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Exploring College English Translation Teaching Based on Translation Competence Scale from CSE

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Abstract:

There are problems of college English translation teaching in China. The translation competence scale from *China's Standards of English Language Ability* provides practical and measurable standard for college English translation teaching when facing and exploring these problems. In this paper, we make the exploration of teaching objectives and requirements, curriculum provision, evaluation and testing in college English translation teaching based on translation competence scale from *China's Standards of English Language Ability*. In the first place, the emphasis of college English translation teaching turns on how to improve the practical competence of English learners and users. Then, the translation competence scale provides the direction for curriculum provision and teachers should choose and adjust appropriate teaching content. Lastly, it could establish a self-assessment scale for English learners and users beyond the traditional college English evaluation model based on the translation competence scale.

1. Introduction

With the introduction of the national strategy of the "Going Global" and "Belt and Road Initiative" in China, especially under the concept of "How to Tell Chinese Stories in English", translation has become increasing prominent as the bridge in the role of cross-language and cross-cultural communication. It is becoming urgent for the demand of compound translation talents. What kind of levels of translation competence should English learners and users achieve in order to meet the needs of society? How should college English translation teaching be reformed so that English learners and users can achieve the corresponding translation competence?

In the college English teaching, it is found that English learners and users feel that learning translation is impossible to start because of the lack of students' language

ability and the neglect of translation process and strategies in the previous translation teaching. *China's Standards of English Language Ability* (CSE) provides a set of practical reference frameworks for teaching and learning objectives. Among them, the translation competence scale offers a measure for the reform and practice of college English translation teaching.

2. An Overview of the Translation Competence Scale from CSE

2.1. An Overview of the China's Standards of English Language Ability

In February 2018, *China's Standards of English Language Ability* was officially released by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China and the National Language Commission of the People's Republic of China and it was officially implemented on June 1, 2018. In the past decade, the series of books on CSE had also been published and the research on CSE has become a hot spot in the past ten years [1].

Basically, the English language competence scales from CSE were divided into nine levels for English learners and users (Table 1), with every three levels corresponding to one stage. For most of college students in China, they are intermediate learners and users and during the stage of improvement for learning English. There are three levels for the intermediate or improving stage for learning English, namely, the fourth level, the fifth level and the sixth level.

Table1. *English Language Ability Levels from CSE.*

English ability development stages	Level
Advanced stage (Advanced Learners and Users)	Level 9
	Level 8
	Level 7
Intermediate stage (Intermediate Learners and Users)	Level 6
	Level 5
	Level 4
Elementary stage (Elementary Learners and Users)	Level 3
	Level 2
	Level 1

2.2. Translation Competence Scale from CSE

As one of the essential component sub-scales, translation competence scale aims at the whole process of translating which is an intercultural and inter-language mediating activity in which source texts are seen as input and target texts are seen as output. There are scales for translation competence, translation strategies and self-assessment scale for translation competence.

For translation competence, it refers to the written language transference competence demonstrated by language learners and users in the participation of intercultural and trans-lingual activities [2]. The scales for translation competence cover translating description, translating narration, translating exposition, translating instruction, translating argumentation and translating interaction. For translation strategies, there are planning, execution and appraising/compensation which referring to the skills, methods or actions applied in solving problems or improving translating effects in the study and practice of translating. For self-assessment scales, they can be used by both language learners and users in assessing their own English competence

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[2]. However, it is pointed that the overall scale for translation competence starts from Level 5 for the translation competence is based upon certain bilingual capabilities.

3. The Exploration of Translation Competence Scale from CSE in College English Translation Teaching

3.1. The Current Situation and Problems of College English Translation Teaching in China

From December 2013, there was an adjustment for the structure and question types of College English Test Band Four (CET-4) and College English Test Band Six (CET-6) from the National College English Examination Committee in China. Among them, the "translation" examinations were adjusted from the translation of single sentences to the translation of paragraphs involving many aspects such as China's history, culture, economy, and social development with 140 to 160 Chinese characters to complete in CET-4 and 180 to 200 Chinese characters to complete in CET-6.

According to the main research from 2013, some scholars in China put forward the current situation and problems in college English translation teaching. From Liu Xiaomin and Liu Jinlong, they thought college translation teaching had always been a weakness in college English teaching. For a long time, the problems in college English translation teaching in China were mainly in four aspects: lacking overall planning for college English translation; insufficient attention to college English translation teaching; the limited traditional teaching mode and the inconspicuous teaching effect and the restriction on improvement of translation competence for non-English major students [3]. Lu suggested that it was needed to find a balance between teaching translation and translation teaching, and introduced the most basic translation skills and common sense of the comparison between English and Chinese language at the level of college English teaching [4]. Sun studied that problems in college English translation teaching covered incomplete translation teaching system, the unqualified of college English translation teachers, the insufficient translation competence of students and the lack of the study and practice of translation skills for students, and lack of understanding of the context and cultural background of the language [5]. Kang discovered that translation teaching still had not received attention it deserved in the *College English Teaching Curriculum Requirements* in China in the past fifty years, and even the translation was once rejected or avoided in college English teaching [6]. From Wang and Chen, problems were lacking receive attention the college English translation teaching reserved, lacking overall planning for the goals, contents and assessment requirements of college English translation teaching, lacking innovation teaching mode and method of college English translation teaching and ineffectiveness of college English translation teaching as well as students with low level of translation [7]. Cao and Zhang believed that college English translation teaching had been on the fringes of college English teaching [8]. In 2017, Liu studied the theoretical and practical research on college English translation teaching and found that there were omitted cultural factors and the weakened practicality of translation teaching [9]. Huang concluded that the deficiencies in college English translation teaching were insufficient attentions to college English translation teaching, the separated teaching content from the actual needs of society, the lack of college English translation practice platform and emphasis on theoretical knowledge and neglecting the training for communicative ability [10].

Based on the mentioned current situation and problems in college English translation teaching for the decade, it was concluded that it was common to pay less attention on college English translation teaching and the problems on macroscopic and microscopic aspects like teaching syllabus, teaching system, teaching modes and methods, also including factors like the teaching educators and learners. Facing these problems in college English translation teaching, therefore, the translation competence scale from CSE provides practical and measurable standard for the exploration of college English translation teaching.

3.2. The Exploration of College English Translation Teaching Based on Translation Competence Scale from CSE

The CSE defines the levels of English ability of Chinese learners and users of English, and describes the features of their English language ability at each CSE level. The CSE is applicable to English assessment, and can be used as a yardstick for English teaching and learning as well [2].

3.2.1. The Exploration of Teaching Objectives and Requirements in College English Translation Teaching Based on Translation Competence Scale from CSE

Based on *College English Teaching Guidelines,* the objectives of college English teaching are divided into three stages: elementary, improved and developed stages. In this three-stage target system, the basic target for elementary stage is determined by the basic needs of most students in English learning which is discussed most in the paper. Furthermore, there are three corresponding levels of teaching requirements according to the teaching objectives of the three-stage target system. The teaching requirements of the basic objectives mainly aim at students who have passed the college entrance examination in English, and are also the basic requirements that most students should meet when they graduate. That is to say, for students who are basically qualified in English in the college entrance examination, the teaching requirements of the basic objectives may be appropriately adjusted by the educators in the college [11]. For some students who have passed the college entrance examination in English, the teaching requirements of the basic objectives in college English translation teaching may be adjusted and revised based on scales of translation competence from CSE. While for many students who haven't passed, the teaching requirements in college English translation teaching should be lower firstly and then adjusted gradually to achieve the basic objectives.

From the descriptive framework for language ability, there are the descriptive frameworks for language comprehension ability, language production ability, pragmatic ability, linguistic knowledge, translation competence and language use strategy and so forth. Specially, translation competence can be classified into six aspects like translating description, translating narration, translating exposition, translating argumentation, translating instruction, and translating interaction (Table 2).

That means the translation competence is the competence of language application, and objectives and requirements of college English translation teaching can be revised and adjusted from the six aspects of translating.

Compared the Table 2 with Table 3, it is noticed that for the translating description, the requirement is to translate texts describing spatial layout and the natural environment, producing faithful and accurate translations; for the translating narration, the requirement is to translate popular narrative texts, accurately and fluently

expressing key information and using diverse sentence patterns; for the translating exposition, the requirement is to translate short, simple texts on topics related to daily life, reproducing the key information; for the translating argumentation, the requirement is to translate argumentative texts in his/her field, producing accurate translations that faithfully reproduce viewpoints and attitudes of the original; for the translating instruction, the requirement is to translate common instructive texts, fully conveying the information and clearly expressing word meaning; for the translating interaction, the requirement is to accurately translate common communicative texts.

Table 2. Descriptive framework for translation from CSE (partial).

		Translating description
Interpreting & Translation	Translation	Translating narration
		Translating exposition
		Translating argumentation
		Translating instruction
		Translating interaction

Table 3. Overall translation competence from CSE (partial).

CSE 6	Can translate argumentative texts in his/her field, such as argumentative articles on common themes and commentary articles on social activities, producing accurate translations that faithfully reproduce viewpoints and attitudes of the original. Can translate popular narrative texts, such as celebrities' anecdotes and short articles on people's social activities, accurately and fluently expressing key information and using diverse sentence patterns. Can accurately translate common communicative texts, such as job applications, letters of recommendation, and formal invitations.
CSE 5	Can translate short, simple texts on topics related to daily life, reproducing the key information. Can translate texts describing spatial layout and the natural environment, producing faithful and accurate translations. Can translate common instructive texts, such as public signs and schedules for routine activities, fully conveying the information and clearly expressing word meaning.

Among them, it is concluded that translating description, translating exposition and translating instruction are the Level 5 of the translation competence while translating narration, translating argumentation and translating interaction are the Level 6 of the translation competence. As the translation competence is based upon certain bilingual capabilities, the overall scale for translation competence starts from Level 5.

Therefore, with the four semesters of college English, the teaching objective of college English translation teaching for the first two semesters is to achieve Level 5 when they are freshmen while the teaching objective for the second year is to reach the Level 6 when they are sophomore. Similarly, with the two semesters of college English, the teaching objective of college English translation teaching for the first semester is to achieve Level 5 while the teaching objective for the second semester is to reach the Level 6. In other words, in the first year or semester, the corresponding requirements can relate with Level 5, like English learners and users can translate short, simple texts on topics related to daily life, reproducing the key information, can translate texts describing spatial layout and the natural environment, producing faithful and accurate translations and can translate common instructive texts, fully conveying the information and clearly expressing word meaning. In the second year or semester, the corresponding requirements can be in link with Level 6, English learners and users can translate argumentative texts in his/her field, producing accurate translations that faithfully reproduce viewpoints and attitudes of the original,

can translate popular narrative texts, accurately and fluently expressing key information and using diverse sentence patterns and can accurately translate common communicative texts. The teaching objectives and requirements of college English translation teaching are clearer, more specific and practical based on translation competence scale from CSE.

3.2.2. The Exploration of Curriculum Provision in College English Translation Teaching Based on Translation Competence Scale from CSE

Based on *College English Teaching Guidelines*, curriculum provision is the main support for achieving teaching objectives and teaching requirements, and it is also the concentrated expression of teaching objectives and teaching requirements in the teaching plan. It is the arrangement and regulation of curriculum structure and curriculum content. The main content of college English teaching can be divided into three parts: general English, English for special purposes and cross-cultural communication, and thus form three corresponding courses. College English courses consist of compulsory courses, limited elective courses and optional elective courses [11].

For the majority of colleges and universities in China, the main content of college English teaching is for general English. As an essential component of college English courses, general English course is aims to cultivate students' listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation skills with teaching English vocabulary, grammar, text and pragmatic knowledge [11]. As it has been mentioned above, there are also three goals or stages for general English courses: elementary, improved and developed goals or stages. In terms of teaching arrangement, the elementary goal or stage is suitable for the initial stage course of college English and the improved goal or stage for most of students who have a high demand for English learning in China. General English courses related to elementary and improved goals or stages are compulsory courses, and it is recommended to arrange no less than four periods per week for the courses of basic and improving goals.

For the four periods of each week, there is at least one period to devote to the translation teaching in the offline classroom. That is the so-called the language use strategies which are organized, planned, and targeted action steps and methods to accomplish a verbal behavior (Table 4). From the CSE, translation strategies, which include planning, execution and appraising/compensation, refer to the skills, methods or actions applied in solving problems or improving translating effects in the study and practice of translating [2].

Table 4. Descriptive framework for language use strategies from CSE (partial).

Strategies	Translation strategies	Planning
		Execution
		Appraising/Repair/Compensation

Considering the teaching procedures of offline classroom, there are generally three components: before translation, during the translation process and after completing the translation. Comparing the three teaching procedures with the three translation strategies for the translation teaching, it might be concluded that the emphasis of curriculum is to plan before translation, then the emphasis of curriculum turns to execute during the translation process and the curriculum focus is to appraise and compensate after completing the translation.

Due to the fact that the overall scale for translation competence starts from Level 5, the college English translation courses of basic and improving goals could be in line with the translation strategies of Level 5 and Level 6 (Table 5).

Table 5. *Translation strategies from CSE (partial).*

CSE 6	Before translation, can reasonably plan the process of translation according to the translation task; acquire relevant professional knowledge; and determine the meanings of terminologies through commonly used translation aids. During the translation process, can convert sentence patterns where necessary. After completing the translation, can correct the translation mistakes of conveying incomplete information or unfaithful content.
CSE 5	Before translation, can clarify the purpose(s) of the translation and consult the meanings of words using reference books or cyber resources. During the translation process, can appropriately make additions or omissions where necessary. After completing the translation, can correct improper wording and grammatical mistakes using reference books and/or cyber resources.

Therefore, the first year or semester of curriculum provision should cover the content of translation strategy of Level 5. That is to say, before translation, English learners and users can clarify the purpose(s) of the translation and consult the meanings of words using reference books or cyber resources. During the translation process, English learners and users can appropriately make additions or omissions where necessary. After completing the translation, English learners and users can correct improper wording and grammatical mistakes using reference books and/or cyber resources. The second year or semester of curriculum provision should cover the content of translation strategy of Level 6, in other words, before translation, English learners and users can reasonably plan the process of translation according to the translation task; acquire relevant professional knowledge; and determine the meanings of terminologies through commonly used translation aids. During the translation process, English learners and users can convert sentence patterns where necessary. After completing the translation, English learners and users can correct the translation mistakes of conveying incomplete information or unfaithful content.

Based on the above analysis, basically, what might the correlated curricula or courses cover in the period in the college English translation teaching?

From Table 6, for the first academic year or semester, the correlated curricula are basic translation software before translation for planning, because the translation strategies of Level 5 are to look up new words and expressions in the original with the use of reference books, online dictionaries, search engines, and/or other resources; basic translation skills during the translation process for execution because the translation strategies of Level 5 are to translate Chinese sentences into English words or phrases according to English grammar rules, using appropriate English expressions, use transliteration to translate proper nouns, etc; and basic translation standards after completing the translation for appraising/compensation to revise the translation.

For the second academic year or semester, the correlated curricula are translation software before translation for planning, because the translation strategies of Level 6 are to determine the meanings of words and expressions in the particular context of the original with the use of translation aids; translation skills during the translation process for execution because the translation strategies of Level 6 are to supplement information omitted in the original, give proper annotations or additional information, add conjunctions indicating logical connections, flexibly convert verbs, nouns,

pronouns, and adverbs into other parts of speech, flexibly use translation skills, etc; and translation standards after completing the translation for appraising/compensation to change wording and sentence structures based on the writing styles of the original and find and revise inconsistencies and incomplete expressions of information in the translation.

Table 6. *Correlated curricula for each procedure.*

Level	Academic Year/Semester	Procedures	Emphasis of Curriculum	Correlated Curricula
CSE 6	The Second Year/Semester	Before Translation	Planning	Translation Software
		During the Translation Process	Execution	Translation Skills
		After Completing the Translation	Appraising/Repair /Compensation	Translation Standards
CSE 5	The First Year / Semester	Before Translation	Planning	Basic Translation Software
		During the Translation Process	Execution	Basic Translation Skills
		After Completing the Translation	Appraising/Repair /Compensation	Basic Translation Standards

Additionally, it is effective to incorporate online courses into the curriculum, and attach importance to the construction of online open courses, offline courses, and online and offline hybrid courses, so that classroom teaching and network-based learning can be connected and integrated.

3.2.3. The Exploration of Evaluation and Testing in College English Translation Teaching Based on Translation Competence Scale from CSE

From CSE, the evaluation and testing in college English translation teaching based on translation competence scale is different from traditional evaluation and testing centered by teacher. It is the self-assessment scales centered by students which can be used by both language learners and users in assessing their own English competence. Self-assessment scales include scales for translation competence which covers the competence to translate commonly used short certificates and announcement, simple texts describing scenes, schedules of campus activities, short essays or chapters of books related to society, culture and learning for Level 5, and covers the competence to translate fundamental practical writing like news reports, short popular science articles, short descriptive texts, simple directions for operation of household appliances and short job applications, letters of recommendation, and invitations for Level 6.

Based on translation competence scale from CSE, the standards of evaluation and testing is to check whether English learners and users can clarify the translation purposes, probing into the meanings of words with the use of reference books and cyber resources before translation, whether they can add proper words according to English grammar rules, ensuring the completeness of grammar structures in their translations during the translation process and whether they can revise improper wording and grammatical mistakes by consulting reference books or cyber resources after completing the translation through self-assessment for Level 5. While for Level

6, the standards tend to check whether English learners and users can adopt basic translation skills and methods to deal with modifier and logical connections in translations during the whole translation process.

Therefore, it is a need to render some materials of practical writing to practice and train, the Chinese-English and English-Chinese texts for the translation materials to make a comparison with the translation standards, then to clarify the translation skills and methods to make a revision and an assessment so as to meet the standards. In addition, there are some translation tools and software like Itranslate and Iwrite for translation teaching which can offer assessment and revision with the quality of translation to fit the translation standards.

4. Conclusions

There are problems of college English translation teaching in China, mainly including paying less attention on college English translation teaching and the problems on macroscopic and microscopic aspects like teaching syllabus, teaching system, teaching modes and methods, also including factors like the teaching educators and learners. In order to deal with the problems, the paper explores college English translation teaching based on translation competence scale from CSE from the perspectives of teaching objectives and requirements, curriculum provision and evaluation and testing.

Through the analysis and explanation, it is concluded that the translation competence scale from CSE provides a framework for the exploration and adjustment for teaching objectives and requirements, curriculum provision and evaluation and testing of college English translation teaching.

Generally, the emphasis of college English translation teaching turns on how to improve the practical competence of English learners and users. Integrating translation competence scale into the college English translation teaching can eliminate some redundant and stale knowledge in English textbooks with the fact that the focus of college English translation teaching can also be shifted to cultivating comprehensive competence of English learners and users and laying a solid foundation of verbal communication for their future development. Furthermore, the translation competence scale from CSE provides the direction for curriculum provision, which is consistent with the teaching objectives and requirements in the current *College English Teaching Guidelines*, and teachers should choose and adjust appropriate teaching content according to it. During the three stages of translation teaching, correlated curricula such as translation software, translation skills, and translation standards could be integrated into the teaching procedures. Lastly, it provides a more comprehensive evaluation model. The detailed description of each level offers a basis for the setting of the evaluation content which establishes a self-assessment scale for English learners and users beyond the traditional college English evaluation model and makes the standards more diverse and specific for evaluation.

Conflicts of Interest

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