

Original Paper

A Study on the Effect of International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) Course on Students' Intercultural Communication Skills

Wenqing Kang¹

¹ English College, Xi'an FanYi University, Shaanxi, Xi'an, China

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Abstract

Under the background of global economic integration, international business activities are becoming more and more frequent, and intercultural communication ability has become an indispensable core quality for international business people. As an important way to cultivate international trade students' cross-cultural communication ability, the teaching effect of International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) course has a profound impact on students' future career development. The purpose of this paper is to explore the influence of International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) course on students' cross-cultural communication ability through empirical research, analyze the role of the course in enhancing students' awareness of cross-cultural communication, strengthening their language use ability, and mastering their cross-cultural negotiation skills, etc., and put forward corresponding optimization suggestions.

Keywords

International Business Negotiation, Intercultural Communication Competence, Language Skills

1. Introduction

As the wave of globalization advances and international business activities become more and more frequent, cross-cultural communication has become an indispensable part. When people from different cultural backgrounds meet in business negotiations, differences in language habits, values and ways of thinking add richness to the negotiations and bring challenges. Language barriers, value conflicts and differences in ways of thinking may affect the outcome of negotiations. Therefore, it has become an important mission of higher education to cultivate international business talents who can adapt to the cross-cultural environment. The International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) course, as a core course

for international trade majors, aims to improve students' business negotiation theories and skills, and to strengthen cross-cultural communication skills. Through empirical methods, this study collects data, analyzes cases, and compares the results of pre and post-tests to comprehensively investigate the impact of the course on students' intercultural communication skills. The study is expected to reveal the effectiveness of the course in enhancing language use, cultural sensitivity, intercultural adaptability and communication skills, and at the same time, it may find that the teaching content is out of touch with the reality, the teaching method is single, and the practice opportunity is insufficient, which will provide a direction for the optimization of the course and promote it to keep pace with the times to better serve the cultivation of international business talents.

2. Overview of Definitions

2.1 Definition and Composition of Intercultural Communication Competence

Intercultural communication competence refers to the comprehensive ability of individuals to communicate and interact efficiently and accurately in a multicultural context. This competence not only requires individuals to have proficient language skills and be able to express ideas and information fluently, but also goes deeper to the level of cultural adaptability, i.e., individuals are required to deeply understand and respect the unique values, customs and social etiquette of different cultures. In addition, intercultural communication competence also covers conflict recognition and resolution, which means that individuals are able to keenly detect potential cultural conflicts in intercultural communication and adopt effective strategies to resolve and deal with them. To summarize, intercultural communication competence is the individual's comprehensive ability to flexibly adjust communication strategies according to the differences in cultural backgrounds in a multicultural environment to ensure the accurate transmission and reception of information.

2.2 Intercultural Communication in International Business Negotiation

International business negotiation, as a cross-border economic exchange activity, the core of which lies in the fact that stakeholders in different cultural backgrounds reach a consensus through effective communication and jointly promote the progress of cooperative projects. In this process, cultural differences play a crucial role, which directly affects the negotiation process, atmosphere and final results. Therefore, cross-cultural communication is particularly important in international business negotiations. Successful negotiators not only need to have solid knowledge of business negotiation, but also need to have a high degree of cultural sensitivity, able to quickly capture and understand the other party's cultural characteristics and communication habits, and then adjust their own communication style to be closer to the other party's cultural background, leading to mutually beneficial agreements that are acceptable to both parties. It can be said that the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication is a key indicator of the success of international business negotiation, and it is also one of the core competencies necessary for negotiators.

2.3 Research Status of International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) Course

At present, with the deepening of globalization and the vigorous development of international trade, the research on international business negotiation (bilingual) course is increasingly receiving extensive attention and emphasis from the academic community. The research mainly focuses on the core issues of curriculum design, innovation of teaching methods and evaluation of teaching effects. Numerous studies have shown that the bilingual teaching mode has significant advantages in enhancing students' language proficiency, and also helps to strengthen students' cross-cultural communication ability, so that they can better adapt to the multicultural international business environment. However, this mode of teaching also faces many challenges, such as the variability of students' language proficiency, the insufficient depth of understanding of cultural differences, and the lack of actual business negotiation experience. In order to cope with these challenges, researchers have actively explored and practiced a variety of teaching methods, such as negotiation simulation, real-life case analysis, role-playing, etc., aiming to effectively enhance students' negotiation skills and cross-cultural communication abilities through these practical teaching tools, so as to lay a solid foundation for them in their future international business activities.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts an empirical research method to collect data through questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations to analyze the impact of the International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) course on students' intercultural communication skills. The questionnaire survey aims to understand the students' perception of intercultural communication competence, language use ability, mastery of negotiation strategies, etc.; interviews are used to gain insight into the students' experiences and feelings during the course, as well as their evaluation and suggestions on the teaching effect of the course; classroom observation is used to record the teacher's teaching methodology, students' participation, and the classroom atmosphere during the teaching process.

3.2 Data Collection

The questionnaire was designed to survey the students majoring in international trade, covering the students' intercultural communication awareness, language ability, and mastery of negotiation strategies. The questionnaire adopts the Likert five-level scoring method, which requires students to score each question for quantitative analysis. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed and 180 valid questionnaires were recovered, with an effective recovery rate of 90%.

Some students were selected for in-depth interviews to understand their experiences and feelings in the study of International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) course, as well as their evaluation and suggestions on the teaching effect of the course. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way to ensure that the interviews covered all aspects of course learning. A total of 30 students were interviewed, including 15 male and 15 female, to ensure the representativeness of the interview results.

The questionnaire data were statistically analyzed using SPSS software, and descriptive statistics and ANOVA were used to analyze the differences between the students in terms of cross-cultural communication awareness, language use ability, and mastery of negotiation strategies. Content analysis was used to organize and analyze the interview and classroom observation data to extract key information and themes to support the research results.

4. Research Findings

4.1 Enhancement of Intercultural Communication Awareness

The data from the questionnaire survey clearly reflect that the vast majority of students have a deeper understanding and awareness of the importance of cross-cultural communication after participating in the International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) course. They generally believe that in the context of international business negotiation, cross-cultural communication is the key to avoiding misunderstandings, resolving conflicts, and thus facilitating the smooth progress of negotiations. This view was further verified in the classroom observations and follow-up interviews. In the practice of simulated negotiation, students demonstrated respect for the other party's cultural habits and tried to apply the cross-cultural communication skills they had learned to solve problems. For example, they would take the initiative to ask and understand the other party's cultural background and communication preferences, and adjust their communication strategies accordingly to be more adaptive to the other party's communication style.

4.2 Enhancement of Language Utilization Skills

Bilingual teaching, as a core feature of the International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) course, has produced a significant enhancement of students' language use ability. The results of the questionnaire survey show that more than 80% of the students indicated that their English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills have been enhanced after the course, especially in the expression and use of business English. Classroom observations also confirmed that students were able to communicate fluently in English, accurately understand the other party's intentions, and respond appropriately and professionally in simulated negotiations. In addition, students in the interviews generally said that bilingual teaching not only helped them better master international trade terms, but also improved their business communication skills, laying a solid language foundation for their future careers.

4.3 Mastery of Negotiation Strategies

The International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) course not only focuses on the cultivation of language ability, but also places great emphasis on the teaching of negotiation strategies. Through diversified teaching methods such as case analysis and simulated negotiation, students have mastered a variety of negotiation strategies, such as opening strategy, concession strategy and conflict resolution strategy. Questionnaire data showed that more than 70% of the students reported that they learned effective negotiation strategies in the course and successfully used these strategies in simulated negotiations. Classroom observations also revealed that students were able to flexibly adjust their

strategies according to the progress of the negotiation and the other party's reaction in order to reach a mutually beneficial and win-win agreement. In the interviews, students generally agreed that the learning of negotiation strategies would be of great help to them in dealing with the challenges and problems in actual business negotiations in the future.

4.4 Challenges and Problems

Although the International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) program has achieved remarkable results in enhancing students' cross-cultural communication skills, students also face some challenges and problems in the learning process. The language level varies, and some students have relatively low English proficiency, which makes it difficult for them to keep up with the progress of the course and the pace of the simulated negotiations. This led to their lack of active performance in class, which affected the overall learning effect. Insufficient understanding of cultural differences: students do not have a deep enough understanding of business habits and etiquette in certain specific cultural contexts, which sometimes leads to misunderstandings and conflicts in simulated negotiations. This requires teachers to strengthen the content of cultural teaching in the teaching process to help students understand cultural differences more comprehensively. Lack of practical experience in negotiation, due to students' lack of actual business negotiation experience, they sometimes have difficulty in applying what they have learned to practical situations. Therefore, teachers need to add more practical aspects in the teaching process, such as organizing more simulated negotiation activities and encouraging students to participate in international business practice projects, in order to improve students' practical application ability and negotiation skills.

5. Discussion

5.1 Optimization of Curriculum Design

In the teaching practice of the International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) course, the challenges faced by students such as differences in English proficiency, lack of understanding of business habits in different cultures, and insufficient practical experience require us to carry out continuous optimization and innovation of the course. The implementation of hierarchical teaching is the key. Scientific and reasonable stratification according to the English level of students to ensure that the teaching content and difficulty match the actual level of each student is the basis for improving the teaching effect. For students with lower English proficiency, additional language tutoring should be provided, such as vocabulary development, speaking practice, etc., and the basic practice of simulated negotiation should be increased to help them gradually build up their confidence and improve their language use ability. For students with a higher level of English proficiency, more in-depth teaching of negotiation strategies, such as advanced negotiation skills, strategy adjustment under cultural differences, etc., can be provided to meet their higher-level learning needs and further enhance their international business negotiation skills.

Enhancing cultural teaching is also crucial. Adding teaching content about business habits and etiquette

in different cultures, such as business etiquette, negotiation styles, decision-making process, etc., to the curriculum will help improve students' cultural sensitivity and adaptability. Strengthening cultural teaching through case studies, cultural lectures, video materials and other methods enables students to understand cultural differences more intuitively, learn to respect and understand each other's cultural habits in cross-cultural communication, and avoid misunderstanding and conflict.

Finally, increasing practice sessions is an effective way to enhance students' practical application ability. Simulated negotiation activities are organized to let students experience the process of cross-cultural communication in actual operation and exercise their negotiation skills and communication ability. At the same time, cooperate with enterprises to establish internship bases to provide students with the opportunity to participate in actual business negotiation activities, so that they can deepen their understanding and application of the knowledge they have learned in a real environment, and be well prepared for their future careers.

5.2 Innovation of Teaching Methods

We should also explore and innovate the teaching methods to meet the needs of the International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) Program. Case teaching is an effective teaching method. Introducing real international business negotiation cases and letting students analyze the cross-cultural communication problems in the cases, such as misunderstanding and communication barriers caused by cultural differences, can cultivate students' practical ability and problem solving ability. Guiding students to propose solutions and discuss the feasibility and effectiveness of different solutions helps them learn to flexibly apply what they have learned in real situations.

Role-playing activities are also a fruitful way of teaching. Organizing role-playing activities to simulate business negotiation scenarios in different cultural contexts, such as negotiating with a Japanese client or negotiating with an American partner, can enable students to experience first-hand the communication differences and negotiation strategies in different cultural contexts, and improve their cross-cultural adaptability and communication skills. Through role-playing, students can have a deeper understanding of business behaviors and communication styles in different cultures and be well prepared for future international business activities.

Combining online resources and offline teaching activities is also necessary to provide students with more flexible and diversified learning methods. Online resources can include video courses, online discussion forums, case banks, etc., which are convenient for students to study anytime and anywhere; offline activities can include simulated negotiations, cultural lectures, expert lectures, etc., which provide students with face-to-face communication opportunities with teachers and classmates, and enhance the interactivity and effectiveness of learning.

5.3 Improvement of Teachers' Quality

The improvement of teachers' quality is an important guarantee for the teaching quality of International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) course. Teachers should be regularly organized to participate in training activities on international business negotiation and cross-cultural communication, so as to

update their knowledge structure and teaching skills. Through training, teachers can understand the latest international business negotiation theory and practice dynamics, master advanced teaching methods and skills, and improve teaching effect.

Encouraging teachers to participate in international academic conferences and exchange activities is also an important way to improve their quality. Exchanging teaching experience with peers and understanding the latest research results and teaching dynamics help teachers broaden their horizons, open their minds, and inject new vitality and innovative elements into course teaching.

The introduction of foreign teachers to participate in the teaching of the course is also an effective means to improve the quality of teaching. Foreign teachers have rich international business experience and cross-cultural communication ability, which can provide students with more real and diverse cross-cultural communication experience. Their face-to-face exchanges and interactions with students help students better understand and adapt to communication differences in different cultural contexts and improve their cross-cultural communication skills.

The establishment of a team composed of teachers with different professional backgrounds and academic specialties to jointly undertake the teaching task of the International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) course is also an important initiative to improve the quality of teaching. Through teamwork and communication, we can pool our ideas and complement each other's strengths to improve the quality and effect of course teaching. At the same time, it can also promote mutual learning and growth among teachers and form a favorable teaching atmosphere and academic environment.

6. Conclusions and Outlook

This paper explores the impact of International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) course on students' intercultural communication skills through empirical research. The results of the study show that the course plays an important role in enhancing students' awareness of cross-cultural communication, strengthening their language use ability and mastering cross-cultural negotiation skills. However, students also face some challenges and problems in the learning process, such as varying language levels and insufficient understanding of cultural differences. In order to further improve the teaching effect of the course, it is recommended to optimize and innovate the course design and teaching methods, while focusing on improving the professional quality and teaching ability of teachers.

Future research can further explore other factors affecting students' intercultural communication ability, such as personal traits and cultural background, and make more targeted suggestions for improvement. In addition, the effects of different teaching methods and tools on students' intercultural communication competence can also be studied to provide a more scientific basis for curriculum reform and teaching method innovation. Meanwhile, with the deepening of globalization and the continuous development of international trade, the International Business Negotiation (Bilingual) course will face more challenges and opportunities. We need to constantly explore and practice new teaching methods and means to meet the needs of the times and the development of students.

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