

# Research on the Current Situation and Countermeasures of College Sports English Teaching from the Perspective of ESP

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**Abstract:**

*Since the success of the Beijing Olympic Games, the internationalization of China's sports industry has developed significantly. The labor market has an increasingly urgent demand for compound talents who have both sports professional knowledge and foreign language ability. From the perspective of English for Special Purpose(ESP), taking Shanghai University of Sport and Shenyang Sport University as examples, this paper used the methods of literature review and investigation to collect data, investigated the current situation of Sports English curriculum in these two universities, analyzed the problems existing in the curriculum development, and put forward the corresponding countermeasures. The purpose of this paper is to provide reasonable suggestions on Sports English curriculum and teaching in colleges and universities. and cultivate more excellent sports English talents for the society, so as to make up for the lack of compound talents with sports professional knowledge and foreign language ability in the labor market.*

**Key words:**

*ESP Sports English English teaching*

## 1. Introduction

Under the historical background of the new era, sports has become an important business card for China's foreign exchanges. The "Thirteenth Five-Year Plan for Sports Development" promulgated by the State Sports General Administration also proposes to take the opportunity of preparing for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games and participating in major sports events to strengthen the right to speak in international sports affairs and speed up the training of sports foreign affairs talents. In this process, English teaching plays an important role.

Sports English major is an English major with international sports characteristics set up to meet the needs of the society for professional English talents. Aiming at cultivating compound sports English talents, sports English major was successively set up in 10 sports colleges in recent years. However, problems like insufficiency of sports and English integration, poor pertinence and timeliness of course books are demonstrated in the process of development. From the perspective of English for Special Purpose(ESP), taking Shanghai University of Sport and Shenyang Sport University as examples, this paper investigated the current situation of Sports English major, analyzed the problems and put forward the corresponding countermeasures according to the existing problems.

This study would serve as a reference for the perfection of ESP course construction, improvement of teaching methods, improvement of ESP teaching materials and preliminary establishment of ESP course evaluation system.

### 1.1 ESP

As a common language in international communication, English plays an increasingly important role. The labor market is also increasing for talents who are proficient in English communication. In the past, people learned English only for the exchange of

language and culture, or for English learning and teaching. But now the demand for English talents is diversified. Foreign affairs, education, law, news, tourism, science and technology and other fields need more English talents. This puts forward higher requirements for English teaching. Therefore, the theory of English for Special Purpose came into being.

English for Special Purpose(ESP) is an important branch of Applied Linguistics, including English for academic purposes, English for professional purposes and English for occupational purposes. Its goal is to set up English courses for Special professional needs and help learners master the English skills of effective communication in the professional field.

### **1.2 Sports English**

With the increasing number of sports events at home and abroad, the international exchange of sports industry is more and more frequent. The demand for English talents in sports industry is increasing day by day. The talents who only have sports professional knowledge but lack of foreign language communication ability or only have foreign language communication ability but lack of sports professional knowledge can not meet the needs of the development of sports industry. The labor market is in urgent need of compound talents with sports professional knowledge and foreign language ability. To solve this problem, Sports English major came into being. Sports English major is a major set up in Colleges and universities to make up for the lack of compound talents with both sports professional knowledge and foreign language ability in the labor market. In a narrow sense, Sports English is a kind of language used in sports events or sports activities with English as a communication tool. In a broad sense, Sports English is a kind of language, which has a special form of expression in all sports related activities.

## 2. Current Situation of College Sports English Teaching

Sports English is still in its infancy in China. It has been paid close attention by experts at home and abroad. In recent years, several colleges and universities in China have set up Sports English major, but their experience is still insufficient. Taking Shanghai University of Sport and Shenyang Sport University as examples, to summarize the current situation of college Sports English teaching .

### 2.1 Shanghai University of Sport

Shanghai University of Sport is one of the earliest institutions of higher learning in China to cultivate sports English talents. The staff structure of Sports English major is reasonable, all of them are highly educated. At present, there are 11 full-time teachers, including 1 Professor, 5 associate professors and 9 doctors. At the same time, employ 2-3 foreign teachers to teach all the year round. Reasonable staff structure ensures students' effective learning. This major adopts the teaching mode of combining English skills with sports professional knowledge to cultivate compound English talents with solid English and sports professional knowledge. Sports English major of Shanghai University of Sport mainly teaches: *Introduction to Sports, Sports Knowledge, Sports English Reading, Sports English Audio-visual Speaking, Comprehensive English, English Translation, English Interpretation, British and American Culture, General Situation of Britain and America, Sports Economics, Sports Event Management, Sports Event Market Development, Sports News Interview, News Writing, Research Methods and Thesis Writing*. The purpose is to cultivate senior professionals with solid English foundation and rich sports knowledge, and make up for the lack of compound talents with both sports knowledge and foreign language ability in the labor market. This major aims to develop

in an all-round way senior professionals with solid English foundation and extensive sports professional knowledge, who can be engaged in interpretation and translation, organization and management in foreign affairs, press and publication, education, sports media, domestic and foreign sports institutions and competitive sports events. The employment rate of graduates of this major is very high, and most of them are employed in sports and related industries.

## **2.2 Shenyang Sport University**

In 2004, Shenyang Sport University set up Sports English major and began to recruit Sports English major students. Sports English major is set up as an undergraduate major, which has a good development prospect. The professional teachers all are high-educated and they all have solid professional knowledge. At present, there are 25 full-time teachers, including 2 professors, 6 associate professors, 16 lecturers and 1 teaching assistant. Shenyang Sport University regularly invited experts from other sports colleges at home and abroad to give lectures, strengthened cooperation and exchanges between sports colleges at home and abroad, and learned from other sports colleges' school running experience and management system, so as to promote the better development of the major. Sports English major of Shenyang Sport University mainly teaches: *Basic English, Advanced English, Selected Readings of English Newspapers and Periodicals, Audio Visual Speaking, Practical English Writing, Introduction to English Linguistics, General Situation of Britain and America, Sports English ,Introduction to Sports, Translation Theory and Practice.*

The major of Sports English cultivates students who have good English communication ability and sports theory knowledge. The purpose is to cultivate talents who have the ability to use English, master sports professional knowledge, and be able to engage in

sports and related fields. Most of the graduates of Sports English major in Shenyang Sport University work in public and commercial sports service agencies, sports intermediary consulting agencies, news media units, sports administrative departments and schools. Most of them are engaged in sports and related industries with high employment rate.

### **3. Problems in College Sports English Teaching**

At present, as a new English major, Sports English major is in the stage of development. It carries out a short time in colleges and universities. Although it has made some achievements, there are still many problems in college Sports English teaching.

#### **3.1 Unreasonable Curriculum Arrangement**

In Shanghai University of Sport, from the perspective of curriculum arrangement, the curriculum is unreasonable. First of all, Sports English major of Shanghai University of Sport lacks the cultivation of cross-cultural ability. In the existing courses, there is no course about the cultivation of cross-cultural ability. Because the purpose of this major is to train professionals engaged in interpretation, translation, organization and management of foreign affairs, press and publication, education, sports media, domestic and foreign sports institutions and competitive sports events. As a major of Sports English in sports colleges, Sports English is different from other common English majors. Because in sports events, there are very obvious cultural characteristics between countries. Therefore, the lack of sports cross-cultural ability training will inevitably lead to students' misunderstanding of sports events, and even lead to unnecessary misunderstanding when communicating with other countries. Secondly, the curriculum of Sports English major in Shanghai University of Sport emphasizes theory over practice. It mainly imparts

professional knowledge and does not pay attention to students' practical ability.

In Shenyang Sport University, from the perspective of curriculum arrangement, the curriculum is unreasonable. Firstly, Sports English major of Shenyang Sport University lacks the cultivation of oral English communicative competence. Oral English communicative competence is a very important skill for college students. Everyone should learn and master it. Especially for students of English major, most of them will be engaged in English related industries in the future, which is inseparable from the usage and communication of English. If the oral English communication ability is low and can not meet the requirements, it will have a great impact on employment, and also cause unnecessary trouble and misunderstanding in English communication. And secondly the curriculum does not reflect the needs of society. The goal of Sports English major is to cultivate professional English talents who can use English to serve sports industry. The curriculum of Sports English is single, only adding a few sports courses on the basis of the original English major courses, which lacks the integration of English and sports. This is not conducive to students' mastery of professional knowledge.

### **3.2 Lack of Professional Teachers in Sports English Major**

In Shanghai University of Sport, there are 11 full-time teachers, including 1 Professor, 5 associate professors and 9 doctors. At the same time, three foreign teachers are employed throughout the year. And in Shenyang Sport University, there are 25 full-time teachers, including 2 professors, 6 associate professors, 18 lecturers and 1 teaching assistant in Shenyang Sport University. From the existing number of teaching staff, both the number and professional level of the teaching staff of Sports English major in Shanghai University of Sport and Shenyang Sport University are insufficient. And also most of the teachers of English major in Shanghai University of Sport and Shenyang Sport University

are translators of various sports events or former public English teachers of sports universities or teachers who graduated from normal English major. Some of them only know sports professional knowledge but lack of English skills, or only master English skills but lack of sports professional knowledge. All of them are not graduated from Sports English major. And also have no experience of Sports English learning, so they can't fully master the theoretical knowledge of Sports English and they have no special teaching methods and models set for Sports English major. Therefore, these teachers can not meet the needs of setting up Sports English course. Therefore, the professional level and quantity of teachers of Sport English major in Shanghai University of Sport and Shenyang Sport University are insufficient.

#### **4. Solutions in College Sports English Teaching**

In view of the problems in the teaching of Sports English major, it provides scientific methods and reasonable suggestions for optimizing the curriculum and teaching of Sports English in colleges and universities.

##### **4.1 Adding the Corresponding Sports English Courses**

In view of the unreasonable curriculum of Shanghai University of Sport, there are several solutions as follows: First of all, they should increase intercultural communication courses, make intercultural communication courses become a compulsory course for Sports English majors. It can also set up activities related to intercultural communication. Through the practice and feedback of real communication scenarios, they can be familiar with strategies and methods in the process of intercultural communication, improve the intercultural communication ability and expand students' thinking ability. Secondly, the curriculum design of Sports English major in Shanghai University of Sport lacks the

combination of theory and practice, and does not apply theoretical knowledge to practice. While learning professional knowledge, they should also pay attention to students' practical ability. They should offer courses related to the application of English and sports in real life. For example, increase sports English exchange class. In the classroom, the teacher arranges a communication task about the application of sports English, let the students cooperate in groups, complete the group task assigned by the teacher, and finally make a group presentation in the class.

In view of the unreasonable curriculum of Shenyang Sport University, there are several solutions as follows: First of all, it is necessary to set up oral English courses to train students' oral ability and encourage them to communicate more in English. If possible, an English speaking club can be set up. In English speaking club, they can carry out many kinds of activities, such as sitcom performance, speech activities, etc. to improve students' oral English. At the same time, professional teachers can be employed to guide and correct errors, so as to improve students' oral English. Secondly, they should strengthen the combination of sports professional knowledge and English professional knowledge. At the same time of cultivating students' English language skills and knowledge, we should increase the penetration of sports knowledge.

#### **4.2 Promoting the Quality of Teachers**

As a teacher of Sports English major, in addition to mastering English knowledge, they should also master sports professional knowledge. In view of the lacking professional teachers in Shanghai University of Sport and Shenyang Sport University, Teachers can improve their professional ability through the following methods: First of all, these two universities should organize extracurricular learning activities to train the teachers of Sports English major. Secondly, teachers in Sports English major should improve their

professional quality and learn English and sports knowledge in their spare time. they can learn through teaching research groups. In addition, teachers should learn from other teachers' teaching methods, keep pace with the times, improve their teaching level and change their teaching mode according to the needs of students, so as to make it in line with the development of students.

## **5. Conclusion**

From the perspective of English for Special Purpose, this paper took Shanghai University of Sport and Shenyang Sport University as examples to investigate the development of Sports English major, and found out various problems in the construction of Sports English major. According to these problems, the corresponding solutions were put forward. The purpose is to solve the problems in the construction of Sports English major and optimize the curriculum of Sports English major.

Finally, I hope that all sports colleges and universities can seize the critical period of the development of Sports English major, improve the teaching quality, teaching level and the overall quality of students in sports colleges and universities to cultivate more sports English talents for the society and the country. Although the major of sports English is now in the stage of development, it has great development potential. It will cultivate many sports English talents and inject new vitality into the labor market.

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