

The Blended Teaching Practice of Business English Based on Output-Oriented Approach

Xiaoning Liu

School of Foreign Languages of Yulin University, Yulin, Shaanxi 719000, China

ABSTRACT. English teaching should pay attention to the cultivation of cross-cultural communication ability. On this point, the domestic and foreign education circles have long reached a consensus. The Undergraduate Teaching Requirements for Business English Majors in Higher Education (Trial) put forward the requirement of “strong cross-cultural communication skills and high humanistic literacy” to the goal of personnel training, and included cross-cultural communication skills and humanistic literacy in the four major professional knowledge and ability modules, accounting for about 10% to 20% of the whole course group. The courses offered international business culture, corporate culture, European and American culture overview, Chinese culture summary, etc. For first-and second-year students, basic language course teaching should also create a strong cultural learning atmosphere. This requires teachers to infiltrate cultural teaching into the process of language teaching, and cultivate students' cross-cultural communication ability. Based on the theory of “output-oriented approach”, this paper intends to analyze the principle of the Chinese introduction of comprehensive English teaching in business, and explore the teaching design under the mode of cultural import.

KEYWORDS: Output-oriented approach, Business english, Blended teaching

1. Introduction

In the English teaching process with output as the main orientation, the output-oriented method has practicality in the business English teaching process. It can cultivate complex applied English talents and has a great influence in the field of English teaching. The application of the output-oriented method in business English teaching promotes the realization of teaching goals through the three-stage teaching process, which further improves the students' participation and enthusiasm in the classroom, and at the same time improves the quality of teaching and learning efficiency. [1]

2. The Concept of Output-Oriented Approach and Blended Teaching

The Output-oriented Approach (Production-oriented Approach, hereinafter referred to as POA) is a new Chinese university language teaching theory proposed by Professor Wen Qiufang, whose predecessor was the “Output-Driven Hypothesis” and “Output Driver - Input Enable Assumptions”. POA takes the social-cultural perspective of “output hypothesis” and language learning as the theoretical basis, and its theoretical system is three dimensions, including “teaching philosophy”, “teaching leave” and “teaching process”. The POA promotes the “one-of-a-kind” teaching philosophy, using output activities as a driving tool (output-driven) and teaching objectives, and input activities as an enabling tool (input-enabled), incorporating the teacher-student cooperative evaluation model into the “to evaluate learning” hypothesis. Teachers need to give full play to the role of the output task, according to the students' “recent development area”, through reasonable scientific task design, guide students to select and process input materials, in order to promote the completion of the production task [2]. The teacher's stent role should fully mobilize the students' main initiative, and finally achieve the ultimate goal of education of “learning to gain, learning to use, learning to be talented”. The cultural import teaching mode is a relatively stable operational framework that allows students to construct language and cultural knowledge and promote the improvement of the ability of English in the comprehensive use of English through guidance. Under the guidance of “output-oriented method” to carry out cultural import teaching, first of all, learning as the center, that is, the task set the primary concern about what students can learn, teachers give full play to their own professional leadership role providing students with the necessary “scaffolding” during the course of completing the output task so as to urge students on to interact with learning environment elements such as “situational”, “collaborative” and “talking” ones under the influence of original knowledge experience, social and cultural background and emotional motivation, and finally take the initiative to construct cultural knowledge and ability. The aim is to develop students' cognitive abilities to different cultures, sensitivity and tolerance of cultural differences, and cross-cultural thinking, adaptation and communication skills. [3]

2.1 The Relationship between Teachers and Students

In term of the relationship between teachers and students, the POA as well as blended teaching values the teacher's "scaffolding" role in teaching, putting to top priority the student-centered, teacher-led, harmonious and unified learning and teaching process to ensure the realization of learning effect.

2.2 In Terms of Learning Forms

Both POA and blended teaching highlight the integration of various forms of learning, such as receptive learning, participatory learning, autonomous learning, focused discussion, and group cooperation etc., and effectively combine the online learning and classroom learning to improve students' listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating abilities in an all-round way. [4]

2.3 In Terms of Learning Resources

Blended teaching attaches great importance to the organic combination of book knowledge, network resources and practical learning, which not only guarantees the learners' free choice of learning content, but also ensures their acquisition system of basic knowledge, realizing the individualized development of teaching according to students' aptitude eventually. [5]

2.4 In Terms of the Learning Environment

Blended teaching involves both online learning and the traditional face-to-face classroom or practical training room learning, which is relatively open yet with a certain degree of supervision. As a result, it can not only ensure the achievement of multidirectional interaction through the network environment, but also face-to-face emotional communication and humanistic spiritual experience between teachers and students.

3. Principles of Cultural Import Law

3.1 Phase Principle

The stage principle requires that the import of cultural content should follow the principle of "step by step" and conform to the general law of students' cognition, that is, from shallow to deep, from simple to complex, from phenomenon to essence, from explicit knowledge culture to implicit communication culture import. Therefore, the introduction of culture can be divided into three stages: primary, middle and high level. The cultural introduction in the primary stage mainly introduces the differences between the mainstream cultures of English and Chinese in daily life, and their manifestations in the language form including greeting, apologizing, thanking, request, invitation, etc. The intermediate stage mainly introduces the differences in English and Chinese expression caused by cultural differences, that is, the differences in the cultural connotation of words, such as euphemisms, taboos, cultural load words, etc. The advanced stage deeply explores the differences between Chinese and Western values and mindsets, such as interpersonal relationships, time and space concepts, etc. [6]

3.2 Contrastive Principle

There are great differences between Chinese and Western cultures, and discovering those differences can help deepen our understanding of our own culture and objectively grasp our own cultural characteristics. The contrast also follows a step-by-step process, such as the contrast between language phenomena and non-language phenomena, from the contrast of knowledge and culture to the contrast of communicative culture. In the process of discovering the differences, the commonalities of both sides and the positive role of the mother tongue culture are supposed to be taken into account, taking advantage of the mother tongue culture to reveal some of the main features of the target language culture and solid the learners' knowledge of Western culture. [7]

3.3 Situational Principle

Situational principle refers to the way teachers try their best to create a real living environment, promote students to experience in the real living environment, to find problems, think about problems, solve problems, and finally build the

meaning of the knowledge. Because of this, in the classroom teaching, teachers are to introduce as many real life examples as possible, connect the knowledge taught with students' life experience closely, actively build various class participation platforms for students, and stimulate students' interest in learning and participation. [8]

3.4 Cooperative Principle

It is only through interaction and cooperation between learners that knowledge can be understood more comprehensively and thoroughly. Therefore, in the course of classroom teaching, discussion, consultation, cooperation, role-play and other methods are frequently employed to make individual wisdom the resources shared by groups, and the means of jointly exploring solutions to problems empowers the students to compare the different views to produce a higher level of understanding. In this “cooperative learning” environment, each student can not only contribute what he has learned to group sharing, but also learn from other students to achieve individual complementary, which is truly conducive to promoting each learner's learning.[9]

4. Application of Output-Oriented Approach in Business English Blended Learning

To implement the output-oriented approach, teachers must first work out feasible, clear and easily assessable teaching objectives, and then break down large objectives into small tasks and design specific output tasks that meet the goals; for these tasks, teachers need to outline the key points and difficulties so that students know the specific goals and tasks clearly.

4.1 Setting Teaching Objectives and Teaching Tasks

Take business English writing for instance, it is to make students, through the study of the basic theory and knowledge of business writing, get a good command of the basic format and writing skills of business English correspondence, and instruct them in the proper and effective use of different business documents, such as cover letter, resume, e-mails and memos, faxes, minutes, thank-you letter, congratulation letter, apology letter, complaint letter, and invitation etc., as well as foreign publicity documents, such as company brochure, product specification, press release, business contract, business report, questionnaire and so on. In practical classroom teaching, teaching objectives and teaching tasks accordingly need to be carried out in following three steps: first, account for the communication scenario and objectives clearly to the students; second, provide the students with related vocabulary, expressions and sentence patterns beforehand. Third, offer the proposed format of the business correspondence. [10]

4.2 Presenting a Practical Example of a Business Correspondence

At this stage, teachers play the significant role of “intermediary”. This is the “facilitating” stage of output-oriented approach. On the basis of the output-oriented approach, students independently choose suitable input materials for learning under the guidance and supervision of teachers, thereby promoting the completion of output tasks.

In business writing class, teachers provide students with authentic business scenario and cases of business correspondence, analyzing them and highlighting how to write business correspondence. Suppose a company writes a business letter to an agent company to introduce its products. The agent company asks questions related to the products based on the product profile. Teachers should first inform students of the content and objective of the lesson. Then organize students to discuss, for example, what paragraph structure, style, vocabulary and business etiquette should be used in a business letter. In turn, with their increased class participation and aroused enthusiasm for learning tasks, students can better understand what is to be written and learned. Then, offer students a real case, after their discussion, teachers should analyze and summarize it in class, and eventually illustrate how to write a correct business letter.

4.3 Explain the Content of Business English Writing Teaching

In the above business letter scenario, the output tasks can be “actuated” and summarized as “improving business English reading ability” and “business English letter writing ability”. In the process of improving business English reading ability, teachers could organize students to read business letters in class. In the process of reading, according to different scenarios, students are empowered to learn different types of business correspondence to record key words, structures, business terms and sentence patterns. After reading, teachers could arrange students to carry out simulation exercises. For example, first ask students to introduce a company's products working as its marketer, after that swap the role into an advertiser of an agency company to work out the product consultation description. In practice, should students encounter some writing problems, they can ask the teacher for help at any time, and the teacher would come to

their aid and guide them in time. Teachers' direct and timely guidance and evaluation will help students solve problems in time and improve the efficiency of classroom learning and teaching quality to a large extent.

The “evaluation” stage of output-oriented approach normally consists of instant evaluation and time-lapse evaluation. Instant evaluation is combined with the “actuated” phase. According to the learning content set above, in the “facilitating” stage, teachers could answer students' questions , guide and evaluate them in class immediately. That is, for the common questions raised by students, teachers could explain in time, answer their questions and guide them instantly to master the correct content of business English writing. The Time-lapse evaluation is conducted after class. Teachers arrange relevant homework accordingly, such as assigning students to write English cover letters, company introduction, product introduction, company meeting minutes and so on. After the students submit the homework, the teacher reviews and summarizes the students' common problems in business English correspondence. In the next class, the teacher will explain these common problems and correct them, so as to cultivate compound applied business English talents in the output-oriented teaching process. This output-oriented approach not only has practical feasibility, but also has great influence in the field of English teaching. The application of output-oriented approach in business English teaching, through the three-stage teaching process, further promotes the implementation of teaching objectives, boosts students' classroom participation and enthusiasm, and enhances teaching quality and learning efficiency as well.

5. Conclusion

The output-oriented approach provides theoretical and methodological guidance for the organic integration of online and offline teaching in blended teaching and learning, so that students could carry out various forms of communication and interaction inside and outside the class, giving full play to the role of teachers' preparation, management and assessment in teaching process, reflecting the main role of students, and greatly improving the teaching effect. In teaching practice, there are still some problems to be solved. The design of teaching details such as teaching content, time and steps is not reasonable enough to guarantee students' personalized learning. However, the output-oriented teaching concept provides the direction for business English teachers to carry out blended teaching, and we should continue to explore and innovate in this field to achieve the goal of nourishing more qualified complex applied business talents.

Acknowledgement

The author acknowledges the Yulin University teaching reform project fund (Grant: JG1914).

References

- [1] Liu Jinlian. Research on teaching practice of business English writing based on “output-oriented approach” . *Contemporary Educational Practice and Teaching Research*, no.24, pp. 152-153,2019.
- [2] Fan Jiying. A Practical Study of Output-oriented Approach in Business English Letter Writing Class . *Educational Theory & Practice*, no.33, pp. 62-64, 2019.
- [3] Chen Ruimin. College Business English Audiovisual Teaching Model from the Perspective of Output Orientation . *Quality Education in Western China*, no.20, pp. 179 + 181, 2019.
- [4] Huang Liqi. Research on the mixed teaching mode of business English curriculum system supported by big data . *Journal of Tianjin Institute of Business and Technology*, no.05, pp. 80-87, 2019.
- [5] Yang Lu. Cultural Introduction in Business Comprehensive English Teaching Based on the Theory of “Output Orientation” . *English Plaza*, no.11, pp. 70-72, 2018.
- [6] Zhang Luqian, Zhang Jing. Research on Teacher-Student Cooperative Action in Output-oriented Business English Classroom . *Journal of Heilongjiang College of Education*, no.10, pp. 128-131, 2018.
- [7] Li Huiyan. Research on the Effectiveness of Business English Teaching Based on “Output Oriented Approach” . *Crazy English (Theoretical Edition)*, no.03, pp. 97-98, 2018.
- [8] Chen Ruimin. Research on the Reform of Audiovisual Course in Business English under the Guidance of Output . *Contemporary Course of Teaching and Research*, no.08, pp. 107, 2018.
- [9] Li Huiyan. Research on Business English Teaching Based on Output-oriented Approach . *Overseas English*, no.09, pp. 29-30 + 43, 2018.
- [10] Zhang Lifei. Application of output-oriented method in business English mixed learning in higher vocational

colleges . Journal of Jiamusi Vocational College, no.01, pp. 309-310, 2018.