

# Curriculum Design for English Major in Ethnic Colleges under the Background of Application Transformation

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## ABSTRACT

Curriculum design is the core of talent training program. In the context of the application transformation of local colleges and universities, the curriculum of English majors in ethnic college needs to be adjusted and updated timely and properly. This paper, first, analyzes the old curriculum designed in 2009 and finds it has high total number of class hours, high proportion of public courses, high proportion of professional basic courses, and a low number of specialized elective courses. Then, by contrasting the old one with the new ones designed in 2017 and 2019 respectively in light of application transformation, it summarizes that the new ones have more reasonable total class hours, are more focused on application orientation and practice teaching, but don't reflect the "ethnic" and "regional" orientation, have too many public class hours, and lack enough specialized elective courses. Then, the reason behind is analyzed. Last, practical and feasible optimization methods of curriculum designing is proposed from the perspective of strengthening application, emphasizing practice, adding specialized elective courses, highlighting local and national color, improving quality of teachers, and building practice teaching platforms, with a view to promoting the cultivation of application-oriented talents in local colleges and universities in ethnic areas.

*Keywords: Application transformation, Ethnic colleges, Curriculum design.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As early as 2000, the official document entitled "Several Opinions on the Reform of Undergraduate Education for Foreign Language Majors in the 21st Century" pointed out the problems in China's foreign language major education, which were, inadaptability of ideas, inadaptability of talent training mode, inadaptability of curriculum design and teaching content, inadaptability of students' knowledge structure, ability and quality, as well as inadaptability of teaching management[1]. Among these five inadaptabilities, the three aspects of training mode, curriculum design and knowledge structure accounted for more than half [2]<sup>76</sup>.

In 2012, another official document "Several Opinions of Ministry of Education on Improving the Quality of Higher Education in an All-round Way" pointed out that characteristics of colleges and universities should be promoted, tendency of

homogenization should be overcome, distinctive school-running orientation, development planning, talent training specifications, discipline and specialty settings should be determined, structure of disciplines and talents training should be optimized and catalogue of disciplines and specialties, etc. should be revised.[3]

In 2017, in the 2nd "National Forum on Teaching Reform and Development of English Majors in Applied Undergraduate Colleges", Professor Zhong Weihe stated that the current curriculum system of English majors had problems such as inconsistent curriculum setting with training objectives and specifications, unbalanced and uncorrelated curriculum structure, insufficient number of specialized knowledge courses and specialized direction courses, single graduation thesis form, and separation from practical needs and professional practice [4].

All of these indicate both the importance and problems of talent training and curriculum design. The key link of English talent training is the formulation of talent training program, the core of which is the curriculum design. Curriculum is the core component of talent training model[5]<sup>45</sup>. Whether curriculum design is scientific or not will directly affect the effectiveness of talent training, which involves not only issues of course name, class hours, credits, but also of talent training concept, market positioning, specialty construction, education concept, etc. [6]<sup>23</sup>. It can be said that the quality of curriculum design directly affects training specifications, comprehensive abilities and employment of a whole grade or even several grades of students.

## **2. INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND THE OLD CURRICULUM DESIGNED IN 2009**

In this part, the orientation and talent training objectives of Sichuan Minzu college and its school of foreign languages are introduced briefly and the characteristics of the Old Curriculum Designed in 2009 are analyzed.

### ***2.1 Introduction to Sichuan Minzu College and its School of Foreign Languages***

Sichuan Minzu College is the only local college in Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, formerly known as Kangding Normal College for Nationalities. It was upgraded to a four-year college in 2009. At present, it has 14 departments, with minority students mainly including Tibetan, Yi, Qiang, Tujia, Miao, etc. In 2014, Ministry of Education proposed that most local colleges and universities in China should be transformed into application-oriented ones. Following that, Sichuan Minzu College has determined its orientation as being “ethnic, regional and application-oriented”. The goal of its talent training is to train application-oriented talents who are “dedicated, reliable, and qualified” for ethnic areas.

In the context of application transformation of local colleges and universities, School of Foreign Languages (renamed from English Department in September, 2017) has constantly adjusted and updated its talent training program. The 2017 talent training program adjusts the orientation of English major to “strives to build it into an application-oriented undergraduate major with certain

characteristics”. The talent training objectives are to “cultivate English education teachers adapting to the development of basic education, and cultivate application-oriented talents who are able to engage in translation, in foreign trade, tourism, management and other language-related industries”[7]. The 2019 talent training program adjusts its orientation of talents training to “cultivate qualified English teachers who are “dedicated, reliable, and qualified”. The goal of its talent training is to “cultivate application-oriented talents engaged in teaching, research and management of primary and secondary education”.

Based on the orientation and talent training objectives of Sichuan Minzu College and its School of Foreign Languages, the type of talent training objectives of the 2017 program is mainly applied talents, and the talent training mode is “foreign language+professional direction(English teaching, tourism and translation)”. While the talent training type of 2019 program is still application-oriented talents, but the talent training mode is further focused on English teacher orientation, that is, to cultivate future English teachers who have solid basic knowledge and skills of English language teaching, have proficiency in use of English language, and can conduct English teaching or teaching research in primary and secondary schools. Therefore, the curriculum should focus on the direction of English education, and emphasize training primary and secondary school English teachers[8]<sup>87</sup>.

### ***2.2 Characteristics of the Old Curriculum Designed in 2009***

Since its upgrade to Sichuan Minzu College in 2009, English Department has been using the talent training program designed in 2009 to the year of 2017, which features:

#### ***2.2.1 High Total Class Hours***

In the four-year course arrangement, the total credits are 185, including 36 credits for public basic education, 21 credits for career education, 22 credits for comprehensive practice, 100 credits for discipline and professional education, 6 credits for optional courses on school-wide platform. In addition to comprehensive practice credits, teaching credits reach more than 160, which takes up 88% of the total class hours. Considering thesis writing, internship, employment, etc. for the senior students, more than 160 credits are mainly concentrated in

the first six semesters, with an average of 26-27 credits, about 30 class hours per semester, which is intensive and tight scheduled, leading to high pressure in students' academic study, and unsatisfactory learning effect.

### 2.2.2 *High Proportion of Public Courses*

In the class hour credit structure for four grades, the total score of public compulsory and public limited elective is 66 credits, accounting for 35.7% of the total credits. Each semester, there are about three public courses, which occupy more time and energy for students, so that students have no time to study professional courses, resulting in weak professional knowledge and skills, which has a negative impact on its talent training quality[9]<sup>46</sup>.

### 2.2.3 *High Proportion of Professional Basic Courses*

Among all the courses, the proportion of English basic and core courses is the highest, including compulsory courses such as Basic English, Advanced English, Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing and Translation. The total credits of such courses are 86 credits, accounting for 46.5%, reflecting that the college attaches importance to teaching of students' basic language knowledge and training of basic language skills.

### 2.2.4 *Limited Professional Elective Courses*

In the discipline and professional education, there are only 15 professional development courses, with a total of 14 credits, accounting for 7.6%, mainly including occupation-oriented qualification examination course and professional development general course, of which, among the 10 listed professional development general course, only four courses, "Appreciation of British and American Literature, Film and Television" "Introduction to European Culture" "English Lexicology" and "English Translation of Khampa Tourism", have actually been offered, while the other six courses, exist only in name, due to such reasons as lack of teachers and insufficient selection number.

## 3. **NEW CURRICULUM FOR ENGLISH MAJORS UNDER THE BACKGROUND OF APPLICATION-ORIENTED TALENT TRAINING**

In this part, adjustments in the New Curriculum designed respectively in 2017 and 2019 are analyzed, followed by their characteristics.

### 3.1 *Introduction to the New Curriculum Designed in 2017 and 2019*

To adapt to the application transformation requirements of local colleges and universities, in April 2017, School of Foreign Languages made a negotiation on the new curriculum, and in 2019, it fine-tuned it again based on the 2017 version. Compared with the old in 2009, the curriculum in 2017 and 2019 has the following adjustments:

#### 3.1.1 *The Total Credit Is Adjusted from 185 Points to 170 Points*

The total credit of the old program is 185 points, while in the 2017 program, the total credit is 170, with 36 credits for public basic courses unchanged, credits of career education adjusted to 18, credits of discipline and specialty adjusted to 86, comprehensive practice to 20, and the public optional to 10. In the 2019 program, the total credit is also 170, of which general education course (i.e. the previous public basic course) has been increased from 36 credits to 38 credits, discipline and specialty has been adjusted to 85 credits, career education to 18 credits, comprehensive practice to 19 credits, and public optional courses have 10 credits.

#### 3.1.2 *The Credit Content Has Been Adjusted*

In the 2017 and 2019 curricula, public basic courses, career education courses and comprehensive practice courses have been fine-tuned, while the discipline and professional education has made major adjustment. Among them, the professional basic and core courses have the following four features: unchanged, added, deleted and changed:

First, the opening semester, class hours and credits of such courses remain unchanged as English Listening (1), (2), (3), (4), English Grammar, Translation Theory and Practice (1), (2),

Fundamentals of English Writing (1) and (2), Selected Readings of English Literature, Selected Readings of American Literature, Introduction to English-speaking Countries and Social Culture, English Academic Papers Writing and Introduction to Linguistics.

Second, the total class hours and credits of English Pronunciation remain unchanged, but one semester is adjusted to two semesters with English Pronunciation (1) and (2) offered separately. In the 2017 program, one semester of Oral English (4) with 36 hours is added to the old version of Oral English (1), (2) and (3).

Third, Extensive Reading (4) is canceled, with only Extensive Reading (1), (2) and (3) offered. For Intensive Reading, the class hours of (3) and (4) is reduced from 108 to 72, the same as Intensive Reading (1) and (2). Advanced English (3) is canceled, with only Advanced English (1) and (2) offered. In addition, in the 2019 program, oral English (4) is canceled.

Fourth, in the 2017 program, Basic Interpretation has been adjusted from compulsory courses to elective courses. Japanese (1) and (2) remains unchanged, but Japanese (3) is adjusted from compulsory courses to elective courses. Teaching Methodology is adjusted from previous career education to compulsory courses. English Writing is adjusted from compulsory course to career education course. In the 2019 program, Japanese (1), (2) and (3) are transferred from professional basic and core courses to cultural quality courses of general education section, Teaching Methodology and Interpretation are transferred to professional basic and core courses section, and English Speech and Debate is added to professional basic and core courses section.

In the 2017 program, the number of optional course for professional development is adjusted from the old version of “qualification examination course” and “professional development general course” to three parts of “professional optional course”, “teacher professional skills” and “translation professional skills”. The professional development course has a total of 16, more than the old version, and students choose 11 elective credits from a total of 27 credits. Among them, 9 courses such as Khampa Tourism English Translation, Pragmatics and English Stylistics remain unchanged. The Introduction to Kangba Tibetan Culture (English), Appreciation of European and American Literature and Film, and Interpretation Practice in the old version are canceled, Basic

Interpretation is changed into section of translation professional skills.

While in the 2019 program, the number of elective courses for professional development has been adjusted from 16 in the 2017 program to 11, and the total credits have been adjusted from 11 in the 2017 program to 12, a slight increase compared with the 2009 program. At the same time, the specific courses have changed a lot. Only Comparative Study between English and Chinese course has been retained, and seven English teaching direction courses have been added as follows: Middle School English Curriculum Standards and Textbook Analysis, English Writing, Trial Teaching, English Testing and Evaluation, English Classroom Games, Flipped Classroom Teaching Method, Micro-class Design and Making. Besides, three national-level high-quality MOOCs, namely, Introducing China in English, Cultural Differences and Cross-cultural Communication, Enjoyable English and Translation have been added.

### ***3.2 Characteristics of the New Curriculum Designed in 2017 and 2019***

Here, both the improvements and limitations of the New Curricula are summarized as follows:

#### ***3.2.1 More Reasonable Total Class Hours***

According to National Standard of Teaching Quality for Undergraduate English Majors (simply, National Standard) issued in 2018, the total credits of courses are generally 150~180 and the total class hours are 2400~2900 [10]. The total credits of the 2017 and 2019 programs are 170 points, the total class hours of the 2017 program are 2792+34W (34 weeks of comprehensive practice), and the total class hours of the 2019 program are 2566+32W (32 weeks of practice class hours), which is more consistent with National Standard compared with the old curriculum.

#### ***3.2.2 More Practical Courses Offered in Each Section***

In the 2017 program, in the public basic education section, “Ideological and Political Education Practice” has been added to ideological and political quality section, “College Sports” has been adjusted to “College Sports (1), (2), (3), and (4)” in health quality section, and “Basics of Computer Culture, College Mathematics, and Introduction to Modern Science and Technology”

have been changed to “Basics of Computer Application, College Writing, and Introduction to Traditional Chinese culture” in cultural quality section. In the part of artistic quality, “Introduction to Art” is added to the five courses of “Music, Arts, Dance, Film Appreciation and Calligraphy Appreciation”, and students are required to choose two from the six courses now instead of one of five. In career education section, the “Chinese writing” is replaced by “English writing”. In the 2019 program, in career education section, “Simple Line-drawing” and “English Writing” are further adjusted to “Teacher Language and Communication Art” and “English Teaching and Internet”, and the rest remain unchanged, so that the curriculum is more focused on the training of English normal students.

In the 2017 program, the initial orientation of talent training is teacher-oriented, translation-oriented and language & culture-related occupation. Therefore, in the curriculum of subject specialty section, courses like English Pronunciation and Oral English are added. Besides, during the 2017 “Exchange Meeting of Talent Training Program of English Department of Sichuan Minzu College”, Wen Jianqiong, teaching director of Luding Middle School, pointed out that the interns and new teachers are not familiar with new English curriculum standards in primary and secondary schools, are not familiar with textbooks in junior and senior high schools, their PPT making needs to be improved, their actual teaching ability is not good enough, and their ability to deal with classroom teaching emergencies needs to be improved, thus, the 2017 program added practical courses such as “English Curriculum Standards and Textbooks analysis for Primary and Secondary Schools” “English Classroom Games” “Teaching Practice” in the direction of teachers’ professional skills. The 2019 program clearly focuses on cultivating students to be English teachers, further adding such three courses as English Testing and Evaluation, Flipped Classroom Teaching Method, Micro-class Design and Making, and adjusts English Writing from a career course to a professional development course. In addition, three national-level quality MOOCs: Introducing China in English, Cultural Differences and Cross-cultural Communication, Enjoyable English and Translation have been added to make up for limitations of this region and teachers.

### *3.2.3 More Stress on Practice Teaching and Increasing on Practice Teaching Hours, Credits and Activities*

In the 2017 program, the total practice credits are 77.25, accounting for 45.46% in all courses. While the 2019 program adjusted practice credits to 73.1, accounting for 43% of the whole courses. In the comprehensive practice section, specific practice teaching activities has been clarified, and professional practice activities like second class, community activities, competitions, innovation and entrepreneurship education and practice have been added on the basis of the 2009 program. In addition, practice platforms with Kangding Middle School and Luding Middle School have been build, through which our students can go to these schools to learn and practice teaching, our front-line teachers can take a temporary job there to have a deep understanding of the characteristics of junior and senior high school students and their classroom teaching situation, while excellent teachers of these junior and senior high schools can also lecture or have demo class in our college.

### *3.2.4 Being Not Obvious in “Ethnic” and “Regional” Orientation*

The curriculum in 2017 and 2019 has been improved in terms of “applicability” and “practicality”, but in terms of being “ethnic” and “regional”, it makes no difference. Among the 170 credits of courses offered, only the “National Theory and National Policy” in the public basic section and the “Khampa Tourism English Translation” in the professional development course of the 2017 program, reflect the ethnic and regional color respectively, but all other courses do not clearly reflect the overall orientation of the college.

### *3.2.5 Too Many Public Courses and Too Few Specialized Courses*

In the 2017 program, the total proportion of public courses is 49.41%, and the total proportion of professional courses is 50.59%, of which the proportion of professional basic and core courses is 44.12%, and the proportion of professional development courses is only 6.47%. In the 2019 program, the total proportion of public courses is 50%, and the total proportion of professional education is 50%, of which the proportion of professional basic and core courses is 42.94%, and the proportion of professional courses is only

7.06%. As is required in National Standard, public courses should account for 38%-48%, professional core courses 20%-40%, professional development courses 20%-30%, and professional courses should account for 50%-85% of the total professional hours. By comparison, it is found that in both the 2017 and 2019 programs, the number of public courses is still too large and the number of professional courses is relatively small. Among them, the proportion of professional basic courses and development courses is inappropriate, the professional basic courses and core courses are slightly out of standard, and the number of classes and hours of professional development courses is seriously insufficient.

### **3.3 Reasons Analyzed for Above Problems**

The reason for the above last three characteristics is that the curriculum should not only conform to the era background of application transformation, respond to national education policies, reflect professional positioning and training objectives of the school and the college, combine geographical characteristics and social needs, but also take full account of the actual situation of teachers and students.

On teachers' side, the college now has 32 teaching staff. Apart from teachers for further study, on maternity leave and some teaching and auxiliary staff every year, there are less than 30 in-service teachers. They undertake both college English teaching in other 13 colleges and English major teaching. The average class hours per semester are 16-20, which is large in teaching amount and heavy in tasks. Compared with college English, there are many professional courses, but the number of professional teachers is obviously insufficient. In addition, since the college was upgraded in 2009, College of Foreign Languages has faced great difficulties in talent recruitment and suffered serious brain drain due to various reasons. Finally, since the college has been upgraded from a junior college to an undergraduate, most teachers and college running experience in the junior college has remained the same. Although most teachers have obtained master's degrees through further study in winter and summer vacation. However, there are only 6 full-time masters among the existing 32 teaching staff. On the whole, their knowledge structure and teaching and research ability need to be improved, the discipline structure is unbalanced, with more teachers in direction of teaching methodology and literature, but less teachers in

translation and linguistics, and few teachers in culture. All these conditions make it difficult to open professional development courses.

On students' side, since the college was upgraded, the admission score has been higher year by year and the overall quality of students has gradually improved. However, because the college mainly enrolls students in Sichuan Province, 18 counties of which enjoy the bonus policy of adding 20 to 50 points to the total of College Entrance Examination, thus students' level is uneven, their language foundation is weak on the whole, and their English pronunciation needs to be polished.

## **4. OPTIMIZATION OF ENGLISH MAJOR CURRICULUM DESIGN UNDER THE BACKGROUND OF APPLICATION-ORIENTED TALENTS TRAINING**

In this section, practical and feasible suggestions on optimizing the curriculum design for English majors under the background of application-oriented talents training are made based on the above analysis:

### **4.1 Emphasizing Language Knowledge Courses to Strengthen Application**

The curriculum should reflect importance of basic courses according to the source and language basis of students in regional ethnic colleges. Only with a solid foundation, can students develop towards high-quality application-oriented talents [11]<sup>103</sup>.

In 2017, the "Exchange Meeting of Talent Training Program of English Department of Sichuan Minzu College" specially invited the English teaching principals of Kangding Middle School to communicate from aspects of English teaching requirements and teacher training of junior and senior high schools. Cheng Yuanyou, Vice President of Kangding Middle School, mentioned that: First, in Kangding Middle School, the first priority of teachers' recruitment is teachers' basic language skills, especially their pronunciation and intonation. If students don't polish it well in college, it is difficult to make a big breakthrough after work. It is suggested that teaching of pronunciation and oral English should be strengthened, and there should be final exams for these two courses instead of checking; Second, Vocabulary and grammar are the key and difficult points of English teaching in

senior high schools. Teachers must have a solid and comprehensive knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, correctly guide students to memorize words and understand grammar points. It is suggested that lexicology should be adjusted from an optional course to a compulsory course and teaching hours of grammar should be appropriately increased; Third, the teaching of education, psychology and teaching methods should be stressed, to understand the learning and psychological characteristics of high school students, and to be able to communicate with and teach them in appropriate ways.

Following the above teacher recruitment requirements, the 2017 and 2019 programs offer English Pronunciation for two semesters. Moreover, the 2017 program open one more semester of Oral English, adjust English Teaching Methodology to professional basic and core course, while the 2019 program changes Oral English (4) to English Speech and Debate, and adds a number of courses about teaching method and textbooks analysis of primary and secondary school, because good pronunciation, clear oral expression and familiarity of teaching materials and methods are basic requirements for primary and secondary school teachers.

However, besides requirements of pronunciation and oral language, teachers' vocabulary and grammar knowledge are also very important. It is necessary for teachers to systematically study history and origin of words, and common word-formation methods, so as to correctly and scientifically guide students to memorize words. Therefore, lexicology should be adjusted to compulsory course to meet students' learning needs and employment needs. In addition, "Cultivating applied and inter-disciplinary English talents is not a negation of traditional English talents, but a supplement. It cannot cover up the fact that the most essential content of English majors is language skills, functional ideas and acquisition of the essential language knowledge, among which grammar is an extremely important connotation"[11]<sup>103</sup>. In The Syllabus, English Grammar is listed as a professional compulsory knowledge course, which is required to be offered in the third and fourth semesters, while in our college it is offered only in the second semester, with three classes every week. Due to too many contents in grammar course, students in ethnic areas can only finish half of the course within one semester, and their grammatical foundation is weak, thus it is suggested to open this course for two

semesters, two classes a week, which will not only help to consolidate students' grammar foundation, and to pave the way for the study of other professional courses, but also systematically finish the whole grammar book.

In addition, it is suggested to combine Extensive Reading course with Writing course, and change it to "Theme Reading and Basic Writing", lead reading to writing, use reading to promote writing, practice writing to strengthen reading, so as to solve the opening class of these two courses and targets at training of reading and writing skills. Moreover, in addition to listing required books of different grades, it is suggested to list some required memorization books, such as "Passion Morning Reading" "Inspirational English Reading" "Warm Night Reading", etc., asking students to recite 5 to 10 articles every semester, and making it as part of course assessment. Besides, in winter and summer vacation, each student is required to finish reading one or two books on the book list offered, and write post-reading reflection, as part of practice teaching.

Finally, "Linguistics" is a core professional knowledge course for senior students. However, due to so many chapters in the coursebook, it is not possible to finish all the contents one semester. It is suggested that half of the courses should be set as compulsory courses and the other half as optional courses, offered to students taking Postgraduate Entrance Examination, hoping to be teachers or being interested in language research.

#### ***4.2 Stressing Language Skill Courses for Practicality***

As far as language expression skills are concerned, Oral English is the main course in lower grades, while (Basic) Interpretation is the only course in higher grades. But due to limitations of interpretation teachers and interpretation practice platform, the 2017 program listed it as an optional course and canceled the opening of "Advanced Interpretation", which is contrary to requirements of The Syllabus, National Standard and China's Standards of English Language Ability, which does not meet the training objectives and standards of the College, and is not conducive to serve the local development, as is shown below:

First, both The Syllabus and National Standard list "English-Chinese / Chinese-English Interpretation" as core language skills required for English major.

Second, on June 1, 2018, “China’s Standards of English Language Ability” for English learners included the general scale of language ability, as well as listening comprehension ability... pragmatic ability, interpretation ability and translation ability [12] and Interpreting ability is listed as one of important indicators of English learners’ comprehensive ability test.

Thirdly, ability structure requirements of our college’s English professional training objectives and standards are as follows: item1 “have solid listening, speaking, reading, writing and certain oral and written translation skills”, and item 9 “students should obtain interpreting or translation qualifications, and other qualifications related to their majors according to their own interests and career planning” [7]. The “Third Classrooms linking practice teaching content system for English majors” takes the examination of primary, intermediate and advanced qualification certificates of interpretation as a part of practice teaching in the second classroom and recognizes practice credits accordingly.

Finally, the college is located in Garzê Prefecture, and its pillar industry is tourism. Activities such as “Kangding April 8th International Mountain Race”, “Garzê Mountain Tourism Festival” “Love Song Culture Festival” and “Garzê Gongga Mountain International Outdoor Sports Challenge”, etc., have an increased demand for English volunteers and interpreters. As a practical professional course, interpretation can not only improve students’ comprehensive language skills, but also serve local development.

Thus, instead of canceling this course, it is advisable to solve problems from introducing interpretation teachers, strengthening interpreting quality of existing teachers and building interpreting practice platforms.

In addition, it is advisable to open core language skills courses such as “English Viewing, Listening and Speaking” “English Communication” “English Speech” and “English Debate” to facilitate the implementation of a series of activities such as “National Oral Evaluation Contest” and “English Speech Contest” in the second class of practice teaching.

### ***4.3 Increasing the Offering of Professional Elective Courses***

In 2005, Ministry of Education pointed out in the “Several Opinions on Further Strengthening the

Undergraduate Teaching Work in Colleges and Universities” that we should continue to promote the curriculum system...build a new curriculum structure, increase the proportion of elective courses, and actively promote the construction of flexible learning system[13]. In 2017, Professor Zhong Weihe proposed that English major courses should focus on the systematic construction of talent training objectives, innovate the curriculum... and improve the proportion of professional knowledge courses and professional development courses and the curriculum should meet needs of social talents and enhance core competitiveness of English major students[4].

As is analyzed above, in the 2019 program, the professional development courses for English majors only account for 7.06%, which is far from the 20% - 30% proposed by National Standard. At the same time, in these eleven professional development courses, due to reasons of teachers and course selection, not all of them are offered, so the actual proportion is even lower.

To solve above problems, on the one hand, considering the existing teachers, some important courses that cannot be completed within specified time can be divided half into optional courses, such as “Linguistics”. On the other hand, it’s better to create conditions and add practical courses, for example, for teacher-oriented occupation, “English Curriculum Design in Primary and Secondary Schools” “English Teaching Case Analysis” “English Teaching Strategies” “Introduction to Foreign Language Teaching Theories” “English Teaching Research Methods”, etc.

### ***4.4 Highlighting Ethnic and Regional Characteristics***

The new curriculum should combine social needs of ethnic areas and offer courses with local characteristics. In terms of professional courses, it is suggested to retain “Khampa Tourism English Translation”, and consciously instill ethnic and regional elements in in-class teaching and extracurricular practice of professional courses such as translation and interpretation; In terms of public courses, such public quality education courses involving minority culture as “Minority Music” “minority Dance” “Minority Art” “Introduction to Tibetan Culture” “National Sports”, can be set up as compulsory or optional courses, so that students can sing Kangding love songs, dance Guozhuang, learn Thang-ga, speak Tibetan language, etc., which is conducive to deepen their understanding



of ethnic language and culture, promote the inheritance and development of national culture, and can also be used as carriers to expand practice teaching platform [8].

#### **4.5 Improving the Quality of Teachers**

The cultivation of application-oriented talents depends on application-oriented teachers, and the large demand for English application-oriented talents puts forward higher requirements for construction of college teaching staff. Building a teaching staff with “excellent quality, excellent structure, and distinctive characteristics combined with full-time and part-time” is the guarantee of cultivating application-oriented talents[14]<sup>71</sup>. National Standard stipulates that “foreign language majors should have a qualified full-time teacher team to form a teaching and research team with reasonable age structure, academic structure and professional title structure of teachers and a certain proportion of foreign English teachers, and student-to-teacher ratio is not higher than 18:1. Applied majors should employ professionals of the filed as teaching tutors.” [10]

The promotion of teaching reform of English majors and improvement of the quality of talent cultivation mainly depend on teachers. The key to guarantee teaching quality of English majors is to take teacher development as the guide and improve the overall ability and quality of professional teachers [15]<sup>7</sup>. In view of difficulties in recruitment of teachers, the irrational academic structure of existing faculty, the need to improve the overall teaching and research ability, the far exceeding teacher-student ratio, and limited teacher development platform, for one thing, the college should formulate various preferential policies to attract outstanding talents, for the other, it should emphasize and strengthen training of existing teachers, “formulate a scientific teacher development plan and system to enable teachers to constantly update their educational concepts, optimize their knowledge structure, and improve their professional theoretical level and teaching and research capabilities through academic education, on-the-job training, domestic and foreign advanced studies and academic exchanges, and industry practice” [10].

#### **4.6 Actively Building Professional Practice Teaching Platform**

The establishment of practice platform and practice base is the necessary link to develop application-oriented talents training for English majors in local colleges and universities. In addition to establishing teaching practice bases with the above-mentioned Kangzhong Middle School and Luzhong Middle School, college-college cooperation and college-enterprise cooperation platforms with major tourist attractions as well as foreign affairs offices and training institutions in surrounding areas, can also be bridged, so that during weekends, winter and summer holidays, students can carry out teaching practices, such as internship, pre-job training, and take part-time jobs.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

Against the background of application transformation, the curriculum design is the core of the talent training mode. Based on the orientation and talent cultivation goal of Sichuan Minzu College and School of Foreign Language, its old talent training and curriculum(2009) is first analyzed with following characteristics: high total number of class hours, high proportion of public courses, high proportion of professional basic courses, and low number of specialized elective courses. Then, by comparing the old curriculum with the new ones (in 2017 and 2019), it is found that the new ones feature by more reasonable total class hours, being more focused on application and practice teaching, but not being obvious in its “national” and “local” orientation, too many public class hours, relatively less specialized courses in number and the proportion of specialized elective courses in particular seriously below the standard. The reason behind is restricted mainly by the particularity and limitations of running colleges conditions in ethnic areas and actual situation of teachers and students. To solve these problems, this paper last discusses practical and feasible optimization methods of curriculum setting from the angle of strengthening application, stressing practice, adding professional elective courses, highlighting local and national color, improving teachers’ quality, and building practice platforms, with a view to promoting the cultivation of application-oriented talents in local colleges and universities in ethnic areas.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper is independently completed by Panpan Cao.

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