

Original Paper

A Comparative Study of College English Teaching Modes and Effects in Chinese Universities and Sino-Foreign Cooperative Universities

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Received: July 17, 2019

Accepted: July 27, 2019

Online Published: August 9, 2019

doi:10.22158/selt.v7n3p328

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/selt.v7n3p328>

Abstract

College English course in Chinese domestic universities focused on Comprehensive English and could not bring a satisfactory result in a long time. Students in these universities often underperformed in English and they were left far behind by the students in Sino-foreign cooperative universities (SFCU). Through questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations on 256 students and 30 teachers in five Chinese public universities and four Sino-foreign cooperative universities, a huge gap in teaching objectives and modes, teaching staff, medium of instruction, the number of courses taught in English and class size, students' English learning motivation and teaching effect between the two types of College English courses was found. The time to study and use English for non-English majors in SFCU in the four-year university study can reach 12,000 to 15,000 hours, which is 10-20 times longer than that of the students in Chinese domestic universities. In addition, 90% of students in SFCU can get Band 6.5 in IELTS, but less than 50% of students in Chinese domestic universities can get Band 5.0 in IELTS and 30%-60% of them will regress in English ability when they graduate. This study finds out that SFCU focus on academic English in College English lessons and their teaching modes and language environment can enhance students' improvement in English, which shows the significance of reference for the reform of College English and the development of students' English competence in China and other non-English-speaking countries.

Keywords

Chinese universities, SFCU, College English, Teaching effect, Comparative study

1. Introduction

“Chinese universities” in this paper refers to domestic universities in China. China has more than 2,600 colleges and universities and their teachers and teaching modes are basically localized (Ministry of Education, 2018).

“Sino-foreign cooperative universities” (SFCU) refers to campuses of foreign universities in China. They hold the same teaching philosophy with their foreign campuses, hire administrators from their foreign campuses, recruit teachers globally, and award the foreign degrees. The curriculum and content, teaching and effect of teaching of these two kinds of universities in China are quite different, but more than 90% of the students are Chinese students (Ministry of Education, 2018).

College English is the longest compulsory course with most credits for non-English majors in Chinese universities. It is arranged to study in freshman and sophomore year for four semesters, 4-5 hours a week, 200-260 hours in total and 16-20 credits, accounting for about 10% of the total undergraduate credits. However, the teaching effect of College English in China’s local universities has been unsatisfactory for a long time. After spending 2-3 years on learning English, students’ English level has not been improved significantly, and some even stated that their English level has even become worse than the time they sit for college entrance examination. Furthermore, the passing rate of CET-4 and CET-6 is not high. Therefore, College English has become the most time-consuming, the most disliked, and the least effective compulsory course that many students are not willing to learn (Jing, 2017).

In 2014, *Nanfang Metropolitan Daily* interviewed 196 students from 10 key public universities in Guangzhou, China. It was found that 90% of the respondents were not satisfied with the current College English teaching mode and felt that their English level was even worse than that of senior high school. They believed that “if we take the CET-4 as soon as we got into university, we would surely get higher scores. The longer time passed from college entrance examination, the worse the our English proficiency will be. When I graduate, I dare not go to a foreign company for an interview”, a student said (Tang, 2014). This survey shows the current situation of English learning for many college students.

According to the *Guidelines for College English Teaching* issued by the Ministry of Education of China in 2017, the aim of College English teaching is to cultivate students’ English ability, enhance their intercultural communicative awareness and competence, develop their self-learning ability and improve their comprehensive cultural literacy, so that they can effectively use English in their study, life, social communication and future work to meet the needs of the country, society, school and personal development. The main purpose of teaching is to improve students’ English listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating ability. According to the actual needs, colleges and universities can independently determine the starting level and choose teaching objectives. In this way, there will be

great differences in the teaching objectives, class hours, teaching modes, and teaching effects of College English, that is to say, there will be great differences in the English competence of college students (Wang, 2016).

Colleges and universities develop students' comprehensive English skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation by arranging courses such as comprehensive English, intensive and extensive reading, listening and speaking, oral English, writing and translation. Some colleges and universities have reduced the total class hours of College English to about 150 hours. To complete so much teaching content in such a small number of class hours, it is often difficult to teach any of them thoroughly. At the same time, many content of College English repeat with the English courses in senior high schools.

Many students think the content is simply repetition and have a slack mentality in their study. Therefore, their English ability has not been improved and their ability to take exams has declined. Finally, in order to achieve good results in the exams, many students have to pay a high price to attend training class for CET-4, CET-6, IELTS or TOEFL (Guo, 2017).

The reform of College English teaching in China has been continued, and many researchers have carried out various kinds of curriculum reforms, such as classroom teaching reform based on the Internet micro-lessons, MOOC and multimedia (Wu, Y., 2018), from basic English EGP to ESP and EAP of academic English (Wu, X., 2018; Ye, 2017), task-based language, mixed teaching mode of TBLT + SPOC (Gao et al., 2017), and other classroom teaching reform proposals, but the overall situation of College English teaching in China has not been fundamentally improved.

However, the admission scores of Sino-foreign cooperative universities, such as University of Nottingham Ningbo China, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University and Wenzhou-Kean University, have just passed the cut-off line for first-tier universities, which indicates no significantly difference in students' college entrance examination scores and their English foundation between these universities and other Chinese domestic universities. However, students in Sino-foreign cooperative universities have made a breakthrough in their English learning during the first academic year in university, and they can take course taught in English in the second year (or even in the first year). They can not only understand foreign teachers' courses taught in English, but also can read original English books, finish homework in English and write papers in English. They can discuss professional problems with their classmates and teachers fluently and confidently in English. Most of the students' English proficiency can reach IELTS 6.0-6.5; among them, the passing rate and average score of CET-4 and CET-6 of University of Nottingham Ningbo China ranked first in China in 7 consecutive years. It was the first time in China that a university can far surpass the 985 and 211 universities in these exams. These non-English majors graduate with English proficiency even surpassing the English majors in other Chinese domestic universities (Zou, B., 2015). More importantly, they are full of confidence and interest in English learning. They are also full of confidence, enthusiasm and expectation for the future development of their studies and careers. Most of the undergraduate are successful in their application

for postgraduate studies or get employment in foreign enterprises (Zou, L., 2015).

What is the reason for students with similar foundation become so different in 1-2 years? Is the students' learning motivation and interest? Is the curriculum and class hour arrangement? Is the teaching material, teaching mode or learning environment? Or a combination of multiple causes? Which of these reasons play a key role? Through investigation on the above-mentioned issues and comparative analysis, this study will find out the causes, put forward countermeasures, and to provide references for the reform of College English in Chinese universities and other non-English-speaking countries.

2. Research Design

2.1 Subjects

In this study, Zhejiang University, Zhejiang University of Technology, Zhejiang Normal University, Zhejiang University of International Studies and Zhejiang University of Science and Technology were selected as representatives of local public universities in China. University of Nottingham Ningbo China, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Wenzhou Kean University and Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen) were selected as representatives of Sino-foreign cooperative universities. Teachers and students who take College English courses in these universities were randomly selected to be subjects. At each university, 30 to 50 students and 3 to 5 teachers in different majors and different grades were surveyed through questionnaires and interviews, and the total number of subjects is 256 students and 30 teachers.

2.2 Content of the Survey

The purpose of the survey is to investigate the teaching objectives, curriculum settings, school hours, teaching materials, teaching methods, curriculum resources, learning environment and teaching effects of these College English courses, and to make a multi-dimensional in-depth comparison to explore and analyze the differences and key causes between the two types of College English teaching modes and teaching effects.

2.3 Research Methods

Through literature review, survey ideas and content are formulated, survey tools are compiled, survey data are obtained by classroom observation, questionnaire and interview survey. SPSS 22.0 was used to run ANOVA for test of significance.

2.4 Survey Tools

Questionnaires and interview outlines for students and teachers in College English courses were compiled as survey tools.

The questionnaire includes seven parts: basic information of the subjects, self-evaluation of English proficiency (including the score of college entrance examination and score of English), English learning experience, attitude, motivation, strategies, styles, and evaluation, suggestions on College English, and satisfaction with College English curriculum.

Teachers' questionnaires include five dimensions: the basic situation of the teachers interviewed,

English teaching modes and teaching strategies, assessment methods of students' English learning, evaluation of students' English learning, and evaluation and suggestions of the courses taught.

The questionnaires were compiled based on AMTB Attitude/Motivation Scale designed by R.C. Gardner, SILL Language Learning Strategy Questionnaire designed by R.L.Ordord, BALLI Language Learning Concept Scale designed by E.K. Horwitz, LSS Learning Style Questionnaire designed by Costa and McCare, LSS Learning Style Questionnaire designed by Andrew Cohen, CASFL Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale designed by Horwitz (Ding, 2010), the "CEQ Questionnaire for College Students' Course Experience" (Yuan, 2010), the "Questionnaire on Students' Satisfaction with College English Classroom Environment" compiled by Huang Zhe (2013) and the English Learning Attitude Questionnaire compiled by Cheng Youqiang and Zhang Lan (2011). The first version of questionnaire for students has 56 items and the questionnaire for teachers has 36 items. After distributing to students and teachers in pilot study, these questionnaires were tested and revised by experts and the unreliable and invalidated items were deleted. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was 0.917 and 0.911 for the final 38-item questionnaire for students and 28-item questionnaire for teachers respectively. Since both of them are above 7, the result shows that the final questionnaire has high reliability and validity.

The interview outlines for students and teachers contain 10 questions according to the main dimensions of survey in the corresponding questionnaires, and all of them are the questions that difficult to answer simply and need to be interviewed in detail to further explain and improve the results of the questionnaire survey.

3. Survey Results and Analysis

3.1 English Foundation

The survey found that the rankings of the nine universities are different. The average Gaokao admission score of Sino-foreign cooperative universities are 590-620, which is almost the same as that of local public universities and around 15% lower than that of 985 key public universities in China. Zhejiang University is a 985 university with a recent average admission score of more than 700 (out of 810) in Zhejiang Province; the average admission score of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen) in Zhejiang Province in 2018 was 659; the average admission score of Zhejiang University of Technology and Ningbo Nottingham University in Zhejiang Province is around 615, the score of Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University is 605, the score of Kean University Wenzhou, Zhejiang International Studies University and Zhejiang University of Science and Technology is around 590 in Zhejiang Province. Domestic universities have no requirement for the score of English, while the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen) and Nottingham University of Ningbo require more than 120 points (out of 150 points) for English, and the Xi'an Jiaotong-liverpool University and Kean University Wenzhou require more than 110 points (out of 150 points).

The results of the survey are listed in Table 1. Since the content of the survey is about the College

English courses and students' English learning in the above-mentioned nine universities, the subjects selected are all non-English majors. The students' English foundation when they enrolled is measured by the average score of English in the College Entrance Examination. The scores of students from Sino-foreign cooperative universities are 110-130, which is 20% higher than that of key universities in China and 30% higher than that of ordinary universities in China, and the difference is relatively significant ($P = 0.032$), especially converting to the 100-mark system, that is, the difference between 80 and 60 points. The difference in the total score of college entrance examination between the students in Sino-foreign cooperative universities and Chinese domestic universities is not very significant ($P = 0.049$), except Zhejiang University.

Table 1. Comparison of Majors and Situation of English Foundation

Comparison items	Sino-foreign Cooperative Universities	Key Universities in China	Non-key Universities and Colleges in China	P value
Major of Subjects	Non-English Major	Non-English Major	Non-English Major	
Score of College Entrance Examination (out of 810 in Zhejiang)	590-620	620-700	590-610	.04
Average score of English in College Entrance Examination(out of 150)	110-130	90-100	70-90	.032

It is very common for many high school students to improve their score of a subject by 20-30 points in 1-2 years (Gao, 2018); during the time in college, students have more time for self-study and self-development, and their improvement of academic performance can be earth-shaking (Hu, 2017). Therefore, it is appropriate to compare the students in two types of colleges by total score of the college entrance examination (the gap is less than 10%) and score of English (the gap is 20-30%). According to the change of score in English during the four years in university, the development of their English ability can be clearly explained.

3.2 Criteria for Measuring English Competence

Since IELTS and TOEFL scores are usually used to measure the English proficiency of non-English speaking countries, we adopt IELTS bands to measure the English proficiency of college students. The assessment criteria of Sino-foreign cooperative College English course are similar to IELTS and its results of English course can be converted into IELTS bands. Many students in these universities are willing to take IELTS test for their study abroad. Furthermore, the scores of CET-4 and CET-6 of domestic college students can also be converted to equivalent IELTS bands for comparison.

According to the difficulty level of IELTS and CET-4 and CET-6, the scores can be converted as follows: band 5-5.5 out of 9 in IELTS has no corresponding CET-6 score, and can be converted to the 550-600 in CET-4, which shows the English ability is not good enough and errors are relatively significant. The band 6-6.5 in IELTS is corresponding to 650-700 in CET-4 and 550-600 in CET-6, which shows the student's English competence is in the intermediate level and can communicate with native English speakers and have occasional mistakes. The band 7 in IELTS has no corresponding score in CET-4 because its difficulty is beyond the scope of CET-4, and is equivalent to 650-700 in CET-6, which shows the student's English ability is excellent (Tang, 2017).

3.3 Objectives and Materials of Teaching, Medium of Instruction, Tuition and Attitudes towards English Learning

Through investigation, it is found that the Sino-foreign cooperative universities generally adopt the teaching materials and textbooks of their foreign campuses; in contrast, domestic universities use the textbooks compiled in China.

The survey shows that there are significant difference in the teaching objective of College English and students' motivation and attitude towards learning English between these two types of universities.

The Sino-foreign universities adopt English as medium of instruction (EMI), and have a clear objective in College English course: students who fail to reach the band of 6.0 (out of 9) in IELTS in the first academic year cannot study the courses taught in English further, which means more than 100,000 yuan tuition fees a year (20 times higher than that of Chinese public universities) are wasted, either dropping out or grade retention, so all students' attitude towards English learning is clear and motivated. They have made up their mind that they must learn English well before applying for a foreign degree in the Sino-foreign cooperative universities. With such a learning attitude and the guidance of the teaching mode adopted by these universities, students' English ability improves rapidly.

Chinese is the medium of instruction in local colleges and universities in China. Like other courses, the learning goal of College English course cannot arouse students' special attention. They just want to pass the exam, so their attitudes towards English learning are naturally unmotivated, especially the students with poor English foundation.

Therefore, these two kinds of universities are significantly different in the teaching objectives of College English and students' motive and attitudes towards English study, which are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of Objectives and Materials of Teaching, Medium of Instruction, Tuition and Attitudes towards English Learning

Comparison items	Sino-foreign cooperative universities	Key Universities in China	Non-key Universities and colleges in China	Comparison results
College English Teaching Objectives	IELTS 6.0-6.5	Passing the course exam and CET-4 & 6	Passing the course exam and CET-4 & 6	Significantly different
Using textbooks	Original English version	Chinese version	Chinese version	Significantly different
Learning attitude	Active	Not Active	Passive	Significantly different
Medium of Instruction	English	Chinese	Chinese	Significantly different
Annual tuition fee (RMB1000)	100+	5	5	

3.4 Teaching Plan, Teachers, Teaching Mode and Content

(1) Teaching plan and teachers

College English in Chinese domestic universities is generally scheduled from the first to fourth semester, with 4-5 hours per week, 46-60 hours per semester and 184-240 hours in total. Besides, less than 5% of teaching staff come from overseas countries.

The Sino-foreign cooperative universities usually arrange College English in the first academic year and 8-10 hours per week, with 280-300 hours in total, and more than 70% of teaching staff come the English-speaking countries. The details are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparison of Teaching Plan, Teachers, Teaching Mode and Content

Comparison items	Sino-foreign cooperative universities	Key Universities in China	Non-key Universities and colleges in China	P value
Class semester	1-2	1-4	1-4	.000
Total Hours	280-300	184-200	220-240	.037
Weekly hours	8-10	4	4-5	.000
Teaching staff	70% foreign teachers	5% foreign teachers	5% foreign teachers	.000
Number of students in the teaching class	15-20	40-80	40-80	.000
Teaching mode	EAP+Flipped Classroom	Traditional teaching	Traditional teaching	Significantly different
Classroom discussion and group collaboration	Very common	uncommon	uncommon	Significantly different

(2) Teaching Content

As for textbooks of College English, the Sino-foreign cooperative universities use the original textbooks adopted by their foreign campuses and focus on the EAP.

EAP (English for Academic Purposes) is an English course to help learners study academic language knowledge and improve their professional learning and research abilities. It is a popular international college English teaching course (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002; Hyland, 2006). Academic English is generally divided into English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and ESAP (English for Specific Academic Purposes) (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

Sino-foreign cooperative universities generally study EGAP in the first semester and ESAP in the second semester. Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University opened ESAP course from the second to the fourth semester, but the study time was reduced to 4 hours per week. ESAP courses focus on syntax, vocabulary, grammar and discourse analysis that are related to relevant major, which is similar to the conclusions of Johns & Price-Machado (2001). Sino-foreign cooperative universities often draw lessons in teaching methods, syllabus and evaluation methods from their foreign main campuses to develop and design academic English teaching models that suitable for their own campuses, which is the same as Jeaco and Hu (2010).

In China, local colleges and universities use textbooks compiled in China, which focus on content of Comprehensive English. The two kinds of textbooks are quite different in content and teaching emphasis.

(3) Teaching Mode

The College English course at Sino-foreign cooperative universities mainly concentrate on the first academic year, with 8-10 weeks and 280-300 hours in total; 70% of English teachers are foreign teachers from the English-speaking countries; all of them adopt small classes with 15-20 students, and the cooperative teaching mode of "EAP+flipped classroom" is widely used in classroom teaching, which forces students to have classroom discussions and group work and the performance accounted for 50% of the final results.

At the same time, every module of College English course requires students to write an essay, which advances from easy to difficult, and the number of words increased from 300 words in the initial stage to more than 1,000 words later., and teachers ought to give feedback on students' papers. In the second semester, students are required to start writing 2-3 course papers with 1000-2000 words in groups, and the scores are included in the final grade. In the process of research, three to five students work together to formulate research programs and collect data, such as interviews and questionnaires, then they write their own reports, and both plagiarism and be plagiarized will be calculated zero point. Different majors have different scopes of investigation and the writing topics are determined according to their own fields. Through the group collaborative research and independently completed essay and course paper, students' English ability, critical comparative thinking ability and team spirit have improved rapidly.

However, in the first and second academic years of College English in Chinese universities, the total school hours of key universities are 184-200 and 220-240 school hours for the ordinary universities. Although the gap in class hours between them and Sino-foreign cooperative universities is not huge, the school hours at Chinese domestic universities are less than 4-5 hours per week. English teachers are basically Chinese, and only around 5% of faculties are foreign teachers. Large classes with 40-80 students are widely adopted and only the traditional teaching mode can be used in classroom teaching, because there are too many teaching classes and teachers need microphones in class, otherwise, students can not hear them at all. Therefore, the cooperative teaching mode is often difficult to carry out. Without essay and course paper, students often hold a negative attitude toward learning and homework. Many of them choose to copy answers from reference books to deal with the problem, so their English cannot be improved and even may decline. Many students have reflected that if they were allowed to take CET-4 or CET-6 at the beginning of their freshman year, they may have passed it once. On the contrary, it is harder for them to pass the CET-4 or CET-6 after freshman and sophomore years, because their English ability at that time is already worse than their English proficiency at the time of taking the College Entrance Examination.

3.5 English Learning Strategy

The students at Chinese-foreign cooperative universities mainly adopt the method of “network learning + actual practice” in English learning. They often use network multimedia to simulate the English environment to study, and enhance their listening and speaking ability through group conversation and debate in class. At the same time, in order to complete their essay and course paper independently, they must often go to library to read and collect a large number of English materials. Therefore, “Academic Reading + Academic Writing” is also the main way to improve their English ability. Many freshmen hate their teacher’s persistent to “force” them to write essay and course papers, but when they graduate and read the English paper they published and get offers from foreign universities for postgraduate studies and foreign enterprises, many of them are deeply moved. They sincerely thank teachers for previous strict requirements.

However, the way for students in Chinese universities to improve their English performance is often to recite more texts, read more reference materials and do more exercises. As a result, there are many “dumb” students with insufficient English practical ability. Most of the graduates in English majors and non-English majors at Chinese universities are unable to write an international standard English academic article, not to mention to publish on international journals and international conferences, which is consistent with Sun Youzhong (2011)’s research conclusions. Table 4 shows the detail.

Table 4. Comparison of Strategy and Time of Learning, Proportion of EMI Lesson and Attitudes to Teaching

Comparison items	Sino-foreign cooperative universities	Key Universities in China	Non-key Universities and colleges in China	P value
Average daily time to learn English and other courses in English (h)	8-10	1	0.5	.000
Student Learning Strategies	Online Learning + Practical exercises + Academic Reading + Academic Writing	Textbook + Reference Book + Do exercises	Textbook + Reference Book + Do exercises	Significantly different
Student satisfaction levels	70% Very satisfied 25% Satisfied	40% Satisfied 60% Dissatisfied	30% Satisfied 70% Dissatisfied	.000
Proportion of English taught courses	95% of lessons except political and PE class	10% of lessons elective course for some students	5% of lessons elective courses for limited students	.000

3.6 Study Time

The courses in Sino-foreign cooperative universities are all in English except political and physical education courses; the average time for students to learn English and other courses in English is 8-10 hours per day, and most of these time is for extracurricular self-study, which is 12,000-15,000 hours total in four years.

In contrast, the time to study English in Chinese key universities is about an hour per day in China, and 0.5 hours per day for ordinary universities, and about 1,000 hours for in four years.

As a result, the students at Sino-foreign cooperative universities can basically reach the level of IELTS 6.0 at the end of freshman year, while the majority of college students in Chinese universities are around IELTS 4.5-5.0, and the average English level at the end of sophomore year has been raised to 6.5 and 5.0-5.5 respectively. The results of this survey are also in line with Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis and Swain's (1995) output hypothesis.

3.7 Course Satisfaction

To the question of "Satisfaction with College English Teaching", about 70% of the respondents in the Sino-foreign cooperative universities answered "very satisfied", 25% of them answered "satisfied", only 5% of them were unsatisfied. Meanwhile, 40% of students at domestic key Chinese universities answered they were satisfied, 60% of them were unsatisfied. In addition, 30% of students in ordinary Chinese universities were satisfied, 70% of them were unsatisfied, and none of them feel "very satisfied".

3.8 Teaching Effect of College English

The statistical results of the teaching effects of two kinds of College English in China can be found in Table 5.

Although non-English major students in Chinese domestic universities have studied English for two years, due to the limitations of the school's medium of instruction, plan, content, and mode of teaching, they usually do not have environment to use English, and only half of them can reach Band 5.0 in IELTS in the sophomore year. Compared with freshman, 10-30% of graduates think their English level has been improved, and 30-40% think it is the same, but 30-60% think it has been regressed.

On the contrary, the language learning environment, teaching plan, teaching content, and teaching mode of Sino-foreign cooperative universities can develop students' English ability more effectively. Eighty percent of the students can reach Band 6.5 in IELTS at the end of their sophomore year and 90% of them can reach Band 6.5 in IELTS at the end of their senior year, which is 100% improved compared with their achievement in the freshman year.

Table 5. Comparison of Teaching Effect of College English and Proportion of Study Abroad

Comparison items	Sino-foreign cooperative universities	Key Universities in China	Non-key Universities and colleges in China	P value
English level at the end of freshman year	80% IELTS 6.0	70% IELTS 5.0	50% IELTS 4.5	.000
English level at the end of sophomore year	80% IELTS 6.5	60% IELTS 5.5	40% IELTS 5.0	.000
English level at the end of senior year	90% higher than IELTS 6.5	30% IELTS 6.0	15% IELTS 5.5	.000
English level compared with enrollment	100% raise	30% raise 40% remain the same 30% decrease	10% raise 30% remain the same 60% decrease	.000
Proportion of going to graduate school	30-50% study abroad	10% abroad, 30% domestic	1% abroad, 5-10% domestic	.000
Proportion of transferring, visiting and interning abroad	30% of students join	1% of students join	1% of students join	.000

3.9 Proportion of Study Abroad

Over 30% of students in Sino-foreign cooperative universities can spend a few months to 1-2 years abroad through "2+2" projects, exchange programs, and international internship programs. However,

less than 1% of the students in Chinese universities have such opportunities, so the gap between the two types of college students' English ability is even greater when they graduate.

Among the graduates of Sino-foreign cooperative universities, 30-50% of them go abroad for postgraduate study, and the English ability of non-English major graduates is higher than that of English major graduates in domestic universities; 10% of the graduates in key universities in China go abroad for postgraduate study, and about 30% of them start their postgraduate study in China; only 5-10% of the graduates in ordinary universities in China go to further study. Many graduates' English ability declines due to the low proportion of courses taught in English in Chinese universities, which just accounts 5-10% of total curriculum, and most of them are optional courses, so most students cannot choose them. The learning goal of College English in Chinese universities is mainly to pass the course exams and CET-4 and CET-6. After completing the English course for freshman and sophomore years, students who do not take part in the entrance examination for postgraduate basically throw away their English, and their English ability at graduation time is imaginable.

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

4.1 Conclusion

(1) The survey found that the score of college entrance examination for the students of Sino-foreign cooperative universities is 590-620 points on average, which is similar to that of local universities in China, 15% lower than that of key universities in China. Their average score of English single subject in college entrance examination is 110-130, which is 20% higher than that of key universities in China and 30% higher than that of ordinary universities in China.

(2) The teaching objectives, teaching plans, teaching modes, medium of instruction, situation of teaching staff, the number of students per class and the proportion of courses taught in English in the two types of College English courses are far from each other.

The total class hours of College English courses at Sino-foreign cooperative universities are 280-300 hours, which is about 30% higher than that of Chinese universities. In addition, these courses are mainly completed in the first academic year at the Sino-foreign cooperative universities and last 8-10 hours per week. Around 70% of the teachers in the Sino-foreign cooperative universities are from the English-speaking countries and 30% are Chinese teachers with abundant learning and teaching experience in the English-speaking countries. Furthermore, the textbook and teaching materials of foreign campuses were adopted, and the cooperative teaching mode of "ESP + Flipped Classroom" is used in small class at different levels. The courses focus on EAP and the size is generally 15-20 people per class. All the courses except political education and physical education are English-based, and English is used as the medium of instruction.

However, most of the class hours for College English courses in local universities in China are 200-240, which are arranged in the first and second academic years and 4-5 hours per week. More than 95% of the teachers are Chinese and less than 5% of the teachers are foreign teachers. The textbooks are

compiled by Chinese and the content is focused on comprehensive English. The teaching classes are usually composed of 40-80 students, and the teaching mode is usually traditional lecture-based teaching. Besides, the medium of instruction is Chinese, whereas less than 5% of all courses are taught in English, and nearly all of them are optional.

(3) Teachers in Sino-foreign cooperative universities generally use the cooperative teaching methods, in which students generally cooperate in group during learning, and they often spend 2-3 hours to preview, review and finish the homework for the content of one-contact-hour instruction. The average time of learning English and other courses taught in English is as long as 8-10 hours per day and most of the time is extracurricular self-learning. Students in these universities have a strong desire to learn English well and promote their academic and professional development, and have an active attitude towards self-learning of English. Their English learning strategy is “online learning + actual practice” and “academic reading + academic writing”. They need to complete essay and course independently; 70% of the students in the Sino-foreign cooperative universities are satisfied with their English courses; more than 30% of them have the experience of visiting, exchanging or studying abroad; their English proficiency has been greatly improved by 100% compared with the phase of enrollment, and 90% of students can reach Band 6.5 in IELTS; furthermore, their English ability and critical thinking ability have also been greatly improved, and the rate of study further abroad is 30-50%.

(4) The average time for local Chinese college students to learn English is only 0.5-1 hours per day, and almost no time to learn other courses taught in English. Besides, students in these universities generally hold an inactive attitude towards learning English. In the four years of university, they have only 700-1,500 hours to study English. Their English courses do not adopt the assessment of essay and course paper. In addition, their strategy to improve English achievement is to recite more textbooks, read more reference books and do more exercises. Therefore, many students underperform in English, especially in speaking and listening. Around 30-60% of the students' English ability has deteriorated, except some students who want to apply for postgraduate, since they do not need English when they graduate, and less than 50% of students can get Band 5.0 in IELTS. The rate of students admitted by foreign universities is less than 10% in Chinese key universities, and the rate of enrollment for postgraduate schools in China is around 30%; furthermore, the rate of study abroad for postgraduate is less than 1% for students in ordinary Chinese universities, and the rate of admitted by postgraduate schools in China for them is 5-10%.

(5) During the four-year study at Sino-foreign cooperative universities, the time for a non-English major student to use and study English ranges from 12,000 to 15,000 hours, which is 10 times longer than that of students in key universities in China and 20 times longer than that of students at ordinary universities. The time spent in learning and using English and the cooperative teaching and learning mode are the two main factors contributing to the fact that their English ability and critical thinking ability are much better than that of non-English majors in domestic universities in China, and even better than that of English majors in Chinese universities. But the most important reason is the attitude

and motivation of these students to learn English: they all have the determination to learn English well, the strong desire to go abroad for postgraduate studies and obtain high-paying positions in foreign enterprises.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the above investigation and discussion, the following suggestions were put forward to reform the College English and develop students' English competence in China and other non-English speaking countries.

(1) According to the relevant theories and characteristics of second language acquisition, College English courses in the non-English-speaking countries should be completed in the freshman year. High-intensity and high-frequency teaching arrangements should be adopted, and EAP in academic English should be focused in teaching materials. In addition, the teaching should carry out in small-class and "EAP+flipped classroom", and the teaching scheme can combine academic English with CET-4 and CET-6 to improve students' academic English and competence in examination-taking simultaneously.

(2) Colleges and universities in non-English-speaking countries should actively establish and effectively use online English learning platforms, improve online multimedia reading, audio-visual, vocabulary, grammar, writing, film clips, classical songs and other English learning materials, and encourage students to simulate English native environment through online multimedia courseware to make up for the serious shortcomings of foreign teachers. Encourage the vigorous development of campus English speeches, sketches, writing and other competitions, so that students really love English, have the opportunity to use English.

(3) Accelerate the internationalization of non-English-speaking universities, improve the ability of teachers of non-English major courses to teach bilingually or in English, speed up the cooperation with the universities in the English-speaking countries, and increase the courses taught in English.

Acknowledgements

This paper is the research result of the project "A comparative study of College English teaching modes and effects between Sino-foreign cooperative universities and Chinese domestic universities" (Project No. 2018Y02) funded by Zhejiang International Studies University, China.

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