

# *Empirical Research on the Effectiveness of Case Method in Business English Teaching*

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**Abstract:** This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the case method in Business English teaching, particularly in terms of its impact on students' language skills, classroom engagement, and satisfaction. Quantitative and qualitative research approaches were employed to conduct a comparative analysis of 50 Business English learners using the case method (experimental group) and 50 learners using traditional teaching methods (control group). The results indicate that, compared to traditional teaching methods, the case method significantly enhances students' language abilities, increases classroom participation, and improves student satisfaction. The study also reveals some challenges encountered in the implementation of the case method. Based on these findings, a series of recommendations are proposed to optimize Business English teaching practices. This research holds significant implications for educational practitioners seeking to improve the effectiveness of Business English teaching.

## 1. Introduction

As globalization accelerates, Business English, serving as a crucial tool for communicating in international business activities, has its teaching quality directly related to the competitiveness of learners in the global business environment. Traditional methods of Business English teaching have primarily focused on the memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary. Although this method has somewhat improved students' linguistic knowledge, it falls short in enhancing their practical application capabilities, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills<sup>[1]</sup>. Therefore, finding more effective teaching methods has become an urgent task in the field of Business English education.

Case method is a student-centered approach that emphasizes enhancing students' practical application skills and comprehensive qualities through analyzing and discussing problems in real-life situations. Originally widely used in business school education, its core idea is to promote active learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills by simulating challenges in a real business environment.

The theoretical basis of case method originates from cognitive and constructivist learning theories. Cognitive theory emphasizes the internal processing of knowledge, viewing learning as a process of receiving, processing, and storing information. Constructivist learning theory, on the other hand, posits that knowledge is constructed through individuals' interactions and problem-solving in specific situations. Case method integrates these theories by providing real business scenarios to stimulate students' interest in learning and enable them to process and construct knowledge in practical

applications.

The features of case method are presented as follows.

**Authenticity.** The cases used in case method often come from real business scenarios, closely related to the practical problems students may face in the future, increasing the realism and relevance of learning.

**Participation.** Case method encourages students to actively participate in discussions and decision-making processes, enhancing their engagement and interaction through group cooperation or role-playing.

**Comprehensiveness.** When analyzing cases, students need to apply interdisciplinary knowledge, including economics, management, law, as well as language expression and logical reasoning skills. This interdisciplinary training plays a significant role in enhancing students' comprehensive qualities.

**Reflectiveness.** Case method emphasizes reflection during the discussion and analysis process. Through reflecting on the case handling process and outcomes, students can deepen their understanding, promoting critical thinking and self-learning capabilities.

In Business English teaching, these features make case method a highly valuable teaching strategy. By introducing real business cases, students can learn and use English in real contexts while gaining a deep understanding of business concepts, developing cross-cultural communication skills, and improving their ability to solve real business problems. Additionally, the application of case method also helps to enhance students' learning interest and motivation, making Business English learning more vivid and effective.

Case method, as a student-centered teaching approach that emphasizes participation and practice, has been increasingly applied in Business English teaching in recent years. By analyzing and discussing real business cases, students can use English to communicate in simulated business environments, thereby improving their language abilities and business understanding in authentic contexts<sup>[2]</sup>. Additionally, case method can also stimulate students' interest in learning, enhancing their engagement and motivation. However, the specific effects of case method in Business English teaching still need to be verified through systematic empirical research.

This research aims to explore the application effects of case method in Business English teaching. Through quantitative and qualitative approaches such as surveys and student interviews, this research examines the impact of this method on students' language abilities, classroom engagement, and satisfaction. The purpose of this research is to provide more scientific and practical guidance for Business English teaching.

## **2. Research Methodology**

To comprehensively assess the application effects of the case method in Business English teaching, this research adopted a mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis approaches to thoroughly understand the teaching effects from various dimensions.

### **2.1 Research Design**

This research utilized a pre-post experimental design. Two Business English classes with similar backgrounds were selected. One class as the experimental group using the case method, and the other as the control group using traditional teaching methods. By comparing the language abilities, classroom engagement, and satisfaction of students from both groups before and after the experiment, the effectiveness of the case method was evaluated.

## **2.2 Data Collection**

### **2.2.1 Quantitative data collection**

Data were gathered through standardized language proficiency tests and student engagement survey. The language proficiency test aimed to assess students' abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in Business English; the student engagement survey was used to investigate students' participation and interest in the classroom.

### **2.2.2 Qualitative data collection**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students who participated in the case method teaching. The goal was to gain a deeper understanding of students' views, experiences, and suggestions on the case method, and to further verify its impact on student satisfaction.

## **2.3 Data Analysis**

### **2.3.1 Quantitative data analysis**

Statistical software like SPSS was used to analyze the results of the language proficiency tests and student engagement survey, including descriptive statistics, paired sample t-tests, and ANOVA, to evaluate the effectiveness of the case method.

### **2.3.2 Qualitative data analysis**

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview transcripts. Data were coded, categorized, and analyzed for themes based on the research questions to reveal students' opinions and experiences with the case method.

## **2.4 Research Hypotheses**

To systematically assess the effects of the case method in Business English teaching, the following research hypotheses were established.

Hypothesis 1 (H1). Business English learners using the case method will show significant improvement in language abilities.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). Business English learners using the case method will show significant improvement in classroom engagement.

Hypothesis 3 (H3). Business English learners using the case method will have higher satisfaction with their learning.

The goal of the empirical analysis is to verify the above hypotheses, with primary indicators including improvement in language abilities, classroom engagement, and student satisfaction. Language abilities are assessed through pre-and-post comparisons of standardized tests; classroom engagement is measured through analysis of survey data; student satisfaction is gauged through semi-structured interviews.

## **3. Research Results**

### **3.1 Impact of the Case Method on Language Proficiency**

As shown in Table 1, the independent samples t-test results before the experiment showed no significant differences in language scores between the two classes, ensuring the initial equality of the

experiment. The paired samples t-test results before and after the experiment indicated significant changes in the language scores of the experimental group, while there were no significant changes in the control group. Further post-experiment independent samples t-tests showed significant differences between the experimental and control groups in language scores, with the experimental group showing a marked improvement. These results support the conclusion that the case method can significantly enhance students' language proficiency.

Table 1: Improvement in Language Proficiency

Group	Average Score	Standard Deviation
Experimental (Pre-test)	70	10
Experimental (Post-test)	85	8
Control (Pre-test)	71	9
Control (Post-test)	72	10

### 3.2 Impact of the Case Method on Classroom Engagement

As shown in Table 2, the independent samples t-test results before the experiment showed no significant differences in the level of classroom engagement between the two classes. The paired samples t-test results before and after the experiment showed significant changes in the level of classroom engagement in the experimental group, but no significant changes in the control group. Post-experiment independent samples t-tests indicated significant differences between the experimental and control groups in classroom engagement levels, with the experimental group showing a significant increase. These results indicate that the case method can effectively enhance students' classroom engagement levels.

Table 2: Improvement in Classroom Engagement

Group	Average Score	Standard Deviation
Experimental (Pre-test)	3.0	0.5
Experimental (Post-test)	4.5	0.4
Control (Pre-test)	3.0	0.5
Control (Post-test)	3.1	0.6

### 3.3 Impact of the Case Method on Student Satisfaction

Through thematic analysis of interview records, it was found that students in the experimental group expressed a higher level of satisfaction with their learning. Students reported that the case method made classes more engaging and interesting, enhanced their motivation, and also increased their confidence in the practical application of Business English. Therefore, it can be concluded that the case method effectively improves students' satisfaction levels.

In summary, the application of the case method in Business English teaching significantly enhances students' language abilities, classroom engagement, and satisfaction levels, thereby proving its effectiveness in Business English education.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 Explanation of Results

The quantitative and qualitative analysis results of this research demonstrate that Business English

learners employing the case method experience significant improvements in language proficiency, classroom engagement, and student satisfaction. These findings support the effectiveness of the case method in Business English teaching. By introducing real business contexts, the case method stimulates students' interest and motivation, fostering active learning and participation<sup>[3]</sup>. Moreover, through interactive activities such as group discussions and role-playing, students are able to apply English practically, thereby enhancing their practical language skills. The case method also encourages critical thinking and problem-solving, which not only improves their language abilities but also strengthens their business acumen and professional skills.

## **4.2 Limitations and Challenges**

Despite the positive conclusions drawn, there are some limitations and challenges. First, the relatively small sample size may affect the general applicability of the results. Future studies should expand the sample size to enhance the representativeness and credibility of the conclusions. Second, the selection and design of cases significantly impact teaching effectiveness. High-quality cases need to be authentic, relevant, and challenging, yet finding or designing cases that meet all these criteria can be difficult in practice<sup>[4]</sup>. Additionally, case method requires teachers to possess high teaching skills and a deep understanding of business practices, which sets higher demands on educators.

## **4.3 Implications for Teaching**

Based on the results of this research, the following suggestions are proposed to further improve the effectiveness of Business English teaching.

### **4.3.1 Diversify Case Resources**

Teachers should actively seek and create diverse business cases covering different business areas and issues to meet the varied learning needs and interests of students.

### **4.3.2 Enhance Teacher Training**

Improving teachers' abilities to use case method is key to enhancing teaching effectiveness. Professional training should be provided to teachers to strengthen their skills in case selection, design, and implementation.

### **4.3.3 Promote Student Interaction**

Encourage and guide students to engage more in interactions and discussions in class, enhancing their participation and motivation. This can be achieved through group discussions, role-playing, and other forms that allow students to learn and apply knowledge in practice.

### **4.3.4 Reflection and Evaluation**

Establish a systematic reflection and evaluation mechanism to encourage students to reflect on their learning processes and outcomes, while also collecting student feedback to continuously optimize teaching methods and content.

By overcoming these challenges and adopting these suggestions, case method is poised to play a greater role in Business English teaching, helping students learn and master Business English knowledge and skills more effectively.

## **5. Selection and Design of Business English Teaching Cases and Implementation Process of Teaching**

### **5.1 Selection and Design of Business English Teaching Cases**

In Business English teaching, the selection and design of cases are crucial steps in implementing case method. A good case not only enhances students' learning interest but also effectively improves their language skills and business knowledge. Here are some important principles and steps in case selection and design.

#### **5.1.1 Defining Teaching Objectives**

The selection and design of cases should always revolve around teaching objectives. Business English courses generally aim to cultivate students' business knowledge, professional English skills, and cross-cultural communication skills. Therefore, when selecting or designing cases, teachers need to ensure that the cases help students achieve these learning objectives.

#### **5.1.2 Considering Student Background**

When choosing or designing cases, students' background knowledge and interests should be considered. The difficulty level of the cases should match the students' English proficiency and business knowledge to ensure effective participation in case discussions and analysis. Additionally, selecting cases related to students' future careers can enhance their learning interest and motivation.

#### **5.1.3 Authenticity and Timeliness**

Excellent Business English teaching cases should come from real business environments and reflect current business trends and issues. This not only provides more vivid and real learning materials but also helps students understand the latest business practices and challenges. Teachers can find suitable cases through news reports, business magazines, and corporate case study reports, among other sources.

#### **5.1.4 Diversity and Comprehensiveness**

The selection and design of Business English cases should cover different themes and fields, such as international trade, marketing, human resources management, financial analysis, etc., to ensure that students gain a comprehensive business knowledge. At the same time, cases should have a certain level of comprehensiveness, encouraging students to use interdisciplinary knowledge and skills to analyze and solve problems.

#### **5.1.5 Interactivity and Participation**

When designing cases, incorporating elements that increase interactivity and participation should be considered. For example, through role-playing, group discussions, and simulation negotiations, students can actively use English during participation, enhancing their language practice skills. These activities also help develop students' teamwork and communication skills.

#### **5.1.6 Reflection and Evaluation**

The design of cases should include elements for reflecting and evaluating students' learning outcomes. By designing relevant reflection questions or evaluation criteria, teachers can guide students to think about what they have learned in the case study process and how to apply this

knowledge in real situations.

By following these principles and steps, teachers can effectively select and design cases suitable for Business English teaching, not only enhancing students' English language skills but also strengthening their business understanding and practical application abilities, laying a solid foundation for their future careers.

## **5.2 Implementation Process of Teaching**

The successful implementation of case method depends on a well-designed teaching process, which typically includes key stages such as case introduction, group discussion, role-playing, classroom discussion, feedback, and summarization. Here is a detailed description of this process.

### **5.2.1 Case Introduction**

**Purpose.** Ensure students have a clear understanding of the case background, key figures, events, and issues.

**Steps.** The teacher first introduces the background information of the case, including the company background, industry environment, main characters, and key events. During this stage, the teacher can engage students' interest through questions, brief explanations, or video materials, ensuring that students have a basic understanding of the case.

### **5.2.2 Group Discussion**

**Purpose.** Encourage students to deeply analyze the case, developing teamwork and communication skills.

**Steps.** Students are divided into groups, each discussing the key issues and challenges in the case and exploring possible solutions. The teacher can act as an observer and guide during this stage, providing guiding questions or tips as needed to help students think deeply.

### **5.2.3 Role-playing**

**Purpose.** Improve students' practical application skills and language expression by simulating the situations in the case.

**Steps.** Students assign roles within the group, simulating dialogues or decision-making processes in the case. This segment can involve company meetings, client negotiations, or other business interactions. After role-playing, each group can present their performance, allowing the whole class to watch and provide feedback.

### **5.2.4 Classroom Discussion**

**Purpose.** Integrate different groups' perspectives and solutions, promoting exchange and learning among all students.

**Steps.** After group discussions and role-playing, the entire class engages in open discussions. The teacher can pose open-ended questions, guiding students to discuss their findings, differences in viewpoints, and the reasons for these differences. During this stage, the teacher should encourage students to critically think about different solutions, evaluating their feasibility and potential impacts.

### **5.2.5 Feedback and Summary**

**Purpose.** Provide feedback on students' learning outcomes and summarize key learning points from the case study.

Steps. The teacher summarizes the main points of the classroom discussion, emphasizing learning objectives and key lessons from the case analysis. Additionally, the teacher can provide professional feedback, highlighting the bright spots and areas for improvement in students' analyses. Finally, the teacher should encourage students to reflect on their case study experience and how to apply the knowledge and skills learned to future learning and work.

Through the detailed teaching implementation process described above, the case study method can effectively enhance the interactivity and practicality of Business English learning, helping students use English in real situations while deepening their understanding and application of business concepts.

## 6. Conclusion

This research, through empirical analysis, explored the application effects of the case method in Business English teaching, particularly regarding its impact on enhancing students' language proficiency, increasing classroom engagement, and improving student satisfaction. The results indicate that, compared to traditional teaching methods, learners using the case method showed significant improvements in these areas. These findings underscore the important role of the case method in fostering active learning, enhancing practical language application skills, and improving teaching effectiveness among Business English learners.

Despite the positive outcomes, this research faced several limitations, such as the limited sample size, challenges in case selection and design, and the high demands on teachers' teaching skills. Future research should address these limitations by expanding the sample size, enriching and optimizing case resources, and strengthening professional training for teachers, to further validate the effects of the case method and optimize its application in Business English teaching.

In summary, as an effective teaching strategy, the case method significantly enhances the language abilities, classroom engagement, and satisfaction of Business English learners. Given its positive educational impacts, it is recommended that the case method be more widely applied and developed in Business English teaching. Additionally, educational practitioners should strive to overcome the challenges encountered during implementation, continually exploring and innovating to enhance teaching quality and learning outcomes.

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