Exploring Feasible Strategies for University English Teaching in the Information Age: A Preliminary Study

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Abstract: With the rapid development of information technology and the popularization of the Internet, various industries have entered the network era, which has brought new opportunities as well as challenges to university English teaching. However, exam-oriented education model is still very common in China. With the advent of the information age and the continuous development of artificial intelligence technology, the university English classroom teaching model must also undergo new changes. Teaching content, teaching methods, teaching theories, and performance evaluation all need to be updated and improved accordingly. In addition, Today's society also demands higher English proficiency from students, with more diverse requirements for their abilities and a need for richer knowledge reserves. Therefore, both teachers and students should keep up with the times, change their ideas, actively make necessary adjustments, and construct effective strategies. This paper will study university English classroom education in the information age, explore the problems existing in current university English classroom teaching based on years of English teaching experience, and construct feasible strategies for university English classroom education in the information age, in order to better integrate English education with society and serve it.

1. Introduction

The world is now undergoing a revolutionary change, which is the information and information technology revolution around the world. This revolution is playing a decisive role in the direction of social change unprecedented ways, and the world is entering the information age.

In recent years, with the continuous development of internet technology, online distance education has gradually become an emerging model in the education industry [1].The so-called information age is the era in which information produces great value and artificial intelligence has a dominating role. It is mainly composed of the information technologies, and the focus is on creating and developing knowledge. Knowledge and information together represent the most advanced productive forces and is the main mainstream of this era following the gradual end of the agricultural era and the industrial era. "computer" is its representative symbol and information technology has been widely used, such as network, communication, cloud computing, big data etc. Information technology has become an indispensable tool and infrastructure in various industries and fields.

In this era, information and the ability to obtain information have become an important means for people to obtain wealth and realize their self-value. Information will become the first factor of production and will constitute an important technical and material basis of the information society. Under this trend, all countries are currently building information highways and computer popularity is very pervasive, the information age has created a global, interconnected society where information, goods, and people flow freely across borders. This trend has penetrated into all areas of society, including political, economic, diplomatic, education, military field, etc.

Furthermore, the integration of telecommunications and computer systems has enabled the transmission of information to any corner of the world within seconds, with high processing and

transmission speeds and strong effectiveness. Information production, processing, transmission, and consumption are all faster and more efficient than they are in traditional times, resulting in the manifestation of information features in all aspects of human activity. Moreover, information exchange in this age is no longer limited by geography, time, or space. Through Internet, people all over the world can access massive amounts of information anytime and anywhere, and can share and exchange information across borders with almost unlimited access to knowledge produced by human so far. Information and information technology have become active participants in all activities, even in human perceptual, conceptual, and primal activities. In this progress, information is being applied in a systematic way to transform material resources, replacing labor as the source of added value in national production and in people's production and lifestyle patterns. The ways and means by which people obtain information resources have become very convenient, thus presenting unprecedented opportunities and challenges in the field of education accordingly. This information revolution will not only change the production process, but more importantly, it will give rise to a new era and a new society by changing the communication and dissemination structure of society. Information has become the main wealth nowadays, and information flow has become the main driving force of social development and a new power source.

In the context of the information age, many fields and industries must keep up with the times and actively develop effective transformation strategies, including university English teaching. With the rapid development of information technology and the popularization of the Internet, online education has become the focus of attention in the current education field. In this context, the web-based university teaching has gradually emerged [2]. In the process of university English teaching, educational entities should fully leverage the advantages and influences of the information age, try to break free from the constraints of traditional teaching models, and actively engage in the reflection of teaching method. At the same time, effective optimization of current teaching strategies should be carried out to make teaching content more vivid and interesting, and students' passion for English learning should also be enhanced. By this means, students' learning quality can be guranteened and they can better adapt to the times and serve the society.

2. The Major Problems in the Current University English Teaching

As an international language, the importance of English is self-evident. University English education aims to deliver English majors with strong comprehensive qualities to the whole society, enabling them to complete work assignments excellently based on their own qualities in future job positions. The achievement of this goal depends on the level and quality of university English teaching activities. With the continuous Internet development of this information age, the core role of teachers in traditional teaching models is constantly being weakened, and they are no longer the only source of knowledge acquisition and transmission. The language knowledge that used to require teachers to collect, organize, and explain can now be sought by students through multiple online resources. The fixed traditional teaching model is gradually marginalized under the impact of various online education resources. Although China has made magnificent achievements in English teaching reform, there are still phenomena that are incompatible with the current information age. The main problems are reflected in:

Firstly, the essence of the information age concept has not yet deeply penetrated people's mind. From a holistic perspective, in the daily classroom teaching of university English, the traditional teaching model, which is relatively traditional and outdated, is still the mainstream of classroom activity. Educators' teaching ideas and methods have not been innovated in due course, and the indoctrination teaching model and boring teaching content are difficult to stimulate students' interest and involvement in the learning process. It is evident that the leading ideas and requirements of the information age have not permeated deeply into the practice of university English teaching, resulting in a disconnection between concept and practice. Even if some teachers and students in universities consider the requirements of the

information age, they only scratch the surface and do not truly integrate network technology into their teaching and learning activities, nor do they actively learn new technologies and concepts. Therefore, it is difficult to achieve a thorough and substantial transformation of teaching strategies. English teachers, limited by their own professional backgrounds, lack the ability to handle computer information technology, and are not proficient in the ability to properly apply Internet resources to teaching content. The shared high-quality teaching resources online can not be fully presented to students in a reasonable manner. Therefore, the application of information technology is not scientific or adequate so far, and its advantages cannot be fully utilized in university English teaching.

Secondly, the coverage of university English teaching content is too narrow. In terms of content, the main manifestation is that the knowledge scope is too narrow and the coverage is difficult to expand, without considering the practicality and diversity of English. At present, the teaching content lacks practical value and cannot serve the work requirements after graduation. This phenomenon is likely to create strong resistance among many students towards English learning. When they are not supervised by teachers outside the classroom, they will lack motivation and interest in learning, and are unlikely to have a sense of self-initiated learning. In terms of teaching organization, most of it is still based on the traditional classroom teaching model. This model is mainly manifested in the class concentration, the use of uniformly ordered textbooks with standard answers, the unshakable status of teachers, strict time constraints in the classroom, and teaching content that is often selected and decided by teachers. These phenomena will lead to a lack of student participation in the classroom. Due to the fixed teaching model, students are familiar with the teaching process of each and every class, thus lacking a sense of novelty and expectation. Besides, communication between teachers and students is not sufficient, and teaching resources are not fully shared and students' access to knowledge is limited.

Finally, insufficient attention has been given to the uneven levels of English proficiency among university students. As is known to all, university students come from different regions of China which have varying educational resources, and this fact will inevitably result in disparities in their English abilities. For instance, based on years of observation in actual teaching life, students from developed regions in eastern China tend to excel in oral and listening skills as well as foundational language knowledge compared to those who are from remote areas. Therefore, employing a single teaching mode and uniform assessment system in the teaching process disregards individual differences and is not conducive to addressing the students'actual problems. Such a teaching method that neglects the individual differences of students will inevitably dampen their enthusiasm and ultimately lead to deviation from the teaching goals.

It can be seen that traditional teaching models are increasingly unable to meet the demands of the era development and lag behind social needs. The efforts and expected outcomes of teachers and students are difficult to align. The goal ofaddressing the practical needs of English learners and social demands is difficult to achieve. In classroom, the students who lack sufficient participation and practice are unable to grasp the effective methods of English learning, ultimately leading to unsatisfactory learning outcomes.

3. Characteristics of University English Learning in the Information Age

As for the English education in this information age, English learners are not limited by time constraints and where they are, and they can use network resources to share and obtain their favorite knowledge. Network resources are increasingly widely used in English teaching. Compared to traditional face-to-face teaching, online education has advantages in terms of time, space, and resources, which makes it a popular learning method for students [3-4]. At the same time, the integration of the world economy and the rapid development of science and technology promotes the high-speed dissemination of global information, and gradually realizes seamless integration and sharing. Excellent educational resources in recent years are gradually

shared to learners all over the world. This feature of this age fundamentally transforms China's traditional classroom-based teaching mode into a more open and more interactive one. Online education, multimedia education, personalized education, multi-teacher class, family learning and so on, have been very common in today's daily learning. The status of information age has given the English teaching in universities several obvious characteristics:

The first feature is that traditional center-based teaching is presented in a scattered form in Internet. In traditional large-scale English classroom teaching, the teacher is the guiding role of learning. From textbook selection to classroom design to post-class assignments and final assessments, it all depends on the individual instructor. However, in the context of the information age, teachers and students are presented as equal counterparts, and each student can independently choose learning content based on their interests, graduate exam or job requirements, and also each student has the right to evaluate the selected courses. Through the online remote education mode, students can independently choose their learning content and progress, and arrange learning plans according to their personal needs, promoting personalized teaching [5].

The second feature is the flexibility and efficiency of English learning in the information age. Leveraging internet technology, students can easily access high-quality English learning resources without being limited by the objective factors. The web-based remote translation teaching mode can be learned anytime and anywhere, without being limited by time and location. Students can decide their own learning time and location, which is convenient and flexible [6]. This can fully stimulate students' enthusiasm and make the most of their valuable university time. Optimizing English classrooms with internet technology can also help students experience language environments and improve teaching achievements. As students live in China and use Chinese as their daily language, they may encounter phenomena such as "Chinglish" due to a lack of English language environment. By applying internet technology, teachers can effectively utilize resources from the internet to help students experience the native language environment. In a more authentic language environment, students can learn English more actively and effectively. Teachers can also use internet technology to help students learn English knowledge before and after class, allowing students to be immersed in the English language environment and improve their learning efficiency and learn how to employ English to solve practical problems. Just as John Seely Brown once said, "In the information age, information and knowledge are becoming commodities. What sets successful individuals apart is their ability to use that information to solve complex problems and innovate" (John Seely Brown, *Harvard Business Review*, 2002).

The third feature is that students can repeatedly learn from online resources, which highlights the importance of their initiative and enthusiasm. In the network mode of this age, as long as students are proactive and enthusiastic enough, they can make visible progress and improvement in their learning, thereby forming a good virtuous cycle and enhancing the overall goal of university English education. Being able to repeatedly watch online learning content was a learning pathway that was difficult to popularize before the information age. Today, this convenience greatly improves the quality of learning and effectively avoids the vagueness of knowledge for only listening to the lecture once, and thereby improves students' learning confidence and efficiency. Through the online remote education mode, students can have real-time online interactive communication with professional teachers and other students, enhancing their learning experience and participation [7].

4. The Feasible Teaching Strategies for University English Teaching

Based on the analysis above, which mainly targets the main issues in current college English teaching and the key features of education in the era of information, this part aims to develop feasible and effective teaching strategies for college English courses, and the ultimate goal is to enhance the effectiveness of college English teaching.

In response to the computer technology shortcomings of English teachers, targeted training

should be provided to improve their computer technology processing skills. There is an essential difference between information-based and traditional university English education. If they do not make a transformation in skills improvement and remain stagnant, outdated educational concepts and methods, it will inevitably limit the achievements of English teaching and waste the precious time of both students and teachers. Therefore, university management board should timely designate relevant computer skills training programs, ensure their effectiveness and feasibility, and conduct relevant of assessments of the teachers after the training. These trainings can help educators truly transform their educational concepts, cultivate their innovative consciousness, and ensure that they are truly armed with ideological concepts to become the guiding role in university English education.   This is an indispensible way to promote the rapid adaptation of university English teaching to the requirements of the information age and to fully leverage the advantages of learning resources. At the same time, universities should designate relevant policies to encourage teachers to try new educational models such as micro-courses, MOOCs, and flipped classrooms and actively change their teaching methods.

In the Internet environment, students need to have a certain level of computer operation and Internet knowledge. If their own understanding of technology is not deep, their adaptability and effectiveness in online teaching may be affected to some extent [8-9].Students are the primary agent of learning, and this age requires students to improve their learning habits of autonomy and self-discipline. If the students are still in accordance with the previous passive learning attitude to spend the university life, they can only be eliminated by the Times. In the daily teaching, the teacher should constantly transmit this idea to the students and gradually penetrate the concept into the students' actual study and life. In daily tests and final assessment, the score of independent learning can be set on a certain level, so as to encourage students to get out of the passive learning habits and develop active learning behavior which will benefit their future life. According to a survey, the current mobile phones, computers and tablets and other electronic products cover the whole student commnity. Yet for some disadvantages of network learning, students should also be prevented from addicting to network. During the teaching process, students can be divided into various groups so they can have mutual supervision. Besides, relevant online learning plan and target can be specified. With the help of groups, it is easier for the students to overcome the bad learing habits and inefficient learning methods.

Encouraging faculty members at ordinary universities to create high-quality online courses can enhance their computer skills and provide students with greater access to online resources, thereby enabling them to fully benefit from the convenience of the information age regardless of time and space constraints. While the availability of online resources is currently abundant, it mostly concentrates on established universities' online course development. Faculty members at ordinary universities may lack confidence or feel unprepared to establish their own online courses. Therefore, ordinary universities can encourage their teachers to embrace the creation of online courses, which not only improves their computer application and information processing skills but also transforms their mentality from "I cannot"to "I can", thus ultimately cultivating these teachers into capable individuals for educating in the digital age.

Encourage students to engage in research-oriented learning.In the online environment, students can access a large number of online learning resources through various platforms, such as online libraries, e-books, academic journals, and so on [10].Teachers should gradually change the traditional learning model of rote memorization and encourage students to utilize online resources for pre-class preparation and post-class consolidation. Through the online education model, students can access high-quality course resources worldwide, avoiding the limitation of a single textbook [11-12].Various teaching platforms and applications like Rain Classroom and XuetangX can be used to assign pre-class assignments and post-class tasks that can help enhance independent thinking and cultivate students' ability to utilize online information resources to solve and explore problems. For students, online teaching is not limited to the control of teachers, and they can find their own learning paths and problem-

solving methods, cultivating their creative thinking and independent thinking abilities [13]. Teachers can monitor students' progress and effectiveness in real-time through online feedback, thus identifying weak areas and major problems, and adjusting classroom content and pacing accordingly. By emphasizing key difficulties, teachers can enhance classroom efficiency and learning outcomes. For post-class tasks, teachers can assign research-oriented topics relevant to the course content for students to do research with the use of various information resources. This approach enables practical application of language learning into problem-solving exercises, which enhances learning results compared with traditional rote memorization. Students can work in groups to discuss assigned topics and expand their English vocabulary, leading to practical language practice in problem-solving exercises. This approach encourages students to use English as a communicative tool and enhances their practical English skills. The online teaching model has the advantages of stronger flexibility, wider resources, and more convenient communication, which to some extent improves many problems in traditional translation teaching, provides students with a better learning environment, and promotes the improvement of their English learning [14-15].

Reforming student assessment through modern information technology. By leveraging the advantages of modern information technology, student evaluation methods can be reformed to move beyond traditional paper-based exams and utilize various platforms and specialized software to provide more objective assessment formats. With English being a tool-oriented subject, assessments can focus on the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, thus a comprehensive and thorough assessment can be operated in students' perpormance. Modern information technology can provide accurate, comprehensive, and objective evaluation results for English language assessment, making it imperative for educators to fully learn and leverage its technological advantages to enhance their teaching efforts. As such, teachers should embrace modern information technology as an invaluable tool in supporting their instructional work and seek to optimize its potential by incorporating it into their teaching methodologies.

5. Conclusion

In the students' academic journey, the learning of English in universities has undergone a transformation from traditional test-oriented education to practical education. In the context of the current information age, the nation and society have put forward higher requirements for English professionals. Only through the comprehensive development of students' vocabulary, language skills, communicative competence, language application skills, and innovative mindset in related fields, can they adapt to the trend of social development and meet the needs of foreign language-related job positions. This should also be regarded as the new requirements and challenges of modern times for higher education English education. As English teachers in universities, it is essential to feel the heavy responsibility on shoulders and take an active approach to adapting to the information age. It is a must to break away from traditional teaching concepts and modes of thinking and actively participate in information technology training. Teachers should also have the courage to explore and implement innovative educational concepts. In daily teaching activities, adjustments and innovations should be made and the entire teaching process by utilizing various information technologies. Furthermore, an interesting and practical university classroom should be constructed to improve students' comprehensive practical abilities.Thus, new challenges and responsibilities are given by the times, and innovative educational ideas should be actively explored and implemented to meet the needs of the information age.

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