

# A Study on the Application of Literary Translation in College English Teaching

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**Abstract:** Despite the increasing demand of translation in society, translation still lack sufficient attention from college education. Traditionally, the public think that it is necessary only for professional translators or students engaging in translation to learn translation. Actually, as a kind of teaching method it has not been fully tapped into potential in language teaching. However, this essay proposes that translation including interpretation is useful tools for cultivating and training college student's English abilities. There are a variety of translation materials in different field such as economy, medicine, but this essay mainly focuses on literary translation. Translation and interpretation are adopted to help student acquire language skills under the help of literatures both in Chinese and English.

**Key Words:** literary translation, language teaching, college students

## 1. Background

Literature teaching and language teaching are not opposed to each other but are complementary to each other. Literary works are divided into different types. Literary translation referred to in this article generally refers to literature written in English or written in Chinese and translated into English. Teachers should choose appropriate materials according to the level and ability of students. Reading English literature can help students understand the culture and traditional customs of English-speaking countries, thereby improving students' language skills. Using some English Chinese bilingual Chinese literary works can also improve students' knowledge and skills of their own culture, so as to better apply and output them. Therefore, literary translation can be used as a conventional translation method to assist language acquisition.

Language is a tool for communication. The author found in his usual teaching practice that many college students' reading ability is higher than their writing and speaking ability. They know a word when reading, but they can't use it in writing and speaking appropriately. The writing and speaking of college students are weak, sometimes because they lack the accumulation of English language for corresponding expression, but behind it is also largely because the communicators are unfamiliar with the content of Chinese culture. For example, a student wants to introduce traditional Chinese culture in English, but he doesn't even know how to say it in Chinese, let alone use English. For this reason, some Chinese works translated into English should also be properly used in teaching practice. The first is to cultivate students' language ability to express in their mother tongue, and then carry out relevant foreign language education on this basis.

In the initial stage, the materials for literary translation should not be too difficult. The author uses Chinese traditional culture-related text materials such as Ye Lang's *Insights. Into Chinese Culture* as an aid and supplement for college English teaching. At the same time, improve students' Chinese cultural literacy.

## 2. The role of using English literature or English-translated Classics in College English Teaching

Han Ziman (2012) once pointed out in an article that the English translation of classics and English teaching are not only not contradictory, but also have a good role in promoting English teaching. Literature learning not aim to cultivate professional translators but can be regarded as an effective teaching material for raising college student's bilingual ability during language teaching.

### 2.1 Improve Students' Language Skills such as Writing and Speaking

Generally speaking, what people know is that only students majoring in translation and those who specialize in the translation industry need to study Chinese culture and related English systematically. However, the author think that it can be equally learnt by ordinary students by allowing students to memorize vocabulary and other language knowledge in the context of literature and culture. When reading, students will encounter many new words and unfamiliar sentence patterns. In the past, students' knowledge will be deconstructed word by word. By reading literary works, students will improve their sense of language and guess the meaning of words according to the context. At the same time, while reading literary works, students can learn authentic expressions, such as metaphors, personification, exaggeration and other rhetorical techniques, which can be used in writing to improve writing skills.

### 2.2 Cultivate Students' Aesthetic Consciousness

The aesthetic function is an important function of language. As a bridge of cross-cultural communication, translation should reproduce and reflect the beauty of language. There are many basic elements of language beauty, such as phonetic features, semantic features, imagery, rhetoric, etc., and these elements are integrated into translation to make the article an aesthetic picture expressing aesthetic meaning. In college English translation teaching, teachers can directly use the two basic elements of phonological beauty and artistic conception as the starting point to cultivate students' aesthetic awareness .

#### (1) Phonological beauty

Poetry translation is one of the most difficult parts of literary translation, but it is also the best style to help students establish translation

aesthetic awareness. When translating poetry, students can only convey the content, atmosphere, style and emotion of the original text clearly only if they understand the author's aesthetics, appreciate his aesthetic experience, and preserve the phonological beauty of the original text in translation. Before asking students to translate, teachers can lead students to read this little poem aloud, so that they can experience the role of rhythm in this poem. The words king, ring, and sing at the end of the first three lines all have the same ending rhyme. The way of rhyme at the end expresses the author's aesthetic experience of the bright spring, which makes readers have a harmonious and carefree aesthetic feeling.

#### (2) The beauty of artistic conception

If the beauty of phonology can be instantly and intuitively felt by readers, then the beauty of artistic conception needs to be experienced throughout the text. Artistic conception is an artistic image formed by the scene and atmosphere described in the work, which combines the emotional expression and imagination of the author. For example, lead students to appreciate Owen's Westminster Abbey as an example to illustrate the importance of artistic conception.

#### 2.3 Improve Students' Interest in Learning, Stimulate Intrinsic Learning Motivation and Communication Skills

Cultivating students' writing and speaking skills can start slowly from translation. Given Chinese, let students translate or interpret the corresponding English. After a period of learning and practice, students' fluency and coherence will be greatly improved. This will largely stimulate students' intrinsic motivation for learning, and students will overcome shyness, slowly becoming more and more daring to express in written and oral language. When conducting translation exercises in class, teachers should create a relaxed class atmosphere with a high degree of freedom. For the answers given by students, teachers should avoid directly giving feedback on whether they are right or wrong but should encourage further thinking and reflection.

### 3. Teaching Methods

In terms of teaching methods, the author uses translation methods, mainly oral interpretation, supplemented by written translation. Sight translation is the main method of interpretation. The time in class is tight, and translation takes more time. In addition, translation has higher requirements for writing and even academicism. Compared with translation, interpreting is more flexible and focuses on communication. Therefore, it is used as a method to supervise students' oral output. To a certain extent, interpreting and written translation intersect. What can be interpreted must be written. Both are output, the former is through the mouth, and the latter is through the pen.

In terms of teaching aids, the author uses two sets of Chinese and English bilingual textbooks of Insights into Chinese Culture by professors Ye Lang and Zhu Liangzhi, and selects the effective content in each chapter to guide students to learn. Insights into Chinese Culture is different from the previous method of condensing Chinese culture into a cultural dictionary. It captures some of the most distinctive content and highlights of Chinese culture, uses typical examples to introduce knowledge, and at the same time tells the story of Chinese culture. Its spirit and core values also show the life attitude and sentiment of ordinary people (2008). This book takes the traditional culture that people are more familiar with as the entry point. From Confucius' "The Analects" and the building of the Temple of Heaven, we can see the Chinese people's awe and gratitude to nature. Starting from "Sun Tzu's Art of War" "War with caution" warns that Zheng He's voyages to the West followed the "Share Peace" diplomatic policy, and the Chinese built the Great Wall so that the world can understand the Chinese people's eternal prayer for a peaceful life.

In the training method of interpretation, some fragments of classics are selected for sight translation practice. This practice method can improve students' accumulation of relevant English expressions, expand their vocabulary accordingly, and improve students' confidence and fluency in oral expression. Give students appropriate English translation courses, but the goal should not be too high. For example, when talking about the topic of Kung Fu in the fifth unit of the textbook, the author found that Chapter 36 of Chinese Culture Reader also talks about Kung Fu in traditional Chinese culture. Teachers can use this material for interpretation practices. Let's take the first paragraph of Chapter 36 Kung Fu and Cuju as an example, the original Chinese text is as follows:

(1) Firstly, teacher guide the students to think and give the English expressions of the following words "Fitness", "Entertainment", "Dragon Boat Festival", "Dragon Boat Race", "Qingming", "Swinging", "Chongyang", "Climbing", "Martial Arts", "Colorful" and so on. These are key words in some traditional cultures, and they are also familiar to students. The above keywords are divided into two categories, one is the words in the typical traditional cultural context, with authoritative and conventional translations, such as Duanwu Festival, Qingming Festival, Double-Ninth Festival, Martial..., and the other is English words in the common sense, such as "entertainment" have several synonyms in English, entertainment, amusement, recreation, "rich and colorful" can be simply expressed as many, various, or a variety of..., so, even cultural texts can still involve a lot of ordinary language expressions. Therefore, while learning professional expressions, common used language points can be accumulated.

(2) After the students have mastered the key words, teacher put a few key words out, let the students use their own words, look at the Chinese and speak English, this is the sight translation in the interpretation. When performing sight translation, there is great flexibility. As long as the meaning expressed by the student is consistent with the original text, and the purpose of letting others know what he is talking about is considered successful. There are two purposes. One is that in sight translation, students should repeat the key words just mentioned to play a consolidated role. Furthermore, through sight translation, students can have a sense of urgency, respond quickly, and at the same time improve students' oral expression and communication skills. Learning English in a Chinese environment, students rarely have the opportunity to speak English. Therefore, this provides a very rare opportunity for students to dare to speak English and speak English

well. Slowly, students start from resisting and fear to become curious, then eager to try, and then full of confidence, sometimes even when encountering words that they don't know, students will also exert their subjective initiative and solve problems by themselves, so as to express themselves perfectly.

(3) In terms of the translation practice method, for the same classic, list all the translations, let students compare and analyze which one is better, and independently think and comment on the advantages and disadvantages of the translations. This kind of thinking is somewhat similar to translation criticism. If students want to put forward their own opinions on the translation, they must first consult the materials, then think and analyze, and finally give their own understanding and conclusions. This not only helps to subtly strengthen the translation ability, but also helps to cultivate students' critical thinking.

(4) As a means of improvement, teacher select some authoritative English translations of classics as reading materials or teaching materials to explain to students. No matter what kind of subject text it is, when selecting the original text and translation of classics, the principle of teaching students in accordance with their aptitude should be followed. According to the level of the students, the level of difficulty will increase accordingly. You can start with the translation of simple literary knowledge, and then go to classical Chinese novels. Under the premise of taking into account the comprehensiveness, it is best to include some classics with strong application colors such as science and technology, law, and military affairs. The translation can also be combined with the actual situation, and the classics that are closer to the students can be selected.

#### 4. Summary

Literary works have high learning value and are important learning materials in English teaching. Integrating English and Chinese literary works into college English teaching can not only improve students' English level and ability, but also help them understand the culture and customs of English-speaking countries. In the past, college English teaching mainly used the teaching method of written translation. As a way of language acquisition, oral interpretation can also be introduced into the classroom. Combining appropriate bilingual materials of literature and culture in Chinese and English can greatly improve students' oral English. In short, the importance of literary translation in college English teaching is worthy of further exploration.

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