

## Research on the Construction of Corpus-based College English Network Teaching Resources Platform and Its Teaching Model

**Zhenying Li**

Associate Professor

School of Foreign Languages

Guangxi Normal University for Nationalities

### ABSTRACT

**This research attempts to construct a corpus-based college English network teaching resources platform and a testing corpus by using network and information technology. And it is expected to improve college English teachers' ability of teaching and research and students' Data-Driven Learning capability.**

**Keywords: Corpus; College English Teaching; Network Resources Platform; Data-Driven Learning**

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### INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the level of information technology has been greatly improved. And the concept of internet plus education has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. The traditional teaching mode of teacher-led, textbook-based and passive learning of students has been unable to meet the needs of the development of the information age. A lot of teachers from colleges and universities have increasingly realized the importance of obtaining the information from internet. And with great concentration, they are studying how to use the internet source to change the methods of learning and teaching (Johnson, 2001). *Guidelines on College English Teaching* (hereinafter referred to as *Teaching Guidelines*) (NFLTAB, 2016) states: " All colleges and universities should incorporate online courses into the curriculum, attach importance to the construction of online courses, and put related courses on the network teaching platform, so that classroom teaching and network-based learning can be seamlessly integrated and integrated."

Nowadays it becomes the remarkable field of applied linguistics that the application of corpus linguistics research results and software technology in foreign language education and teaching and it has unique advantages. On the one hand, the corpus language material is real, large and rich in content, which can reflect the most vivid use of language and is also extremely convincing to the usage paradigm of language. On the other hand, corpus research tools (such as Word Concordance Lines, Word Frequency List and Keyword List, etc.) provide technical support for inquiry learning and facilitate the implementation of autonomous learning (He, 2010).

According to the *Teaching Guidelines*, this research intends to apply computer and network information technology to English language teaching and research based on corpus. A College

English teaching corpus and self-test corpus will be designed and created mainly based on the usage of computer technologies in PHP and SQL Server in order to build a college English network teaching resources platform system on the basis of web-based campus network. Through the application of information retrieval technology, the corpus and college English teaching are closely combined to carry out teaching experiments and to explore new teaching models based on corpus. Furthermore, it will mobilize the subjective initiative of teachers and students. In the students-centered teaching process, teachers will make roles of guidance and supervision into full play and develop students' Data-Drive Learning (DDL), discovery-based learning and autonomous learning ability.

Meanwhile, gradually develop students' English application ability, enhance cross-cultural communication awareness and communication skills, improve comprehensive cultural literacy, and meet the needs of national, social, college and individual development (NFLTAB, 2016).tBased on the research of corpus-based foreign language teaching research at home and abroad, this paper probes into the construction of corpus-based college English network teaching resources platform, designs a corpus-based college English teaching model, and explains the specific application effects.

### **THE RESEARCH STATUS OF CORPUS-BASED FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING**

There are many corpus-based research on foreign language teaching and autonomous learning at home and abroad. A Corpus is a collection of naturally occurring language text, chosen to characterize a state or variety of a language (Sinclair, 1991). The emergence of corpus not only marks the technological progress of language research methods, but also marks a major shift in language research thinking. It represents a new linguistic thinking and a new cause (Leech, 1997; Granger, 1998). After applying corpra into teaching, learners may access real language use rather than fabricated examples, and teachers can use corpra through various ways, such as exercises design, grammar difference demonstration, synonyms discrimination, collocation analysis and reliable responses to the learners questions, etc.

Corpus-based foreign language teaching research mainly includes three aspects abroad: (1) The Construction of Language Teaching Corpus. Sinclair (1991: 81) believes that spoken language can reveal the basic mechanism of language organization more than written language. In 2002, Simpson et al. set up "Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE)", the purpose of which is to analyze the characteristics of academic English and to improve and develop the oral English course and listening test materials. In addition, *Touchstone* is one of the first series of comprehensive textbooks based on corpus research. The language in the *Touchstone* series is taken from the Cambridge International Corpus North American Corpus (CICNAE) with a capacity of 700 million spoken and written vocabulary (McCarthy, McCarten, & Sandiford, 2005). (2) Data-Driven Learning Research. Tim Johns (1991) represented a new method of learning foreign languages named "Data-Driven Learning" (DDL) based on corpus data, and it was the challenge to the traditional foreign language teaching centered on teachers and textbooks. Corpu-based autonomous learning is an effective way for a individual learner to acquire language knowledge through network information resources (Benson, 2005). (3) The Development of English Teaching Resources. Coxhead (2000) used the corpus to develop an Academic Word List for the design of word list and reading, writing materials of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Accordingly, corpus-based language teaching has become a new trend in foreign countries.

At home, corpus linguistics used in the study of teaching began in the early 1980s. It was marked by the Jiao Da English for Science and Technology (JDEST), which was hosted by Renjie Huang and Huizhong Yang of Shanghai Jiaotong University in 1982. However, it was not until

the late 1990s that scholars began to apply corpus to foreign language teaching practice in China (Xie, 1996; Li, 1999; He, 2001). Li and Pu (2001) introduced data driven learning methods earlier. Naixing Wei, Wenzhong Li and Jianzhong Pu have realized the online query, retrieval and free sharing of corpus resources in China for the first time. The Database Learning System was developed for the online conversion and real-time transmission and sharing of the KWIC network from text resources of 4 corpora about 7,000,000 words (Zhen, 2010). In addition, Chinese language educators also used results of corpus linguistics study in the compilation of textbooks. For example, *21st Century College English* edited by Xiangjun Zhai was based on a large corpus (Yao, 2005). Some scholars (Zhang, & Chen 2008; Zhang, et al., 2008) explored the use of network or online corpora in college English teaching. Even more scholars (Zhang, & Zhou, 2009) use the corpus in college English classroom teaching, which proves that the corpus can greatly improve the effect of classroom teaching. It is not difficult to see that the corpus provides a new way of thinking for foreign language learning and teaching.

Even so, the current corpus-assisted language teaching is far from the expected results. The existing corpora are mainly designed and built for the investigation and research of language. They have large scales, a wide variety of topics and domains, but the contents are usually not directly linked to language teaching requirements (He, 2010). In addition, due to the differences in teaching conditions at home and abroad, the current application of domestic corpus in college English teaching is limited to vocabulary, grammar and reading teaching. The research on corpus-based college English network teaching resources platform construction and teaching model is relatively rare. It is necessary for college English educators to make new attempts and explorations based on corpora and technology.

#### **THE RESEARCH ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF CORPUS-BASED COLLEGE ENGLISH NETWORK TEACHING RESOURCES PLATFORM AND ITS TEACHING MODEL**

This research intends to establish a college English network teaching corpus and self-test corpus including listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation, by means of independent design and creation of a corpus according to the goals set in *the Teaching Guidelines*. And we will create college English network teaching resources platform system through computer and network technology. Meanwhile, it will explore a corpus-based college English network teaching model combined with classroom teaching. The corpus-based college English network teaching resource platform consists of two modules: module one is the construction of the teaching resource platform based on campus network, and module two is the application of the corpus-based college English network teaching resource platform. Module 1 "Web-based teaching resource platform based on campus network" was constructed in six steps as follows: 1. Collecting and organizing corpus; 2. Processing corpus; 3. According to the training objectives of the three types of students, Liberal Arts, Science and Engineering, and Arts & Sports, we constructed a corpus entry system using computer programming language design, entered the corpus into the corpus, and built the following corpora: General English Corpus, Special English Corpus and Intercultural Communication English Corpus; 4. Establishing different levels of Audio-visual Sub-corpus, Spoken Sub-corpus, Reading Sub-corpus, and Translation Sub-corpus for three types of students; 5. Constructing college English network teaching corpus and self-test corpus 6. Developing a Web-based teaching resource platform system based on campus network through PHP and SQL technology, and building a corpus-based college English network teaching resource platform.

Module 2 "Application of corpus-based college English network teaching platform" includes the following two aspects: 1. Classroom teaching based on the platform for college English teachers; 2. Students' DDL and autonomous learning based on the platform. Teachers can fully play a leading role by using the online teaching resources platform in classrooms: guiding and

supervising students to learn English; selecting corpus material resources suitable for teaching tasks according to the teaching contents; setting teaching goals and applying appropriate strategies in order to improve teaching level. Students can fully play the main role based on the resources of the network teaching resources platform: DDL and self-learning; self-testing for students through self-test corpus and timely feedback to teachers through the platform in order to facilitate the change of teachers' teaching strategies in classroom; Students can also conduct extracurricular collaborative learning based on task-based teaching, and ultimately achieve the improvement of students' general English, specialized English and intercultural communication abilities at different levels.

The two modules are specifically explained as follows.

### The Design and Development of Corpus

In the design of online teaching corpus, we follow *the teaching Guidelines* of the three levels of teaching requirements, "Basis, Improvement, and Development", to realize the ultimate goal in cultivating students' General English Ability, Special Purpose English Ability and Intercultural Communication Ability (NFLTAB, 2016). In order to adapt to the principle of individualized teaching, students can choose appropriate learning content according to their own characteristics, level and time, and they can carry out DDL and independent learning in a targeted manner. In terms of network corpus construction, we have built three network teaching corpora: General English Corpus; Special Purpose English Corpus; Intercultural Communication Corpus.

### The Construction of General English Corpus

We built a General English corpus, which is mainly open to first and second-year students of Liberal Arts, Science and Engineering, and Arts & Sports. The goal focuses on cultivating students' abilities of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation & interpreting at different levels. The specific design is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 The General English Corpus Design of College English Network Teaching Corpus**

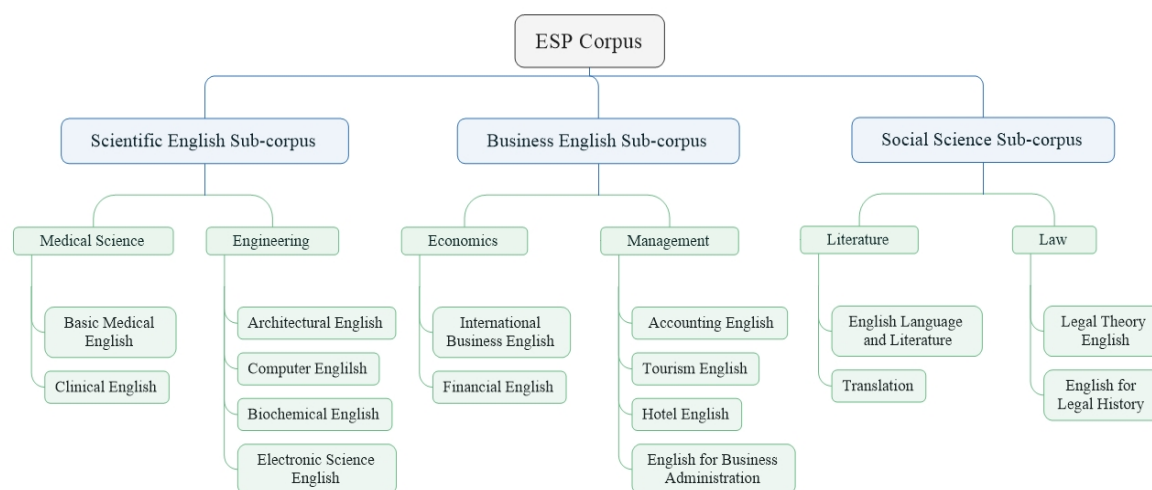
Sub-corpra	Corpus contents and Categories				Ratio(%)
<b>Audio-visual</b>	Listening	Comprehensive	Films and TV	Classical Songs	30%
	Comprehension (10%)	Listening (10%)	Programs (5%)	(5%)	
<b>Spoken</b>	Sigle Sente (5%)	Conversation (5%)	Speech (5%)	Self-introduction (5%)	20%
	<b>Reading</b>	Blanks Filling (5%)	Reading Long Passages (5%)	Reading in Depth (10%)	
<b>Writing</b>	Ordinary Writing (8%)		Practical Writing (7%)		15%
<b>Translation &amp; Interpreting</b>	English to Chinese (7%)		Chinese to English (8%)		

Table 1 shows that the College English General Corpus contains five sub-corpra of Audiovisual, Spoken, Reading, Writing and Translation & Interpreting, accounting for 30%, 20%, 20%, 15% and 15% of the total corpus respectively. In the selection of Audio-visual and Speaking sub-corpus, we choose a large number of audio and video materials such as news, films and television programs, and songs, etc., especially the selection of listening materials, according to the principle of combining knowledge and interest. In the selection of Spoken, Reading, Writing, Translation and Interpreting sub-corpra, In the selection of spoken and written translation materials, we have increased the proportion of spoken and reading corpra, focusing

on the diversity of questions (the spoken sub-corpus contains Spoken Sentences, Conversations and Self-introduction; the reading sub-library includes Blanks-Filling, Reading Long Passages, Reading in Depth). Meanwhile, we select Writing, Translation and Interpreting corpora, both of which account for 15% of the General Corpus, aiming to cultivate students' comprehensive English application ability.

### ***The Design and Construction of Special Purpose English Corpus***

The main purpose of the Special English Corpus is for the students of grade two and three. Special Purpose English courses are oriented towards the use of English to enhance students' ability to use English for professional and academic exchanges, work, and academic and professional accomplishment (NFLTAB, 2016). The corpus we selected mainly comes from the original textbooks, general academic journals and academic papers in the field, and less popular journals or monographs. Then, using British National Corpus (BNC) as a comparative corpus, and referring to the US General List (common vocabulary, containing 2186 words), the selected corpus statistics are automatically shielded by computer software (such as shielding all frequency in all corpora, such as: the, of, his, etc.) and manual screening, extraction and merging (Zhang, et al., 2009). On the basis of Hutchinson & Waters' (1987) classification of Special Purpose English (ie, Scientific English, Business English, and Social Science English), and 12 subject categories announced by the Ministry of Education, this study is specialized in the construction of medicine, engineering, economics, management, literature, law, and other professional corpora. As shown in Figure 1:



**Figure 1 The Design of ESP Corpus and the Sub-corpora**

As shown in the above figure, according to the classification of Hutchinson & Waters (1987), the ESP corpus contains three sub-corpora of Scientific English, Business English and Social Science English. The six disciplines of medicine, engineering, economics, management, literature, and law are classified into three sub-corpora. Then these six disciplines are subdivided into 16 majors as follows: Basic Medicine, Clinical Medicine, Architecture, Computer, Biochemistry, Electronic Science, International Business, Finance, Accounting, Tourism, Hotel, Business Administration, English Language and Literature, Translation, Legal theory and Legal history.

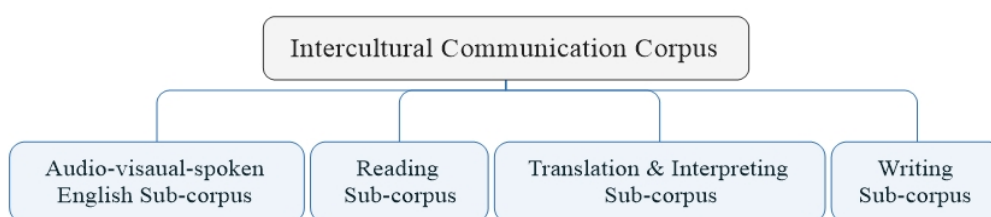
Because ESP lies between general English and professional English, it is a bridge between them. The content of ESP tends to general subject knowledge. And it has greater generality than professional English, therefore the content is close to popular science articles. To cultivate students' academic skills, the training objective is to improve students' comprehensive

language quality and provide support for students to use English for professional learning (Zhang, 2011).

In view of the above characteristics, the selection of corpus must follow the principles of scale, representativeness, pertinence and openness in order to integrate English teaching with professional knowledge. The main sources and proportions of the corpus are as follows: original textbooks and books (40%), general academic journals (20%), academic papers (20%), open courses of famous foreign universities (15%) and a small number of professional monographs (5%). In addition, the corpus will be expanded in size and capacity over time and as needed for teaching.

### ***The Design and Construction of Intercultural Communication Corpus***

The Intercultural Communication Course is designed to provide intercultural education to help students understand the differences in world views, values, and ways of thinking between China and foreign countries, foster intercultural awareness among students, and improve students' social and verbal communication skills. The Intercultural Communication Corpus is mostly for the students of grade three and four. The corpus of the design and construction of this research includes four sub-corpora of Audio-visual-spoken, Reading, Translation & Interpreting and Writing. As shown in figure 2.



**Figure 2 The Design of Interecultural Communication Corpus**

As shown in the above figure, the contents of the four sub-corpora of the Intercultural Communication Corpus include: English film and television appreciation, English speech, US Presidential inauguration speech, English poetry, British history, Bible and Greek mythology, Western culture, English-speaking society and culture, and Anglo-American Literature, American society and culture, American diplomacy, international business English translation, EU legal text translation, English and American legal text translation, international business English writing, etc. After the materials were selected, we used annotation software and manual form to annotate all the corpora.

In order to facilitate teachers' teaching and students' DDL, autonomous learning, we have established a special intercultural communication case corpus under each sub-corpora. The construction of the case corpus adheres to the student-centered, full use of the students' initiative, enthusiasm and creativity, and allows students to participate in all aspects of building the corpus. Teachers cite out theoretical points of intercultural communication in teaching. One theoretical point corresponds to 2-4 cases, of which 1-2 cases are collected and organized by students, and 2-3 cases are collected and arranged by teachers. The construction of the case corpus adheres to the principle of typicality and reality, uses scientific methods to collect cases, and refuses to use fictional cases to explain relevant theories. On sources of the case: Part of the selection is from intercultural communication textbooks and related works, and the rest is selected from news reports, documentary works, film and television works,

online videos and other materials. On annotation of the case corpus: Text headings of all cases, including the case title, the source of the case, the location of the case, the characters (name, gender, age, nationality, occupation) in the case, and the type of the case, should be tagged. The contents of the case corpus can be retrieved through the text retrieval softwares PowerGrep and AntConc.

Through the use of Intercultural Communication Corpus, teachers can better cultivate students' intercultural communication awareness, and improve their intercultural communication skills as soon as possible to achieve good practical teaching results; meanwhile students can actively conduct DDL and autonomous learning based on the Corpus, and improve their intercultural communication skills ultimately.

In the design of self-test corpus, we referred to the study of Yan Jin and Jiang Hao (2009) that they presented the design principles of online CET4 and CET6 : mainly referred to the test paper and system design principles, that is, the test objectives are set according to the Teaching Guidelines, and the test tasks have typical characteristics of real language communication activities. It can maximize the automatic scoring of the machine; the system meets the design requirements of the test: it is reliable, stable, safe, and it has operability and universality , etc.. It aims at strengthening the detection of development status of language application ability in the learning process of students. And it will develop the backwash effect of testing in teaching, further improve the testing and evaluation system, and help tudents to adapt to online CET4 and CET6 as soon as possible, and eventually improve students' abilities of DDL and autonomous learning. The content and scale design of the sub-corpra included in the autonomous test corpus are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 The Design of College English Autonomous Test Corpus**

<b>Sub-corpora</b>	<b>Question Types</b>	<b>Purposes</b>
<b>Listening Comprehension (25%)</b>	Multiple Choices	Subject, Details and Deduction
<b>Comprehensive Listening (35%)</b>	Words, Phrases and Passage Dictation	Dictation, Summary and Comment
<b>Reading Comprehension (40%)</b>	Blanks Filling, Multiple Choices and Questions Answering	Reading Long Passages, Reading in Depth and Grammatical Structure

Table 2 shows that the college English autonomous test corpus contains three sub-corpra: Listening Comprehension, Comprehensive Listening and Reading Comprehension. In terms of Question Types design, the autonomous test corpus is basically the same as the online CET4 and CET6. In addition to the regular questions, the listening test is highlighted, and the proportion of Comprehensive Listening is increased (about 35% of the test corpus), mainly including words, phrases and passage dictation.

However, in the early stage of research, whether it is the teaching corpus or the selection of autonomous test corpus, we mainly select listening and reading corpus, supplemented by oral, writing and translation corpus, to build an open corpus, and timely update the corpora related subjects and language materials according to the development of the eras.

The corpus sources mainly include audio-visual and speaking products, related listening textbooks, English learning websites, VOA website, BBC website, and the materials of the CET4 and CET6 past examination papers and simulation examination papers since 2010. The

subjects cover current affairs, characters, occupation, history, education, and tourism, economy and trade, science and technology, sports, health, culture, literature and society etc.. In addition, we insisted on no negative guidance when choosing corpus, and the materials did not involve religions and sensitive political issues.

On the basis of collecting a large amount of original corpus, we systematically organize the corpus materials and draw up the contents and ways of the annotation, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3 Corpus Annotation**

Tagged Content	Tagged Symbol	Tagged Content	Tagged Symbol
Title	<TITLE>...<TIT>	Video	<VIDEO>...<VID>
Spoken English	<SPOKEN ENGLISH>...<SE>	Audio	<AUDIO>...<AUD>
Short Conversation	<SHORT CONVERSATION>...<SC>	Keys	<KEYS>...<KEY>
Long Conversation	<LONG CONVERSATION>...<LC>	Script	<SCRIPT>...<SCR>
Passage	<PASSAGE>...<PAS>	Topic	<TOPIC>...<TOP><
Passage Dictation	<PASSAGE DICTATION>...<PD>	Source	SOURCE>...<SOU>
Reading Long Passages	<READING LONG PASSAGES>...<FR>	Type	<TYPE>...<TYP>
Reading in Depth	<READING IN DEPTH> ...<RI>	Time	<TIME>...<TIM>
Songs	<SONGS>...<SON>	Size	<SIZE>...<SIZ>
Movies	<MOVIES>...<MOV>	Writings	<WRITINGS>...<WRI>
Culture Talks	<CULTURES TALKS>...<CT>	Translation	<TRANSLATION>...<TRA>

Table 3 shows that this study involved 22 items such as titles in terms of corpus content annotation. We use the first three letters of a single English word or the acronym of two English words to avoid repetition and place the notation in the international common angle brackets <>. For example, <TITLE> *title* is identified by <TIT>; and <SPOKEN ENGLISH> means short spoken English, using the acronym <SE> of the two words.

### **The Construction of Corpus-based College English network teaching resources platform**

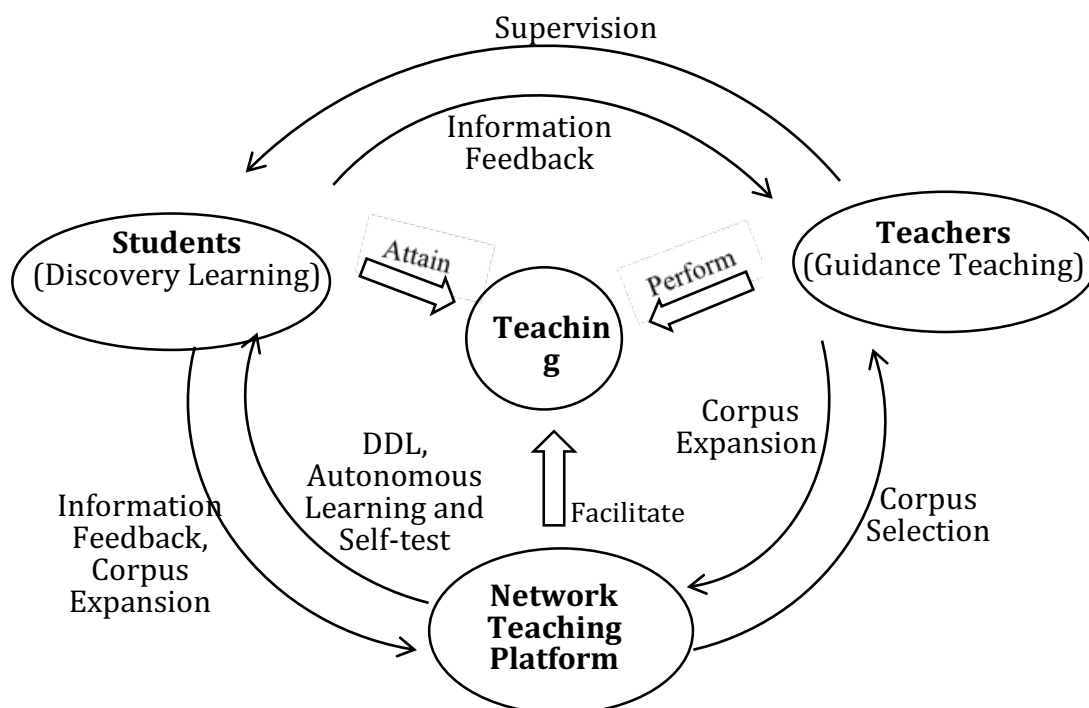
After the initial establishment of the corpus, designed a Web-based college English network teaching resources platform. The platform publishes an application system on the campus network through a dedicated network server to ensure the service quality of the teaching platform and the security of platform data.

We use different methods of judgment for different corpora and question types. Because objective questions (mainly including the traditional Reading Comprehension and Blanks Filling etc.) have the character of unique key, we store the test questions in the database and give students score through comparing the students' keys with standard keys by the program design. While subjective questions (including Words, Phrases and Passage Dictations, Writings and Translation, etc.) have the characters of diversity and flexibility of keys, so we use the parser, *Link Grammar Paser 5.5* (developed by computer linguists at Carnegie Mellon University of the United States, which has strong capability to recognize and analyze English syntax), to analyze subjective questions in College English Testing. (ie, correlative grammar and syntax parser).



### Research on Corpus-based College English Network Teaching Model

On the basis of the platform built, we combine the classroom teaching of our university to explore the corpus-based college English teaching mode. The Network Teaching Mode Layout is shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3 Corpus-based College English Network Teaching Model Layout**

This model can be summarized as "1+2+1" Teaching Mode, that is "One foundation, Two platforms, One purpose": the Teaching Mode constructs two platforms of Interactive Teaching in class and online DDL & Autonomous Learning out of class based on the corpus. Teachers may achieve the ultimate purpose of improving students' comprehensive English application ability and cultivate modern application talents with international perspectives.

This model follows the teaching principle of "Teaching Students according to their Aptitude", aiming to fully mobilize the enthusiasm of college English teachers and students, and to play the leading role of teachers and the subjectivity of students. On the one hand, teachers can use the corpus system platform to select rich and real teaching resources, and better carry out teaching design and teaching resources development, in order to give full play to the leading role of teachers in the classroom English teaching, supervisors and facilitators. Guidance teaching is conducted to guide students to observe, summarize and generalize the phenomenon of language use in the corpus, and to conduct self-discovery English learning. At the same time, teachers can also expand corpus according to the feedback from students' teaching information and the needs of the times in order to facilitate future English teaching.

On the other hand, under the guidance and supervision of the teachers and the help and cooperation of the students, the students can select the learning content on the corpus resource system platform based on the unit theme of the textbooks according to their own learning needs, and carry out related information retrieval. Furthermore, students can conduct DDL and autonomous learning to consolidate the effect of students' classroom learning, and finally achieve the goal of cultivating students' self-learning ability and improving students' English application ability.

## CONCLUSION

In short, the corpus-based college English network teaching resources platform, constructed based on the information technology, can not only make college English teaching and learning free from the limitations of time and space, but also better play roles of developmental, retrievable, and researchable features of corpus resources in the teachers' teaching and students' learning process.

This study will provide teachers with the possibility to implement personalized teaching for different levels of students, while providing students with interesting and targeted learning tools and learning resources. Students can conduct DDL and autonomous learning according to their actual level and time. And the skills of students' English language application, ESP application and intercultural communication will be improved rapidly.

This paper mainly conducts preliminary research and design on the construction of corpus-based college English network teaching resources platform. In the next stage, based on the network platform, we will conduct a large number of teaching practice researches according to the requirements of the *Teaching Guideines* and the university English teaching reform program. And we will strive to further promote the reform of college English teaching.

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**The author's Profile:**

**Zhenying Li** is an associate professor in the School of Foreign Languages at Guangxi Normal University for Nationalities, Chongzuo Guangxi, China. He got his M. A. from China West Normal University. His research fields include: Corpus Linguistics, English Pedagogy and Translation Studies.