

# A Review of Current Situation and Countermeasures of Basic English Teaching in Application-oriented Universities

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Gan Sheng Huang

**Abstract.** "Application-oriented university" is an education mode integrating new undergraduate education and new level higher vocational education and aiming to cultivate diversified and applied talents. On the basis of the research results of Yang Yanping, Liu Yuhuan, Ning Ting, Luo Xiaojing and Leng Jinying, the primary problem about the English teaching in application-oriented universities and its reason are pointed out, so as to explore the path to reform the basic English teaching in application-oriented universities in the context of university transformation.

**Keywords:** application-oriented, English teaching, countermeasure; literature review

## Introduction

"Application-oriented university" refers to the undergraduate university positioning at application rather than research. Research university aims to cultivate the academic talents with solid professional basis and strong research ability, while the purpose of application-oriented university is to cultivate the applied talents who can solve practical problems with the learned knowledge and skills. In the curriculum arrangement of application-oriented university, college English is an important subject. However, the college English teaching of the application-oriented university doesn't fully represent the core character of "cultivating applied talents".

At the end of 2015, China issued Instructional Advice on Guiding Part of Local General Undergraduate University to Transform to Application-Oriented University, which proposed that part of undergraduate universities shall be promoted to "cultivate applied talents". University transformation not only has put forward urgent task for the English teaching in application-oriented universities, but also provided valuable opportunity for them.

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Gan-sheng Huang, School of Foreign Language, Nanchang Institute of Technology, Nanchang 330044, China; 634385472@qq.com

### **Status of English teaching in application-oriented universities**

At present, there are many problems with cultivation positioning and mode of applied talents. The traditional teaching model "emphasizes teaching and obtaining knowledge and ignores processing knowledge and thinking questions. The consciousness and capability of students to put forward and research questions is weak, leading to insufficient innovation ability and critical thinking". During teaching, the ability of students to actively participate in classes is not enough and students lack the positivity and creativity to study, "follow teachers in class, read book according to textbooks, preparing for a test within the reviews limits". Universities pay less attention to guiding and stimulating the learning concept, method, interest and situation of students, "especially the research, significance and assessment of learning outcomes of students".

College English teaching always adopts traditional and unidirectional input teaching model with lagging teaching concept, which makes students unable to fully participate in teaching activities and can't mobilize the enthusiasm of students, so the class atmosphere is depressive and the teaching effect is not good. Students sleeping, playing mobile phones and sneaking off are common in class. The purpose of application-oriented university is to cultivate applied talents, however, at present, most universities take passing CET-4 as the goal of students to learn English, which is divorced from the goal of cultivating applied talents. Moreover, compared with the old-brand undergraduate universities, the English foundation of the students of application-oriented universities is poorer, and the English foundation of the students in different majors is different. If teachers adopt same teaching method and schedule, some students can't keep up with the study schedule, and some students may be tired of learning English. Before transformation, the universities focus on higher vocational education, and most teachers are good at higher vocational education. After transformation, in the face of application-oriented undergraduate education, teachers have less experience in teaching, and their teaching method is obsolete, which can't stimulate the positivity of students.

### **Reform of basic English teaching of application-oriented undergraduate universities**

**Update teaching concept:** In the basic English teaching, the teacher-centered teaching principle and the textbook-oriented teaching shall be broken, so as to establish the student-centered teaching and improve the independent learning ability of students. During teaching, the language input quality shall be improved and the skill of outputting language shall be developed through practical teaching in order to enhance the ability of students to comprehensively apply English. The foundation of students of English major in application-oriented universities is weak and students learn passively, so teachers should guide students to learn actively, let students become the subject of class and actively participate in the whole teaching process rather than only

emphasize teaching language knowledge. During teaching, on the one hand, teachers should provide high-quality material for inputting language and correct learning method. On the other hand, teachers should build platform for students to output language. In the basic English classes, according to the teaching theme of each unit on textbooks, it is necessary to design corresponding output task for students and provide support for the task. For example, teachers guide students to obtain relevant culture and language by "reading-discussing-writing". First, teachers provide high-quality materials for students to input language and tell them the specific output task and assessment standard. Next, teachers organize students to read after class and guide them to discuss and write report in writing. Finally, students demonstrate the report in class. During the process, teachers play the guiding and assisting role and promote students to learn in the form of written report which makes students apply what they have learned.

**Change the single teaching mode:** In the traditional teaching mode, teachers are responsible for teaching and students receive knowledge passively, which is lagging and can't arouse the interests of students who usually sleep and play phones in class. The teaching mode of "teacher-student interaction" shall be established to fully mobilize students to participate in classes actively. During teaching, teachers should pay attention to combining teaching with practicing, adopt multiple teaching methods, such as inspiration, asking question, viewing, listening & speaking, group discussion, scenario simulation, role playing and task-based teaching, etc. It is necessary to make full use of multimedia teaching mode, which makes students see the language communication scene in daily life and is conducive to arousing students' interests and fully playing their various learning ability, so as to help students develop oral ability and communicative competence. Moreover, it is necessary to take cultivating applied undergraduate talents as goal, cultivate the ability of students to listen and speak, which is conducive to the career development in future.

**Develop extracurricular activities in university, and improve the positivity of students to learn English:** It is necessary to organize English song competition, English speech contest, English drama competition, English evening party, English poetry recitation contest, English corner in universities, and actively organize students to participate in various contests, such as "FLTRP CUP" English speech contest, translation contest, writing contest, national English competition of college students, which can fully mobilize the interests and activity of students to learn English, make up the deficiency of class teaching, effectively prevent theory separating from reality, so as to cultivate the language competence, practical ability and communicative competence of students.

**Carry out graded teaching of college English:** In the basic period, that is the first year of university, the obligatory course of phonics should be opened for all students to cultivate solid phonics ability and increase reading speed; meanwhile, on the basis of intensive reading, students should listen to the material intensively and repeatedly to improve listening proficiency and rectify nonstandard pronunciation. In the graded teaching period, that is the sophomore year, three obligatory English courses should be arranged to cultivate language

skill, application and culture to make students choose according to their English foundation and career planning. In the "language skill class", students will intensively read the past exam paper and predicting exam paper of CET-4 to improve their ability of taking examinations of CET-4; in the "language application class", based on the career plan of students, students will learn workplace English relevant to their major to cultivate the workplace English application ability such as making and demonstrating English transcript, English speech, writing English document, translating professional English; the "language culture class" aims to cultivate students' cultural quality, ability to obtain information by extensive reading, so as to expand the scope of knowledge, improve reading interests, cultivate the habit of reading English.

**Construct the "self-help" teaching pattern:** Cultivating the independent learning ability of students is the main objective to cultivate applied talents, therefore, we must constantly innovate the mode of translation teaching and construct the "self-help" teaching pattern. As a result, teachers should take Internet terminal as the carrier, interact and communicate with students face to face on line. Meanwhile, students can search, choose, transfer and communicate according to the task arranged by teachers, so as to better realize the purpose and meaning of teaching. During innovating translation, we should neither pursue novelty, nor translate in the traditional way, that is reference version. Students can improve their learning ability through the "self-help" translation learning.

**Optimize assessment system:** It is necessary to integrate summative assessment with formative assessment and adopt several assessment methods. The performance of students will not be determined by test paper, but the class presentation, performance in group discussion, task accomplishment situation and learning autonomy will be included into total mark to make assessment more objective and scientific. It is necessary to refine assessment standard when the evaluation system is optimized. In terms of the difference between written and oral output, it is urgent to let audience to participate in assessment and provide feedback so as to prevent teachers from deciding everything by their say and avoid audience from sneaking off.

**Arouse the learning interests of students:** The students of application-oriented universities have many problems, such as worse academic performance, lacking self-confidence in learning, lower learning enthusiasm. In the teaching of basic stage, basic English is the primary professional course. On the basis of teaching input language knowledge, teachers should elaborately design language output task. The progressive practice of language output helps students finish the language output task, gradually establish the learning confidence of students, find the sense of achievement from learning, arouse learning interests and enthusiasm, and improve the comprehensive quality.

**Enhance to cultivate teacher resources:** The teaching level of teachers directly affects teaching quality and effect. As the practitioner of talents cultivation, the level of teachers' ability directly affect the cultivation of applied talents. Teachers should actively learn and strive to improve their own professional level and capability. In addition, universities should provide more opportunities

for teachers to learn and communicate in the experienced application-oriented universities, absorb good teaching experience, develop teaching plan suitable for students from the university according to the features of the university, and teach students according to their aptitude.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of application-oriented undergraduate is to cultivate diversified and high-quality talents adaptive to social development. It is urgent and necessary to reform college English teaching in this situation. Meanwhile, reform of college English is a challenge both for teachers and students. Teachers must make great efforts to improve their professional skill and learn according to the features of each department and major. As for students, they should positively participate in class and learn actively rather than passively. Only when the positivity of both sides are mobilized, can the reform of college English be developed smoothly, so as to cultivate the applied talents adaptive to the requirement of enterprise, society and country.

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