

The Application of Translation Theory and Practice in Chinese Regular High School English Writing

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Abstract:

This paper studies and explores the possibility of integrating senior high school English writing with proper translation theory and practice. Due to the current situation of senior high school English writing, reforms in teaching methods are quite necessary. In the past, senior high school English teaching often separates translation and writing, neglecting the inner relationship between writing and translation. The paper aims to find a new way to integrate translation with writing, mainly focusing on a specific teaching method in translation—Process-oriented teaching and learning methodology, exploring its application in the English writing learning process. The method especially emphasizes the importance of process of learning English writing skills, which can help students acquire writing skills in a better and more sufficient way. In addition, other important advantages of learning translation, which help students learn writing skills, are also mentioned in the paper, including linguistic skills, non-linguistic skills, translation competence, and so on.

Keywords: Translation, English writing, Process-oriented Translation Teaching Methodology

1. Introduction

With the changes in the new edition of the English Curriculum Criteria for Regular High School in China, the writing section of the English subject has also changed. Nowadays, high school English writing consists of two important parts: “writing continuation after reading“ and „writing for practical use“, which emphasizes students’ language input and language output abilities and requires students’ abilities to use vocabulary, grammar, and conception together. Language competence has become an important part of English writing, which refers to the ability to understand or to express meanings in ways such as listening, speaking, reading, viewing, and writing in social situations, as well as language consciousness and language sense in the course of learning and using English language. As a result, the perfection of English writing needs effort on all fronts.

However, seen from today’s high school English writing teaching, the situation of high school English writing teaching is slightly disappointing. Many high school teachers only have a single writing teaching method and a single evaluation method, like forcing the students to continuously do writing practice and give the mark, which lacks guidance on how to organize and process information and how to structure the composition. Moreover, this

simple and single way of teaching and evaluating will also deprive students of interest in writing, posing a negative effect on students’ writing learning. In addition, the homogenized teaching of writing is a serious and indispensable problem that is waiting for solutions. In writing evaluation, students’ marks are tightly related to the usage of difficult sentences and words; that is to say, the lexical and syntax are over-represented in high school English writing. Facing with the condition, the students have no choice but to imitate. The core idea of writing is no longer from self-thinking but from reciting. Students care too much about the results and final marks of English writing while neglecting what they truly have acquired during the process of writing.

Therefore, teachers need to reverse the outcome that students care about back to the writing process itself. So, process-oriented teaching and learning plays an important role in high school English writing. This is also the core concept in English translation teaching. For English translation, because there will never be a definite correct answer, the process becomes one of the most important parts. The evaluation of English writing should not be a fixed one, either. As a result of this phenomenon, it is easy to see an obvious but very significant linkage between English writing and English translation. As a result, it may be possible for teachers to apply English translation

theory and practice to regular high school English writing teaching. By integrating translation into the teaching of English, teachers can help their students gain a deeper understanding of the writing process, why it is important to write, and how to produce good work. Unfortunately, in the English teaching stage of Chinese high schools, the cognition and utilization of translation teaching are still not comprehensive and perfect. Nowadays, most of the research on English writing in high school focuses on improving students' English language proficiency. At the same time, when discussing the teaching of translation, most of the study focuses more on its significance for students' mastery of grammar and vocabulary but pays little attention to its significance for English writing.

For instance, this paper differs from mainstream research in that it attempts to explore the possibility of applying translation theory and practice to the teaching of Chinese regular high school English composition. It is from the perspective of translation teaching that we use the version of translation teaching to solve the problems in today's high school English writing teaching. This paper mainly focuses on the application of the Process-oriented teaching and learning methodology in translation and writing.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Translation Competence

Translation is a process with utility and purpose, which needs comprehensive and complex knowledge, ranging from language competence to translation competence. Research on translation competence is at an exploratory stage about how to identify, describe, clarify, and analyze it. However, in the translation field, it is widely acknowledged that translation competence comprises a set of associated component competencies.

In the past, based on observations of translators' behaviour during their translation process, researchers divided translation competence into three parts: bilingual competence, transfer competence and world/subject knowledge. But the discovery of translation competence has never stopped. In 21st century, Albrecht Neubert re-identifies the definition of translation competence as five important parts: language competence, context competence, theme competence, culture competence, and transfer competence[1]. All these competencies together work so that translation activity is different from other fields of communication, so do the translation study.

The conclusive comments on translation competence argue that the translation competence of a successful translator means that he has acquired knowledge, abilities and strategies that enable him to use them in translation. It is emphasized that translation competence should be based,

in particular, on linguistic and pragmatic competence, the total of which is a complex cognitive network of knowledge, abilities and strategies[2].

As a result, translation competence is a concept of several dimensions, including the ability to concisely understand and express the intended message in a target language. It is a very important skill for translators, requiring technical, conceptual, and interpersonal skills [3]. This competence is mainly based on the situation, treating interlingual skills as the most important thing, and is acquired through languages and cultures and the mediation abilities between them. In this digital era, the simplest approach to translation competence, emphasizing the production and elimination of alternatives, is proposed as a solution to adapt to quick technological and professional changes.

2.2 The Impact that Translation Learning Has on Students

Translation learning has a very important impact on individuals, not only in terms of extending beyond linguistic skills but also in terms of personal development and moral awareness[4]. It is a valuable tool in language teaching, enhancing students' language skills and cognitive abilities[4,5]. The combination of technology in translation training, such as the use of Translation Memory tools and Statistical Machine Translation, has further transformed the learning experience, creating a need for a reformed education approach. That is why this paper aims to reform education approach with more translation teaching methods.

Moreover, according to PACTE (a language study organization), Allison Beeby, a research member, points out four ultimate goals of developing translation competence during translation teaching[6]. The four goals are the real important things that translation learning can bring to students. First is to develop students' transfer competence. That means students should have a deep understanding of the translation process so as to grasp the essence of the passage out of language. The second is to develop the ability to contrast languages, through which students can know more about the differences between Chinese and English, including the differences in language types, lexical, semantic fields, and so on. The third one is to encourage students' discourse contrastive competence. By learning translation, students can more easily differentiate Chinese genres from English genres. Students may be aware that there are quite a lot of differences between English passages and Chinese forms, which can be used in their English learning. The last goal, and the most important one, is to help students go out of language itself, developing students' non-verbal skills. For example, through learning translation, students get to know the differences between

the meanings of English symbols and Chinese symbols. Besides, referring to a dictionary or encyclopedia is also a crucial skill that translation can help students acquire.

2.3 The Use of Translation Teaching in Writing

Several scholars have explored the use of translation teaching in English writing promotion. They emphasize the role of translation in enhancing students' understanding and absorption of basic English knowledge, as well as in improving their overall writing level. This is further supported by another scholar, Liu, who discusses using a "Literary Translation Workshop" to promote the cognitive aspects of translation teaching. Moreover, specific approaches to teaching translation, such as paragraph translation and teamwork translation, can also further enhance students' writing skills.

3. Analyses

3.1 The Basic Function of Translation in English Writing

Translation teaching has the most direct effect on the improvement of students' English writing ability: to improve their language ability. Language ability covers many aspects, such as vocabulary, grammar and syntax, expressive language skills, rhetorical skills and so on.

Vocabulary selection: In the process of translation, you need to choose the right words to convey the meaning of the original text. This means that you need a huge vocabulary to sustain your work. Through translation, you will be constantly exposed to a wide range of vocabulary from different fields, thus enriching and expanding your vocabulary and learning how to choose the most appropriate words in different contexts. Similarly, vocabulary is a very important element for writing. Whether choosing the right words to express what you're thinking or polishing your writing with more elegant words, a good vocabulary is essential.

Grammar and syntax: Translation requires you to understand the grammatical and syntactical structures of the original language and translate them into the target language. This will help you deepen your understanding of grammar and syntax and improve your grammar when writing, making your expression more accurate and fluent.

Language Expression: Translation requires you to accurately convert thoughts, feelings or information from one language into another, which requires you to have strong language expression skills. Through translation work, you will constantly think about how to express the meaning of the original text with the most accurate and appropriate words and sentences, so as to improve your language ex-

pression ability.

Rhetorical skills: In the process of translation, you will come across various rhetorical devices, such as simile, metaphor, and prose. By translating these rhetorical devices, you will have a deeper understanding of their meanings and ways of using them, thus enriching your own rhetorical skills and making your writing more vivid and interesting.

3.2 Process-oriented Teaching and Learning Methodology in Translation and Writing

Nowadays, there are some problems in both assessment and teaching of English writing in high school. At the assessment level, the form of assessment is single and dull, with only two fixed types: "writing continuation after reading" and "writing for practical use". Putting "writing for practical use" aside, the articles in "Writing continuation after Reading" are mainly short stories. Not only is the genre of the short stories simple, but the content is also not rich enough, and most of them are positive stories.

At the teaching level, due to the influence of assessment and the stereotypes of writing teaching in the past years, high school English teachers still adhere to the previous teaching methods, which mainly consisted of assigning a composition task to students, then correcting the grammar, grading with advanced sentences and words as extra points, and finally giving model essays for students to study, and then the task of writing teaching was considered to be over. However, the exploration of the writing process is missing. Under such an environment, students change the focus of writing from "writing" to "memorizing", thinking that they only need to memorize enough good essays and elegant words so that they can get high scores. Thus, they pay too much attention to the result of writing and neglect the process of writing and the construction of ideas. It can be said that the current high school English writing has a rigid tendency from assessment to teaching to student learning.

Therefore, to solve this problem, there is a need to reform the teaching method. According to Professor Hairston in 1988, just correcting students' compositions cannot really teach students to write. We have to know how the composition was produced and why it is the result[7]. We need to figure out as much as we can about what happens in the writing process. It is more difficult to study the invisible process than the visible outcome, but it is one thing we must do. This is what we call Process-oriented teaching and learning methodology[8].

The Process-oriented teaching and learning methodology is a very important concept in translation teaching because there is no standard answer for translation, and there is only a difference between appropriate and inappropriate,

accurate and inaccurate translations, not definitely good or bad. The improvement of translation ability does not lie in how many articles or books you have translated well or how great marks you have got in the translation exam, but in your understanding, comprehension, reflection, and improvement of your translation ability in the process of translation, so that you can do better in the next translation. In this respect, translation and writing have the same point. Writing focuses on the process of creation, and as Hairston says, what we really need to figure out is how the text came to be and why it was written like this. The Process-oriented teaching and learning methodology is characterized by its ability to reveal the actual process of writing and the writer's subjective role, not emphasizing the outcome of writing but focusing on describing and explaining the process of writing.

The process-oriented teaching and learning methodology stands out because it reveals the behavioral manifestations and thinking models of writers. The aim of this teaching method is to gradually develop students' cognitive, strategic and psychological abilities turn their minds to focus on the writing process, the thinking process, and the decision-making process. Moreover, when practicing writing, they can have a deep understanding of what they have learned, the writing methods and techniques they have adopted, and their own creativity so as to improve their own writing skills comprehensively.

The Process-oriented teaching and learning methodology has the following characteristics: it inspires students to recognize the principles, methods, and processes involved in the writing process; it does not focus on commenting on specific word choices when discussing students' compositions but rather explores the process by which the compositions are produced; it focuses on a particular kind of problem in the writing process and avoids distraction; it helps students understand and recognize the construction of ideas and decision making that occur in the writing process; it allows for full diversity in writing and encourages students to be creative; and it avoids the imposition of standards and stereotypes on students' writing.

The traditional method of teaching writing is that the teacher selects a piece of composition for students to practice, and the students finish the writing task after class and return to the classroom to submit the composition to the teacher for correction. However, this teaching method is not a good way to master writing skills and develop writing ability. The result-oriented teaching method and the ensuing assessment of students' writing following the rule of „standard essay“ aggravate the negative consequences: classroom teaching is homogenized, the teaching atmosphere is depressing, and students are in a state of passive learning, which weakens their self-confidence and creati-

ity.

However, the Process-oriented teaching and learning methodology inspires students' self-awareness in the first place. Instead of practicing blindly, beginning writers gradually become aware of what they do and think in the writing process, the knowledge and abilities they need to understand, and master the basic concepts of writing. The teacher does not use model essays as a guide, and students can boldly use their imagination and creativity in their own compositions, which are full of their own unique insights.

The Process-oriented teaching and learning methodology enables students to explore the process of writing, vividly experience and master the writing skills and strategies, and realize that writing does not come by memorization. It helps them avoid mechanically applying the vocabulary and sentence patterns accumulated on a regular basis, as well as the method of writing, but rather flexibly use different methods of writing to fulfill their creativity.

The process approach also enables students to play their own role in the process of writing learning and to stop being passive recipients of knowledge. Through the play of independent writing, students recognize and understand their own writing styles, and realize that writing is something that can bring out their self-consciousness and express their own viewpoints. Students can actively face and show their own work and give their own unique insights, constantly increasing their initiative, self-confidence and creativity.

3.3 Exploring the Role of Translation in English Writing and Teaching Methodologies

Apart from the fact that completing the translation task itself, as mentioned above, helps to improve the students' language skills, engaging in translation learning also helps the students develop themselves in other ways. It is not just a matter of mastering a few words and knowing how to use a few sentences. On the contrary, the continuous improvement of translation ability becomes a dynamic process where students incorporate the newly acquired knowledge into their existing knowledge system. Students integrate their previously acquired knowledge and skills into a deeper understanding of the language. Students' general abilities are enhanced and can be applied to writing, an activity that requires comprehensive English language skills.

For example, translation learning brings about the development of students' ability to compare and contrast languages[9]. Students understand more clearly the similarities and differences between the two languages and know that English and Chinese differ in text types, lexical, semantic fields, and syntax[10]. After practicing transla-

tion, students are better able to choose appropriate words and also better grasp the situation of multiple meanings of words in writing.

In addition, the improvement of discourse comparison skills is equally crucial. Through translation learning, students can come into contact with the complete English discourse and Chinese discourse, and compare the two at the overall level, avoiding the embarrassing situation of only learning sentences and words, and understanding the great difference between English and Chinese in terms of discourse coherence and connection from a macroscopic point of view, which provides theoretical support for building a framework for their writing and connecting passages.

4. Conclusion

Through reviewing and summarizing the papers concerning translation learning and the condition of senior high school writing teaching nowadays, and analyzing the positive impact which translation has on English writing, this research finds that the important learning method in translation—Process-oriented teaching and learning methodology, which can be also used as a teaching method in English writing and help the students to acquire writing skills in a more proficient way. However, there are some limitations that cannot be ignored, first, the paper are not supported with fundamental data resources. In order to prove the authenticity and effectiveness of the application, real practice is requisite. Second, if using too much translation skills in English writing, then the process and result of English writing will go wrong. It is necessary for us to find a balance. In the future, high school English writing

teaching can try to integrate some translation teaching appropriately, so that students can develop themselves with the help of translation, thus better improving their writing ability.

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