

## A Study of Strategies to Improve the English Translation Ability of Chinese non English Majors

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**Abstract:** *Among the five skills in the foreign language, translating can reflect EFL learners' comprehensive language ability. Due to the increasingly frequent international communication, there is a growing demand for qualified translators in all trades and professions, which requires non-English majors to improve their translation ability. Therefore, more importance should be attached to teaching non-English majors translation skills. Some methods and ways to improve and cultivate the translation ability of the Chinese non-English majors have been put forward in this paper*

**Key words:** non English majors; translation ability; strategies

### 1. Introduction

With the further acceleration of globalization and internationalization of society, English, as an international language, its practical and instrumental functions are becoming more and more important in China. Accordingly, English translation has been paid more and more attention. China's higher education is experiencing the transformation from elite education to mass education. The rapid increase in enrollment will inevitably exert great pressure on students' employment in the future. Nowadays, international exchanges and cooperation are becoming more and more frequent, and many jobs require staff with translation skills. Therefore, for non-English majors, on the basis of professional knowledge and skills, if they have a certain translation ability, it will enhance the competitiveness in the job market. In addition, translation competence also helps students to study international academic frontiers better in the future. Nowadays, translation accounts for a certain proportion of CET-4 and CET-6 in China, which shows that the cultivation of translation ability is particularly important. However, among Chinese college students, especially non-English majors, the level of translation is still very weak. From the students' usual exercises and various tests, it can be found that many students have problems in translation, such as lack of coherence, grammatical disorders, improper collocation, logical ambiguity and disorderly translation. The main reason is lack of basic knowledge of translation theory and common skills. This shows that in daily teaching, the cultivation of students' translation competence should be paid more attention.

### 2. Strategies to improve students' English translation ability

In recent years, the English translation ability of non-English major graduates in Chinese universities is generally low, which makes it difficult to meet the needs of future work and social development. Some graduates who have passed CET-4 and CET-6 fail to translate abstracts, resumes and business cards. Some foreign-related publicity materials have been translated with spelling errors and grammatical errors. Faced with the severe employment situation and the global trend of economic globalization, the cultivation of non-English majors' English translation ability is very important. At present, the cultivation of non-English majors' English translation ability can be mainly carried out in the following aspects.

#### 2.1 Attaching importance to English translation

In the past twenty years, although many college students have passed CET-4 and CET-6, their translation ability is still very limited. Among them, the main weakness is poor understanding of the original text. This is mainly related to the long absence of translation in college English teaching. As is known to all, translation is the embodiment of foreign language comprehensive ability and one of the important criteria to measure foreign language level. Therefore, translation should not only be used as a tool for learning a foreign language, but also be regarded as an important teaching content. Therefore, teachers should attach importance to the cultivation of students' translation ability in ordinary English teaching, constantly improve teaching methods, and conduct English translation teaching for non-English majors from various angles. At the same time, teachers should guide students to practice translation more after class, so that students can increase the input of translation through a lot of training after class. The main task of teachers in the classroom is to answer questions, teach translation skills and methods, and let students learn translation actively. In this way, translation teaching will achieve better results. As a student, one can't take it for granted that one's translation level should be very low because he is a non-English major. The student might also think that he needn't study translation well because he does not engage in translation work anyway. In fact, whether it is professional or amateur translation work, or the translation in CET-4 or CET-6, all needed is solid training.

## **2.2 Acquiring solid English and Chinese language foundation**

Solid English and Chinese language foundation is the basis for improving the translation level. The basic requirement of translation is that the translator must have a solid bilingual foundation and good language accomplishment, because it directly affects the translation of the original text and the expression of the meaning of the translation. A solid foundation of English is a prerequisite for translation. Some students lack basic English skills, which leads to misunderstanding of the original text in English-Chinese translation and expression errors in Chinese-English translation. Facts have shown that if the students' ability to express in Chinese is strong, their translation level is much higher than that of students with weak Chinese expression ability. Therefore, for non-English majors, they should not only study English well, but also pay attention to the study and improvement of their mother tongue. In order to do well in English translation, Chinese students' mother tongue training should be improved from two aspects. Firstly, students should systematically learn the rules of Chinese grammar. Any rule in Chinese grammar is summarized from numerous similar linguistic phenomena through the tireless exploration of generations of scholars. These rules come from language practice and play an important guiding role in language practice. Secondly, students must attach importance to their knowledge accomplishment. As a student, the best way to improve oneself is to broaden the reading range. Tang poetry, Song Ci, and the Four Masterpieces are the cream of Chinese culture. Students should also be familiar with both Chinese and foreign contemporary literary works. At the same time, students should also strengthen the understanding of relevant background knowledge, which helps students lay a solid foundation in English and Chinese.

## **2.3 Paying attention to the training of translation skills for non English majors**

The training of translation skills helps translators to consciously jump out of the framework of literal translation and get rid of Chinglish. If translation skills are neglected, high-level translators may unconsciously be influenced by Chinese structure and Chinese thinking, thus affecting the quality of the translation. In the process of learning translation, students must follow the usual methods to do more exercises. Only through a large number of training, can practice make perfect. As for the translation skills of Chinese to English, students should pay attention to the following two aspects.

### **2.3.1 The basic methods of translation**

Literal translation and free translation are two important translation methods. Literal translation and free translation are interrelated, coordinated and indivisible. Students should pay attention to the fact that literal translation is not a dead translation, but a literal translation that basically preserves the original sentence structure. Literal translation is strictly faithful, while free translation is more concerned with the characteristics of English. Because English and Chinese have both similarities and differences, students can not use one translation method in translation practice, but should use both methods according to the specific needs of the text.

### **2.3.2 The adaptations of translation**

When translating, one should not simply or mechanically translate word by word. One must carefully analyze the context, grasp the exact meaning of the words, and then express them in proper English, and adopt some flexible means if necessary.

Firstly, addition and subtraction of words. The addition and subtraction of words in translation are all aimed at expressing the meaning of the original text more accurately and truthfully. It may seem unreal to add words and phrases that are not found in the original text, but a careful analysis reveals that the meanings expressed by these words and phrases are not out of nothing, but implied in the original text. Subtraction is to omit irrelevant words and phrases without affecting the original intention.

Secondly, conversion of parts of speech. Part-of-speech deformation and conversion is an important feature of English language. Among the three main parts of speech, nouns, verbs and adjectives, most of which can be directly converted to use, or can be converted to another part of speech with affixes. Therefore, the conversion of parts of speech is one of the most important means in Chinese English translation. If used properly, it will not only make the translation fluent, but also reflect the style and characteristics of English.

Thirdly, voice conversion. Because there are both active and passive voices in both English and Chinese, people often simply think that only being loyal to the voice of the original sentence is enough. In fact, this is not the case. In English, the use of passive voice is much higher than that in Chinese. If the translation is done blindly according to the

voice of the original sentence, it will make the translation appear to be different. Therefore, in Chinese to English translation, one needs to flexibly use the transformation between voices.

Fourthly, partial translation and co translation. Partial translation and co translation are relatively complex subjects, and are problems to be solved in translation. Usually, long sentences should be divided into several parts, and short sentences should be translated together, but they should not be generalized. An important factor in determining whether to translate separately or in combination also depends on the semantic relevance of the various elements in a sentence, the coherence of the meaning between the sentence and the context, and the conformity with English expression habits. Most of the sentences needed to be divided are long sentences or complex sentences with complex structures. This kind of sentence, if translated into a long sentence, will make the translation redundant and lengthy. If separate translation is used, it will make the original content clear and the translation easy to understand. Although English sentences are becoming more and more concise, there are still many complex clauses. Therefore, it is necessary to translate two or more Chinese sentences into one English sentence.

### 3. Conclusion

In a word, students of non English majors must face new social development and employment situations. They must recognize the importance of English translation, study the translation courses seriously, change the learning attitude and improve the learning quality. They should also read more translation works and practice a lot. Gradually, the translation level can be improved. At the same time, teachers should constantly integrate translation learning resources, innovate the translation teaching mode, encourage and guide students to carry out self-study through innovative learning methods, and further improve the learning efficiency of non-English majors, so as to lay a foundation for training comprehensive talents.

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