

Research on Learners' Cognitive Improvement in Learning Translation Theory and Practice*

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Abstract—Translation is a compulsory course for four year undergraduate students, since it is related with reading, writing and organizing the language in the target language, and concerns many abstract theories in different academic research, and learners can't understand the instance of it at the beginning of learning. So, cultivation of cognitive ability in translation practice is quite significant, and learning and teaching strategies adopted in helping them must be scientific and integrated. This paper aims to make a research on learners' cognition improvement in learning by three steps: arrangement of content in teaching, translation practice in enhancing learners' cognition, methods of organizing the class activities. In order to test the scientific and rational natures of the research, the author gathers data from learners' test and interview learners about their idea and requirement for the course; the research finds that cooperation between teachers and learners are a systematic link in mastering the translation ways and improve learner's translation ability.

Keywords—translation practice; cognition cultivation; cultural competence

I. INTRODUCTION

Translation is somewhat the tool of communication, specifically also a way to accomplish the communication in different cultural background. It is another step to help students have deep understanding about Chinese and English. The aim of learning English is to apply the language, differences and similarities of the two languages will be apparently as a cultural part in learning and also a major section in translation.

Appropriately transferring the two languages well is essential in learning. Students who learn translation well must experience the beauty and charm of human's language, also sense the marvelous culture that human being create, so translation of the culture information is a vital component in cultivating students' abilities in language application. Exploration the concerned knowledge that shapes the culture difference in English and Chinese can deepen student recognition on the two languages.

II. LITERARY REVIEW

Since the 1980s, researchers at home put emphasis on cross academy and cross culture perspectives in translation studies and translation norms often follow the trend of international communication and development. It mainly conveys the multiple levels, multiple dimension and synthetic exploration in form and content. Wang Zuoliang believes that translation is born to be comparative, cross language and cross discipline. It must be correlated with culture, history and society. Teaching and learning of translation could not emphasize on its inner core, but consider it in the angle of linguistics and culture. To synthetically think many factors connected with it and made rationally to settle the problems in it. That is to say, it must focus on the original text and consider in a multiple dimensions in the lingual and cultural level to fulfill its commission in application of language and serve the international communication.

According to Fox (2001:23), the process of cognition is based on the knowledge and experience of the subject, and it is an actively process. Structuralism consider that learning is like the process of building, and translation just is a proof for the theory, structuralism. Vygotsky (1986) and Carl G. Bruner (1990) make a progress and improve the theory. Holmes, a translation critic puts that nobody can deny the fact that translation is an experience, a science established on experience. So, translation practice is relied on the learning experience, and cognition can be reached by practice. Tours, representative of descriptive school also advocate that translation research should be based on experience.

A conclusion can be made from the above related theory that translation learning is a process connected with many perspectives, learning of culture, learners experience and cultivation of their cognition. So, learning should be in a whole-scale and systematic. Learners should generalize the theory from practice and then use theory in practice, then, when their patent will be extended, so is their ability.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research conducted in the whole academic year for two terms teaching and learning of translation I and translation II. It demonstrates the close relation for translation practice and learners' cognition. It includes

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analysis of learners score and their interview after the whole year learning according to the arrangement of teaching content, interactively learning and translation practice.

The norms for design of translation practice is mainly the interactive teaching and learning in class, teacher and students cooperation and learners cognitive experience, the whole experimental process focuses on translation practice, learners' demand, and practice effect. The research content is as follows.

A. Creative Use of the Textbook and References

Currently, course book of Translation in E-C by Lian Shuneng (2010) is adopted in teaching, which is welcomed by teachers and students and covers affluent examples with practical theory and skills, however, it's tiresome to read and study one example after another, moreover, the books examples focuses on the basic information and some of them are out of date. So, it is needed to select some new examples, and make reasonable and integrated adjustment to the textbook according to its advantages and disadvantages. The major measures is to design the teaching plan, connecting teaching aims and students levels, improve learners cultural competence and application ability and set up a systematic teaching and learning structure. So the measures we take are to obtain some resources on the internet official account, database from library, Wechat, news from China daily, translation critics in magazines, such as Translation Research and Teaching, material from different style, exposition, narration and argumentation, etc.

B. Improving Learners' Cognitive Level in Learning

Translation ability influences the quality of translation; it involves many research fields for learners to grasp, for example cultural communication, text analysis and transferring ability. Culture communication is quite popular but culture learning is quite a difficult one for learners. Text analysis is another key point, it manifest all things learners have to know about language learning, including Chinese and English. Transferring ability is one significant field, which needs learners to recognize the original text and translate it in correct and proper target language. All in all, the three aspects make beginners hard to understand the essence of translation. To improve learners' ability, one scientific way is to cultivate learners' cognition: teachers often watch video and enjoy debate and some documentary films in class, because these are quite good examples to practice and enhance the cognitive ability on the basis of language and culture.

C. Cultivating Learners' Cultural Competences

Translator is not only a bilingual communicator but an envoy of bi-cultural in communication. Practice and theory combined in translating the source text materials which carry cultural information, learners must know idioms, sayings and fixed phrases and some other information with culture, it means that learners must have the ability and awareness to recognize culture elements and can translate them in translation; otherwise, problems will occur.

Domestication and foreignization are the two strategies in transferring the source text with culture elements. So, when learners learn to recognize cultural element in translation materials, when they use the proper strategies and right expressions in translating the text materials, they can reach the aim of fluency, loyalty and accuracy on a whole in their translation.

IV. RESEARCH APPROACH

The research is a qualitative and quantitative one with Junior of English majors, 2016, there are 93 subjects from class 1, 2 and 3, one teacher as supervisor. Different assessments are taken about class activities, including group check, quiz and interview after class, three steps are adopted in the research: observation, practice and check, and interview.

Statistics applied in the research are from the final exam in the two terms. Term one is to test how learners master the basic translation theory with blank fillings. Term two is comment and criticism about translation of the source text, And suggested translation by learners themselves are required, to test if learners can make a judgment and use the translation theory and skills, and express in Chinese with accurate and elegant words.

Interview, after the whole academic year, interview are done to test if learners get to know the course, translation ways, their needs and ability cultivation.

V. STATISTICS ON THEORY AND SKILLS MASTERING IN FINAL EXAM

A. Analyzing on Marks in the Final Exam in Term One

Two representatives of the blank fillings are selected to show learners fault, and taken as example to illustrate learners' shortcomings and disadvantages in understanding the function of translation from different academic field. Learners can get one point for one blank in the answer is right.

No. 1: Scholars with different academic background have attempted to define translation from various perspectives, please list the six aspects we have learned: (1) _____ view. (2) _____ view. (3) _____ view. (4) _____ view. (5) _____ view. (6) _____ view.

Answer: (1) linguistic (2) cultural (3) literary (4) semantic (5) functional (6) communicative

The exercise is adopted from the introduction of the book by Lian Shuneng (2010:7), because it covers all theories about translation. Actually it is quite difficult and learners never learn it before, they don't know the idea in different academic field, as a result, they got low marks, only 7% met the requirement.

No. 2: In order to make the version grammatically correct, semantically clear, rhetorically sound, logically acceptable, and culturally appropriate, two main translation skills are applied, which are (1) _____ and (2) _____.

Answer: addition; omission.

The blanks test learners if they had master the translation skill of free translation, because addition and omission are the most basic ones in translation. If learners learn it well, then, fluency and smoothness will be reached. The average marks of No.1 and No. 2 are respectively shown here for the 3 classes in the "Table I".

TABLE I. RECOGNITION OF TRANSLATION THEORY AND SKILLS

Class	No. 1	No. 2
(1)	5.45	1.74
(2)	3.81	0.34
(3)	4.28	0.89

B. Analysis on Problems from the Cognitive Perspectives

From the data three problems are shown: first, learners learn passively, and didn't pay attention to theory or can't grasp the real meaning of the theory; second, learners can't master knowledge thoroughly, make confusion on many key points; third, some of students got good marks because they get familiar with the theory.

C. Analyzing on the Marks in the Final Exam in Term Two

In the second term, the test on theory made connection on practice and cognition. Here two questions are listed to test students understanding, each of them takes up 10%. The two blank fillings can check if learners master the whole theory and put them into use; it also is a good proof for the research if students improve their cognition, if teachers' methods in class are scientific and logic. Learners are required to make contrast on the version A and B and make assessment on the two translation ways' advantages and disadvantages, here is the requirement for learners in final test of term two.

Direction: Please make comments on the following two sentences in Chinese, marks are based on the ways your organization of Chinese language and recognition of translation ways (literal translation or free translation) in your comments. (20%)

No.1: ".....真是'天有不测风云, 人有旦夕祸福'..."

Version A : "...Truly, 'storm gather without warning in nature, and bad luck befalls men overnight'..."

Version B: "...I know 'the weather and human life are both unpredictable'..."

Comment A: _____.

Comment B: _____.

Your suggested versions: _____.

No.2: "这也难说, 但凡家庭之事, 不是东风压了西风, 就是西风压了东风。"

Version A: "Well, it's hard to say," she answered. "In every family, if the east wind doesn't prevail over the west wind, then the west wind is bound to prevail over the east wind."

Version B: "It's hard to tell," she said. "In every family affair, one side or the other has to win. If it's not the East Wind it's the West."

Comment A: _____.

Comment B: _____.

Your suggested versions: _____.

The two tested translation covers the knowledge of culture, judgment of translation ways and comment on different translation versions, and marks are based on learners' expressions in accuracy and fluency with proper and elegant words, and transferring and improvement on the suggested versions. The original sentences are abided by the concise of the structure, version A is literal translation, and version B is free translation, which expresses the connotative meaning of the original sentences.

The second comment use the rhetoric of metonymy, west wind and east wind imply the family relations between husband and wife. It's the traditional Chinese culture that one talk about the relations between husband and wife. In those versions, the version A and version B are right; it is purposely designed to make confusion for the learners. Because version A and version B both are fluent and the suggested versions are free for learners to make up information with their own words. The average marks of No. 1 and No. 2 are respectively shown here for the 3 classes in the "Table II".

TABLE II. CULTURE COGNITION OF THE TRANSLATED TEXT

Class	No.1	No.2
(1)	8	9
(2)	7.35	8.65
(3)	8.5	9.5

D. Analysis on Learners Assessment of the Two Versions

The translation comment is based on their usage of two great translation ways, literal translation and free translation. It looks simple but test learners deep understanding and whole ability in using theory to recognize the literal translation and free translation, the translation is connotative ways in translation, In the comment, most of learners can express their own understanding, especially they can convey the translation strategies, domestication and foreignization, and these two strategies are the key points in learning. 90% subject can fulfill the task.

E. Interview with Learners at the End of Term Two

An interview is done at the end of the academic year. Half of the 92 learners from class (1), (2) and (3) participated while all teaching and learning task accomplished, purpose of the interview is to acquire learners' sense about translation practice in the whole year. To test if the research is reliable, valuable and scientific, if learners realize that translation is correlated with other sources, and if learners obtain the knowledge and met the requirements of translation objectives. The interview concerns 5 aspects with questions and answers listed as follows.

1) Questions in the interview

- What skills do you want to get in learning translation?
- If the activities in class can help you improve translation ability, for examples, group work and interaction between teachers and learners.
- Do you think if it's rational to arrange the content in module one for your cognition in translation.
- Do you think if the content is helpful for improving Chinese and English language competence?
- Please show your opinion on the relation between practice and translation ability.

2) Answers in the interview

Learners' Answers concern with many aspects and the statistic mainly shown in 5 categories.

- Training of translation skills can help learners deal with test, credits, participating postgraduate degree entrance exam, they can attend the translation certificates. Learners also can get to know more culture differences in improving and fulfilling our learning task.
- Teaching method is practical; cooperation between teacher and learners is acceptable. Discussion, group members and self-check are beneficial for their cognitive enhancement about abstract theory, thus they get to know more about language. To show good translation by learners as examples in class can stimulate them to finish exercise punctually.
- Translation is a new course for grade 3 learners; there are different styles with different module to learn in the two terms. It's difficult to master all skills such as politics, exposition and argumentation.
- Cultural contrasts emerged in the daily practice and another four weeks culture translation deepen learners' thinking in translation wholly, especially translation strategies, domestication and foreignization are quite good examples for learners in translating idioms, allusion and literature masterpiece. Culture contrasts also help learners classify the differences and similarity on culture.
- Practice help learners actively explore the knowledge in a module way, and establishing their own cognition in module way. But some learners assumed that they cannot connect theory and skills with each other, furthermore, their ability to express in Chinese confine their translation level. They can't translate the material smooth, fluent and elegant.

gets the following conclusion to solve the problems. Firstly, teacher should design translation content according to translatology, and cultivate learners' cognition level in translation practice. Secondly, teacher should establish new teaching system in improving learners' culture competence and synthetically ability development. Thirdly, teacher should strengthen learners' translation ability by combination of language and culture learning.

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VI. CONCLUSION

The paper mainly focuses on learners' cognition cultivation, teaching methods, design of translation practice content, analyzes learners achievement in mastering translation ways through test scores and interview. The research finds the knot hindered in translation learning and