

A Study on the Problems and Countermeasures of the Continuity of English Teaching in “Middle and High School”

Ju Yuan*

Guangxi Vocational University Of Agriculture, Nanning 530000, Guangxi, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

Copyright: © 2025 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: Vocational education is very important in the personnel training system, and the coherence of its English teaching is related to students' career development. At present, the continuity of English teaching of secondary vocational, higher vocational and vocational undergraduate is poor, the foundation of secondary vocational students is weak, the learning enthusiasm is low, the teaching goal of higher vocational education is unclear, the curriculum is not good, the course positioning of vocational undergraduate is fuzzy, the teaching content and the integration of occupation is insufficient. In response to these problems, the paper puts forward some strategies, such as constructing integrated teaching syllabus, optimizing teaching content, innovating teaching methods and evaluation system, implementing stratified teaching, strengthening the construction of teachers, and promoting the integration of school-enterprise cooperation with industry and education, to improve the coherence of teaching and help cultivate high-quality technical talents with good English ability and professional accomplishment.

Keywords: Vocational education; English teaching; Teaching coherence; Teaching strategy

Online publication: May 30, 2025

1. Introduction

At present, there are obvious problems in the coherence of English teaching in China's vocational education, which seriously affect the teaching effect and the improvement of students' English ability. From secondary vocational education to higher vocational education and then to vocational college, English teaching lacks effective cohesion and unified planning in terms of teaching objectives, curriculum settings, teaching contents, and teaching methods, which makes it difficult for students to form a systematic knowledge system and ability structure^[1]. Therefore, it is of great practical significance to improve the coherence of English teaching in vocational education.

2. An analysis of the current situation of English teaching in secondary vocational and higher vocational college

In the current vocational education system, the English teaching of secondary vocational colleges, higher vocational colleges and vocational colleges has formed a continuum with each other's characteristics. However, there are many problems to be solved in the actual teaching of these three, which affect the coherence and effectiveness of English teaching.

2.1. Current situation of English teaching in secondary vocational schools

English instruction in secondary vocational schools represents the foundational level within the vocational education system. Students typically possess a relatively weak foundation in English, and their motivation and engagement in learning tend to be low. Consequently, in secondary vocational English teaching, instructors frequently focus more on imparting basic knowledge while overlooking the connection between English proficiency and career development. Moreover, the English textbooks used in these schools often lack practicality and are disconnected from students' fields of study and future professional requirements, making it challenging to spark their interest in learning. Additionally, the teaching approach tends to be conventional, predominantly relying on lecture-based methods that lack interactive and practice-oriented components, thereby further diminishing students' ability to apply English effectively ^[2].

2.2. Current situation of English teaching in higher vocational colleges

Compared with secondary vocational English, higher vocational English teaching pays more attention to the application of vocational scenarios in setting goals. However, due to the large difference in students' English level, the teaching implementation faces great challenges. Although the vocational English teaching syllabus emphasizes the cultivation of vocational English ability, it fails to fully reflect this requirement in the course setting and textbook selection. The lack of systematic and coherent curriculum makes it difficult for students to form a complete vocational English knowledge system. At the same time, the evaluation system of English teaching in higher vocational colleges is not perfect enough. It pays too much attention to test scores, but neglects the evaluation of students' practical application ability and professional quality.

2.3. Current situation of English teaching for vocational college students

As an advanced level of vocational education, the English instruction for vocational college students presents a more intricate scenario. Regarding course direction and objectives, vocational English courses struggle to fully capture the depth and breadth expected at the undergraduate level. There is significant overlap with general vocational English, and there is a lack of emphasis on developing students' advanced English proficiency. Vocational components are not adequately incorporated into the teaching content. The textbooks predominantly focus on conventional English language knowledge, lacking technical documents and industry reports relevant to specific professional domains. Consequently, students are unable to acquire major-related English knowledge and skills during their studies, making it challenging to fulfill future occupational English requirements. In terms of faculty development, vocational college English instructors typically lack enterprise practical experience, which hinders their ability to effectively integrate English teaching with vocational practice ^[3]. In addition, the vocational college English teaching evaluation system also has the problem of incoherence. The evaluation content mainly focuses on the assessment of English language knowledge and skills, and lacks the evaluation of students' cross-cultural communication ability, teamwork ability, and innovation ability. The evaluation method

is also relatively simple, lacks of diversified evaluation means.

Therefore, to improve the overall quality and level of vocational education, it is necessary to conduct in-depth analysis and research on these problems and explore effective reform paths and strategies.

3. Challenges to the continuity of English teaching in secondary vocational, higher vocational and undergraduate vocational courses

3.1. Lack of progressive teaching objectives

Secondary vocational, higher vocational and vocational undergraduate English teaching syllabuses lack a clear progressive relationship in terms of teaching objectives ^[4]. The secondary vocational school emphasizes the development of students' foundational English knowledge and practical skills while highlighting the use of English in everyday situations. While the higher vocational stage concentrates on applying English in professional contexts, there is significant overlap with the secondary vocational stage, and both stages lack sufficient depth and breadth in progression ^[5]. At the vocational undergraduate level, the focus should be on enhancing students' overall English application abilities and specialized English proficiency, as well as fostering cross-cultural communication skills and a global perspective. However, the actual objectives set for this stage do not adequately capture the advanced requirements of undergraduate education and exhibit considerable overlap with vocational English goals ^[6].

3.2. Lack of coherence in teaching content

There is a lack of coherence and progression in English teaching materials for secondary vocational colleges, higher vocational colleges and vocational colleges. The teaching content of secondary vocational colleges mainly focuses on daily life topics, and the vocabulary and grammar are relatively simple and basic ^[7]. Even though the higher vocational stage has started to incorporate elements of the vocational field, the content often overlaps significantly with that of secondary vocational education and lacks further development. Undergraduate vocational teaching should focus more on professionalism and academic rigor while being closely integrated with vocational practice. However, current textbooks still adhere to traditional content and lack the necessary professional English knowledge and skills that are closely aligned with vocational practice. This results in students facing difficulties during their college years in achieving a smooth transition in their English learning process.

3.3. Lack of coherence in teaching requirements

English teaching in secondary vocational schools, higher vocational colleges and vocational colleges lacks consistency in the language ability requirements of students. At the secondary vocational level, the emphasis is on mastering basic vocabulary and grammar, and the requirement of language ability is relatively low. Although students are required to have certain vocational English application ability in higher vocational colleges, the differentiation requirements for different majors are insufficient. The vocational undergraduate stage should develop more personalized and professional teaching requirements, but there are obvious deficiencies in this aspect at present.

3.4. Lack of connection between teaching methods and evaluation system

There is no effective connection between teaching methods and the evaluation system in English teaching in secondary vocational colleges, higher vocational colleges, and vocational colleges. Secondary vocational students

typically possess a limited English foundation, making them more responsive to teaching approaches that are both intuitive and engaging. Nevertheless, numerous classes continue to rely heavily on conventional teaching methods, offering minimal interaction and practice. During the higher vocational education phase, there has been a focus on vocational English instruction, yet teaching strategies have failed to adapt effectively in response to shifts in student characteristics and educational goals ^[8]. Even though the vocational undergraduate stage underscores the development of students' overall English application skills, traditional classroom instruction remains predominant, with insufficient incorporation of inquiry-based learning, task-driven teaching, and other student-centered methodologies. Concurrently, the assessment system operates independently and lacks cohesive planning and coordination, thereby complicating students' ability to adjust to new evaluation criteria and techniques as they transition into college entrance processes ^[9].

4. Strategies for improving the coherence of English teaching in vocational education

In view of the current challenges in the continuity of English teaching in secondary vocational schools, higher vocational colleges and vocational college, the following strategies are proposed in this study, aiming to break the barriers between different stages of teaching, build a coherent and systematic English teaching system, and promote the gradual improvement and all-round development of students' English ability.

4.1. Build an integrated teaching syllabus

The construction of an integrated teaching syllabus should make clear the teaching objectives, teaching content and teaching requirements of each stage, and ensure the organic cohesion and progressive relationship between each stage ^[10].

- (1) Clear teaching objectives: The secondary vocational phase should focus on instructing fundamental English knowledge and developing basic skills, with an emphasis on the practical use of English in everyday situations. Building on this foundation, the vocational training stage should enhance students' vocational English proficiency to better equip them for workplace communication demands. In the vocational undergraduate phase, students should deepen their overall English application capabilities and advance their professional English competence while nurturing cross-cultural communication skills and a global perspective.
- (2) Optimize the teaching content: The English curriculum in secondary vocational schools, higher vocational colleges, and vocational universities should reflect a step-by-step progression. At the vocational undergraduate level, emphasis should be placed on both professional and academic aspects, integrating vocational practice to enhance students' proficiency in professional English and their skills in academic writing.
- (3) Unified teaching requirements: English instruction at each level should highlight both differentiation and progression. At the secondary vocational level, emphasis should be placed on reinforcing fundamental knowledge and acquiring essential skills. In higher vocational education, the focus should shift toward cultivating practical vocational English proficiency. For the vocational undergraduate stage, attention should be given to enhancing overall English application skills and specialized English competency. Additionally, personalized teaching standards should be developed in consideration of the distinct characteristics of various majors and student populations.

4.2. Optimize the connection of teaching content

Enhancing the integration of teaching content is a crucial step in improving the overall coherence of vocational education English instruction. Developing continuous and progressive teaching materials involves assembling a team of educational experts, language teaching scholars, and frontline English teachers to ensure that the materials align with educational principles while addressing the specific needs and characteristics of students at various stages. During the development process, it is essential to consider the coherence and progression of English teaching across stages to prevent content overlap or disconnection. Additionally, embedding vocational elements deeply into the teaching content can enhance its practicality and relevance.

4.3. Innovative teaching methods and evaluation system

Innovative teaching methods and evaluation systems are effective means to improve the coherence of English teaching in vocational education ^[11]. Adaptive utilization of varied teaching approaches: Depending on the instructional goals and student characteristics at different educational stages, a flexible application of diverse teaching methods is recommended. For secondary vocational students with weaker English foundations, less motivation, and lower enthusiasm, intuitive and engaging teaching strategies can be employed to invigorate their interest and self-directed learning. In contrast, during higher vocational and undergraduate vocational stages, project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, and other interactive methodologies can be utilized to encourage students to practice English in real-world scenarios, thereby enhancing their practical language skills ^[12]. Development of a multi-faceted assessment framework: A comprehensive English teaching evaluation system should be established, encompassing process evaluations, outcome assessments, and competency appraisals. Process evaluations emphasize students' performance throughout their learning journey, such as classroom participation, homework completion, and teamwork effectiveness. Outcome evaluations provide a summary of students' overall achievements at the end of the learning period. Competency and professional quality evaluations focus on assessing students' English application abilities and relevant professional attributes. Through this diversified evaluation mechanism, students' learning outcomes can be assessed holistically and impartially, further promoting their motivation and proactive engagement in learning ^[13].

4.4. Pay attention to the individual differences of students and implement stratified teaching

Paying attention to individual differences of students and implementing stratified teaching is an important measure to improve the coherence of English teaching in vocational education. Scientific evaluation of students' English proficiency: The English skills of students are evaluated systematically through entrance exams, periodic assessments, and other methods. Based on these evaluations, students are categorized into various levels, such as beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Tailored teaching goals and content are then established for each level to ensure that instruction is both targeted and effective. Development of personalized teaching strategies: Teaching pace and methods are adjusted appropriately based on the learning capabilities and adaptability of students at different levels. Additionally, elective courses or interest-based groups can be introduced according to students' preferences and strengths, offering them a wider range of learning options ^[14]. Implementation of dynamic tiered teaching: Tiered teaching should not remain fixed but rather be adjusted flexibly in response to students' academic progress and individual differences. For students showing significant improvement, their classification should be updated promptly, along with providing suitable encouragement and support. Meanwhile, students encountering learning challenges should receive enhanced guidance and assistance to help them address their difficulties.

4.5. Strengthen the construction of teaching staff

Strengthening the construction of teachers is an important guarantee for improving the continuity of English teaching in vocational education. Improve the professional quality of teachers: Enhance the professional competence and instructional capabilities of teachers by means of training and advanced studies. Promote teacher involvement in domestic and international academic exchanges and teaching forums to stay updated with cutting-edge educational philosophies and techniques, thereby continuously elevating their teaching proficiency. Recruitment of dual-qualified instructors: Actively recruit educators who possess robust theoretical knowledge, extensive practical experience, and vocational expertise. These dual-qualified teachers can effectively integrate theory with practice, enhancing the applicability and relevance of education. Development of a teacher incentive system: By creating a well-structured teacher incentive framework, motivate educators to enhance their passion for teaching and foster an innovative mindset.

4.6. Strengthen school-enterprise cooperation and the integration of industry and education

Strengthening school-enterprise cooperation and the integration of industry and education is an effective way to improve the coherence of English teaching in vocational education. Establishment of school-enterprise cooperation mechanism: Form close partnerships with companies and collaboratively design talent development programs and curricula. Companies can offer students practical training platforms and job prospects while providing tailored feedback and recommendations for English instruction based on market requirements and industry advancements. Carry out production-education integration projects: In line with the real needs of enterprises, implement production-education integration projects. For instance, English training courses or teaching materials can be co-created with enterprises, incorporating actual cases and scenarios from businesses into English instruction ^[15]. Strengthen international exchanges and cooperation: Engage in active exchanges and collaboration with international vocational education institutions and enterprises, incorporating advanced vocational education philosophies and instructional techniques to enhance the global standing of vocational education. Additionally, students may be encouraged to join international exchange initiatives or overseas internship programs, enabling them to improve their English skills, explore diverse cultures, and broaden their perspectives within an international setting.

5. Conclusion

This study makes a comprehensive investigation into the coherence of English teaching in vocational education in China. There are many problems in the current situation of English teaching in secondary vocational schools, higher vocational colleges and vocational colleges. These problems lead to the lack of coherence in teaching objectives, contents, requirements, methods, and evaluation systems, which affect the improvement of students' English ability and the development of professional accomplishment. In response to these problems, this paper puts forward some strategies, such as constructing an integrated teaching syllabus, optimizing the cohesion of teaching content, and innovating teaching methods and the evaluation system. These strategies aim to break down teaching barriers and build a coherent teaching system. In the future, English teaching in vocational education should continue to pay attention to industry dynamics and technological development, constantly optimize teaching strategies, and cultivate more high-quality technical skills talents to meet the needs of the era.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] The Ministry of Education, 2022, Opinions on Deepening the Reform of Modern Vocational Education System Construction, visited on, Jan 10, 2024, http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2023-01/19/content_5738581.htm.
- [2] Wang F, Li H, 2021, Construction and Practice of Bridging English Curriculum System in Middle and Higher Vocational Colleges – A Case Study of Business English Majors. *Vocational and Technical Education*, 42(29): 31–36.
- [3] Liu C, Ma Z, 2020, Research on the Dynamic Adjustment Mechanism of Vocational Education Majors: Based on the Perspective of Industrial Upgrading. *China Vocational and Technical Education*, 2020(28): 5–11.
- [4] Shi W, Hao T, 2022, The Development Trend of International Vocational Education and the Reform and Innovation of Chinese Vocational Education. *Educational Development Research*, 42(19): 1–8.
- [5] Xin Y, 2024, Research on Reform Measures of English Teaching Practice in Vocational Colleges Under the Background of Internet. *English Abroad*, 2024(23): 226–228.
- [6] Chen J, 2021, Deepening and Innovation of Work-Study Talent Training Model Under the Background of Industry–Education Integration. *China Higher Education Research*, 2021(5): 102–106.
- [7] Xu G, 2020, Types, Characteristics and Design Methods of Vocational Education Courses. *Vocational Education Forum*, 2020(7): 4–11.
- [8] Li Z, Deng Z, 2023, Experience and Inspiration of English Teaching Reform in International Vocational Education. *China Vocational and Technical Education*, 2023(8): 82–87.
- [9] Ma S, Guo Y, 2021, The Construction of Vocational Majors in the New Era: Logical Starting Point, Core Tasks, and Basic Path. *China Higher Education Research*, 2021(1): 102–106.
- [10] Dai S, 2021, A New Theory of Vocational Education Action-Oriented Curriculum Teaching Reform. Higher Education Press, Beijing, 1–20.
- [11] Xu G, 2022, Construction of a Comprehensive Curriculum System for Secondary and Higher Vocational Education: Connotation, Elements, and Strategies. *Vocational Education Development Research*, 2022(3): 1–8.
- [12] Geng Y, 2024, A Practical Study on the Mixed Teaching Mode of “English +” Talents in Vocational College – A Case Study of the Application of iSmart Platform in College English Listening and Speaking Teaching. *Shanxi Youth*, 2024(24): 44–46.
- [13] Zhao Z, 2021, Key Technologies for the Development of Integrated Courses Combining Engineering and Vocational Education in the New Era. *Vocational and Technical Education*, 42(20): 30–35.
- [14] Li Z, 2020, Key Problems and Solutions for the Construction of Bridging Curriculum System in Middle and Higher Vocational Education. *China Vocational and Technical Education*, 2020(32): 42–48.
- [15] Kuang Y, Shi W, 2021, Construction of Integrated Curriculum System in Higher Vocational Education in the New Era: Logic, Framework and Promotion Strategy. *Educational Development Research*, 41(19): 57–64.

Publisher's note

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