

# *Reflection on English Education in China and the Implications for the Construction of English Majors in the Context of New Liberal Arts*

Chi Che

*Geely University of China, Chengdu, Sichuan, China*

**Keywords:** English Major, Reflect, New Liberal Arts, English News Compilation

**Abstract:** Based on the reflections and suggestions on English education from academia, the paper takes the English News Compilation course as an example to put forward four suggestions on the construction of English major under the background of new liberal arts, that is, to grasp the "Chinese characteristics" of Chinese English major from the perspective of major concept of construction, and to highlight the cultivation of inter-disciplinary talents from the cultivation goal. In the talent training program, the requirements of "knowledge", "ability" and "quality" are reflected, and the degree of support for the training goal is emphasized in the construction of the teaching staff.

## **1. Academic Reflection on English Education**

### **1.1 Reflection on the Cultivation of Inter-Disciplinary Talents**

#### **1.1.1 Vague and General Training Objectives**

As we all know, the training goal of English majors is usually to enable students to skillfully use English after graduation to engage in translation, management, teaching, research and other work in business, education, tourism, journalism, scientific research and other departments. And it does not highlight the importance of English majors and can be applied to any kind of professional training objectives. There is no specific standard for students' basic skills or knowledge. This will affect the specific implementation of the training program for English majors' teaching objectives, resulting in unclear objectives, uncertain requirements of teaching and inconformity between teaching content and teaching objectives.

#### **1.1.2. Similarity and Homogeneity of Specialty Settings**

According to statistics, 90% of the full-time ordinary undergraduate colleges and universities in China have English majors, and most of the colleges and universities do not consider the characteristics of the school when setting up English majors [1]. The specialty settings of different colleges and universities are similar, resulting in the surplus of English major graduates, difficult employment and other negative consequences. Secondly, the homogenization of English major training direction and training objectives is very serious, which does not reflect the characteristics

of the school and the needs of local economic and social development.

### 1.1.3. Divorced from the Actual Curriculum

According to the survey, training courses of language skills account for two-thirds (67%) of the total class hours of English majors, while other professional courses and related professional courses only account for 15% and 18% respectively [2]. Also, the kind of curriculum is seriously divorced from reality, which makes students spend a lot of time studying English in school, but would lack the opportunity to have practical skills. And it is also one of the important reasons for the unemployment situation of most English major graduates upon graduation. Figure 1-5 College Students' Views on English Textbooks

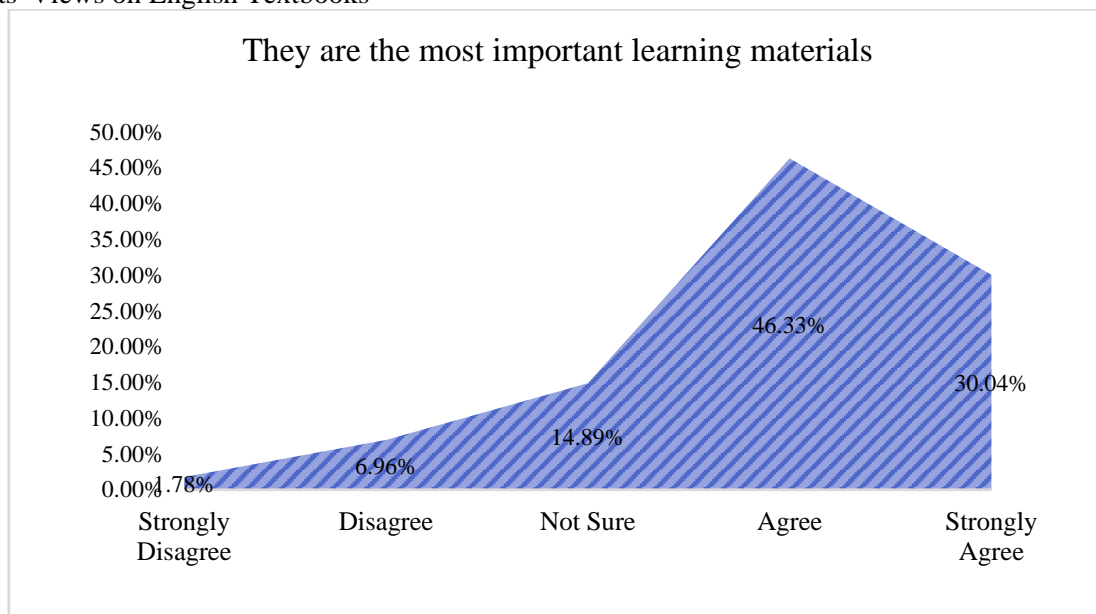


Figure 1: The Percentage of Students Held that English Textbooks are the Most Important Learning Materials

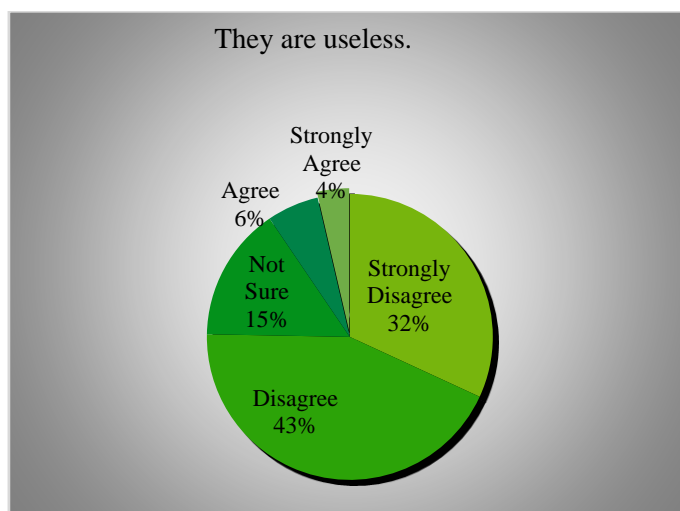


Figure 2: The Percentage of Students Held that English Textbooks are Useless

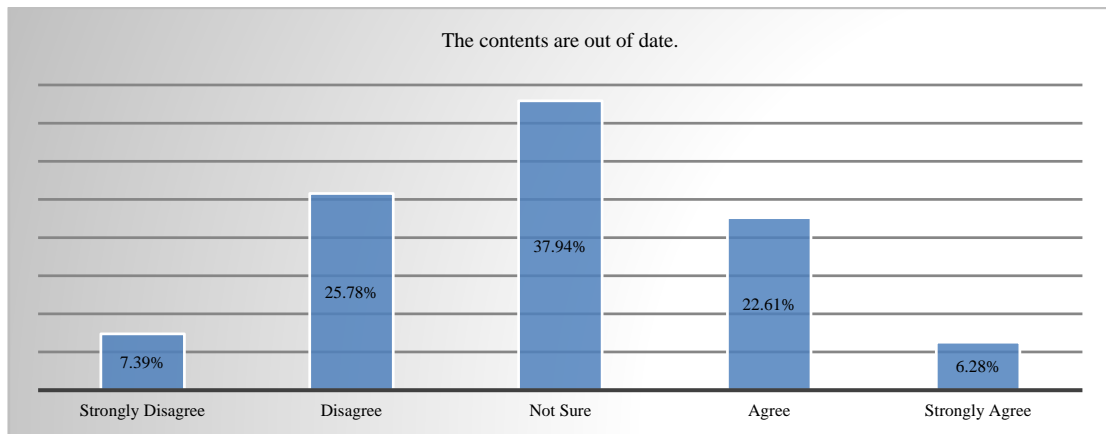


Figure 3: The Percentage of Students Held that the Contents are Out of Date

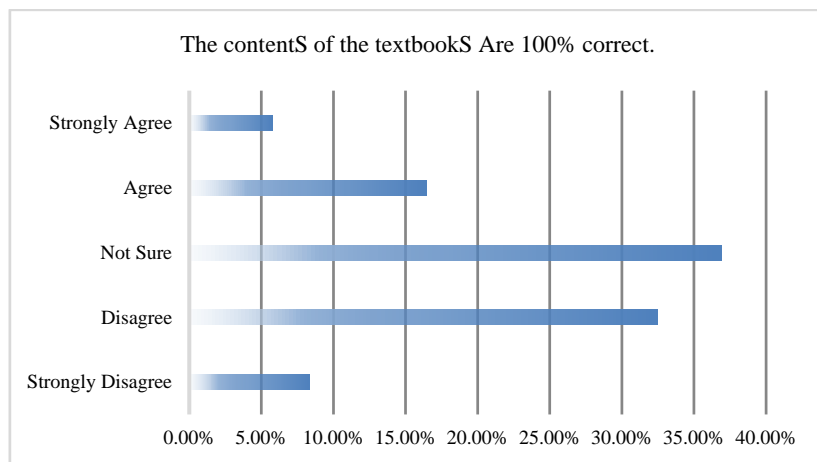


Figure 4: The Percentage of Students Held that the Contents are 100% correct.

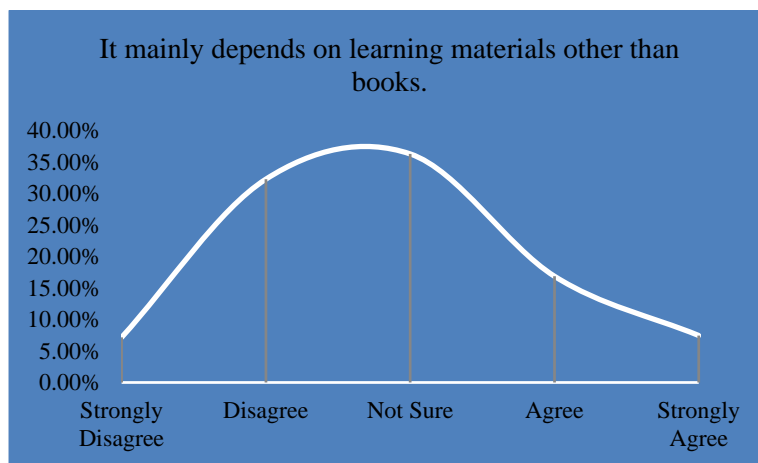


Figure 5: The Percentage of Students Held that the Learning Depends on Learning Materials Other Than Books

## 1.2 Reflection on the Positioning of English Majors

Another debate revolves around the nature of the subject of English majors. Then a common argument is that English major should return to humanities, since it is a return. And it means that it has gone astray before, but where to "return", it seems to be uncertain. In fact, according to the

Concise Encyclopedia Britannica, "the humanities would include language and literature studies, art studies, history, and philosophy," while "the humanities in modern institutions of higher learning include courses in literature, language, philosophy, history, mathematics, and science." Some scholars believe that literature and linguistics, vocational training and academic training, teaching and research should be separated.

## **2. Suggestions for Reflection - taking the Course of English News Compilation as an Example**

### **2.1 Grasping the Chinese Characteristics of English Majors in China from the Perspective of Specialty Construction**

In fact, after years of development, foreign language and literature majors in China have formed a discipline foundation, namely, "foreign languages, foreign literature, translatology, regional and national studies, comparative literature and cross-cultural studies" as specified in the National Standards. And the interdisciplinary nature is first different from the "English Department" of traditional British and American universities, because the latter's traditional research and teaching field is the literature of mother tongue, namely English literature. As Hu Wenzhong said, "the practice and experience in training versatile foreign language talents would have obvious Chinese characteristics internationally" [3]. In addition, we should not ignore the development status and characteristics of English majors in China, let alone belittle ourselves. Therefore, the course of English News Compilation should break the traditional idea of running schools for all majors in colleges and universities, and try to share resources with foreign language majors in schools [4]. What's more, for the course, we could jointly run with universities in foreign countries, especially ASEAN countries, as well as cooperating with the news media, especially the news media with bilingual news communication talents. Last but not least, it is jointly built with the external publicity departments of the Party and the government [5].

### **2.2 Highlighting the Cultivation of Inter-disciplinary Talents in Terms of Training Objectives**

In China, English is learned as a foreign language, but mastering the language is a prerequisite to engage in the "regional and national" research of a particular country or region. And it is in the situation that the formation of the training model for English majors in China began to be combined with journalism, business, law and other majors. Since entering the new era, with the pace of China's participation in the process of global governance, foreign language majors should give full play to their own advantages under the background that China's higher education, together with generally attaching great importance to the cultivation of international vision and cross-cultural communication abilities [6]. Furthermore, the importance of cultural awareness in foreign language education in the new situation is self-evident, which is not only the need for economic and cultural cooperation and exchange, but also the need to enhance the national image [7]. Of course, the mode, content and process of training compound talents must also vary from place to place, from school to school and from major to major.

The practice content of English News Compilation mainly includes making students understand English news programs of BBC and VOA with normal speaking speed. And through the combination of teacher teaching, classroom discussion, multimedia teaching and simulation practice, we can master the basic skills, professional terms and expressions of news listening. inter-disciplinary talents who learn the basic requirements of news writing, are familiar with the basic tools and software for listening to news, and can find and write high-quality news reports [8].

### **2.3 Reflecting the Knowledge Requirements, as Well as the Ability and Quality Requirements in the Talent Training Program**

The training specifications of the National Standard include quality requirements, knowledge requirements and ability requirements. In addition to the outlook of correct world, outlook on life and values, the quality requirements also clearly put forward the Chinese feelings and international vision, social responsibility, cooperative spirit and innovative spirit, while the ability requirements mention cross-cultural ability, critical thinking ability, research ability and ability of information technology application [8]. Compared with the 2000 edition of the Outline, these qualities and competencies are almost all new, except for the ability to innovate. Therefore, the talent training concept of "GB" is in line with the world. However, how to cultivate the above ability and quality becomes the key to the success of the revision of talent training program. Taking Chinese feelings as an example, the revision of talent training program should be aware of which specific courses and the specific contents of which textbooks are aimed at cultivating students' Chinese feelings.

Therefore, according to the training objectives of the English major undergraduate training program and the corresponding relationship matrix between the curriculum system and training requirements in the training program, the specific requirements for the cultivation of knowledge, ability and quality carried by the English News Compilation course can be referred to the following points. Firstly, in terms of knowledge requirements, students should be guided to contact classical or recent English news works of Western media. Secondly, in terms of ability requirements, as a supplement to the English learning of senior journalism majors, students can have certain professional English news reading and listening abilities, together with guiding students to compare the writing styles and languages of Eastern and Western works of news, and do independent thinking. Thirdly, in terms of quality, students should be encouraged to think about the main ideas of the business links of western news works, such as the collection, writing, editing, evaluation and photography, and learn from their unique points to initially cultivate the way of thinking of "journalism professionalism" and the international vision of news [9].

### **2.4 Emphasizing the Support for the Training Objectives in the Construction of the Teaching Staff**

College teachers are not only responsible for the historical mission of spreading human profound knowledge, but also the key force to determine the success of China's "double first-class construction" in the new era. To improve the ideological and political quality, professional quality and ethics of college teachers is an essential focus of the construction of college teachers. At present, foreign language teachers lack professional knowledge of journalism and communication, and teachers of journalism and communication are not proficient in English, especially their spoken English. Teacher training is one of the bases for promoting the teaching of English News Compilation. In order to speed up the development of the course, we should formulate a training plan of teachers to cultivate compound teachers with high English level and strong subject knowledge [10]. Specifically, it can be implemented in the following three steps. At the initial stage, professional teachers with a good English foundation can be selected to participate in the training organized by the school to cultivate the teachers needed for the teaching pilot. After graduation, we could start the pilot experiment of teaching. The second stage is to strengthen English training for in-service teachers studying for doctorate degrees. Through several years of efforts, we have selected a group of teachers with high quality from doctoral graduates to engage in bilingual teaching of English News Compilation, and built a basic team of teaching. And the third stage is to participate in various teacher training at all levels, also hire foreign teachers for short-term training, and conduct rotation training for professional teachers of the English News Compilation teaching

course, as well as sending key teachers abroad to participate in professional training and continuously improve the quality of teaching staff. In addition, the school can also invite more well-known scholars, returned overseas students, managers of multinational companies and foreign-funded enterprises to the school to hold various kinds of lectures, so as to stimulate students' learning interest and motivation, changing students' passive learning into active and active learning.

### 3. Conclusions

The paper sorts out the reflections and suggestions on English education, and puts forward some suggestions on the construction of the English majors. And we believe that the construction of English major in the context of new liberal arts requires a clear understanding of the "Chinese characteristics" of English major in China in terms of the concept of major construction, adhere to the "compound" talent training in terms of training objectives, reflect the ability and quality requirements in the talent training program better, and constantly improve the support of teachers to the training objectives. To achieve this, the primary task at present is to accurately understand the concept of the National Standard and the Teaching Guide, grasp its significance and requirements, complete the revision of the English major training program of the University, and implement it accurately.

### Acknowledgements

Research on Interdisciplinary Practical Project Teaching of English Audio-visual and Oral Courses in Application-oriented Private Colleges and Universities in the Context of "Internet plus" MBXH22YB125.

### References

- [1] Bai Zhonglin, Luo Shu. Policy choice of language capital under the "the Belt and Road" strategy: an empirical study based on China's OFDI location choice [J]. *Journal of Jiangxi Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 2019, 52, (03): 122-129.
- [2] Zhang Jian. The Paradox between Language and Knowledge: How to Train High level Talents for English Majors [J]. *Foreign Languages*, 2020, 36 (5): 1-7.
- [3] Chinanet. Strive to build a new era of compound foreign language talents [OL] [http://edu.china.com.cn/2021-07/21/content\\_77641470.htm](http://edu.china.com.cn/2021-07/21/content_77641470.htm).
- [4] Cai Jigang: The revision and theoretical basis of College English Teaching Guide in the new era [OL] <https://new.qq.com/rain/a/20201017A01LBF00>.
- [5] Fan Nengwei, Wang Aiqin. Exploration on the Integration of Curriculum Module Design and Thinking Ability Training for English Majors in the Context of National Standards [J]. *Foreign Language Circle*, 2017 (1): 7-14.
- [6] Wang Lifei, Ai Bin The development process, summary and rethinking of business English education in the past 40 years since reform and opening up [J] *Journal of Beijing International Studies University*, 2019, 41 (1): 3-19.
- [7] An Zhidan. A Study on the Motivation and Guiding Measures of College Students' News English Learning -- A Review of Guide to News English [J] *News enthusiasts*, 2021.
- [8] Cai Jigang. Research on ESP for English Majors: Reflections on the Revision of the National Standards [J]. *Journal of Jiangxi Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 2019 (1): 131-137.
- [9] Feng Guangwu. The New Round of English Major Education Reform: Review and Prospect [J]. *Foreign Language Circle*, 2016 (1): 12-17.
- [10] Gu Yue. Returning to Humanities: Subject Orientation and Development Path of English Majors [J]. *Foreign Language Teaching Theory and Practice*, 2019 (1): 16-21.