasks, have no time and energy to engage in teaching research, have few opportunities to go out for further study and training, and cannot update their teaching concepts and improve their teaching skills in time [2]. Therefore, improving the quality of college English teaching and cultivating high-quality compound English talents needed by society is one of the problems that the whole society, especially educators, pay special attention to. Although ELT has made some progress and achievements through a series of teaching reforms with the efforts of all sectors of society, there are still some problems [3-4]. If we don't change the existing concept, mode and mechanism of examination-oriented education in university ELT in time and thoroughly, we can't cultivate senior talents who are proficient in English to meet the requirements of the times. Therefore, the urgency and inevitability of university public ELT reform coexist [5]. According to students' existing knowledge, ability level and potential tendency, teachers scientifically divide students into several groups with similar levels and treat them differently. These groups get the best development and improvement in teachers' appropriate stratification strategy and interaction. The implementation of hierarchical teaching in public ELT is helpful to break the traditional single teaching mode and realize the goal of interpersonal face-to-face teaching by improving students' listening and speaking ability. Focusing on listening and speaking is based on the comprehensive training of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and giving priority to developing listening and speaking ability while paying full attention to listening, speaking, reading and writing. Revising the

syllabus, English textbooks, curriculum and teaching methods, at the same time, increasing the investment in voice laboratories and multimedia equipment, changing the examination and evaluation system, and strengthening the cultivation of students' English application ability have become the top priority of university public ELT reform [6].

## **2. The Current Problems in Public English Teaching for Graduate Students**

### **2.1. Single teaching format**

Many schools still focus on teachers, assign a set of textbooks, and use blackboard as a medium for indoctrination teaching in the classroom. Teachers inside and outside the textbook will copy the entire text of the designated textbook, and will not supplement relevant hot topics related to social development and economic situation collected from online sources. ELT inside and outside the classroom will only be limited to limited class hours of learning[7]. Classroom teaching still adopts the method of teacher explanation as the main approach, and how to grasp classroom activities in the application of communicative teaching method has become a difficult problem in the application of communicative teaching method in university ELT, especially for art students who have low interest in English learning and relatively poor foundation, coupled with the influence of their psychological and emotional factors [8]. At present, most university public English teachers still adopt traditional teaching methods, with teachers speaking more and students having relatively few opportunities for independent thinking and training. Many universities lack advanced teaching equipment, and students can only passively receive indoctrination, making it difficult to stimulate learning interest and potential. It is not enough to use second classroom English activities such as English corners, English speech competitions, English speaking competitions, English soundtrack movie salons, and visiting foreign experts' English lectures to extend the enthusiasm and effectiveness of graduate students' learning English from within the classroom to outside the classroom[9].

### **2.2. Lack of demand driven awareness**

In order to complete their studies and work in the future, they often have to consult a large number of English materials and conduct academic research and exchanges at home and abroad. Therefore, graduate students have a stronger demand for the practicality of ELT. In the history of ELT in China, grammar translation teaching method occupies a major position and has a profound influence. This teaching method emphasizes the dominant position of teachers, emphasizes the teaching of grammar and rhetoric, and ignores oral teaching [10]. In this teaching method, teachers mainly explain the vocabulary, grammar and rhetoric in the text, and students' main task is to take notes in class. The classroom atmosphere is dull and there is a lack of communication between students and teachers, which seriously affects students' subjectivity and enthusiasm. Many colleges and universities link students' degrees with the scores of CET-4 and CET-6, which has a serious negative impact on ELT in Chinese universities. Teachers put a lot of energy and time into improving students' passing rate of CET-4 and CET-6, while ignoring the cultivation of students' comprehensive language application ability [11]. ELT content is not connected with the practical and professional requirements of postgraduate English in an orderly way, and the long-standing phenomenon of "dumb English" and "deaf English" is still difficult to get a corresponding change in postgraduate study.

### **2.3. Insufficient teaching staff**

The lack of teaching staff and the quality of teachers also constrain the development of ELT. In recent years, universities have continuously expanded their enrollment, and college English is a compulsory public basic course. The workload of teachers has increased, which has limited their time and energy for self-learning and scientific research activities. With the continuous expansion of enrollment in universities, the number of students is increasing year by year. Most English teachers in universities have heavy teaching tasks, lack time and energy to engage in teaching

research, have few opportunities to go out for further education and training, and cannot update teaching concepts and improve teaching skills in a timely manner[12]. The scale of graduate enrollment is significantly increasing, but the construction of teaching staff has not kept up., The number of graduate English teachers is insufficient, and the school's efforts to cultivate teachers are also insufficient. In terms of improving the professional level of teachers, the school does not attach enough importance, and individual teachers also lack an overall plan. In addition, the professional level of English teachers in many universities varies, and many teachers need to improve their pronunciation, grammar, teaching methods, and other aspects.

### 3. Strategies for Improving Public English Teaching for Graduate Students in Universities

#### 3.1. Update teaching concepts

The update of teaching concepts is the precursor of teaching reform. Teaching ideology commands teaching practice and restricts teaching content, teaching methods, and teaching methods. The traditional teaching mode has led to the phenomenon of teachers leaning against the blackboard, holding books in their hands, and preaching from textbooks in the classroom, resulting in a dull and uninteresting language, and students' language communication abilities being basically in a "dormant" state. In this traditional model, teachers are the only learning resources in the teaching process, as shown in Figure 1.

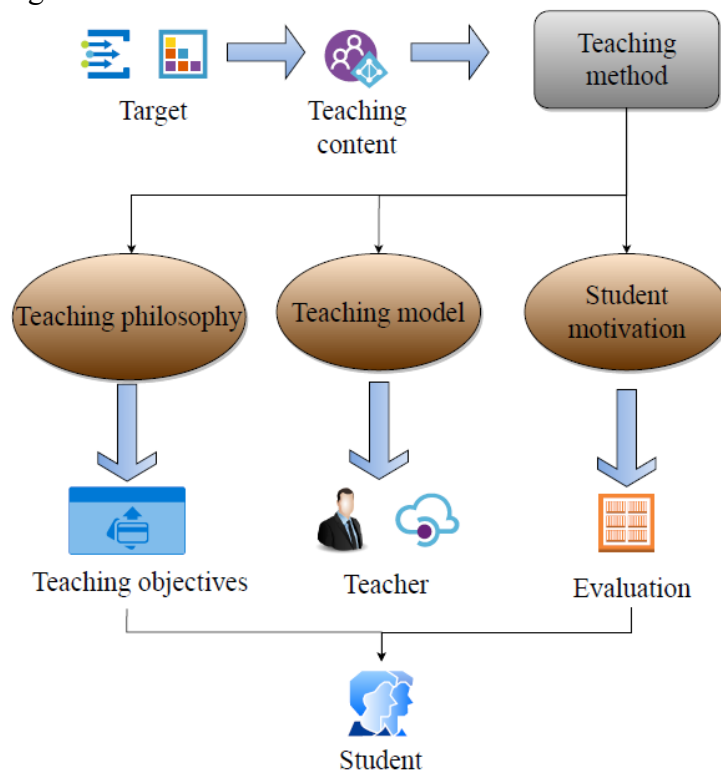


Figure 1 Traditional teaching mode

Therefore, the change of teaching thought is the premise of the public ELT reform in universities. On the one hand, we have changed from attaching importance to "teaching" to "learning" to understand and meet the needs of students and stimulate their enthusiasm and interest. On the other hand, stimulating teachers' desire for teaching is the key to the success of foreign language teaching. According to students' existing knowledge, ability level and potential tendency, teachers scientifically divide students into several groups with similar levels and treat them differently. These groups get the best development and improvement in teachers' appropriate stratification strategy and interaction. The implementation of hierarchical teaching in public ELT is helpful to break the traditional single teaching mode, thus making ELT substantially improved. Graded teaching is an important means to teach graduate students with great differences in English in

accordance with their aptitude, which is helpful to cultivate their practical English application ability, meet the specific requirements of graduate students at different levels for English learning, and finally improve their overall level.

### 3.2. Enrich teaching content

Graduate students focus on scientific research, but lack humanistic knowledge. Language is an important carrier of culture, and when learning a language, one cannot ignore the culture it carries. Without understanding the cultural background, ethnic customs, psychological concepts, and word connotations of relevant countries, even with good pronunciation, intonation, and grammar, it is difficult to communicate effectively. From the perspective of students, teaching them fish is better than teaching them fishing. That is, students transform from passive objects of knowledge to active subjects of knowledge acquisition and continuous improvement of learning and practical abilities. To achieve the goal of interpersonal face-to-face teaching by improving students' listening and speaking abilities. Focusing on listening and speaking is based on comprehensive training in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, while prioritizing the development of listening and speaking abilities. The traditional separation of listening and speaking classes is not advisable. Listening and speaking, as the two major elements of language acceptance ability and output ability, are inseparable in the process of language interaction. Nowadays, the arrangement of many textbooks reflects the concept of cultivating language communication ability. As shown in Table 1 of the "Public English Listening and Speaking Tutorial", this book consists of the following parts.

Table 1 Course Composition of "Public English Listening and Speaking Tutorial"

| Project                                | Exercise Name          | content validity   |
|--|------------------------|--|
| Part A microskilled training           | Communicative Function | Help students acquire some communicative functions   |
|  | Listening Strategy     | Design exercises to help students master various listening skills in response to common listening problems |
| Part B Listening and Speaking Training | Listening Tasks        | Developing listening and speaking skills   |
|  | Speaking Tasks         |  |
| Part C assisted hearing                | Additional Listening   | Conversations or essays related to the topic and exercises   |

The new student-centered teaching model does not diminish the leading role of teachers. On the contrary, from the perspective of teachers, it is necessary to teach and apply what is learned, requiring teachers to play a more outstanding leading role. Therefore, relevant cultural introductions should be appropriately added in teaching to cultivate the humanistic literacy of graduate students. In addition, systematically train translation and writing skills to improve graduate students' translation and writing abilities.

### 3.3. Reforming exam methods

ELT for graduate students should change the "exam-centered" mode and focus on the ability to conduct professional research with English as a tool, so as to improve the language quality of graduate students in an all-round way. CET-4 and CET-6 have always been the baton of public ELT in universities, and we can't deny that it has played a certain role in promoting the development of ELT in China. However, as a standardized test, it tends too much to grammar rules, emphasizes the absolute unified standard of language, and ignores the interactive function and intercultural communication function of language. Therefore, it is necessary to change the examination method, and the examination method should combine the process evaluation with the summative evaluation to establish a diversified formative evaluation system. With multi-level teaching reform, four levels of examinations, A, B, C and D, are adopted. Unified examination papers are adopted at all levels, which are divided into subjective and objective examination questions, and the distribution of

questions is reasonable; Subjective questions account for about 55%, and objective questions account for about 45%. The difficulty of the test questions can be divided into: D level within 60 points, C level within 75 points, B level within 85 points, and A level above 85 points. This kind of evaluation can ensure the fairness and reasonableness of test scores, and is conducive to students' rolling grade adjustment, which not only takes care of the level of students at all levels, but also opens up different levels of grades.

#### 4. Conclusions

The reform of public ELT for graduate students in universities has a long way to go. In addition to emphasizing teaching objectives, teaching models, and teaching evaluation, we cannot ignore considerations such as teaching investment, teaching requirements, curriculum design, teaching management, student learning attitudes, and soft environment construction. Teachers should be based on theory and combine it with the classroom to change traditional teaching models, continuously improve teaching skills, stimulate the two-way interests of teachers and students in the teaching process, and achieve a teaching effect that combines teaching with pleasure, teaching with purpose, and learning with gains. The use of communicative teaching is the current trend in the reform and research of public ELT for graduate students in universities, and interaction and innovation are the essence of this teaching model. This teaching mode also poses great challenges to teachers. Teachers must have the determination to reform their teaching, establish a sense of teaching innovation, learn modern educational technology, use internet resources, truly become practitioners of teaching reform, change the outdated classroom teaching mode with teachers as the main body, and establish a student-centered task-based teaching mode. We must adhere to the attitude of seeking truth from facts, handle the relationship between needs and possibilities, ideals and reality, and propose practical and feasible teaching goals. Only by based on the reality of school development, continuously discovering problems, accumulating experience, adjusting plans during the reform process, and placing the foothold of teaching reform on practical and feasible operations, can we achieve the success of teaching reform.

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