The Research on the Cultivation of Business English Talents in China’s Colleges

Min XU\textsuperscript{1,a,*}, Hui-qin TU\textsuperscript{2,b} and Chuan-dong ZHANG\textsuperscript{3,c}

\textsuperscript{1,2,3}Wuchang Shouyi University, Wuhan, Hubei, China

\textsuperscript{a}93319643@qq.com, \textsuperscript{b}56804430@qq.com, \textsuperscript{c}43190782@qq.com

*Corresponding author

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Abstract. With China’s opening to the world and the deepening reform of the economic system, import and export trade plays a very important role in the economic field. The foreign enterprises’ demands for professional talents of business English are increasing in a large scale. The cultivation of business English graduates with skills and capacities is greatly significant. Based on the investigation into the enterprises’ demands and the graduates’ pursuits, the problems of the teaching procedures in the college are figured out. The suggestive and feasible solutions are also provided, which may be referred to deepen the teaching reform of business English in colleges.

Introduction

With the growing development of China’s economy, the foreign commercial activities occur frequently and foreign trade has grown steadily. As the most important communication tool, English plays a important role in the foreign trade and business activities. However, the shortage of the economic and trade English talents affects the foreign economy and trade to develop fully \cite{1}. With China’s accession to the WTO, the demands for business English talents are more obvious. It is urgent to train a large number of qualified business English talents. Through a careful analysis of the social survey and the experts’ discussion, it’s a necessity to meet the need of the economic development and cultivate business English professionals. It’s feasible to cultivate the business English talents in trade. China’s enterprises are increasingly engaged in the business English activities. A large number of small and medium-sized enterprises, private enterprises, manufacturing enterprises, the domestic large-scale retail enterprises are involving the foreign trade industry and has created more jobs concerning foreign affairs. Many corporations which newly obtained the right of import and export affairs hope to expand its business in a short time. Professionalization and de-skilled professional talents of business English have become the essential factor for enterprises to participate in the international business competition \cite{2}. Investigation into the enterprises’ demands and the graduates’ pursuits, the problems of the teaching procedures in the college are figured out. It’s a necessity to find out the solutions to the problems.

1. The Significance of the Business English Development

The foreign enterprises’ demands for professional talents are increasing in a large scale. The professional requirements for business people are also abundant. According to statistics of the Ministry of Commerce, China’s current gap for various types of senior management talents is nearly 100 thousand people. All kinds of import and export enterprises of the foreign trade engaged in the actual business operation are in a great demand for two-way skillful talents of business English with English proficiency. With the huge demand for talents of English business, the domestic professional talents’ supply is very limited. Experts estimate that the demanding gap for the national practical talents of foreign trade is more than 1 million over the next five years. Therefore, business English major graduates are strongly competitive. In addition, business English specialty serves to enlarge the
special caliber of careers, achieve the enterprises’ market standards, further the connection with the
teaching and market demand. It’s also conducive to further education teaching resources integration.

Based on the National Standard of Teaching Quality for Business English Undergraduates in
China, the author discusses the mode and ways to cultivate business English talents in China’s
colleges. These aspects are included: specialty orientation, talent quality, curriculum system, teaching
staff and business English specialty of higher education aims to develop a solid fundamental language
proficiency, broaden an international vision and grasp reasonable international business knowledge
and skills [3]. Meanwhile, it also aims to grasp the economic management, the basic knowledge and
theory of law and other relevant disciplines. It cultivates the students to have higher cultural quality
and cross-cultural communication and communication ability, and the compound English talents can
work in the two fields of the business trade and economic management of financial affairs in the
international environment. The specific qualities are as follows: ideological quality, professional
quality, vocational quality, cultural quality, physical and psychological quality are necessary to
advocate whole developmental education. The students are educated to be a person with noble and
moral quality, human and scientific quality, international vision, sense of social responsibility,
dedication and cooperation spirit, innovation and entrepreneurship spirit, physical and psychological
heath.

2. The Investigation into the Social Demand of Business English

There are different models for Business English in China. Such as the model of “Business +
English” in University of International Business and Economics, the model of “English + Business”
in Guangdong University of Foreign Studies.

2.1 The purposes of business English teaching

The business English is defined as the lingua franca used in international business communications
[4]. The relationship between business and English is so close that there is no particular order of them,
and they are not modified each other. The core of business English is neither business nor English, but
a new interdisciplinary discourse system. Moreover, it has three level meanings—common English,
general business English and specialized business English. The three complement and integrate each
other. The talents who will be cultivated have three characteristics of internationalization, compound
and application. The cultivation usually achieves two purposes [5]. First, enable the students to master
the English in international business affairs. Second, enable the students to tackle international
business affairs in English. The second one is deeper than the first one. Actually, it emphasizes three
specific abilities: ability of practicing business discourse; ability of tackling the international business
communications; ability of investigating the international business atmosphere and do the relative
research.

2.2 Current problems in the methods to cultivate business English talents

(1) Many scholars study the demands of the business English talents in the society. Business
English interpreters and translators have the greatest demand, and the foreign trade salespersons
follow. However, the students’ job pursuit is administrative positions. This is a wide gap between the
social demand and the students’ job pursuit. Actually, many employers consider the business
graduates with the bachelor degree can meet the needs of the job position.

(2) The basic English skills, such as the speaking and translating, are very important. The
investigation into the business qualities shows that the equality of international business etiquette is
the also important. The ability of import and export English correspondence takes the second position.
The third one is the master of related laws of the protection of intellectual property rights. The
marketing ability tops the fifth. However, some of them have been ignored.

(3) EGBP (English for General Business purposes) has been ignored. In the list of business English
skills based on the marketing survey, the top three professional skills cover: the business English
dialogues and speech, the business English writing, the business English interpreting and translating. Besides, the basic skills include the executive power and force, the ability to manage time, psychological enduring capacity, strain capacity, the accommodative ability of environment, and teaming and collaborating ability. However, several of them have been neglected.

(4) Among the business English relative certificates, the top two are the TEM4 and TEM8. The computer second-level and interpreting take the third and fourth positions. Then the BEC, TOEIC and Secretary Card follow [6]. The last two certificates sometimes are overlooked.

(5) The survey on the business English teachers and teaching methods indicates that the students prefer the teachers who are English majors with considerable business practical experience. Their second choice is the teachers who are business majors and able to teach in English. The last two choices are the teachers who graduate as English majors with the deep understanding of the business knowledge and the teachers who are business majors and teach business English in Chinese. The teaching method of example analysis is the most welcome for the students. The method of interactive practice between the teacher and students is also favored. The third method is group performance and games. The students dislike most is translating practice, vocabulary and sentence pattern drills. The findings prove that the students prefer the practical teaching rather than the basic English skills training in the traditional ways in business English class. Furthermore, it implies that the teachers who can analyze the business examples with rich business English practical experience are most popularized.

The questionnaire on the textbooks and practical curriculum in business English shows that English-Chinese textbooks are mostly favored. The original English textbooks are also acceptable. However, few students approves of the Chinese version of business English textbooks. As for the practical curriculum, most students regard the English business practice important. However, most students seldom have the chance to practice the English business skills in class. This is a clear contradiction between the students’ needs and the teaching limitation in class.

3. Effective Solutions to the Problems

It is urgent to figure out the solutions to the problems above. There are six major solutions advised to the problems.

3.1 To change the expectations for the future job

Based on the investigation into the social demands of the Business English talents, there is a great need for the business English translators, interpreters and foreign trade salespeople. The students should adjust themselves to the demand of the society. They should not only pursue the administrative positions which rarely suit the requirement of the society. The school may change the courses based on the investigation and provide the guidance for the students to modulate their expectation for the job.

3.2 To attach more importance to the English basic skills

The students need to improve their English basic skills to meet the social demands, such as the English speaking and translating skills. On one hand, the employers point that effective and successful communication is the core of the final success. The inappropriate languages may lead to the failure of communication. On the other hand, the speaking proficiency is put the first place during the students’ expectations for the teacher. The basic requirements of the certificates, such as TEM4, TEM8 and Interpreters, also prove the necessity of basic skills. Besides the English skills, the students’ four abilities are also considered, the ability to manage time, psychological enduring capacity, strain capacity, the accommodative ability to the changing environment. These capabilities can be strengthened through extracurricular activities.

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3.3 To reinforce the EGBP teaching

As for the importance of the business knowledge, there is a wide gap between the students and the social demands. The differences between EGBP and ESBP (English for Specific Business Purposes) lead to the different teaching methodologies. EGBP emphasizes the large range of basic business knowledge based on the English skills. ESBP attaches more importance to the combination of English language and specific business knowledge [7].

3.4 To culture double-qualified teachers

Based on the survey, students prefer the business English teachers with abundant business experience and solid language knowledge. These double-qualified teachers are favored by the students. The teachers need to achieve these two goals and teach with Chinese-English or original English textbooks. Furthermore, the teacher analyzes the business cases with fluent English expressions, and conducts practical classes and improves the teaching effects.

3.5 To use up-to-date textbooks with abundant business cases

The textbook is the important carrier for the teaching and learning. Nowadays most of the textbooks are borrowed from English countries with the original English or English-Chinese language. However, the students’ response to the textbooks is negative, because they include too many kinds of theory but few practical business cases. They are even out of date. It’s a necessity to adopt textbooks with rich practical business cases.

3.6 To adopt case analysis teaching method

With the real commerce atmosphere as the language background, the students aim to master the business skills through the dealing with the business problems [8]. The lack of practical business experience motivates the students to value the practical courses. The teacher would better design the real business atmosphere and simulate the teaching process.

Table 1. Major problems and feasible solutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
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<tr>
<td>The gap between social demands and the students’ expectations for job positions</td>
<td>To change the expectations for the future job</td>
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<td>The ignorance of the English basic skills</td>
<td>To attach more importance to the English basic skills</td>
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<td>The ignorance of the EGBP teaching</td>
<td>To reinforce the EGBP teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Few double-qualified teachers</td>
<td>To culture double-qualified teachers</td>
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<td>Traditional textbooks with limited cases</td>
<td>To use up-to-date textbooks with abundant business cases</td>
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<td>The ignorance of case analysis teaching</td>
<td>To adopt case analysis teaching method</td>
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Conclusion

With China’s opening to the world and the deepening reform of the economic system, import and export trade plays a very important role in the economic field. The foreign enterprises’ demands for professional talents of business English are increasing in a large scale. It is urgent to train a large number of qualified business English talents. Through a careful analysis of the social survey and the experts’ discussion, it’s a necessity to meet the need of the economic development and cultivate business English professionals. The talents who will be cultivated have three characteristics of internationalization, compound and application. It cultivates the students to have higher cultural quality and cross-cultural communication and communication ability, and the compound English talents can work in the two fields of the business trade and economic management of financial affairs in the international environment.
Based on the survey, current problems in the methods to cultivate business English talents have been figured out. There is a wide gap between the social demand and the students’ job pursuit; findings prove that the students prefer the practical teaching rather than the basic English skills training in the traditional ways in business English class; students seldom have the chance to practice the English business skills in class.

There are six suggestive and feasible solutions to the problems: change the expectations for the future job; attach more importance to the English basic skills; reinforce the EGBP teaching; culture double-qualified teachers; use up-to-date textbooks with abundant business cases; adopt case analysis teaching method. These solutions will be referred to deepen the teaching reform of business English in higher education.

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References


