

The Construction and Implementation of a Compound Foreign Language Talent Training Model

Jing Li*

Foreign Language College of Suihua University, Suihua 152061, Heilongjiang Province, China

*Corresponding author: Jing Li, 39885082@qq.com

Copyright: © 2022 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: With increasing global exchanges and cooperation, there is an increasing demand for foreign language interdisciplinary talents. The cultivation of interdisciplinary foreign language talents is a long-term, complicated methodical endeavor, which requires constant exploration by experts in foreign language circles. In order to cultivate compound foreign language talents in colleges and universities, it is important to change the educational concept, enhance the teaching staff, and innovate the talent training mode. In the training of compound foreign language talents in colleges and universities, a compound talent training model of “foreign language + major or direction” should be established, and beginning from the actual situation of the major, the bold exploration and implementation of the transformation of the concept of compound foreign language talent training should be followed through, while strengthening the construction of teaching staff, optimizing the professional curriculum, updating the teaching content, as well as enriching the methods and measures of teaching.

Keywords: Foreign language; Compound talents; Training mode

Online publication: July 28, 2022

1. Introduction

The training mode of compound foreign language talents is a topic of common interest today. In order to realize the cultivation of compound foreign language talents, several strategies should be adopted. Compound talents refer to talents with basic knowledge and basic skills of two or more majors (or disciplines), and in addition to good professional knowledge, they should also possess relatively high relevant skills. Compound foreign language talents refer to those who have solid foundation in English language and extensive cultural knowledge and are capable of using English proficiently to engage in translation, teaching, management, and research in foreign affairs, education, economy and trade, culture, science and technology, military, as well as in other aspects^[1]. New and higher requirements have been put forward for the training of foreign language majors in colleges and universities. In addition, the setting and personnel training of foreign language majors or directions are facing new demands and challenges.

2. Domestic research on compound foreign language talents

The cultivation of compound foreign language talents has always been an important topic of concern and research in the field of higher education in China. For a long time, teachers and researchers in the field of foreign language education and teaching have been carrying out in-depth research on various aspects and levels of compound foreign language talent training, such as training mode, training objectives, curriculum

construction, teacher training, management system, etc., and the outcomes have been encouraging. The “compound” here refers to a combination of “foreign language-based” and “secondary” or “subordinate” for other majors. The essence of “compounding” is to be able to use foreign language proficiently to engage in work in various professional fields and to be competent for one’s own job. There is no doubt that compound foreign language talents are adept in not only foreign language knowledge but also other professional knowledge, along with extensive comprehensive knowledge. However, the important point here is that compound foreign language talents should be able to master and freely use English discourse to adapt to the requirements and characteristics of other majors and conform to their habits, so that they are competent for other professional positions. China’s insistence on “foreign language first” is the foothold and foundation of foreign language talent training and foreign language professional teaching. There are certain parallels in the discussion and research at all levels in the construction of this model under the “foreign language + major or direction” training; thus, there are some points for reference. Theoretical research and teaching practice have provided much inspiration, but certain connotations of reference are within a certain range in some aspects as different regions have their own development statures. Foreign language majors in colleges and universities must achieve sustainable development, and these colleges and universities must realize a sound operation in running schools. Circulation, as far as foreign language majors are concerned, is to cultivate compound foreign language talents who can adapt to the socialist market economy and the characteristics of the 21st century ^[2].

3. Research study

A questionnaire survey was conducted on English graduates from a university.

A total of 119 foreign language students who had graduated from a university and had sat for CET-6 were investigated, using a self-designed questionnaire. A small-scale pilot was conducted before it was officially put to use, in which several modifications were made on the basis of the subjects’ feedback to ensure the rationality, validity, and reliability of the questionnaire design. The questionnaire was sent out by e-mail, and some students were then interviewed by telephone. The interviews were included in the case study stage, which helped the researchers gauge the students’ actual thoughts and clarify the root cause of the problem. The data of the interview and questionnaire survey complemented and validated each other, ensuing a more authentic, reliable, objective, and fair result from the study.

Table 1 shows that most graduates are working in general enterprises (36.13%) and companies specializing in foreign trade business (42.86%). Most students have jobs related to foreign trade business and market translation, of which more than half of them often use English in their daily work.

Table 1. Questionnaire data

Types of enterprise	Frequency	Percentage
General enterprise	43	36.13%
Foreign trade enterprise	51	42.86%
Government office	14	11.8%
Tour operator	11	9.24%

Based on the statistical data and subsequent telephone interviews, several conclusions can be drawn (the views of some students are excerpted after the conclusion).

First, a considerable number of students (56.2%) are dissatisfied with the current English teaching situation. They identified with issues such as the single teaching content and knowledge structure, the overemphasis on teaching and the accumulation of language knowledge by teachers, while neglecting the

cultivation of practical application skills, as well as the teaching content that is not in line with students' professional needs and practical work. This is exemplified by a graduate's response: "As a newly graduated student, I feel unsatisfied. I feel that I have not gained much useful knowledge from these courses, nor have I been able to obtain much useful information from the teachers, nor have my English communicative skills improved significantly."

Second, practically all students (96.47%) agree with the training mode of compound foreign language talents, and feel that we should broaden the learning content, add other professional courses, and seek the combination of foreign language professional characteristics and relevant knowledge. In today's society, many people can speak and understand English, thus placing greater pressure on those of us who solely study English and leaving us with no advantage upon joining the workforce. The combination of English and other majors will provide us with more opportunities. English will also open doors to other fields, providing us with more opportunities to grow in career and live with a broader vision.

Third, a considerable number of students (68.72%) are not very satisfied with the curriculum. They believe that the curriculum has low practicability, and they demand a compact arrangement of basic courses and professional courses to allow sufficient time for senior internships, postgraduate entrance examinations, and career planning. From the interview, a graduate shared, "I feel that the curriculum arrangement of our university is unreasonable. For example, the translation and interpretation courses for seniors should also be offered to juniors. Why are they all scheduled in the senior year and only for one semester? During my senior year, everyone was very busy. Those looking for a job were anxious to land a job, while those preparing for postgraduate entrance examinations had very tight schedules. They were not able to concentrate on learning these important professional contents." The curriculum content is somewhat impractical, and the curriculum arrangement is not completely in line with the actual operation in workplaces.

Fourth, most students (89.75%) believe that social practice should be strengthened, and it is suggested that schools should provide students with more internship positions and opportunities for practice to help them accumulate work experience and better adapt to the society. Internship is a very important transition period for employment. Schools and colleges should provide students with more opportunities for practice and internship, which would be very helpful for students to adapt to the society.

Fifth, students hope that the teaching abilities and personal qualities of foreign language teachers will keep pace with the development of the times, and that these teachers will pay attention to the integration of theory with practice and set strict requirements on students and their learning. During the interview, a graduate mentioned, "I hope that teachers will emphasize on integrating theory with practice while teaching and focus on improving students' skills in solving practical problems. Teachers majoring in foreign languages are generally democratic, but strict teachers make excellent apprentices. Hence, I hope teachers will be strict with the students."

4. Constructing a compound foreign language talent training model for colleges and universities

When constructing a compound foreign language talents training model for colleges and universities, it is necessary to consider the training objectives, training plans, curriculum system, as well as other aspects and elements of compound foreign language talents of "foreign language + major or direction." For example, the compound foreign language talent training model of "foreign language + major or direction" in Shandong Heze University can be divided into three stages in the four-year undergraduate training. The first and second years are two academic years but considered as one stage, the third year is considered as one academic year, and the fourth year is considered as another academic year. Simply put, it is the "2+1+1" plan. The first stage "2" is the basic stage of training compound talents for foreign language majors; the

training takes up the first two academic years of university, and it involves the teaching and learning of the two lower grades. The main goal of this stage is to comprehend students' language knowledge and cultivate their language skills. The second stage "1" is the intermediate stage of compound professional foreign language talent training. It involves teaching and learning for one academic year in the third year of university. Its main goal is to enhance students' humanistic quality and cultivate their cross-cultural communication skills. The third stage "1" is the advanced stage of cultivating compound talents for foreign language majors. It involves teaching and learning in the fourth year of university. Foreign language teaching at this stage is jointly carried out by schools and enterprises, with the main goal of cultivating students' professional skills and vocational skills. This stage is divided into two semesters. After the completion of this stage, students would have developed foreign language application skills and professional skills in different professional fields, truly possessed the quality of compound foreign language talents, and are competent for jobs in certain professional fields. In view of this, local colleges and universities should carry out the pilot work of "foreign language + major or direction" compound talent training model with various characteristics based on the region's actual situation ^[2].

There are several compound foreign language talent training models.

(1) Dual professional model

Undergraduates can acquire the basic knowledge and skills of a second (or third) major other than their major by pursuing a second degree (degree) in foreign language-related major, which will broaden their career options and prepare them to adapt to multi-professional and multi-disciplinary work and research as interdisciplinary talents.

(2) Major plus minor model

The major plus minor model refers to a foreign language major plus another major. The major plus minor model means that undergraduates can minor in another foreign language major while pursuing their major (undergraduate or junior college). After completing the required credits, they can obtain a minor certificate. A minor in other interdisciplinary professional knowledge, such as diplomacy, trade, etc., is a practical and efficient training approach for compound talents.

(3) Elective course model

Elective courses are currently the easiest compound talent training model. Colleges and universities can set up various foreign language courses for students to choose independently. Students can methodologically learn the knowledge of a certain subject or major through interprofessional course selection.

(4) Vocational qualification certificate model

In this model, students can sit for the vocational qualification certificate examination, study relevant foreign language courses, and obtain the corresponding qualification documents, including the simultaneous translation qualification certificate, public relations professional qualification certificate, e-commerce division qualification certificate, and other qualification certificates ^[1].

5. Measures for training compound foreign language talents

5.1. Changing the concept of training compound foreign language talents

Under the new policy, colleges and universities must change the traditional concept and the original talent training mode, as well as cultivate compound, practical, and innovative talents. Teachers are keys to nurturing foreign language interdisciplinary talents. The training goal of foreign language interdisciplinary talents poses a challenge to the existing teaching staff. Judging from the current situation of foreign language teachers in many colleges and universities, it is impossible to accomplish such a task in terms of knowledge structure or skill structure. Therefore, colleges and universities must nurture a group of talents who have both foreign language knowledge and other professional skills as soon as possible to improve the

foreign language teaching staff.

5.2. Strengthening the construction of the teaching faculty

Foreign language teachers must improve their own comprehensive qualities, bravely meet various challenges of cultivating foreign language interdisciplinary talents in the new era, and at the same time ensure that their knowledge and skills are up to date. New teachers should determine their development direction as soon as possible, so as to combine professional teaching and language teaching. In order to achieve professional development, several measures should be taken.

(1) Studying at home and abroad

Schools should take a holistic approach to national epidemic preparedness and designate a certain number of young foreign language teachers to devote their time to studying full-time or part-time in domestic or foreign institutions of higher learning, allowing them to gain more professional knowledge.

(2) Attracting “apprentices”

Resource sharing can be implemented among teachers in colleges and universities. Relevant professional teachers and foreign language teachers can make effort in preliminary cooperation, explore, summarize their experiences, and finally offer relevant professional courses and elective courses based on the actual situation.

(3) Joint school running of domestic and foreign institutions of higher learning

(4) Schools must comprehensively consider the national epidemic preparedness, and domestic and foreign institutions of higher learning can train teachers through joint education. In this process, teachers at home and abroad can achieve the purpose of mutual exchange and learning ^[1].

5.3. Optimizing the “foreign language +” talent training program and improving the curriculum

Based on the concept of holistic education, the acquisition of knowledge and skills is only a superficial goal, but the nurturing of attitude and value is the profound goal. In order to optimize the “foreign language +” talent training program and improve the curriculum, we must overcome the phenomena of paying attention to specialty, science, and technology, while neglecting the fundamentals and humanities. We should adhere to the concept of whole person education, take students’ emotion and attitude as the guidance, and cultivate a good foundation in humanistic knowledge, professional skills, and rational thinking among students from different angles. At the same time, we should pay attention to the development of informal courses; that is, we must be adept at using life experiences to transform the abstract knowledge and professional skills of formal courses into choices, actions, and problem-solving skills in real life.

How to improve the “foreign language +” curriculum? When it comes to the cultivation of diversified talents in English major, a common curriculum framework is proposed for the cultivation of diversified talents. The “foreign language +” curriculum can be improved on this basis. This “common framework” has great expansibility and can meet the relevant requirements of “foreign language +” curriculum. As shown in **Figure 1**, the three peripheral plates can be flexibly replaced, and they must concur in terms of teaching requirements. The content of one plate can achieve the goal within its own scope, but it should be reflected in the other two plates; that is, the improvement of language skills is mainly realized in language education, but it should be reflected in professional education and general education. Similarly, the relevant concepts of general education should also be implemented in language education and professional education. Practical education is fixed in the middle, which reflects its importance. The “foreign language +” curriculum must embrace practical education as a compulsory course, and take the teaching plan, syllabus, and curriculum evaluation system as guarantees, so that students can integrate and comprehensively apply the language knowledge, professional knowledge, and general education knowledge learned, so as to help them “accomplish things.” As long as we master the expansibility of

“foreign language +” curriculum, we can address the problem of disciplinary conflict, achieve personalized development, and cultivate talents needed by the country and the times.

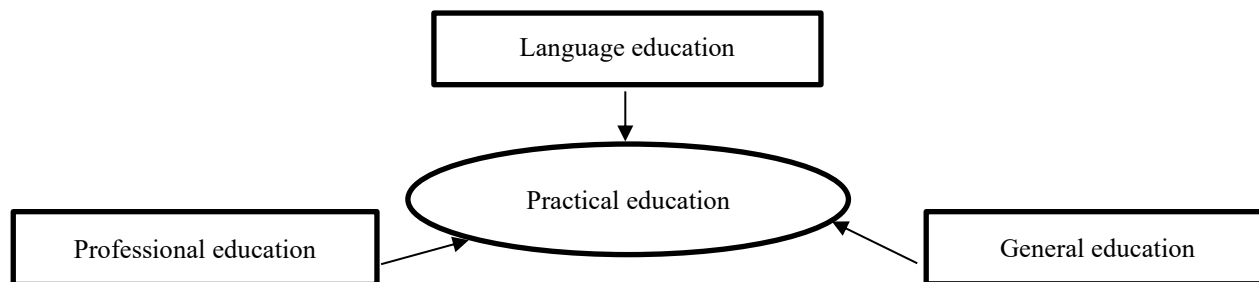


Figure 1. “Foreign language +” curriculum

First and foremost, colleges and universities should address the issue of a single curriculum framework in the existing training of foreign language interdisciplinary talents and promote language diversity teaching by combining the linguistic characteristics of those regions in cooperation. Beginning from various factors such as the use of language, region, and students’ majors, foreign language education is carried out to effectively promote the individualized, differentiated, and ecological development of foreign language education [2]. For example, in the teaching process of English pharmacy courses, in addition to the teaching of pharmacy majors, teachers should also strengthen the learning of certain speaking and listening skills, such as exhibition presentation, oral business negotiation, etc. In addition to mastering their own professional knowledge, students should also have at least one foreign language skill to assist. In this way, cultivated talents have obvious competitive advantages compared with other talents, whether they venture abroad for further studies, postgraduate studies, or employment and entrepreneurship. In view of this, colleges and universities should pay attention to the diversity of curriculum settings in the process of designing foreign language courses, so as to effectively nurture the comprehensive quality of compound talents and lay a solid foundation for their future development. Taking the current actual situation of foreign language education in colleges and universities as a starting point, promoting diversified foreign language education in colleges and universities requires scientific and rational planning. Secondly, colleges and universities should carry out reforms in response to the broad curriculum content in their own talent training program. Colleges and universities should implement ESP (English for specific purposes) programs along with students’ majors. The ESP program mainly takes English language as the carrier and relies on professional content, which not only undertakes a professional teaching process, but also provides a practical and valuable learning process. The purpose of ESP is to combine language skills instruction and professional practice instruction in the course. Through this course, students can be nurtured into compound foreign language talents [3].

5.4. Enriching the teaching mode

In China, the majority of foreign language teaching in colleges and universities continues to adopt the traditional teaching mode, which is incapable of nurturing students into compound foreign language talents. In view of this, teachers should actively modify their teaching mode and conduct curriculum teaching through diversified teaching methods. First of all, the course teaching is carried out using the composite application teaching mode. In the process of foreign language teaching, teachers should teach by combining language tools and actual majors to promote compound application-oriented talent training, in which language knowledge and professional skills are synergistically advanced. This refers to the gradient teaching mode. The task-based teaching mode can also be used to design tasks in a targeted manner, and

students can complete the tasks in groups, so as to strengthen their participation and improve their independent learning capabilities. In that way, foreign language learning becomes more practical and targeted. Second, expand the teaching method. Teachers can teach through interactive teaching; that is to say, in the actual teaching process, English is used as the medium to communicate between teachers and students, so as to effectively improve students' language application skills and communication skills. Teachers can also conduct online extracurricular teaching by using various teaching methods, such as micro-lectures and flipped classrooms, so that students can make full use of their extracurricular time for learning. In addition, they can also use various learning platforms to conduct listening and speaking training, so as to effectively motivate students to actively participate in foreign language learning ^[4].

5.5. Improving the teaching methods

Teachers should “teach according to the law” in order to achieve the goal of “foreign language +” talent training in the face of different groups of students and a changing social environment. Many teachers are now implementing flipped classroom in view of its advantages. As advocated by whole person education, teachers are striving to cultivate students' autonomy, cooperation, and exploration. Compared with traditional classroom, flipped classroom has obvious advantages in cultivating “foreign language +” talents (Table 2).

Table 2. Comparison between traditional classroom and flipped classroom

	Traditional classroom	Flipped classroom
Teacher	Knowledge imparter and classroom manager	Learning instructor and facilitator
Student	Passive receiver	Active researcher
Form of teaching	Classroom explanation + homework	Pre-class learning + classroom inquiry
Classroom content	Knowledge explanation and teaching	Problem exploration
Technology application	Content display	Autonomous learning, communication, reflection, and collaborative discussion
Evaluation method	Traditional paper test	Multiangle and various methods

In order to effectively achieve the expected effect of flipped classroom, teachers need to carefully design and implement tasks and activities. While adjusting and improving it based on the actual situation, flipped classroom can be carried out according to several modes.

- (1) Extracurricular: problem exploration; knowledge construction tools.
- (2) Classroom: collaborative learning and knowledge sharing on the basis of projects; peer assessment; using relevant materials for ductile discussion.
- (3) Practice: competition or games; learning with problems; task-based individual learning.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the construction and implementation of a compound foreign language talent training model should take into account not only the laws of education and teaching, but also the needs of practice; not only the current situation and level of the development of schools and majors, but also the actual needs of social and economic development and security. Teachers and researchers in the field of foreign language education and teaching need to constantly explore, be brave in reform and innovation, as well as construct a scientific and reasonable compound foreign language talent training model and system, so as to cultivate students with solid foreign language knowledge and proficient foreign language skills for the country and society. Foreign language knowledge and skills are employed by compound foreign language talents in

other professional fields. Today, foreign languages, as carriers of cultural communication, have become one of the most important national strategic resources in China. The global infrastructure development initiative adopted by the Chinese government is a regional cooperation strategy. In addition to the support of relevant industries, such as the finance industry, the effective implementation of the strategy is also inseparable from the support of talents. In view of this, it is imperative for colleges and universities to strengthen the cultivation of compound talents based on the improvement of their capabilities in external communication.

Funding

Operating Expenses of Basic Scientific Research Project of Provincial Universities in 2020 “On the Training Model of Inter-disciplinary Foreign Language Talents in Local Application-oriented Universities” (Project Number: YWk10236200111)

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Zhuang Y, 2012, On the Cultivation of Foreign Language Compound Talents. *Education Theory and Practice*, 32(06): 18-19.
- [2] Jiang F, 2021, Research on the Training Mode of Compound Foreign Language Talents in Heze Under the Background of Breaking Through the Rise of Heze and Luxi. *Overseas English* 2021(08): 5-7.
- [3] Wang B, Li X, 2019, On the Cultivation of Foreign Language Compound Talents in Colleges and Universities. *Journal of Xingtai University*, 34(03):169-173.
- [4] Jiang L, Yu M, Li L, 2016, HSK Standard Course 3, Beijing Language and Culture University Press, Beijing.
- [5] Li H, Liao C, 2015, Research on Chinese Culture Teaching, Commercial Press, Beijing, 135.

Publisher’s note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.