

New teaching methods toward translation education in universities under the current market requirements of China

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ABSTRACT. *Under the current circumstances of China's translation market, the education of translator skills building in universities of China seemed to be inadequate and didn't meet with the requirements of the market quite well. In that case, a new discussion over the change of teaching methods and subjects at the undergraduate level has already on the table. This paper will firstly introduce the current situation of translation industry and translation teaching in undergraduate stage in China. After that, required change of thoughts in teaching and drawbacks that may exist during the period of fixing and mending shall be presented. In the later two parts, CAT technology and its' significance in both market and teaching will be intensively stressed, and potential threat and possible solutions could be seen exceedingly.*

KEYWORDS: *Chinese translation market; CAT; undergraduate; market adaptability*

1. Current situation of China's translation market

1.1 Volume and potential energy

Under the great pressure of "high efficiency, fast speed and large amount" that current China's translation market pressed, a great number of translator and interpreter crowded into the market even without any qualification or certification. Bachelor degree could be acceptable to take a position. However, with the development of CAT technique and a further step on MT facilities, this so-called "Grand translator group" is actually corrupting from its inner core.

According to The Annual Report of China's Translation Market 2017 [1] approximately 3,000 translation companies were registered in list while more than 5,000 translation workshops were severing in the market. But how many translator that universities provide every year? The amount should hardly reach to 7,500 a year, which occupies only 13% of the gross number, which could be thought-triggering.

Comments come that translation department students were actually ‘money oriented’, they focus on the income and economic benefit too much to lose the core value of learning translation. As a literature, or an art subject, it is actually cultivating students’ humanity concern and empathy, after the passed away of the elder generation of famous translators, the spirit of Chinese translation was actually fading. Who should be blamed? We may ask. From a personal note, the education system and attitude shall be adjusted and thus speeding up the process of raising the general level of translators before serve.

Potentials do exist even under such a negative circumstance, being needed could also reflect that the conflict between human and Computer technology may not be that acute, in that case, a proper guidance from teachers in college and a flexible change on teaching method are strongly required to have students to accept such technologies and be well prepared for the threat that they may confronted in their further career.

1.2 Requirements and “efficiency first” tag

Chinese all hate so called ‘tag’, however, the clash of the large amount of capitals are actually tagging some of them. We should treat translation as a career with a ‘service’ character; we work with an intention to please our customers instead of fetching and charging. If a document is hard to translate, then quit and explain to your first party; if the document is too much to overwhelm the deadline, and then pay for the liquidated damages; if your customer is not satisfied with your work, we should also correct them under acceptable range. In 2007, the initial year of translation market of China pacing into highway, the chairman of China Association of Translation stressed that translation service ought to be effective and ensure quality at the same time.^[2] Neither of the two shall be abandoned or neglected.

We must have been misunderstood something to result to such awkward situation, and we should not blame it to any side, school or market. Both of them are shouldering their part and pushing forward. Translators are actually been charmed by the high income and social status at the very beginning, so it is the same to universities, they tried to cultivate better and more students to attract high-school graduates with abilities and opportunities to be admitted in order to benefit the fame of the school.

People always pushing too fast and too hard in order to get to the destination, but unfortunately, we have already tagged ourselves to some extent. In the past time, 200 Yuan for thousand words could hardly attract translators for its low payment while 50 Yuan for thousand words requires pre-translation before getting the job in order to get the highest quality. And a paper over 20,000 words will be divided at least 5 parts to be more effective. The contrast could be ironic.

Translators in the highest level are still enjoying higher payment and better social status while under-graduates are suffering and crawling for a way out. That is China’s current translation market, and that could be too cruel. But what did our customers saw? Low qualities translation could be seen everywhere, language

service companies are breaking their fame just for being more effective and earn more in a limited time.

2. Current situation of China's translation education

2.1 Subjects and techniques

Back to the basic requirements of China's education, a great proportion of it is to develop students with special technique on certain section, so they can be of great benefit to the pacing forward of this society as well as this nation. The great educator Tao Xing-Zhi used to present his own view-- "A standard university follows the instruction, a better one organize their own courses; The best one cultivate students' concerns and ability to judge." [3]

According to the latest survey The list of institutions of higher learning colleges, independent colleges and branch schools that are qualified to recruit students for higher education(2017), [4] approximately 2,400 higher education schools were qualified to educate students while 43% of them authorized Translation and Interpretation as a branch of English Major, the number is still increasing.

Question came to us that since we got such a massive number of colleges that have ability to teach students how to translate and interpret, why on earth we can not come out with a brand new translation theory that fit with the current situation of China's translation market? Actually, we should have a deep look towards subjects that translation and interpretation major students take throughout their four years in undergraduate stages.

Under the administration of English Major, students can hardly avoid basic technique education like Writing, Speaking and Reading, it's acceptable. According to the current pattern that English major students study in, Business English, translation & Interpretation and English literature could be the 'Big 3' of the simplest construction of them. Every department got 60% of basic technique education and 40% of specific education (Business English, simultaneous Interpretation and English literature for instance). The number of classes could be at most 4 classes a week, which is far too less.

Although reconstruct the lessons arrangement is not the easiest of thing, we still should have a clear awareness that the weight of technique teaching courses should be more than they are. What's more, a great number of courses lie in sufficient basic knowledge, which are undergraduates lacks of. Take translation courses as examples, they divided translation into 'English to Chinese' and 'Chinese to English' translation. Teachers will start with an idiom translation or a simple report, student will show their works exceedingly and after that, the teacher will make presentations and finish the lesson in analyzing, but without theoretic teaching.

That is to say, what we should really pay more attention to should be the basic theoretic teaching, without theories, all of the technique is actually lame and rigid. Looking back to the teaching method in basic education period, we can easily see

that the way of leading students into the core of study should be relatively the same. However, skipping the theory period will make it somewhat unreliable. A great number of senior students may even slip who Eugene Nida or Newmark is, which makes them unable to have a better preparation for their master degree.

What on earth translation theories count throughout the whole process of translation, we may ask. Let's suppose a student with all round skills in translating and there comes a document about culture and communicating for him to translate, not knowing any translation theory, functional equivalence may block him from being a good translator as his work is full of translationese.

3. Suggesting changes in teaching methods and ideas

3.1 Changes in teaching methods

Here comes the discussion towards accessible changes that may realized on undergraduate stage, we firstly discuss the change in teaching methods, which could be defined into three parts. After that, in the second part, some teaching ideas that may block the improvement of translation teaching will be listed and analyzed for correction and rearrangement.

FIRST, teachers who are responsible for English basic knowledge teaching didn't stress too much on the translation part but just analyzing the structure and giving examples on vocabulary usage. It is extremely hard to blame them anything since barely every single universities or colleges tend to do the same thing. Back to the essence of translation, we could define them into several KEYWORDS-- words, structure, culture and readability. Words or vocabulary are the basis of a translator to finish his or her work. Without adequate vocabulary, one can hardly realize the pre-reading or it will be relatively tough. Structures are different from the grammar that we focus while writing, structures are actually a kind of cohesion among sentences, and it was not depend on whether a sentence is grammatically right but whether the flow of passage is right (A good flow means the passage is not strange for natives of the target language to read). Culture and readability were actually tied connected, according to functional equivalence; a good translation should not stick to the structure of the source language but serve the habit of readers of the target language. No structure equivalence but culture equivalence, reading habit equivalence and culture equivalence. This could be perfectly reflected on English to Chinese translation, 'reproduction' should be a common technique for translators doing English to Chinese translation, but to undergraduate students, this could be too strange.

SECOND, vocabulary basis and usage courses should be added in replace of public electives. The overwhelming amount of vocabulary reciting apps were actually different in memory efficiency, it's hard to tell which one is better. In that case, to every English Major students, a standardized vocabulary usage class is acceptable. The course is not teaching students how to learn words faster but tell them what they should recite. All the students should be divided into small groups of

people according to standardized examination like CET-4/6 or even TEM-4. Better students will step in a higher layer faster and tackle this obstacle faster in order to devote themselves to the technique and theory learning.

THIRD, theoretic teaching should cover 40% of the gross time of translation courses, and exercises should be in accordance with the theory that been taught in class. Reflecting on the translation course that most of the university gave to students, they will mark what the technique was, but only underline this with several words, which is far from enough.

3.2 Changes in teaching ideas

After having analyzed the conductible changes on the current course structure, let us move to the teaching ideas that exist among teachers of translation and interpretation sector. Basically every teacher in the system possesses a master degree, and a great number of them are doctors. However, they were also taught under a complex and complicated background. The earlier generation of famous translators was still teaching, they infuse their students the thought that ‘Translators shall shoulder the responsibility to disseminate culture but not earning’. But at the same time, the Chinese market that time was urgently in need of translators and interpreters, and they were paid in high wages. Gradually, they were mixed up and just teach under the given system and arrangement, no ‘cultural dissemination’ will be heard in class any more. However, that should be a great chance for the translation sector of China to reform. In the past time, translators were paid in rather low wages, but they insist to carry on the work in order to have Chinese have a brief look at what foreigners’ life was, which will evoke younger generations to walk out and learn, experience and benefit their country when they came back. [5]With less responsibility to push forward and speeding up the process of China’s reform, what should teacher taught students?

From a personal note, most translators were paid in a very low wage (average 50Yuan for 1,000 words), while superior translators were paid highly. Most junior translators were replaced by so-called ‘Computer translators’ since they were quick reacted and have approximately 50% of correction rate. Actually, both MT or CAT were a tool of translators, since undergraduates have no courses learning this, a great number of them will slip into the trap of ‘low efficiency’, teachers should infuse them with ‘using computer software will benefit yourself’, in that case, they will be more open to embrace this kind of translation technique. No matter Trados or MemoQ or even Internet based CAT tools should all be familiar to undergraduates as there still a part of them choose to work directly, and they were greatly in need of these skills.

4. CAT technique and its’ significance in the course reform

4.1 Significance of the CAT technique towards the current translation market of China

CAT technology, or Computer Aided Translation, is actually a famous technique that been used by many freelancers and large language service corporations. Like Eagle Eye language service Co. Ltd. in Fujian, China. They provide language service and translation & Interpretation teaching courses at the same time. The most famous of which is CAT technique teaching, every term, hundreds of thousand people participate in the round to learn in order to keep pace with the term of Internet development.

As the previous paper discussing about the CAT technology in universities that published in Oct. 2018, the significance were seen throughout the paper. Among the teaching group, those who a talented and sophisticated in CAT technology could be too less than we expected, furthermore, students established a cliché in them that CAT is AI and AI will replace them, by no means will they accept this. ^[6]

“Efficient first” tag has been long and still will stick to Chinese translation market; we should accept this and be much more open to this technique and make use of it. What is certain, that the guidance of undergraduate stage will of great significance, which in return, will open up the horizon of students and lead them to a higher level of latest translation market.

5. Conclusions

To conclude, the translation market of China is more complex than it used to be, though in a rather declining and negative status, we still need to actively find solutions and make changes as soon as possible. As the stop of Higher education, universities and colleges shall spare effort in making reforms. Join effort should be seen exceedingly in the days to come. As the old Chinese saying goes—‘We still have a long way to go’.

Be positive and active to the situation that we confronted with so far, and make sure all the changes were happened in a mild way, if not, it will not do any help but do great harm or even corrupt the source of Chinese translators and interpreters. Every step ought to be cautious enough to carry out.

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