

# The Cultivation of Intercultural Communication Skills in Business English Teaching in Colleges and Universities

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**Abstract:** With the continuous improvement of China's international status, the cultivation of intercultural communication ability has gradually become a priority in higher education, especially in the teaching of business English courses. The core of this competence lies in fluent language expression, accurate information transfer, and in-depth understanding of communication patterns, values and behavioral habits in different cultural contexts. Based on this, the paper focuses on the mechanism of cultivating intercultural communicative competence in business English education in colleges and universities, aiming to comprehensively improve students' communicative competence in multicultural contexts through innovative teaching methods and curriculum design, which is provided for reference.

**Keywords:** Business English; English in colleges and universities; Intercultural communication

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## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, intercultural communication skills are becoming increasingly important in the field of business English, which requires not only the precise use of language, but also understanding and responding to cultural diversity from a global perspective. The challenge for English educators in higher education is to keep pace with international business in their teaching strategies and to develop students' global business awareness and intercultural communication skills. Against this background, higher education institutions should pay particular attention to the curriculum of business English programs, which should not only reflect the latest trends in language teaching but also meet the practical needs of global business communication. In addition, educators should seek effective teaching methods that combine theory and practice to enhance students' cultural sensitivity and lay a good foundation for their smooth employment and life development in the future.

## 2. The connotation of intercultural communication competence

In the business English courses of colleges and universities, intercultural communication refers to the ability of students to communicate effectively in different cultural backgrounds, including the understanding of multicultural knowledge, the skills of dealing with cross-cultural differences, and the practical application in business communication.

In business English education in colleges and universities, cultivating students' intercultural communicative competence not only implies the improvement of language proficiency, but it is more important to cultivate students' cultural sensitivity and cultural adaptability. It requires students to master the expressions of English and to recognize and respect the behavioral patterns, values and communication rules of different cultures. Academic research has shown that students with intercultural communication skills are more competitive in the global business environment and are able to facilitate international business activities more effectively.

### **3. The important role of intercultural communication skills in business English**

With the acceleration of globalization, business activities gradually cross national boundaries and involve multicultural mingling and conflicts. Under such a background, students majoring in business English must possess intercultural communication skills in order to communicate effectively in a multicultural business environment and deal with the challenges brought by various cultural differences.

Intercultural communication competence involves not only language communication, but it further involves the mastery of cultural context knowledge, the understanding of communication styles in different cultures, and the utilization of strategies on this basis. This ability enables students who major in business English to be keenly aware of business ethics, negotiation habits and decision-making modes in different cultures, and to play a key role in cross-border cooperation and international transactions. For example, in recent years, many companies face the challenge of cultural adaptation when entering new international markets. A multinational company that ignores the cultural characteristics of the target country may experience failure in product promotion, advertising and even daily business communication. With cross-cultural communication skills, graduates who major in business English can provide companies with cultural adaptation strategies and help them succeed in a multicultural context. In this context, business English teaching is no longer limited to teaching language knowledge, but it should also include the systematic cultivation of intercultural communication skills.

In the future, instructional development in this area will focus on more interactive and authentic teaching modules. For example, through virtual exchange programs, international business case studies, and teamwork with students from different cultural backgrounds, students' intercultural communication skills will be enhanced in all aspects. It not only opens up a wide world for students' career, but also provides valuable talent support for the internationalization process of enterprises.<sup>[1]</sup>

## **4. Measures to cultivate students' intercultural communication skills**

### **4.1 Optimizing the curriculum of business English in colleges and universities**

Optimizing the curriculum means a comprehensive innovation from course content, teaching methods to evaluation system, so that students can apply what they have learned and deal with cross-cultural differences and challenges in a real business communication environment. First of all, business English courses in colleges and universities should cover a wealth of cross-cultural communication theories, such as cultural differences and cross-cultural communication strategies, and at the same time actual business case studies should be incorporated, so that students can understand and master the core concepts of cross-cultural communication. In addition, the course should include practical sessions such as simulated business negotiation and cross-cultural teamwork, so students' understanding and application of cross-cultural communication can be deepened through interactive teaching methods such as role-playing and case analysis.

For example, the business English course of a university has designed a series of intercultural communication workshops, such as "international business etiquette", "intercultural negotiation simulation". These workshops require that students analyze business behaviors in different cultures and apply communicative strategies in simulated situations. For example, in the workshop of "international business etiquette", students are assigned to different teams representing different countries, and each team needs to prepare negotiation strategies and conduct simulated negotiations with other teams. Through this form of teaching, students not only improve their language skills, but more importantly learn to communicate and negotiate effectively in a complex cultural context. In addition, the curriculum should also focus on the reform of the evaluation mechanism, adopting diversified evaluation methods, such as peer review, self-evaluation and teacher evaluation, to more comprehensively reflect the students' intercultural communication skills. Such an evaluation system can better stimulate students' intrinsic motivation and encourage them to take the initiative to explore and propose innovative solutions in the learning process.<sup>[2]</sup>

### **4.2 Integrating cultural content into English teaching and learning**

Cultural content is incorporated into English teaching, which not only enriches students' language learning but also improves their ability to interpret different business behaviors. This teaching mode requires teachers to focus on the introduction and analysis of cultural differences while teaching English language knowledge, so that students can accurately understand and adapt to the multicultural environment in actual business communication. In fact, the integration of cultural content is not only limited to the surface meaning of language, but also touches more deeply on the context, pragmatics and the interpretation of cultural symbols. In business English courses in colleges and universities, teachers can closely integrate cultural content with language teaching through case study, role play, team discussion and other teaching methods. In this way, students can deepen their understanding of cultural differences in business communication in the process of language learning and enhance their flexibility and adaptability in

multicultural communication.

For example, the teacher introduced the case of white elephant batteries in a classroom teaching activity. In this case study, students explored the influence of cultural symbols in business communication by examining the different impacts of white elephant batteries in the Chinese and American markets. Students found that while the white elephant is a symbol of good fortune and dignity in China, it often represents an unnecessary burden in Western culture. Through Ernest Hemingway's short story *Hills Like White Elephants*, students learned the negative metaphor of white elephants in Western culture, and then realized that different interpretations of symbols in cross-cultural communication may have an impact on business activities. Such teaching not only deepened students' understanding of the complexity of cross-cultural business communication, but also sharpened their ability to interpret and respond to international business issues from multiple perspectives.

### **4.3 Utilizing network resources for intercultural communication**

In the teaching of business English in colleges and universities, it is an important teaching strategy of meeting the needs of the information age to utilize network resources for the cultivation of intercultural communication. The theoretical basis of this practice lies in the richness and real-time nature of network resources, which can provide students with a wide range of cross-cultural learning materials and communication scenarios, so that students can intuitively feel the communication and collision between different cultures while acquiring the latest business information. From a theoretical point of view, this teaching method not only broadens the boundaries of the traditional classroom, but also enhances the interactivity of teaching and the students' sense of participation, which effectively promotes the enhancement of students' intercultural communication skills.

For example, the teacher assigns the following task for students: "Using the Internet to find the international success stories of Huawei". In this task, students need to search for keywords like "Huawei's global strategy" or "Huawei's cross-cultural communication" on the online platforms, such as the company's official website, news reports, business analysis, to collect relevant information in English. Students then integrate the information into multimedia presentations, such as creating PowerPoint (PPT) or videos, to show how Huawei conducts business negotiations and business cooperation in different cultural contexts, and analyze the key factors and possible challenges to its success. Such classroom activities allow students to learn about the latest developments in international business in practice, and to deeply understand and simulate the application of corporate strategies in cross-cultural communication.

## **5. Conclusion**

With the increasing communication of global business, business English teaching in colleges and universities shoulders the important mission of cultivating talents with cross-cultural communication ability. Through the in-depth analysis and discussion of this study, it can be realized that the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence is not only an extension of language teaching, but also a powerful practice of all-round education for students. Colleges and universities must continue to innovate their curricula, teaching methods, and practical activities to ensure that students can learn to respect, adapt to, and overcome cultural differences while understanding them, so that they can perform well on the international business platform in the future.

## **References:**

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