

# Chinese-English Parallel Corpus-Driven Teaching of Applied Translation and Interpreting

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## ABSTRACT

With the rapid social and economic development, and the increasingly frequent international exchanges, the demand for high-quality translators and interpreters is surging. However, the current traditional cultivation models in many colleges and universities no longer keep pace with the growing demand and requirement of the times. Therefore, it is an urgent task of these colleges and universities to cultivate well-rounded Chinese-English translators and interpreters. Students should not only grasp textbook knowledge but also know how to apply the knowledge in practical fields with the assistance of modernized science and technology. This study puts forward a parallel corpus-driven teaching approach in the courses of the Applied Translation and Applied Interpreting in an attempt to offer some suggestions for the innovation in teaching approaches, with Jilin International Studies University as an example. The corpora involved in this study include four sub-corpora, namely news, science and technology, business, and tourism.

*Keywords: corpus-driven teaching approach, applied translation and interpreting, business interpreting, tourism translation*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Along with the fast pace of scientific and technological advances, there has been an increasing need for well-trained professional translators and interpreters. Students must accept professional training before they step into society and work as professionals. How to train these talents will, to a certain extent, determine how well they adapt to the fast-revolving world. Therefore, the responsibility falls on the shoulder of universities and colleges of foreign languages to cultivate application-oriented talents equipped with both language proficiency and competency in advanced translation technologies. In this study, Jilin International Studies University, where the author works, is taken as an example to illustrate an innovative and creative teaching model that involves Chinese-English parallel corpora.

Jilin International Studies University is an application-oriented university that aims to cultivate students with adequate competency in foreign languages, particularly Chinese-English translation and interpreting. It set up BTI (Bachelor of Translation and Interpreting) in 2003 and MTI (Master of Translation and Interpreting) in 2012. As a non-profit private

university, it has made significant achievements in cultivating foreign language talents. Private colleges and universities have distinctive characteristics, which objectively require continuous innovation and exploration of the most suitable teaching model. In terms of the education system, private universities have greater flexibility and autonomy; thus, it is easy for teachers to adopt advanced and innovative teaching methods. With a multi-dimensional evaluation and feedback system, the problems in teaching and learning can be detected and corrected immediately.

With the increase of international exchanges, the number of inbound and outbound tourists is soaring. So the demand for translators and interpreters that excel in tourism-related materials and activities has also risen. Therefore, this paper will take the courses "Tourism Translation" and "Business Interpreting" as examples. Business English Interpreting is a course for MTI students. "Tourism Translation" is a course for BTI junior students.

Nowadays, the use of parallel corpora to improve translators' awareness of Chinese-English bilingual conversion is exerting significant influence. Therefore, in the process of teaching applied Chinese-English translation, students' learning methods and teachers' teaching methods have been effectively optimized, and their application value has been widely recognized. [1]

\*Fund: This paper is sponsored by the teaching reform project of Jilin Provincial Department of Education [2018]40: Teaching Model Reform on Applied Translation Based on Parallel Corpus.

This paper comprises four chapters. Chapter One introduces the purpose of the study and the organization of this paper. Chapter Two points out the problems and disadvantages of the traditional teaching method in the class of applied translation and interpreting as well as the reasons behind the problems. Chapter Three introduces the corpus-driven teaching approach in the applied translation and interpreting and the methodology. In this study, the corpora include news, science and technology, business and tourism. Business and tourism are highlighted in this study. Chapter Four is the conclusion. The texts are all application-oriented and practical materials.

## **II. THE PROBLEMS OF TRADITIONAL TEACHING METHOD IN APPLIED TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING CLASS**

For applied translation and interpreting class in the true sense, the teacher should be the facilitator and students should be the center of the class and all class activities should be evolving around students. However, for a long time, the teaching mode in many universities has mostly been teacher-centered. Many problems arise from this type of teaching mode, especially in the applied translation and interpreting class. The main problems are listed below.

First, class time is not used efficiently. For the applied interpreting class, we take the Business Interpreting as an example. In many universities, in each class that usually lasts for 90 minutes, for more than half an hour, the teacher will teach related theories and vocabulary. For this session, the students' role is to receive information passively. The result is that teacher is still the main actor and a large chunk of time is spent by the teacher imparting knowledge. After teaching theories and vocabulary, the teacher will assign some time for students to practice interpreting and give some comments. However, because of the large class size, not all the students can get a chance in class to practice, let alone get some feedback from the teacher. The teacher will assign some homework, but because of the heavy workload and large number of students, it is not realistic or possible for a teacher to examine the practice homework of every single student each week. So generally, it's hard to know how well the students have grasped the knowledge.

Second, it is difficult for students to absorb all the knowledge taught in class without having a clue about what the teacher is going to teach. They need to preview under the guidance of the teacher. For students with an education background of translation or interpreting and who have already obtained some skills and knowledge in translation and interpreting, this session may be too easy, while for those who have not learnt anything about translation major, it may be hard for them to absorb the same knowledge. In many cases,

the students have to work hard to understand all the knowledge after class. So it is hard to strike a balance in class and therefore, the course is not as efficient as desired.

Third, it is hard to find the most up-to-date textbooks. Most of the textbooks are outdated, so the information and knowledge in the books are not in pace with the times. If the teacher and students only rely on textbooks, it will be hard for them to keep up with what is happening. What's more, the individual preparation material shared among the students cannot be maintained a sustainable way without systematic organization.

Fourth, it is hard for students to retain their attention on the class. Since teacher is the center in most classes, the students may lack a sense of engagement and it is very easy for their mind to wander away.

The best way is to solve the problems mentioned above is to apply the parallel corpus-driven teaching approach to help students practice and improve their translation and interpreting ability.

## **III. CORPUS-DRIVEN TEACHING APPROACH IN APPLIED TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING**

Translators' technical competence is the technical ability that translators should have when they are engaged in translation practice. The translation technology in the era of artificial intelligence (AI) has a great impact on translation work and requires translators' ability of using technologies during their translation process. [2] Applied Interpreting is an important course in college. Corpus can also be taken use of in interpreting class and the result has been proven effective.

A corpus refers to a large collection of well-sampled and processed electronic texts, on which language studies, theoretical or applied, can be conducted with the aid of computer tools. It has several advantages in terms of improving teaching efficiency and quality.

### *A. Advantages of corpus-driven teaching*

The advantages of corpus-driven teaching are shown as follows:

- It enriches the efficiency and effectiveness of class. With the help of a corpus, class activities can be conducted in a more efficient way. The teacher will have more maneuvering in terms of what content to be used and taught in class. It can inspire students to be knowledge-hungry. [5] Traditionally, the language and grammar explanation and vocabulary points are taught in class. But with the support of the corpus, the students can preview before the class. All that the teacher needs to do is reveal the topic of the

practice material to be used in the next class around one week before the next class. The preparation time should not be too long because if the students make the preparation too early, they will not remember much. Nor should it be too hasty in case the students do not have time to preview before the next class. The preparation time shall be adjusted by the teacher in terms of the real situation of the students.

- It enriches the translation materials for teachers' teaching so that the teacher does not have to rely solely on textbook materials. The corpora include the latest information about business, science and technology, tourism, and news. In addition, the content of the corpus is practical materials.
- It realizes resource sharing. The corpus can be continuously updated and shared among other teachers and students. As all the teachers that teach related courses put efforts to build the corpora, the corpora can be expanded rapidly. And as students benefit from the corpora, while using it as a tool in their study, they can also expand the corpora by incorporating their field practice material into the corpora. So it forms a virtuous circle that serves the needs of all translation and interpreting major students and teachers.
- The differences in the use and expression of the above four kinds of materials in terms of vocabulary, sentence, paragraph and text are compared so as to reduce Chinglish in translation and interpreting. [4]
- It provides an authentic language context for students. Those teachers that teach applied translation and interpreting are also engaged in practical translation and interpreting projects. The authentic materials can be incorporated into the corpus on the condition of not breaking the confidentiality rule. The teacher can use the material to demonstrate how to accomplish a challenging interpreting task.
- Students can have a greater sense of engagement. By assigning the topic, the students will know firsthand what the next class will be about. By taking the initiative to preview, the students will be more confident in class and follow the tempo of the teacher. In this way, students are greatly motivated and thus get the most of the class.

### *B. Methodology*

First, in the very beginning, in each class, the teacher will introduce the corpus that covers the

vocabulary related to the course three days to a week before the next class, in line with the memory curve. For "Business English Interpreting", students will be given a topic, such as a ceremonial address, business presentation, business negotiation, business interview, transportation and logistics, business visit, securities, and so on. For each topic, the students can use the sub-corpus to prepare for the in-class practice.

Second, in the class, the teacher presents the topic and motivates every student to go over the related vocabulary quickly. For each topic, there will be a lot of vocabulary. But not all students can remember all the vocabulary. One student may answer from one perspective and another student can do so from another angle.

Third, the teacher prepares a passage that contains the words and phrases related to the topic and ask the students to practice interpreting. Then the teacher will ask a second or third student to share any other version. In this way, the student can learn more than one way to interpret a sentence or a paragraph.

Fourth, the teacher gives comments on the interpreting performance of students. Since the students have already obtained a lot of information from the corpus, the teacher can spend more time evaluating the overall performance, including eye contact, standing posture, gesture, speaking speed, tone, and voice and so on so that the student can present a great performance. [4] The teacher can also ask students to comment. In this way, the students will be mobilized and will take the initiative to practice and thus be more involved in the class. The students can get the most out of the class.

Fifth, in view of the problem that students' attention is difficult to be concentrated for a long time in class, teachers will design some participation activities to arouse students' interest in the period when students' attention is easy to be distracted. Teachers set different interpretation scenes according to the theme of interpreting practice, and let students design the content by themselves and find students to translate. BTI students are usually interested in this kind of performance activities. [6] Through this kind of self-practice, students' pre-translation preparation ability can be cultivated. In the scene simulation, the teacher not only points out the students' language problems but also reminds them to pay attention to the details beyond the language points, such as eye contact, standing posture, tone and so on.

Thanks to the advantages of corpora, the teacher can make full use of class time to give full play to the potentials of students. Through the application of corpora, the teacher can systematically design the curriculum concept, classroom activities and after-school tasks of business English translation teaching and establishes a teaching model focused on inspiration

and interaction and use test, questionnaire, self-evaluation, observation, and data analysis. It can improve students' translation practice ability and cultivate students' autonomous learning ability and practical ability of translation and interpreting.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The major purpose of this paper is to study the parallel corpus-driven applied translation and interpreting teaching. From the above examples and the comparison between the traditional teaching approach and the parallel corpus-driven teaching approach, it can be seen that the parallel corpus-driven teaching approach boasts great advantages. It will greatly increase class efficiency and effectiveness, improve teaching quality, enhance the sense of fulfillment of both teachers and students and expand the accumulation of corpus. In the future, the teaching mode involving parallel corpus-driven data will continue to be conducted.

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