Research on the Reform of Employment-oriented College English Teaching Model

Ping ZHAO
Dalian University of Science and Technology, Dalian, Liaoning, China
48650952@qq.com

Keywords: Employability; College English teaching model; Autonomous learning.

Abstract. Under the background of new engineering, higher requirements are put forward on the cultivation of applied talents, and the employability has become the key factor to talent cultivation. Based on the constructive learning theory, this paper attempts to build up an employment-oriented college English teaching model. The purpose of this research is to explore the curriculum provision, teaching contents, teaching methods and teaching assessment that are suitable for students 'development needs, foster students' autonomous learning awareness and improve their comprehensive English ability in order to make them become application-oriented foreign language talents to meet the needs of China’s social and economic development and international communication.

Research Background

At present, college English teaching in China is in the transitional stage, and most colleges have adopted the teaching model that focuses on classroom teaching supplemented by information technology. College English teaching has been improved both in terms of teaching conditions and teaching results. However, there are still a few issues that need to be solved urgently. Firstly, students' English learning objectives are not clear and their autonomous learning ability is weak. Most students lack initiative of learning, coupled with the colorful college life, most students spend less time and energy on English learning, which influences students’ English learning to a large extent. Secondly, influenced by the traditional exam-oriented education, students in most colleges and universities focus on the examination, only pay attention to the accumulation of English knowledge, ignoring the cultivation of English communicative ability, mute English phenomenon is serious. Thirdly, most colleges and universities have adopted big class teaching model and greatly reduced English class period. Limited by English class period and class type, the current classroom teaching is mainly teacher-centered, students rarely participate in class activities, which leads to students’ passive learning and low learning efficiency. Lastly, the curriculum evaluation system is not perfect. Most universities generally adopt summative evaluation, the single evaluation is not conducive to mobilizing students’ learning enthusiasm.

The concept of employability was first proposed by the British scholar Beveridge in 1909. He regarded "employability" as "employ ability", which refers to the ability of individuals to obtain and maintain jobs. [1] The research on employability in China is relatively late. At the end of the 20th century, the number of laid-off workers increased dramatically, and re-employment has become an urgent problem to be solved. In this case, the concept of employability was introduced into China. The research on improving college students’ employability is also the product of the times and social development. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education: the number of college graduates in China was 900,000 in 1999, and 8.2 million in 2018. The number of graduates has increased by 8.1 times in less than 20 years. [2] The employment pressure of college students is more and more serious. The employability has become the key factor in determining college students’ employment choices. English comprehensive ability is an important part of quality education in colleges and universities. Therefore, colleges and universities should devote themselves to improving students’ English communicative ability and cultivating application-oriented talents that are suitable for social and economic development.
Construction of Employment-oriented College English Teaching Model

Theoretical Foundation

The Influence of English Comprehensive Ability on Employability. As an essential part of human capital, English comprehensive ability has an significant influence on employment options and wage income in the labor market. Some foreign scholars have long studied how English affects individual performance in the labor market, initially targeting immigrant groups. English proficiency is regarded as an indicator to measure the human capital of immigrant groups. [3,4] After studying, Carliner found that bilingual proficient individuals have more advantages in the labor market and can earn higher incomes. [5] Later, language economists regarded English listening and speaking ability as an important factor of human capital. With the development of the economy, there has gradually been a study on the rate of return of English comprehensive ability in the labor market. In the study of Globalization and the Return of Learning English—Empirical Research from Chinese Micro Survey Data, Zheng Yanyan found that speaking ability and reading ability have a certain degree of influence on the income of low-skilled people. [6] In addition, in terms of wage income, the group with strong listening and speaking ability is also significantly higher than the deaf-mute English group. [7] Therefore, as college English teachers, we should accelerate the transformation of English teaching from exam-oriented education to applied education, establish and improve the English education system based on listening and speaking and then improve students’ English comprehensive ability.

Constructive Learning Theory. Constructivism was first proposed by Swiss psychologist Piaget. Constructive learning theory regards knowledge as a new understanding and hypothesis. Students are required to combine their original knowledge and experience in the learning process, and generate personalized understanding of knowledge and information through interaction with the outside world. Constructivism advocates the learning concept of students’ independent thinking and active exploration, and attaches importance to cultivating students’ autonomous learning awareness. In terms of teaching activities, constructive learning theory combines teachers’ indirect experience with students’ direct experience, strengthens students’ participation in class through cooperative learning, inquiry learning and other ways, in order to internalizes English knowledge and gradually improves the existing English knowledge structure system.

Construction of College English Teaching Model

Improve College English Curriculum to Increase Students’ Employability. The cultivation of employability cannot accomplish in an action. It is a long-term process of preparing for employment. The reform of college English teaching model should first meet the requirements of social, economic and educational development. In combination with the positioning of the school, the goal is to improve students’ English comprehensive ability, cultivate high-quality application-oriented talents, and comprehensively enhance students’ employability. College English course should be set up from the following two aspects: (1) Integrate advantageous teaching resources and optimize the teaching contents. The teaching contents of college English course should be derived from the teaching materials and higher than the teaching materials. Teachers choose the corresponding textbooks according to students’ professional characteristics and English proficiency. On the basis of teaching materials, teachers choose the appropriate auxiliary teaching materials for students according to their employment orientation, and focus on the practice of listening and speaking. (2) Combining the needs of the employers, schools and students, teachers should attach importance to the cultivation of students’ English comprehensive ability, and combine EGP with ESP to effectively integrate professional knowledge into college English classroom, and then stimulate students’ autonomous learning ability.

Construct EGP + ESP Teaching Model to Cultivate “Major + Foreign Language” Applied Talents. WANG Shou-ren points out that enough attention should be paid to ESP and EGP in college English teaching, so as to cultivate students’ language ability for effective professional communication.[8] Based on students’ situation and talents training objectives of applied
undergraduate colleges, English teachers should gradually carry out EGP-based ESP teaching. The
direction of ESP teaching is mainly ESAP (English for specific academic purpose) and EOP
(English for occupational purpose). The ESAP and EOP teaching are based on the talent needs of
the employer and the personal development needs of the students. It can not only improve students’
professional quality and comprehensive English ability, but also increase the opportunities for
students’ future employment. The ESAP and EOP are optional courses, which can be taught both
online and offline. The combination of online optional courses and offline optional courses can
provide students with diversified choices and effectively carry out teaching to improve students’
English proficiency and professional skills. The teaching materials of ESAP and EOP can be
self-compiled teaching materials according to the actual situation of the school. However, the
practicability of the teaching materials must be considered based on the emphasis on language skills
in combination with the actual situation of students and the needs of employers.

Integrate Mobile Technology and Traditional Teaching Resources to Build an “Online +
Offline” Teaching Model. The rapid development of mobile technology and the continuous
improvement of various mobile learning platforms provide opportunities for the construction of
“online + offline” diversified teaching model. Construct an “online + offline” teaching model to
realize the optimization and integration of resources inside and outside the class. (1) Make full use
of the online resources to stimulate students’ interests and cultivate their autonomous learning
ability. Teachers establish QQ group and WeChat group for the class, and find out the cultural
background knowledge related to the topic and send it to the students before each class. Cultivate
students’ autonomous learning awareness and realize the transformation from “teacher-centered” to
“student-centered”. The teacher should recommend all kinds of listening and speaking APPs for
students according to students’ actual level and personality development needs, so that students can
make full use of their scattered time for listening and speaking exercises, and broaden their horizons
while improving their listening and speaking ability. (2) Offline teaching includes classroom
teaching and after-class practice. In the classroom teaching, teachers create a similar real situation,
so that students can participate in it and strengthen the basic training of listening, speaking, reading
and writing. Change the traditional teaching model, let the teacher become the guide and organizer
of the classroom teaching, ensure that the students are fully integrated into the classroom, and then
form a good classroom atmosphere. In the after-class practice, teachers should take advantage of all
the favorable conditions to organize various extracurricular practice activities and encourage
students to participate. Students can perform contextual interpretations of what they have learned in
the classroom through various practical activities, so as to improve their language communication
ability.

Build a Practical Teaching System to Enhance Students’ Employability. Practical activities
are the platform for students to grow up. Based on the needs of social and economic development,
college English teachers of application-oriented colleges and universities should constantly update
their teaching concept, effectively utilize various teaching resources of information technology and
improve students’ humanistic quality through practicing teaching activities inside and outside the
class to cultivate high-quality application-oriented talents with practical English ability. In order to
improve students’ comprehensive English ability, the school should carry out various forms of
English practice teaching activities, give full play to the practical training of various educational
resources inside and outside the school, so that students of different levels can find a form of
practical activities suitable for them. Teachers should take advantage of all favorable conditions,
organize various English practice activities, encourage students to participate in English speech
contest, English song contest and other activities, recommend students to have short-term language
practice experience in school-enterprise cooperation practice base, so that students can improve
their comprehensive English ability and practical innovation ability.

Establish an Effective Curriculum Assessment System to Improve Students’ Autonomous
Learning Ability. Change the traditional curriculum assessment system, and adopt an assessment
system that combines both formative and summative assessment, which means that formative
assessment should be carried out throughout college English courses, and timely evaluate each
student’s implementation progress and implementation results both in-class and out-of-class from multiple perspectives. Strengthen the process assessment to mobilize the enthusiasm and initiative of students to participate in classroom activities. The combination of formative assessment and summative assessment is conducive to the cultivation and improvement of students’ autonomous learning ability, finding out problems in the learning process, and improving students’ learning attitude. At the same time, teachers can make adjustments to the teaching in time according to the feedback information of students.

Conclusion

To sum up, under the background of economic globalization, “major + foreign language” compound talents are the direction of talent cultivation in application-oriented colleges and universities. Diversified English teaching model combines mobile technology and traditional teaching, integrates EGP and ESP, creating a three-dimensional English teaching environment that combines in-class and after-class, theory and practice, offline and online teaching. It is beneficial to stimulate students’ learning interest, gradually cultivate students’ autonomous learning awareness, and provide conditions for the improvement of students’ comprehensive English ability and the development of professional skills.

References


