

## On the Path of College English from EGP to ESP

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**Abstract:** *The College English Teaching Guide* developed by the College Foreign Language Teaching Steering Committee of colleges and universities clearly points out that the current college English education should pay attention to the cultivation of students' English application ability and autonomous learning ability, improve students' cross-cultural communication awareness and communication ability, as well as students' Comprehensive English literacy. In order to achieve this goal, English Teaching in some universities in China (especially some majors with strong applicability) has begun to change from EGP (English General Purpose) to ESP (English Specific Purpose). However, due to its late start and immature development, ESP teaching has not been fully applied in College English teaching practice. Based on this, based on the analysis of relevant concepts, this paper puts forward the path of College English from EGP to ESP, in order to improve the scientific, pertinence and innovation of College English teaching and training applied talents.

### 1. Introduction

In the new era, facing the continuous marginalization of College English curriculum and the new national demand for cultivating compound and applied talents, the reform and transformation of College English curriculum is imminent. At this stage, the traditional EGP teaching in universities has become more and more difficult to meet the needs of the cultivation of applied talents, and ESP teaching has the characteristics of openness, practicality, interaction, professionalism and so on, which is more consistent with the needs and objectives of the cultivation of applied talents. Therefore, the shift from EGP teaching to ESP teaching can be said to be a development trend of College English teaching reform.

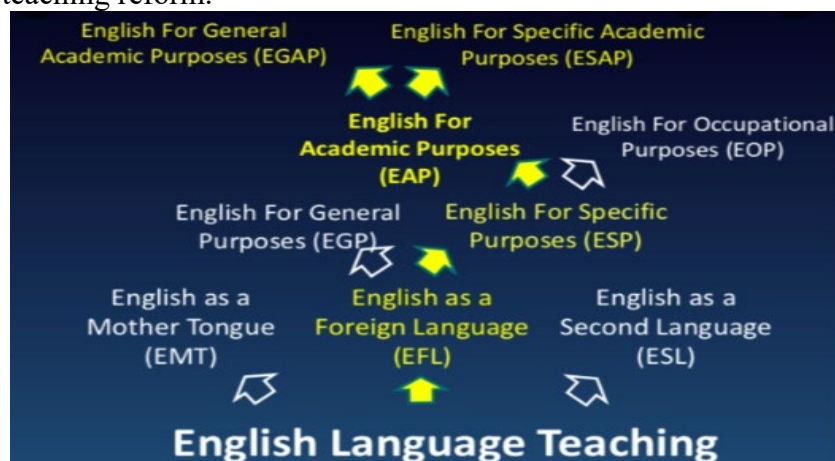


Figure 1 The development of English teaching.

### 2. Overview of Related Concepts

EGP is general English, which refers to typical language teaching courses. Some scholars pointed out that “the purpose of students’ learning during this period is to master the five basic skills of English language listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation, that is, to master the common core of English”. ESP is defined as “those courses whose purpose and content are not based on general English education in principle or on the whole, but are determined by learners’

functional and practical needs of English”, which aims to cultivate students’ ability to communicate in English under a certain effective working environment, and then serve them professionally. In a certain dimension, ESP is the extension and deepening of EGP, which closely links English learning with academic, vocational and employment. It is the key to further improve the effectiveness of College English teaching, and it is also the basic path to meet the needs of practical talents. According to the College English course teaching requirements, the goal of College English teaching is to cultivate students’ comprehensive application ability of English, so that they can effectively absorb and exchange information in future social exchanges, and improve their comprehensive cultural quality to meet the needs of China’s social development and international exchanges. Especially in the face of fierce social competition, the transformation of College English from EGP to ESP is imperative.

### **3. On the Path of College English from EGP to ESP**

#### **3.1. Innovating Teaching Objectives and Improving Teaching Design**

Teaching objectives determine the design of teaching content. The knowledge base of ESP teaching concept is mainly based on the integration of professional knowledge and academic knowledge. Therefore, ESP teaching content can be divided into professional knowledge and academic knowledge. Among them, academic knowledge refers to English theoretical knowledge, and professional knowledge refers to English knowledge specially designed for disciplines, such as tourism English, hotel English, etc. These two parts are not separated, but interrelated. Academic knowledge is the foundation of professional knowledge, and professional knowledge is the development and application of academic knowledge. The purpose of ESP teaching is to realize the integration of the two. Specifically, according to the special purpose of the subject, we can design learning skills courses for students’ learning situation, rearrange the listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation courses in traditional English teaching, and arrange the skills about applied English in professional learning, such as academic research, academic writing, academic experiments, etc. In addition, special-purpose course content should be arranged according to the real needs of communication and major related English learning content, so as to effectively improve English communication ability based on professional needs.

#### **3.2. Making Full Use of Space and Establishing a Multi-interactive Curriculum System**

Curriculum is the premise of teaching. In order to ensure the effective implementation of ESP, we must realize the organic unity of curriculum and teaching style. At present, ESP courses carried out by universities mainly include more than a dozen courses, such as advanced listening courses, business English communication, tourism English communication, English translation practice, financial English, etc. The main problem is that the curriculum is not perfect, the module planning is not scientific enough, and the connection and communication between different modules cannot be realized. For students’ in-depth learning and future employment, the effect of continuous learning cannot be formed. Therefore, College English curriculum should pay attention to the following two points.

Firstly, making full use of the space of compulsory courses and electing courses in university teaching. For example, freshmen who have passed the English proficiency test can be directly exposed to ESP courses and choose professional English according to their majors and interests. When setting up courses, different universities can make specific arrangements according to their own school running conditions, school running positioning, professional teaching, etc.

Secondly, establishing a multi interactive curriculum system. This kind of curriculum system is based on the general university curriculum, and its main purpose is to cultivate college students’ basic understanding of English and deepen their grasp of basic theoretical knowledge. The curriculum system takes ESP teaching as the core, and its main purpose is to learn academic English and professional English, so that students can get rid of the shackles of exam oriented learning and pay attention to the practical function of language learning. On this basis, set up cross-cultural

communication courses, expand English learning to the level of cross-cultural communication, and use academic English and professional English to guide students to distinguish the differences between English and Chinese, western culture and eastern culture, western thinking and Eastern thinking, so as to excavate the instrumentality and humanism in English learning at the same time. Thus, a “EGP→ESP→Multicultural” interactive curriculum system is established to promote the quality of teachers’ teaching and students’ learning. In order to ensure the quality of the curriculum, an ESP teaching evaluation system can be established in College English to monitor and feedback the teaching effect of English courses at different levels and modules, so as to continuously improve the ESP teaching system and strengthen the cooperation between different module courses.

### **3.3. Using Modern Multimedia Technology to Expand Learning Space**

The key to effective teaching lies in the in-depth development of teaching activities. The characteristics of ESP teaching determine that English teaching is to serve students’ professional learning and future career development needs. Therefore, a variety of teaching methods should be adopted in teaching to achieve this goal.

First of all, giving full play to modern multimedia technology for teaching. ESP teaching is based on cultivating applied talents with international vision. Therefore, College English teaching should make full use of multimedia and network information technology, adopt diversified teaching methods, such as Micro-class and MOOC, expand the time and space of traditional classroom teaching, expand online teaching channels, and enrich classroom teaching content, so that students can understand the English teaching environment, current situation and learning resources at home and abroad through the online teaching platform.

Secondly, creating a learning atmosphere and expand learning space. The immersive cultural atmosphere is conducive to helping students change their roles and adapt to professional needs. For example, business English must be learned and understood in a business environment. The method of creating situations can be used to simulate business practice to examine students’ application of professional business knowledge and the cultivation of business ability. In the simulated business situation, teachers can take different roles in business practice as the carrier, set up projects and assignments groups, and let students discuss business practice. In addition, teachers can also use the project teaching method to introduce real business cases into teaching, promote the combination of professional theoretical knowledge and practice, and promote practical training.

### **3.4. Paying Attention to the Diversified Characteristics of Teaching Materials and the Use of Auxiliary Materials**

Teaching materials are the main carrier of English learning and an important part of ESP teaching system. According to the current research on ESP teaching, the inadequacy and imperfection of teaching materials is one of the main factors affecting the development of ESP teaching. ESP teaching in most universities is in an auxiliary position. The primary reason is the lack of scientific and perfect ESP teaching materials, which makes it difficult for English knowledge and professional knowledge to be effectively related, and teachers cannot carry out in-depth teaching. Therefore, developing ESP teaching materials is a necessary way to promote and improve ESP teaching. According to the teaching characteristics of different colleges and majors, and in combination with students’ mastery of basic English knowledge, universities can set a syllabus for ESP teaching and choose appropriate teaching materials. At present, ESP teaching is still in the exploratory stage, and the relevant textbook system is not perfect. In the absence of suitable textbooks, universities can actively organize English teachers and professional teachers to cooperate to compile school-based textbooks according to their own development.

### **3.5. Promoting the Transformation of College English Teachers to ESP Teachers**

The implementation and improvement of ESP teaching requires a group of teachers with strong professional ability and high teaching level. A high-level teaching staff is the premise and guarantee to improve the level of College English teaching, and it is also the most favorable main factor to improve the effect of English classroom teaching. According to the ESP teaching system, improve

the teaching level and professional ability of ESP teachers.

Firstly, promoting the transformation of English teachers to ESP teachers. English teachers can be organized to establish ESP teaching groups to carry out the design, coordination and improvement plan of ESP teaching transformation, so that English teachers can understand and adapt to the new teaching mode. At the same time, the school can also carry out unified selection of teachers in the whole school, select young teachers with solid professional knowledge and a certain foundation of English for further study and learning, organize ESP teachers to carry out teaching exploration activities, comment on relevant professional English teaching, and develop ESP open classes, so as to promote the growth of young ESP teachers in the school.

Secondly, selecting excellent top-notch talents in the industry to enrich the ESP professional teaching team. Universities can invite top talents in the industry as distinguished teachers to supplement professional and industrial knowledge for English teachers, so as to enrich teachers' professional and industrial authentic corpus. At the same time, ESP teachers of professional level at home and abroad are employed to teach in the school, or ESP teaching concepts and methods are taught to English teachers to help them realize their role transformation.

#### **4. Conclusion**

As a traditional course in higher education, College English is not a new subject. In recent years, due to the emphasis on students' professional learning, the deviation of curriculum positioning, and the limitation of class hours and credits, the curriculum status of College English is constantly weakening, which puts forward new challenges to college English teachers in the new era. There are challenges and opportunities at the same time. The transformation of College English teaching from EGP to ESP is a new path for the development of College English in the new era. The ESP transformation of College English requires teachers to establish a correct curriculum view, make efforts to jointly build disciplines, deepen professional and interdisciplinary knowledge, and sort out reasonable teaching content. Therefore, this is a road with a long way to go. It is a process of teachers and students constantly trying new things and running in, but it also injects fresh vitality into the development of College English in our country.

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