

# The Enhancement of English Comprehensive Competence among Master's Degree Students in Physical Education: Contemporary Value, Realistic Dilemmas, and Mitigation Pathways

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**Abstract:** This Against the dual backdrop of the strategy of building a leading sporting nation and the opening-up of education in the new era, English comprehensive competence has become a critical variable constraining the academic development, career competitiveness, and international communication of master's degree students in physical education. This paper systematically analyzes the issue from three dimensions: contemporary value, realistic dilemmas, and mitigation pathways. the findings indicate that enhancing English competence not only serves the construction of national sports discourse power but also aligns with the demand for internationalization in the discipline of physical education. Currently, students face structural dilemmas such as unfocused curriculum orientation, disconnection between learning and application, insufficient teaching faculty, unitary assessment methods, and lack of motivation. Accordingly, five mitigation pathways are proposed: curriculum system reconstruction, teaching model innovation, faculty empowerment, assessment mechanism reform, and learning environment cultivation. This study aims to provide theoretical reference and practical guidance for English teaching reform in postgraduate physical education programs.

**Keywords:** Master'S Degree Students in Physical Education; Postgraduate; English; Comprehensive Competence

## 1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of the new era, China's sports sector is at a critical juncture of transitioning from a "large sporting nation" to a "leading sporting nation." At the same time, the strategies of opening-up in education and the

construction of "Double First-Class" initiatives are continuously deepening, imposing unprecedented demands on the international competitiveness of high-level sports talents [1]. As the core group of high-level talent cultivation in the discipline of physical education, master's degree students in physical education possess English comprehensive competence—including reading, writing, listening and speaking, translation, and intercultural communication skills—that is no longer merely a language course objective but a key variable directly affecting academic innovation, career development, and the construction of international discourse power. However, in reality, English teaching for these students has long faced multiple dilemmas: unfocused curriculum orientation, disconnection between learning and application, structural deficiencies in teaching faculty, unitary assessment methods, and insufficient learner motivation. These problems make it difficult to meet the urgent demand for compound, internationally oriented sports talents in the new era [2]. How to systematically enhance the English comprehensive competence of master's degree students in physical education has become an important issue that needs to be urgently addressed in postgraduate teaching reform in sports institutions. From a policy perspective, the national Opinions on Accelerating the Reform and Development of Postgraduate Education in the New Era explicitly calls for "enhancing postgraduates' international communication and cooperation abilities" while the College English Teaching Guidelines emphasize the priority of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at the postgraduate level [3]. the discipline of physical education is distinctly practical, international, and intercultural. Whether tracking the frontiers of international sports science, participating in the organization

of large-scale events, or promoting traditional Chinese sports culture to the world, English is an indispensable tool. However, existing research mostly focuses on undergraduate English teaching for physical education majors. Studies targeting master's degree students in physical education are notably insufficient, and most remain at the level of empirical description, lacking systematic theoretical construction and multi-dimensional pathway analysis [4]. Therefore, this study takes "the enhancement of English comprehensive competence among master's degree students in physical education" as its core issue and attempts to conduct an in-depth exploration from three dimensions—contemporary value, realistic dilemmas, and mitigation pathways—aiming to fill the gap in systematic research in this field. This study adopts a combination of literature analysis and theoretical deduction. First, it reviews relevant policy documents, academic papers, and teaching reports related to English teaching for master's degree students in physical education, identifying core characteristics and developmental trajectories. Second, based on ESP theory, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) theory, and the concept of New Liberal Arts construction, it constructs a three-dimensional analytical framework of "value—dilemma—pathway". Finally, drawing on observations of teaching practices in several sports institutions, it proposes targeted and operational enhancement strategies. The paper follows the logical progression of "why to enhance—where obstacles lie—how to resolve". Part 1 explains the contemporary value of enhancing English comprehensive competence from five aspects, answering the "necessity" question. Part 2 reveals realistic dilemmas from five dimensions—curriculum, teaching, faculty, assessment, psychology and environment—answering the "crux" question. Part 3 systematically proposes five mitigation pathways: curriculum reconstruction, teaching innovation, faculty empowerment, assessment reform, and ecological cultivation, answering the "countermeasure" question. The innovations of this study are mainly reflected in three aspects. First, it breaks through previous single-dimensional discussions of teaching methods and places English competence enhancement within the intersecting perspectives of the leading sporting nation strategy, internationalization of postgraduate education,

and New Liberal Arts construction. Second, it explicitly proposes a three-in-one ESP course cluster design of "General+Academic+Professional" distinguishing the different needs of academic and professional master's students, thereby enhancing the targeting and stratification of the curriculum system. Third, it constructs a closed-loop enhancement model of "goal—content—method—assessment—environment" emphasizing the synergy and linkage among various elements to avoid fragmented reforms. It should be noted that this study focuses on theoretical construction and pathway design and has not yet conducted large-scale empirical testing. Subsequent research may build on this paper by selecting typical sports institutions for action research or quasi-experimental studies to further verify the effectiveness and applicability boundaries of the proposed pathways. In addition, there are significant differences among master's degree students in physical education in terms of background, English proficiency, and career expectations. How to achieve personalized support within a general pathway framework is also a direction for future deepening. It is hoped that this study will provide theoretical reference and practical guidance for English teaching reform in postgraduate physical education programs and will attract more scholars to pay attention to the interdisciplinary field of "sports+foreign languages," jointly promoting the overall enhancement of the international competitiveness of China's sports talents.

## **2. Contemporary Value of Enhancing English Comprehensive Competence among Master's Degree Students in Physical Education**

### **2.1 Serving the Strategy of Building a Leading Sporting Nation and Strengthening International Sports Discourse Power**

The conceptual innovation embedded in the English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools (2017 Edition, Revised in 2020) represents far more than piecemeal modifications to teaching methods; it signifies a systemic restoration and structural reconstruction of the educational value of the English subject [2]. This reconstruction is predicated on a view of language education not as the mere acquisition of a set of skills, but as a formative process that shapes learners'

intellectual and moral sensibilities. Its connotation can be encapsulated as "one core, dual pathways, and an integrated cycle": with English subject core competencies as the ultimate goal, it advances through two practical pathways—the exploration of thematic meanings and the activity-based approach to English learning—relying on the synergistic mechanism of the integration of teaching, learning, and assessment. Together, these elements drive a profound transformation of instruction from knowledge transmission to competency cultivation. Its connotation can be encapsulated as "one core, dual pathways, and an integrated cycle": with English subject core competencies as the ultimate goal, it advances through two practical pathways—the exploration of thematic meanings and the activity-based approach to English learning—relying on the synergistic mechanism of the integration of teaching, learning, and assessment. Together, these elements drive a profound transformation of instruction from knowledge transmission to competency cultivation. The internal logic of this conceptual system is manifested as a shift from symbolic learning to meaning construction. It requires instruction to move beyond the isolated focus on discrete knowledge points such as vocabulary and grammar, instead guiding students to develop integrated competencies that merge language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning capability through authentic language use and deep cultural engagement. Therefore, the essence of the New Curriculum Standards concept is to advocate a pedagogy that combines immersion with construction, transforming English learning into a meaningful journey where students explore the world, understand themselves, participate in society, and achieve spiritual growth in the process.

## **2.2 Following the Trend of Internationalization in Postgraduate Education and Expanding Academic Development Space**

The construction of "Double First-Class" initiatives and the connotative development of postgraduate education require the discipline of physical education to accelerate its internationalization. Cutting-edge achievements in high-level sports research—such as exercise physiology, sports engineering, and sports big data—are almost all first published in English. If

English competence is weak, postgraduates will long rely on Chinese second-hand literature that lags behind by several years, making it difficult to grasp international research trends, let alone publish in high-level journals such as *Sports Medicine* and *Journal of Sport Management*. Furthermore, academic exchange activities such as joint training, short-term visits, and international conferences impose clear requirements on comprehensive English proficiency. It can be said that English competence is not only a tool but also academic capital—it determines whether postgraduates can enter international academic networks, gain recognition from overseas supervisors, and possess the basic conditions to apply for overseas doctoral programs upon graduation.

## **2.3 Empowering Career Development Competitiveness and Broadening Employment Channels for Sports Talents**

The employment directions of physical education master's graduates have expanded from traditional primary and secondary school physical education teachers and coaches to emerging fields such as sports industry operation, sports diplomacy, international sports marketing, sports translation, and sports rehabilitation guidance. Taking sports event operation as an example, international events such as marathons, e-sports world championships, and winter sports are being intensively held in China, requiring a large number of compound talents who understand both physical education and English communication. In reality, many physical education master's students miss high-quality positions in foreign enterprises, international sports organizations, and foreign-related sports institutions due to insufficient English expression ability. In contrast, those with good English competence are often capable of duties such as interpreting for foreign coaches, receiving international athletes, reviewing English contracts, and expanding overseas markets, with significantly better salary levels and development space than their peers. Therefore, English competence directly translates into career competitiveness and employment bargaining power.

## **2.4 Promoting the Cross-cultural Construction and Local Output of the Knowledge System in Physical Education**

The value of English competence lies not only in

“input”—learning advanced foreign theories and technologies—but also in “output”—disseminating Chinese sports wisdom to the world. China possesses unique knowledge systems in traditional martial arts, sports for health, intangible cultural heritage in sports, and the governance experience of the national sports system. However, these contents have long faced the dilemma of “cannot be expressed” or “cannot be spread even if expressed” the key reason being the lack of sports talents who can use an international language for academic and systematic expression. Enhancing the English comprehensive competence of physical education master’s students can cultivate a group of talents capable of writing martial arts culture papers in English, introducing traditional ethnic sports, and explaining Chinese sports policies, thereby promoting Chinese sports academia from “following” to “running alongside” and even “leading” achieving genuine academic dialogue and cultural mutual learning.

### **2.5 Responding to the Call for New Liberal Arts Construction and Promoting the Interdisciplinary Integration of Physical Education and Foreign Languages**

The New Liberal Arts emphasizes breaking down disciplinary barriers and cultivating compound, applied, and innovative talents. Interdisciplinary fields between physical education and foreign languages—such as sports discourse analysis, sports translation studies, and international sports communication—are becoming new academic growth points. However, the current training systems of these two disciplines are relatively closed: foreign language students lack sports expertise, while physical education students have weak English competence. Enhancing the English comprehensive competence of physical education master’s students is essentially cultivating the emerging direction of “sports foreign languages” in the interdisciplinary zone. Physical education master’s students with a good English foundation can engage in research on the standardization of sports terminology, practice of event interpreting, and production of English-language sports media content, injecting new methodologies and problem awareness into the study of sports humanities and sociology, while also feeding back into the applied fields of foreign language disciplines.

## **3. Realistic Dilemmas in Enhancing English Comprehensive Competence among Master’s Degree Students in Physical Education**

### **3.1 Unfocused Curriculum Orientation: General English Dominates, ESP Absent**

Currently, English courses for postgraduates in physical education institutions generally follow the undergraduate curriculum system dominated by General English (EGP), with content focusing on daily communication, basic grammar, and test-taking skills, having very little connection with the discipline of physical education. Students report that they “learn tourism English and daily-life English but need to translate international sports literature and write English abstracts” highlighting a prominent disconnection between learning and application. the opening rate of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), especially in the direction of sports English, is less than 30%, and most such courses are electives with short class hours, shallow content, and lack of systematicity. the fuzzy curriculum orientation prevents students from establishing effective connections between language learning and professional development, causing English courses to be seen as “mandatory courses to be got through” with low levels of learning engagement and sense of achievement. More critically, the curriculum lacks stratified design and fails to distinguish the different needs of academic master’s students (who need academic English writing and literature reading skills) and professional master’s students (who need oral communication and practical writing in professional scenarios).

### **3.2 Rigid Teaching Models: Teacher-centered, Insufficient Practicality and Interaction**

From classroom observations, postgraduate English teaching remains dominated by intensive reading of texts, grammar explanations, and vocabulary tests, with teachers holding the discourse floor and students in a passive receiving state. Modern teaching methods such as Project-Based Learning (PBL), flipped classrooms, and academic English workshops are rarely applied. Oral training sessions are often compressed or omitted, and even when classroom questions are raised, they remain at the level of low-order memory responses, lacking authentic communicative situations and critical thinking tasks. Homework often consists of copying words or completing exercises, with

few higher-order tasks such as simulating international academic conferences, writing research proposals in English, or presenting English literature reviews. This teaching model tends to produce “dumb English” and “test-oriented English”—students can understand some literature but cannot speak, and can write simple sentences but cannot write academic abstracts. In addition, class sizes are generally large (40-60 students), making it difficult for teachers to implement individualized guidance and formative assessment, and interaction quality cannot be guaranteed.

### **3.3 Structural Faculty Shortcomings: Language Teachers Lack Sports Background, Professional Teachers Lack English Proficiency**

The vast majority of English teachers in physical education institutions graduate from English language and literature or English education programs and lack systematic training in the discipline of physical education. When explaining sports professional texts, they often can only provide literal translations, unable to deeply understand the internal logic of professional concepts such as exercise physiology or sports sociology, causing teaching to remain at the vocabulary level and failing to achieve the deep goals of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). On the other hand, although supervisors and professors in physical education possess profound disciplinary knowledge, most have limited English proficiency (especially in speaking and writing), making it difficult to provide effective English academic training for students in group meetings, thesis guidance, and international exchanges. Thus emerges an awkward situation: English teachers do not understand sports, sports teachers do not use English, and students become “information islands” between the two groups. The severe shortage of double-qualified teachers with interdisciplinary backgrounds constitutes a deep bottleneck constraining the enhancement of English competence.

### **3.4 Unitary Assessment Mechanism: Summative Assessment Dominates, Lack of Competence Orientation**

At present, the assessment method for English courses for physical education master’s students is mostly a final closed-book written examination, with question types mainly

including multiple-choice questions, reading comprehension, translation, and short essay writing (usually in the style of CET-4 or CET-6), accounting for 60%-80% of the total grade. Regular grades are mainly based on attendance and homework completion, lacking process-based assessment of comprehensive competences such as academic communication ability, literature review ability, and oral presentation ability. This assessment orientation directly affects students’ learning behavior—they tend to do test preparation, memorize templates, and practice test-taking skills while neglecting the cultivation of authentic language application ability. More importantly, the existing assessment system hardly includes English tasks related to the degree thesis, such as writing an English abstract, presenting the thesis proposal in English, or simulating submission to an international journal. There is a “decoupling” between English grades and thesis quality as well as research output, further weakening students’ learning motivation. Without competence-oriented assessment, there is no competence-oriented learning.

### **3.5 Coexistence of Weakened Learner Motivation and English Anxiety: Dual Psychological and Environmental Constraints**

The student source structure of master’s degree students in physical education is complex, including both those who directly progressed from undergraduate physical education majors and those from cross-disciplines such as sports training and physical education pedagogy, resulting in uneven English foundations. Some students have low scores in the college entrance examination English or CET-4, and when faced with the high demands of academic English at the postgraduate level, they are prone to develop fear of difficulty and self-denial, forming “English anxiety”—that is, intense tension, avoidance, and even fear when using English. At the same time, the language learning ecological environment in physical education institutions is poor: there are very few scenarios for using English on campus, the utilization rate of foreign language literature resources in libraries is low, academic lectures rarely feature foreign experts, and there is a lack of atmosphere for English communication among peers. Under the group stereotype that “physical education students generally have poor English” students are prone to develop a “collective laissez-faire” mentality,

thinking that “learning or not learning is the same.” the lack of motivation and the lack of environmental support reinforce each other, forming a vicious cycle that makes autonomous learning and language practice outside the classroom almost stagnant.

#### **4. Mitigation Pathways for Enhancing English Comprehensive Competence among Master’s Degree Students in Physical Education**

##### **4.1 Reconstructing the Curriculum System: Building a Three-in-One ESP Course Cluster of “General+Academic+Professional”**

The key to resolving the unfocused curriculum orientation is to shift from General English to English for Specific Purposes and construct a stratified, needs-oriented ESP curriculum system. Specifically: First, the foundational level is “General Academic English” aimed at all students, focusing on training in literature retrieval and speed reading, academic listening, and basic academic writing to consolidate fundamental academic communication skills. Second, the advanced level is divided into two directions: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). Academic master’s students take the EAP module, which includes content such as international journal paper writing and submission, oral presentations at academic conferences, and research proposal writing. Professional master’s students take the EOP module, focusing on real-world work scenarios such as sports event English, sports rehabilitation English, sports business negotiation, and communication with foreign coaches. Third, the extension level offers a series of micro-elective courses or workshops, such as “Sports Terminology” “Interpretation of English Referee Rules” “Sports Translation Practice” and “Selected Readings of International Sports Organization Documents” to meet students’ individual needs. the curriculum design should follow the concept of Content and Language Integration, with all language materials coming from authentic sports academic literature or professional texts, achieving the goal of “learning English while studying the major, and using the major while learning English.”

##### **4.2 Innovating Teaching Models: Implementing Task-Driven and Flipped**

##### **Classroom Blended Teaching**

The core of teaching model reform is a paradigm shift from “teaching” to “learning” allowing students to construct language competence through authentic, meaningful tasks. A blended teaching model of “pre-class online self-study+in-class offline deepening+post-class project extension” is recommended. Before class, teachers release micro-videos, excerpts of original literature, clips of English academic lectures, and other resources, and students complete low-order tasks such as vocabulary preparation and content prediction through online platforms. Class time is mainly used for interactive, critical, and productive activities, such as five-minute oral reports simulating international academic conferences, small-group collaborative critical analysis of English literature, role-playing of statements and Q&A sessions in international sports organization meetings, and peer review of English abstracts. After class, authentic or simulation-based applied tasks are assigned, such as writing an inquiry email to an international journal editor, creating an English academic poster, or recording a short English academic video. At the same time, the concept of the “divided classroom” is introduced, using half of the class time for teachers’ intensive explanation of core language strategies and the other half for student group discussions and presentations, ensuring that each student has at least 2-3 complete English academic output experiences per semester. Technology empowerment is also crucial, utilizing AI oral practice partners, automated writing evaluation systems, and corpus retrieval tools to provide students with low-cost, high-frequency personalized practice feedback.

##### **4.3 Empowering the Teaching Faculty: Building an Interdisciplinary Collaborative “Sports+English” Teaching Community**

Resolving the faculty dilemma requires a two-pronged approach of institutional innovation and capacity building. A short-term strategy is to establish a “language teacher+professional teacher” pairing cooperation mechanism, where each ESP course is co-designed, alternately taught, or jointly delivered by an English teacher and a sports professional teacher. For example, when explaining English literature on sports nutrition, the English teacher is responsible for language analysis and academic writing norms,

while the sports teacher is responsible for in-depth content interpretation and updates on cutting-edge developments. A medium-term strategy is to implement a special plan for enhancing teachers' foreign language competence, selecting outstanding sports professional teachers for overseas visits or English teaching method training, while encouraging English teachers to systematically learn sports disciplinary knowledge through elective courses or participation in research groups. A long-term strategy is to combine recruitment and cultivation, gradually recruiting "double-qualified" doctoral graduates with a sports background and strong English competence, or setting up interdisciplinary positions in "sports language studies." In addition, a teaching case database and a demonstration course resource database can be established to digitally deposit and share excellent sports English teaching designs and implementation processes, reducing the cost of teachers' self-exploration. Faculty development should also include the enhancement of assessment literacy, enabling teachers to design competence-oriented performance assessment tasks and scoring rubrics.

#### **4.4 Reforming the Assessment Mechanism: Constructing a Performance Assessment System Oriented Toward Comprehensive Competence**

Assessment is the "baton" of learning, and it must shift from "testing memory" to "testing ability" and from "one-time" to "accompanying." Specific reform measures include: First, significantly reduce the weight of summative examinations to no more than 50%, and include performance tasks such as course papers, English translation of literature reviews, academic poster presentations, simulated conference reports, and English research proposal writing in regular grades, each task accompanied by a detailed scoring rubric evaluating multiple dimensions such as linguistic accuracy, content logic, academic normativity, and expression fluency. Second, introduce electronic portfolio assessment, requiring students to systematically collect and reflect on various English works completed over a semester, and submit a final summative reflection report explaining their progress trajectory and areas for improvement. Third, integrate English competence into the degree

thesis process management: the thesis proposal must include an English version of the research background and problem statement, a five-minute English summary presentation is added to the pre-defense session, and the quality of the English abstract of the degree thesis serves as one of the evaluation indicators. Fourth, establish an "English Competence Certification System" issuing a "Certificate of Sports Academic English Proficiency" to students who reach a certain level, or providing bonus points in scholarship evaluations and priority recommendations for participation in international exchange programs. Through the diversification, process-orientation, and academization of assessment, students are pushed to shift from "learning for examinations" to "learning for development."

#### **4.5 Creating a Learning Ecology: Building a Language Practice Environment Linking In-class and Out-of-Class, Online and Offline, On-Campus and Off-Campus**

The ultimate formation of language competence depends on continuous, authentic, and supportive opportunities for use. Therefore, it is necessary to systematically create an immersive, full-chain English learning ecology. In class, implement a progressive policy of using English as a medium of instruction, requiring some professional courses (such as "International Sports Dynamics" and "Frontiers in Sports") to be taught bilingually or in English, with glossaries and listening aids provided as scaffolding. Outside class, establish regular activities such as "Sports English Corners" "Academic English Writing Workshops" and "International Journal Paper Clubs" where teachers or doctoral students lead the reading of English literature and oral practice at fixed times each week. Online, build a "Sports English Learning Resource Platform" integrating original textbooks, academic lecture videos, corpora, terminology databases, and automated assessment tools to support students' autonomous learning. At the campus level, encourage the holding of brand activities such as "Postgraduate English Academic Forums" "Mock International Sports Arbitration Tribunals" and "Sports English Speech Competitions" forming an institutionalized tradition of language practice. Off campus, proactively connect with international sports organizations, foreign-related sports enterprises,

and major event organizing committees to establish internship and practice bases, allowing students to use English to solve problems in real work contexts, such as serving as volunteer translators at international events, accompanying foreign athletes, and writing English news releases. At the same time, introduce a peer assistance mechanism, forming “English learning mutual aid groups” where students with stronger English foundations drive those who are lagging behind, creating positive peer pressure and support networks.

### 5. Conclusion

The enhancement of English comprehensive competence among master’s degree students in physical education is by no means a simple language teaching reform, but a systematic project involving multiple dimensions including curriculum, teaching, faculty, assessment, and environment. It not only responds to the urgent call of the leading sporting nation strategy for internationalized sports talents but also aligns with the contemporary requirements of the connotative development of postgraduate education and the construction of New Liberal Arts. The dilemmas revealed in this paper—unfocused curriculum orientation, rigid teaching models, structural faculty shortcomings, unitary assessment mechanisms, and weakened learner motivation—are deep-seated problems commonly existing in current physical education institutions, urgently requiring systematic transformation from concept to action. At the theoretical level, this study places the enhancement of English competence within the interdisciplinary perspective of “sports+foreign languages” breaking through the disciplinary boundaries of traditional language teaching research. It proposes a three-dimensional analytical framework of “value—dilemma—pathway” and constructs a closed-loop enhancement model of “goal—content—method—assessment—environment.” The core logic of this model is that reform in any single dimension is unlikely to succeed; instead, synergistic linkages among all elements must be formed. For example, curriculum reconstruction needs teaching model innovation for implementation, which in turn needs assessment mechanism reform as a driver, and all of these require faculty empowerment and environmental cultivation as support. This model is not only applicable to English teaching for master’s

degree students in physical education but also provides a transferable theoretical tool for public English teaching reform in other professional degree programs (e. g., Master of Arts, Master of Engineering). At the practical level, the five mitigation pathways proposed in this paper are highly operational and targeted. Regarding the curriculum system, a three-in-one ESP course cluster of “General+Academic+Professional” is constructed, distinguishing the different needs of academic and professional master’s students, thereby solving the long-standing problem of “disconnection between learning and application.” Regarding teaching models, task-driven and flipped classroom blended teaching is implemented, shifting the classroom from teacher-centered to student-centered, enhancing the density and quality of language practice. Regarding the teaching faculty, an interdisciplinary collaborative “Sports+English” teaching community is built. Through strategies such as pairing language teachers with professional teachers, overseas visits, and recruitment of double-qualified talents, the “faculty competence gap” is gradually bridged. Regarding the assessment mechanism, a performance assessment system oriented toward comprehensive competence is constructed, reducing the weight of summative examinations and introducing multiple methods such as e-portfolios, English thesis proposals, and evaluation of the English abstract of the degree thesis, making assessment truly serve learning. Regarding the learning environment, a language practice environment linking in-class and out-of-class, online and offline, and on-campus and off-campus is created. Through channels such as English corners, academic forums, and volunteer service at international events, students are enabled to use English and internalize competence in authentic contexts. It is important to emphasize that the above five pathways are not linearly sequential but are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, forming an organic whole. The curriculum system is the “skeleton” the teaching model is the “muscle” the faculty is the “engine” the assessment mechanism is the “steering wheel” and the learning environment is the “soil.” the absence of any one link may significantly reduce the effectiveness of the reform. Therefore, when promoting English teaching reform for postgraduates, physical education institutions should avoid a fragmented approach of “treating the head when the head

hurts and the foot when the foot hurts.” Instead, from a systems theory perspective, they should formulate medium- and long-term plans and advance various reform measures in stages with clear priorities. This study also has certain limitations. First, it mainly adopts literature analysis and theoretical deduction. Although it incorporates observations of teaching practices in several physical education institutions, it has not yet conducted large-scale questionnaire surveys or empirical experiments, so the effectiveness of the proposed pathways needs further testing. Second, the student population of master’s degree students in physical education is highly heterogeneous. Students with different backgrounds (e. g., cross-disciplinary applicants vs. direct progression from undergraduate physical education majors), different English starting points, and different career expectations have significantly different needs for English competence. How the general pathway framework proposed in this paper can achieve personalized adaptation in specific implementations requires further exploration. Third, this study focuses on the formal teaching environment within physical education institutions, with insufficient discussion on the integration and utilization of informal learning channels such as Internet resources, autonomous learning technologies, and social language practice. This is also a direction for future research. Future research can be deepened in the following directions. First, conduct action research or quasi-experimental studies, selecting typical physical education institutions as reform pilot sites, tracking a curriculum reform class for one to two semesters, and using methods such as pre- and post-test comparisons, learning log analysis, and in-depth interviews to test the actual effects of the proposed pathways and extract replicable implementation strategies. Second, develop measurement tools for English comprehensive competence of master’s degree students in physical education, constructing a multi-dimensional evaluation indicator system including language knowledge, academic skills, professional communication ability, and intercultural awareness, providing scientific diagnostic and feedback tools for teaching reform. Third, explore new models of interdisciplinary talent cultivation in “sports+foreign languages” such as setting up micro-majors in sports English or offering joint master’s programs in sports translation, to

promote disciplinary integration and talent compounding at a higher level. Fourth, use big data and artificial intelligence technologies to study intelligent recommendation systems for personalized English learning paths, helping students with different foundations and goals achieve adaptive learning. Fifth, conduct comparative studies, drawing on the mature experiences of foreign sports institutions (e. g., Springfield College in the US, Loughborough University in the UK) in postgraduate English teaching and localizing them in the Chinese context. In summary, the enhancement of English comprehensive competence among master’s degree students in physical education is a long-term and arduous task, requiring the joint efforts of physical education institutions, foreign language departments, educational administration departments, and the students themselves in terms of concepts, institutions, resources, and actions. It is hoped that more physical education educators and language researchers will join hands to jointly promote the transformation of English comprehensive competence among master’s degree students in physical education from a “shortcoming” to an “advantage” contributing to the cultivation of globally competitive sports talents.

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