

## Embedding Innovation and Entrepreneurship in English Major Education

Danyi Huang

College of International Culture and Education, Guangxi Normal University,

Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

296615773@qq.com

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**Abstract:** With the development of Chinese society, professional education needs to be reformed. The cultivation of talents of English major with mixed abilities is a brand new pattern. To embed innovation and entrepreneurship education in undergraduate curriculum for English major students is of great significance to the reform and development of English major education, the improvement of the quality of professional talent training, and the promotion of national innovation and entrepreneurship. However, the current situation is that innovation and entrepreneurship education isn't well embedded in English major education. This paper discusses the rationale and the practicable ways for embedding innovation and entrepreneurship education in English major education.

### 1. Introduction

The construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, which requires the higher education system to cultivate high-quality talents with innovative spirit and entrepreneurial ability. With the rapid development of emerging technologies such as Internet technology, artificial intelligence, and cloud computing, the continuous emergence of new technologies, new formats, new models and rapid iteration not only require workers to learn and master new knowledge and technologies, but also need to have ability of continuous innovation and entrepreneurship.

In order to meet the needs, innovation and entrepreneurship education has been incorporated into China's higher education personnel training system and is constantly restructuring the pattern of its higher education personnel training. In May 2015, the General Office of the State Council of China issued the "Implementation Opinions on Deepening the Reform of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education in Colleges and Universities" (〔2015〕No. 36), which requested that all colleges and universities should promote the integration of professional education and innovation and entrepreneurship education according to the talent training positioning and the requirements of innovation and entrepreneurship education goals, adjust professional curriculum settings, and explore and enrich the innovation and entrepreneurship education resources of various professional courses, and strengthen innovation and entrepreneurship education in the process of imparting professional knowledge in response to the call of the country. Colleges and universities have actively carried out innovation and entrepreneurship education and strived to promote the integration, and have also achieved certain results. However, the current situation is that innovation and entrepreneurship education isn't well embedded in English major education. The good situation of professional talents cultivation has not created effectively yet.

In recent years, with the impact of the expanding enrollment for English majors and the COVID-19 outbreak, English majors graduates are facing the unprecedented challenge of employment. Now, we are living in the post-epidemic era, which is full of uncertainty. Thus, it is necessary to teach English major students innovation and entrepreneurship, raising their awareness of innovation, improving their entrepreneurial skills, and encouraging and guiding them to create businesses. This helps the students better adapt to the rapidly-changing social environment and addresses the challenging employment problems. Obviously, this shows a rising trend of the reform

of English majors education in colleges and universities in the new era. College English teachers should actively explore how to embed innovation and entrepreneurship in English major education so as to cultivate more innovative English professionals who can meet the needs of social and economic development. On the basis of previous research and practice, this paper discusses three feasible modes for embedding innovation and entrepreneurship in English majors education, namely, professional embedding mode, cross-professional joint mode and socialized cooperation mode.

## **2. Research Status and Development Trend**

### **2.1 Research Status of the Integration of English Major Education and Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education**

In China, research on the integration of English major education and entrepreneurial education is mainly about higher vocational business English majors. Chen Ping (2015) explored the strategies and ways of integrating entrepreneurship education into business English professional education from three levels of concept, knowledge and skills. Li Maolin (2018) explored the organic integration of higher vocational business English education and innovation education under the background of "Internet +", and optimized the four guarantee systems of business English curriculum system, practical teaching system, teaching team system, and teaching quality evaluation system. Li Shuang (2018) and others discussed the path to the integration of business English professional innovation education and professional curriculum teaching, including professional planning and design, establishment of business English professional and innovation education training platform, construction of a complete guarantee system, adjustment of business English professional curriculum settings, and redesigning of courses goals and carrying out various teaching activities. Zhang Donghu (2020) pointed out the basic concept of the integration of English majors education and innovation and entrepreneurship education (combination of theory and practice, integration of production and education, and result-oriented education), and proposed to improve the training system for innovative English major talents, and to promote the teaching team building and the integration of English majors and the development of related vocations.

With the development of China and the advancement of the national innovation-driven strategy, there is an increasing demand for the integration of innovation and entrepreneurship education into professional education. The idea of "the integration" has only been put forward in recent years. Nowadays, the training goal of English majors in Chinese universities has turned to focus on creating "innovation and entrepreneurship +" English inter-disciplinary talents. For example, the Open University of China adds practical links into the undergraduate course of Business English, and the students are required to write business project plans. Guangdong University of Foreign Studies held a national business English practice competition, the theme of which is around business management, marketing, operation and other related courses knowledge, and its teaching mode tends to be diversified. However, Chinese universities are also facing many challenges when fulfilling the integration of English major education and innovation and entrepreneurship education. Zhang Donghu (2020) pointed out that the development of professional talent training goals does not match the market demand, and the effect of the teaching linkage mechanism between different colleges in the universities is not ideal, and the cooperation linkage mechanism outside the universities is not operated well. This means that the curriculum system still needs to be improved since the practical teaching effect of is not ideal enough. In addition, the number of the teachers who can teach both innovation and entrepreneurship and professional courses is insufficient. Their teaching ability needs to be improved, and the training mechanism for the teachers also needs to be upgraded. Zeng Wensi (2019) analyzed the current situation of English major students' innovation and entrepreneurship skills training, and pointed out that English major students have weak awareness of innovation and entrepreneurship for their thinking may be limited by current subjects and the students have little practical experience in innovation and entrepreneurship.

### **2.2 Development Trend of the Integration of English Major Education and Innovation and**

## **Entrepreneurship Education**

As a language, the market demand for English major graduates has undergone tremendous changes. In the "Internet +" era, the application of English in cross-border fields is changing the concepts of shopping, education, and co-construction. Hosting a series of large-scale international events such as Olympic Games, World Expo and Asian Games has enhanced China's international exchanges. As for the market demand, cross-border e-commerce trade and online English education are thriving, and models such as Machine English Translation, Automatic English speech recognition, and Crowd sourced Translation have emerged. There is an urgent need for English major education to break through the original single-type talent training model and to move towards an innovative talent training mode.

All in all, from the current research literature, firstly, there are more theoretical research and lack of systematic empirical research. Innovation and entrepreneurship education is an ongoing educational practice in colleges and universities, and the future research trends will focus more on practice. For example, how to integrate innovative and entrepreneurial methodology such as Effectuation Theory and Design Thinking into English major teaching. There are few relevant practices and there should be more practice and research about it. Secondly, the previous extracurricular teaching of English was mainly based on the English language practice. In the future, the teaching embedded with innovation and entrepreneurship should adhere to the development of professional practice, skill competitions and entrepreneurial projects. Thirdly, there are a small number of research on the methods and paths of the integration of English major education and innovation and entrepreneurship education. Some focus on the integration in the direction of business English in higher vocational education, rather than higher education. Zhang Donghu (2020) pointed out that there are few existing research on the integration of college English major education and innovation and entrepreneurship education now. Therefore, the path to the integration should be combined with the characteristics of English majors and disciplines to carry out related explorations. For example, integrating the methods and practices of innovation and entrepreneurship education into the core courses of English majors (English-Chinese translation, comprehensive English, etc.). This helps create better education including innovative thinking training and online English teaching, explore more industry and corporate resources, such as innovative experience product-translation machines, and online entrepreneurship practice simulations.

### **3. Connotation and Significance of the Integration of Professional Education and Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education**

#### **3.1 The Connotation**

The integration refers to the effective integration of professional education and innovation and entrepreneurship education. To understand the meaning of the integration, one should first understand what professional education and innovation and entrepreneurship education are.

According to Chen Xiangming (2006), professional education refers to the educational content imposed on students. That is, according to the requirements of discipline development and industry division of labor in a certain historical period, the education is divided into certain categories for students. British scholar David Waston believes that professional education refers to the process of cultivating students into competent professionals, and also provides post-employment courses and further education to ensure that professionals who have already started working maintain their professionalism in changing working environment.

According to Cao Shengli and Lei Jiachao (2009), innovation and entrepreneurship education is a teaching practice activity about creating a new professional job position, and it is a practical activity of educational reform that truly helps contemporary college students achieve self-employment and flexible employment. In some western countries, entrepreneurship education usually links with the cultivation of enterprising spirit, adventurous spirit and entrepreneurial spirit. Professor Timmons, founder of Babson College, believed that entrepreneurship education is to cultivate students'

enterprising spirit and enhance their enterprise consciousness. In China, innovation and entrepreneurship education is a brand-new concept formed by organically combining the concept of innovation and foreign entrepreneurship education. It contains not only the education of innovative spirit and innovative ability, but also the education of entrepreneurial awareness and entrepreneurial ability, which helps students adapt to the economic and social development of our country.

Based on what have been discussed above, the integration of professional education and innovation and entrepreneurship education is to embed innovation and entrepreneurship into professional education. On the basis of entrepreneurial thinking constructivism, teachers apply new teaching methods to form a new mode of talent training. The integration makes major, innovation, entrepreneurship education integrated, which realizes the fundamental transformation of higher education from theory to practice, from separation to integration. Feng Yuan and Liu Peng (2019) proposed to realize the integration by means of concept change, curriculum reform, teacher formation and school-enterprise cooperation.

### 3.2 Significance

With the advancement of the reform of the innovation and entrepreneurship education system, research on the integration professional education and innovation and entrepreneurship education has become increasingly important. It is an important measure to promote higher education reform and improve the quality of education and teaching. It is also an effective way to cultivate high-quality talents that meet the development needs of the new era. It is of positive significance to students, teachers, schools and society.

Firstly, the integration is conducive to improving the comprehensive ability of students. In the context of national innovation and entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial ability is a crucial quality for college students' academic research and future employment. College English majors have also made corresponding adjustments to the orientation of talent training goals, focusing on cultivating interdisciplinary and compound English majors. Through the infiltration teaching method, the English teaching mode becomes diversified, and students can gradually grow into "innovation and entrepreneurship+" interdisciplinary talents majoring in English under a more comprehensive curriculum system and talent training framework. This can be an effective way to improve the comprehensive quality of college students.

Secondly, the integration is conducive to promoting the teaching development of teachers. From the perspective of teacher development, innovation and entrepreneurship education continues to empower full-time teachers to help teachers innovate and improve in teaching. English teachers not only need strong teaching ability in English majors, but also need to be familiar with the basic knowledge of innovation and entrepreneurship. In the process of continuous exploration of the integration, the teachers' comprehensive ability is improving. In the practice of English teaching, teachers' innovative ability is stimulated. In the process of cultivating talents, teachers can connect with students' future career development. This not only enriches the content of the English teaching, but for teachers, it is also an active practice of teaching reform and teaching improvement.

Thirdly, the integration is conducive to the development of innovation and entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities. The development of innovation and entrepreneurship education must be based on professional education. Only when the two are deeply integrated, can the system of talent training in universities be constructed. Nowadays, universities in China have basically set up entrepreneurship education courses to cultivate college students' entrepreneurship thinking and skills from three aspects of innovation training, entrepreneurship training and entrepreneurial practice. Professional education and innovation and entrepreneurship education need to be organically integrated, which promotes mutual development, and deepen reforms in the talent training program, curriculum system and teaching methods of colleges and universities, and make innovation and entrepreneurship education truly run through the entire process of talent training.

Lastly, the integration is conducive to cultivating high-quality talents for society. Professional education focuses on the training of professional knowledge and skills while innovation and

entrepreneurship education focuses on innovative thinking and practical ability. According to Wu Yuerui (2019), if the two can be well-integrated, it will help form a “thinking-cognition-skills-practice-innovation” talent training chain, cultivating high-quality innovative professionals for the society. In addition, from the perspective of building an innovation country, the new era requires the higher education system to train high-quality talents with innovative spirit and innovative ability to lead and meet the needs of social development. The integration can be an effective way to cultivate applied talents and innovative and versatile talents for the country and society.

#### **4. Theoretical Basis**

##### **4.1 Competence-based Education Theory**

The "competence" in the theory refers to a comprehensive ability that includes knowledge, skills, attitudes and feedback. Competence-based education theory takes the cultivation and development of people as the core, that is, people-oriented. Competence-based education theory advocates to improve the professional ability of the educated, and to determine the ability target based on the ability required by the working position.

##### **4.2 Competence-based Education Theory is Highly Compatible with Integration for English Major**

The idea of the integration is competence-based, for it aims to cultivate students' innovative thinking and enhance their innovation and entrepreneurship ability. Competence-based education theory takes students as the center and focuses on cultivating students' comprehensive abilities, including entrepreneurial ability and employment ability. Proceeding from the development needs of students, under the guidance of competency-based education theory, we hope to give full play to the main role of students and to make English major education and English-related industries closely integrate. The innovation and entrepreneurial development of related industries can effectively promote students' professional development, strengthening the combination of production, education and research and realizing the effective integration of English major education and innovation and entrepreneurship education.

#### **5. The Industries Suitable for English Major Students**

In recent years, cross-border e-commerce, English translation services and online English education are the main fields suitable English major students to innovate and to start up business after graduation.

The target markets of the cross-border export industry are mainly concentrated in developed regions with a high rate of online shopping and complete logistics supporting facilities, such as the United States, the United Kingdom and other English-speaking countries or countries that use English as the national language. The vigorous development of cross-border e-commerce requires a group of English professionals who have mastered language skills, cross-border e-commerce skills, import and export business operations skills, and international logistics operations skills. For this purpose, it is necessary to integrate the innovative fields and entrepreneurial scenarios of cross-border e-commerce, apply the English professional skills involved in cross-border e-commerce to the teaching of English major, and cultivate English professionals who can engage in cross-border e-commerce business capabilities.

English translation has become an important profession, industry, field, and even industry. The translation industry includes translation service outsourcing, professional translation training, and translation software development. The development of translation services has promoted the social demand of English professionals, and has also created unlimited innovation inspiration and entrepreneurial business opportunities for English professionals. At present, in the field of English translation services, a series of innovative models such as crowd sourced translation, machine translation, and post-translation project editing have emerged in the translation service field. The “One Belt One Road” initiative, artificial intelligence, international exchange activities, and

translation project management in language conversion all provide possible entrepreneurial opportunities for English major students. With the ever-increasing international exchanges, the market's demand for translation is expanding rapidly, and higher requirements for translation speed and translation accuracy are put forward. The demand for translation talents becomes more practical and quick. For this reason, in the process of integrating English major education and innovation and entrepreneurship education, a series of innovative modes and entrepreneurial opportunities in the field of English translation services should be integrated into the learning process of English major education.

The development of Internet technology has promoted the popularity of online English education. At present, a series of new English education platforms such as "Speaking English Fluently", 51Talk, TutorABC, VIPKID have become the new representatives of the integration of English education and innovation and entrepreneurship. English online education provides an innovative and entrepreneurial scene with the Internet as the core for the educational practice of English major students, and has carried out beneficial explorations in mode innovation and technological innovation. With the development and maturity of artificial intelligence, VR/AR and other technologies, the application of these technologies to the online English education industry will provide a good platform for the integration of English major education and innovation and entrepreneurship education, and will also provide a broader space for cultivating more innovative English professional talents.

## **6. Ways for Embedding Innovation and Entrepreneurship in English Major Education**

The practical ways for embedding innovation and entrepreneurship in English major education are professional embedding mode, cross-professional joint mode and socialized cooperation mode.

### **6.1 Professional Embedding Mode**

The specific forms of the professional embedding mode include curriculum penetration, setting up the specialized courses and adding the new module. First, curriculum penetration, which is to embed innovation and entrepreneurship knowledge content in English major courses. For example, when teaching English writing courses for English majors, teachers can use the writing of English business plans as learning content. Second, setting up the specialized courses. This means to set up professional compulsory courses or professional elective courses of innovation and entrepreneurship in the professional personnel training plan. Courses can be jointly taught by professional teachers, business school teachers, and corporate tutors. Third, adding the new module. On the basis of setting up the innovation and entrepreneurship courses, it is worth further developing the related new module for English major students, providing classified education to English majors, and guiding the students with strong academic or similar interests to further their study and practice.

### **6.2 Cross-professional Joint Mode**

The cross-professional joint mode refers to breaking through the boundaries of English majors and conducting joint training for students to strengthen their professional English language skills, management knowledge, enterprising spirit, environment cognition covered by innovation and entrepreneurship education. The mode can be divided into two forms: the intra-school joint training form and the inter-school joint training form.

### **6.3 Socialized Cooperation Mode**

Socialized cooperation mode refers to social units such as university joint enterprises, non-profit organizations, government agencies, carrying out practical activities of innovation and entrepreneurship for English major students. The main types of the implementation are as follows.

First, the enterprise-led type. Enterprises or research institutions put forward demands for business innovation or subject research in the English professional field, and invite teachers and students to jointly develop or participate in research. The school can also provide technical,

equipment or site support to a certain extent.

Second, the school-led type. The school establishes a special innovation research center or virtual enterprise, and combines social resources to carry out scientific research, technological development or achievement transformation in special fields, so as to provide students with abundant practical internship opportunities.

Third, student-oriented type. Through the school's entrepreneurial incubator or professional innovation laboratory, the student's self-employment team can be built. The school establishes a startup review system, tracking and monitoring system, performance evaluation system, and reward and punishment system for entrepreneurial projects, and integrates professional technology resources, market operations and social resources, achievement transformation and other aspects so as to provide the related consultation and assistance for students.

## 7. Conclusion

In order to better upgrade the training mode of English majors, the integration of innovation and entrepreneurship education and English major education has become a trend, and it is also an effective way to cultivate inter-disciplinary talents that meet the needs of national and social development. Based on competency-based education theory, we aim at cultivating interdisciplinary talents of English majors with innovative and entrepreneurial spirit and skills. This paper analyzes the direction and trend of entrepreneurship and employment of English major students, and puts forward the ways of integrating innovation and entrepreneurship into English major education.

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