

# The Research on the Mode of Interdisciplinary Cooperative Teaching of EGP and ESP

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**Abstract**—Based on the results of previous research and introspection method, this paper constructs the interdisciplinary cooperative teaching mode of EGP and ESP. Taking the course “*Finance and Economics English*” as an example, a feasible practice of interdisciplinary cooperative teaching scheme is proposed. The aim of the research is to promote the transition from EGP to ESP and cultivate interdisciplinary talents in line with the requirements of the times.

**Index Terms**—EGP, ESP, cooperative teaching, interdisciplinary talents.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Under the current Chinese background of “Double First-class” and “One Belt and One Road” policy, the contradiction of English education in colleges and universities in our country has been transformed into the contradiction between the national requirement to cultivate college students with international competitiveness in various disciplines and the current foreign language teaching in universities that cannot fully meet this demand [1] 42. In the past 40 years, though, a great deal of academic research has been conducted on the transformation ESP (English for General Purposes), mostly in rationale [2]-[4] and the curriculum [5]-[7]. The Ministry of Education has even listed ESP as a second-level subject, along with foreign languages, foreign languages and literature, linguistics, in the Foreign Language Specialty Directory [8]. However, ESP is still difficult to fully and effectively implement foreign language teaching in colleges and universities. However, foreign language teaching in colleges and universities around the world is mainly based on ESP courses.

Therefore, many scholars agree that ESP and EAP could be good medicine to save English for General Purpose (EGP) education [3], [6]. However, there are limited practical studies on how EGP changes into ESP teaching. For example, most of the staff who engaged in ESP teaching are former EGP staff, whose professional backgrounds are English linguistics, literature, translation, etc. However, under the current “Double First-class” construction and “One Belt And One Road” background, whether these staff who teach EGP can successfully change their roles, and whether they can handle the differences and connections among EGP, ESP and professional English; how to

successfully undertake these teaching tasks and train college students in line with the development of foreign language education and with international competitiveness in various fields are both important topics worth discussing.

In view of it, this article explores a new method to solve the problem of the existing teaching paradigm. It tries to explore how the ESP staff and professional English staff cooperate in personnel training plan formulation, compiling the textbooks, organizing students’ competition, and designing online courses. Moreover, how they could realize the horizontal or vertical interdisciplinary teaching mode, avoid repetitive curriculum, promote the integration of science and teaching resources, and makes the goal of the talent training scheme.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### A. Differences among EGP, ESP and Professional English

#### 1) Differences between EGP and ESP

English for Specific Purpose (ESP) refers to English used in a particular occupation or subject to develop the communicative ability of students to work in the target English work environment [3]: 22-28. Dudley-Evans & St John [8] pointed out that in applied linguistics, ESP refers to a way of language learning based on learners’ needs and effective participation of academic objectives and professional groups. ESP, as a teaching concept, is quite different from COMMON English in terms of requirements analysis, curriculum design, teaching materials usage and teaching methods [1]: 44.

“ESP is simply a functional variant of EGP in the context of its emergence,” said CAI. “The relationship between ESP and EGP belongs to the relationship between the ‘common core’ and the ‘language variant’ in linguistic theory. ESP and EGP together constitute two indispensable aspects of English language learning [10]. However, according to the survey, college students have encountered great setbacks in learning English from EGP to ESP, and the process of learning professional terms in English or teaching in English is not smooth. The transition of ESP is difficult, and there are many negative attitudes. On the one hand, there is a lack of effective communication and cooperation among EGP teaching, ESP and professional English teaching from the perspective of discipline construction and talent training program formulation in various colleges and universities. On the other hand, the teaching content of EGP at present fails to actively adapt to and serve the needs of professional discipline teaching, and those two fail to form a complementary or unified relationship in a real sense.

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TABLE I: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ESP AND EGP [9]

content	ESP	EGP
<b>Positioning</b>	To meet special needs.	In order to improve the English level, or to deal with the examination, improve the humanistic quality.
<b>Preparation</b>	Based on demand analysis.	Test students' language proficiency, such as placement tests.
<b>Teaching</b>	Demand teaching, according to students' professional learning needs, focuses on the strengthening of certain abilities and the training of students' application ability and scientific research ability.	Implement graded teaching, pay attention to learning skills training.
<b>Content</b>	Related to the student's major or occupation, such as lab report writing, professional literature reading, or work scenario terminology.	Universal themes, such as current news, oral English, stories, essays, letters, etc.
<b>Language</b>	Emphasis is placed on syntactic vocabulary learning and language skill training in specific professional or career-related activities.	The cultivation of comprehensive English ability in listening, speaking, reading and writing should approach the language level of native English speakers.
<b>Teaching material</b>	Meet the needs of professional learning or industry work related materials, emphasis on the real scene.	The language requirement is idiomatic and beautiful. It is better to be native English, through adaptation to achieving the difficulty of the material step by step.

## 2) Differences between ESP and professional English

ESP is generally regarded as a synonym for professional English (or Scientific English) and content-based teaching. In fact, they are different concepts from the aspects of nature, purpose, and content. ESP is a kind of language teaching which is designed to meet the specific needs of foreign language learners. Its teaching focus is on the

language of the subject and industry, with the purpose of enabling students to master the language communication ability in this major or industry [1]. Professional English is a kind of specialized English course in colleges and universities since the ESP concept was introduced into China in the 1980s.

TABLE II: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ESP AND PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH [1]

	Professional English	ESP
Properties	Content and language teaching	Language teaching
Objectives	Learn the basic content and concepts of the major through vocabulary translation teaching.	To improve students' ability of language communication related to their subject areas.
Teacher	Professional teachers mainly	Language teachers
Contents	Subject content knowledge	A typical language category related to a discipline

## B. Cooperative Teaching Theory

Since 1990s, cooperative methods has been applied to English teaching in several Southeast Asian countries led by Japan. However, in China, there are few research cases in which cooperative teaching theory has been applied to ESP teaching. From 2008 to 2018, there are few articles on TOPICS related to EGP and ESP cooperative teaching that can be searched on CNKI. Therefore, the application of cooperative teaching model to EGP and professional English teaching reform under ESP transformation still has great exploration and research space [10]:68. Tian & Jin [11] pointed out that Constructivism provides the theoretical basis for cooperative teaching. The core point of Constructivism is that individuals in knowledge construction can reach common goals through discussion and reconciliation, further through cooperation and assimilation among individuals. Estrangement and differences can be eliminated to achieve mutual integration and unity, so as to further enrich and perfect individual

knowledge. The advantage of cooperative teaching lies in that it can break down the barriers as well as boundaries of the original resources of professional English and college English, and maximize the development and utilization of the respective resources.

### 1) Interdisciplinary cooperative teaching program of EGP to ESP

ESP courses offered by Foreign Languages School should open a few doors to staff who has the right professional background to lecture such courses and the assistance they needed from the college of Professional English in the course of compiling and using the textbooks. ESP courses focus more on language skills or expertise. The staff conduct ESP courses on how to carry out enterprise training and further study on how to grasp the teaching evaluation of ESP courses. Based on the qualitative and quantitative research findings, the author proposed a feasible practice plan for the interdisciplinary cooperative teaching of ESP of the School of Foreign Languages and Professional English

of the School of Finance and Economics, and constructed a state-enterprise-student model based on the introspection method.

As is shown in Fig. 1, ESP teaching aims at improving students' language communication skills in relation to their professional subject areas. Therefore, in the process of EGP transformation, ESP staff master the language and professional skills required by ESP through reading a large number of domestic and foreign literature. Therefore, EGP staff need to cooperate with professional staff in talented

training program formulation and teaching design, regularly attend English language and professional knowledge training. At the same time, ESP staff should actively participate in various practical activities of the enterprise. A sound training system should be established for ESP teachers to do practices in the enterprise, so that ESP teachers can master professional knowledge and understand working tasks, penetrate theoretical knowledge, accumulate teaching experience, optimize teaching methods, and avoid blindness in learning goal setting [12].

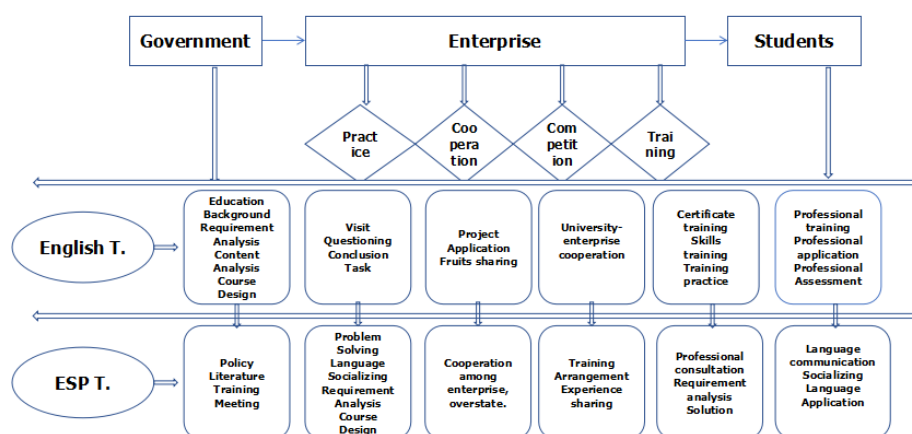


Fig. 1. Cooperative teaching model between professional teachers and ESP teachers.

**Cooperation mode 1:** Establish a team composed of professional bilingual staff and ESP staff. Under the background of “Double First-class” and “One Belt and One Road” construction, position the goals of discipline development and specialty construction. The talent cultivation is based on “academic” or “applied” concept. It should be determined whether EGP should change into ESP or EAP. ESP staff have clear understandings of ESP research trends and teaching practices at home and abroad after reading literature. ESP staff are required to participate into a professional class, carefully studied the coverage, key points and difficulties of professional courses, understood the needs of professional staff and students, and wrote a research report based on the survey results.

**Cooperation mode 2:** Arrange the ESP staff visit the enterprise and start an internship for at least three months to learn about the needs of the enterprise and their suggestions on talent cultivation, and wrote a research report. Colleges and universities regularly invite business executives to attend classes, so that students can have a clear understanding of the future job market.

**Cooperation mode 3:** ESP staff integrate resources by combining literature review, professional survey report, enterprise demand research report and student questionnaire survey. On behalf of the team, professional and ESP staff, based on their own teaching practice and research, as well as systematic discussion, will receive the integrated resources, such as the journal (*the Economist*, *the Financial Times*, etc.), the professional website combined with some focus on communication skills of English materials, ESP teaching materials on the market, in-depth and writing research report.

**Cooperation mode 4:** ESP staff, enterprise representatives, professional staff and students worked together to compile textbooks, MOOCS, micro lessons, and form a series of digital teaching materials.

**Cooperation mode 5:** According to the curriculum design proposed by Basturkmen [12], the students majoring in Finance and Economics should be adjusted. ESP teaching should emphasize more on improving the practical use of language related to the specialty force, thus to deepen students' cognition, polish their professional knowledge, and strengthen their core competence in the target career. Therefore, our curriculum design has a clear goal, emphasizing the use of language in professional communication, the awareness of cross-cultural communication, and the use of language, so as to build professional knowledge, critical thinking, professional problem solving and other high-level thinking ability.

**Cooperation mode 6:** Set up a teaching team composed of ESP teachers and professional English teachers. ESP teaching focuses on cultivating students' pragmatic abilities, such as cross-cultural communication ability. Therefore, teachers of specialized courses are regularly invited to provide students with lectures on professional knowledge and various forms of academic seminars. The staff can also provide reading lists for the students, so that the students can quickly connect both conceptually and intellectually. They can also serve as guides of ESP teachers' basic knowledge and background in *Business English*.

**Cooperation mode 7:** Jointly develop and utilize network teaching platform, and build digital resources, such as corpus and Quiz Bank. Further strengthen the communication on teaching notes, course work, teaching evaluation and other links, so as to realize the integration of teaching resources and evaluation system, and improve the teaching effect of ESP.

**Cooperation mode 8:** The School of Foreign Languages and the School of Finance and Economics jointly establish the ESP special class of B University, which is designed to recruit students for Finance and Economics majors, English majors and non-English majors with solid language

foundation in the third semester or above. According to the management mechanism, such as credit system or basic extension assessment, curriculum integration and reorganization can be realized to strengthen the crossover and integration among disciplines, and further cultivate students' critical thinking ability, creative consciousness and innovative ability. The characteristic class should pay attention to the advantages of the curriculum setting in the established training scheme and effectively promote its effective combination with the new characteristic curriculum setting.

### III. CONCLUSION

Under the current background of "Double First-class" and "One Belt and One Road" policies, it has become the top priority for foreign language teaching in colleges and universities to cultivate college students with international competitiveness in various disciplines. This paper first analyzes the educational and teaching background of EGP transmits to ESP, and then clarifies the positioning, nature, purpose and content of EGP and ESP. Based on this, combined with previous research results, it proposes the interdisciplinary cooperative teaching model of EGP transmits to ESP. EGP staff should cooperate with professional staff from both academic and applied aspects. Academically, they should pay attention to domestic and foreign literature reading, cooperative projects with professional teachers, paper composing and training. Application-oriented students emphasize the language communication ability of students in professional fields. Therefore, the cooperation with professional staff should not only be strengthened in terms of curriculum setting, textbook compilation, practical activities, etc., but also regular enterprise training should be conducted to form a cooperative teaching mode among enterprises, professional teachers and ESP teachers.

The intervention of English teaching is called for by the first-class disciplines or dominant disciplines in colleges and universities, and the intervention of English teaching is ESP<sup>[1]</sup>. Therefore, how to make a smooth transition from EGP staff to ESP staff and to effectively carry out interdisciplinary cooperative teaching has become a hot research topic at present. Under the background of clear definition of current English education in colleges and universities, combined with previous research results and teaching practice, this paper constructed a model of interdisciplinary cooperative teaching mode based on introspection method, and proposed a feasible practice plan for interdisciplinary cooperative teaching by taking the course of *Business English* as an example. This study aims to successfully implement the transition from EGP to ESP and cultivate interdisciplinary talents in line with the requirements of The Times.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

LIU Jing composed the original paper, conducted the research, analyzed the teaching material, constructed the interdisciplinary cooperative teaching mode of EGP and ESP, and made a final conclusion. Some students

participated in the discussion about the schemes, did teaching practice, visited company, and revised the paper.

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