An Experimental Study on Translation Teaching Based on Info-technology

Hong-jun ZHANG
Jilin University of Finance and Economics, Changchun, Jilin, China
876619502@163.com

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Abstract. Since the new century, the integration of information technology into College English teaching has become an important reform. As an important teaching model combining theoretical teaching with practical teaching, translation teaching has been gradually showing its importance. This paper mainly introduces the basic theory, analyzes the status of College English translation teaching in our country, and the teaching mode of College English translation is proposed based on the info-technology in order to provide reference for the teaching reform of modernization.

Introduction

Chinese students’ experience of learning English can be traced back to the primary school or even kindergarten. They have gone through a long process of learning English. It is usually considered that Chinese students were affected by Chinese in the process of learning English. In the teaching practice, English teachers have discovered that many students are still not fluent in the use of English. There are still a large number of mistakes and Chinglish in their translation exercises. It has become a serious issue for students to learn and use English. As a nationwide teaching examination, College English Test Band 4 (CET4) and College English Test Band 6 (CET6) both have translation test. The type of translation in CET4 and CET6 is the translation of essays which scores 15%. This proves that translation teaching plays an important role in College English Teaching.

In China, College English teaching should follow College English Curriculum Requirement which performs a very important function in college English teaching reform. It is intended to bring up students’ comprehensive ability to use English so that they can use English effectively in the future work and social communication. What’s more, it’s indispensable to boost up their autonomous learning ability and enhance their comprehensive cultural awareness to accommodate well to the needs of social development and the rapidly changing conditions.

It has become an urgent problem to solve the problems in the foreign language teaching to change the students’ English learning situation, to improve their interest in translation study and to develop their autonomous learning ability. In view of this, we have adopted the means of information technology in the teaching of translation.

Theoretical Framework

As a new development of cognitive learning theory, constructivism is a revolution in contemporary psychological pedagogy. Multimedia computer and network technology can be used as an ideal cognitive tool in constructivist learning, which can effectively promote students’ cognitive development. Compared with the traditional theory, constructivism puts forward different views on the status and role of teachers and students in the teaching process. Constructivism holds that learning is a process in which learners actively construct themselves, instead of passively accepting external information. The teacher should act as a guide or an organizer rather than an instructor in the teaching process. That is to say, students play a leading role in the learning process while teachers play a supporting role. Constructivism advocates the teaching with real situation in a variety of perspectives. By this way we can develop students’ practical ability to analyze and solve practical problems. In the process of knowledge construction, we should strengthen the communication and cooperation
between teachers and students. Teachers should promptly solve students’ problems, create a good
teaching environment and provide students with adequate teaching resources.

Constructivist learning theory respects students’ subjective position in the learning process. It
displays students’ enthusiasm, initiative and creativity and is helpful to cultivate students’ ability of
self learning and self education. With the rapid development of information technology, it is the trend
to apply the constructivist learning theory to teaching practice.

Informational translation teaching is one of the teaching forms based on modern information
technology. It refers to the extensive development and integration of information resources by using
computer network technology in the process of modern translation teaching. What’s more, the
content of education can be optimized and activated. Thus, the objective of training students will be
achieved [1].

Experimental Study

Objective of the Study. The objective of the experiment is to test whether the use of information
technology in the teaching of translation activities can improve the level of students’ translation and
language application capability and their autonomous learning ability.

Subjects. Sixty-three students participated in the teaching activities both inside and outside the
classroom. These students are nearly twenty years old from all over the country, studying at Jilin
University of Finance and economics. The experiment was conducted by the teacher who has many
years of teaching experience. The teacher and the students were full of great interest and enthusiasm
in the experimental teaching.

Instruments. In the classroom, the teacher carried on the interactive teaching with the students
mainly through the multimedia classroom. After class, teachers and students exchanged and chatted
through mobile phones, computers with wireless access point, QQ and other means of information
technology.

Procedure. The experiment can be divided into three stages: before class, in class and after class.
The details for each stage are as follows:

Before class, the teacher prepared the contents carefully and made courseware elaborately. Because there are no specialized translation courses and textbooks for non English Majors, it virtually
increased the amount of teacher’s preparation. According to the students’ actual level of translation,
the teacher chose the translation materials which were suitable for the students and analyze the
contents of translation carefully. Then the related translation skills and strategies, the cultural
differences between English and Chinese would be made into PPT. For that basic knowledge and the
basic theory of translation, the teacher would pass them to the students before the class through the
contact, such as QQ group and We Chat group and required students to learn them by themselves
before class. For the important or difficult contents, the teacher would provide the appropriate
practices and asked the students to complete them. Through the transfer of the information, the
students might understand the main knowledge and theory of translation that they would learn in class.
They paid more attention to them. After completing the tasks assigned by the teacher, they could also
find some related materials on the web to study by themselves, which enhanced the students’
understanding of translation knowledge. The students could communicate with each other through
the QQ group or We Chat group which enhanced the cooperative learning of students.

In class, the teacher first asked students several questions to test whether the students had
completed the task before class. Then the teacher gave the students the short passage in Chinese (due
to the fact that the tests of translation in CET4 and CET6 are from Chinese to English, the translation
contents in practice were consistent). The students were required to translate it by using the theory
and skills that they had mastered before class. The students should do it independently first and then
they can communicate with each other and discuss their translations among groups. After that each
group sent a representative to explain translation. Finally the teacher reviewed their answers and gave
a detailed explanation according to the PPT.
After class, according to the students’ behavior in the class the teacher let the students to review what they had learned which includes words, phrases, sentences and the translation theory and skills. At the same time, the teacher assigned the students to complete a similar translation. After they had finished, the students interacted together through the Internet with the teacher. They did it together to finish the comment. The teacher might also comment on students’ advantages and achievements in their translation version which is very important for the students to establish self-confidence. Both teaching and time in class are limited. After several times of intensive exercises and explanations in the classroom, the teacher gradually asked the students to finish the translation tasks after class. The students were required to complete it independently and then interact with other students on the Internet. They could also improve their translation practice under the help of the internet. The teacher would write down the students’ questions and the wonderful translations. The evaluation would be carried on in the next class. By using this kind of teaching model, the teacher felt that the enthusiasm of the students to participate in the translation practice was greatly enhanced, and the discussions in the classroom were more intense than before.

Discussion

After a semester of practice, nearly 80% students reflect that translation study is no longer as hard as that of original stage. While in the practice of translation, they will consciously use translation theory and skills they have learned. Moreover, they have more confidence to deal with the tests of translation in CET4 and CET6. The practice has showed that these reform measures have achieved satisfactory results in the translation teaching practice. It enhanced the initiative and creativity of the students greatly. Students’ autonomous learning ability gradually increased and they can use the suitable methods and skills to do translation exercises on their own instead of following the teacher to learn translation and finish the translation task assigned by the teacher, then reciting them before the examination. More extracurricular practice activities have improved students’ practical ability of translation. Students’ confidence of doing translation exercises has been enhanced which has a great role in promoting students’ second language acquisition. It is proved that the information technology plays an essential role in the translation teaching.

The students’ Chinese proficiency and comprehension play an important role in English translation. When they were in the middle school, the students had Chinese classes several times a week. At that time both the teachers and the students took Chinese seriously. However, they would not have Chinese lessons any more after they entered into the university. Therefore, the students need to enhance their Chinese self-learning abilities. They cannot take it for granted that Chinese is their mother tongue and they no longer study Chinese knowledge. If they are asked to explain the meaning of Chinese vocabularies and analyze the sentence structure, quite a few of students cannot answer correctly. So the students will not be satisfied with the original Chinese level. They should look for and create learning opportunities. For example, if it is possible, the students could attend related classes of Chinese department. What’s more, they might read related books by themselves and do some exercises and so on. The development of translation competence requires intensive learning of Chinese and English. At the same time, it’s important to train other related competence. The comprehensive improvement of students’ translation ability is an important part of College English teaching objective system. It is an integral part of the whole process of College English teaching, including listening, speaking, reading and writing. We usually think of reading as language input while writing is language output. Thus, translation is a two-way activity including input and output.

We have always believed that the cultivation and improvement of translation ability not only has a good role in promoting the development of students’ other aspects, but also has a far-reaching impact on their future education and future work. Since their sophomore year or junior year, the students have the opportunities of coming into contact with the original version of professional books and articles, most of which are written in English. If the students have laied solid foundations in their daily study, it’s not difficult for them to read and understand these books and articles which are very helpful for their professional study. The students need to complete their graduation thesis before graduation. The graduation thesis includes English abstract, which is generally the English translation
of Chinese version. The translation methods and skills that the students have studied are particularly beneficial to deal with the English abstract. On the other hand, the students will choose to work after graduation. With the development of economic globalization, they will be brought into contact with foreigners or professional materials related to their majors more or less. Therefore, good English learning ability will be an important role for their work.

However, this kind of teaching mode puts forward higher requirements for both teachers and students. Facing the informational teaching environment, teachers need to have professional information literacy. Teachers should think carefully about how to find the useful resources from many of the relevant information, how to arrange these useful resources to provide students with targeted teaching, and how to organize the classroom teaching effectively. It may be relatively easy for young teachers because they are good at accepting new things and keep up with the pace of the information technology. However, it’s more difficult for the elderly teachers, especially the teachers who are not accustomed to the use of information technology into their teaching. They all have one thing in common: they do not often use computer or exchange ideas with the students through QQ or We Chat. The students need to have stronger autonomous learning ability to cope with numerous informational resources and informational communication tools. They should be able to identify and select suitable learning resources but not to indulge in the network. During the experimental teaching, about 2% of the students said that the change of teaching mode had little effect on their academic performance. They expressed that they were easily disturbed by external factor because they were not active in studying. It leads to the result that they have poor learning awareness and low learning efficiency. Thus it is difficult to improve their grades. There is no doubt that if students want to improve their level of translation, they need a lot of practice after class. But if students’ autonomous learning ability is poor, they would not be reasonable to develop their own learning goals and cannot grasp translation skills well. Thus, to improve translation ability will be just an armchair strategist.

**Conclusion**

From the above analysis, we can see clearly that such teaching method has achieved very good results. The students’ interest is enhanced and the teaching quality is also improved. Translation teaching based on info-technology can raise students’ efficiency greatly. The experiment may establish the basis for the follow-up development of translation teaching.

It takes a long time for any new teaching method to be accepted and recognized by others. In the meantime, questions and challenges of its disadvantages will be emerged. We should not stop, but continue to improve the teaching model with the support of the new emerging information technology and to serve the translation teaching and facilitate the students’ integrated linguistic competence.

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