

RESEARCH ON CHALLENGES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHING STAFF – TAKING FOREIGN LANGUAGE UNIVERSITIES AS AN EXAMPLE

JING DONG*

*Corresponding author: dj7762@sina.com

Abstract. With the accelerated development of globalization, higher education in China in foreign languages is constantly undergoing innovative transformations. There are increasing demands for the cultivation of interdisciplinary talents in foreign languages. The shortage of specialized teaching staff, particularly high-level talents, is a critical issue that urgently needs to be addressed in developing and transforming foreign language universities. How to effectively structure the foreign language teaching staff, ensure the sustainable development of the teaching faculty, and strengthen the ideological and political development of the teaching staff are important challenges that must be resolved in the process of building a high-level university. The modern tendencies of teaching foreign languages in higher school are analyzed. Reforming the educational process in HEI according to the European standards is taken into consideration. The crucial objective of teaching foreign languages nowadays is the student's communicative competence. Qualified language preparation is impossible without using innovative educational technologies. For this purpose, the programs of the teachers' continuing professional development ought to be designed to enhance their cross-cultural communication skills and global outlook. They can be achieved through international academic exchanges, foreign training, and joint research with international institutions. The modern methods of teaching foreign languages using innovative educational technologies are revealed. A more scientific and reasonable evaluation of teaching staff should be made, such as the teaching performance and research achievements, as well as the contribution to the development of an international perspective and abilities in cross-cultural communication. This will inspire enthusiasm among teachers to constantly improve and innovate their teaching activities and will, therefore, stimulate the general development of teaching staff in foreign language universities.

Keywords: foreign language, teaching staff, teacher team, development and construction, explore research.

1. INTRODUCTION

The teaching staff play a crucial and decisive role in the development evaluation of various universities and is an important indicator in the system for the revitalization and healthy, sustainable development of higher education (Hong, 2021; Hu, 2022). The construction of the teaching staff is the foundation for the internationalization and diversified development of education and also an important talent support for universities to continuously deepen educational and teaching reforms (Nam et al., 2023; Wu & Shafait, 2024). The 20th Third Plenary Session pointed out that Education, science and technology, and talent function as basic and strategic underpinnings for Chinese modernization. We

must fully implement the strategy of invigorating China through science and education, the strategy of developing a quality workforce, and the innovation-driven development strategy, making coordinated efforts to promote integrated reform of institutions and mechanisms about education, science and technology, and talent, and improve the new system for mobilizing resources nationwide, to boost the overall performance of our country's innovation system. The first medium – to long-term strategic plan in China with the theme of educational modernization, "China's Education Modernization 2035," also mentioned that a high-quality, specialized and innovative teacher team is the key to accelerating the modernization of education. As a foreign language university, Xi'an International Studies University is the main body for cultivating language and interdisciplinary talents with international perspectives and cross-cultural communication abilities. How to leverage the advantages of the institution requires continuous exploration and reform of the construction and management system of the teaching staff to achieve a talent training model that is in line with the national conditions. The first and foremost issue is the construction of the teaching staff. The reasonable layout and overall level of the faculty team in universities directly determine the overall level of education and training. Therefore, the construction of the faculty team will be an important factor reflecting the future development capacity of universities.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The development of an educational program plays a decisive role in foreign language education. Research shows that well-designed educational programs should meet institutional goals and meet the needs of different groups of students. Proper allocation of resources, including teacher training, materials, and technology, is essential for effective language teaching. Effective assessment methods, including formative and summative assessment, are critical to measuring student progress and program success. Language education in higher education institutions contributes to the development of global competence. Language proficiency opens up international perspectives for students and promotes intercultural understanding. Case studies from various institutions demonstrate successful foreign language teaching strategies. These real-world examples provide insight into effective approaches. The literature review highlights the difficulties and opportunities of developing strategies for teaching foreign languages in higher education institutions. It emphasizes the need for adaptive, student-centered, and technologically advanced strategies. The importance of curriculum development, resource allocation, and assessment methods are also highlighted. Building on the results of previous research, we aim to provide a framework for exploring innovative teaching strategies tailored to the unique needs of students in higher education (Cao, 2019; Hong, 2021; Liu & Guo, 2010; Nam et al., 2023; Zhang & Zhang, 2015; Zhuang, 2022; Yuan, 2024).

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. current situation of foreign language teacher team construction

(1) There is a significant gap between the supply and demand of teaching staff and the scale of school development

Taking Xi'an International Studies University as an example, the university currently offers 57 undergraduate majors across 7 disciplines, including literature, economics, management, law, pedagogy, science, and art. Among these, 30 are language majors, with 20 non-common language majors supporting the construction of the "Belt and Road" initiative. It is the only ordinary university in northwest China with a complete range of major foreign languages. The international coverage of languages has further expanded the influence of the school in the national talent cultivation. However, there is an urgent need to supplement the teaching staff. The quality and quantity of teachers for non-common languages, especially in some minor languages, are difficult to guarantee, making it impossible to build a well-structured teaching team. In practical teaching, the number of teachers is often

insufficient, which affects the stable development of disciplines and the quality of education.

(2) Lack of disciplinary flagship talents and insufficient regional attractiveness for high-end talents

In recent years, major universities across the country have continuously expanded their enrollment scale, increased their professional offerings, and faced a shortage of high-quality faculty. This has prompted many universities in the eastern and southern regions to utilize their geographical, policy, and salary advantages to compete for high-level scholars and leading academic disciplines in the central and western regions, making it more difficult to build a high-level talent team in these universities. Compared to the southeast, the northwest region has a significant gap in policy guidance and recruitment efforts. The attractiveness of high-level talents is low, and the lack of flagship talents also weakens the attraction of universities to talents and team building to a certain extent. High-level construction has become a bottleneck restricting the development of education in Northwest universities. It is particularly important to address the shortage of discipline-based talents and increase the construction of high-level talent teams.

(3) The tracking guidance system for new teachers' professional training and actual teaching ability needs to be improved

With the development of China's multilateral foreign policy and the promotion of the high-level strategy of the "Belt and Road", China also interacts frequently in politics, military affairs, diplomacy, economic construction, cultural exchanges, and other areas, which is leading to a new demand for foreign exchange and language talents. To meet the requirements of education and teaching, as well as the growing need for teaching staff in various languages, especially non-common languages, universities are expanding their recruitment efforts, attracting teachers from across the country and around the world. A large number of foreign language teachers generally have an international education background, which has played a positive role in promoting the school's international education concept. However, due to limitations in their professional or educational background, most new teachers have not received training and practice in systematic teaching methods. There are still significant differences in educational and teaching concepts, research on teaching methods, practical application of teaching theories, classroom effectiveness, and student development. With the increasing emphasis on pre-job training in the education system and various universities, newly recruited teachers are required to undergo centralized pre-job professional training. However, the long-term, targeted tracking and guidance system necessary for the practical teaching process of new teachers is still lacking.

(4) The sense of professional responsibility and honor recognition among university teachers has generally declined

At present, the age composition of the university teaching staff is gradually becoming younger, from the main force of the past "50s and 60s" to the main group of "70s and 80s". Some scarce languages have even seen the emergence of "90s and 10s". The younger age structure of the teaching staff had a positive impact on stimulating overall teaching vitality, diversifying teaching methods, and enriching classroom formats. However, this shift also highlights a problem: the older generation of teachers had a strong sense of professional identity, dedication, and responsibility, along with a clear awareness of the collective good and educational mission. In contrast, younger teachers tend to have more distinct personalities and stronger self-awareness but generally lack a sense of collective honor and dedication.

According to statistical data, in a survey on teachers' sense of honor and responsibility, only 34.68% of the 320 questionnaires submitted to university teachers expressed a sense of honor and responsibility towards themselves. This indicates that as universities gradually shift to a younger teaching staff, the sense of professional responsibility and honor recognition is not as strong as desired, which is an issue that universities need to address in the construction of their teaching teams.

3.2. Suggestions for further strengthening the construction of the teaching staff

(1) Implementation of a flexible employment mechanism to vigorously attract outstanding talents from both home and abroad and enhance the development of the teaching staff

In the context of the shortage of outstanding talents in non-general language majors in foreign language universities, employers should adhere to the employment philosophy of “making the most of people and not being limited to one style”, continuously improve the teaching and research work environment at the school level, leave provide ample room for development for incoming teachers, and continuously increase investment in financial support, to ensure that talents are “willing to come, able to stay, and used well”. In terms of high-level talents, a flexible referral mechanism should be adopted to actively attract renowned experts and scholars from both home and abroad to participate in the school's teaching and research construction. Various forms should be used to invite renowned scholars to guide the construction of the school's teaching team. Efforts should be made to increase the invitation of internationally renowned scholars to give lectures at the school, and the “invite in, Going Global Strategy” teacher construction concept should be implemented to consolidate the school's international education philosophy, making foreign language universities truly become incubators for international education. Shaanxi has numerous universities and abundant educational resources. We should actively seek policy support, break down educational barriers between different universities, and build a collaborative innovation and education platform that covers a wide range of fields, disciplines, and levels. At the same time, we will appoint outstanding talents from society as guest professors and part-time master's supervisors. These flexible forms of employment will play a positive and long-term role in cultivating advantageous disciplines, improving academic level, and maximizing the benefits of talent introduction for the school.

(2) Give full play to the role of “mentoring” and establish a sound mechanism for tracking and guiding new teachers' practical teaching

At present, pre-service training for teachers in universities across the province has been systematically implemented year after year. The training provides theoretical guidance from several aspects such as education, educational psychology, educational policies and regulations, and teacher professional ethics, enabling new teachers to familiarize themselves with various rules and basic teaching concepts. However, as a new force in education, compared with experienced teachers with rich practical abilities in teaching, there is generally a lack of theoretical reserves in education and teaching, insufficient investment in teaching research, in-depth analysis and summarization of problems that arise in the practical teaching process, and practical ability to solve teaching problems. In response to these issues, new teachers' training should not be limited to short-term theoretical guidance. Each university should establish its own practical teaching guidance and training mechanism, deepen the training content, and develop targeted teaching courses according to the specific needs of the school. Specific guidance should be provided in the process of preparing lesson plans, writing courseware, classroom management, and imparting skills, transitioning from theory to practice. This will help new teachers fully prepare for entering the “first classroom” through practical application. At the same time, we will leverage the role of retired high-quality teachers by selecting and hiring senior teachers with high teaching and research levels, rich teaching experience, a passion for education, and good health to undertake the task of cultivating young teachers. Based on the basic form of “mentoring new teachers with experienced ones”, we will provide planned, required, and guided training to help young teachers grow rapidly, accelerate the transition between old and new teachers, and ensure the high-quality and efficient transformation of new teachers from theoretical to practical teaching abilities. We will also establish a sound monitoring system for the teaching quality of young teachers and develop a reasonable and feasible evaluation plan to be conducted within a certain period after they enter the workplace. This will include assessments, summaries, and evaluations from the perspectives of teaching

standards, work status, and classroom teaching quality. These evaluations will help identify the advantages and characteristics of young teachers in teaching, as well as the existing problems and shortcomings. Based on the actual situation of the profession, targeted improvement methods can then be proposed to address issues and deficiencies in the practical teaching process, promoting the enhancement of their teaching abilities and levels.

(3) Strengthening the ideological and political education of university teachers to enhance their sense of discipline and responsibility

With the comprehensive expansion of foreign language exchange among domestic universities, especially foreign language universities, the ideological impact on university teachers, particularly young teachers, has increased.

While their self-awareness is strong, their sense of discipline and responsibility is relatively weak. In response to this, we must first focus on the key areas and take Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era as a guide. We should strengthen the political function of teacher party branches, fully utilize the roles of the Party Committee and the Teacher Work Department, and strictly implement the Ten Guidelines for Teacher Professional Behavior.

Our focus should be on educating young teachers about national conditions, establishing a model for teacher ethics, creating a robust supervision and inspection reporting mechanism, and improving the overall political quality and ethical standards of the university teaching staff through better systems and management.

In the process of normalized teaching, strengthening teachers' ideological and belief education should be a primary task in daily political theory learning. The spirit of ownership and value shaping should be effectively integrated into classroom teaching, scientific research practice, and other activities. Secondly, we will vigorously promote the construction of teacher ethics and style, understand and address the teachers' ideological and political status, and actively engage in educational guidance. In daily work, it is necessary to continuously strengthen teachers' familiarity with understanding school management regulations. We should explore establishing an evaluation system for the sense of responsibility of party and government organs and faculty, identify shortcomings through evaluation analysis, assist faculty, especially new ones, in their ideological growth and professional positioning, and provide targeted ideological and political training. This will help strengthen their ideological cohesion and overall awareness.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China has consistently prioritized education as a major national and party plan. Significant decisions have been made to accelerate the modernization of education and build a strong education nation. General Secretary Xi emphasized during the fifth collective study session of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee that transitioning from an education powerhouse to an education stronghold represents a systematic leap and qualitative change driven by reform and innovation. The construction of the teaching staff is a dynamic process that aligns closely with national policies and continues to evolve. It is a crucial indicator of a university's core competitiveness, reflecting the soft power of teaching quality and scientific research development and serving as a guide for the university's future development direction.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The current education sector is undergoing significant changes, and there is an urgent need for exploration and transformation in foreign language universities. In this process, constructing a composite reform and teacher team development is particularly important. The construction of the

teaching staff, talent reserve, and subsequent training of foreign language universities should be based on the school's future development goals, self-construction status, and the development characteristics of disciplines and majors. Strategies should be adapted to local conditions and continually explored to ensure long-term sustainable development.

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Jing Dong, Deputy Director of the Finance Section, Xi'an International Studies University, Xi'an, China;

ORCID ID: 0009-0008-7681-586X

Address: Jing Dong (deputy director of the finance section), Xi'an International Studies University St.South Wenyuan, Xi'an, China.

E-mail: dj7762@sina.com

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Цзін Донг. Дослідження викликів у формуванні університетського викладацького складу – на прикладі університетів іноземних мов. *Журнал Прикарпатського університету імені Василя Стефаника*, 12 (1) (2025), 135-141.

З прискореним розвитком глобалізації вищої освіти вивчення іноземних мов у Китаї постійно зазнає інноваційних трансформацій. Зростає попит на підготовку міждисциплінарних кадрів з іноземних мов. Брак спеціалізованих викладачів, особливо висококваліфікованих, є критичною проблемою, яку необхідно

невідкладно вирішувати в процесі розвитку та трансформації університетів. Як ефективно структурувати педагогічний склад, забезпечити сталий розвиток викладацького складу та зміцнити ідеологічно-політичний розвиток викладачів – це важливі завдання, які потрібно вирішити в процесі створення університету високого рівня. У статті проаналізовано сучасні тенденції розвитку методів навчання іноземних мов з урахуванням реформи освітнього процесу у закладах вищої освіти відповідно до європейських стандартів. На думку автора, ключовою метою викладання іноземних мов сьогодні є комунікативна компетенція студента, а кваліфікована мовна підготовка неможлива без використання інноваційних освітніх технологій. Для цього програми безперервного професійного розвитку викладачів повинні бути спрямовані на покращення їх навичок міжкультурної комунікації та глобального світогляду. У статті зазначено, що цілі можуть бути досягнуті через міжнародні академічні обміни, навчання та спільні дослідження з міжнародними установами. Автором розкрито сучасні методи навчання іноземних мов за допомогою інноваційних освітніх технологій, а також наголошено на необхідності більш наукової та обґрунтованої оцінки викладацького складу, зокрема за результативністю викладання, наукових досягнень, внеском у розвиток міжнародного мислення і навичок міжкультурної комунікації. За висновком автора це сприятиме безперервному підвищенню кваліфікації та самоудосконаленню викладачів, використанню інновацій в освітній діяльності, що, своєю чергою, допоможе загальному розвитку викладацького складу в університетах іноземних мов.

Ключові слова: іноземні мови, викладацький склад, команда викладачів, розвиток і розбудова, дослідження.