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# Research on the Development of College English Translation Teaching Based on College English Teaching Syllabus

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## Abstract

College English teaching syllabus is overall programmatic document for the reform of college English teaching. Translation teaching appeared along with the syllabus and has become one integral part of college English teaching. By analyzing the requirements of college English teaching syllabus for translation teaching at different stages, and a series of impact on college English test (CET) band 4, textbook of college English intensive reading and translation teaching, it's certain to provide reference for the development of college English translation teaching and to inject new vitality into the college English teaching reform so as to achieve the purpose of improving students' comprehensive language ability.

## Keywords

College English, translation teaching, teaching syllabus.

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## 1. Introduction

As the main basis of non-English majors in English teaching, college English teaching syllabus is constituted in order to adapt to the new situation of the development of higher education in our country, improve the quality of teaching and meet the needs of the state and society for talents. The syllabus of college English teaching has experienced a long developing process, from the beginning, exploration, to maturity. The syllabus of each stage was in line with the situation at that time and the needs of college English teaching.

At the same time, college English translation teaching has gone through different stages of development, and it plays a more and more important role in college English teaching reform. By analyzing the requirements of college English teaching syllabus for translation teaching at different stages, we can have a more clear understanding of translation teaching. Thus teachers and students will pay more attention to translation teaching. The aim of improving teachers' level of teaching translation and enhancing students' ability of translation has achieved.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Translation course is hard to teach and learn because it belongs to theoretical teaching course. And more importantly, it also belongs to practical teaching course. As such, translation course is subsumed into the program of training talents in universities which aims to cultivate interdisciplinary talents with the professional attributes who are needed in society.

Translation is a comprehensive skill. It's believed that to foster the translating capability of non-English majors in universities is associated with the cultivation of listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities. They are of mutual promotion. Cook (1998) emphasized that the use of translation in language teaching is an expedient measure and it is theoretically feasible to contribute to language acquisition. Malmkjaer (1998) pointed out that translation activities can promote language acquisition because translation is

dependent on listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. At the same time it includes these four skills. The students who are learning language are forced to practice these skills when practicing translation.

### 3. Requirements of College English Teaching Syllabus for Translation Teaching at Different Stages

#### 3.1 The Stage of Beginning

In 1985, the state Education Commission of China issued *College English Syllabus (used by undergraduate education of science and Engineering)* which provided clear teaching purpose: "To cultivate students with strong ability of reading, certain ability of listening and translation and preliminary ability of writing and speaking so that students can use English as tools to obtain professional information they need and to lay a good foundation for improving English level further." From the syllabus we can notice that it's the first time to mention translation as teaching purpose.

Then the syllabus used by undergraduate arts and science was promulgated in 1986. The contents are basically the same as that of 1985 version, but it didn't require students' ability of translation this time. From this stage we can see that the requirement of college English syllabus for translation teaching appeared for the first time, but it's not the key point and we didn't pay enough attention to it.

#### 3.2 The Stage of Exploration

In 1999, in order to adapt to the new requirements of talents in twenty-first century, the steering committee of foreign language teaching in colleges and universities launched *College English Syllabus (Revised) (used by undergraduate)*. According to the revised version of syllabus, the aim of college English teaching was to train the students to have a better reading ability, a reasonable listening, speaking, writing and translation ability and thus to enable them to use English in communication.

Meanwhile, college English teaching was divided into two periods: basic period (first and second grades) and the period of application and improvement (third and fourth grades). According to students' different level when entering college, the teaching requirement of basic period was divided into two parts: basic requirement and higher requirement. The period of application and improvement included subject-based English (SBE) and advanced English (AE). The teaching requirements for translation in each period are as follows:

Table 1 Basic Period

Requirement	Target language	Reference book	Material	Criterion	Speed(hour)
Basic requirement	Chinese	Dictionary	Short passage with slightly lower difficulty than text	Understand correctly with accurate rendering	300 words
	English	Dictionary	Familiar Chinese character material	Understand correctly with accurate rendering	250characters
Higher requirement	Chinese	Dictionary	Short passage with slightly lower difficulty than text	Understand correctly with accurate rendering	350 words
	English	Dictionary	Familiar Chinese character material	Understand correctly with accurate rendering	300characters

Table 2 the Period of Application and Improvement

Requirement	Target language	Reference book	Material	Criterion	Speed(hour)
SBE	Chinese	Dictionary	Relevant professional English articles	Understand correctly with accurate rendering	350 words
	English	Dictionary	Familiar relevant professional Chinese language material	accurate rendering without serious language errors	300-350 characters
AE	Chinese	Dictionary	English articles with certain difficulty	Understand correctly with accurate rendering and fluency	400 words
	English	Dictionary	Familiar Chinese articles	Integrate contents with accurate rendering and fluency	350characters

From above analysis, we can find that the revised version of syllabus has increased the quantitative aspects of translation greatly. It emphasized basics of language and students' practical skill of English. Thus the teaching requirement for translation was added. Listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation were at the same level.

### 3.3 The Stage of Maturity

In 2004, the Ministry of Education promulgated *College English Curriculum Requirements (for trial implementation)* in order to adapt to the new development of higher education and further deepen the teaching reform. After three years of experiment, *College English Curriculum Requirements* was formally published in 2007. The aims of college English teaching are to cultivate students' comprehensive ability to use English, especially listening and speaking ability, so that they can use English effectively in the future work and social communication. Moreover, it's necessary to enhance their autonomous learning ability and strengthen their comprehensive cultural awareness to adapt to the needs of social development and international exchange.

College English teaching requirements are divided into three levels, namely the general requirement, higher requirement and more deeply requirement. The first one is the basic requirement for non-English majors in colleges and universities. The others are recommended for qualified schools in accordance with their school orientation, type and personnel training objectives. The three levels of teaching requirements for translation are as follows:

Firstly, the general requirement for translation is that students can translate articles on familiar topics between English and Chinese under the help of dictionary; translation speed is 300 English words per hour and 250 Chinese characters per hour; translation is basically accurate without serious understanding and language errors. Secondly, the higher requirement for translation mentions that the ability of abridged translation of academic materials is needed; students can translate popular newspapers and magazines of English speaking countries on familiar topics with the help of dictionary; translation speed is 350 English words per hour and about 300 Chinese characters per hour; the translation is correct and fluent; there are few errors in understanding and expression of language; appropriate translation techniques should be used. Thirdly, more deeply requirement demands students to translate academic materials and newspapers and magazines of English speaking countries with certain difficulty by using dictionary; articles that can introduce Chinese situation or culture should be translated; translation speed is 400 English words per hour and about 350 Chinese characters per hour;

contents are accurate without mistakes and omissions basically; the translation is correct and fluent and linguistic errors are few.

Compared with revised version of college English syllabus, College English Curriculum Requirements is mature in terms of teaching purpose and the requirements for translation. Students' comprehensive ability to use English is stressed. At the same time, students' autonomous learning ability is mentioned for the first time.

#### **4. Discussion**

From the requirements of college English teaching syllabus for translation teaching, it'll be perceived that the comprehensive cultivation of students' translation competence is an important part of college English teaching objective system. On the whole, the cultivation of translation competence has run through the whole process of college English teaching and has been an integral part. It has effects on national college English test (CET) band four, textbook of college English intensive reading and translation teaching obviously.

##### **4.1 Effect on College English Test (CET) Band Four**

National college English test (CET) band four is a nationwide large-scale standardized test, administered by the Higher Education Department of the Ministry of Education for nearly thirty years. It is designed according to college English teaching syllabus, aiming at examining the execution of the syllabus and promoting the implementation of the syllabus.

The question type of translation was adopted by CET band four in January 1996 for the first time. There were five English sentences which were drawn from the part of reading comprehension, requiring students to translate them into Chinese within fifteen minutes. This reform played a very important role in reflecting students' English level and advancing the development of college English teaching. However, there were only twice to test translation from 1996 to 2006. It was not until 2006 that the question type of translation was fixed as permanent item. Students were required to complete five sentences by translating into English the Chinese given in brackets. The scores were five points. From December 2013, it has changed from translating sentences into paragraph which is mainly about the introduction of traditional Chinese culture. The scores are increased from five percent to fifteen percent correspondingly.

From the variety of the question type of translation, it is clear that the test of translation comes gradually into contact with three levels of teaching requirements for translation.

##### **4.2 Effect on the Textbook of College English Intensive Reading**

Since the introduction of translation, the publishing house has made appropriate amendments to the textbook of college English intensive reading. The practices of translation between Chinese and English have been added to the exercises of the textbook. At the same time, some universities in Beijing and Shanghai have launched a series of new college English textbooks in order to increase the contents of teaching material. Students have chance to know more about translation from intensive reading textbook. And it's also a good way for students to practice the skill of translation by themselves or with the help of teachers.

##### **4.3 Effect on Translation Teaching**

The English teaching is based on teaching syllabus. Along with the request of translation, translation teaching also appeared in the teaching. Teachers and students have paid more and more attention to translation teaching gradually. They have realized that the cultivation and improvement of translation ability not only has a good role in promoting the development of students' listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities, but also has a far-reaching impact on their future education and future work.

In view of this, teachers have increased the interpretation of translation skills in class. For example, they explained the translation phenomena of the sentences in the text and do some targeted exercises. After a

semester of explanation and exercise, students had more confidence in their translation ability. They felt that translation teaching could help them to build vocabulary. It's also a good way to train their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

## 5. Conclusion

It has lasted for thirty years of the development of college English translation teaching. As the continuous improvement of teaching syllabus, we will focus continuously on its requirement for translation and the translation teaching. It's our aim to enable students to have the ability of mutual transform between English and Chinese by teaching students translation theories and skills. Translation teaching is a means of foreign language teaching to let students achieve cross cultural communication ultimately.

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