A Study on the Application of Nanolearning in Business English Teaching from the Perspective of Mobile Learning

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Abstract: With the rapid development of information technology, new mobile terminals are gradually applied to mobile micro-learning. According to the horizon report issued by NMC, mobile technology has been listed as an important technology with developmental potential and applicable space in the field of education in recent years, which will have a positive impact on both teaching and learning. As an important English for special purpose, business English has the characteristics of professionalism and practicality. It covers a wide range of learning resources and strong effectiveness, which is to a great extent different from traditional English learning. Considering the features of business English and the current situation of business English teaching, this paper discusses the advantages of mobile learning to business English teaching and talks about the popular nanolearning model with the purpose of providing new ideas for optimizing business English teaching.

Keywords: Mobile Learning; Nanolearning; Business English

1. Introduction

Under the background of economic globalization and " One Belt and One Road", the reform of business English teaching should keep pace with the times, whose goal is to train comprehensive international talents who are not only equipped with business knowledge, but also the abilities to conduct business activities. In 2016, the Ministry of Education proposed in the 13th five-year plan of Educational Informatization that the concept of "E-learning space" should be transferred from "serving classroom learning" to "supporting networked ubiquitous learning", continuing to encourage the in-depth and extensive application of information technology in daily teaching.[1] In recent years, with the rapid development of mobile technology and the continuous optimization of internet environment, the mobile micro-learning, which is based on mobile technology and utilizes micro-media to present information resources and maximize people's fragmented learning time, arises at this historic moment. Therefore, how to give full play to the strengths of mobile learning, introduce mobile learning into the teaching and skills training system, and further deepen the teaching reform of business English majors in higher vocational colleges has become an urgent problem to be studied and solved.

2. The Application of Mobile Learning in Language Learning

The research on mobile learning can be traced back to a study called the Wireless Andrew project conducted by Carnegie Mellon University in 1994. In 2003, Alexander Dye proposed that "Mobile learning is a kind of learning that can be carried out at any time and anywhere with the help of mobile devices. Mobile devices used in mobile learning must effectively present learning content and provide two-way communication between teachers and learners."[2] Compared with foreign countries, the research on mobile English learning in China starts relatively late. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the research and exploration of mobile learning mainly involves the exploration of mobile learning theory, the research of mobile learning carrier and the design and development of mobile learning resources and courses.

The researchers roughly define mobile learning from two perspectives, namely, the technical perspective and the learner's perspective. Researchers who define mobile learning from a technical perspective believe that mobile language learning is undertaken by the use of portable mobile devices, including mobile phones, tablet computers, electronic dictionaries and so on. While from the learner's point of view, mobile learning is any kind of learning that occurs in a place where the learner doesn't study in a fixed or predetermined place, or where the learner makes use of the learning opportunities provided by mobile technology.

Mobile learning has the characteristics of mobility, infinity, strong personalization, autonomy as well as flexibility and strong interaction.[3] Compared with traditional learning, it has positive implications for business English majors and students in higher vocational colleges.

The flexibility of its learning environment makes the learning of applied foreign language majors break through the limitations of time and space. In addition, its social interaction and situational sensitivity also help to promote student-centered learning style and personalized learning process, and makes learners' learning motivation attract more attention.[4]

3. Nanolearning

Different from other types of web-based distance learning, mobile learning can use mobile terminals to spread segmented knowledge content with short, prominent theme and strong practicability, and meet the needs of people to carry out informal learning anywhere. Especially under 5G technology, it is characterized by the clarity of learning needs, the fragmentation of learning content, the liberalization of learning environment, the mobility of learning style and the lifetime of learning time limit.[5] Nanolearning is an significant teaching method in the field of education and training after the epidemic. The earliest foreign article that can be traced back to nanolearning is the nano-learning-miniaturization of design published in 2006. Subsequent papers tend to compare nanolearning with microclasses, but there are few articles that study nanolearning alone. After 2020, nanolearning has gradually developed on a small scale in China. The time limit of each video is shorter than that of micro-classes, which lasts about 2 to 3 minutes. It is not an exposition of some part of the knowledge of the classroom, but a further expansion for specific topics. This model builds a mobile learning environment for learners, which integrates interactive experience and resource. Students can carry out collaborative learning and further deepen the ability to use knowledge appropriately.

4. The Current Situation of Business English Teaching

Business English, as "English for special purpose", refers to English related to a particular profession or discipline, such as English for science and technology, legal English, and so on. Nowadays, business English teaching in colleges and universities can be divided into two modes: English teachers or professional teachers. However, both professional teachers and English teachers are lack of working experience in enterprises, and what they teach in class is still only some theoretical knowledge. Specifically, the main problems are:

4.1 Single teaching mode

3P model, namely presentation, practice and production, is the mainstream teaching mode in business English classroom at present. This model is a typical teacher-centered model. Teachers are the masters, decision-makers and main executors of the classroom, while students play the role of passive listeners in the classroom, which affects students' interest and desire for learning. However, with the help of mobile Internet, learners can learn anytime and anywhere, come into contact with rich learning resources, and break the traditional learning thinking.

4.2 Little teaching interaction

The practical teaching process in business English classroom is weak, and there are few teaching design about interactive communication and situational task. Although many teachers will ask questions in class, the questions are generally simple vocabulary and sentence translation, which is far from forming an interactive learning situation in which teachers and students cooperate with each other. There is no doubt that it is not in line with the learning-centered teaching concept. On the other hand, the mobile learning model can free teachers and learners in some ways. Learners can learn relevant content independently, while teachers can interact with students offline to answer questions and carry out case experience. Teachers are supposed to create different situational themes for learners, guide and organize students to experience real business situations in groups, and deeply improve business skills and strategies from cases.

4.3 Uncertain learning resources

Learning based on mobile terminals mainly depends on a variety of online learning resources, while all kinds of learning Apps have different functions and purposes. As a result, students sometimes combine several of them, so it is difficult to plan their learning reasonably. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to optimize the curriculum, integrate relevant important and difficult knowledge for different topics, and assist in collocation with nanolearning model, using superstar platform, etc., to plan the content so as to help students master professional knowledge and relevant skills.

5. Strategies for Business English Teaching Reform under Mobile Learning Mode

5.1 Utilization of mobile learning to create a good learning atmosphere

The main purpose of business English courses is to train students to have solid English skills on the one hand and basic theories and knowledge of management, finance, law and other related disciplines on the other. Students will be qualified to have a broad international vision, high humanistic literacy and cross-cultural communication skills as well as rich international business knowledge so that students can use fluent English in business, foreign affairs, management and other fields. Therefore, business English teaching should integrate the training of language skills, the accumulation of business knowledge and the cultivation of business practical ability. Besides, mobile learning can provide students with corresponding learning resources according to their environment, so that they can be in a realistic English environment all the time. Teachers can also participate in the design of the mobile terminal App, simulate the real language environment, and integrate efficient learning plans into mobile learning resources. Students will be given more opportunities to get in touch with English, spark their interests in learning, and improve their ability to use business English in practical work.

5.2 Utilization of mobile learning to change English teaching concept and enrich teaching content

Mobile learning focuses on students' individual needs in learning, emphasizing that teachers should encourage students to learn rather than simply instilling knowledge and skills into students. Teachers are no longer the leaders of the classroom, but motivators and guides, offering auxiliary guidance to stimulate students' enthusiasm for autonomous learning and tap students' interest in learning. Nanolearning not only has the characteristics of digitalization, multimedia, networking and intelligence, but also has its unique advantages. It can help students learn short videos quickly anywhere and anytime. Teachers should take into account the pros of fragmentation of mobile learning, split complex knowledge points into materials suitable for fragmented learning, and help students expand the breadth and depth of knowledge.

5.3 Utilization of mobile learning to improve the teaching evaluation system, curriculum design and the profession of teachers

In business English teaching, we can change the evaluation system with examination results as the main evaluation means, and carry out dynamic and continuous formative evaluation reports on students through the background data collected by the mobile learning platform, evaluating students' learning effect more objectively and fairly. Teachers can also rely on mobile learning resources such as mobile App, online learning resource database and online discussion area, combined with nanolearning model, to solve the key and difficult points of basic and professional courses of business English. Students are guided to dig deep into topics, finally expanding the scope and depth of learning. In order to improve teachers' teaching and research level, teachers should concentrate on the improvement of their own professional ability in order to better promote and boost the teaching reform of business English majors.

Generally speaking, mobile learning is both an opportunity and a challenge for business English teaching. The combination of mobile learning and traditional teaching mode can effectively promote the reform and development of business English teaching, and give a great impetus to education for all, life-long education and personalized learning.

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