

Business English as an Undergraduate Program in China's Higher Education Popularization Trend: Development and Future

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Abstract. As Chinese colleges and universities enroll more and more students, the higher education popularization trend seems to become inevitable. Among numerous undergraduate programs, business English has gained rapid development in globalization tide. In light of the program's current development, quality ascension will be a strong note for its future. Faculty, curriculum setting, school-enterprise cooperation make up the key elements.

An Emphasis on Quality in Higher Education Popularization Trend

Generally, the education popularization at all levels in China has been continuously improved, and the educational opportunities for the Chinese people have been further expanded. 2018 national education statistics show that the gross enrollment rate of preschool education is 81.7%, 2.1% higher than the previous year. The net enrollment rate of primary school-age children was 99.95%, an increase of 0.04% over the previous year. The gross enrollment rate of junior middle school is 100%. The gross enrollment rate of senior high school students was 88.8%, 0.5% higher than the previous year. The gross enrollment rate of higher education was 48.1%, an increase of 2.4% over the previous year. There were 518,900 schools at all levels, an increase of 5,128 over the previous year. There were 276 million students receiving education for academic qualifications at all levels, an increase of 5.3597 million over the previous year. There were 16.73 million full-time teachers in schools at all levels, an increase of 460,000 over the previous year (Ministry of Education, sorted by China Business Industrial Research Institute).

With the expansion of university enrollment, the quality of teaching has been reduced. Education is booming and the employment quality crisis is getting worse. In addition, modern university spirit is ignored in different degrees. University is a place to cultivate social elites and talents. In order to become one of the world's top universities, Chinese universities should not only have excellent teachers, but also carry out elite education, train a large number of outstanding talents and nurture back universities. In light of this, high-quality development has become a new formulation proposed for the first time in the government work report of the state council in 2018, indicating that China's economy has shifted from a stage of high-speed growth to a stage of high-quality development. On March 5, 2018, the government work report submitted to the first session of the 13th National People's Congress put forward nine plans, including in-depth promotion of supply-side structural reform, all centering on high-quality development, and proposed to optimize the structure of higher education based on the needs of economic and social development.

With more and more people receiving higher education, the demand will be varied as well. The announcement that China has entered the higher education popularization stage also reflects that education industry is about to enter a new stage of development. China is also moving from a diploma society to a society calling for comprehensive abilities. Only by paying attention to ability and quality can we make all kinds of schools become satisfactory and expand the choice of the educated. On the other hand, the trend requires all educatees to plan their academic development in a more practical way.

Voices on Business English Program

In recent years, there has been a sharp increase in the number of universities offering business English as an undergraduate program in China. As of 2017, 323 universities have offered business English program (Y. Chen, 2017). On one hand, researchers and teaching practitioners from the subject attribute (T. Lin, 2001; F. Weng, 2012), curriculum (Z. Zhang, 2007), talent training (F. Liu, 2009) and other perspectives on the study of business English, and gradually build a unique subject theory, curriculum system and talent training model. On the other hand, the structure, ability and quality, scientific research level and teacher construction system of business English teachers are unsatisfactory, and the teacher construction is still in the process of continuous improvement. Colleges and universities are short of high-level business English academic leaders, lack of business English teacher team building strategies, and imperfect teacher training and training system, certification mechanism and evaluation system.

Some scholars have made preliminary studies on the quality and ability of business English teachers, and they believe that the quality and ability of business English teachers should include professional knowledge, teaching ability, scientific research ability and professional practice background. Business English teachers are subject teachers and should master subject knowledge. Subject teachers should integrate pedagogical knowledge, subject knowledge and information technology knowledge in the professional environment, and have the knowledge and skills of informationized teaching, informationized professional knowledge and skills, and specialized pedagogical knowledge and skills. In addition, business English teachers, as foreign language teachers, should also have teaching ability, classroom action research ability and career development management ability. G. Wang and H. Zhang (2011) explored the factors of business English teachers' ability through quantitative research and questionnaire survey, investigated the composition of business English teachers' educational background, teaching ability, professional knowledge and scientific research ability, and proposed the future development direction of business English teachers as well as the enlightenment to the subject construction of business English. J. Xia (2012) argue that business English major outstanding application ability and practice ability, has the professional characteristics of interdisciplinary compound, but the current business English professional teachers still restrict the business English teaching reform at the deeper level, investigate its root, is the source of business English teachers' professional of business English major, but the traditional English language and literature major, as a result, most of the business English teachers are more solid English language foundation of basic skills, but the scarce business professional knowledge, lack of business experience, has greatly hampered the students intercultural business communication ability and practice ability training and development (Z. Wang, K. Tao, 2017).

There is a big gap between professional talent training and market demand, and the quality of talents is unsatisfactory. The main reason for this situation lies in the absence of schools and enterprises as the main body of curriculum resources. First of all, colleges and universities failed to give full play to their autonomy. On the basis of investigating regional economic development and actual needs of enterprises, they combined their own advantages to create their own professional characteristics. On the other hand, enterprises tend to sit on the sidelines or complain passively about problems in professional education, and refuse to participate in the process of talent cultivation while they are dissatisfied with the quality of professional talents. Although there are a large number of courses for business English majors, the development, and allocation of course resources are lack of systematic management, resulting in the homogenization of course contents and the lack of optimum. Planned allocation plays a dominant role in the course resource allocation of business English major. This is not the result of compulsory national policies, but because the colleges and universities ignore the role market plays in the process of business English course resource allocation. Many studies emphasize the importance of enterprise demand and point out the curriculum resources should be set and developed according to enterprise demand.

Positioning and Prospect of Business English Program

It is particularly important to clarify the objectives and principles of business English course resource allocation. At present, the resource allocation of business English major courses should shift from the pursuit of supply quantity to the pursuit of supply quality. We should not talk about the supply side without talking about the demand side. We should pay close attention to the actual social demand and its changes, and achieve the ideal state of supply and demand balance through reasonable allocation and effective use of resources. Supply-side structural reform does not regulate supply in a planned way, but follows the general law of market economy and gives play to the decisive role of market in resource allocation. The combination of market regulation and macro-control is the basic principle of supply-side structural reform, and the allocation and optimization of curriculum resources should also follow this principle. Therefore, the three-level curriculum resources of national, local and school for business English major should be developed according to the principle of combining planning mode and market mode. It is also an effective way for colleges and universities to improve students' practical ability by deepening school-enterprise cooperation, sending students to enterprises for practice regularly, or signing an order with enterprises to train the required students.

Language education should run through the whole process of undergraduate education. The solid language basic skill is the most important symbol advanced English specialized talented person distinguishes from those of non-english. Although business courses take a big part in undergraduate business English program, they are guidelines instead of dominant settings. Business English program should pay attention to students' practical ability and application ability. Therefore, the teaching content of professional courses should reflect the business situation, highlight students' use of English in various business activities in the specific business environment, and pay attention to students' cross-cultural communication and communication skills. Curriculum setting should emphasize application, practicality and innovation.

Business English teachers are still dominated by the transformation of English teachers, rather than leaving the existing English teachers to hire business or management teachers. People who can't use English to teach and train students' basic knowledge and skills of business English are not qualified in supporting business English as a program.

To optimize the course resource allocation of business English majors, the construction of business English major teachers should be strengthened and the teacher structure should be improved. Through the establishment of effective training mechanism, school-enterprise cooperation and other ways to improve the business literacy of business English teachers and business practice ability, to build a talent team of high language literacy, business literacy and information literacy. Enterprises should also participate in the allocation and optimization of course resources, and provide Suggestions and help for the selection of course resources, the construction of course resource database, and the allocation and optimization of course resources. School-enterprise connection and cooperation is an effective entry point to realize the balance between supply and demand, and the main way to connect education with market demand. The development of business English major should be promoted by the independent innovation of the school and the enterprise and the interaction between the school and the enterprise.

If the undergraduates can improve their own cultural literacy and soft power, they may have better chances to promote business cooperation. While cultivating students' abilities in various aspects, colleges and universities should not neglect to improve students' cultural literacy.

In the era of "Internet +", students' learning time can be extended by means of information technology. According to the actual situation, colleges and universities can build their own online courses or introduce existing online courses to build a mixed online and offline teaching model, so as to make full use of students' time in and out of class for language practice.

As Prof. T. Lin pointed out, "as long as the global economic integration trend maintains unchanged, as long as China upholds reform and opening up and economic construction as strategic center, as long as English language maintains its communication tool position in international business, as long as we, by means of unremitting efforts, ensure discipline construction be rational,

scientific and healthy, our business English program will gain endless momentum of development in a long historical period".

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