Research of the Reformation of Translation Course for EFL Students in a Public University in China

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DOI: 10.32629/jher.v5i5.2962

Abstract: Task-based language teaching emerges as a transformative approach in the realm of translation education for English majors. This research aims to illustrate the reformation of translation course of EFL students, which meanwhile examine the effect of the application of TBLT method on boosting students' learning performance hereby enhancing their English translation prowess and cross-cultural competency. The research found that the integration of artificial intelligence technology into English translation instruction presents a promising avenue.
***Keywords*:** translation course, EFL teaching, task-based language teaching

1. Introduction

The college years represent a critical juncture in students' educational journey, demanding their adeptness in adapting to societal dynamics. Proficiency in English, particularly in oral communication and translation, is pivotal for students, serving as a cornerstone for their personal and professional endeavors[1]. Over time, English pedagogy at the college level has undergone notable transformations, employing various teaching methodologies. Notably, the delineate key approaches such as the communicative approach, task-based learning, and vocabulary approach, outlining their respective merits and drawbacks[2]. Among these, task-based language teaching (TBLT) has emerged as a prominent and effective strategy for English education in colleges[3].

As AI technology gains prominence, there is a burgeoning interest in its integration into English language instruction to enhance its efficacy and efficiency[4]. It is found that a rising trend of AI adoption across various facets of English translation education, encompassing machine translation, language learning platforms, and computer-assisted translation tools[5]. Despite the potential advantages of AI technology, there are reservations regarding its effectiveness in certain domains of English language instruction, notably translation and oral communication. Universities encounter hurdles in integrating AI into language education, with issues ranging from the imperfect design of AI translation platforms leading to inaccuracies and undermining trust in the technology[6].

The fusion of AI translation technology with TBLT represents a novel and forward-thinking approach to English language education, offering substantial research implications by potentially mitigating some of the limitations inherent in AI technology within language learning contexts.

This paper aims to explore effective strategies for seamlessly integrating AI translation technology with Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in English language education within college and university settings.

2. Literature Review

Translation courses for college English majors followed a structured syllabus, typically commencing with the exposition of translation theory and techniques.

2.1 Difficulties on Translation Course

From an instructional standpoint, college and university translation courses often relied on standardized teaching materials, seldom incorporating contemporary issues or trending topics[7]. Consequently, this approach struggled to remain abreast of contemporary developments, hindering interdisciplinary exchange and integration. For students, this limited exposure may impede their ability to grasp the formality and focused approach required for translation work, potentially resulting in issues such as rigid translation content and a lack of coherent translation concepts.

Some college students tend to rely solely on AI translation software to complete their assignments, neglecting independent critical thinking and the exploration of diverse perspectives[8]. This overreliance on technology in learning has, to some extent, impeded teaching development. Consequently, students' holistic language skills remain inadequately nurtured within this instructional environment.

2.2 Students' Low Participation in Translation Course

Currently, there's a pressing need for a shift in the teaching philosophy and instructor roles within College English translation education. Some educators remain oblivious to the advancements in artificial intelligence translation technology, viewing AI translation software as a tool that fosters laziness among students[9]. Regrettably, due to the absence of encouragement for teaching innovation in some academic institutions, there's a lack of in-depth exploration into artificial intelligence translation technology and its integration into College English classroom instruction, resulting in stagnation in English translation course innovation.

2.3 Immature Translation Course System

Language is a dynamic entity that evolves continuously, necessitating corresponding changes in educational content and methodologies[10]. The innovative evolution of English translation teaching modes demands comprehensive consideration of factors such as students' English proficiency, available teaching resources, and the task-based language teaching approach. Teachers must recognize that students are central to translation instruction, assuming the role of facilitators who offer guidance and assistance as needed, rather than dictating translation practice excessively.

3. Task-based Language Teaching Approach

3.1 Definition of TBLT

Research on task-based language teaching (TBLT) emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s, drawing from the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT) and the interaction hypothesis[5]. TBLT is a pedagogical approach that prioritizes task-oriented learning, focusing on communication and task completion within the learning process. It serves as a language teaching framework centered around tasks as the fundamental unit of instruction. Tasks in language learning are typically defined as goal-oriented communicative activities aimed at achieving specific outcomes, emphasizing the exchange of meanings or activities requiring learners to utilize language to attain objectives[11]. Guided by instructors, students progressively fulfill teaching objectives through experiential learning, practice, participation, communication, and collaboration. Consequently, task-based teaching emphasizes experiential learning and tailors instruction to students' interests, experiences, and knowledge levels. Through task-based teaching, students are encouraged to learn by actively engaging in tasks, fostering a sense of accomplishment, emotional experiences, and adaptive learning strategies, ultimately cultivating a positive learning attitude. By leveraging students' active involvement, this approach facilitates practical language application and enhances students' language proficiency.

The task-based teaching approach centers on real-life language communication activities driven by specific task objectives. It entails students utilizing tasks to engage in learning activities and attain authentic, practical, and meaningful language mastery. Teachers or syllabi design task-based learning activities to prompt students to engage with language actively, identifying problems, discovering rules, synthesizing knowledge, and achieving set goals.

In the context of translation teaching, task-based instruction serves two main purposes. Firstly, it aims to enhance students' translation proficiency, holistic language application skills, and communication proficiency through the completion of various instructional tasks. Secondly, it emphasizes delving into the principles of English translation, enabling students to grasp language learning and translation techniques while fostering their innovative capacities.

3.2 Models of TBLT

In "A Framework for Task-based Learning," Jane Willis delineates the task-based teaching process into three distinct stages: pre-task, task-cycle, and language focus[3]. The pre-task phase serves as the preparatory stage in TBLT, where teachers introduce realistic and meaningful tasks for students to engage with, thus enabling language acquisition and skill development within a task-driven framework. Simultaneously, teachers guide students in understanding the objectives and requirements of the task. During the task-cycle phase, students take center stage in communication and task completion, with teachers assuming a supportive role. Students actively participate in and complete communication tasks, collaborate on task summaries, and subsequently present their findings orally or in writing to peers and instructors. In the language focus stage, guided by teachers, students apply acquired knowledge and skills to produce language output. They focus on language forms during communication, analyze language accuracy, and assess task achievement.

Hence, the task-based language teaching model underscores a task-oriented approach that fosters student engagement, motivates learning, and promotes task authenticity.

3.3 Advantages of TBLT Approach

The translation practice course stands as a crucial component of English majors' professional training, aiming to

cultivate and enhance students' practical translation skills. Proficiency in translation is indispensable for future employment opportunities, making the translation course a key focus for students prior to entering the workforce. In practical translation, the primary objective lies in accurately conveying the original text's meaning, necessitating the preservation of semantic content while transposing it into another language form. By exposing students to theories and methodologies of comparative translation and facilitating analysis, comparison, and discussion of optimal translations, instructors aim to impart essential skills. Through examining typical translation errors and engaging in discussions, students gain valuable insights. In this process, instructors play a pivotal role in identifying common mistakes and analyzing their underlying causes.

Within a task-based teaching framework, students receive feedback and validation from peers or instructors following language output, expediting comprehension of input. Teachers foster an environment conducive to meaningful exchanges, encouraging active participation in problem-solving and task completion activities. Driven by diverse tasks, students are empowered to engage in independent thinking, actively acquiring English language proficiency and experiencing personal growth as they complete specific assignments.

4. Application of TBLT on Translation Course

In the context of AI advancements, there's a pressing need to consider incorporating infrastructure to establish a foundational framework for intelligent English teaching, fostering the integration of AI technologies. The advent of artificial translation necessitates innovative approaches in college English education, requiring enhancements not only in the existing English teaching system but also in the seamless integration of AI translation technology. This integration is essential for further enhancing the quality of English classroom instruction[5]. In translation teaching, it's advisable to integrate relevant translation software, including machine translation and computer-aided translation, into the curriculum. This enables students to adeptly utilize these cutting-edge tools and technologies in their future professional endeavors, thereby improving work efficiency and quality. For instance, platforms like Yandex offer diverse translation capabilities, while specialized tools like Atman assist with medical translations. Therefore, for effective integration of AI, educators must familiarize themselves with intelligent translation software, ensure its correct usage, and spearhead the advancement of intelligent translation teaching. AI serves as a crucial component in ensuring the efficacy of translation instruction, necessitating its judicious use to foster an optimal teaching environment.

4.1 Sample of Application on Translation Course

As the Internet information age unfolds, the rapid advancement of AI is becoming increasingly pervasive across various facets of life. To align with this trend, schools should consider introducing AI-related facilities and incorporating more advanced resources into translation teaching classrooms. Teachers should be encouraged to adapt their teaching methodologies by integrating these intelligent tools, thereby modernizing traditional teaching formats. The establishment of an artificial translation platform can offer students access to teaching resources and vocabulary inquiry channels, positively impacting vocabulary enrichment and translation proficiency[7].

In task-based teaching, task design should not only prioritize language operability but also emphasize authenticity and real-life communication. In terms of teaching content, instructors should actively leverage AI to enrich teaching resources and provide students with dynamic and immersive learning experiences. By harnessing the functionalities of artificial intelligence, teachers can seamlessly integrate these tools with traditional teaching methods, enhancing students' English translation proficiency comprehensively. Moreover, teachers can guide students to utilize assigned tasks to enhance their autonomy in learning. Additionally, technology can be leveraged through partnerships with tech companies to serve societal needs

During translation teaching sessions, instructors can outline learning objectives and relevant topics to students, followed by assigning pre-class translation tasks through an intelligent teaching platform and related corpora. Students then work in groups to prepare for class, gathering materials, previewing related topics, and acquiring background knowledge, with the aid of AI intelligent translation technology for pre-class preview activities.

In the pre-task phase, teachers prompt students to present group results from their pre-class previews, supplementing with additional information to stimulate student interest and curiosity through visual aids and subject-related background knowledge. Integration of subject-related keywords into teaching topics familiarizes students with important vocabulary and sentence structures.

In the language focus stage, teachers facilitate evaluation, jointly assessing task completion for each group. Additionally, teachers can analyze students' translation progress using AI technology, offering guidance for improvement and innovation. They provide renowned translation texts for comparative study, guide students in utilizing reference materials and AI technology to enhance language skills, and invite experienced translators for post-class lectures to enrich teaching and

stimulate student interest through real-world experiences. The AI English translation teaching model is depicted in Figure 1.

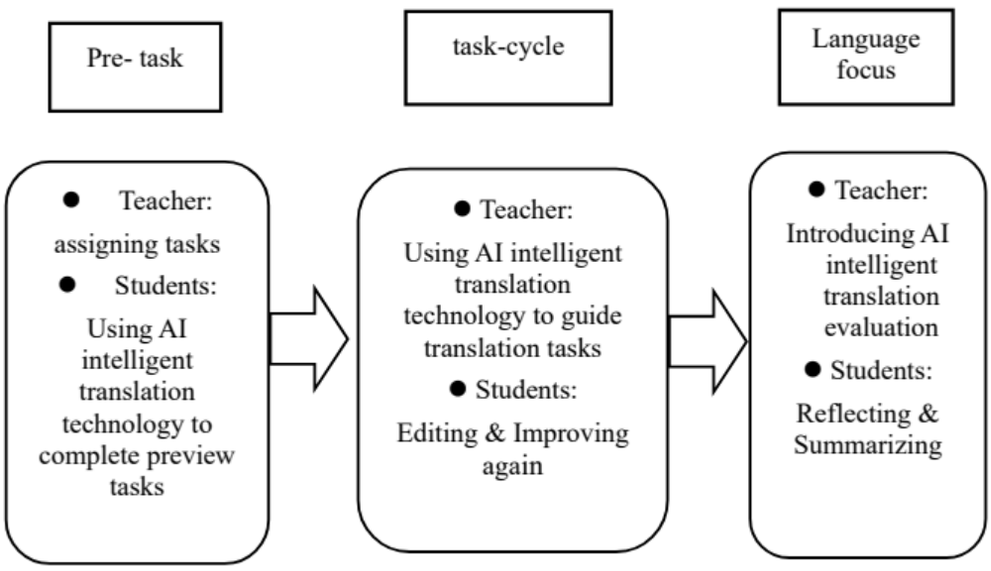

Figure 1. Teaching Model of AI Translation Course

In this instructional task design, the teacher aims to instill in students the skills of information gathering and analysis, alongside the ability to accurately translate it. Through the assignment of specific tasks, students engage in practical translation exercises on designated topics, while the teacher systematically elucidates translation concepts, standards, and methodologies. Throughout the teaching process, the teacher assumes roles as designer, facilitator, and participant, while students serve as the primary participants, and the teaching tasks are open-ended. Working in groups, students undertake translation tasks, share task outcomes, and engage in peer evaluation. These sequential processes foster the development of students' communication skills and collaborative spirit. The pedagogical approach is student-centric, actively fostering creativity and enthusiasm among learners. Ultimately, the objective is to facilitate the integration of acquired language knowledge with translation practice, thereby converting theoretical knowledge and skills into practical abilities.

4.2 Advantages of AI teaching on Translation Course

In the era of artificial translation, the advancement of college English translation teaching necessitates robust and scientifically designed platform support to consistently augment students' English language proficiency. Universities should appoint specialized technicians to enhance existing AI translation platforms, addressing issues like malfunctions, interruptions, and incomplete functionalities during teaching and application processes, thus enhancing the overall teaching and learning experience.

Primarily, universities should enhance the practicality of translation practice courses by meticulously integrating AI translation technology with the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) method, providing guidance for translation instruction. Furthermore, continuous innovation should be encouraged in English translation teaching, empowering teachers to innovate teaching methodologies and integrate AI technology effectively to enrich the translation teaching model. Lastly, teacher education and training should be intensified to bolster instructors' comprehension and utilization of AI translation technology, fostering ongoing optimization and innovation in the teaching system. In the realm of human translation, the evolution of translation teaching demands not only enhancements to the existing English teaching framework but also the seamless integration of AI translation technology, thereby elevating the overall quality of translation instruction.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the current methods employed in university English translation teaching are outdated and necessitate a significant transition towards more innovative, technology-driven approaches. The advent of technology and AI demands an embrace of change, urging the integration of contemporary teaching strategies that cater to industry requirements. Effective teaching methodologies can greatly enhance the efficacy of translation instruction and facilitate the amalgamation of AI with translation practice. Educators can delve into research and extensive discussions on teaching translation through task-based language teaching (TBLT). By leveraging impactful teaching approaches like TBLT and integrating AI technology, we can

nurture well-rounded foreign language professionals who meet societal needs and steer translation studies towards a positive trajectory. Concurrently, English translation teaching should prioritize innovation and AI technology integration to refine AI teaching resources and enhance the effectiveness of translation instruction methods. Given the robust functionality of AI, it can guide students' English translation endeavors, elevate the sophistication of translation class activities, and deepen English translation teaching. Moreover, students can receive comprehensive training to enhance their translation proficiency and develop distinctive translation styles.

While this study has introduced innovation and improved student learning outcomes to a certain extent, there is still scope for further development regarding the impact of TBLT integrated with AI technology on teaching practices. However, this research is confined to college-level English translation courses, lacking in-depth analysis and investigation into other foreign language courses. Due to constraints in time and resources, the empirical study could only encompass a one-semester follow-up experiment in a single university course. Future endeavors should entail broader exploration to extend this integrated teaching approach to a wider array of effective practices.

Acknowledgments

Funding: "Humanities and Social Science Research Project of Hebei Education Department" (SD2021073) "A study on the training model of Chinese- English bilingual translators against COVID-19 based on self-built corpus".

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