

# Translation Workshop in College English Translation Teaching

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## Abstract

The traditional translation teaching mode has many drawbacks, such as emphasizing theory over practice, students' lack of autonomy and creativity, and simplistic evaluation system. Translation workshop is introduced to college English translation teaching. It redefines the roles of teacher and students, pays attention to the combination of translation theory and practice as well as the whole course of translating, thus can cultivate students' ability to explore knowledge and team spirit to cooperate with others, improve professional translation quality, and ultimately truly improve translation ability.

## Keywords

Translation workshop; translation teaching; reform.

## 1. Introduction

The College English Curriculum Requirements clearly stipulates that the teaching goal of college English is to cultivate students' comprehensive ability to use English for listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating. This kind of ability should be expressed in terms of translation ability, because translation includes the comprehensive ability of accepting skills and production skills, and at the same time requires the translator's ability to understand and apply two languages and cultures. From the purpose of teaching, the cultivation of translation ability is very necessary for non-English major students. Economic globalization has greatly increased the demand for translation talents, especially scientific and technological translation talents, who are mainly produced from non-English major students with professional backgrounds. A few foreign language graduates can no longer. It is enough to meet the needs of the society for translators. However, there are many disadvantages in college English translation teaching and students' translation ability is not optimistic. Therefore, it is necessary to reform the traditional college English translation teaching, in which "translation workshop" can provide us with a useful perspective of teaching practice.

## 2. Drawbacks of Traditional College English Translation Teaching Model and the Inevitability of Reform

Since the reform and opening up, English education has been highly valued in China and has been listed as a required course in university education. However, many years of teaching practice have led to many drawbacks in college English translation teaching: first, Emphasis on theory over practice, emphasis on literary translation, neglect of practical stylistic translation, and decoupling from social needs. Traditional translation teaching usually spends most of its time explaining translation theories and focuses on literary translation, teaching literary translation methods and evaluation criteria, such as literal translation and free translation, domestication and foreignization, functional equivalence and "faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance". However, the translation of practical styles, such as science and technology and tourism, which are closely related to social and economic development, has not been extensively studied, and the common phenomena and laws of translation variation have not been taught, so students are engaged in practical translation. When translating, I feel that I

cannot do what I want. Second, teachers occupy a dominant position, and students lack the ability of autonomous learning and creativity. In traditional translation classes, teachers are the absolute authority. They decide which textbooks to use, which translation theories to explain, and which translation exercises to do. Students only accept passively and lack the sense of participation and achievement. As a result, the class lacks vitality and interest. Third, focus on translation error correction and single evaluation system. Traditional translation teaching focuses on the end product of translation, that is, students' translations. Teachers spend a lot of time revising students' translations, lack understanding and guidance of students' translation process, and neglect the efforts and progress made by students in this process. As a result, students often feel deeply frustrated when facing the absolute authority of reference translations provided by teachers, and consequently lose interest in learning translation lessons.

Based on the above analysis, the development of social economy and the urgency of training translation talents make the reform of traditional college English translation teaching mode imperative. It is necessary to change the practice of emphasizing theory over practice. While the necessary literary translation theory and practice are involved, translation teaching should take social needs as the starting point, attach importance to practical translation practice, reposition the roles of teachers and students, allow students to participate and pay more attention, take the translation process as the orientation, and evaluate the students' translation ability in many aspects in combination with the translated text. All these can find reasonable solutions in the "translation workshop" teaching mode.

### 3. Practice of "Translation Workshop" Model

#### (1) The concept of "translation workshop"

The word "workshop" is translated from English "workshop" and refers to a small group engaged in in-depth investigation, research, discussion or practical work in a specific or specialized field, a creative project or topic. Participants gather to exchange experiences and knowledge with each other in order to solve practical problems. It can be a short and high-intensity course, a special seminar or a series of meetings. The introduction of "workshop" into translation classes has resulted in a new translation teaching mode, namely "translation workshop", which is a brand-new teaching method based on a large number of translation practices. Professor Zhong Weihe, who has been teaching "translation workshops" for a long time, defines it as: "A group of people who are engaged in translation activities gather together, hold extensive and heated discussions on a specific translation task with different opinions, and finally reach an agreement on a translation acceptable or recognized by all members of the group through continuous negotiation." As a new teaching method, translation workshop does not put translation theory in the most important position, but integrates it with real translation practice in class, and adopts group discussion and cooperation to enable students to experience the whole translation process, truly understand the true meaning of translation, and truly learn translation in cooperative practice with others.

#### (2) Repositioning of the roles of teachers and students in "translation workshop" teaching mode

"Translation workshop" is a subversion of traditional translation teaching concepts and a repositioning of the roles of teachers and students, thus the translation classroom becomes active and lively. In the traditional translation class, teachers are the absolute masters of the class. First, they take a lot of time to explain abstract translation theories and skills, then they ask students to do translation exercises on translation textbooks or prepared in advance, and then they provide so-called authoritative reference translations to correct the students' translations, thus the whole translation class is over. It can be seen that the teacher is the

inculcator of translation knowledge, the provider of correct answers and the judge of students' translation quality. He lacks communication and guidance with students and does not really participate in the process of students' translation production. Therefore, the translation classroom has become a one-word and one-man show for teachers. With the introduction of "translation workshop" into translation teaching, teachers are no longer the masters of the classroom, but play a variety of roles. First of all, teachers are the organizers and mediators of the classroom. Students should be organized into multiple translation workshops according to different levels and characteristics. Through effective coordination, team members should actively cooperate and do their best in the whole translation process. Secondly, teachers are the creators and supervisors of the classroom. They should create various opportunities and channels to help group members better understand the translated materials and carry out effective translation, create a positive and harmonious atmosphere of cooperation, and put an end to laziness. Thirdly, the teacher is the conductor and coach. Through professional translation knowledge and accomplishment, the teacher provides constructive guidance to students in the aspects of original text understanding, group discussion, group translation and translation revision. The teacher evaluates students' translations in various ways, discovers and points out deviations and problems in time, guides them to actively think and negotiate, and jointly finds out solutions. Finally, teachers must also be diligent learners and active practitioners in the field of translation. Translation is a cross-language and cross-cultural comprehensive discipline. A qualified translation teacher should have a solid theoretical knowledge of translation, extensive theoretical knowledge of foreign linguistics and applied linguistics, extensive miscellaneous knowledge, and accumulate rich translation practice experience through undertaking translation projects. In traditional translation classes, students are only passive recipients, lacking rational understanding of the translation theories and techniques taught by teachers, and having little or no choice and suggestion of translation materials. When translating, they are also in separate groups, lacking communication with teachers and classmates and collision of inspiration sparks. When comparing the reference translation, it is easy to feel frustrated if you don't know the crux of your translation problem. As time passes, you will lose interest in translation study.

Under the teaching mode of "translation workshop", the role of students has also changed. First of all, students become the center of the class, from passive recipients to active participants. From the selection and understanding of translation materials, the selection and formulation of translation strategies, the search and determination of terms to the formation and modification of translations, students will participate in them and truly experience the difficult process of producing qualified translations. Secondly, students are active collaborators of the team. In order to enable his team to finally submit a satisfactory answer, each member must learn to communicate and negotiate with others, actively offer advice and contribute his own capabilities. Thirdly, students are explorers and constructors of knowledge. Through experiencing the whole process of translation, they gradually explore the knowledge needed for translation, and finally construct them into their own knowledge reserves, laying a good foundation for future translation work.

### (3) Steps of "translation workshop" teaching mode

"Translation workshop" teaching mode has distinct characteristics and strong operability, which can be generally divided into the following steps: First, the pre-translation stage, mainly including the teaching of relevant translation theories by teachers. Before class, teachers should choose translation materials according to the students' language level, interests and suggestions. They can train on special topics and involve literary translation in an appropriate amount. However, the emphasis should be on practical styles such as science and technology and tourism. The translation materials will then be sent to the public mailbox for download by all students. In the translation class, the teacher takes 20 minutes out of a class to explain the

necessary translation theories and skills, and briefly explains the text features and translation methods of the translation materials, thus pointing out the direction for the following translation practice. Workshop translation teaching focuses on training skills to solve practical translation problems, but it does not ignore theoretical teaching, so appropriate theoretical teaching is necessary. Secondly, the translation stage includes students' understanding of the original text and the expression of the translated text. After the students get the original text, the teacher asks some outline questions to help them quickly understand the essence of the article. At the same time, students are encouraged to mark areas they do not understand well and reach an agreed understanding through group discussions. Then, according to the text features of the translated materials, the target readers and the translation purposes, specific translation strategies are selected. In the subsequent expression stage, students can use bilingual dictionaries or professional reference books to find the expression of relevant terms, establish a bilingual database of terms, or use the network and book resources to search parallel corpora, and come up with an authentic and readable translation after group negotiation. The final stage is the post-translation stage, which includes the revision and evaluation of the translations submitted by various groups. After completing the translation, each group can correct the translation each other, mark the highlights of the better translation and the inappropriate translation with wavy lines and red lines respectively for emphasis, and propose amendments. After the revision of the translation, the group leader will present the translation to the class and make a report, including how to understand the original text, how to determine the translation strategy, and how to deal with some sentences and words in particular. Then other students can ask questions about the translation, point out the improper translation, and even express their own opinions to generate sparks of inspiration. In this process, teachers must make an appropriate evaluation of the translation, point out the successes and improper handling of the translation, and give constructive suggestions for revision. Teachers and students will jointly summarize translation strategies and skills, so that students can appreciate the rules and essence of translation in person and truly learn translation.

#### 4. Significance of "Translation Workshop" Teaching Mode

Since translation workshop teaching is based on the teaching concept of "translation ability is not taught but developed", it enables translation practice to really enter the classroom, changes the phenomenon of too much emphasis on translation theory and disconnection from translation practice under the traditional translation teaching mode, and turns teacher-centered and crammed boring classroom into student-centered, inquiry-based, discussion-based and cooperative active classroom. It can cultivate students' ability to discover and solve problems, their ability to express themselves, their team spirit of communication and cooperation with others, and more importantly, through the selection of practical stylistic translation materials closely related to economic and social development, through translation training, it can cultivate translation talents who really meet the needs of the market, not just literary translation talents confined to ivory towers. "Translation Workshop" attaches great importance to the whole process of translation production, enabling students to grasp the essence and essence of translation, to truly understand the mechanism and characteristics of professional translation, to cultivate their sense of responsibility, to stimulate their infinite love for the translation profession, and to prepare for becoming a qualified translator in the future.

#### 5. Conclusions

The traditional translation teaching model has many drawbacks, which does not meet the needs of modern economic and social development and needs reform and innovation. The introduction of "translation workshops" into translation teaching classes is a bold innovation

to the traditional translation teaching model. It can stimulate students' thirst for knowledge, cultivate their ability to explore knowledge and team spirit to cooperate with others, and improve their professional translation quality. Therefore, it is worth promoting in university translation teaching.

## References

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