

Enhancing Intercultural Communication Capabilities in College Translation Education: The Status Quo and Curriculum Design

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Abstract

The implementation of “Promotion of Chinese Culture Abroad” strategy in China puts forward higher requirements for the cultivation of high-caliber translation personnel, who shoulder the mission of knowledge dissemination and cultural exchange. Therefore, it becomes the strategic need of national development to foster and enhance the intercultural communication capabilities of translation personnel. However, there are still problems that should be addressed urgently in the cultivation of translation talents in China, particularly in curriculum design of higher education. To meet the requirements of constructing practical and professional translation talents in the new era, this article proposed a comprehensive curriculum design in terms of curriculum system, curriculum content, and curriculum ideology.

Keywords

Translation Education; Talent Cultivation; Intercultural Communication; Curriculum Ideology.

1. Introduction

The report of the 19th CPC National Congress proposed to promote the capacity for China's engagement in international communication so as to tell China's stories well, present a true, multi-dimensional, and panoramic view of China, and enhance China's cultural soft power. [1] In the context of globalization, the enhancement of soft power inevitably involves improving the language, content, and means of communication in promoting the international influence of Chinese culture. Undoubtedly, the implementation of the “Promotion of Chinese Culture Abroad” strategy puts forward higher requirements for translation personnel cultivation. Translation personnel, who shoulder the mission of knowledge dissemination and cultural exchange, have become the human resource that needs to be systematically cultivated under the background of globalization in the new era.

Facing the new challenges and tasks, there are still some urgent problems in the field of translation talents cultivation in China, including insufficient interdisciplinary knowledge reserves, lack of international vision, and inadequate awareness of using external discourse for intercultural communication. It is necessary to construct an effective system of cultivating translation talents that is in line with the new situation, creating a practical and professional array of translation personnel that meet the need of the country in the new era. Therefore, the development of translation discipline should meet the strategic requirements of strengthening China's cultural soft power and capacity for engaging in international communication, and efforts should be made to improve the intercultural communication capabilities of translation talents in a long-term, systematic and strategic way. To this end, a comprehensive and scientific curriculum design should be formulated in terms of curriculum system, curriculum content, and curriculum ideology.

2. Curriculum System

Translation education plays a key role in the cultivation of translation talents. However, there are many insufficient aspects in translation classroom teaching and translation courses in colleges that make translation talents cultivation lag behind the need of social and economic development. In order to foster translation talents that can meet the need of international communication, education departments should clarify top-level design of the objectives of translation education, encourage colleges to take their geographical advantages in communicating with the target countries, and construct a translation curriculum system that not only conforms to the current discipline development but also takes future development trends of the discipline into account. Colleges should strive to create a better language and culture exchange environment in their overall planning, which aims to lay a solid foundation for the “Promotion of Chinese Culture Abroad”.

In view of the diversified values and language systems of different countries, especially the barriers and unfamiliarity of discourse, it is impossible to use the same discourse style for different countries or regions in intercultural communication. In order to avoid the communication barriers in translation caused by cultural differences, translators should not only be proficient in two languages, but in two cultures. [2] Therefore, it is necessary to change the current situation in which too much emphasis is put on the language skills for students majoring in translation. [3] Colleges should coordinate the course content and in-class time allocation, follow the learners’ language learning rules, ensure the continuity and cohesion of different course levels, and make full use of the Internet platform to improve the quality of translation education.

Considering the fact that the depth and breadth of intercultural communication is no longer what it used to be, classroom teaching which solely focuses on the culture of the target country cannot fully meet the new need of intercultural communication. Therefore, the content of translation education should be broadened to include politics, economy, customs, science, literature, art, philosophy, religion, etc. on the one hand, and values, ethics, ways of thinking, behavior patterns, and communication rules on the other. In other words, educators must pay attention to the cultivation of learners’ cross-cultural awareness in translation education so that they can understand and respect the cultural differences, and get familiar with the historical and cultural accumulations of various countries. Only in this way can they maximally meet the value orientations of both groups from the source culture and the target culture in translation practice.

3. Curriculum Content

In order to meet the need of enhancing China’s cultural soft power and international communication, translation courses should be aimed at cultivating students’ comprehensive qualities, professional ethics, bilingual skills, encyclopedic knowledge, humanistic literacy, and intercultural communication capabilities. [4] Translation courses should focus on the following aspects to foster students’ intercultural communication capabilities: First and foremost, the courses should cultivate students’ ideological and moral qualities and correct worldview, outlook on life, and values, enable students to have an understanding and implementation of the national policies, a profound love for their family and their country, an international perspective, and a sense of social responsibility. Furthermore, translation is a cross-language and cross-cultural communication activity which involves different languages and multiple cultures. It also involves many aspects of social and cultural knowledge including history, religion, politics, geography, military, diplomacy, economics, literature, art, science, and customs. [5] Therefore, the courses should incorporate abundant professional knowledge, cultural knowledge, as well as interdisciplinary knowledge. In addition, translation courses

should be designed to cultivate students' ability to skillfully use the target language to express the ideas of the source language, and employ modern information technology and various tools for translation.

In the selection of curriculum resources, educators should integrate the following resources into translation courses. On top of the list are the resources that explain in depth the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's series of speeches, "Chinese Dream" and contemporary Chinese values, as well as resources reflecting contemporary China's economic, political, cultural, and social development. What comes next are resources highlighting the characteristics of national culture, the essence of Chinese culture, and traditional Chinese culture, which are very precious and rare resources for the development of translation discipline with Chinese characteristics. Traditional Chinese culture is the basis for the formation of Chinese people's character and way of thinking. The various elements contained in traditional culture have important enlightening significance for the development of human civilization, and therefore can provide experience and reference for the development of the world. [6] The integration of Chinese traditional culture in translation courses will guide students to comprehend the rule of cultural development, and thus have a clear reflection and understanding of their own culture. Last but not least, translation courses should embrace high-quality resources from foreign philosophy and social sciences, which should be integrated with the aforementioned Chinese resources to promote innovation in knowledge, theory, and method in translation courses with Chinese characteristics.

4. Curriculum Ideology

Despite the fact that curriculum ideology is being carried out in the field of foreign language education which focuses on the integration of Chinese elements, there are still instances where translation personnel do not have a deep understanding of their own culture and lack enough research on narratives of China's stories in foreign languages. [7] Translation courses should implement the fundamental task of "cultivating people with virtue" and undertake the mission of nurturing all-round socialist builders and successors. While fostering students' solid language skills and extensive knowledge, educators should also establish students' cultural confidence and capabilities to disseminate Chinese culture. The new era has given the translation profession a new mission—to serve the national strategic need in strengthening the ideological construction of the curriculum. Based on the primary issue of "what kind of personnel should we foster", educators should find the convergence between the system of ideological content and the system of translation curriculum in order to fulfill the fundamental task of "cultivating people with virtue". The new-era translation personnel should have a strong sense of love for their family and country, and the capabilities to promote Chinese culture abroad and demonstrate a modern, civilized, prosperous, and powerful China to the outside world.

How to shoulder the important mission of serving the national strategies such as "Promotion of Chinese Culture Abroad", "the Belt and Road Initiative", and constructing "a human community with a shared future"? It is a question to be considered in depth for the translation personnel, and it is also the starting point for establishing curriculum ideology in translation education. Practitioners of translation should be supplied with professional knowledge that takes "the love for family and country" as the root and takes "the cultivation of people with virtue" as the foundation. It should be incorporated into translation courses that students must be able to tell the stories of Chinese civilization, Chinese thoughts, Chinese values, Chinese theories, Chinese system, and Chinese achievements in foreign languages. In this way, translation courses will foster the inheritance of Chinese civilization and enhance students' ability to promote Chinese culture abroad.

Translation educators should continuously deepen the integration and development of curriculum ideology and professional courses, taking knowledge acquisition, innovative thinking, and dedication to the motherland as the key point of translation courses. In translation practice, for instance, the proportion of relevant background knowledge such as national conditions and national policies should be relatively increased. Through exposure to the history of exploration and struggle of the Communist Party of China on the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, students will be stimulated to acknowledge their identification with China's socialism roads and thus establish a theoretical awareness of national confidence. In addition, extracurricular activities can be effectively carried out with the help of international conferences to foster students' cultural awareness in international cultural exchanges through authentic intercultural practice.

5. Conclusion

In the communication process between different cultures, cultural collisions and fusions continue to occur. Intercultural communication has its own unique nature, and good communication undoubtedly requires good translation. Under such circumstances, translation personnel should acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the rules of cultural interaction, conflict, and dissemination. The mission and status of translation have been highlighted as China strives to enhance its external discourse system and establish its image as a contributor to global development and a defender of international order. Translation education, correspondingly, should be optimized to enhance the international communication capabilities of translation personnel in order to tell China's stories well and make China's voice heard.

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