

On the Necessity of Cooperative Learning for Business English Learning

Juan Gu

Sichuan University of Arts and Science, Dazhou, China

Abstract—With the globalization of the world and the Initiative of Belt and Road, Business English learning is becoming increasingly popular and important in China. Based on the comparison between traditional frontal-lecturing approach and cooperative learning and analysis of the characteristics of Business English course, this paper tries to integrate Business English teaching with cooperative learning from Dewey's interactive naturalism and humanism with an attempt to explore why cooperative learning is effective in Business English learning to develop students' English competence, business skills and moral qualities.

Index Terms—Business English, cooperative learning, English competence, business skills, moral qualities

I. INTRODUCTION

Since China joined the WTO in 2001, the global economic integration has become more and more intensive, and international business activities have been increasingly frequent, more and more foreign companies choosing to invest in China. Correspondingly, Business English has been applied more extensively, and the high-quality talents proficient in Business English are urgently needed to promote economic and social development. In order to meet the challenges of the commodity economy era in globalization, an increasing number of universities and colleges are beginning to offer Business English course. Improving the teaching level of Business English has become a top priority for these colleges and universities. Therefore, we have further explored more appropriate teaching methods of Business English course to cultivate high-quality talents who have excellent English and business skills as well as moral qualities to meet the needs of society.

The traditional Business English teaching method is mainly based on teachers' lecturing, and the content of teaching is mainly on English and supplemented by business. That is, the teacher mainly teaches English vocabulary, syntax and translation related to business texts, simple basic theory of business included. From the perspective of teaching, this method takes the teacher as the centre of the classroom. The teacher manipulates classes by lecturing almost without pause to seemly obedient yet inwardly resistant students who sit in neat rows. It lacks the opportunity of two-way communication between teachers and students, thus the classroom atmosphere is always not active enough, the students' enthusiasm not high, and the teaching effect minimal. From the perspective of teaching content, the traditional lecturing method emphasizes the students' English ability, but business knowledge is relatively scattered. The teaching content lacks professionalism and systemicity. For students, this teaching method makes the classroom boring, and dampens students' enthusiasm in studying, thus failing to guarantee students' communicative abilities and critical thinking which are indispensable to Business English, so they are passive recipients of knowledge. In this case, students can only learn some business background knowledge, but they can not use the knowledge skillfully in actual business situations.

In addition, in the age of the Information Technology, students have long been accustomed to getting information from the Internet, and the network has changed the way the group learns and behaves. It is of great practical significance to do a better job in Business English teaching, which is closely related to the employment prospects of Business English majors, and also the success or failure of this professional education. So this paper tries to explore why Cooperative Learning, from Dewey's naturalism and humanism, is necessary in developing students' English competence, business skills and moral qualities effectively to improve their future performance in Business English context.

II. BUSINESS ENGLISH DISCIPLINE

The history of Business English course is very long in China, but the Business English undergraduate major, an independent undergraduate major, was approved by the Ministry of Education in 2008 with several generations of Chinese Business English people's hard and tireless work. In 2014, 216 colleges and universities have established Business English major. By 2019, a total of 943 colleges and universities across the country have opened this major. However, Business English as a new subject is not perfect, and it needs to be improved in many fields such as subject construction, curriculum, teaching methods and teaching staff building.

A. Characteristics of Business English Discipline

In general, Business English refers to the English that people use in business activities. In the 1980s, Business English in China was mainly used for foreign trade, so it was also called Foreign Trade English at that time. Now with the

increasing globalization of economic development, China will integrate into the international economic life in a broader field and at a deeper level. Our foreign exchanges and cooperation in the fields of economy, culture and education are becoming more frequent. Modern Business English has given itself a new concept. It should not specifically refer to China's Foreign Trade English. It should also cover the English application of our people in various fields and at all levels of foreign exchange activities. The connotation and extension of modern Business English has been expanded, and a practical subject has been formed. Business English is actually a specialized English for the background of national business. So it is a branch of ESP (English for Special Purpose), which involves both English skills and business knowledge. *The College English syllabus* stipulates that the aim of ESP is "to train students to have strong reading abilities and certain listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating skills so that they can exchange information in English; be proficient in the 1000-1500 common English words related to a specified major; be able to read the original textbooks, reference books and other reference materials about the major in English; have the ability to understand English conversations, reports and lectures related to the content of this major; and could take part in a general conversation about professional content of this major in English, as well as take notes, write outlines, write abstracts and brief introductions when reading relevant professional written materials; in addition, the students could write 150-180 words of English essays and letters of the major in half an hour." As for Business English is concerned, it is a subject of the integration of English linguistics and economics. The relevant theories of English linguistics, economics and management should be the theoretical basis for the development of the major. In addition to its research on the language itself, it also covers the intersection of culture, economics, trade, management and law, so Business English has the characteristics of "interdisciplinary" and "composite". Therefore, the course should not only improve students' ability to use English language in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating, but also help students to learn business expertise and master business practice skills. When it comes to the nature of Business English, we can conclude: First of all, Business English has a complex nature. It does not just mean business vocabulary and terminology, or business combined with English. It is a special communication system with a combination of business knowledge and skills, English language and cross-cultural communication (Zhang & Wang, 2013, p. 51-56). Secondly, Business English is a pragmatic major which is practically oriented and closely related to the profession.

B. Objectives of Business English Discipline

According to the "National Standards for Undergraduate Teaching Quality of Business English Majors in Higher Education Institutions" issued by the Ministry of Education of China in 2014, Business English aims to cultivate Business English majors to have basic English skills, an international perspective and humanistic qualities, and master linguistics, economics, management, international business law and other related basic theories. Furthermore, after learning Business English, the students should be familiar with the common rules and practices of international business. The English application ability, business practice ability, cross-cultural communication ability, speculation and innovation ability and independent learning ability are also included in this national standard. Last but not the least, those students should be applied talents who can engage in international business work after graduation. In other words, the main purpose of learners to study business English is to enable themselves to have the ability to communicate in English in the current or future business work. They share the aim to be the applied English professionals who know business theory and skills, and have a high level of foreign language and computer operation. So after graduation, they have the competence to work in various types of joint or foreign enterprises and institutions, and they can independently complete English-based business negotiation, import and export business, public relations reception, foreign secretary, marketing and planning, business activity (pen) translation, and data translation in the business field. In a word, Business English students will have a comprehensive and solid language competence, master basic economic, trade and business knowledge, as well as understand the development status and trends of their respective fields, and after graduation, they can gradually become Business English talents in the international market. Therefore, Business English has the strong purpose and emphasizes practicality both in the teaching and the actual application.

C. Demands and Evaluations of Business English Teaching

Business English should be taught in accordance with the requirements of the *Syllabus of Business English* issued by the Ministry of Education of China. Teachers should teach students in line with their aptitude with rational use of teaching methods and educational techniques, and pay attention to cultivating students' ideological and moral character, basic English skills, humanities and scientific literacy, international vision, business knowledge, and innovative entrepreneurship. To develop a good business sense and business literacy, students should have a noble moral sentiment, a correct outlook on life, a healthy body and mind, humanities and scientific literacy, innovative spirit, international vision and home country feeling after learning this course. The basic quality requirements of Business English teachers are to master English, business as well as have business practice ability. Business English teachers should be a qualified English teacher with basic knowledge of international business and expertise in a certain field of international business with certain international business practices.

According to the comprehensiveness and cross-cutting characteristics of Business English, the evaluation model of Business English is quite different from that of traditional English. It should focus on the introduction of business and professional elements, as well as English competence. The evaluators should actively establish an evaluation model of openness, pluralism, negotiation and development. Furthermore, the evaluation of Business English teaching should not

be limited to traditional paper examinations. Instead, it should focus on the humanistic quality, both English and business knowledge and practical ability of students, besides, the professional ethics, teaching and research ability, practical ability, as well as all aspects of professional teaching of teachers,

III. COOPERATIVE LEARNING COMPARED WITH FRONTAL-LECTURING

Confucius has once made a description: “Two minds are always better than one”. What he said means cooperation is better than working alone. Cooperative Learning (CL) is a task-based and group-structured instructional method in which members in heterogeneous groups collaborate instead of competing with each other to seek attainments that are beneficial to each member with the teacher’s academic and moral guidance (Han, 2014, p.948). Concretely, CL is to divide the whole class into several groups according to certain requirements, and create an atmosphere that can improve the performance of the group only through the close cooperation of the team members, that is, the team members must not only strive to achieve personal goals, but also need help group members achieve their goals. Students could work together to maximize every participant’s learning through cooperation, for it is very likely that people who work collaboratively for group goals tend to perform better socially and academically than those who work in isolation. CL also supplies students with many opportunities to learn from each other rather than receive information from the text and the teacher alone. Advocators of CL believe that learning is the process of meeting the internal needs of individuals. CL is based on satisfying the psychological needs of students. Control theory tells us that teachers can’t force any student to do things they don’t want to do. Trying to force students to learn is always difficult. Only by creating conditions that satisfy students’ sense of belonging and influence, will they feel that learning is meaningful and is willing to learn.

Meanwhile, there is another saying made by Confucius: Prince is Prince, Minister is Minister. In the traditional Chinese classroom, the teacher is the Prince who give orders while the students are the obedient ministers, “students will perceive the teacher as an authority figure whose superior knowledge and control over classroom learning events should not be questioned” (XU, 2001). In detail, the traditional lecturing method refers to the teaching method that the teacher systematically and carefully explain the knowledge in detail, so that the students can master a large amount of knowledge. This form of teaching is relatively simple. Generally, the teacher accustomed to the center of the class is standing on the podium, and the students are passively accepted below. The teachers are free with this teaching method and students only have a hard time listening at this point, traditional teaching methods often dubbed as cramming. Generally speaking, students are expected to receive knowledge passively in the teacher-centered classroom. If students ask some questions, teachers think they are challenged. Regrettably, the traditional teaching methods we are familiar with always undermine the curiosity of students: students are eager to find something unknown after walking into the school, but finally find themselves shaped into manipulated “puppets” who follows and learns whatever teachers said, although they hate what they are doing. They are exhausted by outdated learning styles in which they are forced to imitate the single and predetermined way of beliefs and thinking by knowledge providers and authorities. In this way, students are bored with the class, and they could not use English in communication even after many years’ English study. When I was a teenager, I was very anxious to finish my studies and explore the world on my own, because I was always bored with study and believed that I just studied for my parents and teachers at school. So after graduation, I suddenly realized that, to become a free thinker and doer, I had to reconstruct my knowledge in my own way

Here we can make a comparison between CL and traditional lecturing in terms of teachers’ role, students’ role and the way to relay knowledge. In the first place, teachers, as the authoritarian of the traditional classroom, afford social and linguistic knowledge to the students and govern all communication channels. In contrast, teachers become knowledge promoters in CL who take responsibility for providing assistance and intervention to develop student’s social skills and language competence that prepare the students for potent contribution to society as democratized and responsible citizens. In the second place, students in traditional classroom are usually passive knowledge receivers who mechanically use what they learned in the whole process of knowledge relay. However, by taking different roles as participants, mediators, even group leaders, students who are in the groups of CL always actively assume great responsibilities for their own study. They gain direct access to knowledge through negotiation, participation and investigation. Finally, in the traditional way, students often receive the language knowledge and obtain skills in an isolated and fragmented manner. Students often adopt a “bottom-up” method to learning: To start with, they master the morphological, vocabulary, and grammatical rules through mechanical exercises and rote memorization, and then they are sure to produce English regulated by rules and fail to flexibly apply what they have learned in the class. In contrast, CL stresses the roles of students in finding out, analyzing and solving problems, and setting up close personal relationships with group members. Here, students adopt a “top-down” method to learning: they grasp language regulations and learn how to use language flexibly through group interaction. For language learners, the most important thing is not how much knowledge the teacher can teach them, but how they can effectively use the knowledge they learned to communicate with others. In short, “the teachers are no longer the authoritarians who control students’ learning behavior but perceived as knowledge promoters; students are no longer passive recipients of knowledge and skills but active discoverers and constructors of knowledge” (Han, 2014, p.948). Teachers are no longer the sole occupants and providers of knowledge, but become organizers and guides of the classroom. Teachers should transform themselves from God to guide, from sage on the stage to the guide on the side, from teachers to helpers, councilors and facilitators. Both teachers and students should change their roles and share the education responsibility. Don Snow points out: “whether or not students succeed in learning a

language depends more on their own efforts than on the teacher's and that a good program of instruction therefore needs to be student centered instead of teacher centered" (Snow, 2007, p.20). Especially, in the Internet age, students have more access to knowledge. Teachers should not think they are authoritarians any more. Only do they correct their thoughts first, they will carry out the right teaching methods in reality.

IV. NECESSITY OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING FOR BUSINESS ENGLISH

In 2012, the Business English major became a discipline independent of English majors. As a subject, although Business English has made great progress in recent years, its curriculum system, teaching staff building and teaching model still need to be improved. As far as the current situation of Business English is concerned, many English schools of universities in China are quite confused about the implementation of this interdisciplinary and compound teaching task. There is a shortage of Business English teachers and the quality of those teachers is always not high. So neither the quantity nor the quality of Business English teachers could meet the development needs of the Business English subject. Most of the teachers who teach Business English were transformed from traditional English majors. They basically use traditional lecturing teaching methods. Besides, it has long been found that the traditional English major does not provide students with a training system for Business English communication skills, so we cannot learn from it. The Business English major should train students to acquire business English communication skills through development and innovation. Strengthening the top-level design from the aspects of classroom setting, teaching methods, and teacher equipment, and implementing them in detail, can achieve such training objectives. Teachers should not only pay attention to the cultivation of English knowledge when teaching Business English courses, but also strengthen students' ability to use English to solve practical problems in foreign business situations. This requires that the traditional teaching methods must be broken in the teaching, the English knowledge and skills training should be integrated into the specific business situations and tasks, and the students should understand, analyze and deal with specific business affairs in the business environment. Meanwhile, it is believed that the people who work together to achieve members' common goals are more likely to succeed in social and academic performance than those working alone. So the following paragraphs try to figure out the necessity of cooperative learning for Business English learning from Dewey's naturalism and humanism,

A. *Necessity of Cooperative Learning for Business English in the Light of Dewey's Naturalism*

Dewey, an American philosopher, psychologist and pragmatist educator (1859-1952) was a reformer of traditional education and a pioneer of new education. He advocated the development of children's personality from the nature of children. Dewey's theory is the representative of modern educational theory. It is different from the traditional three-centered theory of "classroom center", "teaching center" and "teacher center". He proposed "New Three Centers Theory": "child center (student center)" "activity center" and "experience center". One of Dewey's (1915) widely acknowledged ideas is that children's innate curiosity, the basis of learning experiences, enable them to be natural learners and that "the fundamental necessity is leading the child to realize a problem as his own, so that he is self-induced to attend to it in order to find out its answer" (p.151). From Dewey's naturalism, also known as empirical naturalism, students will naturally set up the multiple knowledge networks based on their life experience, mental maps of real life and knowledge repertoire. Dewey(1915) believes that education is "continuous transformation and reorganization of experience" (p.151). Children only have to take the initiative to experience everything, and the acquired knowledge is their own knowledge. Therefore, he proposed the principle of learning from doing and experience. Since children can learn from activities that are truly educational and interesting, replacing traditional classroom teaching with life-based and activity-based teaching, and substituting children's personal experience for book-based teaching contribute to the growth and development of children. So schools teaching should create as many opportunities as possible for students to make them engage in their own learning. CL could ideally provide students with a democratic and collaborative classroom where group-structured students discover and interpret language regulations and all kinds of settings they are directly exposed to. In this case, ideas which is beyond their understanding could be interpreted into what they can comprehend by their group members. Eventually, learning is reorganized, extended and activated by the activities among group members in a specific social setting.

Since Business English has the characteristics of "interdisciplinary" and "composite", it is different from traditional English teaching in teaching contents and teaching methods. Students learning Business English need more practice and cooperation to provide opportunities for them to communicate with each other in English and acquire more business skills and experiences. It is difficult for students to understand and remember simple business theory knowledge which is boring and abstract. Furthermore, in some cases information provided by the teachers is quite technical, so the learners try to paraphrase it to something suitable to their comprehension. Face-to-face group work of CL could make students feel less nervous and be more willing to get involved, as well as offer them abundant opportunities to converse in language they can understand and hear language modified to meet their needs. Their willingness to express themselves in the target language optimizes their language skills, and if students are allowed to cooperate and analyze some business situation together, they can vividly learn the business knowledge contained in these situations.

In addition, the goal of business English is not only to let students master the basic business theory, but more importantly, to cultivate students' practical ability by experiencing more business situations. Although there are corresponding Business English internship bases, due to various reasons, these enterprises always fail to provide the

students with the actual and training opportunities. When contacting companies, most companies are not very active. An important reason is that although students have a certain theoretical knowledge of business English, their actual operational capabilities are far from the requirements of enterprises. Most companies are not willing to disturb their work schedule, so there are very few opportunities to improve the practical abilities of students in those companies. Therefore, Business English teachers should create as many opportunities as possible to make students have more contact with various business environments, and train students to use English freely and accurately to solve common problems in business situations. In college classrooms, situational simulation is a relatively convenient and effective way to allow students to experience realistic business situations. Teachers should carefully design various business situations with moderate difficulty according to the content of the course and the practice of teaching materials, such as: business travel, airport reception, company visit, organization meeting, business banquet, marketing planning, job interview, factory inventory audit, dock inspection Goods, product complaint handling, insurance purchase, banking, trade order negotiations, etc. CL is a very good way to enable teachers and students to cooperate with each other in these situational simulations. In these vivid business situations, students deeply memorize and proficiently master all aspects of the process by simulation training, so that the business process in English goes throughout the classroom activities. In the process of organizing situational teaching, teachers should give full play to students' autonomy and enthusiasm, so that students can become the center of the classroom, and students can be grouped and discuss and exercise according to the established scenes. For example, in the job interview scenario, we can divide the classmates into groups of four by letting the two students act as the company's interviewers, and the other two students act as job seekers. Finally, with everyone's comments and the teacher's summary, students can deeply understand the correct way to deal with the interview. This coincides with Dewey's naturalism, providing students with a real social setting to build their own knowledge reserves. With the CL from Dewey's naturalism, the learners actively participate in pair (in business socializing) or group work (in business socializing and meetings) tasks and are involved in tasks as negotiators (in business meetings and negotiations), problem solvers (in business socializing and meetings) and observers, foreign delegates (in business socializing, negotiations and meetings). Teachers will be the instructor who plays an active role before session (planner and decision maker), during every session (instructor, facilitator, counsellor, partner, role model, problem solver, decision maker), after every session (communicator, coordinator, assignment organizer, assessor) and at the end of every course (rater, examiner or assessor). (Latif, 2013, p.102). In short, CL has led to multilateral exchanges between teachers and students, emphasizing the interaction and cooperation between students, thereby improving students' ability to actually use language and business skills.

Lastly, as we mentioned above, although Business English majors has begun to take shape in many colleges and universities of China, the number of business English teachers is far from enough and many of them are still not qualified enough. Among those Business English teachers, most of them are transformed from other majors, such as translation, education, etc. They have good English competence, and they can also get some basic business knowledge required for teaching through their own self-study, but most of them lack the training opportunities and practical experience to connect themselves with Business English in real situations. Thence, Business English teaching has to be limited to simple theoretical business teaching and cannot be organically combined with practical applications. Through CL, teachers can also gain business practice experience through the desire for knowledge and the simulation of real business settings when they cooperate with students during teaching. This is very helpful for the successful transformation of business English teachers from traditional English majors.

In short, both teachers and students could develop their language competence and business skills better with CL because of life-based and activity-based teaching context and their innate curiosity, the basis of learning experiences.

B. Necessity of Cooperative Learning for Business English in the Light of Dewey's Humanism

Dewey's humanism emphasizes the nature of human beings, mainly giving priority to such issues as human needs, potential abilities and value of life. Dewey (1902) declared that authentic learning will not take place unless "it must be restored to the experience from which it has been abstracted" (p.117). According to his humanism, learning only happens when the things one learns match one's personal interests and when the learners actively participate. The traditional teaching practices run counter to the spirit of humanism: learners are compelled to remember and learn knowledge that is not related to their personal and social needs.

In reality, the privileged class always uses education to maintain status quo, to influence the masses who think and believe in an officially authorized way. Chomsky (1997) once pointed out: "The universities, for example, are not independent institutions. It's dependent on outside sources of support and those of support, such private wealth, big cooperation with grants, and the government.... Those of you who have been through college know that the education system is very highly geared to rewarding conformity and obedience." In this situation, most teachers are just like puppets under the government's control, they think their roles are to pass the knowledge in the textbooks to students, and not responsible for students' critical thinking, democratic consciousness. People painfully felt confused about the difference between the learnt knowledge in the books or newspapers and diversified reality. For example, in the newspapers of different countries, readers are very likely to find that the people of their own country live very happily and peacefully, while people of other countries are miserable and very hard to make a living. When I was a visiting scholar in the United States in 2014, one of my American professors felt very shocked when he learnt that almost every Chinese family has washing machines and most of them have their private cars. What made me unhappy is not that they knew very little about

China, but because their knowledge came from official propaganda materials written by authoritative people who were clearly biased against our country. If learners are denied the right to an objective and comprehensive vision of the world, no matter they are eastern or western, they can just acquire the knowledge which is distorted from reality. That is to say, if people in power deliberately use education as a tool of social manipulation, learners' imagination and demand for progressive changes will be unmercifully strangled. Learning should be a process in which learners are exposed to all the objectivity and emancipated to "name and transform the world" (Freire, 1972) in their own discourses. The student has the right to be made aware of the self-evident truth that the subordinate's understanding and voice are as privileged and validated as those in power.

As far as language learning is concerned, learning a language means learning a culture, and therefore learning values. Values are the rules of conduct, and students should be trained to establish the right values. In Dewey's words, students can acquire skills that qualify them for citizenship in a democracy classroom setting by undertaking projects collaboratively and work out solutions in a respectful yet critical way" (1914). CL based on group studying is beneficial to students in their psychological health and developing their own critical ideas and democratic consciousness. Psychological health derives from two-way interactions within groups. Cooperative learning is a good way to promote democracy which is not an ideal, but a way of life involving socializing and learning together. Dewey believed that if children are to learn to live in thriving democracy, they must experience the process of democracy in classroom life—a process which includes substantive opportunities to make meaningful choices and build productive relationships based on genuine interpersonal respect and empathy (Dewey, 1915). In student-centered setting, teachers' power and authority are equally shared with students. Correspondingly, students have many chances to share, argue and test all kinds of ideas by and for themselves. This process can foster students' self-identity which is essential for a democratic society.

In reality, most teachers know "cooperative learning produces high language proficiency in students" (Han, 2014), however, most of them never associate CL with moral growth of students, and never think their lecturing classes would do harm to students' creativity and critical thinking. This is especially important for Business English majors who will engage themselves in international business which is conducted among the traders from different countries. They should develop a critical and democratic thinking when communicating with foreigners since foreign trade is always complicated and changing. Group-structured learning could provide good opportunities to develop such critical and democratic thinking: by encouraging respect of differences, love, trust and appropriate compromise, peers interactions and modeling can promote students' self-esteem, social relations skills and emotional maturity. International business is also a process that requires cross-cultural communication to remove obstacles among participants who need to have good communication and interaction with customers and establish long-term relationships with their partners. CL is not only a form of class dynamism, but also a way to building life-long interactions and communicative competences to deal with more complicated challenging business situations. Meanwhile, collaborative learning can also promote the formation of self-identity, which is derived from joint efforts and contributions to common goals. Teachers and peers' timely and positive assessment can encourage students' participation in cooperation with others to construct their knowledge framework and give new dimensions to their previous experiences. Cooperation experiences also can make them have faith in their own ability and enhance self-worth. All of these will contribute to the development of teamwork spirit, which is also vital to international business. Besides, CL encourages the development of skills such as dialogues, negotiation and equity, which are indispensable in international business. Hot topics such as public welfare, social unrest, official corruption and environmental pollution will naturally be raised in group discussions, which will help students to establish positive and correct attitudes in future cross-cultural communications. What the student touches in class will project into a larger background. Although individual classes are not able to help students change the way they perceive themselves and the world around them, but CL can influence Business English majors in a long run after their actively participating in the process of collaboration. The process is filled with collision and fusion of convictions and beliefs. It doesn't matter how the change happens, but the direction in which the change takes place is important.

More strikingly, Business English teachers are also democratized in their interchanges with students and related business materials. In most cases, authoritarian teachers exercise power by depriving students of their power. Not surprisingly, when people suppress others' creativity and initiative, they will find their moral growth stagnating and souls shrinking. Teachers can liberate themselves by depriving them of the "mask" of the highest authority and giving up the daunting mental burden. They can get students out of complete obedience and internal resistance to achieve more goals, because sharing power and authority with students can promote the same qualities as teachers and students, namely, initiative, democratic awareness and independent thinking.

In the setting of Business English courses, it is no longer limited to simply improving the ability to use English or teaching business professional knowledge. Instead, it starts with three aspects: language skills, business knowledge and moral qualities. Its final aim is to cultivate the inter-disciplinary talents needed by the market. CL could develop both Business English teachers' and students' critical and democratic thinking key to business world. Their moral growth and self-confidence needed for cross-cultural communication and their future career could also be achieved during the CL process.

V. CONCLUSION

Business English, a branch of foreign language learning and a practical subject, especially needs CL approach which can create a liberal and student-centered setting for Business English learners to build up their language competence, business skills and develop their moral qualities needed for communicating with their business partners, especially the international ones. From Dewey's naturalism and humanism, CL ideally provides a collaborative and democratic environment for Business English learners, who can discover and interpret the language rules and related business knowledge they are in direct contact with. Thus, education participants should make limitless efforts to create an open and democratic environment to make sure learning is a lively, happy, and worthwhile experience. Concretely, a low-anxiety environment with CL will be created by group members' encouragement and trust. When the students are willing to actively participate in the learning process, we win.

All in all, we can envision three benefits from transformation of Business English classes from lecturing to CL. First, it provides supportive and expanded opportunities for learners to use the target language and imitate the real business situations. Second, it contributes to students' psychological health which is important when business English majors get themselves involved in business practices. Finally, it promotes the democratic climate of the classroom and students' critical thinking and democratic consciousness, which are beneficial to cross-cultural communication. Business English teaching should adopt the cooperative learning method that provides authentic and dynamic environment to encourage students to get actively involved, to improve the interaction between teachers and students, so that students can take part more in the classroom activities and get access to more business scenarios, thus helping them better master English and business skills and promote moral growth, accordingly complying with *National Standards for Undergraduate Teaching Quality of Business English Majors in Higher Education Institutions* in which stipulates that Business English aims to cultivate Business English majors to have ideological and moral character, basic English skills, an international perspective and humanistic qualities, and master linguistics, economics, management, international business law and other related basic theories as well as business skills.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is supported by Sichuan University of Arts and Science in the name of "Problems and Countermeasures of Cooperative Learning in Business Teaching" (Grant No. 2019XKQ004Y)

REFERENCES

- [1] Dewey, J. (1902). *The child and the curriculum*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 117.
- [2] Dewey, J. (1915). *The school and society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 151.
- [3] Don, Snow. (2007). *From Language Learner to Language Teacher*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc, 27.
- [4] Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Harmondsworth, London: Penguin.
- [5] Haiyan Han. (2014). Transforming EFL classes from lecturing to cooperative learning. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, Vol. 5, No.4, 948-949.
- [6] Lewis, G. L. & Woodward, p. (1988). Teaching business communication skills in large classes. *The Journal Business of Business communication*, Vol. 3, 65-86.
- [7] Latif. & Farnaz. (2013). Innovative Business English Methodology in Iran. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 1, 102.
- [8] Noam Chomsky. (1997). *What Makes Mainstream Media Mainstream*. MA: *Z Magazine*
- [9] Xu, Z. (2001). Problems and strategies of teaching English in large classes in the People's Republic of China, *Teaching and Learning Forum* 2001. <http://clt.curtin.edu.au/events/conferences/tlf/tlf2001/xu.html>, 2019-10-08.
- [10] Zuocheng Zhang, Yan Wang. (2013). Definition of business English. *The Journal of University of International Business and Economics*, Vol. 6, 51-56.

Juan Gu was born in Sichuan, China in 1976. She received her MS degree in Foreign Linguistics and Applied Linguistics from Chongqing Normal University, China in 2012.

She is currently a lecturer in the School of Foreign Languages, Sichuan University of Arts and Science, Sichuan. Her interests include second language teaching and acquisition, Business English and translation.