

The Application of Case-Based Teaching in the Translation of College English Test Band Four and Band Six

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ABSTRACT

Since the reform of CET-4 (College English Test Band-4) and CET-6 (College English Test Band-6) in 2013, paragraph translation has become a difficult part for most students. The traditional translation teaching model of “explaining translation theories and comparing reference versions” no longer meets the current teaching demand. This paper discusses the application of case-based teaching in CET translation. Combining case-based teaching with translation teaching, students’ independent learning ability and translation skills will be greatly improved.

Keywords: case-based teaching, CET-4 and CET-6 translation, college English education

I. INTRODUCTION

As a language bridge, translation plays an important role in the long history of mankind. Many national English proficiency tests set translation to examine students’ translation ability. Paragraph translation has been added to the National College English Band Four and Band Six after the reform, which has higher requirements for students’ translation competence. Therefore, college English education needs to increase the proportion of translation teaching, get rid of traditional teaching models, and innovate translation teaching methods. With the help of case-based teaching, students will be able to strengthen their translation knowledge and skills and finally get higher scores in the test.

II. CASE-BASED TEACHING

At the beginning of the 20th century, Harvard University created the case-based teaching, drawing on the work model of “dealing with a case” in the law, and integrating the teaching materials into the form of case teaching. Under the guidance of teachers, students conduct research and discussion on cases, actively participate in classroom learning, and form their own independent views. Favored by a majority of teachers, case-based teaching helps to strengthen students’ understanding of knowledge, and improve their ability to analyze and solve problems.

Over the years, case-based teaching has received the attention and support of many scholars: Scholar Zhao Suhua argued that the combination of English speech class and case-based teaching will help cultivate high-quality foreign language talents [1]; scholar Shi Rui innovated the translation teaching model and

demonstrated the feasibility of case-based teaching in applied translation [2]; scholar Qiu Zhijing studied the application of case-based teaching in business English translation teaching, which is conducive to the further development of China’s English education and foreign trade [3]; scholar Zhai Jieru proposed to apply the case-based teaching to international financial English teaching to develop more compound talents [4]. The purpose of college English teaching is to train students with practical English ability, so that students can use English as a tool to obtain professional information and provide help for their future development.

III. THE APPLICATION OF CASE-BASED TEACHING IN CET-4 AND CET-6

A. Case preparation

The selection and preparation of cases is the primary in the teaching procedure and determines the development direction of the entire teaching process. Cases should be typical, serving the teaching goals and linking to the theoretical knowledge. Translation teaching cases for CET-4 and CET-6 should meet the requirement of the examination syllabus. Do not select cases that are too difficult, which will cause a burden to students. However, if cases are too simple, the learning effect will not be achieved and students’ translation skills will not be trained. In the selection of translation topics, teachers should ensure that the cases are suitable for students’ actual learning situation, try to choose translation texts related to China’s history, culture, economy, and social development, and avoid topics that are rarely seen. The practicality of cases should be represented.

After the translation case is determined, teachers may show the case to students so that they can practice in advance. Students are allowed to search relevant materials and collect necessary information. In this stage, teachers can preset some questions for students to think actively, broaden their minds and form their own ideas.

B. Case discussion

Case discussion is an important stage for developing students' thinking ability as well as cooperation and communication skills. Teachers can divide students into groups, and each group selects a representative to lead group members to analyze and discuss the case. In this process, teachers should play the role of "hosts", guide the discussion directions, and organize students to conduct in-depth discussions on key issues. The following three cases illustrate the application of case-based teaching in CET-4 and CET-6.

1) Segment long and difficult sentences

Original text a): 中国长城是中国古代为抵御敌人的侵袭而修筑的伟大工程，位于中国北部，全长约 8851.8 公里，始建于 2000 多年前的春秋时期。

Translation: *The Great Wall of China is a great project in ancient China constructed to defend against the attacks of enemies. It locates in the northern part of China and stretches for 8,851.8 kilometers. The earliest Great Wall was built in the Spring and Autumn Period over 2000 years ago.*

The sentence structure of Chinese and English is obviously different. Chinese is a paratactic language and a Chinese sentence is usually composed of several small clauses. The logical words between the clauses are not clear, and the Chinese clauses are mostly linked by semantic conjunctions. While English is a hypotactic language, and short sentences are connected with obvious logical words to reflect the structural relationship of syntax [5]. When translating from Chinese to English, if students simply copy the usual Chinese sentence expressions and translate them into English, it will not only cause grammatical errors, but also confuse readers in terms of semantic expression.

The original text a) has four clauses. There are no obvious conjunctions between the clauses. The entire sentence is connected by three commas and ends with a period. Through discussion, students found that the subject of these four clauses is "the Great Wall". If the four clauses are translated into only one sentence according to the original text sentence structure, it will be too long. However, it will be too redundant to translate them into four simple sentences. Therefore, the original sentence needs to be segmented and reorganized. The first clause explains the role of the Great Wall. It has a large amount of information and should be translated into one single sentence. The second and third clauses introduce the location and length of the Great Wall, which can be

combined into one sentence. The last clause can be segmented into one sentence.

2) Chinese no-subject sentence

Original text a): 千百年来，创作了许多诗歌和绘画赞美牡丹。(From CET-6 2019. 12)

Translation: *For thousands of years, countless poems and paintings have been created in praise of the flower.*

Original text b): 实施人才战略，把培养、吸引和用好人才作为一项重大任务。

Translation: *We should make efforts to implement the strategy of tapping human resources, and focus on the important tasks of training, attracting and utilizing talented people.*

Original text c): 在电子技术领域里出现了一些新的想法。

Translation: *There emerged some new ideas in the field of electronic technology.*

A sentence without a subject is very common in Chinese. However, English emphasizes hypothesis and usually uses complete sentences [6]. Through discussing the above cases, students found that there are at least three strategies for translating Chinese no-subject sentences. The first one is to translate the Chinese sentence into English passive sentence. The original text a) seems to be an active sentence, but it actually expresses a passive meaning. "Poems and paintings" would not create by themselves, and they should be created. When translating, the object "许多诗歌和绘画" in the original text a) can be converted into the subject of the English passive sentence, which saves the trouble of finding the Chinese subject and faithfully conveys the meaning of the original text. The second translation strategy is to supplement the subject "We". In political and economic texts, there are many no-subject sentences in Chinese. Such translation strategy is often used in Chinese to English translation. In the original text b), the subject of "实施人才战略" is not sure, or it is mentioned in the previous text. But in order to avoid repeating the subject, "We" can be added as the subject. The third translation strategy is to supplement the subject "There". When expressing the existence of certain things, or when certain things appear, such as the original text c) "电子领域出现新想法", the subject "There" can be added to the English sentence.

3) Part-of-speech conversion

Original text a): 时尚界认为，传统的旗袍展示中国女性之美，而中山装则是男性身份的地位的象征。

Translation: *In the world of fashion, it is believed that the traditional cheongsam portrays a Chinese woman's beauty, while the Zhongshan suit represents a man's status.*

Original text *b*): 中国越来越重视公共图书馆, 并鼓励人们充分加以利用。(From CET-6 2018.12)

Translation: *In China, public libraries are receiving an increasing amount of attention and people are encouraged to make full use of them.*

Original text *c*): 剪纸是中国民间艺术的一种独特形式, 已有2000多年历史。(From CET-4 2019.6)

Translation: *Paper cutting is a unique form of Chinese folk art with a history of more than 2,000 years.*

Chinese and English are two different language families, and there are big differences in vocabulary and expression. If every word is translated according to the part of speech of the original text, the translation will appear unnatural and pose reading difficulty. Part-of-speech conversion is a commonly used translation strategy, which means that a certain part-of-speech vocabulary in the original text is presented in another part-of-speech in the target text [7]. If the part-of-speech conversion is properly used, the translation will be more faithful to the original expression and become more fluent and smooth. In the original text *a*), “象征” could be translated as the same part-of-speech in Chinese, namely translated into English as a noun. However, after discussion, the students found that the first half sentence “展示中国女性之美” uses the verb-object structure. In order to harmonize the sentence structure, “象征” can be converted into a verb form. In this way, the two clauses are consistent with the verb-object structure, and the translation will be more harmonious. Verbs are more commonly used in Chinese, while nouns are more frequently used in English. In the original text *b*), “重视” presents as a verb. For the sake of conforming to English wording habits, “重视” can be converted into noun and translated as “receive attention”, which also faithfully expresses the meaning of the original text. Besides converting Chinese verbs into nouns, verbs can also be converted into prepositions. In the original text *c*), “是” follows the part-of-speech in the original text and translated as “is”. “有” in the second half of the sentence appears as a verb. If again following the original part-of-speech and translating it as “has”, there will be too many predicate verbs. Converting “有” into the form of the preposition “with” avoids the overuse of verbs in a sentence.

C. Case summary

After analyzing and discussing the case, students have already understood the translation strategies in the cases. Teachers should set aside a certain amount of time for students to review the class, think and summarize the knowledge they have learned. Students can also summarize and discuss in the form of a group, and finally send a representative to make a summary of knowledge

points. Or each student presents the translation strategies in a written form, so that he or she will then have a deeper impression and better understand the cases.

IV. CONCLUSION

In today's society, the demands for talents' foreign language ability are getting increasingly higher. The National College English Test Band 4 and Band 6 conform to the development trend of the times and has made corresponding reforms. The traditional teaching model of “explaining translation theories and comparing reference versions” is relatively out of date. College English education should innovate teaching models and introduce case-based teaching into CET-4 and CET-6 translation teaching. Case-based teaching has changed the traditional “teacher-centered” teaching mode and moved from “result-oriented” to “process-oriented” [8]. Centered on students, case-based teaching enables students to truly join the classroom and practice translation, effectively helps students to improve their translation ability. Teachers should also play a good guiding role, control the teaching progress, lead students to think, analyze, and discuss, and boost students' learning initiative.

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