

# Research on the Current Situation and Countermeasures of College English Practical Teaching

Honghong Zeng

*Yuzhang Normal University, Nanchang, Jiangxi, China, 330103*

**Abstract:** English is a highly practical subject. If the practical content is ignored in college English teaching, it is difficult to improve students' English application ability, and it also makes English teaching activities lose their due value. College English practical teaching has not received the attention it deserves, and there is a serious disconnect between practice and theory, due to the influence of traditional exam oriented thinking. This paper analyzes the current situation and problems of practical English teaching in universities, and proposes specific teaching reform strategies, including changing ideological concepts, increasing investment in funds, optimizing practical teaching, building practical training bases, promoting professional development, establishing a "dual teacher" team, improving management mechanisms, and optimizing the practical environment.

**Keywords:** College English; Practical teaching; Teaching reform

## 1. Introduction

The goal of learning English is to apply it in life and work. In college English teaching, it is necessary not only to impart theoretical knowledge to students, but also to provide more practical opportunities for students to master English application methods in practice and have good listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. In the long-term college English teaching activities, the teaching content has mainly focused on theoretical indoctrination, and the enthusiasm of students for learning English is not high, resulting in low classroom teaching quality. Given the issues in English teaching, teachers need to clarify the importance of practical teaching, improve English teaching activities, provide students with more opportunities for practical participation, enrich the content and form of English teaching, and cultivate the technical and professional talents needed by society.

## 2. Analysis of the Current Situation of College English Teaching

In the new historical period, Chinese education system has undergone significant changes. After entering the digital era, the situation of higher education has changed. In the past, universities mainly focused on cultivating planned economy professionals, but this traditional education model clearly cannot meet the talent needs of the digital era. Traditional higher education emphasizes imparting knowledge, but at present, it is necessary to take into account the development requirements of students' knowledge, quality and ability; in the past, unified teaching materials and syllabus were adopted, but at this stage, diversified teaching forms are advocated. Through the practical activities of industry-education integration and school-enterprise cooperation, we should teach students in accordance with their aptitude, do a good job in innovative entrepreneurship education, and improve students' hands-on practice and innovative ability<sup>[1]</sup>. The reform speed of English teaching is relatively slow, and the experiential theoretical teaching model cannot stimulate students' interest in learning. These leads to a lack of teaching responsibility among teachers and passive learning among students. Even if teachers try to use new teaching methods such as case teaching, project-based teaching, and problem-based teaching, the cooperation of students is not high, and there is also a lack of ideological slack. In addition, there is a misconception in English teaching that practice is considered as an adjunct to theory, and practical activities are designed for students based on English theory content. This leads to a large degree of randomness in practical teaching activities, a lack of systematic formation, a relatively simple practical teaching content, and an unscientific assessment system, which cannot meet the cultivation requirements of innovative and high-quality talents.

### **3. Problems in Practical Teaching of College English**

#### ***3.1. Insufficient emphasis on ideology***

At present, the English course offered at the university stage is a public course, which is open to all majors and does not highlight the professional characteristics.

Both schools and English teachers do not pay enough attention to English practice, coupled with the implementation of the current English test is a grade examination system, which makes many students associate English content with the examination. This makes its exam oriented learning component heavier. When teaching, teachers lack the integration of practical lectures and professional skills, and do not fully pay attention to the practicality of language. They still adopt a closed door teaching model, which makes the course boring, monotonous, and lacking in fun.

#### ***3.2. Improper organization of practical teaching***

The English proficiency of college students is uneven, and many students are tired of learning English. Although some students have a good foundation in English, they are influenced by the thinking of examination-oriented education in middle school, and their English application ability is not ideal. They also did not develop good autonomous learning habits, like to follow the thinking of teachers. However, schools and teachers may add some English practical courses, which are relatively casual and have a large number of students in the class. It is not guaranteed that every student has practical training opportunities. Only a small number of students can be taken care of in one practical course, and most students do not receive the guidance they deserve.

#### ***3.3. Lack of "dual teacher" teacher***

The ability of teachers is related to the result of English teaching reform. They should be competent in both theoretical and practical teaching, and have strict requirements. At present, the national advocacy of "double-qualified" teachers not only requires teachers to have good theoretical teaching ability, but also needs to have rich practical experience and practical guidance ability. Currently, almost all college English teachers graduate from normal school majors with excellent theoretical ability, but lack of practical experience, lack of in-depth understanding of English application scenarios, and are used to using traditional teaching methods<sup>[2]</sup>. In English classes, teachers are still the main focus, without fully highlighting the subjectivity of students. Long term dull theoretical teaching has gradually eroded students' interest in English learning. Due to the heavy teaching tasks of teachers (in many universities, one English teacher is often responsible for multiple professional English courses), it is difficult for teachers to find time to learn practical English content, which has a very negative impact on English practical teaching.

#### ***3.4. Unsatisfactory environment for practice***

The development of English practical activities cannot be separated from corresponding resource support. In recent years, English teaching software and hardware facilities in various universities have been significantly improved, and smart classrooms have also been incorporated into English teaching activities, achieving significant reform results and being welcomed by teachers and students. However, it is undeniable that the school's funds are still more used for the theoretical and practical construction of professional courses, with limited investment in English teaching. The current reform is only to upgrade hardware equipment such as classrooms, and has not invested enough in English practical teaching. Some schools are even reducing their English class hours, and the overall English practical teaching environment is not ideal, which restricts the smooth development of practical teaching activities.

### **4. Reform Strategies for Practical Teaching of College English**

#### ***4.1. Changing mindset and increasing capital investment***

In order to successfully complete the reform of English practical teaching, it is necessary to change our ideological concepts, especially to give full play to the subjective initiative of English teachers, and establish a new pattern of English education that is collaborative innovation and practical education

through cooperation among all parties. Universities need to provide more learning, communication, and training opportunities for English teachers, allowing them to participate in scientific research activities and social practice. They also should establish industry university research internship bases and laboratories on campus, so that English teachers can improve their practical teaching abilities by participating in such activities<sup>[3]</sup>. The current teaching reform of English practice is still in the early stage of development. Universities can introduce successful cases of reform into schools, and also shape typical role models within the school, playing a demonstrative role and encouraging English teachers to actively combine English teaching with professional skills. In addition, it is necessary to increase funding for the reform of English practical teaching, arrange for students to participate in corresponding extracurricular activities, enrich their leisure life, meet the English practical requirements of students at different levels, strengthen the connection between English learning and employment, and form a wave of "learning English" and "using English" throughout the campus.

## ***4.2. Optimizing practical teaching and build practical training bases***

### ***4.2.1. Establishing a diversified comprehensive training base***

A comprehensive training base with strong practicality and specialization can provide rich resource support for English practical teaching. It can be attempted to establish a simulation training base, covering language teaching, information networks, business training, and other content. Before constructing a practical training base, it is necessary to listen to the opinions of experts from various majors to meet the English practical requirements of students from different majors. It is also possible to establish a real coffee bar, which is managed by students. The text description, decorations, food ingredients, etc. can all refer to the real business model of Western coffee shops. Regular English evening parties can also be held in the coffee bar to enable students to learn English unconsciously.

### ***4.2.2. Expanding English off campus training bases***

The off campus training base can complement the on campus training base, providing students with authentic communication situations. Students can repeatedly practice in the off campus training base, engage in authentic listening, speaking, reading, and writing, perceive the English language environment related to professional learning content, and help improve their English practical abilities. In off campus training bases, it is necessary to focus on adopting experiential practical teaching methods, creating a good experiential environment for students, enriching experiential content, creating a role atmosphere, setting up tailored English practical activities for students with different majors and English foundations, and cooperating with organizing speech competitions, English theaters and other activities to improve students' English practical abilities. In the process of participating in such practical activities, students can have a deep understanding of the job requirements and nature, which significantly improves their language skills and psychological qualities. They can also be exposed to real job positions, which can effectively reduce the resistance of students to subsequent employment.

### ***4.2.3. Elaborating practical teaching content***

The content of college English includes basic English and vocational English, and in the design of English practice activities, it is necessary to connect the two parts well. Due to the influence of exam oriented education thinking, students' English learning thinking has gradually solidified, placing more emphasis on grammar and reading. However, owing to factors such as dull English learning, incorrect usage methods, and weak interest, students are easily bored with English learning. Therefore, after students enter university, specialized English practical courses can be offered to add some typical English communication scenarios, such as English interviews, phone calls, etc. Starting from the basic stage, the dilemma of basic teaching is broken and students' language application ability is enhanced. After students have made certain improvements, they can add scenes of foreign-related business activities to help them lay a solid foundation in English while improving their professional competence. The design of practical teaching content needs to be targeted, and teaching should be tailored to students with different foundations and majors, without using fixed practical teaching concepts and methods<sup>[4]</sup>. For example, for tourism majors, the focus of English practice is on skill training to improve their communication skills; For students majoring in economics and trade, the focus is on cultivating their reading and translation abilities. To cultivate excellent "major+English" practical talents, teachers need to conduct surveys in advance, understand the requirements of each profession for talents, and control the difficulty of the arranged practical content. If the target is too difficult, students will find it hard to learn, which will undermine their interest in participation. Only through interesting and moderately difficult English practical content can a bridge be built between professional

learning and English practice.

#### ***4.2.4. Enhancing Students' Reflective Power in English***

English practice is a planned and targeted learning activity, which requires students' English reflection ability and autonomous learning ability. Therefore, teachers need to provide students with correct guidance and lead them to reasonably divide English learning goals into long-term goals and short-term goals. Long term goals are relatively abstract and difficult to detail, while short-term goals are specific and refined learning tasks. After each stage of learning, teachers should guide students to conduct self-evaluation, conduct self attribution, clarify their own problems and shortcomings, reflect on their experiences, and accumulate experience for the future. Due to the fact that English reflective ability is currently a skill that most students lack, teachers need to pay special attention to it, encourage students to actively and consciously approach every English practical activity, so that students can optimize their learning outcomes under the drive of goals, promote knowledge assimilation, and deepen their understanding. This kind of reflection is a long-term process and cannot be achieved in the short term. In every English practice activity, teachers need to repeatedly emphasize and leave appropriate reflection time for students in the practical stage, so that students can gradually break away from their dependence on teachers with progress and growth.

#### ***4.3. Promoting professional development and establish a "dual teacher" team***

To meet the reform requirements of practical teaching in college English, a "dual teacher" teaching team is essential. Universities need to combine the current school enterprise cooperation and industry education integration model to send English teachers to practical positions in enterprises, enrich their practical experience, and use scientific management mechanisms to enable teachers to grow rapidly. At the same time, it is necessary to actively cultivate professional "double leaders", who refer to high-level and high-quality English teachers. Universities need to optimize the structure of the entire English teacher team, strengthen professional training for teachers, organize a series of teaching and research activities, increase English practical teaching and research funds, and enable teachers to participate in various training activities<sup>[5]</sup>. In addition, it is necessary to cultivate backbone teachers. The development of an English practical teaching system is a complex task that requires leveraging the core strength of backbone teachers, establishing a team of English teachers with excellent comprehensive qualities, and clarifying the specific responsibilities of the entire team. If the number of high-level English teachers in the school is insufficient, part-time teachers can be hired as a supplement. For example, relevant enterprise employees can be hired to be responsible for practical English courses, and regular lectures can be organized to make up for the lack of practical ability of school teachers.

#### ***4.4. Improving management mechanism and optimizing practical environment***

##### ***4.4.1. Optimizing English practice environment***

The implementation of the reform of practical teaching in college English has not been long, and under the influence of the local economy, various universities have different focuses on their professional settings. In addition, the English foundation of students is uneven, making it difficult to improve their English practical ability in the short term. Therefore, it is necessary to further optimize the English practical environment in universities and form a situation of joint management from top to bottom. Meanwhile, universities should continue to enrich English practical education resources, follow the principle of "promoting employment as the main focus", introduce more reasonable and authentic workplace language materials, highlight the professional characteristics of English practice, develop corresponding auxiliary learning tools for students and actively build an English practical teaching resource library. This not only provides convenience for English practical teaching, but also allows students to use the content in the resource library to participate in independent learning in their spare time.

##### ***4.4.2. Improving teaching evaluation methods***

In terms of evaluation, it is necessary to establish a scientific and reasonable evaluation method based on the reform requirements of English practical teaching. The current English teaching evaluation mainly focuses on evaluating students' theoretical learning of English, lacking practical content. Moreover, this summary evaluation model is not conducive to the improvement of students' practical abilities. Corresponding evaluation models need to be established according to practical requirements, using a combination of formative evaluation and summary evaluation. Conducting a

comprehensive evaluation of students' English learning performance, with Incorporating the learning process, learning attitude, etc., and actively organizing student self-evaluation, student peer evaluation, and other models, makes English teaching evaluation more practical and practical. At the same time, by leveraging the educational and motivating functions of evaluation results, a practical English practice grading assessment model with applicability can be established based on the actual situation of universities, and the performance of students participating in daily practical activities can be recorded.

## 5. Conclusion

The subject of English has strong practicality, and good English proficiency is an essential basic ability for talents in the new era. In the current reform of college English teaching, it is necessary to focus on students' English practical ability and improve their vocational skills and qualities in a targeted manner. The reform of college English practical teaching is a long-term process that requires the establishment of a scientific English practical teaching system based on the characteristics of students and the actual situation of the school, and continuous improvement and optimization. Only in this way can we give vitality to English practical teaching activities, establish a dynamic practical reform system, and cultivate high-quality "English+" talents.

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