

Original Paper

Research on the Application of Case Teaching Method in Business English Writing

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Abstract

This paper reviews the relevant research on the application of case teaching method in writing teaching in China from 2003 to 2023, and summarizes four themes: the applicable course type of case teaching method, the applicable object of case teaching method, the construction of case database, and the applicability of case teaching method in business English teaching. On the basis of literature combing and analysis, this paper points out that this field is facing some problems, such as the lack of ability of teachers and students, the insufficient construction of case database and the insufficient breadth of research, and puts forward some suggestions and prospects for future practice and research of writing case teaching.

Keywords

Case teaching method, Business English, Writing teaching, Research Review

1. Introduction

The implementation of the "Belt and Road" provides opportunities for China to expand its overseas trade market, and at the same time broadens the employment market of contemporary college students. Cultivating professionals with international vision, high quality and strong ability in colleges and universities is an important part of boosting the construction of "the belt and road initiative". Wen Qiufang (2016) pointed out that the construction of "the belt and road initiative" requires language to pave the way, and language to pave the way requires talents first. Under the complex external environment, only business English professionals with international vision, interdisciplinary knowledge and critical thinking can promote "the belt and road initiative" to give full play to its role as an economic, political and cultural bridge, so as to improve China's international discourse power (Chen, 2020). In order to achieve the above goals, educators have actively explored and innovated the cultivation of business English talents, such as reforming the traditional English curriculum system, popularizing

modern teaching methods and exploring multiple teaching methods (Gu & Chen, 2017).

As far as teaching methods are concerned, case teaching method is a teaching method that pays attention to the combination of theory and practice. Teachers create real or virtual scenes according to typical events, conduct interactive teaching in class, guide students to question and discuss, and finally cultivate students' cognitive ability and ability to become new talents (Xu & Shen, 2023). Case-Study Method has won the appreciation and trust of many educators. In 1979, the Chinese industrial and commercial administration delegation introduced this teaching method into more practical majors such as medicine, law, and business administration for the first time, and the case teaching method has since entered the educational field in China. Cheng Siwei (2001) believes that case teaching tries to simulate an actual management situation, and it is a teaching method that allows learners to analyze and make decisions immersively. In practical applications, management cases are usually used as teaching materials. In the process of learning and discussing cases, students identify and define problems as decision makers. Analyze various feasible options and formulate implementation plans. In order to deeply understand the application research of case teaching method in business English writing teaching in China in recent twenty years, this study uses the Chinese journal database of CNKI as the information source, and uses "writing + case teaching method", "writing + case teaching method", "business English writing + case teaching method" on CNKI, "Business English writing + case teaching" and "case teaching method + business English" were searched in full text, and the number of related literatures searched was 459. After eliminating the chapters obviously unrelated to the topic, a total of 444 valid documents were obtained. This paper summarizes four main research topics: the types of courses applicable to the case teaching method, the objects applicable to the case teaching method, the construction of cases and case database, and the applicability of the case teaching method in business English teaching. Finally, according to the analysis of existing literature, some suggestions and prospects are put forward for the future practice and research of case teaching in the field of business English writing.

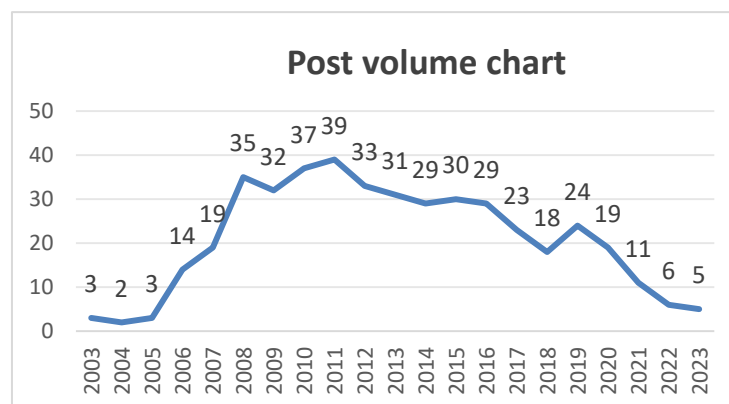


Figure 1. Post Volume Chart

2. Research Topics and Main Ideas

2.1 Applicable Course Types of Case Teaching Method in Business English

Case teaching method is suitable for many business English courses in English teaching, such as English interpretation, English reading and English writing. Case teaching method can help students combine abstract theory with concrete examples, so that students can better understand and master knowledge, and help students realize the application of business English in different occasions. This kind of knowledge is not limited to textbooks, but more like an internalized practical ability.

The practical research of case teaching method in business English interpretation course is rich (Li, 2016; Yao, 2020). First of all, the application of case teaching method in interpretation class can cultivate students' cross-cultural awareness. In the classroom focused on analysis and discussion, teachers show typical and common problems in cross-cultural business communication by selecting real cases, guide students to analyze the problems and conflicts existing in the cases, encourage them to break through the mindset, explore how to make up for the mistakes in cross-cultural business communication, and find the correct communication method. So as to learn to cope with the challenges brought by cultural differences. Secondly, case teaching method has three functions: The three functions of scaffolding, internalization and transfer (Li, 2016) fit well with the goals and requirements of interpretation teaching. She also pointed out that their functions must be realized through the psychological mechanism of "specific environment -- stimulating students' interest, mobilizing students' emotions -- changing students' cognition and concepts". Finally, case teaching method also plays an important role in ethics education. Some researchers have pointed out the applicability of case teaching method in professional ethics education of interpretation, and in practical research, they take the teaching of "faithfulness" and "neutrality" in interpretation practice as examples to elaborate on specific strategies (Yao, 2020).

Case teaching is also applicable to English reading class (Yang, 2014). According to the teaching objectives, some scholars have studied the application of case teaching method in business English reading teaching in higher vocational colleges, and summarized six teaching steps: case collection, data consultation, group discussion, class discussion, scheme summary and scheme submission. Some researchers emphasize the feasibility of introducing case teaching into business English reading class, pointing out that English majors have relatively insufficient mastery of economic and trade knowledge, which may have an impact on their technical terminology and language ability. In this case, teachers guide students to carry out four links: real case preparation, case analysis, case summary and case report writing, in order to increase students' purpose in business English communication, exercise students' ability to think and solve problems, and realize the authenticity of business reading teaching (Yang, 2014).

The case teaching method is also suitable for business English writing courses (He, 2010; Tian, 2012; Cao, 2022). The main purpose of business English writing is to train students to learn to choose appropriate writing strategies in an international business environment to achieve effective communication. Some researchers have found that in the past, the teaching methods were mainly

teacher-centered, and the writing teaching was mainly based on error correction. Students had some problems, such as lack of interest in learning and difficulty in improving their writing ability. Introducing case analysis into business English writing teaching can change the traditional teaching mode of "model essay-imitation" and has strong operability. In addition, with the help of multimedia courseware and online classroom, the business English writing course has gradually realized three-dimensional, and the teaching system has gradually improved. He Jianju (2010) believes that based on the practicality and application of business English writing teaching, it is inevitable to introduce network case teaching. She suggests that the existing case teaching resources should be integrated by using campus LAN and Internet, and a four-step teaching method should be constructed by combining it with traditional classroom case teaching: Case release, independent inquiry + online discussion, report writing, case review. Some scholars have introduced case teaching method into business English writing teaching by combining modern teaching methods such as multimedia courseware and the Internet (Tian, 2012). Cases in business English teaching can be divided into two kinds: one is specific cases aimed at specific links in business activities; The other is comprehensive cases involving a certain business activity, which are usually the focus of business English writing courses. Some scholars' practice in teaching shows that case teaching method can enable students to participate in real business situations, and it can bridge the gap between teachers' description of business scenes and real business scenes in the classroom to the greatest extent.

To sum up, for interpretation teaching, proper application of case teaching method can cultivate students' cross-cultural awareness, learning ability and professional ethics awareness. For English reading teaching, case teaching method can help students develop a good habit of independent thinking and pave the way for their career. For business English writing, case teaching method has strong practicality and practicality, and has higher requirements for students' language skills, business skills and cross-cultural communication skills (Cao, 2022).

2.2 Applicable Objects of Case Teaching Method in Business English Teaching

Case study learning helps to create an enabling environment for people with three competencies, namely: knowing the content of a specific area, understanding organizational processes, and having the necessary social and communication skills (Yun, 2016).

In order to meet the needs of society, the primary purpose of higher vocational education is to cultivate students into technical application talents. Professional English courses play an important role in higher vocational education. The main purpose of students studying professional English courses is not to learn basic knowledge of English, but to conform to the trend of internationalization, learn English terms for dealing with business, and pave the way for workplace life. Case teaching rules can enable students to accumulate experience, master skills and learn to think independently in situations in the process of actual case handling. As early as 2012, some researchers proposed to integrate case teaching method into English teaching in higher vocational colleges. At that time, most of the teaching methods were "lecture-style", and the teaching effect was poor (Liu, 2012). In the practical research of case teaching

method in professional English courses, some scholars analyze the influencing factors of case teaching method in English classroom of a higher vocational college from three different dimensions: teachers, students and schools, hoping to effectively improve students' English ability through case teaching method and cultivate sports talents with excellent comprehensive quality.

In 2017, Hiram College in the United States put forward interdisciplinary learning models such as the intersection of literature and literature, the intersection of arts and sciences, the intersection of literature and industry, and the intersection of literature and medicine. This "new liberal arts" educational concept advocates the integration of modern information technology into curriculum teaching, and recombines various majors on the basis of traditional liberal arts, so as to promote the cross-integration and innovative development of knowledge among different disciplines and majors (He, 2018). In this regard, some researchers have discussed the application of case teaching method in postgraduate academic English writing teaching based on the case path analysis of the blended teaching mode of case teaching method. The research conclusion points out that case teaching method is highly compatible with postgraduate academic English writing teaching (Xu & Shen, 2023).

Through the analysis of past literature, this paper finds that case teaching method is applicable to a wide range of people. No matter higher vocational students, college students or graduate students, they can absorb the case teaching method well. The key to the problem lies in how schools organize teachers' activities, how teachers implement case teaching reasonably, and how students digest this kind of new classroom.

2.3 Construction of Cases and Case Libraries

Many researchers have pointed out that high-quality cases are the premise of effective case teaching, and teaching cases with the characteristics of problem orientation, typicality, authenticity, pertinence, systematicness and timeliness can better ensure good teaching effects, and different types of cases should be used for learners of different levels (Zhang, 2015; Liu, 2022). The Outline of the National Medium-and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) also mentions the need to speed up the process of educational informatization, strengthen the development and utilization of high-quality educational resources, and strengthen the construction of online teaching resource database. With the gradual popularization of case teaching method in China, researchers' views on building case database have also changed. In the early days when case teaching method was introduced into China, there was a general lack of unified business English case textbooks in the teaching field. In this case, teachers can write, design or collect case materials according to the syllabus, and constantly improve and perfect them in case teaching practice. However, with the gradual development of science and technology and the increasingly abundant educational resources, schools and related departments should encourage teachers and researchers to set up a case database of business English teaching with school teachers' resources sharing. In recent years, many higher vocational colleges have gradually paid attention to case teaching method and started to actively build case database. However, collecting, organizing and analyzing cases are still important and difficult points, especially the lack of high-quality

cases. In order to solve the problem that an effective case database has not been established in business English case teaching in higher vocational colleges, some scholars have studied the development objectives, ideas and main contents of the case database, and put forward the method of developing business English case database in higher vocational colleges. However, it still provides a good reference value for implementing the zero-distance transition between business English classroom and enterprise in higher vocational colleges (Zhang, 2015). Some researchers suggest that a network autonomous learning environment can be built with the help of campus network. They discuss the construction ideas, theoretical guidance, construction content and development tools of business English course resource database (material database, course resource database, question bank, case database, video library and extended resource database) under the network environment of our school (Liu, 2022). In recent years, researchers are increasingly interested in the construction of case library, and put forward a new teaching case library construction mode, calling on students, teachers and different disciplines to build and share case library. The construction work is divided into four steps: theme refinement, material collection, case writing and management of teaching case library (Lin et al., 2016).

In short, the core of case teaching method is the case. If we want to give full play to the advantages of case teaching method, the construction of case database is very important. With the rapid development of science and technology in recent years, researchers have begun to devote themselves to the research of case database. Although the current case database research is still in an immature stage, I believe it will become more perfect in the future.

2.4 Applicability of Case Teaching Method in Business English Teaching

Business English teaching is an important branch of English teaching system, and it is an advanced course for students to learn on the premise of having certain basic knowledge of English. Case teaching is considered to be one of the most important methods to improve the effectiveness of undergraduate English teaching, because it can promote students' English learning from three aspects: diversification of knowledge sources, enrichment of situational knowledge and practicalization of written knowledge.

According to the 2020 Teaching Guide for Undergraduate Business English Majors in Colleges and Universities, the goal of business English teaching is to cultivate students' ability to analyze and solve problems, improve their comprehensive language ability, and exercise their business practical skills. At the same time, the national standards for undergraduate teaching quality of business English majors require students to have language use, cross-cultural communication, business practice, independent learning ability and critical and creative thinking (Wang et al., 2015). Case teaching method adheres to the principle of learning by doing and learning by teaching, and emphasizes students' ability to use language in real situations and participate in social practice. This is in line with the goal of business English teaching to a great extent. Therefore, case teaching is widely used in business teaching.

Through the analysis of the current research situation in China, it can be seen that the early research of case teaching method in English teaching focused on comparing case teaching method with traditional teaching methods, clarifying the advantages and exploring the implementation steps. For example, Qiu

Quanju et al. took the case database of Tourism Translation as an example to introduce the use, promotion and achievements of the case database in detail, with a view to providing reference for the construction of such case database (Chou & Song, 2021); Wang Mengjie uses case teaching method in foreign trade correspondence teaching, and puts forward a new talent training mode adapted to the background of digital economy (Wang, 2022); Combined with her practical experience, Liu Jing pointed out the shortcomings of case teaching method in business English courses in colleges and universities under the new economic background (Liu, 2021).

All in all, case teaching method has played a positive role in business English curriculum. Case teaching method can not only enable students to effectively understand and learn business English professional knowledge, but also make students substitute into the real business environment through vivid and real cases, and carry out practical training on the basis of mastering the basic knowledge of business English, so as to stimulate their thinking and creativity and improve their comprehensive language ability.

3. Challenges of Case Teaching Applied to Business English Writing

Although the application of case teaching method in business English writing education is welcomed by scholars, it still faces some challenges in practice, including the following aspects:

First of all, as far as students are concerned, the case teaching method requires high comprehensive ability of students (Zhang, 2013). Since English is the language medium of foreign language teaching, students must have a solid ability to use English language. Otherwise, the understanding of many basic concepts and core theories related to business will be hindered, and it will be more difficult to apply theoretical knowledge to practice. At the same time, the case preparation and analysis of real business scenarios pose certain challenges to students' deep thinking and critical thinking. In addition, the cases provided by teachers may be too professional or broad for students to fully understand, which will affect the actual effect of teaching. Therefore, how to help students better master English and understand complex business and economic concepts through the development of pre-language reinforcement auxiliary tools is also an urgent problem to be solved.

Secondly, in terms of teachers, case teaching method has high requirements for case implementation and compilation. When choosing appropriate cases, teachers should not only consider students' existing knowledge level and language level, but also satisfy students' preferences and stimulate their interest. In case analysis, teachers should pay attention to cultivating students' multi-perspective analysis ability, so as to bring the benefits of case law to the limit. In case demonstration, teachers should control the discussion as a whole to ensure that the discussion goes smoothly. Use appropriate technical terms to make difficult theories easily understood. After the discussion, teachers should give insightful comments and insightful conclusions to ensure that students have a clear understanding of the case application. Additionally, teachers need to acquire additional skills and competencies as case writers, coaches, mentors, and facilitators of classroom discussions, but without complete control of the classroom. Some researchers have found in the classroom of business English writing courses that although teachers have

tried their best to make the course interesting and meaningful, not all students can accept and appreciate it. How the case teaching method can make more students at different levels participate in it remains to be explored (Huang et al., 2022).

Finally, in the construction of case database, the quality of teaching cases is uneven, the form is single, and the timeliness is lacking, which seriously affects the teaching effect of case teaching method. In recent years, researchers in the field of English education have actively explored the case teaching method, and devoted themselves to building a teaching case database, mainly focusing on college English and translation. For example, the connotation and construction process of the middle school English teaching case base, the development of the Business English teaching case base based on typical tasks in higher vocational colleges, the exploration of the construction of the ideological and political teaching case base of graduate public English courses based on PBL, the construction and application of the ideological and political case base of college English courses, the cross-border e-commerce English email teaching case base, and the construction of the translation teaching case base for English translation majors. This trend shows the importance and practicability of case teaching method in English education, which provides students with a more concrete and practical learning environment and helps to improve their practical ability and problem-solving ability.

4. Conclusion and Prospect

Looking at the case teaching method in China, there is still a long way to go before it matures. Therefore, case research and development, case teaching and case database research are urgent, which also requires the joint efforts of organizations, teachers and students.

4.1 Research Results

From the perspective of the evolution and transfer of case teaching research hotspots with time, as far as foreign language teaching is concerned, the related topics that have attracted attention since 2001 include: cross-cultural communication, spoken college English, business English, flipped classroom, new media horizon, etc. With the passage of time, the research topic has gradually refined, from the initial combination of case teaching and English classroom, to the exploration and feasibility analysis of the application of various case teaching methods in classroom teaching in 2009. In this process, the research system of case teaching method in college English classroom has become preliminarily mature, and the peak of the research of case teaching method in business English is around 2011. In recent years, the discussion of case teaching method itself has been relatively saturated, and many domestic researchers have focused on the construction of case database.

From the research basis, there is still a lack of in-depth, cross-professional and continuous cooperative research. From the point of view of content system, a large number of studies still stay in the establishment stage of traditional case teaching methods. Although a few studies have carried out practical classroom practice, such as the application in cross-cultural communication teaching, a mature application system has not been formed because of the scattered inquiry topics, the difference of teaching

contents, the difference of case teaching methods and the lack of feedback of achievement teaching. The scarcity of related articles also proves the shortcomings of the research, and highlights the necessity of practical research on college English case teaching.

4.2 Research Outlook

Based on the analysis of the current research situation, this paper will put forward the following suggestions for the future research and practice of business English case teaching, hoping that future researchers can make innovative contributions from the following aspects.

First, the applicability of different case teaching forms is explored. It is known that the common forms of case teaching classroom are generally as follows: lecture case teaching, discussion case teaching, debate case teaching and simulation case teaching. Lecture-based case teaching method is relatively simple, but it is still dominated by teachers, which can't get rid of the shackles of traditional teaching methods, and the degree of students' participation is low. Discussion case teaching is the most widely used, with flexible form and full content. This will help case teaching to be carried out more efficiently, achieve fuller teaching results and avoid useless efforts. Debate case teaching means that teachers organize students to debate around case-related issues in class. This form can fully mobilize students' enthusiasm, but it requires higher preparation before class. Simulated case teaching is to make students enter the corresponding scene and reproduce the plot and content of the case according to the script prepared before class. This method requires a large workload and has certain limitations. Therefore, in order to solve students' needs in receiving explicit guidance from teachers, future case teaching can incorporate more instructional teaching elements. Instead of immediately jumping into complex case studies, teachers can adopt a structured case studies framework that gradually guides students to think deeply. Such a transition can help students gradually adapt to the requirements of critical thinking and independent analysis.

Second, multiple subjects participate in the research. The two main subjects of case teaching classroom are students and teachers. The existing literature shows that most students prefer teachers to use case teaching method to teach, and the teaching effect is better than traditional teaching. In 2005, Zhong Xingyun used a questionnaire survey in the research survey of case teaching method. The questionnaire showed that students generally thought that case teaching method was more inspiring to themselves than other teaching methods, and it was the teaching method they most wanted teachers to adopt [37]. The study also found that students think that case teaching is difficult, and few of them can prepare before class. Because they are unfamiliar with cases, the participation of some classroom discussions is not high. The problems faced by students are mainly reflected in the difficulty in understanding the concept of case, the information of case presentation and the information of case solution methods. From the perspective of teachers' teaching situation, case teaching classroom requires teachers to be good at adjusting the discussion atmosphere, and teachers can inspire and guide students to think when encountering difficulties, but not all teachers can do this well. At the same time, the workload of teachers has greatly increased, and it is necessary to sort out the teaching content and case materials, so some teachers find it

difficult to adapt. Therefore, there is still much room for improvement in teachers' teaching skills and experience in teaching cases, and students' enthusiasm and adaptability need to be further optimized. Based on these two points, future research can explore how to make teachers and students participate in case teaching classrooms more effectively, such as building case database to reduce teachers' workload and improve students' autonomous learning ability.

Third, strengthen the construction of case database. First of all, the construction of case database is inseparable from the platform and financial support of the school. The school should organize business English teachers to build a teaching resource database, which covers teaching materials, audio resources, film and television materials, English learning software, English learning websites, etc. Secondly, teachers should encourage students to actively participate in the construction of case database, conduct regular group discussions, and let students communicate and discuss, so as to enhance their learning enthusiasm. In order to discover more high-quality learning resources for students, teachers also need to learn all kinds of advanced teaching software and equipment, make full use of all kinds of resource platforms, collect classic, targeted and enlightening case materials, and form a unified and universal case teaching tool. Finally, researchers should also contribute to the construction of case libraries. With the development of educational technology, future case teaching may rely more on the use of science and technology, such as using virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR) to reproduce real business scenes, realize interactive and real-time feedback mechanisms, and provide learners with more vivid and practical learning experiences to meet students' diverse learning needs and optimize teaching effects. At present, researchers have begun to attach importance to the construction of case database in the research of case teaching method, and it is expected that it will develop into the research frontier in the future.

Fourthly, the combination of case teaching method and traditional teaching method. There is no omnipotent teaching method in teaching. Teachers can't blindly use case teaching method, but should continuously improve the application scenarios under the framework of other learning theories. For basic training in English teaching, traditional teaching methods are still the best choice for teachers. If learners want to actively participate in the classroom of case teaching method, the first condition is to have certain abilities, such as the triple abilities mentioned above: solid basic language skills, strong understanding ability and communication ability, which happen to be the focus of traditional teaching method. In addition, teachers, as the main body of case teaching, need to practice repeatedly and advance step by step in order to give full play to the advantages of this teaching method and cultivate students into new talents of business English, instead of abandoning traditional teaching. Specifically, you can refer to the three stages of case teaching method put forward by Shao Guanghua: in the initial stage, simplifying the teaching time and inserting cases into traditional teaching; In the medium term, actively participate in the formulation of case teaching mechanism, transform the original curriculum content structure system, and integrate cases into it; In the later period, develop a new curriculum system, organize teaching around cases, and actively learn, use and develop cases.

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