



Research on Business English Cross-cultural Communication Course Concepts Based on Cultural Studies and Language Education

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Abstract

This study explores the conceptual framework of Business English cross-cultural communication courses based on cultural studies and language education theories. With globalization advancing, cross-cultural communication competence has become a critical skill in international business. Through literature review and case analysis, this research identifies deficiencies in current curriculum design, content, and teaching methods. It proposes strategies to clarify course objectives, enrich teaching content, and innovate methodologies, aiming to enhance students' cultural sensitivity, practical language application, and critical thinking. The study also suggests integrating cultural updates, exploring personalized teaching, and applying technology to provide new perspectives for course development.

Keywords: Business English; Cross-cultural Communication; Cultural Studies; Language Education; Cross-cultural Communication Competence.

1. Introduction

In the context of globalization, Business English serves as a vital bridge for cross-cultural communication, with its educational significance and practical value becoming increasingly prominent. This research aims to explore the concepts of Business English cross-cultural communication courses based on cultural studies and language education, seeking to provide valuable reference and guidance for Business English teaching practices.

Regarding the research background, Business English has become the common language for global business communication as international trade activities continue to increase. During cross-cultural communication, cultural differences and language barriers often lead to communication difficulties or misunderstandings, seriously affecting the smooth progress of business activities. Therefore, cultivating Business English talents with cross-cultural communication competence has become particularly important. This research is rooted in this practical need, aiming to construct scientific and effective Business English cross-cultural communication course concepts through in-depth analysis of cultural studies and language education theories.

In discussing research significance, this study focuses not only on the theoretical value of Business English cross-cultural communication course concepts but also on their practical guidance for Business English teaching. Theoretically, this research helps enrich and improve the theoretical system of Business English cross-cultural communication courses, providing new perspectives and insights for research in related fields. From a practical perspective, by constructing scientific and effective course concepts, this research aims to provide specific teaching methods and strategies for Business English teachers, thereby improving students' cross-cultural communication competence and cultivating more Business English talents who meet international needs.

Regarding research methodology, this study adopts a comprehensive approach combining literature review, case analysis, and empirical research. First, through literature review, it clarifies the current research status and deficiencies in domestic and international related studies. Second, through case analysis, it examines practical issues in Business English cross-cultural communication courses, providing realistic foundations for course concept construction. Finally, through empirical research, it verifies the effectiveness and feasibility of the constructed course concepts, providing strong support for Business English teaching practices.

Concerning innovation points, this research has conducted beneficial exploration and attempts in the following aspects: First, it combines cultural studies and language education theories to provide a solid theoretical foundation for constructing Business English cross-cultural communication course concepts. Second, through in-depth analysis of the characteristics and needs of Business English cross-cultural communication, it proposes targeted course objectives and teaching content. Third, it emphasizes practical application, verifying the actual effects of course concepts through empirical research, providing valuable reference for Business English teaching reform.

2. Theoretical Foundation and Literature Review

2.1 Cultural Studies Theory

Cultural studies theory occupies a pivotal position in Business English cross-cultural communication courses. As a discipline studying human cultural phenomena and their patterns, cultural studies provide a profound theoretical foundation and practical guidance for cross-cultural communication. In the context of globalization, Business English majors need not only to master solid language knowledge but also possess cross-cultural communication competence to adapt to increasingly frequent international trade and cultural exchanges.

The basic concepts of cultural studies include culture, cultural exchange, cultural conflict, and integration, which hold significant importance in cross-cultural communication. Culture represents the sum of material and spiritual wealth created during the historical development of human society, reflecting the values, beliefs, customs, and arts of a nation or society. During cross-cultural communication, people from different cultural backgrounds often experience misunderstandings or conflicts influenced by their respective cultures. Therefore, understanding the characteristics and differences of various cultures is crucial for improving cross-cultural communication competence.

The application of cultural studies theory in Business English cross-cultural communication courses primarily manifests in several aspects. First, through studying cultural studies theory, students can develop a deeper understanding of different countries' and regions' cultural backgrounds, including their history, geography, politics, economy, and religion, thereby enhancing their understanding and cognition of cross-cultural phenomena. Second, cultural studies theory helps students analyze practical issues in cross-cultural communication, such as business etiquette, negotiation techniques, and communication strategies, improving their ability to respond in actual business scenarios. Finally, cultural studies theory can guide students in effective cross-cultural communication practices, such as establishing and maintaining cross-cultural business relationships and resolving cross-cultural conflicts, thereby cultivating students' cross-cultural communication awareness and competence.

Cultural studies theory plays an irreplaceable role in Business English cross-cultural communication courses. Through in-depth study of cultural studies theory, students can comprehensively understand the characteristics and differences of various cultures, improve their cross-cultural communication competence in business scenarios, and lay a solid foundation for future international trade and cultural exchange work (Guo, 2022; Cha, 2020; Fang, 2005).

2.2 Language Education Theory

Language education, as a discipline exploring the principles and methods of language teaching, provides a solid theoretical foundation and practical guidance for Business English cross-cultural communication courses. Its fundamental principles encompass the nature of language, the process of language learning, and principles and methods of language teaching, which are crucial for constructing an effective cross-cultural communication curriculum system.

In Business English teaching, language education emphasizes that language is not merely a system of symbols but also a carrier of culture and a tool for communication. This perspective encourages teachers to focus on students' practical language application abilities, particularly their communication skills in cross-cultural business scenarios. Therefore, cross-cultural communication courses should emphasize developing students' language skills while considering business knowledge and cultural awareness enhancement (Ma, 2012; Liu, 2008; Tang, 2010).

Language education advocates a student-centered teaching philosophy, emphasizing students' primary role in the learning process. In Business English cross-cultural communication courses, this philosophy manifests in teachers designing learning activities and tasks that align with students' needs, interests, and proficiency levels and reflect actual business scenarios. Through this approach, students can learn through practice and improve through experience, thereby more effectively enhancing their cross-cultural communication competence (Xue, 2022).

Language education also focuses on assessment and feedback mechanisms in language teaching. In Business English cross-cultural communication courses, this means teachers need to establish scientific, diverse evaluation systems to comprehensively and objectively assess students' cross-cultural communication competence. Through effective feedback, students can timely understand their learning progress and existing issues, subsequently adjusting their learning strategies to achieve more efficient learning (Wang, 2010).

3. Current Status Analysis of Business English Cross-cultural Communication Courses

3.1 Curriculum Design and Teaching Content

When examining the current curriculum design and teaching content of Business English cross-cultural communication courses, we must first acknowledge the special status of Business English in the context of globalization. As English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Business English's importance continues to rise with the increasing frequency of international business activities. Therefore, the design of Business English cross-cultural communication courses becomes particularly crucial as it aims to cultivate students' effective communication abilities in business environments.

Regarding curriculum design, most higher education institutions have listed Business English cross-cultural communication as either compulsory or elective courses, reflecting the importance attached to this field. However, specific course arrangements still exhibit certain differences and flexibility, primarily depending on each institution's teaching resources, faculty strength, and actual student needs. Some institutions emphasize combining theory with practice by introducing authentic business cases and simulated business negotiations, enabling students to enhance their cross-cultural communication competence through practical operations. Others may focus more on language skill training, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, along with business etiquette and cultural differences knowledge transmission.

The teaching content of Business English cross-cultural communication courses also demonstrates diverse characteristics. Basic language skill instruction remains essential, including mastery of Business English vocabulary, grammar, sentence patterns, and improvement of language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation. Additionally, cultural knowledge transmission occupies an important position, including East-West cultural differences, business etiquette, and business negotiation techniques, all of which students must face and handle in future business activities. Notably, recent years have seen increasing emphasis on practicality and applicability, with courses organizing students to participate in business practical activities such as field visits and enterprise internships, allowing them to learn and apply cross-cultural communication knowledge through actual operations.

3.2 Teaching Methods and Approaches

In the practical implementation of Business English cross-cultural communication courses, the selection and application of teaching methods and approaches have crucial impacts on teaching effectiveness. Currently, with the continuous update of educational concepts and rapid development of teaching technology, teaching methods and approaches in Business English cross-cultural communication courses demonstrate trends toward diversification and modernization.

Traditional teaching methods such as lectures and discussions continue to play important roles in teaching. The lecture method, as teachers' primary means of knowledge transmission, can systematically introduce basic concepts, theories, and techniques of cross-cultural communication, helping students construct complete knowledge frameworks. Discussion methods encourage students to actively participate in classroom discussions through group discussions and role-playing, allowing them to apply learned knowledge to solve practical problems in simulated business scenarios, thereby cultivating students' cross-cultural communication competence and team collaboration spirit.

Modern teaching approaches such as multimedia teaching and online learning have gradually become essential components of Business English cross-cultural communication courses. Multimedia teaching, through the integration of audio, video, and other multimedia elements, makes teaching content more vivid and engaging, helping stimulate students' learning interest and improve learning outcomes. Online teaching breaks the limitations of time and space, providing students with more flexible and convenient learning methods. Through online platforms, students can access teaching resources anytime and anywhere, engage in online communication with teachers and other students, and achieve personalized learning needs.

3.3 Existing Issues and Challenges

In the actual teaching of Business English cross-cultural communication courses, several issues and challenges inevitably affect course effectiveness and even hinder the cultivation of cross-cultural communication competence. The following presents a detailed analysis of current issues and challenges.

Regarding teaching content, although Business English cross-cultural communication courses cover aspects such as cultural differences and communication strategies, they often lack in-depth and systematic exploration. Some courses overly emphasize language skill training while neglecting deep interpretation of cultural backgrounds, making it difficult for students to truly understand and apply cross-cultural communication knowledge. Furthermore, the update speed of teaching content often lags behind the rapidly developing international business environment, creating a disconnect between students' acquired knowledge and practical needs.

In terms of teaching methods and approaches, although multimedia and network technologies offer more possibilities for teaching, some teachers still rely excessively on traditional lecture methods, lacking innovative and practical teaching

components. This "spoon-feeding" teaching method not only fails to stimulate students' learning interest but also cannot effectively cultivate their cross-cultural communication competence. Meanwhile, due to the lack of authentic or simulated business environments for practice, students struggle to apply learned knowledge to practical scenarios, resulting in a disconnect between theory and practice.

Business English cross-cultural communication courses also face challenges in faculty resources. Teachers possessing both profound cross-cultural communication theoretical knowledge and rich practical experience are relatively scarce, which to some extent affects the teaching quality. Some teachers, though skilled in language, may lack deep understanding and practical experience in cross-cultural communication, making it difficult to provide comprehensive, in-depth guidance to students.

4. Construction of Course Concepts Based on Cultural Studies and Language Education

4.1 Establishing Course Objectives

In establishing objectives for Business English cross-cultural communication courses, we must thoroughly understand and apply core concepts from cultural studies and language education. Cultural studies emphasizes the plurality, dynamism, and deep structures of culture, providing important guidance for understanding cultural differences and conflicts in cross-cultural communication. Language education focuses on cognitive processes in language learning, language skill development, and interactions between language and sociocultural factors, offering rich teaching theories and practical experience for cross-cultural communication courses.

Based on these two theories, we can establish the following course objectives for Business English cross-cultural communication:

First, enhancing cross-cultural awareness: Courses should strive to improve students' cross-cultural awareness, enabling them to deeply understand values, beliefs, customs, and behavioral patterns across different cultural backgrounds. Through comparative analysis of cultural differences, students can become more sensitive to and respectful of cultural variations, thereby avoiding cultural conflicts and achieving effective communication in business activities.

Second, developing cross-cultural communication competence: Course objectives should emphasize cultivating students' cross-cultural communication abilities, including linguistic competence, non-verbal communication skills, cultural adaptation abilities, and cross-cultural conflict resolution capabilities. Students need to master the ability to communicate accurately and fluently in English in business settings while learning to use appropriate non-verbal communication methods, such as body language and facial expressions, to convey appropriate information and emotions. Additionally, students should develop the flexibility to adapt to different cultural environments quickly.

Third, improving business cultural literacy: Business English cross-cultural communication courses should also focus on enhancing students' business cultural literacy. This includes understanding international business etiquette, business customs, and business communication strategies, as well as mastering basic knowledge and skills in cross-cultural business negotiation, marketing, and team management. Through cultivating business cultural literacy, students can better understand and adapt to cultural norms and behavioral standards in business activities, improving their competitiveness in international workplaces.

4.2 Optimization of Teaching Content

In optimizing teaching content for Business English cross-cultural communication courses, we need to closely align with course objectives while deeply exploring core concepts from cultural studies and language education theories to create a teaching system that is both practical and substantive.

We must recognize that optimizing teaching content involves more than simple additions or deletions; it requires deep integration and innovation based on existing foundations. This means conducting comprehensive analysis of current teaching content, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and determining optimization directions.

From a cultural studies perspective, Business English cross-cultural communication course content should emphasize greater interpretation and response to cultural differences. Specifically, we can enhance content regarding business etiquette, communication strategies, and value systems across different cultural backgrounds. This content not only helps students better understand cultural differences but also improves their adaptability in cross-cultural communication.

4.3 Innovation in Teaching Methods

In Business English cross-cultural communication courses, innovation in teaching methods represents an essential component. Traditional teaching methods often emphasize language knowledge transmission while neglecting cultural context integration and practical skill development. Therefore, this research proposes innovations in teaching methods aimed at better achieving cross-cultural communication course objectives.

(1) Cultural Immersion Method Application

The cultural immersion method emphasizes integrating cultural elements throughout language teaching, enabling students to deeply understand target language countries' cultural backgrounds, values, and social customs while learning the language. In Business English cross-cultural communication courses, applying the cultural immersion method offers significant advantages.

Teachers can introduce authentic business scenarios, simulating business negotiations, meetings, and other practical activities, allowing students to experience and comprehend business culture through simulated practice. For example, in simulated business negotiations, teachers can guide students to focus on cultural differences between negotiating parties, such as etiquette, communication styles, and time concepts, thereby cultivating students' cross-cultural sensitivity.

(2) Language Practice Method Exploration

The language practice method emphasizes developing students' language application abilities and communication skills, stressing student language practice in authentic contexts. In Business English cross-cultural communication courses, implementing the language practice method holds equal importance.

Teachers can organize students to participate in role-playing, group discussions, and impromptu speeches to improve their oral expression abilities and mental agility. These activities not only exercise students' language abilities but also cultivate their team cooperation spirit and innovative capabilities.

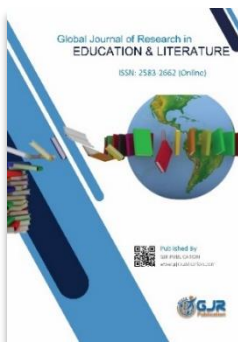
Teachers can also encourage students to participate in off-campus business practice activities, such as enterprise internships and international exchanges, allowing students to apply learned knowledge in authentic business environments and enhance their cross-cultural communication competence. These practical activities not only test students' learning outcomes but also lay a solid foundation for their future career development.

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