



# Exploration on Bilingual Teaching Reform of International Trade Courses Based on Students' Foreign Language Proficiency

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## ABSTRACT

Remarkable and substantial development has been achieved in bilingual teaching of many universities in China since 2001 when the Ministry of Education promulgated "Several Opinions on Strengthening Undergraduate Teaching Work in Higher Education and Improving Teaching Quality". Most colleges and universities all over China carry out bilingual teaching on fundamental as well as professional core courses of relevant majors. However, there are still some problems such as, the uneven language proficiency of students, the bilingual the teaching ability needed to be improved. evaluation etc.. This article takes one course of international trade major of Sino-US cooperative education by analyzing how the foreign language proficiency influences the study of international trade courses, then puts forward some suggestions on the bilingual teaching in universities based on student's language proficiency.

**Keywords:** Foreign language proficiency; International trade courses; Bilingual teaching

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The "Opinions on Strengthening Undergraduate Teaching Work to Improve Teaching Quality" issued by the Ministry of Education in 2001 (Jiaogao [2001] No. 4) clearly puts forward that in order to meet the challenge of economic globalization and scientific revolution, it is necessary to actively promote the use of English and other foreign languages for teaching. For undergraduate education, universities need to create conditions to make sure the use of foreign

languages such as English for public courses and specialized courses teaching", especially majors like "high-tech fields of biotechnology, information technology etc., as well as Finance, law and other professional which are necessary to meet the challenges of China's accession to WTO, need to take one step ahead, the percentage of foreign teaching courses to the overall courses is up to 5% to 10%."

Bilingual teaching takes two languages as the teaching medium of subject education. The second language is the teaching language and means rather than the content and subjects of teaching. Students' ability to use second language is naturally raised in the study of subject knowledge so as to use the second language to read literature, translate books, communicate and sign contracts when it's necessary and so on. The main purpose of bilingual education of our country is to introduce advanced foreign teaching resources, methods and concepts to improve the level of professional courses which will enable students to master the cutting-edge knowledge of the subject, directly connect with the world's mainstream technology and scientific thinking, so as to make great strides in expanding vision, cognition ability, problem solving and scientific research innovation, etc..[1]

## 1. Optimization of Bilingual Teaching Design Based on Language proficiency

### 1.1 Relevant analysis of language proficiency and bilingual courses grades

In bilingual education, the language proficiency of students and teachers has always been one of the most important factors affecting the quality of teaching. The uneven language level of students and their lack of mastery of specialized vocabulary and relevant knowledge reserve are one of the main factors restricting bilingual teaching. The score of students' foreign languages is in direct proportion with the final grade of the professional course. This proportion changes with the improvement of students' foreign language proficiency. [2] By analyzing the correlation between the CET-4 scores of 99 international Economics and Trade students and their final scores of

the International Settlement Course, Table 1 suggests that the scores of CET-4 is closely related to the grade of the professional course ( $r > 0.4$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$ , indicating a significant positive correlation).

**Table 1 Correlation Analysis of CET-4 and Bilingual Course Grade**

		Bilingual Course Grade Y	CET-4 X
Bilingual Course Grade Y	Pearson Correlation	1	.433**
	Significance (two-tailed)		.000
	N	99	99
CET-4 X	Pearson Correlation	.433**	1
	Significance (two-tailed)	.000	
	N	99	99

### 1.2 Optimization of Bilingual Teaching Design Based on Students' Language Level

Teachers should take full account of students language skills in the design of bilingual courses teaching. First of all, teachers should arrange relevant learning contents in the preview, classroom teaching, after-school review and course evaluation based on the level of the students' language proficiency, for example, students of different language levels have different pre-class preview sessions with different learning scopes and difficulty levels. The purpose of bilingual teaching is to enable students to grasp cutting-edge knowledge of the subject and to gain access to world advanced technologies and scientific thinking. Bilingual teaching, after all, is not a foreign language teaching. Discipline teaching aims to acquire knowledge, form skills, and the corresponding emotions, attitudes and values. Therefore, taking full account of the basis of the language under the premise of the main content of professional courses is still the core content of student learning. [3] In addition, bilingual education must also promote the all-round development of people through the combination of academic goals and bilingual talents. At the same time, teachers should inspire students to participate in classroom teaching activities as much as possible, so that boring linguistic knowledge will be internalized, then internalized linguistic knowledge will be specialized. [4]

**Table 2 Teaching Process of Professional Courses**

Teaching Process	Specific procedure
Preview	Students of different language level get to know the important and difficult knowledge of all chapters separately by preview, and the teacher will design the classroom topic and activities by students' feedback.
Class room Teaching	Through classroom questions, teachers grasp specific effects of the students preview, and then lecture accordingly, for example, focuses on the timeliness and variability of the content for declarative knowledge, focuses on charting the content of procedural knowledge, and focuses on the use of case-based approaches of strategic knowledge.
Review	To strengthen the important vocabularies and professional terms or topics, teachers can arrange homework for different students or set up Q&A time.
Evaluation	Teachers can take unit tests and final exams as the main form of bilingual examination of students to verify the effect and increase the proportion of process assessment.

As shown in Table 2, in different phase, such as the classroom teaching, there are levels to explain bilingual course content based on the preview situation.

Students have a basic understanding of the contents of separate chapters through the textbook content, related teaching courseware and part of the teaching video learning, teachers should focus on explaining their learning difficulties and priorities, As for the declarative knowledge in the course of international trade, teachers should focus on the timeliness and difference of content, while for the procedural knowledge, teachers focus on the content visualization, and for the strategic knowledge teachers should pay more attention to the case study.[5] In the group homework presentation, students with different language ability will be assessed accordingly. It is how they progressed matters. In the class discussion, teachers can encourage students of different linguistic levels to express their opinions. In the course

examinations, the determining factors are classroom discussion performance, the completion of the group homework and all kinds of tests such as unit tests and final exam are the main choice, which will make sure them to study during the whole period, rather than just the final two weeks.

## **2. Bilingual Teaching Exploration of International Settlement Course for International Trade Major**

Based on the above optimization scheme of bilingual teaching design based on the students' language proficiency, the specific teaching process of bilingual teaching of "International Settlement" will be analyzed below. According to the current arrangements of the professional training programs, the actual needs of bilingual teaching, the characteristics of students' language proficiency and knowledge classification of international settlement courses, the specific hours of the courses are arranged as shown in Table 3:

**Table 3 "International Settlement" [6] Bilingual teaching schedule Unit: Hour**

Module	Hour	Chapter	In Class hour	Experiment hour
Introduction	4	Chapter 1 Introduction	2	0
Settlement instruments	10	Chapter 2 Bill in Settlement	8	2
Settlement Method	8	Chapter 3 Remittance	6	2
	8	Chapter 4 Collection	6	2
	12	Chapter 5 Letter of Credit	8	4
	4	Chapter 6 Standby letter of credit and bank of guarantee	4	0
	4	Chapter 7 International factoring and Forfeiting	4	0
	2	Chapter 8 Settlement Finance	2	0
Settlement documents	12	Chapter 9 Documents in settlement	4	10
总计	64		44	20

Due to the characteristics of the course and the different requirements of students' foreign language proficiency, Chapter 2, Chapter 3, Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and Chapter 10 have a relatively long class time, especially Chapter 5, because reading of Letter of credit, examination of the credit and the use of the letter of credit are based on a large number of professional English vocabularies. Take Chapter 5 as an example, the following article will optimize different teaching phases based on the level of student language.

### 2.1 Preview Phase

The vocabulary of this chapter can be divided into three levels according to the level of students' language, for students with relatively weak language skills must be mastered vocabulary L1, other students based on personal language ability can choose to grasp L2 and/or L3 related vocabulary, as shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4 Hierarchical Professional Vocabulary Learning Schedule**

L1	L2	L3
Letter of credit, honor, Advising bank, Accepting bank, Soft Clause, Documentary credit Confirmed letter of credit Sight payment credit, Negotiation credit, Beneficiary Confirming bank, Applicant Issuing bank, Clean credit, Reimbursing bank, Back to back credit.	L1 Primary liability Account party Preliminary advice Mai credit Brief cable credit Complying presentation Silent confirmation Usance credit Deferred payment credit Revolving credit.	L2 Anticipatory credit Reciprocal credit Green clause credit Red clause credit.

During their preview, the teacher will release the words or questions they need to know before class, all students must master the vocabulary at L1, and some of them with better language skills can choose to upgrade to L2 or L3 which are more difficult. To some extent, This will solve the learning problem caused by uniform standards of different students, for example, for such students with poor language foundation man

not be able to fully grasp the relevant content which may lead to negative learning about this course, and for students with better language skills, they may be encouraged to explore more.

## 2.2 Classroom Teaching Phase

Take the teaching and learning objectives, characteristics of the content, emphasis and difficulties of this chapter in to consideration, it comes to the requirements of learning, such as to master the basic knowledge of the letter of credit, to read the content of credit in varying degrees, to know how to examine the credit from the perspective of both banks and enterprises, to master the practical use of letters of credit in international trade business. There are more of declarative knowledge in this chapter, such as the concept of credit, features, letters of credit parties, types of letters of credit, different practices of countries in the credit business practices. For example, in parties that may involved in letter of credit business, teachers pay more attention to the parties under L1 which means all the students need to understand this level, and for students pursuing more ,can reach to L2 and L3 appropriately. L1 includes Applicant, Issuing bank, Beneficiary, Advising bank, Nominated bank, Paying bank. L2 includes L1+Accepting bank, Confirming bank. L3 includes L2+Claiming bank, Reimbursing bank.

With reference to the latest Swift open standard format, in order to help them to understand and read the letter of credit, the teachers will interpret on different language level. In accordance with the standard L/C format, where the L1 level must be able to read 27,40A, 20,31C, 31D, 50,59,32B, 39A, 41D, 42C, 42D, 43P, 43T, 44A, 44B, 44C, 45A and 46A, and the L2 level need to be able to read L1 +39 C, 47A, 49, the last L3 should be able to read L2 + 78 and 72.

In the after-school review stage, students will have to check their missing trap according to their preview and classroom learning, and improve their understanding through certain practice provided by teachers. Finally, in the stage of curriculum assessment, different assessment methods are set up

for different types of knowledge. For the theoretical knowledge, they are mainly investigated through objective questions, while the contents of relevant procedural knowledge and reading ability are examined through subjective questions. And for the applied knowledge are checked by case analysis. At the same time, according to the main contents of this chapter and the students language level, set optional questions.

## 3. Problems Found in Exploring Bilingual Teaching Reform in International Trade Courses

### 3.1 Student's initiative learning ability need to be improved

Due to the current inappropriate selection of teaching materials in bilingual teaching in colleges and universities, the limitations of bilingual teachers' ability and the inadequate incentive mechanism, some of the students now are in negative learning emotion, and they will not learn actively and subjectively, some even have serious doubts and contradictions with these courses, which leads some students to reverse behavior. Teachers are now contributing into transforming the traditional classroom teaching model to new creative forms which are meant to meet the new needs of students, to arouse the enthusiasm of students to learn, to guide students to find more motivation to participate. It is urgent to help them not only to be positive about those courses, but also to overcome the inferiority in learning. At the same time, there is no doubt about the importance of international trade major courses, there are still some students pursuing the passing of their grades and they are not willing to take the initiative to study in their spare time. Under the new situation that every university emphasizes "student-centered" teaching philosophy, how to enrich classroom forms, stimulate students' interest in active learning, reduce language barriers and change passive learning to active learning have become a key issue. [7]

### 3.2 Basic foreign language ability need to be enhanced

There are language difficulties in bilingual

professional courses learning for students with low language ability. For these students, usually, they will spend much more time in learning, and the teachers usually instruct more often, but the final consequences are not really ideal. On this issue, universities in Hongkong often provide more choices for them, same course, small class, students can chose to take classes taught in complete English or bilingual or in Chinese. [8] The teachers also need to help them find better ways to learn more bilingual or English course as they need.

### Conclusion

The students' language proficiency is one of the influencing factors of bilingual teaching quality. According to the situation, the teachers adjust the teaching content and optimize the teaching design appropriately. combine the characteristics of both the theoretical and practical traits of international trade courses, according to the classification of classification of knowledge, introduce case studies and class discussions into class to promote bilingual teaching enhance students' interest in learning are being introduced into class to promote bilingual teaching. Bilingual teaching has been continuously integrated into the teaching of relevant professional courses in colleges and universities. However, there is still a gap between the increase of the number of courses offered and the improvement of the quality of courses offered. Combining the different language levels of students, effectively adjusting the teaching process is conducive to the realization of teaching objectives and the improvement of teaching effectiveness. On the exploration of bilingual teaching reform, more teachers shall focus on complicated issues, such as the optimization of bilingual teaching materials, the improvement of bilingual teaching ability of teachers,

the enrichment of bilingual teaching environment and the transformation of teachers' teaching philosophy.

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