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Study on the WeChat-Based After-Class Translation Teaching Mode of College English From the Perspective of Eco-Translatology

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Abstract

This paper intends to verify the feasibility of WeChat-based after-class translation teaching of college English from the perspective of eco-translatology. It believes that the limitation of time and space should be broken and views the students as its center during the process of translation teaching. The result of three-month experiment has proved that the new mode is feasible and effective in enhancing students' translation competence.

Key words: Eco-translatology; College English; Translation Teaching; WeChat

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INTRODUCTION

Under the background of globalization, with the further deepening of opening-door policy, the compound translation talents have become an important bridge in culture communication between Chinese and foreign countries. Therefore, it asks higher requirement for College English's translation teaching, which mainly

aims at non-English majors, but the research of college English's translation teaching has been marginalized for a long period. As for the research status at home, scholars concentrate on comparison of "teaching translation" and "translation teaching", the status of college English's translation teaching and discussion about teaching methodology, process and curriculum. Sun (2014) pointed out the problems existed in it from three perspectives. Zhang (2010) put forward five solutions to the problems. In brief, most of the previous studies focus on the current situation and the development direction. However, few researchers have been able to draw on any systematic theory into translation teaching study. The primary problem of such research status is lacking in new perspective.

In light of this, the raising of eco-translatology provides a new horizon for the exploration of College English's translation teaching mode. As for studies at home, there are 55 literature concerning translation teaching from the perspective eco-translatology in CNKI, especially since 2013, the number is rising markedly. Song (2012), from the perspective of integrity of eco-translatology, pointed out the irrationality in traditional translation teaching and believed elements in translation teaching are interconnected and interactive. Tao (2012) elaborated constructing harmonious and dynamic eco-environment of translation textbooks, by analyzing construction of textbooks of translation majors. Shu (2014), from perspective of eco-translatology, gave detailed explanation on four dimensions of translation teaching mode; furthermore, she carried out an empirical study on translation teaching.

Most previous studies of college English's translation teaching from the perspective of eco-translatology have focused on the teaching in class by teachers, but ignored after-class learning centered on the students themselves. In view of this, the employment of WeChat is conducive to solving this problem, breaking the

limitation of time and space, and effectively bridging the gap between teachers and students, between in-class and after-class.

This paper, from eco-translatology perspective, based on mobile network platform WeChat, attempts to verify the feasibility of WeChat-based after-class translation teaching of college English. The hypothesis was raised that the employment of WeChat is of tremendous benefit to promote translation teaching and improve students' translation competence effectively, under the guidance of eco-translatology. The result is verified by presenting the real teaching cases and carrying out the experiment in this paper.

1. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Nowadays, ecological management and environmental protection plays an increasingly important role in the process of globalization. The combination of ecology and other disciplines has spawned many interdisciplinary subjects, for example, eco-translatology, a newly-established discipline based on the natural science of ecology and social science of translation. The thought of eco-translatology can be traceable to translation theories at abroad in the 1980s to 1990s. Peter Newmark listed ecology the first in five culture categories. Rosanna Warren compared translation as human's migration, for both of them undergo adapting to the new environment. Wolfram Wilss laid stress on environmental factor affecting the translation process, such as characters of translation activity, sponsors' requirement and translators' ability. Michael Cronin came up with translation ecology, emphasizing on the balance of language and cultural pluralism in the context of globalization.

Eco-translatology, was initiatively proposed in 2001 by Professor Hu Gengshen in Tsinghua University. The theory was raised by adopting Darwin's evolutionary theory's key notion, "nature selection" and "survival of the fittest". Based on the point of view of ecological holism, Hu redefined translation as "a selection activity of the translator's adaption to fit the translational eco-environment" (Hu, 2004). It centers on "translator-centeredness" and gives detailed interpretation of translation process, translation principles, translation methods, and the value standard of the translated text. What's more, series of notions have been raised, such as "ecological rationality", "translational eco-environment" and "subsequent punishment".

In eco-translatology, there are mainly two principles can be adopted in support of WeChat-based after-class translation teaching of college English, namely translator-centeredness and ecological holism of translational eco-environment. It will be analyzed by combining with WeChat in detail in the next part.

2. FEASIBILITY OF THE NEW MODE OF TRANSLATION TEACHING

2.1 WeChat and Its Function Supporting for Translation Teaching

WeChat is a communicative software for mobile terminal launched by Tencent in 2001 after QQ. Users can share texts, voices, photos and video images with their friends anytime and anywhere with less consumption of flow. According to the official data, by the end of 2017, WeChat has become the most used mobile software in Asia, with more than 900 million users. It provides free and convenient service and also brings entertainment and interest to people's leisure time, especially favored by young people. Many scholars have already conducted researches about WeChat's learning function. Bai (2013) and Wang, (2013) discussed the feasibility and significance of WeChat being used in teaching. Yuan et al. (2013) and Zhu (2014) analyzed specific cases of application of WeChat in teaching. Wang and Dai (2015) construct interactive translation teaching mode based on WeChat from interactive perspective.

WeChat possesses many functions, single chat, group chat, friends circle sharing, public articles reading and so on. However, through looking at and summing up previous studies, it is considered that among various functions, group chat is the most useful and helpful function that can be employed in translation teaching. Therefore, in this paper, the new mode focuses on WeChat's function of group chat to carry out experiment of translation teaching.

2.2 Eco-Translatology Support for Translation Teaching Based on WeChat

According to eco-translatology, translator-centeredness and ecological holism of translational eco-environment are the most two fundamental principles, which are providing theoretical foundation for WeChat-based after-class translation teaching of college English. How the two principles offer support for translation teaching will be elaborated in the following part.

2.2.1 Translational Eco-Environment Stressing the Importance of After-Class Teaching

Translational eco-environment refers to: "the world presented by the source text, source language and target language, namely an integration connected by language, communication, culture, society, author, readers and sponsor, etc. (Hu, 2008). It lays emphasis on ecological holism and holds the view that all kinds of elements are interactive to form an organic integrity. Now, the situation of college English translation teaching is not optimistic: there are only two class hours of "Synthesized Translation" every week, with 17 weeks and 34 class hours in total in a semester (Zhao, 2013). It can be clearly seen the marginalization of translation teaching of non-

English majors. In view of this, the eco-translatology offers a new perspective and theoretical support for this situation.

The eco-environment of translation teaching not only includes classroom teaching, but also includes after-class teaching which is neglected for a long time. As a connector, WeChat bridges classroom teaching with after-class teaching organically. The former stresses teachers' teaching, and the latter highlights students' learning, the two of which coordinates with each other and contributes to the overall development of translation teaching. Only dual attention is paid to the interconnection and interaction of the elements within the system, can the integral system realize dynamic balance and be promoted and developed steadily.

2.2.2 Translator-Centeredness Focusing on the Mobilization of Students' Subjective Initiative

During the process of translating, all adaption and selection behaviors should be decided and implemented by the translator (Hu, 2011). This point of view attaches the translator at the center in the whole translational eco-environment, viewing translator both as the subject and the cornerstone of the translation process. In translation teaching, it is the students who did translation activities and need to improve the translation skills. Therefore, it is the students who are the translator and dominate the translation teaching.

As the old saying goes, "it is better to teach a man fishing than give him a fish directly." Teachers should not only consider what kind of fish they plan to give students, but also how to give them. In traditional translation teaching, teachers dominate every part, giving students fish directly. In class, the teachers pass on the knowledge by citing examples and students listen and take notes at the same time. After class, students will be assigned a translation task and then submit to the teacher, then the translation will be sent to students after being examined by teachers. This seemingly two-way teaching mode, in fact, is a quadratic single mode, led by the teacher. With poor timeliness, students will lose the enthusiasm in translation gradually, which is hard for them to learn to "fish". Under the guidance of the principle of "the translator-centeredness", WeChat begins to establish the student's leading status: Students have discussions with each other whenever they have questions or turn to help from teachers through group chat. Under the guidance and supervision of teachers, it gives students' subjective initiative into full play in learning fishing from the teacher.

2.3 Specific Operational Mode of WeChat in Translation Teaching

The specific operation of WeChat in translation teaching mode concentrates on group chat teaching mode, which is principally adopted for multi-user discussion and is the most commonly used mode. Teachers can set up WeChat

groups of different functions according to specific circumstances. During the course of translation teaching, the author established two translation teaching groups, one for daily translation to sign in every day, and another for communication of translation thoughts among students and the teacher.

2.3.1 Translation Group for Daily Sign-In

The teacher should, as a group manager, set up a daily translation group for students to sign in translation every day. On every Sunday, the teacher published three articles in the form of Word in the group, which can be a poem, a famous saying, a short story or an essay. Students do translation exercises every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and send the photos into the chatting group. The author found that there exists delaying and low efficiency phenomenon when students do translation on their own. But within the group, their enthusiasm of translation increased, with usually only a few students failed to finish the work due to special reasons. In terms of students' translation habit, translation speed, etc., this kind of sign-in of translation mode produced the effect of $1 + 1 > 2$. Each element in translational eco-environment is interactive to realize dynamic balance, and the overall effect is not simply the addition of every individual effect.

2.3.2 Translation Group for Communication

Another is translation group for communication: It is chiefly used for the teacher to supplement background of a translation material and for students to discuss the translation problems.

Firstly, in terms of supplementing the background, the teacher is supposed to choose various types of texts which are attractive to students. And then gives background information through ways of words, voices, photos or PPT. Here takes a translation of a famous saying by American writer Hemingway as example: "Life always makes us black and blue, but later, those places become more strong injured." The teacher can first give an introduction of Hemingway's rich life experiences, for example, he had been a soldier, a journalist, and later became a writer. During the World War two, he had the experiences of felling from the plane for twice, and suffering from car accidents three times, and 237 bullets were taken out from his body in the hospital. By citing specific examples, students will have an overall knowing about Hemingway's "Code Hero", and impressed by his spirit of undestroyed, so that it is not hard to understand why the "black and blue" translated into "遍体鳞伤". A complete translational eco-environment not only includes the original author, but also includes the society, culture and communication behind the original author. Therefore, any translations are bound to connect with the background information of its text. Lacking of macro background and experience of cultural beauty, only paying attention to the words, are to the disadvantage of presenting the overall effect.

Secondly, in terms of communication among students themselves and students and the teacher: Here take an example of a sentence in *Pride and Prejudice* once discussed in the chatting group. The author once adopted a word of Elizabeth rejecting Darcy's propose to let students to translate it, and there are 6 versions of translation about the sentence "You are the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry": "你是我被说服嫁的最后一人", "你是这个世界上我能嫁的最后一人", "你是可以嫁的世界中的最后一人", "我最终将要结婚的人应该是你", "哪怕天下男人都死光了, 我也不愿意嫁给你", "在这个世界上嫁给谁, 我也不会嫁给你". Through hot discussion about the final translation of it and referring to the materials, students took Sun Zhili's version as the final translation, "哪怕我一辈子找不到男人, 也休想让我嫁给你". In this way, students, namely the translator, dominate the whole process of translation, so that they can give translator's subjective initial into full play and make adaption and selection by group discussion, critical thinking and self-exploration. Due to the impediment of time and space, students have few chances to communicate with the teacher. In light of this, the presence of WeChat solves this problem effectively. In WeChat's chat group, students communicate with each other and the teacher gives guidance duly. So WeChat provides a convenient and rapid platform, sharing the task of class teaching, without losing interest and entertainment.

3. EXPERIMENT OF THE APPLICATION OF THE NEW TEACHING MODE

The author has conducted a three-month empirical research on the new mode for translation teaching. Before the experiment, students were assigned to do a translation test. After three month's experiment, students were assigned to do a test again on the same range, degree of difficulty and time with the first test, to check if students' scores have improved and whether the new mode is feasible and effective. To know about students' evaluation and feedback about WeChat being used in college English translation teaching, when the experiment finished, students were asked to do questionnaires.

3.1 Research Hypotheses

Through the three-month teaching under the new mode, the experiment will be employed to verify the following two hypotheses.

(a) WeChat-based translation teaching mode can improve students' translation ability.

(b) The feedback of students to the new mode is mainly positive.

3.2 Research Subjects

The research subject is students in class 1701, 1702, 1703 in Department of Mathematics in North China

Electric Power University, with 70 students in total. Since the subjects are students who just finished college entrance examination before long, their vocabulary is around four thousands. In terms of translation study, they received little knowledge about translation in middle schools, so their translation skills are not so competitive.

3.3 Experimental Materials

The experiment mainly adopts two materials: examination and questionnaire.

Examination: The examination involves two tests, each including two translation passages, one Chinese-English translation, and another English-Chinese translation. Chinese-English translations are around 100 words, adopted from past exam paper of College English Test Band 4, 乌镇 from paper in June, 2016 and 黄色 in December, 2016. Two English-Chinese translation tests, *My Mother's Gift* and *My Father's Music*, about 150 words, are adopted from Kekenet.com, a famous and professional website to study English. Its degree of difficulty is close to passages in students' textbook.

Questionnaire: The questionnaire was designed in accordance with the actual situation. By referring to other questionnaires of previous research of effectiveness of teaching mode, and basing on the experiment, the author raised eight questions in all, including six structured questions and two non-structured questions. 6 structured questions are: (a) Have you had the experience of translation teaching based on WeChat? (b) How is the operability? (c) Whether the new mode has increased your interest to translation. (d) How about the interactions among the members of the group? (e) Whether the new mode has improved students' translation ability? (f) Is the new mode recognized? And the non-structured questions concentrate on the problems of the new mode and suggestions raised by students.

3.4 Data Collection and Statistic Tools

The evaluation criterion is according to the translation criteria of CET-4, with full score of 15 points. To ensure the fairness of the scoring and accuracy of the experiment result, both of the tests were judged by two fixed teachers who are not involved in the research and know nothing about the students. The final score students get are the average score of two teachers.

The date of scores will be processed and analyzed by Statistics Package for Social Science (SPSS 19.0) to test whether the new model can effectively improve students' translation ability. SPSS is statistical analysis software with basic functions of data entry, reduction and analysis. It is widely used in the study of social science, for it is convenient, visual and clear for clients to use. In this experiment, the function of Paired Samples Test is adopted.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION ABOUT THE RESULT

4.1 Data Analysis

4.1.1 Analysis of Test Scores

Table 1
Scores of the Pre-Test and Post-Test of the Class

	Total points	Mean	The highest score	The lowest score
Pre-test	796	11.37	14	8
Post-test	855	12.21	15	9

Table 2
Paired Samples Test

	Paired differences					<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	S.D.	S.E. Mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	-0.84286	1.23518	0.14763	-1.13738	-0.54734	-5.709	69	0.000

From Table 1, it is clearly that the total points of the pre-test and post-test are 796 and 855, the average scores are 11.37 and 12.21. After three month's experiment, the mean score of the post-test has increased 0.84 point compared with the pre-test. The highest score of the two tests are 14 and 15, increasing 1 point. And the lowest scores are 8 and 9 points respectively.

Through observation of the result of Paired-Sample *T* Test in table 2, $t=-5.70$, $p=\text{Sig}(2\text{-tailed})=0.000<0.05$, it proves that there are significant differences between the two variables. Thus it can get the conclusion that the new mode indeed has promoted effect on improving students' translation competence.

4.1.2 Analysis of Questionnaire

After the experiment, secret questionnaire survey was made among the students. 70 questionnaires were sent out and 70 valid questionnaires were withdrawn. The data analysis is as follows: (a) 58(82.9%) students haven't the experience of this kind of teaching mode. (b) 48(68.6%) students think it is very useful or useful of WeChat-based teaching model. (c) 52(74.3%) students consider the new mode prompts their interest in translation. (d) 54(77.1%) students believe that the interaction in the group is active, the communication is good, and the interpersonal relationship is promoted. (e) 62(88.6%) students consider the new mode indeed improves their translation ability. (f) In summary, 57(81.4%) students firmly approve or approve the new mode. As for the non-structural question 7, students think the main problems existed are: "the timeliness is poor", "less convenient than face-to-face talk", "using WeChat easily distract my attention". As for the question 8, the comments are mainly focused on "a novel teaching mode", "cultivate the cooperating awareness", "indeed improve translation ability", "create a relaxed learning atmosphere", and "become closer to the teacher". In general, the above appraises indicate the positive effect of the new mode, but some problems existed at the same time. What's more, suggestions were

also proposed by students to improve the mode.

4.2 Discussion About Effectiveness of the New Mode in Translation Teaching

Both of the experiment and the questionnaire show that the new mode effectively contributes to improving students' translation ability. There are two reasons accounting for it:

Firstly, eco-translatology, stressing the integrity of the ecology, views integrity as an organic system which is connected by different elements. The internal elements of the system are interrelated and interact with each other to obtain dynamic balance and promote the overall development, thus achieving the effect of $1+1>2$. WeChat is a convenient platform for students to carry out translation practice at any time and at any place. The two sub-systems of class and after-class teaching complement each other and promote the sound and rapid development of translation teaching.

Secondly, eco-translatology, highlighting translator-centeredness, believes that the translator is at the center and plays the leading role in the process of translation. In translation teaching, it is student who is the real translator. The translation teaching under WeChat mode lays emphasis on the interaction between students and the teacher, students and students, students and learning resources. Carrying out translation practice anytime and anywhere, answering questions, sharing information, communicating and commenting. This is conducive to the full play of students' subjective initiative, with active translation, active communication and active thinking. Students come out of the traditional teaching model and truly become the master of translation studies.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, the feasibility of WeChat-based after-class translation teaching of college English is illustrated.

After three month's experiment, the result verified that it is effective to construct the new mode of translation teaching. It breaks the limitation of time and space, connecting the two main subsystems and promoting the students' subjective initiative. Under the supervision of teachers, students improve their translation competence and cultivate the creative thinking, self-confidence and social communication ability. All in all, the new mode is of enormous value to make a change from teachers' solo of traditional translation teaching to harmonious symphony played by both of teachers and students and help cultivate practical talents for the society.

However, certain limitations are existed in this study, due to the relatively limited sample size and the experiment time. This study verifies that the new model has a promoting effect to college English translation teaching, but in what extent improving the students' translation ability it still needs further study.

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APPENDIX I

Questionnaire

1. Have you had the experience of WeChat-based translation teaching?
A. often B. occasionally C. had D. never
2. How is the operability of WeChat-based translation teaching?
A. very convenient B. convenient C. common D. not convenient
3. Whether the new mode has increased your interest to translation.
A. increased a lot B. a little C. common D. not increased
4. How about the interactions among the members of the group?
A. very active B. active C. common D. not active
5. Whether three times a week sign-in is of help to increase translation ability?
A. very helpful B. helpful C. common D. not helpful
6. In general, do you agree with the WeChat-based after-class translation teaching mode?
A. totally recognize B. recognize C. common D. not recognize
7. What do you think of the defect or problems existed in the new mode.
8. What are your comments and suggestions to the new mode?

APPENDIX II

Pre-test:

黄色

在中国文化中, 黄颜色是一种很重要的颜色, 因为它具有独特的象征意义. 在封建 (feudal) 社会中, 它象征统治者的权力和权威. 那时, 黄色是专为皇帝使用的颜色, 皇家宫殿全都漆成黄色, 皇袍总是黄色的, 而普通老百姓是禁止穿黄色衣服的. 在中国, 黄色也是收获的象征. 秋天庄稼成熟时, 田野变得一片金黄. 人们兴高采烈, 庆祝丰收.

My Mother's Gift

I grew up in a small town where the elementary school was a ten-minute walk from my house and in an age, not so long ago, when children could go home for lunch and find their mothers waiting.

At the time, I did not consider this a luxury, although today it certainly would be. I took it for granted that mothers were the sandwich-makers, the finger-painting appreciators and the homework monitors. I never questioned that this ambitious, intelligent woman, who had had a career before I was born and would eventually return to a career, would spend almost every lunch hour throughout my elementary school years just with me.

I only knew that when the noon bell rang, I would race breathlessly home. My mother would be standing at the top of the stairs, smiling down at me with a look that suggested I was the only important thing she had on her mind. For this, I am forever grateful.

Post-test:

乌镇

乌镇是浙江的一座古老水镇, 坐落在京杭大运河畔。这是一处迷人的地方, 有许多古桥、中式旅店和餐馆。在过去的一千年里, 乌镇的水系和生活方式并未经历多少变化, 是一座展现古文明的博物馆。乌镇所有房屋都用石木建造。数百年来, 当地人沿着河边建起了住宅和集市。无数宽敞美丽的庭院藏身于屋舍之间, 游客们每到一处都会有惊喜的发现。

My Father's Music

I remember the day Dad first lugged the heavy accordion up our front stoop. He gathered my mother and me in the living room and opened the case as if it were a treasure chest. "Here it is," he said, "Once you learn to play, it'll stay with you for life."

Before I was born, he and my mother moved into her parents' two-story home in Jersey City, N.J. I grew up there on the second floor; my grandparents lived downstairs. Each weekday Dad made the three-hour commute to and from Long Island, where he was a supervisor in a company that serviced jet engines. Quiet and shy, he was never more comfortable than when at his workbench.

Only music carried Dad away from his world of tools and projects. On a Sunday drive, he turned the radio on immediately. At red lights, I'd notice his foot tapping in time. He seemed to hang on every note.