

# Research on Application-Oriented Teaching of Business English Major from the Perspective of New Liberal Arts Construction and Multiple Discipline Integration

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**Abstract:** In the context of the New Liberal Arts Construction, application-oriented teaching and the innovation of teaching modes in Business English have been further developed. Due to the advancement of digital and intelligent technologies and dynamic change of industry talent demands, the cultivation of Business English professionals must adapt to the evolving times through multidisciplinary integration, enhancing students' professional skills to gear to industry positions. Faced with issues such as obsolete professional cognition and stiff teaching systems in traditional education, as well as detachment between academia and industry and gap between education and real talent demand, this paper proposes innovative strategies to tackle the challenges of application-oriented teaching reform. It is suggested to update educational ideology, to strengthen multi-disciplinary cooperation, to adopt innovative teaching modes and to deepen cooperation with industries.

**Keywords:** New Liberal Arts; Business English; Application-Oriented Teaching

## 1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of the information technology industry under the fourth industrial revolution has driven the innovation of modern business models, spurring the rapid development of cross-border e-commerce, which has accordingly influenced the social requirements for talent of Business English major. The national "15th Five-Year Plan" proposed by China advocates the deep integration of digital technology and the physical economy, upgrading traditional industries and giving birth to new industries. Against such backdrop of Chinese national reformation of higher education, the teaching of traditional "pure liberal arts" major of Business English struggles to adapt to changes in new talent demand trend. Under the

guideline of New Liberal Arts Construction, Business English talent cultivation should cater to the new economic pattern of China, embracing the digital-tech supported economy. Thus, the high-quality talents who are expected to be cultivated by Business English major need to have interdisciplinary skills and capable to handle composite situation of job positions of digital times. To implement the New Liberal Arts Construction and fulfill objectives of cultivating high-quality applied Business English talents, it is necessary to explore innovative modes of "Business English+Big Data" and "Business English + Information", breaking disciplinary barriers and propelling integration of arts and sciences.

Moreover, as for application-oriented teaching, it is of practical significance to consolidate cooperation between industries of international trade and education of Business English, which promotes the output-accomplishment of applied talent cultivation. By assisting local companies to conduct international publicity or proceed international trade, the students can obtain valuable chances to practice their disciplinary knowledge and improve their skills for their future career. The cultivation of application-oriented talents stresses integration theoretical knowledge with practice, while ushering in the real working scenarios to shape up the technical qualification of students. In correspondence with pursuit of New Liberal Arts Construction, cooperation between Business English majors and colleges is also a driving force to promote the interdisciplinary teaching, since realistic job pressure can effectively motivate students to acquire latest digital techniques to confront challenges in jobs, increasing momentum of learning and teaching reform.

## 2. Theoretical Review on New Liberal Arts and Application-Oriented Teaching

## 2.1 Application-Oriented Teaching from the Perspective of Ecological Pedagogy

Scholars of ecological pedagogy point out that in the teaching process, various "cells", including students, teachers, teaching content, teaching environment, etc, constitute a complex and dynamic teaching ecology network [1]. Effective teaching relies on the dynamic equilibrium and positive interaction of all elements, as stated by Doyle and Ponder. This pedagogical theory argues teaching should manifest the characteristics of "holism, dynamism, interactivity, and situationality", organically combining learning of participants and the environment they are engaged in [2]. In line with this ecological pedagogy, application-oriented teaching of Business English should extend teaching links to real economic and social elements and build an ecological environment for the teaching system in which teaching objectives are embedded. And during such application-oriented education process, the students should be regarded as the center role. The instruction system should serve to propel students to construct their own cognition, rather than focus on teacher's lecturing. Knowledge and skills need to be developed based on perception of students by themselves. Teachers would play the auxiliary roles in education, though they design the teaching plan, facilitate consistency of teaching, and guide the students to follow the most efficient pathway to for building their own disciplinary knowledge system. But teachers should be conscious of the significance to delegate more time and space to students' growth on their own autonomy. The student synthesize all the information provided through all elements of ecological teaching system. Through the cooperation between industries and colleges, more scenario based and project based teaching environment can be provided, which forms ecological system of learning. Students, with the guide of teacher, fully refine their professional skills through experiential practice.

## 2.2 Interdisciplinary Teaching under the context of New Liberal Arts Construction

In 2018, the "New Liberal Arts Construction" initiative is launched, which proposed the concept of "multidisciplinary collaboration and versatile talent cultivation". It emphasizes the importance of application of modern science and information technology in liberal arts. In March

2019, Director of Education Department of China, Yan Wu, delivered a keynote speech in Beijing on the theme of "New Mission, Grand Vision, New Liberal Arts, and Grand Foreign Languages". In November 2020, the Ministry of Education held a working conference on the construction of the New Liberal Arts, proposing measures for the innovative development of higher education in China and releasing the "Declaration on the Construction of the New Liberal Arts", further promoting the principles of adhering to integrity and innovation, value-led development, and advancing by categorization, with professional optimization, mode innovation, and curriculum improvement as the three key focuses.

In such background of development of the new economy propelled by the global technological revolution, the liberal arts explore new roads to break the confinement of traditional liberal arts. The new liberal arts innovate the disciplinary cognition, teaching content and pedagogical methods of Business English. It advocates the in-indepth disciplinary convergence of science and liberal arts, facilitating the profound intersection of cross-discipline learning [3]. Such integration of multiple disciplines can drive upgrading of traditional liberal arts disciplines, and renovate the learning system of Business English. From the perspective of new development trend of Business English major, Wang&Song proposed that this major should be geared to scientific and technological progress and the needs of the times[4]. Business English integrates with data-analysis subjects and information processing subjects, which conforms to professional needs of the new historical development stage of economy and international trade. So spurred by the new social trend and government education guidance, Business English major will open new horizon with employment of new technology and improve the actual vocational capability.

## 3. Challenges in Application-Oriented Teaching Reform

### 3.1 Professional and Disciplinary Cognition Needs to be Transformed

To maintain the momentum of advancement of Business English major towards adapting to to new trend of talent demand in such new society with new technology popping up, it is necessary to enhance the disciplinary cognition of students

besides the improvement of cross-disciplinary knowledge and capability. With traditional pedagogy, students restrict their understanding on learning to the classroom instruction, paper-based learning, and teacher-led classes. But in application-oriented teaching, students are required to extend the knowledge system and amplify their applicable skills, which should be fulfilled by extended teaching space and time. Thus, more channels embodied the elements connected with realistic professional business should be explored. Meanwhile, more scientific and digital technique study demands more persistence of students. This is a great overhaul of traditional education of Business English, which are usually confined to campus study, classroom lectures and paper-work presentation. Correspondingly, teachers should hold more resolution to pioneer disciplinary system, and students should hold more persistence to expand disciplinary scope with more autonomy. To foster such revolution of Business English Education, the ideological transformation in terms of disciplinary cognition is very critical. Students and teachers should fully understand the necessity and urgency for revolution of Business English education to comply with the challenges of new career requirement of international trade and international business communication, then they can strengthen motivation and insist on making arduous efforts to pursue the innovation of Business English major.

### **3.2 The Application-Oriented Teaching System Needs to be Improved**

In the face of technological innovation, foreign business communication and the foreign trade industry have also undergone rapid changes. The development of digital intelligence technologies such as AI has presented liberal arts majors with not only challenges but also more opportunities. In addition to traditional foreign business communication skills and knowledge of foreign trade, modern job development also requires students majoring in Business English to possess cross-border e-commerce operation and new media-based communication skills, as well as industry data analysis capabilities supported by intelligent digital technology. These new technological capabilities have raised new requirements for Business English majors, and the curriculum system, teaching mode, and teaching strategies need to be adjusted and

optimized to meet modern professional needs and technological development. How to retain the traditional teaching advantages of the major and break through the bottleneck of professional application skill development has become an important issue.

### **3.3 The Cooperation of Industry and Academia Needs to be Consolidated**

Applied teaching under the new liberal arts construction places a significant emphasis on the cultivation of practical abilities by means of multidisciplinary integration, which purports to enhance students' capacity to explore, solve, analyze, and innovate when dealing with practical problems encountered in real-world job positions. The new liberal arts education seeks to break down the barriers between different academic disciplines [5-7]. To fulfil the objective, the practical environment is needed to be forged, in which knowledge of multiple fields can be incorporated together, and systematic application of the professional skills can be conducted. The traditional pedagogy always centers around theoretical instruction. With such traditional learning mode, the knowledge of different disciplines is separated and detached. For example, if the traditional pedagogy is taken, even if the digital technology course is held for Business English major, it may still be learned as a separated disciplinary course, detached from the realistic usage for the vacation of Business English major. Theoretical instruction of the traditional teaching mode can't serve the purpose of the New Liberal Arts Construction and the new talent requirement of contemporary international trade, which has high demand for actual performance of job posts, rather than for the high scores shown in examination paper. In this context, to expand the scope of Business English classes and substantially achieve the objective to educate application-oriented talents, more scenario-based and project-based teaching methodologies should be employed in teaching. Then, involving more foreign trade and cross-border e-commerce enterprises in the major talent cultivation process is also necessary, which offers more opportunities for students to direct vocational experience.

### **3.4 Interdisciplinary Integration Needs to be Deepened**

In the era of rapid advancements in information technology and the booming growth of

cross-border e-commerce, the significance of business data and the ability to analyze information in the realm of foreign trade has grown more and more prominent. Thus, the integration of arts and sciences, which is in line with the concept of the new liberal arts [8], specifically the combination of "Business English + Big Data" and "Business English + Information", has emerged as a crucial pathway for the future development of Business English career.

Nevertheless, in the traditional educational system, the faculty resources are usually insulated between department. The teachers of Business English themselves are mostly confined to academy related to linguistics. Accordingly, their teaching will also limited to English teaching related classes, such as courses of Business English Reading, Business English Listening, and so on. When it is connected with information technology or data analysis subjects, the teachers of Business English major will show deficiency in capability to deliver such science and technical teaching. And if Business English major directly invites science and technical teachers from other departments without comprehensive planning and sophisticated consideration on the means to integrated teaching with original knowledge foundation of Business English majors, many problems may emerge. For instance, the science teachers will find that the teaching content, methods and curriculum pace, which are applicable to the science students, can not well accommodate the students of Business English major. The students will struggle to grasp the abysmal scientific knowledge with motivation discouraged. Moreover, to follow the traditional teaching mode, the teaching time of scientific and technical subjects will not be sufficient, since the class schedule of Business English major is packed with linguistics courses and foreign trade courses. It's hard to spare ample class time for scientific teaching. Thus, to properly arrange the faculty resources and make strategic planning for the teaching, the cooperation between department and disciplines need to be consolidated.

#### **4. New Liberal Arts Discipline Integration Strategies**

##### **4.1 Promoting the Ideological Building and Optimizing Teaching Content**

Ideology improvement and disciplinary cognition upgrading can broaden students' vision of global trade and economy development and solidify their faith to the profession capability development [9]. Nowadays, international business is boosted by multi-dimension communication, which is not only based on communication of exchange of goods, but also based on understanding ideological and cultural background of each other. So business communication and dealings are not isolated from international economic and social landscape. To broaden students' vision and propel ideological building, teachers can optimize the teaching content and enrich the teaching materials.

As to optimize the teaching content, the more materials related to other countries' economic background and the whole situation of world development should be included. International trade is always influenced by world development, and smooth communication is facilitated by better understanding of others. More inclusive teaching material extend the students' vision from confinement of linguistic study to broad horizontal understanding of other counties and the world. Also to optimize the teaching content, materials to shape positive value of life and strengthen students' dedication to future career also should be included for Business English learning. In the future career, the students may find themselves in dilemma, hard to make decision on choices. In such case, the righteous value and ideology will help them out of entanglement and confusion. Also, the international trade is volatile, and there are chances in future career students encounter adverse circumstances. Thus positive value and solid faith can uphold students confidence to go through hardships. The "Understanding Contemporary China" series of English textbooks is an example to illuminate teaching content optimization, which is not only engaged in linguistic teaching, but also emphasizes the significance of broadening students' horizon of the world and enhancing students' sense of mission to contribute for booming of global trade.

##### **4.2 Strengthening Multi-Disciplinary Cooperation**

Business English major should strengthen teaching cooperation with other departments and faculties within the college, facilitate the

interchange of teaching resources, and conduct communication on the construction of specialized interdisciplinary modules. It is necessary to conduct preliminary research on student preliminary learning situation, talent requirements of trade industry, and teachers' perception on proceeding of classes. Such research will guarantee the effective interdisciplinary integration of the curriculum setting, ensuring that course setting and instruction is not divergent from students' learning foundation. When Business English major integrates arts and sciences into its teaching system, it should implement a planned and guided arrangement, and carry out scientific course construction. Effective cooperation between arts and science departments can achieve a win-win situation for teaching accomplishment, consolidation of teacher resources, and teachers' professional growth. For example, if a course of e-commerce data analysis or cross-border communication is effectively built based on solid preliminary research on learning situation of business English students and industry trend, which not only can systematically enhance the professional abilities of Business English students, but also broaden development of science and engineering disciplines in business applications.

#### 4.3 Conducting Innovative Teaching Mode

There are practical difficulties in teaching Business English across disciplines. Whether it is "Business English + Information Technology" or "Business English + Big Data", the demand for a mathematical and physical foundation knowledge becomes prominent. As a composite major facing dynamic trend of international trade industry, Business English itself encompasses teaching in both English language and international business. If the learning time of mathematical and physical foundations is comprehensively increased, it will squeeze out the original teaching time of Business English in aspects of linguistics and international trade, which will affect the cultivation of cross-cultural communication and foreign trade skills to a certain extent. Moreover, considering the weak mathematical and scientific foundation of liberal arts students in Business English, conventional teaching methods may be ineffective. Therefore, innovative modes for multi-disciplinary teaching are required [10]. The "group-building" system and "project-based" system, rather than the

"class-building" system, are recommended. The teaching modes based on project groups and groups for competition or tasks have obvious advantages. Firstly, the teaching audience can be dynamically adjusted and organized. In competition groups and project groups, students can discover their own strengths through participation and establish a learning connection that integrates arts and sciences according to the situation. Secondly, the setting of competitions and projects in the context of the development of the times are always directly in line with the current development of the times and social needs. Therefore, its cultivation proceeded in such modes is also directly aligned with the talent needs of the times, promoting the practice of output-oriented and application-oriented teaching.

#### 4.4 Deepening Industry-Academia Integration

Business English major should develop professional practical teaching links to actual industries to create a practical-oriented teaching system. The industry-academia collaboration need to be deepened to establish a effective practical education mode that closely combining education of colleges and guidance of enterprises. Based on the interdisciplinary professional development system of the new liberal arts, the colleges need to actively invite enterprise experts and industry professionals to organize regular discussions and provide guidance on professional construction concerning such as discipline development, curriculum design, and talent training programs, to directly address industry needs and requirements of talents. By tightening the connection with enterprises, a long-term channel of communication and cooperation between industries and colleges can be established. At the same time, industry-academia integration also facilitate smooth and successful conduction of project-based teaching approaches, since collaboration with industries provide more available actual practical industrial resources and circumstances for students to get experiential engagement, and more contact with real industries help students achieve professional growth. Under the model of interdisciplinary integration, business English practical teaching will have a deeper output orientation. With industry support as the foundation for expanding practical, the Business English major also can contact with local government, establishing a

multi-party integration collaboration platform among universities, enterprises, and the government, actively contributing to the realization of regional development goals.

#### 4.5 Facilitating Student Autonomous Exploration

Under the guidance of the "New Liberal Arts" philosophy, students are facing a vast landscape where disciplinary boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred and paths for ability development are growing more diverse. For Business English majors, this means construction of their knowledge system is no longer confined to traditional language and purely theoretical international trade concepts. Instead, it extends towards enhancing ability to make statistic analysis and cultivating practical skills required in the information age. The expected structure of students' disciplinary knowledge and capability is expanding outward with unprecedented breadth. Compared to fellow students following traditional learning models, students in the New Liberal Arts context find themselves in a more far-reaching and dynamic developmental landscape. However, traditional practical teaching, limited by the time and space of the classroom, can no longer effectively support the growth of students' diversified practical abilities. Therefore, cultivating independent critical thinking and enhance autonomy of students' learning is crucial. Students need to selectively carve out their own paths of arts-science integration under teacher guidance, connecting knowledge points from different disciplines into a unique personal knowledge system. While the New Liberal Arts initiative has an overall roadmap, the specific path for individual development may inevitably vary. Students need to explore persistently in the way that best suits them. Take the direction of "Data + New Liberal Arts" as an example. Specifically, the depth and breadth of each student's engagement in data theory construction and application practice must be driven by strong autonomy and dynamically adjusted according to their own characteristics. In this journey of autonomous exploration of students, the role of the teacher remains indispensable. Teachers serve not only as guides for arts-science integration, builders of foundational systems but also as catalysts in the process of students' autonomous extension, and mentors, giving supportive suggestion and comforting

reassurance.

#### 5. Conclusion

Under the New liberal Arts Construction, the pursuit of interdisciplinary Business English application-oriented teaching is to build a comprehensive professional education system. This pursuit is firmly grounded in the principles of "renewing ideology, innovating teaching modes, and expanding practical experiences." By adhering to these guiding rules, Business major seek to foster an ecological environment for major learning where students are encouraged to engage in multi-disciplinary learning consistently and refine their skills in practice. Persistent efforts of students on multi-disciplinary learning will help equipping them with diverse skill and prepare them for the dynamic demands of the modern workforce with the broader understanding of interconnected fields, which will pave the way to their future professional success.

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