

Research on the Teaching Reform Paths of Business English in Colleges and Universities Under the Background of the New Liberal Arts

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Abstract: Under the background of the comprehensive advancement of the new liberal arts construction, the teaching of Business English in colleges and universities has gained greater development space. Colleges and universities need to seize the opportunity of the times, align with market demand, adapt to national strategies, and realize the transformation and upgrading of the discipline. Combined with the core characteristics of the new liberal arts, strategic nature, innovation, integration, and development, this paper analyzes the prominent problems existing in the current Business English teaching in colleges and universities, and explores the practical paths of teaching reform under the background of the new liberal arts. It aims to promote the reform of Business English teaching and cultivate compound Business English talents.

Keywords: New liberal arts; College business English; Teaching reform; Compound talents

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1. Introduction

The new liberal arts advocates the reorganization of traditional humanities, promotes the interdisciplinary integration of liberal arts and sciences, and integrates new technological elements to cultivate comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and diversified innovative talents in the new era. Under the upsurge of interdisciplinary integration in the field of education, cultivating compound talents has become the core goal of the Business English major. How to make good use of the opportunity of the new liberal arts construction, based on the actual teaching situation of the university, explore scientific and feasible reform paths, and improve the quality and efficiency of teaching has become a key issue that needs to be studied urgently under the current situation.

2. The contemporary logic of business English teaching reform in colleges and universities under the background of the new liberal arts

2.1. The connotation and core characteristics of the new liberal arts

The new liberal arts is an educational development concept proposed to respond to the complex domestic and international situation, enhance international discourse power, and promote the deepening reform of the economy and society after socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era. Its core lies in the disciplinary reorganization of traditional humanities and social sciences, upgrading its connotation, and building a liberal arts education system adapting to the needs of the new era^[1]. The new liberal arts has distinct contemporary characteristics, mainly in the following four aspects: first, strategic nature. Its purpose is to strengthen talent strategic training and serve the overall situation of national opening up and economic development; second, innovation. Through reforming the traditional training model, achieve breakthroughs in theory, mechanism, and model, and promote the transformation of traditional disciplines; third, integration. Break disciplinary barriers and promote the interdisciplinary integration of liberal arts and sciences, liberal arts and engineering, liberal arts and medicine, etc.; fourth, development. Society is in constant development and change, and there will be uncertainties in the field of humanities and social sciences. It is necessary to adjust and improve the “new liberal arts” in the process of development.

These characteristics of the “new liberal arts” provide a clear direction for the teaching reform of Business English in colleges and universities. It needs to break the single disciplinary framework and realize the transformation from knowledge impartation to ability training, and from closed teaching to open education.

2.2. The inherent compatibility between business English and the new liberal arts

Business English is an interdisciplinary and applied discipline aiming at cultivating English language skills and business communication skills. It covers a wide range of fields and is an integration product of business disciplines such as economics, management, and trade. With the rapid changes in the market economy and the deepening of global cooperation, Business English places more on cultivating compound talents with solid language skills, business knowledge, and strong practical ability^[2]. Both in terms of disciplinary attributes and talent training goals, Business English has a strong compatibility with the “new liberal arts” concept. The construction of the new liberal arts is a solid background for the cultivation of compound Business English talents, and the reform of Business English talent training is a specific manifestation of the implementation of the new liberal arts concept. The two are integrated and interrelated, and jointly cultivate talents.

2.3. Policy basis and practical needs for teaching reform

At the policy level, the “Belt and Road” initiative and the “dual circulation” strategy clearly require the cultivation of business talents who are familiar with international rules. The construction of the new liberal arts by the Ministry of Education advocates interdisciplinary integration, and the “Guidelines for the Teaching of Undergraduate Business English Majors in Regular Institutions of Higher Education” incorporates cross-cultural competence and critical thinking ability into the talent training goals. At the practical level, the development of economic globalization and the digital economy has given birth to new formats such as cross-border e-commerce, international business negotiations, and digital trade, putting forward higher requirements for the comprehensive ability of Business English talents. However, the current Business English teaching in some colleges and universities is facing problems such as the mismatch between talent training supply and demand, and the disconnection between practical teaching and the industry, which makes it difficult to meet

the needs of the new era for compound talents^[3]. The superposition of this policy orientation and practical contradictions makes the transformation of Business English teaching towards an interdisciplinary and applied nature inevitable.

3. Prominent problems existing in the current business English teaching in colleges and universities

3.1. Vague orientation of teaching goals, disconnected from the requirements of the new liberal arts

The teaching of Business English in colleges and universities overemphasizes the mastery of basic theories of English language, but lacks education on business communication and business etiquette, and ignores the cultivation of students' language application ability and cross-cultural competence, making it difficult to adapt to real business work scenarios^[4]. In addition, the orientation of talent training goals is vague, failing to reflect the needs of interdisciplinary integration, and lacking the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge, such as economics, management, and digital technology. The cultivated talents are difficult to cope with complex business environments.

3.2. Unbalanced curriculum system, insufficient interdisciplinary integration

The current curriculum system of Business English in colleges and universities is unreasonably structured. Most of the compulsory courses are language basic courses and business theory courses, with fewer practical courses and single content. In addition, the interdisciplinary integration of courses is insufficient. The curriculum setting fails to incorporate cutting-edge content under the background of the new liberal arts, such as the digital economy, artificial intelligence, and cross-border trade rules, and also lacks interdisciplinary courses related to finance, management and other related disciplines, making it difficult to meet the needs of students' personalized development and career planning^[5].

3.3. Traditional and single teaching methods, low degree of technology integration

The traditional teacher-centered lecture-based teaching still dominates the teaching, ignoring the dominant position of students, and lacking interactivity and innovation. Especially with the continuous development of emerging technologies, the integration of artificial intelligence, virtual reality, online learning platforms, etc., in the field of education has become inevitable^[6]. However, some teachers have insufficient ability to apply emerging teaching technologies and methods in the teaching process, and the teaching methods are single and backward, making it difficult to stimulate students' learning interest.

3.4. Weak practical teaching links, imperfect school-enterprise collaboration mechanism

Practice makes perfect. To improve students' business communication level and ability, it is urgent to improve the corresponding practical teaching system in combination with the actual needs of Business English curriculum teaching. However, the current lack of practical resources, backward construction of training bases, and disconnection between practical content and actual job needs are all key factors restricting the quality of practical teaching^[7]. Some colleges and universities lack high-standard facilities such as business simulation laboratories and digital trade training platforms on campus, and the construction of off-campus practice bases is backward. School-enterprise cooperation is mostly a formality, and students' practical ability is difficult to

be effectively improved.

4. Practical paths of business English teaching reform in colleges and universities under the background of the new liberal arts

4.1. Reconstruct the curriculum system and optimize the curriculum content setting

Under the background of the new liberal arts, the reconstruction of the Business English curriculum system needs to be based on the university's positioning, closely linked to industry development needs and local economic development goals. The curriculum setting should reflect the characteristics of applicability, career orientation, and openness, and improve students' professional ability^[8]. Under the professional curriculum model of "language tools + business skills" in Business English, combined with the new liberal arts concept, we should blur the boundary between professional theoretical courses and practical courses, and reflect the changing trend of practice in theoretical courses and strong theory in practical courses in the construction of the curriculum system. Derive and develop practical courses such as comprehensive international trade training, foreign trade follow-up practice, and cross-border e-commerce training from traditional Business English professional courses such as international trade practice and international marketing, and appropriately increase the proportion and weight of practical courses. Carry out school-enterprise cooperation with local foreign trade enterprises, invite enterprise backbones and industry experts to serve as training instructors, extend the classroom to enterprises, provide students with real job practice opportunities, and improve their professional quality. At the same time, adhering to the concept of keeping pace with the times, optimize and innovate the traditional curriculum content, supplement the latest Business English vocabulary and industry cases, replace outdated content, reduce the explanation of pure language knowledge, and reserve more practical space for students^[9].

4.2. Innovate teaching methods and create immersive and interactive experiences

The innovation of teaching methods is the key to improving teaching effect. It is necessary to break the traditional teaching model and build an interactive, immersive, and personalized teaching model.

First, implement situational teaching method, simulate real business scenarios such as business negotiations, product promotion, and cross-border e-commerce operations, let students play different roles in the scenarios, use English to complete business communication and practical tasks, and improve their language application ability and business skills. Second, adopt a project-based teaching method, take real business projects as carriers, and cultivate students' teamwork ability, innovation ability, and problem-solving ability.

Third, build a mixed teaching model that integrates the advantages of online and offline teaching: online, use platforms such as MOOC and Xuexitong to provide high-quality teaching resources for students to learn independently, carry out personalized learning and interactive communication; offline, focus on practical training, case analysis, group discussions and other links to realize the organic combination of online and offline teaching^[10].

Fourth, introduce new technologies to empower teaching. Teachers can use artificial intelligence technology to help students improve their pronunciation and oral expression ability; use virtual reality (VR) technology to build immersive business scenarios, allowing students to obtain an immersive learning experience; use big data technology to analyze students' learning data, grasp students' learning difficulties and

advantages, and provide personalized teaching guidance.

4.3. Deepen school-enterprise collaboration and establish a long-term and in-depth cooperation mechanism

School-enterprise collaboration is an important way to realize practical talent training. Colleges and universities should break the long-standing dilemma of superficial school-enterprise cooperation and establish a long-term and in-depth cooperation mechanism. First, establish a school-enterprise co-construction and benefit-sharing cooperation mechanism, and clarify the respective rights and obligations of colleges and universities and enterprises. Colleges and universities need to provide talent support and scientific research services for enterprises, while enterprises should provide practical positions, practical teachers, real projects and other resources for schools, so as to achieve mutual benefit and win-win results^[11]. Schools and enterprises can also co-construct on-campus training bases and off-campus internship bases. On-campus bases introduce real operation platforms and equipment of enterprises, and off-campus bases provide on-the-job internship positions for students to ensure that practical teaching meets the needs of actual positions.

In addition, schools and enterprises need to cooperate in formulating talent training programs, designing curriculum content and assessment standards. Enterprises should participate in the whole teaching process, send industry experts to serve as part-time teachers, guide practical teaching and graduation design, and improve the quality of talent training^[12]. At the same time, carry out industry-university-research cooperation, and schools and enterprises jointly carry out research on Business English-related topics and project development activities, transform scientific research achievements into teaching resources, and improve the cutting-edge and practicality of teaching.

4.4. Strengthen teacher team construction and cultivate a compound and professional teacher team

The construction of a teacher team is the fundamental guarantee for teaching reform. It is necessary to cultivate a compound and professional Business English teacher team in accordance with the requirements of the new liberal arts for teachers. Colleges and universities should optimize the standards for teacher recruitment, pay attention to their interdisciplinary background and industry practical experience when recruiting teachers, and absorb compound talents with English language ability, business professional knowledge, and industry practical experience to join the teacher team. At the same time, invite outstanding practitioners from enterprises to serve as part-time teachers to optimize the structure of the teacher team^[13].

For in-service teachers, colleges and universities also need to strengthen training, organize teachers to participate in academic exchanges, industry practices and other activities, learn advanced teaching concepts and methods, and improve teachers' interdisciplinary literacy, technology application ability, and practical teaching ability. At the same time, encourage teachers to take on temporary positions in enterprises to have a deeper understanding of industry development and the talent needs of actual industry positions, thereby improving teaching effects^[14]. In addition, colleges and universities should build an interdisciplinary exchange and cooperation platform for teachers, set up on-campus interdisciplinary teaching and research teams, promote the exchange and cooperation between teachers of language disciplines, business disciplines, information technology disciplines, etc., and carry out interdisciplinary teaching.

4.5. Optimize the evaluation system and establish a compound talent evaluation mechanism

First, improve evaluation indicators. The cultivation of compound Business English talents based on the new liberal arts should focus on multiple levels. Therefore, colleges and universities should consider students' language ability, business negotiation skills, cross-cultural literacy, etc., as evaluation indicators, and pay attention to students' all-round development. At the same time, increase the weight of indicators such as practical ability and innovative achievements to highlight the orientation of practical talent training [15]. Second, it is necessary to enrich evaluation methods, adopt a combination of process evaluation and summative evaluation, and use methods such as business case analysis, practical operation assessment, and business competitions as evaluation tools to comprehensively reflect students' comprehensive abilities. Finally, colleges and universities need to expand the evaluation subjects. In addition to teacher evaluation and student self-evaluation, external evaluation should be added, and Business English industry experts, enterprise representatives, etc. should be invited to participate in the evaluation to make a more comprehensive and objective evaluation of students. Colleges and universities need to optimize the Business English talent evaluation system according to the actual situation to make it more adaptable to the development needs of the new liberal arts era.

5. Conclusion

The construction of the new liberal arts provides an important opportunity and puts forward higher requirements for the teaching reform of Business English in colleges and universities. The teaching reform of Business English in colleges and universities needs to be based on the contemporary characteristics and core requirements of the new liberal arts, closely linked to market demand and talent training goals, and promote collaboratively from multiple dimensions such as curriculum system, teaching methods, and school-enterprise collaboration, so as to cultivate more compound Business English talents for national opening up and economic and social development.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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