

# The Reform of Undergraduate Courses for English Majors ---On the Cultivating Model of Interdisciplinary English Majors in My University

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**Abstract** - The paper is based on the current educational policies of English major reforms and their cultivating models in colleges with similar college bases to CUPL. This provides suitable theoretical and practical references to the target renovation in the English department in our university. We are aimed at two models in this interdisciplinary training of undergraduates: English (Legal English) Major and Translation (Legal Translation) Major. Through this renovation, we are to deepen the key notions of diversity and characteristics in English major reform in CUPL.

Index Terms – reform, cultivating model, interdisciplinary

## 1. The Social Background of Interdisciplinary English Talents

### A. *The Requirement of the Party Central Committee under the state council*

The development of higher education reform is the key requirement of the Party Central Committee under the state council. The National Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan Outline schematize the major issues of scientific development of all kinds of education during the period of 2010 to 2020. It puts especial stresses on new requirements of undergraduate course of foreign language and literature education.

At present, the major of college English instruction has rapidly developed. More and more colleges have newly opened major courses like English Translation, Commercial English, Legal English, and etc. There is an obvious tendency that English majors have well integrated with other branches of the humanities and that English majors become interdisciplinary in China's universities.

### B. *The Market Requirement of Interdisciplinary English Talents*

Social market is a massive drive to the higher education reforms. The demand ranks of undergraduates goes "Business (50%) > Management > (36.6%) > Translation (27.5%) > Law (11.3%) > Literature (8.8%)" according to the investigation of social demands for the foreign language graduates (Wang Lifei, 2013). Social markets pose demands of interdisciplinary cultivations of undergraduates, "solid foundation" of professional knowledge in English Language, "specific" knowledge and skills of international law and "high quality" of interdisciplinary talents. The demands for cultivation of

English majors are even higher with the social development and international interactions.

## 2. The Cultivation Model of Interdisciplinary English Majors

### A. *"Foreign Language + Professional" Model*

The concept of interdisciplinary development is the steady trend of the development of English majors since purely English majors cannot cater to the demands of social market and international communications. There is a continual shift from the singleness to multi-interdisciplinary educations, thus arises the cultivating model of "English + Economic and Trade/Commerce/Law/Tourism/Public Relations /Management /Culture... Most colleges in China have changed the traditional single focus on English to multi-dimensional forms adopting the integrated model of "Foreign + Professional" or "Professional+ Foreign", so as to expand students' knowledge, to improve their abilities of application, adaptation and competition.

### B. *The Reference of Various Current Models of Interdisciplinary English Majors in Key Universities in China*

According to the social demand for high-quality foreign language undergraduates/graduates, domestic colleges are undergoing a new round of teaching reforms for English majors under the impetus of higher education reforms. They have provided the important reference of experience, whose similar feature is on the basis of characteristics in each of their universities and on the stress of the professional features.

The current online investigation of reforms in English departments in universities of law or of non law indicates that reforms of English majors in English departments unanimously highlight their unique features based on the solid foundation of language skills and of the wide range of knowledge. Beihang University, for example, has established Translation Department and so is characterized as translation of aerospace science and technology. The English Major in College of Diplomacy displays the features of foreign affairs in its curriculum settings. Besides, the college of foreign language translation is empowered independent recruitment of students, mainly in the service of foreign direction. The English Department in Xian Jiaotong University offers sub-departments like English language and literature, business English, Medical English and bilingual sections such as English-French, English-Russian, and English-German.

Beijing Sport University specializes physical instructions in English, with eminent professional characters.

Southwest University of Political Science and Law opens English Majors of Law and of Economic and Trade. Northwest University of Politics and Law have offered Legal English Professions and established special section for Legal English. These two schools characterized in Legal English have achieved great results in both instruction and academic researches. This investigations show that English Major Education in most colleges or universities is of striking features and they have set up new majors paralleled with the major of English language and literature. Others have integrated professional curriculum with English majors. English majors all have obvious and direct training goals which are specified in students cultivating with school characteristics. The most representative ones are Southwest University of Political Science and Law and Northwest University of Politics and Law. Each stresses Majors of Law and of Economic and Trade, and Legal English respectively. Their undergraduates of legal English are quite strong in competition in employment market. Majors of legal English in Southwest University of Political Science and Law, for instance, enable their students to be engaged in international law and in foreign economics and trade. The training scheme and curriculum setting illustrate the variety and specification of English majors in most colleges and universities in China.

The reference of current models in cultivating English majors in China offers us rich examples and resources. We hold that the reforms of English majors in foreign language departments should be deeply rooted in the preponderant discipline and should take full advantage of top teaching resources like law and business. We are to combine legal English with translation, English with law to establish in modelling compound personnel. The course establishment focuses on specialty education objective, and add interdisciplinary of English and Law or Business, to promote the all-round disciplinary construction with English professional characteristics.

### **3. The Renovation of English Majors in Our University---The Primary Renovation**

#### *A. Credit System Instruction*

Credit system instruction offers a platform for interdisciplinary English undergraduates in our university (China University of Political Science and Law, CUPL in short). The English Department of CUPL started credit system instruction in 2003, with independent selection of curriculum, independent learning, self design and students' evaluation of teachers yearly. This system is of vast advantages to students and teachers. English Department has been practicing double major systems in bachelor education, offering undergraduates to continue a second major—major in law after the accomplishments and qualification of all the professional courses required in the first major. This stage is of great advantages to students for they can have systemic legal

studies based on their linguistic advantages, making them interdisciplinary in English and Law.

Credit system instruction has given full play to teachers and students as well. The resources integrity of interdisciplinary curriculum has increased flexibility of students in courses selection. Moreover, our department has added various legal English courses which are of practical basis to the cultivation of English-Law compound talents.

#### *B. Joint Model of Undergraduates' and Graduates' Cultivating*

The joint model is an essential step for the boosting of compound talents in English and law. Since 2003, English Department of CUPL has initiated joint running of schools with Law Schools of China and the United States, and of China and Germany, promoting a "5+2" model. Five years for two bachelors study in English and law is followed by two years of master study in Law Schools of China and the United States or in Law Schools of China and Germany. Therefore, students have furthered their professional proficiency in two majors and thus they can carry on occupation in foreign-related legal professions, in foreign-related lawyer notaries, in translation of foreign references and in English teaching.

### **4. The Cultivating Model of Interdisciplinary English Majors in My University**

#### *A. Legal English Major---the Target Training Mode*

The training aim of English (legal English) is to cultivate high qualified undergraduates with strong ability of critical thinking, of innovation, of practical operation, and of social adaptation. They are bound to be of all-round development, of high humanities, of proficient English language skills and skilled professional knowledge in English language and literature, and basic knowledge in law and in legal economics and trade. They can perform the work in all kinds of professions as government, foreign affairs, public security, customs frontier, civil aviation, tourism, foreign-related institutes, foreign-related law firm institutions, higher education, and research institute. In all, English major (Legal English direction) sticks to the basis of English major instruction combined English with law, implementing the cultivating model of "English + Law"

#### *B. Translation (Legal Translation) Major--- the Target Training Mode*

Translation (Legal Translation) is to cultivate interdisciplinary undergraduates of legal translation. They aim to be familiar with legal systems both home and abroad, and skilful in language transformation between language and legal language. They are of flexibility in dealing with foreign-related legal affairs, and in legal translation.

The period of bachelor study can enable the undergraduates to master domestic and foreign legal systems, to translate legal language skilfully, and to write native-like foreign-related legal instruments. Translation major (Legal Translation) is translation-based instruction in combination

with legal professional knowledge. This cultivating is instructive in helping students master accurately the linguistic features of legal English, and analyse legal language in grammar and logic aspects. In this way they can grasp certain translation theory and strategy in legal language, and capable of legal English translation. Undergraduates are expected to get employments in legal departments, enterprises, foreign-related law firms, translational corporations and etc. Their curriculum aims to train translation undergraduates of all-over development, and to cultivate critical thinking with special focuses.

## **5. Conclusion**

The paper is based on the current educational policies of English major reforms and their cultivating models in colleges with similar college bases to CUPL. This provides suitable theoretical and practical references to the target renovation in the English department in our university. We are aimed at two models in this interdisciplinary training of undergraduates: English (Legal English) Major and Translation (Legal Translation) Major. Through this renovation, we are to deepen the key notions of diversity and characteristics in English major reform in CUPL.

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