A Study of Application of WeChat in Translation Teaching

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Abstract. Nowadays the WeChat intercourse platform has quickly become an important channel for people to socialize and get information. In many areas in universities, WeChat is also widely used and accepted. However in the field of translation teaching, the traditional model has been unable to adapt to the needs of the new era and the use of new technologies is urgently needed. After analyzing the trend of translation teaching reform, the author tends to integrate the interactive functions of the WeChat to construct a WeChat-based interactive mobile model in translation teaching in order to get rid of the time and space constraints in the traditional model and improve the effectiveness of translation teaching.

1. Introduction

In 2011, Tencent Company released WeChat, whose functional orientation is a kind of mobile instant communication tool. WeChat is a kind of free chatting software which could provide instant communication service. WeChat official data show that as of Dec. 2016, the number of WeChat users has reached 900 million. The WeChat user group is the largest one of mobile real-time communication software in Asia. WeChat has become a way of life, especially favored by college students and other young people. The emergence of WeChat provides a new way for foreign language teaching and a good interactive platform for the efficient expansion of classroom teaching. The research on the possibility and value of WeChat learning support has been discussed [1]. Some other scholars have carried out case studies on the application of WeChat education, but have not yet found the research on the application of WeChat in translation teaching [2].

2. The Reform Trend of Translation Teaching

English Syllabus for English Majors of Institutions of Higher Education (2000) pointed out that the main task of foreign language majors in the 21st century was “to change the teacher-centered traditional teaching method, and to highlight the students’ dominant position in the teaching activities”, via the use and development of “computer, multimedia and network technology”, to reform the teaching methods of foreign language majors [3]. It can be seen that in the past ten years, the translation teaching reform in China was mainly around two directions: “highlighting the students’ status” and “the use of information network technology” [4].

2.1 Highlighting the students’ status

Highlighting the students’ subjective status means that the one-way teaching model has been changed to strengthen the interaction between teachers and students. Liu Biqing (2003) pointed out that emphasizing the interaction of translation teaching was one of the distinctive and professional characteristics of translation quality education [5]. Murray (2004) argued that interaction was an important factor in the advanced stage of translation teaching [6]. The notion of interactive teaching method has been gradually introduced into the translation teaching process and interactive translation teaching researches have been carried out by some scholars [7]. It is proved that interactive teaching method plays an important role in enhancing learners’ abilities in translation. Interactive teaching model is a development direction of translation teaching.
2.2 Using information technology to assist teaching

Another important way of teaching reform is to use information technology to assist teaching. Many teachers carry out translation teaching activities via the teaching sites, blogs, forums, QQ, etc. on the computer network to expand the interaction between teachers and students. However, due to the constraints of geographical location, communication means and other factors, students cannot learn at will. The timeliness and flexibility of interaction are bad. In addition, because the problems are not timely solved, students are prone to anxiety, helplessness, which also seriously influence the teaching effect. It can be seen that the use of mobile learning model for translation teaching is an effective way to break time and space constraints, to realize the teacher-student interaction and the universalization of translation teaching. Thus, interactive mobile teaching model is an inevitable trend of web-based translation teaching.

3. Interactive Translation Teaching Platform Based on WeChat

WeChat teaching platform integrates with the private chat, WeChat groups, Moments, functional plug-ins and other major functional modules. It can be seen that WeChat integrates with functions of mobile phone, text messages, cell phone calls, e-mails, microblogs, forums, constituting a simple, efficient and integrated mobile interactive platform, which could make the interaction more flexible and smooth. Convenient operation allows WeChat to enjoy a high utilization rate in the university students.

3.1 The private chat module

Private chat module is mainly used for one to one interaction between teachers and students, such as individual guidance, Q&A discussion, sharing of information, teaching feedback, etc.

Students can send the self-practicing translated texts or some of the problems that are encountered in daily life to their teachers at any time to accept the comments and suggestions from teachers.

3.2 The WeChat group module

WeChat group module is mainly used for multi-person interaction, such as group discussions, inner-group discussions, inter-group discussions and so on. Multiple theme groups based on teaching needs can be created, such as information and resource group, translation practice group, work exchange group, translation discussion group, and question answering group. Different theme groups have different focuses. If necessary, teachers can attend to understand the students' discussions and guide them in a timely manner.

3.3 The Moments module

The Moments module is mainly used for one-to-many interactions. Teachers and students in the Moments can share their own translated texts in the form of texts, pictures, links, etc., exchange translation experience, and recommend famous translators and classical works, as well as excellent translation websites, articles, videos and so on.

3.4 The functional plug-in module

The functional plug-in module is mainly used to improve the interaction efficiency between teachers and students and achieve cross-platform interaction, which meanwhile promote the WeChat platform, QQ, Tencent microblog, QQ mailbox and other softwares to achieve seamless connectivity. Teachers and students can receive and reply the QQ or mailbox information, browse and release Tencent microblogs directly in the WeChat platform (Table 1).
Table 1. The Main Functional Plug-ins of WeChat 6.3 Version.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WeChat plug-ins</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QQ offline message plug-in</td>
<td>Directly receiving and replying QQ messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QQ mailbox Notification</td>
<td>A timely reminder to the QQ new mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microblog personal mail assistant</td>
<td>Receiving and sending Tencent microblogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass assistant</td>
<td>Sending the same message to multiple friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice input shaking</td>
<td>Converting the voice into texts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shaking the URL, pictures onto the phone via the computer Internet,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sweeping the WeChat two-dimensional code to get its embedded information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WeChat Computer webpage version</td>
<td>Chatting with friends on the computer and via mobile phone synchronously, along with transferring files and so on</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Interaction of Translation Teaching in the New Model

Moore (1989) proposed that there were three important forms of interaction in the distance education (Figure 1): teacher - student interaction, student - student interaction and student - learning resource interaction. With the new model, these three forms of interaction could run through the various aspects of translation teaching, and could be carried out at any time [8].

![Interactive Translation Teaching Model Based on WeChat.](image)

4.1 Interaction in translation practice

The improvement of translation ability cannot be separated from a large amount of translation practice. Due to limited time, much translation practice can only be carried out by students in extracurricular time, in the form of independent or cooperative translation. In the new model, after the students complete the translation as required in extracurricular time, they can send their translated texts to the assignment exchanging group, on which other students can comment and teachers can give timely guidance. This approach is equally applicable and conducive to solve some of the problems that are encountered by teachers and students in daily life. This process of translation has become a self-exploration along with the collaborative learning process, the translation concept and the ability of the students will unknowingly be improved.

4.2 Interaction in the Q&A process

Q&A is an important part of teaching. In the traditional model, when students encounter problems in the learning process, they cannot immediately seek help from teachers especially in the spare time, or the questions cannot be timely answered, which have seriously affected their learning enthusiasm. In the new model, once the students encounter problems, they can contact with the
teachers or students through the private chat at any time to get one-to-one interaction, or they can also seek help from the Q&A group. Therefore, the problems can be solved in time.

4.3 The interaction in the review process

It is an important part for translation teaching to review students’ translation assignments and to feedback. In the new model, teachers can comment on the students’ translated texts uploaded to the WeChat platform and give feedback to students in the forms of texts or voice information anytime and anywhere. Meanwhile, the teachers can also communicate with students online. In addition, teachers can also organize students to participate in the review process, carrying out mutual assessments, inter-group assessments and other review activities within the discussion group or the work exchanging group, which not only reduce the burden of teachers’ correction work, but more importantly, students can learn from each other during the review process.

4.4 Interaction in the feedback process

Students’ teaching feedback helps teachers adjust their teaching methods and optimize the teaching effect. The new model not only broadens the channels of teaching feedback, but also makes teaching feedback more convenient. Through the WeChat platform students can always give some feedback on learning to the teachers, and vice versa teachers can also get some knowledge of the teaching situation from students, collecting students’ feedback, timely communicating with the students to seek the best teaching program.

5. Conclusion

Mobile interactive translation teaching model based on WeChat could break the time and space constraints and effectively solve the problem of the lack of teaching interaction in the traditional teaching model. Teachers and students can contact with each other via portable mobile phones and other mobile communication devices in a variety of forms anytime and anywhere. WeChat-based platform promotes interaction to become ubiquitous, multi-modal, three-dimensional, and personalized in translation teaching, which promotes teaching flexibility and guides students from passivity to initiative. All in all, the new model is a useful supplement to the traditional classroom teaching model as well as to the computer network assistant teaching model, which can effectively improve the efficiency of translation teaching.

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References


