

# Curriculum Reform and Specialty Construction of Translation Major in the "Translation Workshop" Mode

Jinghan Wang

Xi'an International University, Xi'an 710077, China

janetjh@sina.com

**Abstract.** "Translation workshop" is a highly practical teaching mode, which is student-centered and process-oriented. It maximizes students' participation in practice, adapts to social needs, and meets the training goals of applied translation talents. This thesis takes the translation major of the English Department of Xi'an International University as an example to explore the application and specific practice of this model in the curriculum reform of translation major, as well as to show the author's reflections on the specialty construction of translation major.

**Keywords:** Curriculum reform, Specialty construction, Translation major, "Translation Workshop".

## 1. Introduction

As a new type of teaching mode, "Translation Workshop" is the product of translation teaching and translation research to a new stage in recent years, which has become one of the compulsory courses for graduates and undergraduates majoring in translation in many universities. This mode provides students with a lot of high-intensity translation training in the form of workshops, enabling students to continuously improve themselves through "learning translation in practice", "learning translation in cooperation", and "learning translation in discussion". Through the interactive learning environment in the classroom, students can improve their ability to translate and their translator competence, understand and sharpen translation skills, hence to lay a solid foundation for them to independently engage in translation activities or to operate translation projects in the future. What is created in the classroom of this course is an interactive and cooperative learning environment and atmosphere, which enables students to cooperate and communicate with each other and to work together with group members based on a large number of translation practices. The interactive discussions conducted by the teachers in the classroom help students acquire the translation knowledge more fully, comprehend the true meaning of translation, and grasp the professional spirit of translation. [1]

The "translation workshop" model is also the result of adapting to the needs of social development and people's new understanding of translation teaching and translation process. Curriculum based on this model will certainly be a powerful promoter and accelerator for the practical application ability of translation majors. However, for this seedling to grow into a towering tree, strong support by different aspects such as the college and authorities is urgently needed, and relevant teachers should carry out curriculum settings and reforms according to the specific situation of students, and apply it effectively to the courses and teaching of translation major.

## 2. Curriculum Reform for Translation Majors based on "Translation Workshop" Mode

Curriculum reform for translation major is an urgent need and a necessity for building a first-class major. Translation major was established along with the country's strong demand for translation talents and adapted to the needs of society. However, a fact that can't be ignored is that there are about 200 colleges and universities in the country that have undergraduate majors in translation. According to related research, many problems exist in the construction of translation major in colleges such as unclear teaching plans, unreasonable curriculum and the lack of characteristics. Furthermore, teaching materials are not systematic and teaching modes lack

innovation. [2] It is known to all that the characteristics will determine the vitality and development of translation major. In response to this problem, the translation major of the Xi'an International University has introduced a "translation workshop" mode to change the curriculum setting and training model of its translation major. It has gradually changed from the traditional translation teaching mode that focuses on lecturing---assignment---appreciation into a mode of interpretation and translation workshops with students' teamwork as the core, aiming to infiltrate the "translation workshop" mode into the curriculum setting of translation major, and with the help of the instructor's guidance, through four years of continuous learning and training, students are able to translate or interpret from simple to difficult, from shallow to deep, so that they can become practical professionals with strong professional standards and applicability, and fully adapt to social needs.

In the specific operation and practice, the four-year college course setting for translation majors is divided into different levels. Each school year adopts a flexible and diverse training mode, starting from the students' basic English skills, increasing the difficulty of training year by year, and gradually improving translation practical skills. The specific operations are as follows:

### **2.1 Elementary Stage---Mainly Referring to the First-Year Curriculum Reform, Highlighting Introduction and Basicity.**

By introducing the "translation workshop" mode into the main courses, students will gradually develop a cooperative learning habit that lays a solid foundation for translation. Reform the basic courses (such as comprehensive reading, etc.) and highlight the characteristics of translation major in the teaching of basic courses for English majors by adding some translation elements such as transforming them into reading and translation courses. At this stage, students have a preliminary grasp of the "workshop mode" learning method and operation process, and master the related skills of "reading and rendering" and "sight interpretation" and can give a faithful and smooth translation of children's books, etc.

### **2.2 Intermediate Stage---Mainly Referring to the Second-Year Curriculum Reform, Highlighting Transition and Intensity.**

At this stage, combined with the students' own interests, the special guidance of the tutor is introduced, and the practice is divided into texts and modules. Interpreting and translating courses strengthen the training of students' skills. For example, basic oral expression courses like English speaking and debate are combined with preliminary interpretation courses. Courses such as contrastive studies and translation of English and Chinese, and Chinese culture are also offered to improve students' bilingual and cultural awareness. Through this stage of study, students can comprehend translation more fully in the "translation workshop" mode through mutual cooperation and exchanges with group members and interactive discussions with the lecturer in the classroom and finally grasp the professional spirit of translation, and form a sense of teamwork.

### **2.3 Advanced Stage---Mainly Referring to the Curriculum Reform of the Third and Fourth Years, Highlighting Practicality and Application.**

Establish interpreting workshop and translation workshop separately to provide students with a platform to give full play to their translation abilities, and infiltrate the "translation workshop" mode into courses such as film and television subtitle translation and business English-Chinese translation, so that students can complete more professional translation of texts such as literature, business, finance, politics. Combined with the "3 + 1" training mode and through the school-enterprise cooperation practice units established by the translation major, the docking with the internship units and translation companies is realized, allowing students to experience the craftsmanship of translation in a real enterprise. Students can follow their own interests to go to hotels or scenic spots to be tour guides or accompanying interpreters, or to intern in translation companies and foreign trade companies.

Through the reform of the curriculum for translation major, it is planned to solve the problem that translation majors have fewer practical opportunities and less subjective initiative; the theoretical learning and practical links of student systems are insufficient; and the translation materials are not comprehensive and systematic and practical. Teachers play the role of organizers in translation workshops, and encourage students to cooperate in learning and actively participate in practice. Theoretical courses should be set up so that students can find answers to their practical doubts and the training and practice materials should be classified systematically for students to practice through teamwork, discussion, and repeated revision of translations.

### **3. Reflections on the Construction of Translation Major**

#### **3.1 Focusing on the Combination of Humanities Education and Professional Education**

Professor Cai Jigang of Fudan University published a series of articles on the reform of college English that caused much attention and concern as well as hot debate and discussion in the English community. Some scholars, represented by Cai Jigang, believe that the idea of "English education is essentially a humanistic education" should be abandoned, and English should be accepted as a "tool for drawing and exchanging internationally advanced information in professional fields". [3] Scholars are arguing over whether English major should train "people who master the tools" or "people who can communicate". The author believes that English is more than just tools. The "humanity" and "instrumentality" argued by English majors are not opposites, but complement each other. Professor Wang Lifei believes that English major should not only cultivate students' humanities, but also emphasize professional education. The same goes for translation major. Translation courses should not only cultivate students' basic translation skills, professional knowledge, and language communication skills, but also help students understand Chinese and Western cultures in depth through relevant general courses and expand their international perspectives so that they are able to acquire international rules, improve their cross-cultural communication ability and finally become "cultural talents." [4] Today, translation majors also have the mission of telling Chinese stories and spreading Chinese voices. Learning Chinese history and philosophical knowledge, especially Chinese cultural knowledge has endowed translation majors with the most valuable core competitiveness to achieve professional sustainable development which contributes to cultural soft power and Chinese culture going global.

#### **3.2 Highlighting Characteristics of Application**

Developed from English major, translation major further emphasizes the concept of applied talent training. Its graduates should provide sufficient and qualified language and cultural services to facilitate local social and economic development. Application-oriented translation talents have the characteristics of profound knowledge accumulation, solid translation skills, excellent comprehensive quality, and adaptation to social needs. From the perspective of market demand, there is still a great need for a large number of language service talents engaged in interpretation and translation integration, pre-/post-editing, review and proofreading, exhibition organization, and project management. Society's demand for senior translators (such as interpreters of conference, high-end interviews, foreign affairs, etc.; translation of classic texts, literary texts, academic texts, political and government documents, etc.) is still strong, and demand for compound language translators remains exuberant. However, a reality that cannot be ignored is that traditional translation teaching focuses on theoretical knowledge and skills training. Translation majors often stay at the stage of talking on paper. Graduates lack practical work experience and do not know much about the translation company's workflow and they usually need a long time to get into work. Therefore, translation major needs to highlight its application-oriented characteristics in terms of curriculum setting, teaching design, and evaluation system. It must adhere to the market-oriented translation teaching and training process, simulate real working environments, and strengthen students' professional ethics and integrity. [5] The "translation workshop" model is an active exploration of market demand and the cultivation of applied talents. However, the exploration of the

cultivation of applied translation talents should not be limited to this, but should be gradually shifted to applied translation studies. For example, refine translation categories (such as literary translation, legal translation, document translation, scientific translation, etc.), strengthen training of parliamentarians, enhance school-enterprise cooperation, and give each student the opportunity to go to translation companies and other institutions for practical training.

### **3.3 Sticking to Innovative Development**

With the rapid development of computer-aided translation and machine translation technology, great changes have taken place in the translation ecological environment. The development of the translation major urgently needs to be repositioned to keep pace with the times. We must not only encourage technological progress, but also emphasize the subjective initiative of translators, prevent the tendency of excessive use of technology and instrument, and avoid the lack of humanity. The construction of translation major should also actively embrace technology by setting courses such as computer-assisted translation, localization technology and by exploring MOOC, SPOC, and micro-learning, and teaching via mobile phone. Teachers should also make corresponding adjustments because many teachers of translation major are "academic" and lack practical experience. The path to solving the problem includes: exploring their own teacher resources, providing relevant policies and guarantees to send teachers to take related courses in other departments or universities; hiring teachers from other departments or colleges to teach translation majors, and systematically introducing and absorbing talents with interdisciplinary education background such as computer and corpus professionals into the translation major.

### **Acknowledgments**

This work was supported by 2019 Scientific Research Project of Education Department of Shaanxi Provincial Government under Grant No. 19JK0715.

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