

Research on MTI Education Model from the Perspective of Needs Analysis Theory

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Abstract. To meet the growing needs of translation market, China has attached great importance to the training of translation talents. MTI was set up under this background. However, as a new major, education model of MTI is still relatively unclear for most MTI institutes. Market needs of translation talents haven't been met in some extent. From the perspective of Needs Analysis Theory, through means of questionnaires and interview survey conducted to MTI students, teachers and administrators of translation services, the author concluded some major problems existing in the current MTI education and then proposed tentative suggestions for improvement of MTI education.

Introduction

Since the implement of China's reform and opening up policy, translation market needs has been thriving. Though there has been 159 universities in China that started MTI major in their related department according to statistics made by the Chinese Translation Association in 2011, social needs of professional translators is still large. This situation is not due to the lack of quantity of graduate students in translation related major, it is because of their translation competence that needs to be enhanced. As a result, high-level professional translators and interpreters are still rare in the current market. This thesis focuses on the existing problems in the current MTI education. Based on the problems, this thesis tries to seek effective solutions from the perspective of Needs Analysis for improvement of MTI education. This is of great significance to the current MTI training and the providing of high-level, practical professional translators to meet the urgent needs of Chinese market and hopes to provide a certain model for later research in translation training from the perspective of Needs Analysis.

Definitions of Needs Analysis

Needs Analysis have been utilized in foreign language teaching process for many years. It is widely used in education, commerce, manufacturing and service area. The term "Needs Analysis" is firstly documented in the 1920s by Michael West. Firstly it is used in ESP/LSP (English/Language for Specific Purposes). Mitchell (1993) describes Needs Analysis as "an example of the existing need for training within an organization". Needs Analysis is also defined as "a systematic and ongoing process of providing usable and useful information about the needs of the target population-to those who can and will utilize it to make judgments about policy and programmes" [1]. Based on the definition, we can conclude that the final purpose is to formulate decisions and improving teaching in a certain program. It helps teachers or administrators to make decisions in terms of various aspects of a training program. Those aspects may include teaching materials, curriculum arrangement, teaching approaches, etc. From analysis of the information gathered from needs analysis, the instructors can get better understanding of social needs and learner's needs. When students know that their specific needs and interests are understood and will be addressed by educators, their learning motivation is highly enhanced.

When translation learner's needs are clearly defined, Needs Analysis can work as a decision-making process. It is of great help to innovation, curriculum arrangement, teaching

materials selection, teaching training and reform of teaching mode in a certain translation training program. In light of this, Needs Analysis for translation training should be a continual process and take place throughout the instructional program (Burnaby, 1989; Savage, 1993).

Achievements and Problems of MTI Education

Achievements of MTI Education

To meet the needs of reform and opening up, and the socialist modernization drive, the State Council decided to establish Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) in 2007. From then on, in a short period of time, MTI witnessed great boom. The pilot training institutes have increased and the language category has enlarged from English, French to German, and Korean etc. Thus MTI becomes a hot major that attracts great attention. MTI not only provides talents of translation theory, but also translation practitioners according to social needs. Meanwhile, a portrait framework with translation bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctor's degree, and lateral framework of MA and MTI constitute the three dimensional education systems.

MTI education is a professional degree education, which meets the requirements of the development of translation industry. The training of MTI students must meet the requirements of the translation industry and profession [2]. According to the "Plan", the objective of MTI is "cultivating high-level, practical and professional translation and interpreting talents with good morality, wisdom and health that meet the requirements of global economic integration and for the improvement of national competitiveness and the construction of national economy, culture and society". MTI education is featured by tight connection with translation industry, which emphasizing on professional translation competence and practical skills. These features made MTI a promising major with great practical value.

Problems Existing in MTI Education

In light of the questionnaire and interview survey the author conducted to students majoring in MTI, teachers, administrators of translation services, it is generally believed that the problems existing in the current MTI education are as follows.

Unreasonable Curriculum Arrangement. Curriculum arrangement is a systematic process to schedule courses according to requirements of a specific education objective. Curriculum contents, categories, periods and distribution of periods are all stipulated in a curriculum arrangement. Therefore, it is considered as the reification of education objective and training model. A study of MTI curriculum arrangement can help to find out problems existing in current MTI curriculum, and help MTI institutes make a better self-positioning and establish specialty MTI education models. According to surveys conducted to 6 MTI institutes in Xi'an, the author finds out that problem lies in the following aspects:

The distinction between MA and MTI still needs attention. As master of academic, MA has an apparent theoretical and professional feature. And thus its curriculum arrangement is generally organized in a manner of professional basic course, professional course and professional direction course. While MTI, as a professional master, should put emphasis on practice and strengthen overlap with related subject knowledge. However, as founded in our survey, some MTI institutes merely followed the organization model of MA curriculum, or just made little change.

Improper curriculum structure reflected in lack of optional courses. For improving student's comprehensive competence and range of knowledge, the proportion of optional course in MTI education should be increased [3]. However, this proportion is relatively maintained at a low level. For example, there are only 8 credit points in an institute surveyed while the total curriculum credit points are 30. MTI institute can offer specialty courses by utilizing its special school resources. However, as founded in the survey, specialty courses are generally very rare in MTI institutes[4]. Through an analyzing of the 6 institutes, there is a very similar curriculum arrangement whether it's polytechnic university or foreign language ones.

Professional Textbook Insufficient. As we know, teaching materials play a vital role in MTI education. As the main factor in education, teaching materials on one hand is the major method to implement education schedule, on the other hand, it is the main contents that students learn. In a

narrow sense, teaching material refer to textbook. Thus the quality of textbook has a great impact on MTI education.

In this study, I find out that the quality of textbook and the quantity of professional textbook are the main shortcomings of current situation. A series of textbooks are published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press in 2009 and 2012, and in 2011 by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press. To some extent, those textbooks enhanced the education of MTI. However, for enhancing of MTI textbook, this is still not enough. There is a serious lack of technical translation textbooks in aspects of international conference interpretation, Court Interpretation., etc.

Lack of Qualified Teachers. Teacher plays a vital role in the development of education. This is also true in the education of MTI. Training of translation talents are subject to quality of translation teachers to a large extent. The interpreting and translation competence of teachers should be in a high level according to the No. 2007 [11] file “On Plan of Professional Degree of Master of Translation and Interpreting” (hereinafter referred to as “Plan”). But for a long time, there is a severe division between research fruits and teaching ability. And the debate between theory and practice has been long-stand. At the same time, professional title evaluation, project application and achievement rewarding all place emphasis on research product. As a result, translation teachers pay more attention to translation theory study other than practice. Thus there is a severe lack of practical teachers, especially for interpreting courses. Technically speaking, teachers that meet the requirements stipulated in “Plan” in institutes that newly started MTI major are very few. It is also required in “Plan” that some senior translators in translation industry should be hired as part time teachers. However, in Midwest China, where translation education and practice are comparatively weak, those teachers are not easy to seen. During my survey to 6 institutes that have MTI major, few have taken actions to train its teachers or hire excellent professional translators in current translation industry.

Teaching Method Transformation. The traditional translation courses are made up of teacher, text and chalk. Usually, teachers illustrate translation skills, and then learning materials are distributed to students. After that, the teacher makes a brief introduction about the background knowledge or cultural knowledge. In this process, the main channel for students to get information is by listening to the teacher or through reading.

However, this teaching method with teacher as the center, with teacher’s reference version as the ultimate goal of a translation course, does not comply with the essential feature of translation in real situation. Meanwhile, it damages greatly the creativity and enthusiasm of students in learning translation. The backward of translation teaching method is a common problem exists in many Chinese universities, which is also a problem that hinders the improvement of translation teaching quality and the training of translation talents [5]. Thus the reform of teaching method in translation training is of great significance for the improvement of translation education in China.

Suggestions for MTI Education

Suggestions for Curriculum Arrangement

MTI is an inter-disciplinary major, and the training of comprehensive translation talents needs the support of many related disciplines. Thus the curriculum of MTI needs diversity. Suggestions on this problem are in the following three aspects.

The relationship between foundation courses and specialized courses should be handled well. Both of the above two aspects should be emphasized. This is also the requirements of diversity and specialization, internationalization and localization in translation industry. MTI institutes should put their emphasis on its own disciplinary advantages while conducting basic translation education, and establishing its own specialized courses [6].

The relationship between literature and non-literature translation must be properly handled. The curriculum arrangement of MTI is often subject to traditional literature translation. Therefore, in terms of literature and non-literature translation issue, the update of concept and the transformation

to non-literature should be emphasized. Thus in the arrangement of MTI curriculum, literature translation should be weakened to a certain extent.

A good balance between theory and practice should be achieved. In MTI curriculum, theories are often over-emphasized while practice is relatively neglected[7]. Therefore, a proper ratio in curriculum arrangement is of great significance. Meanwhile, MTI teachers should change their concepts on practical courses.

Suggestions for Teaching Materials

The author proposes that authors of MTI text books should have authority in the current translation industry; various kinds of real situation texts should be included in MTI training in some extent. The objective of MTI is training professional, practical and high-level translation talents; therefore, authors of MTI teaching materials should be teachers with abundant translation experience of practical texts, or experts who know well about translation industry and the development trend of it. On in this way, the compiling of MTI teaching materials can catch up with market development and meet the social needs. The choosing of MTI teaching materials should break through the traditional literature dominated condition, and put emphasis on the variety of texts, such as law, commerce, finance, news, tourist texts, etc[8]. These texts can help students get better knowledge of the translation texts they might face in real situation.

Suggestions for Teacher quality improvement

For most universities that set up MTI, a qualified team of translation and interpreting teachers is very important. Some scholars think that a qualified translation teacher can be described as four kinds of combinations based on double tutor: the combination between international and inland, scholarism and profession, full-time and part-time, and schools and industry. It is of great significance to attract excellent translation talents in local area or even the whole country. MTI institutes and other institutes that are planning to set up MTI major can establish special fund for the training of MTI teachers. For example, through organizing various translations and interpreting activities, it can accelerate the transformation of traditional translation teachers, and thus build comprehensive teacher teams that meet the requirements of MTI education. Excellent foreign and domestic translation professionals can be invited to work as part time teachers or hold academic forums in MTI institutes. Academic assessment and post promotion mechanisms should be reformed and improved so as to encourage teachers to be engaged in translation practice[9]. Thus teacher resources can be shared between universities from other countries and China. New tutors of MTI should be chosen according to the stipulation of the "Plan".

Suggestions for Reform of Teaching Method

In terms of teaching method, the author recommend Rogers' humanistic teaching mode which considers students as the center of a teaching program. In this learner-centered approach, teachers' roles are transformed from "instruction" to "guidance". When students become the center of teaching process, good effects are achieved in the teaching practice of many disciplines[10]. In the author's opinion, MTI education should imitate this successful teaching method and create an easy learning environment. Through interaction between teachers and students, the teaching process of MTI can enhance students' interest and enthusiasm on translation learning, and cultivate students' ability to think independently and solve problems by themselves. Besides, MTI institutes should explore more effective translation test methods, and put emphasis on the testing of students' practical skills. Various testing methods can be adopted to make assessment of student's translation competence.

Conclusion

This thesis presents a tentative study on MTI education model from the perspective of Needs Analysis. Through investigation the author conducted and qualitative and quantitative analysis of the gathered information from the survey, the author finds out some problems existing in the current MTI education. Thus tentative suggestions are put forward by the author to solve these problems. From target situation analysis, the author proposed that MTI curriculum arrangement should make a good balance between foundation courses and specialized courses, literature and non-literature

courses as well as theory and practical courses. The quantity teaching materials of MTI should be enlarged and the compiling of it should emphasis on translation skills. From present situation analysis, the author suggests various ways should be used in teaching quality improvement and a learner-centered approach should be adopted in translation training program.

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