

Cultivation of Intercultural Communicative Competence of Business English Majors

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Abstract: Since the twenty-first century, with the deepening of the opening to the outside world, China has gradually entered the scope of economic globalization. Since China's accession to the world trade organization, the hosting of the Olympic Games and World Expo has greatly enhanced the communication between China and the rest of the world, maintaining an increasingly powerful trend. Therefore, the cultivation of the intercultural communicative competence of business English majors is the key to strengthening the communication between China and foreign countries. Starting with the teaching objectives and intercultural communicative competence of business English majors, the thesis explores the theoretical basis of cultivating students' intercultural communicative competence, reveals the necessity of improving the intercultural communicative competence of business English majors, finds the difficulties in improving students' intercultural communicative competence in teaching in colleges and universities after investigation, points out the problems existing in the cultivation of students' intercultural communicative competence, and finally explores the strategies for improving the intercultural communicative competence of business English majors, to improve the students' intercultural communicative competence and make the business English major better serve China's foreign exchange and economic development..

1. Introduction

With the deepening of economic globalization and the increasingly frequent cultural exchanges, the economic dependence among countries is getting higher and higher, and a large number of multinational companies are gradually rising. Therefore [1], the business English major students with strong intercultural communicative competence have become the talents with urgent needs of the employer. Based on the current situation of business English Majors in China, it is obvious that the current business English majors in Chinese colleges and universities have not had the intercultural communicative competence to adapt to the needs of the society. The emergence of this situation is due to the subjective and objective factors. However, only by studying the problems in the teaching of business English in colleges and universities, can we implement the targeted strategies for the problems to improve the intercultural communicative competence of business English majors in china and make this kind of professional students make more contributions to China's economic construction [2].

As a discipline independent from the public English, college business English has its own specialty and particularity, and scholars have distinguished the business English and from the general English early in the academic field of language studies. Compared with the public English, business English is a kind of professional intensive training of English, whose purpose is to cultivate the excellent communication skills of business English majors. Therefore, business English majors must have strong English language skills and excellent communication skills. The object in workplace communication for business English majors is generally foreigners, which puts forward higher requirements for students' intercultural communicative competence. But on the current situation of business English teaching in China, the students' intercultural communicative competence has not reached the objective requirements for the current international economic exchanges, so that how to improve the intercultural communicative competence of business English majors has become a major research issue of business English majors in Chinese colleges and universities [3-4].

The understanding of intercultural communicative competence should begin with the

communicative competence. The command of the communicative competence needs not only to know how to organize the language but also to organize the language according to the social situation. After a long time study, the academic circle holds that the intercultural communicative competence is the ability of people to achieve the effective and appropriate communication with people or groups from other cultures. Figure 1 is the distribution map of the intercultural communication competence from 2004 to 2013, and it can be found that since 2004, the number of literature on the topic of intercultural communicative competence has been increasing, which shows that the intercultural communicative competence has been paid more and more attention [5].

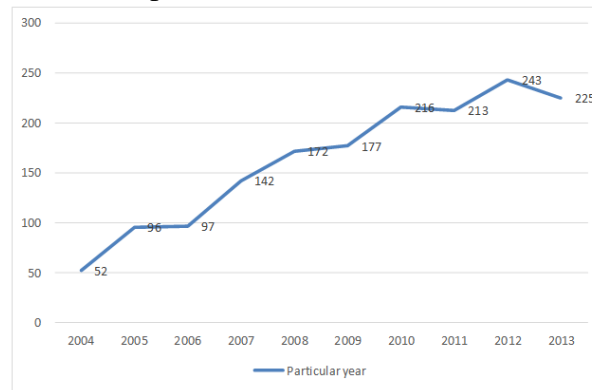


Fig.1 the distribution of research literature on intercultural communication competence in 2004-2013

2. The Theoretical basis of cultivating the intercultural communicative competence in business English

2.1 Constructivism learning theory

Influenced by traditional examination oriented Education for many years, teachers have been in the absolute dominance of the teaching process, and the students are in the passive position. The relationship between teachers and students has a negative impact on students' learning effect and learning efficiency. The theory of constructivism is a shock to the traditional examination- oriented education, and the theory holds that students should have more autonomy in their learning process. Constructivism suggests that after acquiring the basic knowledge and practical experience, students should maintain the curiosity to the outside world and the psychology to explore, in order to obtain more knowledge and ultimately form a knowledge structure with self-characteristics [6].

2.2 Context teaching theory

Table 1: situational teaching model

Time arrangement	theme	Content of courses
1-3weeks	Introduction and training of situational teaching model Practice	Situational teaching experience
4-7weeks	Manners Book	Formal western etiquette
9-12weeks	Western Idioms	Common Western idioms with strong cultural connotations
14-17weeks	Western Cultural Festival	Major festivals in the West

The theory of context teaching was born earlier, and the rudiment of context teaching has come into being in England as early as in 1920s. The context teaching theory holds that the knowledge is in the context, and students need to learn and understand the knowledge in the context, finally achieving the purpose of the application of knowledge; knowledge has no meaning if there is no context. In the specific implementation process of teaching, teachers need to study the teaching content, anticipate the teaching effect, and design a scientific and reasonable teaching situation, making students acquire

knowledge in the teaching context through a series of activities and enhancing students' ability for practical application. The success of context teaching model needs the cooperation of many factors: scientific and reasonable teaching context, students' autonomous learning [7], communication and cooperation between students and teachers and the coordination of teachers. Table 1 is the context teaching model, and there are no exact teaching materials in the table.

2.3 Intercultural communication theory

People need to communicate and interact with people from other cultures, and pick up information in a way that can be accepted by the other party and in accordance with the cultural cognition of the other party, to achieve their communicative goals. According to the theory of intercultural communication, economic globalization and the continuous development of science and technology shorten the distance of communication time and space, and the intercultural communication will become the normal state in the future global communication; however, due to the differences in social system, ideology and mode of thinking, there are many contradictions in the exchange of people in various countries, and the fundamental way to solve this problem is to improve the intercultural communicative competence of the people in various countries [8].

3. The role of improving the intercultural communicative competence of business English majors

3.1 Important ways to enhance the overall strength of the country

It is of great significance for the country to improve the intercultural communicative competence of business English majors. First, with China's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001, the degree of opening to the outside world has been deepening. For now, China is more dependent on the foreign imports in many aspects; the business English majors who are active in the international workplace should play a more important role in China's import and export trade. In order to achieve this goal, business English majors should enhance their intercultural communicative competence, so as to gain more initiative in the international workplace communication. Moreover, the overall quality of the people is an important part of the national comprehensive strength, and the international communication will become a trend in the future. The improvement of the whole people's intercultural communicative competence is the performance of our country's comprehensive ability.

3.2 Improving the core competence of students

Table 2: Business English Majors' satisfaction with their intercultural communicative competence

Intercultural communicative competence	Very satisfied	Satisfied	commonly	difference	Very poor
Consciously use communication skills	12.17%	20.3%	24.3%	38.6%	4.63%
Tolerate cultural differences	32.6%	48.8%	4.81%	4.6%	9.19%
Correct understanding of cultural differences	2.5%	9.42%	65.3%	11.28%	11.5%
Strong language skills, solid professional knowledge	1.2%	3.4%	28.49%	51.61%	15.3%
Communication obstacles can calm	10.43%	10.57%	17.6%	28.7%	32.7%

The twenty-first century is the era of knowledge economy and information economy, and the requirement of the society for the comprehensive ability of students becomes higher and higher; for business English majors, the intercultural communicative competence may directly determine the core competence of the students in the field competition. Those companies that are interested in opening up foreign markets maintain the urgent needs of business personnel, while the students of business English major with strong intercultural communicative competence are the talents reserve pursued by this kind of companies. Business English majors need to improve their intercultural

communicative competence so as to improve their core competence in the job candidates. It can be seen from the data in the following table that basically, more than half of the students in each item are not satisfied with their intercultural communicative competence.

4. The present situation of the improvement of the intercultural communicative competence of business English major students

4.1 The unclear purpose of business English learning

For many Chinese students, the unclear purpose of learning is the key to students' doubts about their studies and even their careers. There are a lot of students of business English majors whose learning purpose are not clear. The purpose of business English majors' students can be divided into such aspects as the pursuit of individual development, intrinsic interest, external environmental impact, the pursuit of academic results and determination to go abroad. If the purpose of learning is one of the purposes above, their intercultural communicative competence can be improved to some extent. However, if the students are not clear about their own learning goals, their learning process will be seriously affected.

4.2 Cultural differences between china and western countries

In learning a language, the most important element that can help students to speed up the learning progress of language is culture. Language and culture complement each other, and the language is the carrier of culture. Because of the great difference between Chinese culture and Western culture, if we understand and express ideas in the way of thinking in our culture, language errors may be made, which has a negative impact on the social work of the students. Especially in the business English communication, students need to communicate with people from different countries, and if the student does not understand the cultural background of these countries, it may be possible to produce a discourse of cultural conflict, eventually leading to the failure of the business plan. Although colleges and universities have been aware of the trouble of the differences between Chinese and Western cultural backgrounds on the students' intercultural communicative competence, in the current curriculum arrangement, the less introduction class of cultural background cannot produce a great result.

4.3 The difference of thinking mode

The culture plays a decisive role in the development of a person's way of thinking and behavior, and there are a lot of differences in the thinking mode of people in different cultural systems. For example, the western mode of thinking attaches importance to the stringency of the logic, which in serious situation is regarded as square accounts in every detail by Chinese; the thinking mode of our country pays attention to the entirety, which is often criticized for only knowing such ambiguous words as "probably" and "almost", without accurate results. The differences between Chinese and Western modes of thinking will cause some problems for students to engage in business communication activities. Therefore, in order to improve the intercultural communicative competence, students need to change the mode of thinking in business communication.

4.4 Students' lack of cross-cultural awareness

The cross- cultural awareness is divided into four levels. The First level is that people are able to recognize the cultural differences in the surface and feel strange; the second level is that people can perceive the subtle differences and conflicts between cultures, but they cannot accept them; the third level is that through the rational thinking, people can basically cognitively accept the differences between cultures; the fourth level is that through a long period of life abroad, people change the perspective of thinking into the perspective of local culture. For these four levels, scholars believe that it is more practical for people to achieve the third level. Business English majors should try to reach a higher level to cultivate their intercultural communicative competence. While in the investigation of intercultural communicative competence, there are still a considerable number of

students who think the cultivation of this ability is not very important, which fully reflects the lack of cross-cultural awareness of business English majors.

5. Problems in the cultivation of students' intercultural communicative competence

5.1 Language and application barriers

The cultivation of students' intercultural communicative competence is based on the ability for students to master a language, but for the current business English majors in china, there are considerable obstacles in the application of language. Since students learn English, the school only pays attention to the written examination results; excessive emphasis is made on the vocabulary, grammar and so on in the arrangement of teaching material, and the examination only inspects these two aspects of reserves of the students, neglecting the cultivation of the practical ability of foreign language. Students' lack of oral practice in the daily learning leading that in face- to -face communication students can only use words to make up a plausible statement instead of expressing their ideas accurately.

5.2 Cultural barriers

In the learning process, students have always been influenced by their own culture, their knowledge level, knowledge structure and understanding orientation have been basically solidified; once the conflict with foreign culture emerges, students' receptivity and transformation ability will directly affect the results of their communication. First of all, the formation of a nation's language must be accompanied by the formation of culture, and the cultural differences between countries will lead that students will have conflicts with others when communicating in other languages. In addition, the differences between ethnic customs will lead to different cognition from other students. If the students cannot find and correct their language habits, it will make the communication get into an awkward situation.

5.3 Students' lack of the nonverbal communicative competence

In addition to the text language, body language and other ways, the purpose of communication can be achieved under certain circumstances in the communication among individuals. While in the intercultural communicative competence, the nonverbal communicative competence is an important means for students to communicate. According to the different manifestations of nonverbal communication, it can be divided into: body language, object language, environmental language and paralanguage. In these four types, the body language is often used by business English students and even ordinary people. Under the right circumstances, the use of non-verbal communication means helps students communicate smoothly, and sometimes even achieves unexpected results.

5.4 Inconspicuous teaching effect of teachers

First of all, some English teachers of business English major are those who are transferred from the position of language of literature, and these teachers' comprehensive quality cannot meet the requirements of business English teaching. Business English teachers need to be familiar with business knowledge, have a good command of business skills, and have a certain understanding of business knowledge and skills. Moreover, the research direction of business English teachers in the course of further study is not intercultural communication, so the teachers' awareness of intercultural communication is weak and it is impossible to cultivate students' awareness of intercultural communication so as to improve students' intercultural communicative competence.

5.5 Insufficient learning enthusiasm of students

For students, learning English is more of a kind of forced learning, which is the result we have to accept under the examination-oriented education, and students who are really interested in English are relatively few. Therefore, these students are lack of enthusiasm for learning, and the improvement of their intercultural communicative competence is not guaranteed. For business English majors, it is necessary to understand the culture of other countries which is very helpful to improving students'

intercultural communicative competence. But according to the actual situation, only a few students take the initiative to understand the foreign culture, and even if these student's oral English can meet the requirements, it is also possible for them to produce cultural conflict in the workplace communication.

6. Research of strategies of the improvement of the intercultural communicative competence of students of business English major

6.1 Strengthening the teaching of the language application of students

As is mentioned above, the cultural difference between Chinese culture and Western culture may lead to the cultural conflict between the students and the foreigners in communication and the failure of business communication. Therefore, colleges and universities should pay more attention to the application of language teaching in business English teaching and the cultivation of students' intercultural communicative competence. Because there are differences between China and Western countries in terms of customs and habits, and the understanding of the same thing may be mixed. If a student misuses it in business communication, it may cause misunderstanding. Teachers should correct students' translation habits in daily teaching. For example, westerners have different understanding of "Long" with Chinese, and the translation should be turned into something acceptable to the west---the "Dragon" can be translated into "tiger".

6.2 Decreasing the influence of the native culture on pupil's learning

Due to students use their mother tongue to understand foreign languages when learning a foreign language, they will carry the Chinese way of thinking in all aspects of foreign language learning. In fact, the use of Chinese way of thinking to learn a foreign language is not conducive to the improvement of the level of foreign language, and the native culture in Chinese can cause considerable problems in foreign language learning. Teachers can change students' way of thinking by analyzing specific cases. In order to reduce the influence of native culture on primary school students in learning foreign language, teachers need to bring students into the cultural environment of foreign language through the teaching design, and train students' English thinking mode repeatedly.

6.3 Focusing on improving students' nonverbal communicative competence in teaching

As is mentioned above, the nonverbal communication competence is an important part of students' intercultural communicative competence; however, it is important to note that the nonverbal behavior may be understood differently in different countries. Therefore, in improving the students' nonverbal communicative competence, colleges and universities should make an in-depth explanation of the nonverbal types and distinguish the nonverbal types with different meanings.

6.4 Improving the comprehensive quality of business English teachers

Improving the overall quality of business English teachers is the key to cultivating students' intercultural communicative competence. For some business English teaching with teaching experience of many years, colleges and universities should arrange these teachers to attend the training of the knowledge and skills of business, enhance teachers' awareness of intercultural communication through engaging them into advanced studies, and encourage teachers to participate in a variety of business communication activities to enhance their own cross-cultural communicative competence. For new business English teachers, colleges and universities should raise the threshold for teachers' professional knowledge of business and require teachers to have strong cross-cultural communication skills. At the same time, teachers should change the traditional teaching concepts and improve teaching methods to make students cultivate their intercultural communicative competence in practice as much as possible.

6.5 Stimulating students' learning enthusiasm through various forms

Compared with other students, college students have more spare time for their own arrangements. Teachers can stimulate students' learning enthusiasm through various forms. On the one hand, to

improve students' English proficiency; on the other hand, to enhance the students' foreign cultural literacy. Teachers can hold reading activities that students read the designated publications after class, and teachers explain it and make in-depth analyses of the cultural features contained in it in class. Students can improve their English in extracurricular reading and know more about the foreign culture in class. Teachers can also make the students adapt to the various aspects of the workplace communication as soon as possible and improve the students' intercultural communicative competence by simulating business communication activities.

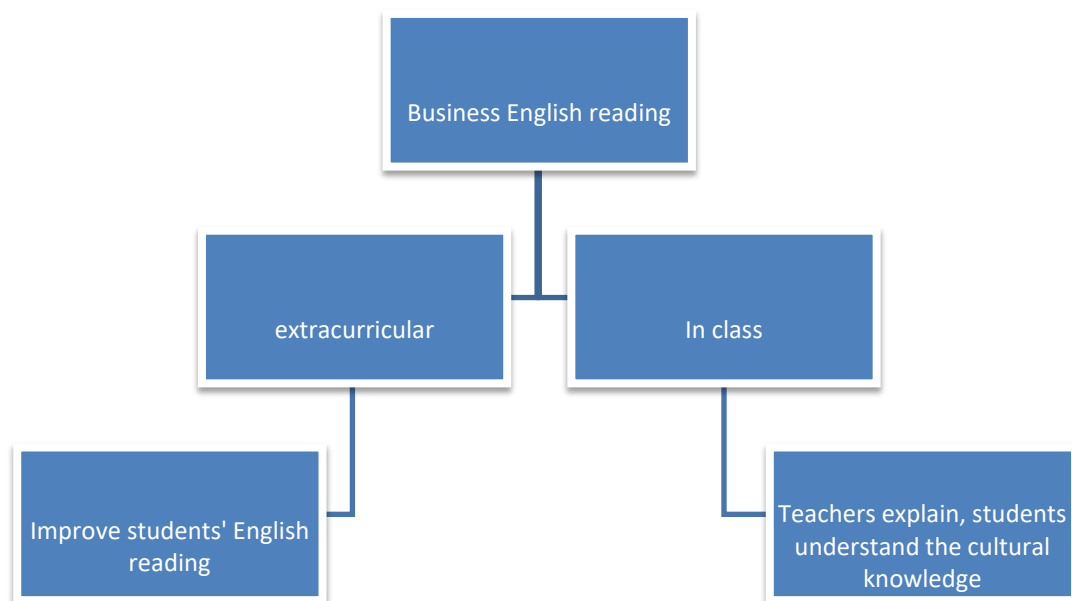


Fig.2 Business English reading activities

7. Conclusion

In the present time with the increasingly frequent international exchange, the intercultural communicative competence is the key to the effective acquisition of information and even the promotion of the success of contracts. In view of the current situation of the scarce intercultural communication competence of business English majors in China, colleges and universities need to improve teaching methods and improve students' English level and intercultural communicative competence through reasonable curriculum to make more contributions to China's economic development.

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