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# On the Teaching Reform of Translation Course Based on the Cultivation of Applied Talents

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## Abstract

This article, taking the translation courses for English majors in Zhejiang University of Finance and Economics Dongfang College as an example, starts from the current teaching problems of translation courses in application-oriented colleges and universities. In order to clarify the teaching system, highlight the local characteristics, and find a way to adapt to the teaching objective of high-quality applied talents, this article establishes the teaching idea of “solid foundation, application-oriented and strong ability” and discusses the teaching reform of translation course by optimizing the teaching syllabus, teaching content, teaching mode, teaching method and evaluation system. The innovation of translation teaching reform mainly lies in the consistency, integration and effectiveness of the “Four-in-One” teaching mode which taking practical ability as the core, integrate the teaching objective, teaching content, teaching methods and teaching evaluation as a whole, so as to solve the existing problems of the translation course and follow the changes of social and economic development.

**Keywords:** Translation Course, Teaching Reform, Teaching Mode, High-Quality Applied Talents, Application-Oriented Colleges and Universities

## 1. Introduction

As China’s “the Belt and Road” initiative and the Chinese culture’s “Going Out” strategy are implemented recently, the importance of translation is increasingly prominent. Nowadays, there is a growing demand for English translators. Many industries are looking for professional and applied translators. How to cultivate a group of qualified translators to meet the market demand has become a serious problem for colleges and universities. Under the current socio-economic transformation and the development of higher education, independent college students are neither academic-oriented colleges, nor vocational colleges that mainly focus on the cultivation of operational skills. Therefore, how to effectively cultivate a number of high-quality application-oriented translation talents has become the focus of translation teaching in independent colleges. The

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only way to solve this problem is to carry out the application-oriented teaching reform, which can deepen the current teaching reform of various colleges and universities, improve the practical application level of translation course, so as to build a modern translation teaching system. In the long run, there is no doubt that it can provide more suitable application-oriented translators for the society.

## **2. An Analysis of the Current Problems of Translation Teaching**

With the deepening of the mechanism of social demand for talents training in colleges and universities, the importance of the ability training of English majors has become increasingly prominent. Domestic experts and scholars pay more attention to the research of translation teaching. However, on the whole, the theoretical and practical research of translation teaching is not systematic enough, and there are still many problems. Some scholars have studied the feedback of translation practitioners on translation teaching at school, and found that there are some problems, such as insufficient class hours, single translation teaching mode, disconnection between teaching materials and social needs (Gao Yan, 2016). Some scholars have also pointed out that “In the current process of translation talents training, there are still many deficiencies in the curriculum module setting, teaching mode, teaching management and assessment. And distinctive teaching system has not been formed, for example, the curriculum module setting of practical teaching is unreasonable: the practice inside the school pays more attention to theory than practice, the practice outside the school pays more attention to form than content, practical teaching management system is not perfect, and practical teaching evaluation system focuses on results rather than process” (He Hongli & Mo Aiping, 2016).

The emergence of these problems is bound to return to a fundamental problem: What are the basic requirements of the ability training of applied talents? The author believes that we should highlight the requirements of various application scenarios, including expression, communication and the ability to find and solve problems in practice, which is different from the training objectives of acquiring solid theoretical foundation of academic colleges and universities, as well as relatively simple skills of vocational colleges. With the deepening of the mechanism of social demand for talent training in colleges and universities, the requirements of translation ability training for English majors in application-oriented colleges and universities are also constantly improving (Hu Pengzhi, 2015). Although those colleges and universities are carrying out reform in recent years, on the whole, there are still many problems which are not coordinated with the ability training in translation teaching.

According to our research, the main problems are as follows: first, the teaching mode of emphasizing theory and neglecting practice is still relatively common. The main reason is that the teaching syllabus does not highlight the application-oriented teaching objectives, which leads to the fact that the translation curriculum system is still inclined to academic purposes. Second, the teaching content cannot meet the needs of today’s social and economic development and students’ employment needs. The main reason is that the content of the course focuses on academic theory, and there are few contents facing the reality of social economy. Third, there are few applied translation textbooks for undergraduates, most of which focus on translation theory and literary translation. This kind of teaching material cannot adapt to the characteristics of English majors in independent colleges, nor can it meet the requirements of improving students’ practical ability. Fourth, off-campus practical teaching pays more attention to form than content which fails to solve the practical problems. Fifth, the course assessment emphasizes the end of the term but ignores the process. Such an assessment method will inevitably lead to a single teaching mode, which is not conducive to improve the enthusiasm of students in the learning process or the promotion of practical teaching.

The above-mentioned problems neglect the cultivation of students’ translation ability, which makes it difficult for students to adapt to the needs of translation practice after graduation. In view of this, we must take the initiative to explore the market-oriented teaching reform of translation course for English majors and vigorously promote the cultivation of high-quality applied translation talents to meet the needs of economic and social development.

### 3. Teaching Idea of Translation Course

Teaching activities that are not completely consistent with the teaching idea should be reformed. The idea of teaching reform of translation course is: “Guided by the training goal of high-quality applied talents in our college, based on the foundation of English language, with application ability training as the core and practical teaching as the approach,” that is, “solid foundation, application-oriented and strong ability.” In order to ensure the basic theoretical literacy of undergraduate specifications, we should highlight the practical ability. Facing the local economy and society, we should take the initiative to undertake the translation tasks of foreign affairs, publicity and product promotion of local enterprises, institutions and industries, so as to provide more translation practice opportunities for students to improve the practical ability.

### 4. Teaching Reform of Translation Course under the Cultivation of High-quality Applied Talents

#### 4.1 *Optimizing the Teaching Syllabus and Teaching Contents*

Each school has its own training objectives. Application-oriented universities should follow the talent training concept of “focusing practical ability” (Dong Yi & Zhou Zhihu, 2010). Based on the target of talent cultivation, the curriculum syllabus is revised to highlight the teaching objectives and adjust the teaching contents. First of all, we should get familiar with the employment requirements of the job market for translators, optimize the teaching objectives reasonably, change the traditional inertia of emphasizing knowledge and neglecting practice, and cultivate application-oriented talents with practical ability.

Secondly, we should revise the syllabus comprehensively, optimize the teaching objectives, adjust the theoretical hours of the course, increase the extracurricular practice teaching hours, and focus on the cultivation of practical ability in accordance with school’s requirements of training high-quality applied talents. For English major, we should strengthen the training for the qualification examination; for double majors, we should strengthen the construction of courses related to computer and translation tools when teaching conditions permit.

Finally, the textbook of translation course should be updated in time. The textbook with new content, strong professionalism, moderate difficulty and reasonable system can be selected. At present, more than 90% of the world’s translation is practical translation. Therefore, the compilation of translation textbooks should fully reflect the needs of political, economic, technological and cultural development. In the design of text structure, it should fully reflect the translation of economic, social, technological, diplomatic, legal, news and other practical texts, and strengthen students’ translation practical training so as to lay a solid foundation for their future work (Rong Linhai & Li Jing, 2010).

Taking the author’s college as an example, since there is no textbook suitable for students in our school, our teachers have compiled a school-based textbook suitable for our students, taking full account of the market demand and the characteristics of students. This textbook includes not only the professional knowledge of translation required by students for employment, but also includes the content of improving students’ practical ability, appropriately adding materials related to the characteristics of local economic development.

#### 4.2 *Optimizing the Practical Teaching Mode and Multiple Teaching Methods*

Teaching mode is an important element to achieve the teaching objective of the course. The focus of cultivating high-quality applied talents is to improve students’ skills to solve practical problems. Therefore, we should explore diversified teaching modes. English language ability, translation practice ability and translation service ability are not acquired in the traditional teacher-centered teaching mode, so it is urgent to reform the current teaching mode (Zhou En, 2016). We have put forward a “Four-in-One” teaching mode, that is, taking practical ability as the core, integrate the teaching objective, teaching content, teaching methods and teaching evaluation as a whole, so as to solve the existing problems of the translation course.

Besides reforming the teaching mode, we should also improve the teaching methods. Taking the translation teaching of junior students in my college as an example, this article discusses the project-based translation teaching method, which is student-centered and aims at the cultivation of translation practice and service ability. After teachers' explanation of the translation theories and strategies, the students will practice translation through the translation projects. The project requires students to work in groups and use the translation materials provided by the teacher from translation companies in Hangzhou City to complete the translation task and produce the final product, as well as to write the translation project report including key points and difficulties in the process of translation. By this way, students can be familiar with the process of translation projects, consolidate the basic theory of translation, and check the mastery of translation strategies. Through translation diary, self-evaluation and mutual evaluation, group discussion and other forms, the translation projects can cultivate students' ability of analysis, reasoning and evaluation. In the process of translation project, students learn not only theoretical knowledge and translation skills, but also the ability to acquire new knowledge and cooperate with others. In the learning process, it is necessary to inculcate the concept of "translation ability is not taught, but practiced", and to cultivate students' autonomous learning ability (Zhong Xiao, 2015).

We should make full use of the network platform to carry out online and offline mobile classrooms and arrange necessary time for experience and practical learning. We should also use modern teaching technology, such as online school, rain classroom, flipped classroom, cloud classroom, etc. Using task-based and interactive teaching methods attracts more students to participate in classroom teaching activities and after-school tasks. Taking the translation course of author's college as an example, the teaching method of mobile classroom with flipped classroom plus experiencing teaching is implemented. For example, when talking about the chapter of tourism culture translation, we used the form of mobile classroom to organize students to visit South Lake in Jiaxing City, Yanguan Ancient Town in Haining City and Chang'an Party Service Center. During the visit, we arranged tasks for students. Every student is required to find and correct the mistakes in translation as well as the names of exhibits that lack translation. Students can get their own translation by consulting some materials and discussing with each other as well as consulting teachers on online, and then display their results in the class through text, pictures, audio and video, so as to effectively realize interactive teaching in the class. The teacher explains the typical translation problems of the students, so that the students can find their own shortcomings. This method can stimulate the students' interest in learning, and improve the students' conversion ability of translation.

The training goal of translation course is to improve students' applicability and practicability. This requires the cultivation of high-quality applied talents who can serve the local economy (Sun Wenyuan & Dai Congteng, 2016). Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the extracurricular translation practice teaching characterized by local translation so as to cultivate students' practice ability. Through the establishment of translation practice base, simulation translation laboratory and other ways to fully develop learning resources and practical training conditions, which help students to apply classroom knowledge to practice and feed back the problems encountered in practice to teaching.

Taking the author's college as an example, the teaching of translation course is oriented to the local economy and society. Through the school-enterprise cooperation, we actively undertake the translation tasks of Haining foreign affairs, publicity, product promotion, etc. We organize junior students to participate in a lot of volunteer activities, such as the volunteers of the World Internet Conference held in Wuzhen, the World Garden Conference held in Haining, 2019 FIBA 3 \* 3 International Basketball Competition, etc. We provide students with good opportunities for translation practice by interpreting for foreign visitors. It is conducive to cultivating students' translation ability and adaptability, and improving the effectiveness of translation teaching. At present, the translation course of our college is directly linked with professional practice, such as graduation internship, graduation thesis and other practical activities which have become an important part of the practical course learning of students at school. In recent years, the number of students who choosing translation projects for graduation thesis is increasing year by year. This year, due to the epidemic, the online translation practice activities are taken as the main content of graduation internship.

### *4.3 Optimizing the Evaluation System*

Teaching quality is an endogenous driving force of teaching reform, and teaching evaluation is an important means to guarantee teaching quality. Through assessment and evaluation, teachers can check the teaching effect of the course, so as to adjust the teaching plan in time. Students can also check their mastery of knowledge and improve their learning methods. For the assessment of translation course, we should change the traditional evaluation method and gradually form a scientific and reasonable formative evaluation system which can really play a positive leading role in teaching. Taking the evaluation system of translation course in the author's college as an example, we change the current situation that the final examination is used to determine the total score. Formative assessment constitutes 60% of the total score, which is composed of students' performance, homework, translation projects and bonus points for scientific research and innovation. The content of translation project includes project report (20%), project statement (30%), final product (35%) and team cooperation and performance (15%). At the same time, a course reward mechanism is set up for students who are given certain course rewards through translation training, competition, scientific research and other activities. For example, students who participate in translation research projects, write and publish related papers, and win prizes in translation competitions will be awarded 1 to 5 points. The purpose is to cultivate students' translation practice and scientific innovation ability by encouraging students to participate in translation competitions, research projects and other activities.

The developmental assessment mode is adopted to solve the problem of emphasizing the final examination and neglecting the process. To evaluate from multiple perspectives, we should attach importance to both summative assessment and formative assessment (Wang Shuhuai & Wang Weiping, 2010). First of all, when commenting on students' translation exercises, students' attitude towards translation learning, their mastery of translation skills and theories and the handling of translation problems are integrated to be considered. We should listen to the opinions of students, pay attention to the interaction between teachers and students as well as the interaction between students. The students should conduct their translation projects in the form of group activities. During their translation projects, they should cooperate with each other, and carry out self-evaluation and mutual-evaluation. Secondly, we should focus on students' subjectivity and creativity, and evaluate students' sense of responsibility and self-confidence in learning. We should not only evaluate the students' theoretical knowledge and translation ability, but also their sense of responsibility for spreading Chinese culture to the world. In the context of globalization, we should help students to understand the different values and ways of thinking between China and the West, and to interpret and translate in the most appropriate way (Fang Mengzhi, 2013). Thirdly, the evaluation content should be diversified to help students eliminate the fear of final examination, and build up their self-esteem and self-confidence. We should evaluate students' translation ability and also their all-round development ability.

In addition to teachers' evaluation of students, students also need to evaluate teachers' teaching. Teachers' weak vocational level directly affects the quality of teaching. Therefore, improving teachers' specialty becomes the key to cultivate high-quality applied translation talents. The construction of a team is not only the need for deepening teaching reform, but also the core of translation teaching. Most of the teachers graduated from foreign language department and lack professional knowledge of economy, trade, law information, etc. However, teachers who know professional knowledge have relatively weak foreign language proficiency. Therefore, it is urgent to cultivate a team of double qualified teachers. For example, the author's college is currently exploring the mode of English teachers taking temporary posts in enterprises and translation experts who work in foreign trade enterprises teaching in college, which is very beneficial to the cultivation of high-quality applied translators.

## **5. Innovation of Teaching Reform of Translation Course**

After three years of reform and practice, the results of the reform have been gradually shown. The innovation of translation teaching reform mainly lies in the interconnection, integration and effectiveness of the "Four-in-One" teaching mode.

### 5.1 The Consistency of “Four-in-One” Teaching Mode

The teaching reform, based on the students’ mastery of translation theory knowledge, with the cultivation of students’ bilingual conversion ability and translation practical ability as the core, carries out all-round training on students’ ability to solve practical problems. Ensure that online and offline classroom learning, experiencing teaching and practical training are connected.

### 5.2 The Integration of “Four-in-One” Teaching Mode

The teaching objective, teaching contents, teaching methods, teaching evaluation and other elements are organically combined. Through the teaching idea of “based on the foundation of English language, with application ability training as the core and practical teaching as the approach,” all parts are organically integrated. At the same time, a whole process teaching quality evaluation mechanism is established. As an important basis for the adjustment and improvement of the teaching mode, it forms a circulation system of interconnection and integration among various parts.

### 5.3 The Effectiveness of “Four-in-One” Teaching Mode

In the past three years of practice, students’ translation ability has been improved, and the results of related scientific research, competition and other achievements have become more and more prominent. From the initial experiment of one class to the current implementation of different grades and classes, the teaching effect is remarkable. Students generally reflect that their translation application ability and practical ability have been greatly improved. And the number of translation volunteers and social evaluation of our students have been continuously improved. The number of winners of translation competitions, the number of students who have passed the translation certificates and the number of graduates who have worked as translators have been increasing year by year.

## Conclusion

The cultivation of high-quality applied talents is not only the need of market development, but also the need of students’ self-development. Translation, as a practical course, is consistent with the requirements for training applied talents. The translation course should closely follow and adapt to the changes of social and economic development. Translation teaching should explore a set of feasible and effective teaching reforms to improve the theoretical system of translation teaching and the quality of professional training. At the same time, it is necessary to adjust the teaching content of the course according to the needs of enterprises and industries, and cultivate the compound talents suitable for foreign language translation in a certain industry. The reform in the past three years has improved the teaching objective centered on the cultivation of high-quality applied talents, enriched the teaching methods and formed a relatively effective teaching mode of translation course. As an applied technology-based college in the period of transformation and development, our college had already established a good teaching reform to meet the needs of regional economic and social development, and cultivate high-quality translation talents required by the market.

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