ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study puts forward the BECI system under the background of Chinese new liberal arts construction and the guidance of postmodern philosophy and the blended teaching mode in order to sustainably improve students’ Business English Reading and Writing ability and cultivate Business English compound talents who meet the market demand.

Theoretical framework: The research makes use of post-modern philosophy and blended teaching mode to explore the BECI system.

Design/methodology/approach: The BECI system teaching mode integrates traditional teaching and digital teaching, and uses information technology, online and offline, multi-modal teaching and process assessment mechanism to comprehensively improve students’ participation and subjective learning status, and cultivate their good study habits.

Findings: BECI system is market-demand-oriented, student-centered and teacher-scaffolded, which includes business knowledge, English knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge and ideological and political knowledge, and advocates the mutual promotion of Business English Reading (input) and Business English Writing (output).

Research, Practice & Social Implications: The research not solely solves some problems, such as complicated teaching content and low learning efficiency of students, Business English Reading and Writing facing with, but also endows learners with the sustainable Business English Reading and Writing ability and good study habits.

Keywords: BECI system, business English reading and writing, Chinese new liberal arts.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Este estudo apresenta o sistema BECI sob o pano de fundo da nova construção chinesa de artes liberais e a orientação da filosofia pós-moderna e do modo de ensino combinado, a fim de melhorar de forma sustentável a capacidade de leitura e escrita em inglês empresarial dos alunos e cultivar talentos compostos em inglês empresarial que atendam à demanda do mercado.

Keywords: BECI system, business English reading and writing, Chinese new liberal arts.

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Estrutura teórica: A pesquisa utiliza a filosofia pós-moderna e o modo de ensino misto para explorar o sistema BECI.

Design/metodologia/abordagem: o modo de ensino do sistema BECI integra o ensino tradicional e o ensino digital, e usa tecnologia da informação, on-line e off-line, ensino multimodal e mecanismo de avaliação de processos para melhorar de forma abrangente a participação dos alunos e o status de aprendizagem subjetiva, e cultivar seus bons hábitos de estudo.

Constatações: O sistema BECI é orientado para a demanda do mercado, centrado no aluno e estruturado no professor, que inclui conhecimento de negócios, conhecimento de inglês, conhecimento transcultural e conhecimento ideológico e político, e defende a promoção mútua de Business English Reading (input) e Business English Writing (output).

Pesquisa, Prática & Implicações Sociais: A pesquisa não apenas resolve alguns problemas, como conteúdo de ensino complicado e baixa eficiência de aprendizagem dos alunos, Inglês de negócios de leitura e escrita enfrentados, mas também dota os alunos com a capacidade sustentável de leitura e escrita de Inglês de negócios e bons hábitos de estudo.

Palavras-chave: sistema BECI, leitura e escrita em inglês de negócios, novas artes liberais chinesas.

1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the international pattern is changing rapidly and the world’s politics and economy are experiencing a great change that has never happened in a hundred years. Education is generally seen as a vital factor for promoting equality, providing people from various origins with an opportunity to fully develop their skills (Wang Meiping, Ali Sorayyaei Azar, Albattat Ahmad 2023). In order to enhance a country’s soft power and its comprehensive national strength, it is necessary to build new liberal arts that conform to the laws of political, economic, social and cultural development and cultivate more high-quality compound talents. In 2018, China made an overall plan to build four new arts (new engineering, new medical science, new agricultural science and new liberal arts). In 2019, 13 chinese departments including the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science & Technology jointly launched the “Six Excellence and One Top-notch” Plan 2.0. In 2020, the Ministry of Education of China held a kick-off meeting to comprehensively promote the construction of new liberal arts. The construction of new liberal arts in China was in full swing and quite effective.

Business English teaching in China began in the early 1950s, and it is gradually improving with the development of economy, culture, science and technology in China. The international environment in the new era puts forward higher requirements for Business English talents in terms of international vision, ideal value, mission responsibility and knowledge. Teaching Guide for Foreign Language and Literature
Majors in Colleges and Universities (Part I): Teaching Guide for English Majors, issued by the Ministry of Education of China in 2020, clearly points out that business English majors aim to cultivate compound international talents with solid English language basic skills, business professional knowledge, good humanistic quality, strong cross-cultural ability and business communication ability. Business English discipline includes English, economy, business, law, sociology, psychology and other multidisciplinary knowledge. These theories and research methods should be organically integrated rather than simply added, and the disciplines should cooperate and coordinate with each other, and finally integrate into a complete knowledge form, forming a development model of Business English beyond disciplines.

Business English Reading and Writing course naturally has the factors of implementing the new liberal arts construction, which meets the requirements of the current new liberal arts construction. Business English Reading and Writing is a course to teach students to use English, economy, business and other multidisciplinary knowledge to read and write, in order to cultivate more high-quality business English compound talents. Because of this, its teaching practice naturally contains a large number of elements to implement the construction of new liberal arts, such as reading and writing English cover letters and advertising in English, which must conform to the laws of economic, social and cultural development and be closely related to students’ future employment.

At the present stage, there are still some problems in Business English teaching in China. First and foremost, some foreign language colleges emphasize foreign languages as the main mode of talent training, supplemented by business terms, and the relevant materials are simple and easy to understand. Second, English course and business course are mixed on the surface, but they are still two courses, and even the teachers on both sides are not related to each other. Third, English is instrumentalized and humanity is not paid enough attention to. Last but not the least, there are single-discipline thinking and research methods in Business English research, and the awareness of transcending disciplines is not strong.

The Business English Reading and Writing course under the Business English teaching in China faces the following questions: What subject knowledges does the course contain? How to integrate English knowledge, business knowledge and other multidisciplinary knowledge reasonably? How to allocate the teaching proportion of
Business English Reading and Business English Writing? These problems still have not been solved properly. The traditional teaching methods of Business English Reading and Business English Writing are teacher-centered and targeted reading and writing practice, which helps students to enlarge their vocabulary, master background knowledge and improve their reading and writing skills. However, through the actual classroom observation, it is found that the teaching content is complicated and chaotic, the classroom teaching time is short, the students’ participation is low, the interaction between teachers and students is poor, and the students’ interest in active learning is low.

Therefore, under the background of new liberal arts construction and the guidance of postmodern philosophy and the mixed teaching mode, this study takes the Business English Reading and Writing curriculum system as the research object and puts forward the BECI (“Business” - “English” - “Cross-culture” - “Ideological & Political Education” Curriculum System) system of Business English Reading and Writing course so as to improve students’ business English Reading and Writing ability and cultivate Business English compound talents who meet the market demand. The research content is mainly divided into two aspects: the construction of BECI system of Business English Reading and Writing and the construction of BECI content of Business English Reading and Writing (Figure 1).

The construction of BECI system is market-oriented, student-centered, and teacher-scaffolded. BECI system unifies Business English Reading and Business English Writing, including business knowledge, English knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge and ideological & political knowledge. After reasonable structure and content
construction, the BECI system will be put into practice, and the BECI system is continuously improved and popularized according to comprehensive evaluation.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical basis of the research includes post-modern philosophy and blended teaching mode. Post-modern philosophy is the philosophical basis of BECI system, and its concept is rooted in Business English, emphasizing decentralization, pluralism, dynamics and post-humanitarianism. The blended teaching mode is the basis of the teaching mode of BECI system, which emphasizes the organic integration of classroom teaching and digital teaching.

2.1 POST-MODERN PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy studies the relationship between man and nature, thinking and existence. Philosophy and linguistics are intertwined. The phenomenology of perception established by Merleur Ponty (1945) holds that the root of mind lies in the body. Piaget’s constructivism (1972) advocates that cognition comes from the interaction between subject and object. The new phenomenology (also called body phenomenology) founded by Schmitz (1980) emphasizes the study of people from the perspective of body perception and emotion. Internal realism put forward by Putnam (1980) advocates discussing realism from the subjective point of view of human beings. Based on these viewpoints, Lakoff & Johnson (1980, 1999) put forward Embodied Philosophy, which laid a philosophical theoretical foundation for cognitive linguistics and initiated a new era of linguistic research. Embodied Philosophy is mainly embodied in the three principles of “mental experience, cognitive unconsciousness and metaphorical thinking”. Then, the experience-oriented view came into being, which holds that there are both objectivity and subjectivity in human thinking, cognition, concept and even language. It is said to be objective because human language and knowledge mainly come from perceptual experience; It is said to be subjective because human language and knowledge also need cognitive processing. This is the “experience-people-oriented view” that WangYin (2014) has advocated, in which the word “experience” emphasizes the physical experience of human beings, and the word “people-oriented” highlights the subjective cognition of human beings. Experience-people-oriented view fully embodies the views of Merleur Ponty, Piaget, Schmitz, Putnam, Lakoff & Johnson, severely criticizes the defects of the
previous people-oriented view, and also implements the thought of breaking and standing, which provided a brand-new explanation scheme and research direction for explaining human thinking, concepts, reasoning and language. As the fourth turn of philosophy (Wang Yin 2012), postmodern philosophy opposes dualism, monism, determinism and classical logic reductionism, advocates the holistic view of “1+1 > 2”, and emphasizes decentralization, super-foundation, pluralism, discontinuity, uncertainty and post-humanitarianism (Wang Zhihe 2004; Wang Yin 2012; Qian Guanlian 2017, etc.).

Postmodern philosophy combines interactive experience with cognitive processing, rational knowledge with perceptual knowledge, highlighting Marxist-Leninist dialectical materialism and humanistic view. Human concepts, thoughts, knowledge and language all come from interactive experience and cognitive processing. Interactive experience and cognitive processing not only help to implement quality education in language teaching, but also explains many basic issues in liberal arts (Wang Yin 2021). Specifically, interactive experience is between human body and the outside world, which includes physical factors and social factors. Although cognitive linguistics has also mentioned this point (such as Lakoff & Johnson), it has not been emphasized. Reality is objective, while cognition is a cognitive process based on people’s interactive experience with the outside world, which is subjective. Reality is the basis and determines cognition, and human cognition is the basis of the language. Therefore, human language in reality reflects cognition and cognition reflects reality, but at the same time, language can affect cognition, and cognition can affect reality too (Wang Yin 2020: 85). For example, snow in the south is just called “snow”, no matter what form it is. In north, snow includes snowflakes, snow crystals, graupel, ice particles, hail, etc. In northerners’ cognition, snowflakes, snow crystals, graupel, ice particles and hail are different shapes and things for snow crystals are single crystals, snowflakes are the condensation of many single snow crystals, and graupel is small white opaque ice particles in a spherical or conical shape, usually before or after snow. In the process “reality-cognition-language”, the humanistic element is very important, that is, what people do is only what people think (Wang Yin 2020: 4). In Conclusion, postmodern philosophy emphasizes body and cognition and takes “reality-cognition-language” as the core principle.

The interdisciplinary mode of Business English fully conforms to the postmodern philosophy. First of all, the multidisciplinary knowledge of business English is not simply superimposed, but “1+1 > 2” should be achieved, and Business and English disciplines
should be deeply crossed and integrated to cultivate interdisciplinary and high-quality compound innovative talents. Second, the cultivation of Business English talents is market-oriented, dynamic and uncertain. Third, the post-humanitarianism view is similar to the Marxist humanitarianism view. It not only attaches importance to people’s status and value, but also criticizes the idealistic historical view, and is no longer exclusive.

Thus, Business English Reading and Writing course system should pay attention to both the teaching content, the teachers and students themselves, with market demand as the guide, students as the center and teachers as the guide and promoter.

2.2 BLENDED TEACHING MODE

“Blended” in the blended teaching mode refers to the blending of various networking technologies, teaching methods and teaching technologies (Driscoll 2002), which integrates learning theories such as behaviorism, cognitivism and constructivism, organically integrates the advantages of traditional face-to-face classroom teaching and digital teaching, expands learning content, optimizes learning resources and maximizes students’ learning efficiency.

In the past three years, the online teaching mode and online resource development in China have been developed unprecedentedly. Digital teaching with a variety of network and teaching technologies can make up for the time and space limitations and material limitations of traditional face-to-face teaching. BECI system intends to expand the learning content, optimize the learning resources and maximize the learning efficiency of students according to the blended teaching mode.

The blended teaching mode of Business English Reading and Writing course is mainly to provide students with the real scenes of classic business cases online and offline in a multi-modal way by means of information technology under the information background, so as to comprehensively improve students’ participation and subjective learning status and cultivate good study habits. Finally, the learning effect is comprehensively evaluated through the process assessment mechanism, so as to promote the further development of BECI system.

3 BECI SYSTEM

BECI system of Business English Reading and Writing are position as market demand-oriented, student-centered, and teachers-scaffolded. With the rapid development
of the world economy, there is a shortage of compound talents who can directly engage in transnational trade, transnational finance and transnational marketing. The exploration of the role of integrated work-based learning in preparing students to face the challenges of the Industry 4.0 workplace has yielded valuable insights (Afwan Hariri Agus Prohimi et al. 2023). The market demand for talents is dynamic, and the BECI system of Business English Reading and Writing should also develop dynamically according to the market demand and keep pace with the times. Specifically, teachers can try their best to provide students with the real scenes of classic cases in order to solve practical problems and meet practical needs. The core of BECI system is students. Student-centered means student-oriented, that is, teachers always pay attention to what students think and do, and always think about how to guide students to change and learn core knowledge and acquire core competence. To solve these problems, teachers must understand students, especially students’ interests, so as to carry out subtle education on favorite topics and guide students to actively think and summarize. Specific to the Business English Reading and Writing, on the basis of understanding students’ psychology, on the one hand, we should use vivid case teaching to stimulate students’ interest in learning; on the other hand, we should increase the teaching design of students’ autonomous learning and organize some simulated business activities, such as simulating business transactions and simulating email negotiations. The teacher’s role in the BECI system is to guide and promote, that is, to arrange the teaching objectives, knowledge structure and teaching methods of each teaching section, and to provide students with as real and rich learning resources as possible online and offline by using blended teaching, so as to maximize the learning efficiency of students, and finally to conduct process assessment and feedback to students.

Under the guidance of postmodern philosophy, we put forward the BECI (“Business”-“English”-“Cross-culture”-“Ideological & Political Education” Curriculum) system of Business English Reading and Writing according to the blended teaching mode. (Figure 2)
As the name implies, Business English Reading and Writing courses include both Business English Reading and Business English Writing. Reading and writing are not unrelated and not contradictory. According to Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, learners should be exposed to a suitable language environment and a lot of language input (1985). Swain (1995) put forward the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis, advocating that learners should be provided with more opportunities for language output while language input. Therefore, we advocate taking Business English Reading as the input and Business English Writing as the output, and linking, unifying and promoting the two skills.

BECI system of Business English Reading and Writing contains four major course: business knowledge, English knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge and ideological and political knowledge. Zhang Zuocheng and Wang Yan (2002) described the three elements of Business English as the relationship between business knowledge, English language knowledge and application, and business practice. Just as Zhang Zuocheng and Wang Yan (2002) defined Business English, Business English is a communication system in which participants in business activities use English vocabulary and grammar resources selectively and use pragmatic strategies in written or oral form in order to achieve their respective business goals, follow industry practices and procedures and be influenced by social and cultural factors. Wang Guanfu (2012) once concluded that the intersection of Business English disciplines is formed by the intersection of language, business and cross-cultural theories, knowledge and research methods.
However, in addition to business knowledge, English knowledge and cross-cultural knowledge, ideological and political knowledge cannot be ignored.

With the educational aim of “teachers should establish themselves by virtue, learn by virtue, and teach by virtue” pointed out by Chinese President Xi at the Peking University, ideological and political education puts forward a new concept, a new model and a new responsibility for talent training that integrates moral education with professional teaching, which contains the social responsibility and historical mission of transmitting socialist core values. In June, 2020, the Ministry of Education of China officially issued the Guiding Outline of Curriculum Ideological and Political Construction in Colleges and Universities, pointing out that the content of ideological and political education should be closely optimized around political identity, patriotism, cultural accomplishment and moral cultivation, so that all colleges and universities, teachers and courses should bear the responsibility of educating people, and build a big pattern of educating people in an all-round way. Business English major, as a new compound foreign language major to improve students’ comprehensive quality, must also organically combine professional knowledge and skills teaching with ideological and political education. While cultivating students to master and skillfully use Business English and cross-cultural business communication skills, it should strengthen the educational concept of moral education, help students form good professional ethics, pay attention to improving students’ patriotic and humanistic feelings, and pay attention to people’s all-round development (Yan Ming 2020; Wang Lifei and Cui Can 2020; Liu Hua and Liu Junwei 2020). Therefore, the BECI system of Business English Reading and Writing includes ideological and political knowledge, which helps students distinguish the noises and paradoxes in the ideological field in the process of professional learning, dispel its negative impact and influence, help students maintain keen political judgment and understanding, enhance their cultural self-confidence and national pride, and firmly believe in the correctness of China Road, China System and China Model.

In a word, business knowledge, English knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge and ideological and political knowledge run through the Business English Reading and Writing and are indispensable. The blended teaching mode of traditional teaching and digital teaching is the core teaching approach of BECI system, which mainly blends online and offline, multi-modal teaching and process assessment mechanism.
Business English major under the construction of new liberal arts aims to cultivate compound international talents with solid English language basic skills and business professional knowledge, good humanistic quality, strong cross-cultural ability and business communication ability (Ministry of Education of China, 2020). The goal of BECI system of Business English Reading and Writing is to reasonably integrate business knowledge, English knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge and ideological and political knowledge, take Business English Reading as input and Business English Writing as output, and cultivate compound international talents with solid basic Business English Reading and Writing skills, good humanistic quality, strong cross-cultural ability and business written communication ability by blended teaching mode. Specific objectives of BECI system include: Further deepen the organic integration of multiple disciplines in Business English Reading and Writing, and cultivate compound Business English talents that meet the market demand; strengthen the design, research and teaching of Business English Reading and Writing to maximize students’ learning efficiency; further integrate traditional teaching and digital teaching, and make use of rich online and offline learning resources, teaching models and evaluation methods to promote students’ autonomous learning and improve learning efficiency.

4 CONCLUSION

Under the background of the construction of new liberal arts in China, Business English teaching needs to keep pace with the times and cultivate Business English talents with more international vision and knowledge. On the theoretical basis of postmodern philosophy and blended teaching mode, the BECI system is put forward. BECI system is market-demand-oriented, student-centered and teacher-scaffolded, which includes business knowledge, English knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge and ideological and political knowledge. The BECI system teaching mode integrates traditional teaching and digital teaching, and uses information technology, online and offline, multi-modal teaching and process assessment mechanism to comprehensively improve students’ participation and subjective learning status, and cultivate their good study habits.

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