

# Business English Classroom Motivations: Cognition of Business English Teachers in Chinese Universities

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**Abstract:** *The teaching of business English has always been concerned due to its close connection with real business world. Classroom motivations, as important factors affecting students' learning, are of great significance to business English teaching. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the cognition of business English teachers in Chinese universities on classroom motivations, and analyze their application and effect in practice. This study collected data using methods such as questionnaire survey and classroom observation. Data processing and analysis were conducted through descriptive statistical analysis. The research found that there are some misunderstandings and blind spots in business English teachers' cognition of classroom motivations. At the same time, there are also shortcomings in the recognition and application of motivations by teachers. Teachers find it difficult to accurately evaluate the effectiveness of different motivational strategies, or fail to adjust and optimize motivational strategies based on student feedback and performance. Business English teachers' cognition of classroom motivations needs to be further improved, and targeted training and research are needed for different cognitive errors and shortcomings. Teachers can improve their motivational strategies, and better promote students' learning motivation and academic development by learning relevant theoretical knowledge and practical experience.*

**Keywords:** *Business English, Classroom Motivations, Business English Teachers*

## 1. Introduction

With the rapid development of globalization and market economy, business exchanges have become increasingly frequent and important. Therefore, business English, as a language for specific purpose, has extremely important practical value for people in modern commercial society. In the process of business English teaching, teachers' employment of classroom motivations affects students' learning effectiveness. What motivations are appropriate, how to implement them, for what purposes and whether they can effectively improve students' learning motivation are challenging issues for business English teachers.

In the past, some studies have explored the influence of motivations on business English learning and the ways to promote it. For example, Mudure-Iacob I believed that business English teaching and learning needs a customized evaluation mechanism, and the use of idioms and specific phrases in vocabulary and oral tasks can pave the way for more attractive learning methods [1]; Alharbi W, through a 16 item questionnaire survey, believed that success in the job market depends on the provision of appropriate and adequate business English at the university level [2]; Xu Q surveyed 61 business English majors, and the results showed that English learners with higher motivation were more likely to use more words to provide timely feedback [3]. However, these studies often only focus on a single factor, and lack a comprehensive understanding of business English teachers' cognition and application of classroom motivations.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the cognition of business English teachers on classroom motivations, and analyze their application and effect in practice. Data were collected through methods such as questionnaire surveys and classroom observations, and descriptive statistical analysis was used for data processing and analysis. The significance of this study is to provide business English teachers with a more comprehensive and accurate cognition of classroom motivation strategies, and provide teachers with more specific and feasible strategies to guide classroom motivations, promote students' learning motivation and academic development, and also help improve the quality and level of Business English teaching.

## **2. Motivations for Business English Class**

### ***2.1. Current Situation and Problems of Business English Education in China***

Business English education in China has been rapidly developed and popularized in the past decades [6-7]. Business English is widely used in higher education and vocational training, and has become an important means of cultivating business talents. With the development of China's economy and the trend of globalization, the demand for business English education is growing. Business English education has become an indispensable part of China's education system.

In terms of curriculum setting of business English education, Chinese universities and vocational training institutions have set up business English majors and courses, covering a wide range of educational stage and fields from undergraduate to graduate, from vocational skills training to international certification training [8-9]. At the same time, the curriculum content of business English education is constantly enriched and updated. In addition to the teaching of language knowledge and skills, it also includes business communication, business document writing, business etiquette, cross-cultural communication and other aspects.

In terms of teaching methods of business English education [10-11], business English teachers in China continue to explore and innovate, and adopt a variety of teaching methods, such as project-based teaching, case teaching, simulated business environment teaching, to improve students' learning interest and practical ability. At the same time, with the development of digital technology, online business English education has also been widely used. In terms of business English teacher team building, China's higher education institutions and vocational training institutions are strengthening the training and selection of business English teachers to improve their professional level and teaching ability [12-13].

Business English education in China is constantly developing and making progress, providing a solid educational foundation and support for the training of business talents in China, but it also has certain problems. First, the teaching content should be updated and comprehensive. At present, business English education in China mainly focuses on grammar and vocabulary teaching, and the practical application of business English knowledge and skills has been neglected. Second, some teaching methods are outdated. In business English education, some teaching methods are outdated, uninteresting and not innovative enough, which makes it difficult to stimulate students' learning motivation and interest. Third, some business English teachers are not professionally competent. Because of the particularity of business English education, teachers need to have good business background and language ability. However, in fact, many business English teachers are transferred or transitioned from other disciplines and lack relevant background and ability. Last, students lack practical experience. Business English education requires students to have practical experience and operation ability, but in reality, many students lack practical opportunities and experience, so it is difficult to apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned to the actual situation.

To sum up, there are some problems in the development of business English education in China, which need to be solved by means of improving teaching content, innovating teaching methods, improving teachers' competence and increasing practice opportunities.

### ***2.2. The Importance of Motivations in Business English Class***

Business English classroom motivation refers to students' learning motivation and interest in Business English courses [4-5], which is an important factor affecting students' learning effectiveness and results. Business English is characterized by extensive knowledge, tedious content, and difficult language. Students are prone to learning fatigue, boredom and other problems in the learning process. Therefore, improving students' learning motivation and interest is of great significance for promoting students' learning enthusiasm, improving learning results and achievements.

Specifically, its importance lies in the following. First, classroom motivations promote students' interest in learning. In the process of learning business English, if students lack interest and motivation, it affects their learning results and achievements. Second, classroom motivations enhance students' willingness to learn. The content of business English course is complicated and difficult, and students tend to feel pressure and confusion in learning. If teachers can mobilize students' learning willingness and improve their learning motivation through classroom motivational strategies, they can make students more actively engaged in learning. Third, classroom motivations improve students' learning

outcomes and grades. Students with good learning motivation and interest can be more proactive in learning, thinking, and exploring. Therefore, improving students' learning motivation and interest has a positive effect on promoting their learning outcomes and grades. Last, classroom motivations promote students' self-directed learning and innovative spirit. Business English requires students to have independent learning and innovation spirit. Teachers can cultivate students' independent learning and innovation spirit through classroom motivational strategies, and improve students' learning ability and comprehensive quality.

Therefore, the importance of business English classroom motivations lies not only in promoting the cultivation of students' learning interest and willingness, but also in improving students' learning effects and achievements, promoting students' independent learning and cultivating their innovative spirit.

### ***2.3. Significance of Classroom Motivations Based on Teacher Cognition***

The study of classroom motivations based on teacher cognition refers to exploring how teachers use and implement classroom motivations in teaching by understanding the cognitive process of teachers [14-15], with a purpose of enhancing students' learning motivation and interest.

Its significance are as follows. First, by understanding the cognitive process of teachers using classroom motivations, the strengths and weaknesses of teachers in teaching can be discovered, therefore teaching strategies can be optimized and teaching quality can be improved. Second, teachers' classroom motivations have a significant impact on students' learning motivation and interest [16-17]. By understanding teachers' cognitive processes, it is possible to identify which strategies have a positive impact on students' learning motivation and interest, thereby guiding teachers to better apply and regulate these strategies. Third, by understanding the cognitive process of teachers' classroom motivation application, specific problems and challenges faced by teachers in teaching can be identified, providing professional development paths and support for teachers. Last, the study of classroom motivations based on teacher cognition [18-19] is an innovation and expansion of educational research methods, which can provide new perspectives and ideas for educational research. At the same time, this type of research can also provide reference and inspiration for motivation research in other fields.

The study of classroom motivations based on teacher cognition is of great significance for promoting the improvement of classroom teaching quality, cultivating students' learning motivation and interest, developing teacher professionalism, and deepening educational research.

## **3. Design and Methods**

### ***3.1. Purpose and Issues***

Based on the research of this paper, reasonable research methods should be designed. For business English classroom motivations, research questions and purposes need to be clear, so as to establish the general research ideas of this paper. To review and summarize previous literature, the issues and objectives that need to be studied in this article are as follows.

Research questions are 1) how do business English teachers recognize classroom motivations in classroom teaching? 2) what are business English teachers' cognition and coping strategies for different types of students in classroom motivation strategies? 3) what are the difficulties and challenges for business English teachers in using classroom motivations?

Research purposes are 1) to explore the cognitive process of business English teachers' classroom motivations in classroom teaching and understand their employment and implementation of classroom motivations; 2) to analyze business English teachers' classroom motivations for different types of students, and explores their impact on students' learning motivation and interest; 3) to find out the problems and challenges of business English teachers in the use of classroom motivations, and put forward corresponding solutions and suggestions.

Based on the above questions and research purposes, this study can provide business English teachers with more scientific and effective classroom motivations [20], improve students' learning motivation and interest, and promote the development of business English education.

### 3.2. Samples and Data Collection Approaches

In order to explore the cognitive process of business English teachers' classroom motivations in classroom teaching, the following samples and data collection methods were used.

First, business English teachers who are from different locations and have been teaching for different years in Chinese colleges and universities were selected as the respondents to ensure the reliability of the samples. Based on factors such as the age, gender, work experience, educational background, and professional title of teachers, multi-level and multi-dimensional sampling is conducted to ensure strong reliability of the sample. Second, a questionnaire survey on business English teachers' cognition of classroom motivations was conducted, and samples were investigated to obtain their understanding and application of classroom motivations. Third, business English teachers' use of classroom motivations in classroom teaching was observed, and teaching methods, student responses and other data were recorded. Last, two questionnaires on students' interest levels and learning satisfaction levels were conducted to see the effectiveness of classroom motivations.

To sum up, business English classroom motivations research can obtain business English teachers' cognition and application through a variety of data collection methods, such as questionnaires, and observation, so as to provide data support and reference for research.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Business English Teachers' Cognition of Classroom Motivations

The questionnaire on motivational strategies designed by Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) was used as the main reference and was distributed to 43 business English teachers who were from different Chinese universities and were asked to give their opinions on the importance of these strategies, so that they could have a subjective evaluation of these strategies. After that, the questionnaire was recycled and the data was statistically analyzed. The importance of classroom motivations was rated at 4 levels: very important, important, less important and not important. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Cognition of classroom motivations

Cognition of Classroom Motivations	Male teachers	Female teachers
Very important	10	19
Important	4	5
Less important	1	2
Not important	1	1

As shown in Table 1, out of the 43 business English teachers, a total of 29 teachers (10 male teachers and 19 female teachers) regard classroom motivations as very important. Nine teachers (4 male teachers and 5 female teachers) consider classroom motivations as important. Only five teachers view classroom motivations as less important or not important. The results shows that the majority of the respondents think classroom motivations important.

Then, business English classes in these universities were randomly selected and observed to see whether teachers used classroom motivations or not. Figure 1 shows the observation results.

Among the four grades across different Chinese universities, classroom motivations were used the most in freshman classrooms, perhaps due to a greater emphasis on the experience of freshman students. The distribution of classroom motivation usage is as follows: nine male teachers and seven female teachers in freshman year; four male teachers and five female teachers in sophomore year; four male teachers and three female teachers in junior year; six male teachers and five female teachers in senior year. From the results, it is found that all the responding male and female teachers used classroom motivations in their teaching and more male teachers used motivations than their counterparts except in the sophomore year.

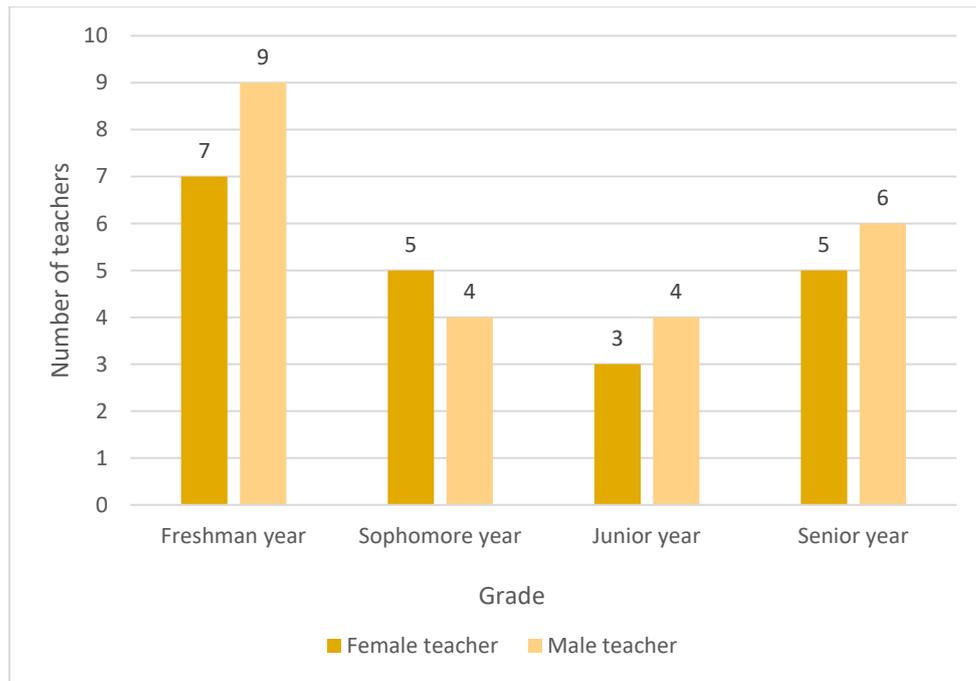


Figure 1: Use of classroom motivations

#### 4.2. Effectiveness of Classroom Motivations

In order to explore whether classroom motivations can bring different learning outcomes, two questionnaires on students' interest level and learning satisfaction level were conducted. The results are shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

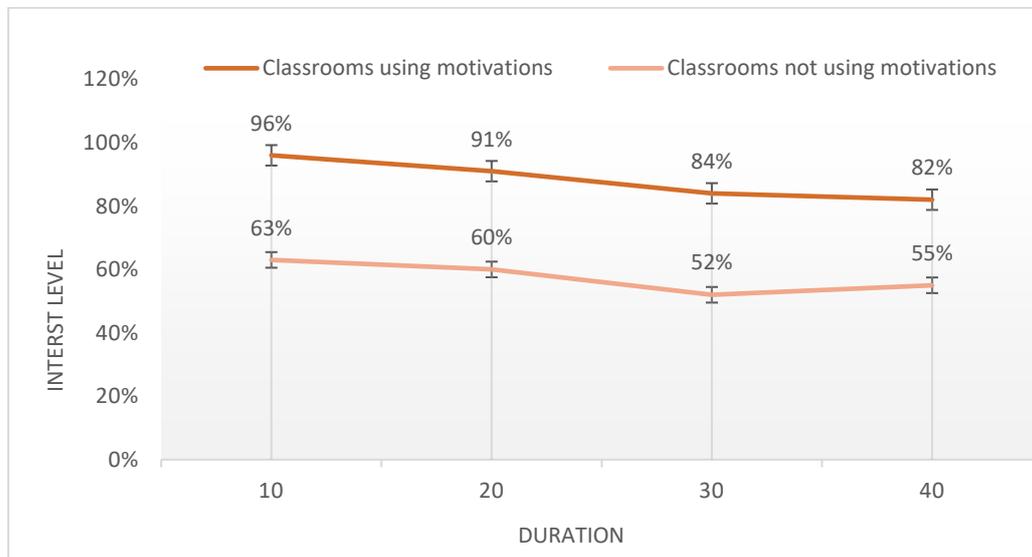


Figure 2: Comparison of students' interest levels

The horizontal axis of Figure 2 shows the time of the classroom, while the vertical axis shows the changes in students' interest levels during the classroom period. As shown in the above figure, the interest levels of students in classrooms using motivations are 96%, 91%, 84%, and 82% at different class times, which are higher compared to the counterparts (63%, 60%, 52% and 55%). It is obvious that classrooms using motivations generally have higher levels of students' interest than those not using motivations. This shows that classroom motivations can effectively enhance students' interest, thereby improving the quality of learning.

Next, a questionnaire on students' learning satisfaction was conducted between those who used classroom motivations and those who did not use classroom motivations. The results are shown in

Figure 3.

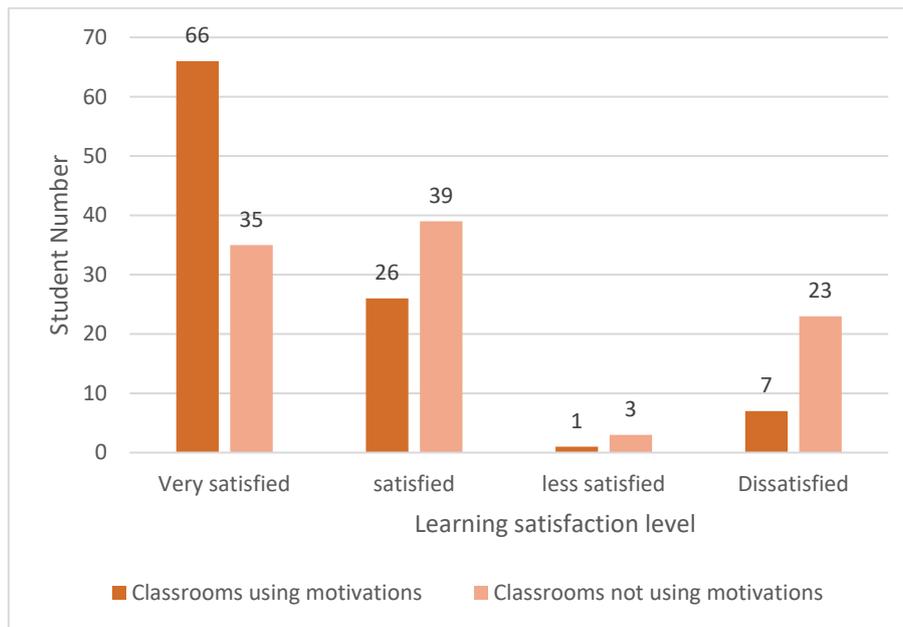


Figure 3: Students' learning satisfaction level

After using classroom motivations, students' satisfaction levels were significantly improved. The data results of using classroom motivations are: 66 people were very satisfied; 26 people were satisfied; 1 person was less satisfied, and 7 people were not satisfied. The data results of not using classroom motivations were: 35 people were very satisfied; 39 people were satisfied; 3 people were less satisfied, and 23 people were not satisfied. It is obvious that students in classrooms using motivations have higher satisfaction levels and lower dissatisfaction levels compared to their counterparts. It proves that classroom motivations are very helpful in improving students' learning satisfaction.

## 5. Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to explore the cognition of business English teachers in Chinese universities on classroom motivations, and analyze its application and effect in practice. Business English teachers' cognition of classroom motivations varies across different universities but they share the following common features.

There are certain misconceptions about motivation. Some business English teachers believe that motivation is mainly the performance of students' internal factors, ignoring the influence of external environment and teachers' guidance on motivation. For example, they may believe that students' learning motivation only depends on their own interests and abilities, while ignoring the influence of external factors such as teaching methods, teachers' attitudes and behaviors on students' motivation.

The understanding of motivational factors is not comprehensive enough. Business English teachers can usually identify the impact of students' interests, goals, expectations and other factors on learning motivation, but ignore the impact of other factors such as learning environment, social support, self-efficacy and so on.

The cognition and application of motivations are insufficient. Business English teachers often lack flexible motivation strategies in practice, and cannot adopt different strategies according to the characteristics and needs of different students. Some teachers may only use reward and punishment measures, while neglecting other more effective strategies.

The evaluation of the effectiveness of motivations is insufficient. Business English teachers often find it difficult to accurately evaluate the effects of different motivations in practice, or fail to adjust and optimize motivations according to students' feedback and performance.

In general, business English teachers' cognition of classroom motivation needs to be further improved, and targeted training and research are needed for different cognitive errors and shortcomings. Teachers can improve their motivation ability and better promote students' learning motivation and

academic development by learning relevant theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

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