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Research on the Deep Integration of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education with Professional Education Driven by Academic Competitions: A Case Study of the Business English Major

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Abstract:
In the context of the deep integration of the global economy and China's active promotion of an innovation-driven development strategy, Business English education needs to deeply integrate with innovation and entrepreneurship education to cultivate interdisciplinary talents with language proficiency, business acumen and innovative spirit. Driven by academic competitions, this paper explores teaching models and practical approaches for integrating Business English education with innovation and entrepreneurship education. Currently, this integration faces challenges such as a fragmented curriculum system, traditional teaching methods, insufficient teacher capacity, low student engagement, and limited practical platforms. To address these issues, this paper proposes a "competition-integrated teaching" model, which is systematically designed across five dimensions: teaching objectives, content, methods, organizational forms, and evaluation systems, while constructing a multi-dimensional learning ecosystem of "classroom + competition + enterprise". Practice demonstrates that this model effectively enhances students' competencies, though further optimization is needed in course articulation and practical implementation. It is suggested to promote the widespread application of the reform outcomes through a "local pilot - system optimization - comprehensive promotion" pathway, thereby providing a reference paradigm for cultivating interdisciplinary talents in the new era.

Keywords:
Academic competitions, Innovation and entrepreneurship education, Business English, Deep integration

1 Introduction

Innovation is the core engine of social progress. Strengthening innovation and entrepreneurship education and cultivating innovative talents have become key tasks for colleges and universities in supporting the national innovation-driven development strategy. In 2015, the General Office of the State Council issued the Implementation Opinions on Deepening the Reform of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education in Colleges

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and Universities, which explicitly requires universities to integrate innovation and entrepreneurship education into their professional training systems and implement it throughout the entire talent cultivation process. The document emphasizes that universities should align their talent cultivation objectives with innovation and entrepreneurship education goals to achieve deep integration between professional education and innovation and entrepreneurship education.

Currently, China is deeply integrated into the global economy, and the demand for Business English talents with innovative capabilities is growing increasingly urgent. An in-depth study of the integration paths between innovation and entrepreneurship education and Business English education will not only expand the scope of relevant theoretical research but also provide new insights for practical applications. By assessing the current state of integration, analyzing challenges, and clarifying reform directions, this study can offer references for educational authorities to formulate targeted policies and improve support mechanisms, thereby effectively enhancing the quality of Business English talent cultivation.

In particular, building and empirically validating a deeply integrated teaching model driven by academic competitions will significantly advance the innovative development of Business English majors.

2 Literature review

In China, theoretical and practical explorations have been conducted on the integration of professional education and innovation and entrepreneurship education, yielding fruitful results. The organic integration of innovation and entrepreneurship education with professional education is an important approach for colleges and universities to cultivate innovative talents needed by society. The relationship between the two has evolved from initial disarray to differentiation and then to organic integration, forming the necessity and feasibility of their synergy (Wang et al.[1]).

Currently, the integration of innovation and entrepreneurship education with disciplinary education faces multifaceted challenges. In terms of conceptual understanding, some teachers and students lack sufficient awareness of the importance of such integration, leading to cognitive biases. At the curriculum level, the curriculum system lacks organic integration, and content updates lag behind industry demands. The underdeveloped practical platforms fail to meet students' practical demands, and industry-academia cooperation lacks depth. The faculty lacks teachers with both professional knowledge and innovation-entrepreneurship guidance skills.As for institutional mechanisms, poor coordination among management departments and ineffective policy implementation fail to provide robust support for integration, significantly hindering its progress (Lu et al.[2]; Chen[3]; Zhu et al.[4]; Chen et al.[5]).

Facing the challenges in integrating innovation and entrepreneurship education with professional education, scholars have explored the mechanisms of such integration from multiple perspectives, including curriculum design, faculty development, educational philosophy, and university-industry collaboration (Chen[3]; Liu et al.[6]). Some scholars have proposed integration models and pathways for combining innovation and entrepreneurship education with professional education, based on theories such as coordinated governance, the Triple Helix model, constructivism, the CDIO concept, and the "Double First-Class" initiative(Li et al.[7]; Peng et al.[8]; Fu et al.[9]; Huang [4]; Zhu et al.[10]; Dai et al.[11]). Furthermore, scholars have investigated

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integration approaches specifically designed for local universities, particular disciplines, and individual courses, offering comprehensive analyses of practical implementation methods (Ni[12]; Yi et al.[13]).

In developed countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, Singapore, and Japan, innovation and entrepreneurship education has a longer history of development. Through years of exploration and practice, these nations have accumulated relatively mature experience. These valuable experiences are worthy of in-depth study and reference (Chen[14]).

Taking the United States as an example, its universities have established a comprehensive and mature system for integrating entrepreneurship education with professional education. In terms of educational philosophy and objectives, these institutions adhere to principles of inclusivity and diversity, fully respecting students' individuality and diverse developmental needs. They aim to cultivate well-rounded talents with both solid professional knowledge and exceptional innovation and entrepreneurship capabilities. The curriculum system features a distinctive multi-layered design where loose joint curricula initially bridge entrepreneurship and professional studies, with embedded courses systematically infusing entrepreneurial elements into disciplinary content to subtly foster entrepreneurial mindsets, while cross-integrated and interdisciplinary courses break down traditional disciplinary barriers to significantly broaden students' intellectual horizons and integrative competencies. Organizational models exhibit similar diversity. Approaches like central diffusion, platform coordination, and centralized coordination are flexibly adopted based on institutional contexts and strategic goals, effectively advancing the integration process. Additionally, U.S. universities have developed a diversified faculty structure where full-time entrepreneurship faculty provide systematic theoretical instruction based on disciplinary expertise, integrated faculty effectively combine professional knowledge with entrepreneurial practice, and practitioner faculty leverage substantial industry experience to deliver practical guidance (Yin et al[15]).

Although domestic scholars have explored innovation and entrepreneurship education and professional education to some extent, few studies have examined the integration of innovation and entrepreneurship education with Business English education from the perspective of disciplinary competitions. While scholars such as Bian[16], Du[17], Huang[18], Yan[19], Wang[20], Cui[21] and Hu[22] have made valuable contributions to the research on cultivating interdisciplinary talents in Business English, the trends of globalization, China's growing imperative to integrate into the global economy, and the national strategy for innovation-driven development have all presented new imperatives for integrating innovation and entrepreneurship education with Business English education.

Yi[23] investigated innovation and entrepreneurship education for Business English majors from the perspective of disciplinary competitions. While this research offers new conceptual directions and practical approaches to the field to some extent, it fails to thoroughly analyze the key issue of how disciplinary competitions can effectively drive innovation and entrepreneurship education and achieve deep integration with Business English education. This limitation reduces the study's practical value in providing concrete, actionable recommendations for education and teaching reform, ultimately falling short of addressing the actual needs of advancing innovation and entrepreneurship education for Business English majors in higher education institutions.

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3 Current Status of Integrating Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education with Business English Education

At present, as "Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation" education continues to advance, integrating innovation and entrepreneurship education into the Business English major has become a key focus and significant trend in higher education reform. However, analysis of questionnaire data from Business English majors at Jiangxi Normal University reveals persistent challenges in this integration process, including a fragmented curriculum system, teaching methods lacking innovative vitality, insufficient professional competence among faculty, low student participation enthusiasm, and limited practice platforms. The specific manifestations are as follows:

3.1 Divergence Between Disciplinary Competitions and Business English Professional Knowledge in a Fragmented Curriculum System

The survey reveals that while 61.18% of Business English students acknowledge some correlation between academic competitions and their discipline, merely 29.41% perceive a strong connection, highlighting a systemic disconnect stemming from the curriculum's overemphasis on conventional linguistic and business knowledge at the expense of innovation-oriented interdisciplinary training. Specifically, professional courses mainly focus on traditional knowledge such as language skills and business theory, while the cultivation of interdisciplinary knowledge and practical ability necessary for innovation and entrepreneurship has not received enough attention and is in a marginalized position. This separation of the curriculum system makes it difficult for students to effectively and flexibly use the professional knowledge they have learned when participating in the discipline competition, thus weakening the promotion and feedback effect of the discipline competition on professional learning. Therefore, it is necessary to reconstruct the curriculum system in the future, such as adding cross-cutting courses such as "Business Innovation Case Analysis" and "Coss-border E-commerce Entrepreneurship Simulation", so as to strengthen the synergy between disciplinary competitions and the curriculum system.

3.2 The Limiting Effect of Traditional Teaching Methods on Innovative Thinking for Business English Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education Integration

At the teaching methodology level, 58.82% of students consider the current integration of innovation and entrepreneurship education with professional education to be "ineffective", while only 20% perceive it as "highly integrated". The survey reveals that classroom instruction remains dominated by teachers' one-way knowledge dissemination, with underutilized interactive methods such as case-based teaching and project-driven learning. Despite the inherently practical nature of Business English, traditional teaching mode fail to adequately cultivate students' critical thinking and innovation ability. For instance, in courses like Business Negotiation and Foreign Trade Correspondence, most instructors rely solely on textbook content without simulating real-world business scenarios or incorporating competition projects. Therefore, it is necessary to promote the reform of teaching methods, introduce the mechanism of "promoting learning by competition", and use the tasks of discipline competitions, such as writing business plans, designing international marketing programs, etc., to encourage students to take the initiative to integrate language skills with business thinking.

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3.3 Urgent Construction of a Dual-Qualified Teacher Team for Business English Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education Integration

Teacher competency is the core constraint hindering the effective integration of business English innovation and entrepreneurship education and professional education. According to survey data, 83.92% of students reported that teachers need to update their teaching approaches, while 90.91% believed teachers lack practical skills. This reflects that most teachers remain focused on theoretical instruction, with insufficient practical work experience or competition guidance, and they are failing to meet the demands of innovation and entrepreneurship education. For example, when guiding students in competitions like "Internet+" or "Challenge Cup", teachers often demonstrate inadequate expertise in key areas such as business model design and roadshow techniques. The solution lies in accelerating the development of dual-qualified teachers. This can be achieved through school-enterprise partnerships that enable teachers to gain corporate work experience, combined with incentive mechanisms to encourage participation in innovation and entrepreneurship training or industry certification programs. These measures would enhance teachers' practical teaching capabilities.

3.4 Students' Lack of Enthusiasm for Academic Competitions

According to the survey, only 17.65% of students expressed a very positive attitude toward academic competitions, while 31.76% remained neutral. Several factors contribute to this low participation rate. On the one hand, many students fail to recognize the benefits of these competitions, with some believing they are unrelated to employment prospects; on the other hand, the competition formats are relatively limited. Most Business English competitions focus solely on language skills, while innovation and entrepreneurship competitions attract only 31.76% participation, indicating a failure to address students' diverse interests. In view of this situation, colleges and universities need to improve both the publicity and incentive mechanisms for academic competitions. Specific measures could include incorporating competition results into the credit recognition system and prioritizing recommendations for award-winning students to intern at cooperative enterprises, thereby enhancing student participation motivation.

3.5 The Imbalance of Limited Resource Allocation in Practice Platform Restricts the Integration Depth of Business English Innovation and Entrepreneurship education

Although 71.76% of students acknowledge the value of academic competitions in enhancing professional competencies, access to practical opportunities remains highly unequal. Most Business English training platforms in educational institutions are confined to conventional classrooms, while cross-disciplinary innovation and entrepreneurship practice bases suffer from acute resource scarcity. Furthermore, school-enterprise collaboration projects have limited coverage, with only a small fraction of students securing internship or project incubation opportunities through competitions. To address these issues, future initiatives should integrate on-campus and off-campus resources. For instance, institutions could collaborate with cross-border e-commerce platforms to develop practical projects, which would expand student participation in hands-on learning experiences.

In general, the integration of innovation and entrepreneurship education with Business English education remains at an exploratory stage, confronting structural contradictions in curriculum design, teaching

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methodologies, faculty development, student engagement, and practical implementation. To overcome these challenges, higher education institutions must initiate reforms through top-down design, establishing a trinity ecosystem integrating "curriculum-competition-practice" components. This requires strengthening school-enterprise partnerships and facilitating faculty transformation, ultimately achieving the dual enhancement of Business English students' innovation capabilities and professional competitiveness.

4 Constructing a Teaching Model Through Deep Integration of Business English Education and Competition-Driven Innovation-Entrepreneurship Education

In the current era of continuously deepening higher education reform and vigorously developing innovation and entrepreneurship education, discipline competitions, with their unique advantages, have become a key means to cultivate students' practical operational abilities and innovative thinking. These competitions have established a practical platform for the deep integration of Business English professional education and innovation and entrepreneurship education. To construct a teaching model driven by discipline competitions, it is necessary to conduct comprehensive and systematic planning across multiple dimensions, including teaching objectives, teaching content, teaching methods, teaching organizational structures, and teaching evaluation systems, thereby promoting the coordinated development of professional education and innovation and entrepreneurship education.

4.1 Defining Teaching Objectives with a Competency-Based Focus

The primary task of constructing the teaching model is to clarify the teaching objectives—that is, to fully cultivate students' Business English professional competence, innovation and entrepreneurship literacy, and teamwork spirit, driven by discipline competitions. Specifically, the teaching objectives can be categorized into three levels.At the knowledge level, by participating in discipline competition projects, students deepen their understanding of Business English professional knowledge, including but not limited to international trade terms, business negotiation skills, and cross-cultural communication. Additionally, they should integrate innovation and entrepreneurship-related knowledge, such as business model design, market analysis and project management.At the ability level, the focus lies on enhancing students' language application skills, innovative thinking, and practical abilities, ensuring they can effectively translate professional knowledge into problem-solving skills. For example, they should be able to successfully complete competition tasks such as writing business plans, delivering product roadshows, or conducting simulated business negotiations. At the competency level, the focus is on cultivating students' teamwork spirit, stress resilience, and professional ethics, enabling them to develop a proactive learning attitude and entrepreneurial mindset through competition participation.

4.2 Teaching Content Optimization for Organic Integration of Discipline Competitions and Professional Courses

In designing teaching content, it is essential to move beyond the traditional Business English curriculum that focuses solely on language skills training and to deeply integrate discipline competition projects with

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professional course content. Specifically, a modular course design can be adopted, dividing the Business English course into three components: the Language Skills Module, the Business Practice Module, and the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Module. The Business Practice Module can be closely aligned with requirements from competitions such as the National Business Elite Challenge for College Students and International Trade Competitions. This module should incorporate carefully designed simulation tasks, including writing English business plans and simulating international business negotiations. Simultaneously, case teaching should be integrated with competition projects by selecting outstanding past competition entries as teaching materials. Through in-depth analysis of their successful elements, students can learn from these examples and apply the insights innovatively. For instance, in the International Business Communication course, authentic cases from cross-border e-commerce competitions can be introduced to enable students to analyze market positioning and marketing strategies. Additionally, emphasis should be placed on interdisciplinary knowledge integration, incorporating content from management, marketing, and related fields to help students build a comprehensive knowledge system. This approach provides a solid foundation for both competition participation and entrepreneurial practice.

4.3 Innovative Teaching Methods for Enhancing Student Engagement

To achieve the established instructional objectives, adopting diversified teaching methodologies is essential to emphasize student-centered learning. The project-based learning (PBL) teaching method proves particularly effective for structuring course content into specific tasks centered around competition projects. For instance, when assigning a "cross-border product English promotion plan" project, students engage in comprehensive processes including market research, data analysis, and strategic planning, with instructors providing scaffolded guidance and formative feedback. Collaborative Group Learning is equally vital, as it effectively simulates the team division structure used in competitions. Students are assigned differentiated roles such as project manager, market analyst, and copywriting planner, working collectively to complete tasks while developing essential communication and leadership competencies. Furthermore, scenario simulation and role-playing represent valuable pedagogical approaches. In Business Negotiation courses, instructors may design authentic competition scenarios where students alternately assume the roles of buyers and sellers, conducting negotiations in English. This methodology significantly enhances both linguistic application skills and adaptive capabilities.

4.4 Optimizing Instructional Organization to Enhance Practical Learning

Teaching institutions should emphasize the organic integration of theory and practice, striving to build a multi-dimensional "classroom + competition + enterprise". First, bridging in-class and extracurricular activities is essential. In the classroom, instructors should deliver knowledge and skill-based training, while outside class, students can participate in competition preparation, corporate visits, or entrepreneurial workshops – broadening their perspectives and enriching their learning experience. Second, industry-academia collaboration should be enhanced. Inviting corporate mentors to guide student competitions provides access to real-world business cases. Outstanding competition projects may then be recommended for corporate implementation or incubation programs, enabling students to apply their knowledge in practical settings. Additionally, a tiered competition talent development system should be established. A progressive training framework – from "junior interest groups" to "senior competition teams" – ensures sustained student participation,

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allowing continuous skill development and experience accumulation throughout the process.

4.5 Developing a Rigorous Teaching Evaluation System

The conventional single-examination evaluation approach fails to comprehensively and accurately assess students' overall competencies, necessitating the establishment of a multidimensional assessment system. This system integrates three key components: (1) formative assessment (50% weighting) focusing on students' progressive performance in competition projects, including task completion quality, team contributions, and learning documentation; (2) summative assessment (30% weighting) evaluating final competition results, project presentations, and defense performance; and (3) competency and attitude evaluation (20% weighting) conducted through instructor observations and peer assessments to measure innovative capability, collaborative spirit, and professional attitude. This integrated framework enables more holistic and objective evaluation of both learning outcomes and comprehensive abilities.

5 Teaching Practice Through Deep Integration of Business English Education and Competition-Driven Innovation-Entrepreneurship Education

The teaching practice of deep integration between innovation and entrepreneurship education and Business English education, driven by academic competitions, does not yield results through single-factor effects. Rather, it constitutes a complex achievement system formed through the coordinated efforts and mutual influence of three key stakeholders implementing the "competition-education integration" model: curriculum design, faculty members, and students.

At the curriculum level, the integration of academic competition elements has led to significant changes in both course content and teaching methods. Taking the Business English course International Trade Practice as an example, the incorporation of competitive components has made the instruction more dynamic and practice-oriented. The teaching approach has evolved from a traditional knowledge-delivery model to an innovative project-based format, where competition projects facilitate active learning and practical application of knowledge. This transformation has established a solid foundation for enhancing teaching effectiveness.

Teachers play a crucial role in this process, serving not only as knowledge transmitters but also as competition mentors. While guiding students through academic competitions, instructors must continuously update their knowledge base and enhance their practical coaching skills to effectively address various challenges encountered during competitions. By evaluating students' competition performance, teachers can accurately assess their knowledge mastery and application abilities, enabling targeted adjustments to teaching strategies that better align with students' actual needs. As direct participants in this teaching practice, students' experiences and achievements under the "competition-teaching integration" model are particularly significant. Through competition participation, students apply classroom-acquired knowledge to real-world scenarios, significantly improving their professional competencies while developing teamwork skills, innovative thinking, and problem-solving abilities. This approach fully stimulates students' learning motivation and initiative, making their learning outcomes a key metric for evaluating teaching effectiveness.

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Teachers employ multidimensional assessment methods to evaluate student learning outcomes through a comprehensive framework encompassing competition results, classroom performance, homework completion, as well as student self-assessments and peer evaluations. These assessment outcomes enable instructors to propose targeted improvements for both course content and teaching method. For instance, when students exhibit deficiencies in competition negotiation components, teachers respond by intensifying relevant skill training and refining instructional methods through case studies and simulation exercises. Questionnaire results demonstrate the significant impact of the “competition-education integration” model, revealing that 71.76% of students reported enhanced Business English proficiency, 62.35% demonstrated improved innovation capabilities, 74.12% showed advancement in teamwork competencies, and 70.59% exhibited progress in problem-solving skills. Nevertheless, 74.12% of respondents indicated the need for further model refinement, particularly regarding curriculum content alignment (with 85.88% requesting competition case materials as teaching resources) and practical instruction reinforcement (as advocated by 74.12% of students for increased hands-on components).

Based on current practical outcomes and identified challenges, there is an urgent need to establish a dynamic and sustainable optimization mechanism to achieve the deep integration of innovation and entrepreneurship education with Business English education, driven by academic competitions. Through in-depth analysis of questionnaire feedback regarding curriculum alignment needs and the demand for enhanced practical components, efforts should focus on the following key aspects:

First, building upon the competition-education integration model successfully implemented in the International Trade Practice course, this study systematically examines its practical achievements. We particularly analyze the model’s core mechanism of “project-driven learning with competition-oriented guidance”, extracting its underlying principles and transferable components for broader application.

Second, this empirically validated model will be progressively extended to core courses such as Business English Translation and Business English Writing, establishing a competition-integrated framework across the entire Business English curriculum. This systematic implementation facilitates optimal resource allocation and comprehensive enhancement of educational outcomes.

Finally, by establishing an inter-institutional teaching reform alliance, we have created a platform for sharing and exchanging best practices. This optimized teaching model is now being extended to other Business English programs both within and beyond the province, generating widespread influence and serving as an exemplary demonstration of educational innovation.

This progressive reform path of " local pilot-system optimization-comprehensive promotion " can not only effectively solve the practical problem of the disconnection between current curriculum and practice, but also provide a replicable paradigm for cultivating compound talents with language ability, business literacy and innovative spirit in the new era, and promote the continuous innovation and development of business English education.

This progressive reform pathway which is characterized by local piloting, systemic optimization, and comprehensive implementation. It not only effectively addresses the current disconnection between curriculum and practice, but also establishes a replicable and scalable paradigm for cultivating interdisciplinary talents

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with language proficiency, business acumen, and innovative thinking in the new era. Ultimately, this framework drives continuous innovation and development in Business English education.

6 Suggestions on the Deep Integration of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education with Business English Education Driven by Academic Competitions

First, concerning curriculum content integration, survey feedback indicates that 85.88% of students proposed embedding competition cases into classroom instruction, acknowledging this would significantly enhance the learning experience. Consequently, we recommend introducing competition modules including simulated negotiations and cross-border e-commerce operations in courses such as International Trade Practice to enhance both practical relevance and interactive engagement. This approach enables students to systematically acquire theoretical knowledge while developing practical operational skills and teamwork competencies in simulated business environments, thus ensuring thorough preparation for their future careers.

Second, concerning teaching mode innovation, 74.12% of students in the current educational landscape confirmed the effectiveness of practice-oriented instruction and actively advocated for implementing innovative teaching models. These respondents strongly advocate for adopting innovative instructional models that systematically integrate project-based learning with structured group cooperation.

Third, regarding faculty development, diagnostic assessments reveal that 90.91 % of teachers have weak practical ability, practical measures must be taken to improve the overall quality of teachers. In order to achieve this goal, teachers' practical teaching ability can be strengthened in an all-round way through various ways such as industry-academia collaboration and dual-qualification training. The industry-academia collaboration will enable teachers to directly contact the cutting-edge knowledge and technologies, so as to better realize the organic combination of theory and practice, and improve the practicability and pertinence of teaching. At the same time, the dual-qualification initiative systematically cultivates educator cohorts with robust theoretical grounding and substantial field experience, ultimately improving their capacity to mentor students and foster engagement with innovative thinking.

Fourth, concerning incentive mechanisms, current data indicates that only 17.65% of students demonstrate "highly positive" participation attitudes. This necessitates establishing a comprehensive incentive framework incorporating, though not limited to competition credit equivalency systems and merit-based recognition for outstanding participants. These measures aim to significantly enhance student motivation across academic and practical activities, thereby fostering holistic development in both theoretical and applied learning domains.

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