

Research on Implementation Approaches to Online-Offline Blended Teaching Mode in Business English Teaching

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Abstract

In business English classroom teaching practice, the cultivation of students' language competence and the impartation of business knowledge cannot be both covered within limited class time. In order to solve this problem, this paper proposed an online-offline blended teaching mode which is suitable for business English courses. Rich and high-quality online resources can meet different learning needs of students at different levels, facilitating students' autonomic learning of business knowledge, thus fully mobilizing the autonomy of students' learning. Offline classroom teaching facilitates teachers to carry out various forms of language skill training and fully play teachers' leading role in class. The online-offline blended teaching mode combines the offline classroom teaching with online teaching, which takes the advantages of both teaching forms, therefore, effectively improves the quality of business English teaching.

Key words: Blended teaching; Business English; Online and offline; Teaching mode

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INTRODUCTION

In the information age, information technology has penetrated into the field of education, causing profound

changes in teaching concepts, teaching methods, and teaching assessment methods. In this context, blended teaching has emerged. The blended teaching mode refers to the teaching mode that combines online teaching and offline classroom teaching, which is a new teaching mode explored and formed with the development of information technology and Internet technology (Tan, 2018). This teaching mode complements the advantages of traditional classroom teaching and online teaching, "emphasizing the leading role of teachers and reflecting the dominant position of students (Hong, 2017)", so as to achieve better teaching results. This paper intends to explore the implementation approaches to MOOC-based online and offline blended teaching mode in business English teaching, and apply information technology to solve the problem that language skill training and business knowledge impartation cannot be both covered in the classroom teaching practice of business English.

1. PROBLEMS IN TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM TEACHING OF BUSINESS ENGLISH

As trade exchanges between China and foreign countries become more frequent, business English has begun to appear as a branch of English for specific purposes, and has gradually established its own independent disciplinary system in China. Compared with other English disciplines, business English courses involve knowledge and content of economics, trade, management, finance, e-commerce, etc. and have distinctive features of being interdisciplinary. The core and foothold of the cultivation of business English majors is still language ability, and teachers should pay attention to the training of students' language skills. At the same time, business ability is a key point in the cultivation of business English majors. It is necessary to highlight the characteristics of "business" to distinguish business English from other English disciplines.

Thus, Business English teaching involves both language teaching and business teaching, but due to the limited time of classroom teaching, business English teaching often falls into a situation where it catches one and loses the other. At present, business English teaching in China's colleges and universities emphasizes the training of language skills and weakens its "business" characteristics. Though the students cultivated in this way have good language skills, the quality of business English teaching is not high due to insufficient impartation of business knowledge. The advantage of classroom teaching lies in direct face-to-face communication between teachers and students. Classroom teaching is an indispensable teaching form for students' language skill training. Therefore, in business English teaching, classroom teaching should be mainly used to develop students' language skill training. However, a large amount of business knowledge is involved in business English courses. If students have no idea of the business knowledge, it will be difficult for them to understand the business-related vocabulary, terms and texts, let alone to improve language skills. Therefore, the impartation of business knowledge is also necessary. In business English teaching, how to impart business knowledge to students while training students' language skills has become an urgent problem to be solved. Teachers should use information technology, to be specific, apply online-offline blended teaching mode, to solve this problem, so as to extend teaching time and space and enrich teaching forms.

2. APPLICABILITY OF ONLINE-OFFLINE BLENDED TEACHING MODE IN BUSINESS ENGLISH TEACHING

Although traditional classroom teaching can achieve direct face-to-face communication between teachers and students, it cannot meet different learning needs of students at different levels. And traditional classroom teaching has fixed time and location, which cannot meet the needs of students to learn anytime and anywhere. Furthermore, the learning resources provided by teachers during the classroom teaching time are very limited.

With the reform of education informatization, online teaching breaks the limitations of time and space and provides students with rich and high-quality learning resources, which greatly meets the needs of students for autonomic learning, personalized learning, and learning anytime and anywhere. Although online teaching has the advantages that traditional classroom teaching does not have, online teaching cannot replace classroom teaching. Since MOOC is a kind of human-computer interactive teaching form, face-to-face interactive teaching cannot be achieved, resulting in students being unable to have necessary communication with teachers and teachers being unable to give students professional guidance

and suggestions, etc. (Huang, 2019) Moreover, online teaching is not very restrictive to students. It mainly relies on students' consciousness. Students with poor self-control and procrastination can hardly guarantee to complete online learning tasks on time and quality. In addition, online MOOCs just "teach students", not to "educate students". Educating students requires that teachers instruct and influence students by their precepts and deeds. After all, teachers' responsibility and mission are not only to teach students to learn knowledge, but also to teach students how to behave. (Su, 2015)

The online-offline blended teaching mode combines offline classroom teaching and online teaching to complement each other's advantages, better play the leading role of teachers, give full play to students' learning autonomy, and achieve better teaching results.

The advantages of online teaching provide convenience to impart relevant business knowledge to students. For teachers, the rich and high-quality online resources bring convenience to teachers, so that teachers can screen and integrate the resources, and then release the online courses that match the content of the target unit to students. For students, online resources can meet students' different learning needs, making learning more interesting. Moreover, students can arrange their online learning according to their own learning plan, and the flexibility of online teaching helps improve students' enthusiasm and initiative in learning. Offline classroom teaching is an excellent way to develop students' language skill training. Teachers and students can communicate face-to-face, and the exchanges between students and teachers, among students, among groups are direct, which is convenient for teachers to carry out various forms of classroom activities. Teachers can also observe the performance of students in class, and correct students' mistakes in time. The online-offline blended teaching mode not only guarantees the training of students' language skills, but also makes the impartation of business knowledge no longer a problem through the extension of time and space, which makes up for the shortcomings of the lack of business knowledge impartation in traditional classroom teaching.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF BUSINESS ENGLISH ONLINE-OFFLINE BLENDED TEACHING MODE

The basic concept of business English online-offline blended teaching mode is: in business English teaching, the business knowledge involved in business English courses is imparted through online teaching, and offline classroom teaching is mainly used for students' language output and training students' language skills. Based on this basic concept, the implementation of business English online-offline blended teaching mode can be divided into four stages: pre-class preparation, online teaching, offline classroom teaching, and unit review.

3.1 Pre-class Preparation

Before class, the teacher will send the task list and related learning materials for the target unit to students through QQ or Chaoxing Learning Platform, so that students have a general understanding of the learning content about the target unit and are fully prepared for the learning of this unit. In addition, after completing the unit study, the teacher can check whether the students have completed the tasks according to the task list, and the students can also conduct self-examination against it.

3.2 Online Teaching

On the MOOC Website of Chinese Universities, teachers select the online courses that match the content of the target unit and release them to students. Students learn these courses consciously, and complete their online learning within the time allotted. After completing learning these courses, students should master the relevant vocabulary, understand the professional terms, and test themselves online to know about their learning achievement. Students can ask questions online at any time in the process of online learning. Teachers can answer the questions online, or leave the questions for offline class discussion according to teaching needs. Online teaching can cultivate students' autonomic learning ability. Teachers monitor the learning progress of students by checking the records on the MOOC Website to prevent a few students from being lazy. And teachers can post questions or organize discussion on the MOOC Website to guide students to participate consciously in online learning. In this way, teachers can avoid spending a lot of time in class explaining a certain terminology, and focus their time and energy on students' language skill training. In the online teaching stage, students have a general understanding of relevant business knowledge, and their learning efficiency will be greatly improved in the subsequent offline classroom teaching stage. Therefore, online teaching is a useful supplement to offline classroom teaching and helps students be well prepared for offline classroom learning in advance. Moreover, online teaching is not limited by time and space, and students can make their own plan to study online courses. Furthermore, students can log in the MOOC Website to study the online courses repeatedly, and strengthen their understanding of these courses.

3.3 Offline Classroom Teaching

The offline classroom teaching in the blended teaching mode is essentially the deepening of online teaching, which is the stage of applying and outputting the business knowledge absorbed by students in the process of online learning. Offline classroom teaching can check the actual effect of students' online learning, and it is also a process of reprocessing the knowledge absorbed by students online.

As students absorb scattered knowledge in the online learning stage, teachers need to sort out the content of

the online courses at the beginning of classroom teaching to help students form a complete knowledge system. In addition, teachers can list students' online questions, and guide students to quickly review the content of the online courses. Teachers can leave the unanswered questions online to students to discuss in class.

3.3.1 Discussion

This is the introductory part of classroom teaching. The questions to be discussed are the questions raised by students in the process of online learning. Teachers can answer simple questions online, and leave the comprehensive questions for class discussion, so that students can have the chance to express their opinions to deepen their understanding of the knowledge. Moreover, taking the class with questions can cultivate students' spirit of exploration and increase their interest in learning.

3.3.2 Text Comprehension

Students have already had a process of digestion and absorption of relevant business knowledge through the early online learning, especially the mastery of professional vocabulary and the understanding of terminology. This is the prerequisite for students to accurately understand business English texts. Students are no longer entangled in the meaning of a certain vocabulary or a certain term. The understanding of business English texts is no longer hindered by lack of business knowledge, but based on students' reading ability. Therefore, the blended teaching mode can better cultivate the reading ability of business English majors. Only by helping students clear away the obstacles caused by lack of business knowledge when reading can students make greater progress through continuous language skill training. This part is the deep processing of knowledge on the basis of the previous online learning to promote the internalization of the knowledge.

3.3.3 Speech

For English majors, giving a speech on a topic is a common way of language application. This way puts forward higher requirements for business English majors, because business English has unique language features compared to ordinary English. For example, for a simple word such as "policy", if students do not know that it also means "insurance contract" in business context, it will cause an understanding obstacle. Therefore, business English majors must first master business vocabulary before they can use business vocabulary for expression. This is why the online teaching stage should be added to impart business knowledge to students before classroom teaching. This part is the output of knowledge and language based on the online learning and the previous classroom teaching parts.

3.3.4 Situational Practice

Business English is a kind of vocationally applied English. Therefore, business English teaching should place great

emphasis on the training of students' application ability of business English in the work scenes. At the end of classroom teaching, teachers can set up some situations related to the content of the target unit, and ask students to play the given roles in groups. On the one hand, the practice allows students to have a preliminary experience of the work scenes; on the other hand, it trains students to apply business language appropriately in the work scenes. This part aims to develop the comprehensive ability of business English majors.

3.4 Unit Review

After completing the study of the target unit, students should check the degree of completion of the tasks against the task list released by the teacher, summarize their learning of the unit, reflect on their learning process, and provide references for future learning. Only when teachers have a deep understanding of what students think, can they better guide students, adjust their teaching plans in time, and carry out teaching effectively.

Teachers should also check students' degree of completion of the tasks based on the task list, provide feedback on students' online learning and classroom learning, and comment on students' online and offline performance. Teachers also need to summarize the teaching of this unit, find out the advantages that the blended teaching mode is worth promoting, gradually explore a better way to connect online teaching and offline classroom teaching, and explore better implementation approaches for all stages of teaching. For the problems that arise in the blended teaching mode, teachers need to find out the causes of the problems, so as to better carry forward the advantages of the blended teaching mode and make up for its shortcomings in future teaching, and make the new teaching mode more perfect.

The online teaching and offline classroom teaching in business English online-offline blended teaching mode integrate and complement each other. Online teaching is the impartation stage of business knowledge. Only by

carrying out online teaching well, will the efficiency of offline classroom teaching be greatly improved. Offline classroom teaching is the deepening of online teaching, through further learning in the classroom, the students' comprehensive ability can be gradually enhanced.

CONCLUSION

In business English teaching, the online-offline blended teaching mode can modify the current situation of business English teaching focusing on the training of students' language skills while weakening the impartation of business knowledge. Therefore, it can improve the quality of business English teaching and cultivate applied talents with both good language skills and solid business knowledge, making the cultivation of business English majors really adapt to job market demand. In addition, information technology has brought profound changes to the teaching environment. Teachers need to learn new teaching methods, keep up with the pace of technological innovation, and apply advanced technology in teaching, so as to improve teaching quality.

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