A Study on SPOC-based Blended Teaching and Learning Platform of Business Translation Course

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Abstract. Entering the information age, the popularization of mobile learning, distance learning, online learning and ubiquitous learning have greatly changed the methods and improved the effect of teaching. The application of modern educational technology in teaching has become a must to adapt to the teaching reform in the new period. The SPOC-based blended teaching and learning platform of business translation course provides a way to reform the traditional teaching mode, can enhance the learner autonomy and collaboration, overcome the limitations of time and space of classroom instruction, thus to improve the quality of teaching.

Introduction

Owing to the increasing speed of the globalization and the frequent international business exchanges, the teaching of business translation has got unprecedented attention than ever. In order to meet the social and market demand for talents in business translation, the teaching mode of business translation has been experiencing continuous changes, with a gradual transition from “teaching of translation skills training to occupational education and quality education, from teacher-centered to student-centered, from the result oriented to process oriented” [1]. These changes have enabled students to gradually get rid of the shackles of the language form reproducing, give full play to their initiative to acquire the basis operation skill, strategy and competence of business translation.

The rapid development of information technology has brought great convenience to people’s life and learning, but also provides opportunities for development and broad prospects for the reform of education. The educational concept, teaching mode, teaching process and teaching methods of schools are experiencing changes under the influence of information technology. The Ten Year Development Plan of Educational Informationization from 2011 to 2020 has proposed to drive the modernization and development of education through promoting the educational informationization, give full play to the advantages of modern information technology, focus on the full and deep integration of information technology and education and the developing direction of autonomous learning [2]. The application of computer, multimedia, network and other modern teaching means to flip the traditional classroom has created a new wave of education reform. Therefore, this study designed the SPOC-based blended teaching and learning platform of business translation course, which combines the advantages of network teaching, the flipped classroom and digital classroom with the integration of SPOC platform and digital teaching resources, thus to improve the students' professional knowledge and skills of business translation, learner autonomy, cooperation, interaction and intelligence level of translation based on modern science and technology.

The Development and Research of SPOC

SPOC is small scaled private online courses with set access conditions (mainly for the students of the school) with the components of micro video, instant practice, interactive discussion and learning test etc. It is a kind of localized learning model of MOOC and has overcome the shortcomings of MOOC such as failure of exact match with the existing teaching object, course target, difficulty level and students’ accumulation of knowledge[3]. SPOC was first proposed by Armando Fock of the
University of California at Berkeley. He believes that the application of SPOC in classroom teaching can enhance the effect of teachers’ guiding, students’ mastering of knowledge and their participation in the classroom [4]. Robert Lu of the Harvard University argues that the significance of SPOC lies in that the online learning is totally different from copying the classroom curriculum. It’s trying to create a more flexible and effective way of learning [5]. Yexin Kang thinks that compared with MOOC, SPOC integrates the factors of teaching, video watching, discussing and evaluating etc., which can provide learners with complete and deep learning experience, improve the completion rate of the course, thereby enhance the effectiveness of autonomous learning [6].

At present, the researches on SPOC has focused on two aspects—the design of teaching mode and teaching practice. In the aspect of teaching design, Bin He creatively proposed the SPOC-based structure of “time-space-learning form” to guide the practical application of SPOC in teaching [7]; Ran Chen et al. designed the applicable case of SPOC-based blended learning model of programming language C and thought this model is helpful to promote the optimization of teaching effect and change the traditional learning means of students [8]; Xiaofan Lin et al. constructed the mode of SPOC-based innovation cultivation [9], and proved by practice that SPOC in blended learning environment can improve learners’ innovation. At present, University of California at Berkeley, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University, Tsinghua University, Zhejiang University and other famous universities have tried to apply SPOC to teaching, but the research and design of the new model is mainly in the field of liberal arts and science courses, while there is still insufficient application in translation courses.

The Theoretical Basis and Advantages of SPOC

The theoretical basis of SPOC is Constructivist learning theory, which is an important branch of cognitive theory in late 20th Century. The earliest presenters can be traced back to the Swiss scholar Jean Piaget and Soviet psychologist Vygotsky. The Constructivist learning theory holds that “knowledge acquired by the learners in certain situations, namely the social background, with the help of other people and the use of appropriate learning materials, through the way of meaning construction” [10]. The theory emphasizes the function of four main factors—“situation”, “collaboration”, “conversation” and “meaning construction” in the learning. Applying it to business translation course, “situation” refers to the near-to-real business communicating scenarios and exchanging activities created by the teacher for learners, the purpose is to make the students complete the meaning construction under the “situation”. The learning process is the individual’s construction of their own knowledge structure, in which the students are no longer passive recipients of information, they should actively select and process the external information. “Collaboration” means the cooperation, imitation and stimulation among the students to construct their knowledge. And the “conversation” is an important part of students' cooperation, through which students discuss to complete the tasks and finally complete the "meaning construction"-finding that the nature and law of things.

The massive, personalized learning resources and teaching resources and convenient intelligent feedback system built in business translation SPOC platform provide convenient and intuitive measurement and analysis tools for the design and research of teaching, which can stimulate students’ self-monitoring, self-testing, self-checking, self-reflecting and other activities and create a comfortable learning environment based on the situation, collaboration, conversation and meaning construction.

Detailed Design of SPOC-based Blended Teaching and Learning Platform of Business Translation Course

The SPOC-based blended teaching and learning platform of business translation course makes full use of campus resources and integrates the online and offline teaching and learning. The platform is composed by four modules: online teaching includes providing resources, publishing content, online
Q & A, monitoring learning; online learning includes self-learning, self detection, feedback and peer review; offline teaching includes demand analysis, course and task designing, evaluation and feedback; offline learning consists of learning fruit presentation, interaction and exchanges, Knowledge Internalization and learning reflection.

**Online Teaching**

Teachers can build curriculum resources and publish teaching announcements in the online teaching platform of SPOC-based business translation course. Curriculum resources include basic information, course materials and curriculum practice tests. The basic information consists of the introduction of business translation course, basic knowledge points and curriculum standards. Course materials include the video or slides showing basic knowledge ad theories of business translation, business translation practice and application, translation versions by famous translators, CAT software for code conversion, format conversion, document recognition, spell check and machine translation etc., website links of business translation or English learning and links of BNC and COCA corpus. Business translation practice tests can take the form of objective items such as multiple-choice questions, blanks filling and judgement questions or subjective items e.g. translation error correction, sentence translation and text translation and other subjective questions concerning the relevant theory and practice of business translation. In the online teaching module, teachers can give evaluation and feedback to students’ work, pay attention to students’ autonomous learning such as video viewing schedule, reading frequency, class participation and on-line testing to give timely guidance and advice. These are considered as important basis for the formative evaluation.

**Online Learning**

Through the online learning platform of SPOC-based business translation course, students can read the course information carefully to know the curriculum standards, learning key points and methods of business translation, thus to understand and get familiar with the course as a whole. Familiar with the teaching goal of the course, students can further learn the content of each chapter by watching the related video resources, reading teachers selected business translation passages and translation theory or visit the related website. At the same time, the students can learn step by step to use the CAT software in business translation to prepare for the project in future. During the process of learning, if there is any doubt or difficulty, students can ask the teachers for help or exchange with peers through interactive function of SPOC.

At the same time, the SPOC-based online platform of business translation can provide students with online testing and peer review. The objective items are mainly about basic knowledge, skills, theory and operations of related CAT software concerning the chapter, which can usually be evaluated automatically in the platform. The subjective items are mainly in the form of sentence or essay translation, which will be evaluated by peers with the assistance of scales provided by the teacher.

**Offline Teaching**

In the offline classroom of SPOC-based business translation course, teachers and students focus on key points, difficulties and doubts of the teaching content according to the online questioning and discussion. Generally speaking, the key points and difficulties of business translation mainly involves the following aspects: the differences between English and Chinese business languages and its reflection in business translation; the flexible mastery of business translation techniques and the cross-cultural awareness in translation. Based on the students’ versions, the teacher put forward the problems concerning text analysis and understanding, guide students to seize the ideas of the original text, analyze the structure of complex sentences in the original text, make clear the literal meaning, pragmatic meaning and the rhetorical meaning of words and phrases in the text, then choose the appropriate words to express. After solving the difficulties and doubts of the teaching content, teacher can arrange some tasks for practice, to help students internalize the contents of online learning.
In the SPOC-based offline teaching of business translation course, the role of teacher has changed from main performer into director, i.e. the teacher is no longer the initiator of knowledge but the coordinator and guide of students’ learning. The teacher guides students in group discussion and collaborative inquiry with timely and appropriate suggestion or advice, to help students have more profound understanding, summary and expansion of the learning content. The teacher also gives timely answers or solutions to the students’ questions or difficulties encountered in the course of the discussion. Students are the protagonists rather than passive recipients of knowledge compared with traditional classroom teaching.

**Offline Learning**

The SPOC-based offline learning of business translation course mainly includes: business translation salon, forums and competitions organized by the teacher to promote the interaction between the students and create sound learning environment of business translation. There are also activities such as individual statement, learning report, fruit presentation, self-evaluation, peer review and teacher evaluation etc. to enhance students’ translation competence and innovative thinking and internalize the knowledge. At the same time, students are required to write a weekly reflection journal on translation study for further diagnosis of learning problems and better understanding of their learning characteristics and styles, thus to continuously improve their learning ability.

**Summary**

Compared with the traditional business translation teaching, SPOC-based blended teaching and learning platform can provide diversified teaching methods to adapt to different learning styles and habits of the students with its personalized features. With the assistance of the platform, teaching contents of business translation are more refined and interesting, the teaching materials become diversified and the teaching activities are no longer subject to the restriction of time and space. The online plus offline teaching and learning mode can mobilize the students’ awareness of autonomous learning, accord with students' learning habits of the information age, solve the problem insufficient classroom interaction and enable teacher to make efficient use of classroom time. The diversified evaluation mechanism effectively utilizes the means of network to promote the students’ self-monitoring and reflection and contribute to the two-way communication between teacher and students. However, the construction of SPOC-based blended teaching and learning platform of business translation is a complex process, which should be guided by the Constructivist learning theory. The blended teaching and learning mode urges the teacher to pay more time and effort than traditional classroom teaching, which will be gradually improved and perfected in the teaching practice.

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**References**


