

Research on the Integration Path of the Cultivation of Intercultural Communication Competence in Business English Teaching

Lili Guo^{1, a}

¹Zhejiang DongFang Polytechnic, Wenzhou, Zhejiang, 325000, China

^a2471600134@qq.com

Abstract

With the acceleration of the globalization process, Business English teaching is facing new challenges and opportunities, and the cultivation of intercultural communication competence has become a key link. Through analyzing the connotation of intercultural communication competence and the characteristics of Business English teaching, this study deeply explores the necessity of integrating the two. By comprehensively using methods such as literature research, case analysis, and questionnaire surveys, it reveals the current situation and problems in the cultivation of intercultural communication competence in Business English teaching and puts forward practical integration paths in a targeted manner. It aims to improve the quality of Business English teaching and provide theoretical support and practical guidance for cultivating compound talents who can adapt to the international business environment.

Keywords

Intercultural communication competence; Business English teaching; Integration path; Globalization.

1. Introduction

Today, the wave of economic globalization is surging, breaking through the constraints of regions and national boundaries and deeply integrating the world economy[1]. The "Belt and Road Initiative" is like a powerful driving force, empowering it, connecting many countries along the line, and reshaping the world economic pattern in multiple fields such as infrastructure, trade, humanities, and science and technology. Against this grand background, international business activities are full of vitality and the pace is accelerating[2]. Multinational enterprises are building global supply chains. From raw material procurement to product export, each link relies on accurate communication in Business English. Transnational investments are booming, and strategic mergers and acquisitions and venture capital all need Business English to build bridges[3]. With the help of the Internet, cross-border e-commerce has risen, and small and medium-sized enterprises and individual merchants have entered the international market by virtue of it. Business English has become the key to knocking on the door of overseas markets.

Business English plays a crucial role in international business communication, and the importance of its teaching is self-evident. It undertakes the mission of cultivating professional talents. However, in reality, the traditional Business English teaching model has many problems. Like craftsmen who focus on one aspect, teachers often concentrate on instilling vocabulary and grammar and strengthening reading and writing. Students bury themselves in memorizing words and studying sentence patterns. However, the key dimension of intercultural communication competence has been quietly neglected. In international business negotiations, cultural misunderstandings are like hidden reefs. According to statistics from authoritative

institutions, cases where negotiations break down and cooperation fails due to such misunderstandings are common, with a failure rate as high as 30%. This is undoubtedly a wake-up call, warning of the important position of intercultural communication in the business field. It is related to the international expansion of enterprises and national economic cooperation. Therefore, it is urgent to re-examine teaching and integrate the cultivation of intercultural communication competence into Business English teaching to activate new vitality in teaching[4].

2. Investigation on the Current Situation of the Cultivation of Intercultural Communication Competence in Business English Teaching

2.1. Design and Implementation of the Questionnaire Survey

In order to comprehensively and accurately understand the actual situation of the cultivation of intercultural communication competence in Business English teaching, this study carefully designed a set of targeted questionnaires, which were distributed to student groups and teacher groups majoring in Business English. The content of the questionnaire was carefully considered and refined, covering multiple key dimensions: In terms of satisfaction with the curriculum setting, it focused on exploring the views of students and teachers on the number of existing intercultural courses, the rationality of the course arrangement, and the degree of integration with professional courses; regarding the degree of mastery of intercultural knowledge, it aimed to understand the familiarity of teachers and students with knowledge points such as business etiquette, values, and thinking patterns under different cultural backgrounds; the teaching method evaluation section focused on the feedback on the practical application effects of traditional teaching methods and emerging teaching methods such as situational teaching, cooperative learning, and project-driven teaching; the practical opportunity dimension delved into the frequency and quality of opportunities for students to exercise their intercultural communication competence in practical links such as on-campus simulated business activities and off-campus internships.

In terms of sample selection, the diversity and hierarchy of colleges and universities were fully considered, striving to cover different types of institutions of higher learning such as comprehensive universities, science and engineering colleges, normal universities, and vocational colleges. Finally, five representative colleges and universities were selected as the research objects. For the student group, 800 questionnaires were distributed on a large scale. This quantity ensured that students of different grades and learning levels could be covered. After a rigorous data collection and collation process, 720 valid questionnaires were recovered, with an effective recovery rate of 90%. For the teacher group, 150 questionnaires were distributed. Considering the relatively streamlined but professionally insightful characteristics of the teaching staff, 130 valid questionnaires were recovered, with an effective recovery rate of about 86.7%. Such a high effective recovery rate and reasonable sample selection effectively ensured that the survey results could accurately reflect the overall situation of the cultivation of intercultural communication competence in Business English teaching and had broad and reliable representativeness.

2.2. Analysis of the Survey Results

2.2.1. Curriculum Setting

By deeply analyzing the feedback data of the questionnaire, it can be clearly found that most colleges and universities' Business English majors have already realized the importance of cultivating intercultural communication competence in the curriculum layout and have opened some related courses, such as "Introduction to Intercultural Communication" and "Business Etiquette and Culture". However, the proportion of these courses in the overall curriculum

system is seriously insufficient, accounting for only about 10% of the total class hours. They are like scattered islands in the ocean of professional knowledge, making it difficult to build a comprehensive and systematic intercultural knowledge framework for students. Moreover, the course content shows a highly fragmented state, often explaining individual cultural knowledge points in isolation, lacking organic integration and in-depth connection. It fails to guide students to understand the internal relations and mutual influences among different cultural elements from the perspective of the macro cultural system, making it difficult for students to quickly apply the learned knowledge and construct effective intercultural communication strategies when facing complex and changeable international business scenarios.

2.2.2. Teaching Methods

Although the wave of education and teaching reform continues to advance, the traditional "cramming" teaching mode still dominates in Business English classrooms. Teachers eloquently explain the key points of knowledge on the podium, while students passively sit in the audience to listen and take notes. The classroom interaction atmosphere is dull and 压抑. Although innovative and interactive teaching methods such as situational teaching and cooperative learning have been promoted to a certain extent, their application scope is still relatively narrow, only occasionally appearing in a few courses or in the classrooms of some teachers. This imbalance in teaching methods greatly reduces students' participation in the learning process, making it impossible for them to fully immerse themselves in simulated international business situations and truly exercise their intercultural communication skills in practical operations. A gap is formed between knowledge and practice that is difficult to bridge.

2.2.3. Teaching Staff

A high-quality teaching staff with intercultural literacy is the key guarantee for cultivating students' intercultural communication competence, but the actual situation is not optimistic. Due to the limitations of their own growth experiences and educational backgrounds, some teachers have relatively scarce intercultural experiences. They have never had the opportunity to deeply experience the cultural atmospheres of different countries and regions, nor have they received systematic and comprehensive intercultural training. This makes them only able to superficially impart intercultural knowledge in the teaching process, unable to deeply analyze cultural connotations by combining vivid personal experiences or case stories. The teaching content is dull and boring, making it difficult to stimulate students' learning interests. Moreover, when facing cultural conflict problems encountered by students in the learning process, they also lack effective guidance strategies and cannot help students resolve confusion and improve their coping abilities from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

2.2.4. Student Practice

From the perspective of practical links, although some simulated business activities, such as business negotiation simulations and international business conference simulations, are regularly organized on campus, they often tend to be formalistic in the implementation process, lacking careful refinement and in-depth planning of activity details. The activity scenes are simple and rough, and the role settings are not realistic enough. Students participating in them can hardly feel the pressure and challenges of the real business environment and cannot achieve the expected practical exercise effects. Off-campus internship opportunities are even scarcer resources for students. Even if a few lucky ones obtain internship positions, they often face the dilemma of a lack of targeted guidance from the internship units. Students only engage in some simple basic work during the internship process and rarely have the opportunity to truly participate in the core business links involving intercultural communication, resulting in very few opportunities for them to apply their intercultural communication competence in the real business environment and slow growth in practical ability.

3. Exploration of the Integration Path of the Cultivation of Intercultural Communication Competence in Business English Teaching

3.1. Optimize the Curriculum System

3.1.1. Increase Core Courses on Intercultural Communication

Offer compulsory courses such as "Intercultural Business Communication" and "Comparative International Business Cultures". It is not just a simple addition of course names, but also requires careful design in all aspects from course objectives, teaching syllabi, textbook selection, to assessment methods. The course objectives clearly focus on systematically imparting intercultural knowledge to help students build a complete knowledge system. For example, deeply explain the negotiation styles of various countries in business negotiations, from the preparatory etiquette and opening greetings before negotiations, to the decision-making models and communication rhythms during negotiations, and then to the signing ceremonies and follow-up after negotiations. Analyze the differences in performance under different cultural backgrounds; elaborate on the differences in corporate culture, covering the different manifestations of corporate organizational structures, management concepts, and employee incentive mechanisms in the context of Eastern and Western cultures, ensuring that students have a deep and comprehensive understanding of the field of intercultural business. At the same time, ensure sufficient class hours to avoid the course content being superficial due to time constraints, allowing students enough time to digest and absorb the key points of knowledge. Through diversified teaching activities such as classroom discussions, case analyses, and group presentations, effectively improve students' mastery of intercultural knowledge.

3.1.2. Integrate Cultural Elements into Professional Courses

In Business English courses such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation, embed cultural cases organically instead of making a rigid combination. It should be skillfully integrated according to the characteristics of different courses and teaching objectives. Taking the Business English reading course as an example, teachers can widely collect business articles rich in cultural connotations, such as case analyses, industry reports in authoritative publications such as *The Economist* and *Harvard Business Review*, or annual reports of internationally renowned enterprises. In classroom teaching, guide students to use critical thinking to deeply analyze the impact of cultural factors on business decisions. For example, discuss the case where a multinational company mispositioned its products due to neglecting local consumer cultural habits when entering an emerging market, resulting in a decline in market share. Let students think about how to keenly capture cultural clues when reading business information and predict cultural risks in advance, so as to lay a solid foundation for their future business work.

3.2. Innovate Teaching Methods

3.2.1. Situational Simulation Teaching

Build simulated scenes of international business negotiations, exhibitions, etc., striving to highly restore the real business situations. From scene layout, prop selection to role setting and process arrangement, all need careful consideration. In terms of scene layout, refer to the standards of international business occasions and equip professional conference tables and chairs, projectors, translation equipment and other facilities to create a realistic business atmosphere; in terms of prop selection, prepare physical objects such as business cards of various countries, contract samples, and product promotional materials to enhance students' sense of substitution; when setting roles, cover different nationalities, cultural backgrounds, and job roles, such as a market development manager from the United States, a technical

consultant from Japan, and a project manager from China, allowing students to fully experience cultural collisions in role-playing. During the simulation practice, teachers closely observe the whole process and timely guide students to deal with cultural conflicts. For example, when students simulate negotiations with Middle Eastern clients and encounter different understandings of the concept of time from the other party, teachers should intervene in a timely manner, guide students to understand the impact of religious activities on time arrangements in Middle Eastern culture, and help students improve their cross-cultural communication and adaptability skills.

3.2.2. Group Cooperative Learning

Organize students to complete transnational business project tasks in groups, such as formulating marketing plans for cross-border e-commerce. First, group students reasonably, taking into account differences in students' professional knowledge levels, language abilities, and intercultural communication awareness to ensure that the groups can complement each other's advantages. During the project implementation process, encourage students to fully exchange different cultural views. Taking cross-border e-commerce marketing as an example, discuss the differences in product preferences, promotional methods, and brand image perceptions among consumers in different countries, prompting students to resolve cultural differences in the collision of ideas. Meanwhile, teachers should establish an effective supervision and evaluation mechanism, regularly check the progress of the groups, evaluate and feedback on the communication and cooperation and cultural integration in the group cooperation process, stimulate students' team spirit, and improve their cross-cultural project execution abilities.

3.2.3. Use Multimedia Resources

With the help of online course platforms and Business English film and television materials, broaden students' cultural horizons. In terms of online course platforms, recommend cross-cultural business courses on internationally renowned platforms such as Coursera and EdX, covering topics such as global business culture and cross-cultural communication skills. Students can choose courses independently and interact with learners from all over the world to obtain cutting-edge knowledge. In the selection of Business English film and television materials, in addition to the American drama "Silicon Valley", it can also be expanded to the British drama "Downton Abbey" (showing the social etiquette and business exchanges of the British aristocracy) and the South Korean drama "Descendants of the Sun" (presenting the cultural characteristics in South Korea's modern military and business cooperation). Through watching different types of film and television works, let students feel the charm of diverse cultures. After class, organize seminars. Teachers can set open-ended topics, such as "Differences in Business Dress Cultures in Film and Television Works" and "The Manifestation of Interpersonal Relationships in the Workplace in Different Countries in the Drama", to guide students to deeply explore cultural connotations and deepen their understanding.

3.3. Strengthen the Construction of Teaching Staff

3.3.1. Professional Training and Improvement

Regularly select teachers to participate in domestic and foreign intercultural communication training and academic seminars. The training content should cover multiple aspects such as the frontiers of intercultural theories, innovation in teaching methods, and analysis of practical cases. For example, in the training on the frontiers of intercultural theories, deeply study the latest research results such as cultural relativism and intercultural adaptation theory to update teachers' knowledge reserves; the training on innovation in teaching methods focuses on the application of new teaching methods such as situational teaching and project-based teaching in intercultural classrooms to improve teachers' teaching skills; in the analysis of practical cases,

invite senior executives of multinational enterprises and experienced international business people to share practical experience, allowing teachers to understand the intercultural problems and solutions in real business scenarios. Encourage teachers to study overseas, deeply experience different cultures. They should not only visit local scenic spots and historical sites but also integrate into local community life, participate in business activities, social gatherings, etc., personally experience cultural differences, and improve their own intercultural literacy to inject fresh vitality into teaching.

3.3.2. Enterprise Practice and Training

Arrange for teachers to take temporary positions in multinational enterprises for practical training and participate in actual business activities. Ensure that teachers are deeply involved in core business links, such as participating in transnational project negotiations, international marketing planning, and overseas supply chain management. During transnational project negotiations, teachers can learn the application of negotiation strategies under different cultural backgrounds and observe how both parties handle cultural conflicts to reach a consensus; when planning international marketing, understand the impact of differences in consumer demands in different regions on marketing strategies; in the process of overseas supply chain management, experience the characteristics of enterprise cooperation models in a multicultural environment. By accumulating intercultural business practice experience, teachers can vividly present real cases in the classroom after returning, arouse students' resonance, and improve teaching effects.

3.4. Expand Practical Platforms

3.4.1. Deepen School-Enterprise Cooperation

Establish long-term internship bases with multinational companies and foreign trade enterprises and establish a sound cooperation mechanism. On the one hand, schools should customize the cultivation of students according to the needs of enterprises, integrate actual business cases of enterprises into the curriculum setting and teaching content, and let students familiarize themselves with the enterprise work process in advance. On the other hand, enterprises should provide paid internship opportunities for students, ensuring that the internship positions match the cultivation of students' professional skills and intercultural communication competence. For example, arrange students to intern in international business departments and overseas market expansion teams. Enterprise mentors should guide the whole process. Mentors should not only impart professional knowledge but also guide students to deal with intercultural communication challenges and share work experience, allowing students to polish their intercultural communication skills in actual combat and achieve a seamless connection from campus to the workplace.

3.4.2. Hold Campus Cultural Activities

Carry out activities such as the Business English Cultural Festival and the International Business Etiquette Competition, paying attention to the systematization and innovation of the activities. The Business English Cultural Festival can set up multiple sections such as cultural exhibitions, Business English speech contests, and intercultural knowledge contests. The cultural exhibition presents the characteristics of business cultures of different countries through forms such as pictures, physical objects, and multimedia displays. The Business English speech contest requires students to focus on intercultural business topics, combine their own insights and practical experiences, and exercise their oral expression and logical thinking abilities. The intercultural knowledge contest uses the form of interesting quizzes to stimulate students' learning interests and test their knowledge mastery. The International Business Etiquette Competition should simulate real business scenes, from receiving foreign guests, business banquets to conference hosting, to assess students' application of etiquette norms and

cross-cultural communication abilities, creating a strong intercultural atmosphere and comprehensively exercising students' practical abilities.

4. Conclusion and Outlook

On the one hand, this study has clarified the important position of the cultivation of intercultural communication competence in Business English teaching, revealed the existing problems in current teaching, and put forward integration paths covering multiple dimensions such as courses, teaching methods, teaching staff, and practice. Moreover, the feasibility has been verified through practical cases, providing a useful reference for the reform of Business English teaching. On the other hand, looking to the future, as new technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data continue to be integrated into the education field, the cultivation of intercultural communication competence will gain new opportunities. For example, using AI intelligent auxiliary teaching systems to customize personalized intercultural learning plans for students according to their different situations; using big data to analyze students' learning behaviors to accurately optimize teaching content and methods, thereby further improving the quality of Business English teaching and opening up new channels for the cultivation of international business talents.

5. Fund Projects

1. General scientific research project of Zhejiang Provincial Department of Education: Research on the Development Strategies of International Exchanges and Cooperation of Zhejiang Higher Vocational Colleges under the Background of the Belt and Road Initiative, Project No.: Y202456201
2. Supply and Demand Docking Employment Education Project of the Ministry of Education: School-enterprise Co-construction Project of Sino-British Model Training Base and Apprenticeship Internship Base for Modern Manufacturing Professional Group. Project No.: 2023122979889

References

- [1] Hu Wenrui. Research on the Construction Path of the Curriculum Ideological and Political Evaluation System for Business English Majors Based on the Outcome-oriented Approach [J]. Foreign Economic Relations & Trade, 2024, (12): 115-118.
- [2] Sun Manna. Research on the Personalized Teaching Strategies of Business English in Higher Vocational Colleges from the Perspective of Field Theory [J]. Science & Education & Culture, 2024, (24): 153-156.
- [3] Liang Huan. Exploration on the Practical Teaching Standards for Business English Majors from the Perspective of the Integration of Industry and Education [J]. China Standardization, 2024, (24): 253-256.
- [4] Sun Xiaojun, Cheng Manli. Research on School-enterprise Collaborative Education for Business English Majors under the Background of New Finance and Economics [J]. Journal of Hubei University of Economics (Humanities and Social Sciences), 2024, 21(12): 8-10.