

# Exploration of English Translation Teaching in Higher Education Institutions from the Perspective of Situated Cognition

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**Abstract:** Translation teaching is an important part of English teaching in colleges and universities. With the continuous deepening of Reform and Opening-up, the demand for modern translation talents in China is also increasing. How to do a good job in English translation teaching in colleges and universities has become an important part of educational reform and development. As the saying goes: “Knowledge starts with practice”. This article analyzes the application of Situated Cognition theory in English translation teaching in universities, and proposes strategies for English translation teaching based on Situated Cognition theory. The aim of this article is to promote the development of higher education, improve the quality of English translation teaching, and promote the all-rounded development of students.

**Keywords:** Situated Cognition, College English, translation teaching

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## Introduction

In the context of globalization and internationalization, English translation teaching plays an increasingly important role in higher education. However, there are many challenges facing by current English translation teaching. To address these challenges, this article introduces the theory of Situated Cognition and explores its potential application in English translation teaching in colleges and universities. Situated Cognition theory emphasizes the close connection between knowledge and context, believing that learning is constructed by combining interaction and experience in specific contexts. This article will analyze how Situated Cognition theory can improve the current situation of English translation teaching and propose corresponding teaching strategies.

### 1. The current status of English translation teaching in higher education institutions

#### 1.1 Theoretical basis and practical application deviate from each other

A significant issue in English translation teaching in colleges and universities is the extreme deviation between theoretical foundations and practical applications. At present, many English translation courses still focus too much on imparting theoretical knowledge and neglect the cultivation of practical application abilities.<sup>[1]</sup> This traditional teaching model results in students, although they have mastered a large amount of translation theory, being mostly powerless and helpless when faced with practical translation tasks, unable to effectively apply theoretical knowledge to practice. The deviation between theoretical basis and practical application has affected students' translation ability and weakened their interest in translation learning.

#### 1.2 Students' interest in learning is not high

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Learning English translation requires a lot of time and effort, and many students often experience resistance and gradually lose their enthusiasm for translation learning when faced with heavy academic workload and boring learning content. Some students lack confidence in their translation ability and are worried that their translated works will be ridiculed and criticized by others, which further reduces their learning participation.

### **1.3 Teaching achievements cannot be displayed**

The inability to demonstrate teaching results is also an important issue facing English translation teaching in current colleges and universities. Due to the special complexity of translation teaching, its teaching outcomes are difficult to measure using traditional exam scores. However, many universities still utilize a single examination method to evaluate students' translation ability, which cannot comprehensively and objectively reflect their true level. Even if students put in a lot of effort and time in translation learning, their achievements may not be fully recognized, which undoubtedly undermines their learning confidence.

## **2. The significance of applying Situated Cognition theory in English translation teaching in universities**

### **2.1 Promoting the integration of translation and situation**

The theory of Situated Cognition emphasizes the close connection between knowledge and situations, believing that knowledge is constantly developed and enriched through activities in specific situations. In English translation teaching in higher education, the application of Situated Cognition theory can promote the effective integration of translation and context. By combining simulated real language environments and translation scenarios, students can better understand the practical application of translation and master the techniques and methods of translation in different situations. Not only can it improve students' translation skills, but it also enables them to better adapt to the needs of practical translation work.

### **2.2 Encouraging students to enhance their cognition in social interactions**

The Situated Cognition theory also emphasizes the important role of social interaction in cognitive development. In college English translation teaching, the introduction of Situated Cognition theory can encourage students to strengthen their cognition in social activities. Teachers can organize interactive activities such as group discussions and role-playing for students to engage in English communication and translation practice in simulated social scenarios. Not only does it exercise students' oral expression ability and translation skills, but it also enables them to continuously deepen their understanding of English language and culture in social interaction, and enhance their cross-cultural communication skills.

### **2.3 Continuously accumulating experience in knowledge construction**

The theory of Situational cognition holds that learning is a process of constantly constructing and enriching a knowledge system. In English translation teaching in universities, the application of Situated Cognition theory can guide students to continuously accumulate experience in knowledge construction. By participating in various scenario based translation activities, students can be exposed to rich language materials and translation cases, thus continuously accumulating translation experience and language knowledge in practice.<sup>[2]</sup> This accumulation of experience not only helps improve students' translation skills, but also enables them to face various challenges more confidently and calmly in their future translation work.

## **3. Teaching strategies for English translation in higher education institutions based on Situated Cognition theory**

### **3.1 Reforming curriculum design to optimize teaching content**

Traditional college English translation courses focus on imparting language knowledge. To change this situation, it is necessary to first carry out in-depth reforms in curriculum design. Under the guidance of Situated Cognition theory,

curriculum design should pay more attention to the combination with practice, and add course content related to real translation situations, such as translation practice in specialized fields such as business translation, legal translation, medical translation, etc. There is also a need to optimize teaching content, introduce more translation materials that are contemporary and practical, so that students can be exposed to the latest translation theories during the learning process. Practical achievements can enhance their learning enthusiasm.

### **3.2 Implementing situational teaching to create a learning atmosphere**

Situational teaching is a teaching method that can effectively enhance students' practical abilities. In college English translation teaching, implementing situational teaching means creating a learning environment similar to real translation situations, allowing students to practice translation in simulated situations. It can be achieved through organizing simulated international conferences, business negotiations, legal litigation and other activities, allowing students to play different roles in these activities and carry out practical translation operations, so that students can more intuitively feel the actual needs of translation work and improve their translation skills more targetedly.

### **3.3 Strengthening teacher-student interaction to enhance collaborative learning**

In Situated Cognition theory, learning is seen as a social process that emphasizes interaction and cooperation between teachers and students. Therefore, in English translation teaching in colleges and universities, teachers should actively interact with students, encourage them to raise questions and viewpoints, and guide them to engage in in-depth thinking. At the same time, students can be organized for group cooperative learning, allowing them to divide translation tasks and collaborate within the group, jointly solve problems encountered in translation, enhance students' teamwork ability, and continuously improve their translation skills and ideas through mutual communication and discussion.

### **3.4 Emphasizing translation skills to cultivate comprehensive qualities**

The ultimate goal of English translation teaching in colleges and universities is to cultivate students' comprehensive translation abilities, enabling them to flexibly apply the translation knowledge and skills they have learned in their future work and life. Therefore, in the teaching process, teachers should pay attention to the comprehensive cultivation of students' translation skills, such as language conversion ability, cultural understanding ability, information retrieval ability, etc. Attention should also be paid to cultivating students' comprehensive qualities, such as critical thinking ability, innovation ability, cross-cultural communication ability, etc., which is of great significance for improving students' overall translation level and adapting to the needs of future society.

### **3.5 Utilizing modern technology to innovate teaching methods**

With the development of information technology, modern teaching techniques have provided new possibilities for English translation teaching in universities. Teachers can make full use of multimedia teaching tools, such as electronic courseware, online videos, interactive software, etc., to enrich teaching methods and make the classroom more lively and interesting. At the same time, students can be guided to use modern translation tools such as translation software, online dictionaries, and corpora to improve their translation efficiency and further enhance their translation abilities.

### **3.6 Carrying out practical activities to enhance practical experience**

In addition to classroom teaching, universities can actively organize students to participate in various translation practice activities, such as participating in intercollegiate or international translation competitions, providing translation services for on campus and off campus institutions, and participating in cross-cultural exchange activities in the community. Students can personally experience the actual workflow of translation, understand the norms and standards of the translation industry, and enhance their practical experience and professional competence.

### **3.7 Establishing feedback mechanism to promote continuous improvement**

Establishing an effective feedback mechanism is crucial in English translation teaching in colleges and universities. Teachers can timely understand students' learning situation and problems through regular homework grading, classroom

discussions, individual tutoring, and other methods, and provide targeted guidance and suggestions.<sup>[3]</sup> At the same time, teachers are supposed to encourage students to evaluate each other's works, propose improvement suggestions, promote mutual progress among them, meet students' different needs and learning styles, and achieve continuous improvement and enhancement of teaching.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Under the theory of Situated Cognition, the English translation teaching in colleges and universities emphasizes authenticity. Learning translation skills in simulated situations helps students better understand the context of the original text and improve the accuracy and fluency of translation. The theory of Situated Cognition not only promotes the improvement of students' practical abilities, but also stimulates their learning enthusiasm and cultivates their ability to think in multiple ways. In the future, with the continuous advancement of educational technology and the increasing demand for globalization, the application of Situated Cognition theory in English translation teaching in colleges and universities will be more extensive and in-depth, which is expected to further improve the quality of teaching and cultivate more excellent translation talents who can adapt to international communication requirements.

#### **Conflicts of interest**

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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