

Exploring Cross-Cultural Aspects of English Translation Teaching in the Context of International Exchange and Cooperation in Universities

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Abstract: With increasingly frequent international exchange and cooperation in universities, cross-cultural communication has become an important dimension of English translation teaching in universities. Universities should actively optimize their educational models, deepen international exchange and cooperation, build bridges for cultural exchanges, and create a new international educational environment. Starting from the background of international exchange and cooperation, this article deeply explores the inherent needs of English translation teaching in universities, discusses the practice of cross-cultural translation teaching, enhances students' cultural awareness and cross-cultural translation abilities, and provides a reference for the reform and innovation of English translation in universities.

Keywords: University international exchange and cooperation; English translation; Cross-cultural

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1. Introduction

In the era of globalization and informatization, there are more and more channels for people to access information, and cultural collisions have intensified. At the same time, the importance of English as an international language has become more prominent. English translation teaching in universities can cultivate excellent translation talents, promote external communication, and enhance China's international influence. English translation is not just about translating English into Chinese, but about grasping cultural differences, achieving faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance, and fully building a bridge of communication. Therefore, English translation from a cross-cultural perspective is worthy of deep exploration. Universities should take advantage of the "express train" of international exchange and cooperation, keep up with the pace of the times, cultivate students' cross-cultural awareness and cross-cultural communication skills in the context of international exchange and cooperation, effectively improve their translation skills, and become translation

talents with an international perspective.

2. Current analysis of cross-cultural English translation teaching in universities

In current university English translation teaching, translation is often viewed as a skill that requires craftsmanship, but lacks a cultural “core”. The main objective of translation teaching is to equip students with specific translation methods and enhance their translation proficiency through continuous practice. However, in this process, cross-cultural aspects are often overlooked. Teachers focus on whether students can translate accurately, without considering whether they can understand the meaning of the translation in a cross-cultural context ^[1]. Teachers also overemphasize the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English, and approach translation ability enhancement from the perspective of skill training, introducing various translation techniques through a “piecemeal” approach. In the long run, students may encounter issues such as mistranslation, confusion, and logical deviations in their translation practice. This teaching model leads to a weakening of students’ cultural awareness, causing them to translate only based on the literal meaning and struggle to translate cultural elements, historical references, and national allusions skillfully.

Moreover, teachers fail to view translation teaching through a developmental lens, lacking accurate insight into the requirements of the times. This results in a mismatch between talent output and societal needs, further leading to translation teaching into a vicious cycle. Systematic investigations and practices reveal that many university students lack cross-cultural knowledge and awareness of cross-cultural language learning, with urgent needs for improvement. When translating, students often rely on learned translation methods, resulting in translations that are devoid of aesthetic value and linguistic interest, making international communication more difficult and even leading to embarrassing situations. To address these issues, universities must actively integrate into the trend of internationalization, optimize English translation teaching methods, reposition translation teaching, and fully recognize its importance.

2. The importance of university English translation teaching in international exchange and cooperation

2.1. Bringing in and absorbing excellent foreign experience

In the context of international exchange and cooperation, universities are more open and actively participate in cross-border, cross-ethnic, and cross-cultural educational exchanges, achieving comprehensive improvements in educational quality in the process of internationalization ^[2]. English translation teaching plays a crucial role in this process. It can cultivate translation talents and strengthen Sino-foreign exchanges. Through effective translation, universities can more effectively absorb excellent foreign experience, achieve “bringing in,” draw nutrients, open their minds, comply with the requirements of the times, and constantly improve themselves. Through the effective implementation of English translation teaching, students can master translation skills, correctly understand Chinese and English, and effectively translate various content in international exchanges and cooperation, thereby enabling more efficient collaboration.

2.2. Go global and showcase the elegance of Chinese culture

The teaching of English translation in universities under international exchange and cooperation facilitates the external dissemination of Chinese culture and enhances China’s international influence. By exporting outstanding talents in the field of translation, Chinese culture can also be revitalized in international exchange

and cooperation, gaining new vitality on the international stage. Through effective translation teaching, students can promote Chinese culture in the process of Chinese-English translation, achieving the goal of “going global,” accurately conveying China’s history, traditional culture, and values, eliminating cultural misunderstandings, and enhancing cultural soft power.

3. Practical strategies for cross-cultural English translation teaching in universities under international exchange and cooperation

3.1. Popularize cultural knowledge and cultivate students’ cross-cultural awareness

In the context of international exchange and cooperation, English translation teaching in universities should shift from traditional teaching methods to a cultural perspective, constructing a translation teaching model with cultural attributes. This allows students to consciously analyze the cultures of different languages and experience cultural differences in translation practice, thereby effectively cultivating cross-cultural awareness. Universities should introduce cultural learning resources, focusing on the design of cultural courses from both Chinese and English perspectives, to prepare for effective translation teaching. Teachers should guide students to learn more cultural knowledge, popularize culture, and emphasize cultural accumulation, allowing students to consciously discover, explore, and understand culture in the translation process. Based on the popularization of cultural knowledge, teachers should focus on cultivating students’ cross-cultural awareness, allowing them to understand the characteristics of different cultures and further explore how to conduct cross-cultural communication and translation. This promotes international exchange and cooperation, enabling students to grow into new-era translation talents with cultural awareness, communication skills, and translation literacy.

Through the popularization of cultural knowledge, translation teaching in universities can improve students’ translation literacy, enabling them to translate English from a broader perspective and address issues such as one-sidedness and vagueness that arise in previous translation processes. In specific course teaching practices, teachers popularize cultural knowledge from both Chinese and English perspectives, allowing students to understand English culture while continuing to feel their cultural lineage. This enables them to achieve meaningful, smooth, and spiritually compatible translations. Nida divides culture into ecological culture, linguistic culture, religious culture, material culture, and social culture. Teachers provide students with different cultural knowledge, allowing them to fully understand the differences between English and Chinese cultures. For example, a teacher tells students, “Chinese is known for its refinement and lacks connectives. English, on the other hand, has a large number of connectives, and English vocabulary is more polysemous.” The teacher provides students with specific translation topics, such as “Shaping a campus to better serve the community,” which students translate as “Shaping a campus to better serve the community.” The teacher asks students to rethink the meaning of “community” in English from a cultural perspective. Students recognize that “community” is not narrowly defined as a “community” but broadly refers to “society.” Serving society is one of the major functions of universities. Given this, the translation could be: “Beautify the campus, serve society.” In another English translation teaching case, the teacher popularizes specific cultural knowledge, such as religious culture, folk culture, and festival culture, in the English language family. This allows students to analyze culture before translating, identify potential cultural obstacles that may arise during the translation process, and further find the best translation method, thereby improving translation quality.

The popularization of cultural knowledge also requires the optimization and construction of translation courses. Universities can design and develop specific cross-cultural communication courses, introducing cultural knowledge in all aspects, allowing students to understand cultural customs in English-speaking

countries and enhance their professional literacy during the translation process. Through innovative educational methods, students' cross-cultural awareness is significantly enhanced, enabling them to independently explore cultural integration points and improve their translation and cross-cultural communication skills.

3.2. Establishing an international education philosophy and effectively introducing cultural context

Translation is not only a transformation of language but also an adjustment of cultural context. Language is the carrier and an essential component of culture, and there is an inseparable relationship between language and culture ^[3]. Due to different cultural backgrounds, English and Chinese languages have their unique characteristics. Translation teaching in universities should enable students to understand the cultures of both the source and target languages. Only by possessing cross-cultural communication skills can students achieve "the closest natural equivalence" in their translations. Therefore, universities should establish an international education philosophy, update translation teaching materials, courses, and teaching activities, embrace diverse cultures, and allow students to engage in translation within specific cultural contexts, comprehending values, aesthetics, and rich cultural information. Teachers should provide targeted training to enable students to become cultural "adapters," organically combining translation and culture to enhance their cross-cultural translation abilities.

In traditional university English translation teaching, teachers tend to have students mechanically translate different texts, accumulate translation knowledge, and improve their translation skills through repetitive practice. This teaching model has distinct advantages and disadvantages. In the short term, students' translation skills are improved, and various aspects of their abilities gradually mature. However, in the long run, students may become trapped in a rigid translation pattern, struggling to adapt flexibly or effectively translate various content in complex international exchanges. To address these issues, universities should start with international exchanges and cooperation, establish an international education philosophy, connect translation classrooms with international exchanges, and naturally expose students to cultural contexts during the language learning process. This approach encourages students to consciously translate from both Chinese and English cultural perspectives, achieving the goals of language and cultural exchange. For instance, in daily translation practices, teachers conduct special training in cross-cultural translation, providing students with translation topics involving cultural content. They guide students to first interpret the English cultural context and then find corresponding vocabulary in the Chinese cultural context, thereby understanding language and culture in the translation process, deepening their memory, and laying a foundation for future translations in international exchanges and cooperation. In the practice of curriculum construction, universities also introduce experts from the cultural field to further guide students in analyzing cultural contexts and recognizing that translation is not only a process of language conversion but also a process of cultural interaction.

Guided by the cultural context, students not only understand English culture but also effectively showcase the charm of Chinese culture in their translations. They accurately convey the original text's meaning while finding the most suitable Chinese expressions. Students can also effectively translate unique Chinese expressions into English, thereby enhancing their cross-cultural communication skills. For example, in translation teaching, a teacher presents a Chinese-to-English translation topic: "There are often people playing Chinese chess in hutongs, with many people watching. If the outcome is uncertain, they are happy to end in a draw." A student translates it as: "There are often people playing Chinese chess in hutongs, with many people watching. If neither side can win, the players will be happy to call it a draw." This translation effectively conveys the cultural

concept embodied in “ending in a draw,” thus achieving the goal of cross-cultural communication.

3.3. Creating cross-cultural translation scenarios with information technology

In the context of the continuous development of information technology, international exchanges and cooperation among universities can be carried out more effectively. At the same time, information technology has also promoted the innovation of English translation teaching models. Modern teaching methods can help to realize the role transformation of teachers, that is, the role of teachers is no longer mainly as disseminators of translated knowledge, but changes from “teaching” to “guiding learning”; students change from passive recipients to active participants, becoming the subjects of knowledge exploration and construction ^[4]. Universities can use information technology to innovate translation teaching, introduce international and cross-cultural exchanges, and comprehensively create cross-cultural translation scenarios. For example, they can combine artificial intelligence and virtual technology to simulate international communication scenarios, allowing students to immerse themselves in the experience of translation. Universities can also conduct online international exchanges and cooperation through remote connections, enabling students to interact with people from different countries and cultural backgrounds. Through instant interaction and feedback, students can hone their translation, expression, and adaptability skills. In such translation scenarios, students solve real translation problems, intuitively feel the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, and optimize their translation methods from a cross-cultural perspective.

In specific teaching practices, universities have comprehensively updated their educational equipment for English translation teaching, added diversified teaching tools, and effectively introduced information technology. This allows students to participate in international exchanges within the classroom, breaking through time and space limitations, and enabling them to practice translation skills and cultivate cultural awareness in cross-cultural contexts. For instance, teachers can start by simulating international communication scenarios, such as international economic conferences, using virtual environments, and have students play the role of Chinese translators to systematically translate relevant content. In simulated scenarios, students recognize the importance of cross-cultural communication, translate relevant cultural content through experience, and enhance their translation skills. Universities also organize online international exchange activities, allowing students to participate in real translation practices through remote connections, combining their translation knowledge with specific cultural contexts to showcase their talents.

3.4. Organizing cross-cultural practical activities based on international exchanges and cooperation

The translation industry increasingly demands talented individuals with innovative spirits and practical abilities. Traditional university English translation teaching, which focuses on mastering translation techniques and understanding the English language, is no longer suitable for the new requirements of the current era. In the new era, university English translation teaching should dare to break through self-imposed limitations, pursue innovation, and be based on international exchanges and cooperation. It should seize every opportunity for cross-cultural communication, organize cross-cultural practical activities, enable students to improve their translation abilities through cross-cultural exchanges, deepen their cultural understanding through practical problem-solving, and effectively promote Chinese culture to the world, achieving transformation and innovation in translation teaching. Universities can establish long-term and stable cooperative relationships with foreign universities, research institutions, international organizations, and other entities, build platforms for international

academic exchanges and cooperation, expand their international horizons, continuously absorb excellent experiences, and improve their educational quality. At the same time, students can gain more translation opportunities and materials through international exchanges, developing a cross-cultural awareness. Universities can also introduce foreign teachers to help students systematically understand culture and broaden their international horizons through diverse cultural exchanges. Through international exchanges and cooperation, universities can create a culturally interactive and open “learning environment” that encourages students to participate in translation practices with a cross-cultural communication attitude, innovate translation methods based on cultural backgrounds, enhance translation abilities, and become outstanding translation talents in the context of globalization.

In today’s context of cultural globalization, translators, who shoulder the dual tasks of cultural exchange and dissemination, not only need to introduce foreign cultures to enrich local culture and traditions, but also need to promote their own culture to the world and carry forward local culture and national traditions. In college English translation teaching, colleges and universities start from international exchanges and cooperation, cooperate with foreign universities, carry out interactive teaching practices, conduct study visits and research activities, allowing students to showcase themselves in international exchanges and actively innovate in translation. For example, universities organize cultural exchange activities with the theme of “Dragon Boat Festival”, guiding students to spread Chinese festival culture in international activities, while also understanding the festival culture of English-speaking countries and enhancing their cultural awareness. Students participate in specific practical activities, translating poems about the Dragon Boat Festival such as “Who first spoke of the Dragon Boat Festival? The ancient legend tells of Qu Yuan. It’s a pity that the vast and empty Chu River cannot wash away the injustice suffered by the loyal minister.” into English, and effectively explaining the origin and customs of the Dragon Boat Festival in the process. Universities also invite native English-speaking foreign teachers to help students deeply understand the culture and gain a clearer understanding of relatively vague cultural content. Through embodied practice, students understand culture through translation, grasp the meaning of translation in cross-cultural communication, establish clear learning goals, actively disseminate Chinese culture, and significantly improve the effectiveness of translation teaching.

4. Conclusion

In summary, infiltrating cross-cultural knowledge in college English translation teaching, cultivating students’ cross-cultural awareness, and updating the university English translation teaching model from the perspective of international exchanges and cooperation are conducive to improving the translation skills of contemporary college students. This approach can guide students to effectively translate in cross-cultural communication, establish cultural confidence, and form an open and inclusive attitude. Colleges and universities should continuously innovate English translation teaching methods, actively participate in international exchanges and cooperation, allow students to improve their translation literacy through cross-cultural experiences, and become outstanding translation talents needed by the times.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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