

The Exploration and Practice of MTI Translation Teaching From the Perspective of Ecological Translatology

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In the past 20 years, significant changes have occurred in translation theories and translation studies, in which both Western and Chinese translation theories have played an irreplaceable role. Advancing with The Times, the academic development also puts forward new requirements for translation classroom teaching in Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) colleges and universities. It requires it to introduce new academic trends and promote teaching reform actively to meet the purpose of training composite applied translation talents. Ecological translatology, a new subject, has aroused the interest of many Chinese scholars and has become a relatively active local translation theory in China. This study studies translation activities from the perspective of ecological translation studies, combines ecological translation theory with translation teaching, and discusses the classroom reform and innovative development of MTI colleges.

Keywords: ecological translatology, MTI teaching reform, training of translation talents

Introduction

The Belt and Road Initiative means that the international market is constantly increasing, and the demand for translators who provide language services is bound to increase. Training foreign language translation talents to provide a stable language exchange guarantee for the economic prosperity and development of the “Belt and Road” has become essential in the translation teaching reform of Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) colleges and universities. Ecological translatology is a translation theory rooted in China, which focuses on the holistic concept, helps to cope with the complex and changeable translation environment, and positively impacts improving the teaching quality of MTI universities. This study aims to combine talent training with local academic theories and explore the teaching theory and practice of translation classrooms in MTI universities from the perspective of ecological translation.

Literature Review

The discussion of translation teaching reform from the perspective of ecological translation studies is derived from the continuous development of ecological translation theories. It has become a new research direction for domestic scholars. For example, Tao Youlan (2023) interpreted translation textbooks’ compilation, development, and research in the context of Chinese translation ecology from the perspective of ecological translation studies. Deng Yuan (2021) interpreted the teaching approach of ecological translation studies in

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interpretation. Shu Xiaoyang (2022) integrated modern information technology with the normalization of translation teaching to achieve harmony and unity in the ecological environment of translation teaching. Zhu Xiaoxiao (2022) and Wang Lan (2021) combined ecological translation with corpus translation teaching to explore new teaching methods.

Li Zhiying (2022) built a teaching model of “integration of teaching and translation” based on the concepts of “translation chain”, “text ecology”, and “post-punishment” in ecological translation studies. This study takes ecological transliteration as a translation concept. It discusses its application in MTI translation teaching, such as cultivating students’ awareness of ecological transliteration and guiding students to complete translation tasks with ecological transliteration concepts.

A New Perspective of Combining Ecological Translatology With MTI Translation Teaching

Ecological transliteration is a new translation theory proposed by Chinese scholar Professor Hu Gengshen (2021), which focuses on the translator and emphasizes that the translation process is a process of multi-dimensional transformation, orderly correlation, and overall interaction among various factors involved. In this paper, the theory of ecological translation is applied to MTI college translation classroom to explore the cultivation of talents from three aspects: ecological rationality, translation community, and ecological aesthetics.

Ecological Rationality

From the perspective of ecological translatology, ecological rationality emphasizes the harmonious unity of translator, ecological environment and text. Therefore, how to integrate the three pairs of relations—wholeness/relevance, dynamic/balance, and diversity/unity—into MTI translation teaching has become the main theoretical basis of this paper.

Overall/Association

By focusing on the interaction between the subject and object of translation activities and between the subject of translation activities and its external ecological environment, a dynamic and interdependent system of translation ecology is formed. Compared with traditional translation teaching and ecological translation teaching, it can be seen that the former pays more attention to the training of translation skills, while the latter pays more attention to the translation ecological environment in which the text is located, focuses on strengthening the interaction between the subject and object of translation, and the cognition of cultural and social backgrounds, so as to enhance the wholeness and correlation between the translation subsystems.

Dynamic/Balance

By emphasizing the interaction between the subject and object of translation and the external ecological environment, the dynamic balance between the translation ecosystem is achieved. MTI teaching under the guidance of this theory will consciously strengthen students’ understanding of the dynamic/balanced characteristics of translation, and pay attention to the correlation and interaction between the translator, the work, and the elements of the external environment of translation, and the dynamic balance.

Diversity/Unity

It means paying attention to the individuality and commonness of various things at the same time, reflecting the law of the unity of opposition between human life and nature. Translation teaching should investigate the individual differences of students from the perspective of cultivating them as translators, and then find suitable training methods.

Translation Community

In the framework of ecological translatology, the translation community is regarded as a pluralistic ecosystem in which translators, audiences, texts, publishers, revisers, etc., are all interacting ecological participants. These participants together constitute the ecological environment of translation and determine the direction and results of translation activities.

Definition and Characteristics of Community

A translation community is not just a collection of translators. It includes all the participants involved in translation activities, such as authors, editors, readers, critics, etc. These participants jointly determine the process of text generation, dissemination, and acceptance, forming a complex interactive network.

The Dynamic Nature of Translation Community

The translation community is a constantly changing and developing system. As society, culture, and technology change, roles and relationships in the translation community are constantly adjusted. For example, with the development of technology, new players, such as computer-aided translation and machine translation have joined the translation community, changing the traditional translation model.

Cooperation and Competition in Communities

Participants in a translation community are both cooperative and competitive. For example, translators and reviewers need to work together to ensure the quality of the translation, but they may also clash because they have different views on certain issues. This kind of cooperation and competition makes the translation community vibrant, and also provides the impetus for the improvement of translation quality.

Community Concept Cultivation in MTI Teaching

In MTI teaching, the concept of translation community should be emphasized to educate students to realize that translation activity is a multi-interactive process. Through teamwork, role playing, case analysis, and other methods, students' community concept is cultivated, so that they can better integrate into the translation community and interact effectively with other participants.

Translation community is a core concept in ecological translatology, which emphasizes the sociality and interactivity of translation activities. In MTI teaching, attention should be paid to the cultivation of translation community, so that students can give full play to the power of the community in the actual process of translation, and improve the quality and efficiency of translation.

Ecological Aesthetics

The ecological aesthetic consciousness in ecological translation studies focuses on how to ensure the harmonious resonance between the translated text and the target language culture while maintaining the aesthetic sense of the source text, so as to realize the harmonious symbiosis between the text and the environment.

Definition and Core of Ecological Aesthetics

Ecological aesthetics explores the harmonious relationship between human beings and the natural environment. In the field of translation, this can be understood as a harmonious symbiosis between a translated text (as a human creation) and its cultural, social, and linguistic environment. Ecological aesthetics advocates that translation should not only convey the meaning of the source text, but also consider its aesthetic value in the target culture.

Aesthetic Adaptability of Translation

Ecological aesthetics emphasizes the aesthetic adaptability of translated texts. This means that the translated text should not only be faithful to the beauty of the source text, but also harmoniously resonate with the target culture. This requires the translator to have profound cultural background knowledge and keen aesthetic judgment.

Cultural Differences and Ecological Aesthetics

Since different cultures may have different definitions and feelings of beauty, translators need to take these cultural differences into full consideration when translating, and seek a translation strategy that can not only retain the aesthetic sense of the source text, but also adapt to the aesthetic concept of the target culture.

Cultivation of Ecological Aesthetics in MTI Teaching

In MTI teaching, we should strengthen the cultivation of ecological aesthetic consciousness. Through comparative translation, cultural background analysis, aesthetic evaluation, and other methods, students can develop a translation ability that is not only faithful to the source text, but also adapted to the aesthetic concept of the target culture. At the same time, students should be encouraged to read and write more to improve their cultural literacy and aesthetic sensitivity.

Ecological aesthetic consciousness is an important dimension of ecological translatology, which emphasizes the aesthetic value and cultural adaptability of translation. In MTI teaching, attention should be paid to the cultivation of ecological aesthetics to help students form a translation concept that is not only faithful to the source text, but also harmonious with the target culture.

MTI Translation Classroom Teaching Model Based on Ecological Translatology

Teaching Objective

The primary task of teaching model design is to formulate teaching objectives, which are the basis of teaching implementation and evaluation.

Capability Objectives

The goal of translation competence based on ecological translatology should be to link all subsystems in the translation ecosystem and focus on cultivating comprehensive competence, such as basic language competence (bilingualism), including the ability to master the lexical and grammatical systems in two different languages and the ability to use relevant knowledge in other languages. Enhancement of translation ability aims to help students understand the translation process from both theoretical and practical aspects and broaden their horizons in the field of translation. Technical ability improvement, including the ability to use the corpus, online dictionary, and other network-sharing technology, improves students' ability to use technology to assist translation.

Emotional Goals

(a) Cultivate students' ecological aesthetic consciousness, including aesthetic elements, such as symmetry and balance and ecological aesthetic principles; and (b) Cultivate students' awareness of the translation community, which includes translators, readers, authors, publishers, etc. The whole, correlated, dynamic, and balanced relationship among them is an essential external factor to be considered in translation activities. Therefore, students' awareness of the translation community should be established in the MTI teaching mode from the perspective of ecological translation studies.

Teacher Role and Student Role

Teachers are one of the key influencing factors in teaching. Traditional MTI translation classroom is teacher-centred, while the teaching model of MTI translation classroom based on ecological translation studies is student-centred, with teachers acting as guides to create a translation ecological environment close to actual practice for students from the aspects of ecological paradigm, translation community, and ecological aesthetics. In this teaching environment, teachers support students' independent learning by introducing good ideas and increasing students' sense of participation and subjective consciousness in MTI translation class.

Compared with the traditional MTI teaching model, the ecology-based teaching model pays more attention to the core position of students (future translators) and should enable them to assume different roles in MTI translation teaching and truly participate in the translation process. Only when students personally understand the translation needs of a specific role in the translation community will they stand in the other side's perspective in translation activities and comprehensively consider all factors to improve students' translation practice ability.

Teaching Activity Design

According to the translation community theory in ecological translation studies, the author designed two translation teaching models in MTI universities: "project-driven simulation translation community teaching model" and "project-driven simulation real translation community teaching model".

Project-driven simulation translation community teaching model. This model refers to the application of translation community theory from the perspective of ecological translation studies to simulate translation practice projects in school classes, so that students can understand different perspectives of translation communities in the translation ecological environment and aims to guide students to experience the overall/associated, dynamic/balanced, diverse/unified characteristics of translation ecology through role-playing, and cultivate students' ecological translation awareness. The teaching design of this model is carried out from three aspects: student grouping, translation activities, and teacher guidance.

1. Grouping of students: The teacher divides students into two dimensions: role identity and translation project, in which role identity is vertical and translation project is horizontal. In the horizontal dimension, each simulation project constitutes an independent translation ecosystem, and each project team carries out translation activities according to its translation project. In the vertical dimension, each role identity constitutes an independent translation community, and each role group carries out subjective discussion according to its identity characteristics.

2. Translation activities: According to the "translator centre" theory of ecological translation studies, the translator community is the centre of the whole simulated translation ecology, and other communities will carry out translation projects around the translator community, and each community will interact with each other to achieve a dynamic balance between the translation ecosystem.

3. Teacher guidance: In this model, teachers are organizers and guides and control the entire simulation translation community teaching. Before the translation project, the teacher is required to group the students. During the project, teachers will help students feel the ecological aesthetics, lead students to experience the role identity, and ensure the smooth progress of each group activity. After the project, teachers will organize students to conduct group discussions and summaries from horizontal and vertical dimensions and guide students to establish ecological translation awareness.

Project-driven simulation of accurate translation community teaching model. This model is based on the “project-driven simulation translation community teaching model”, which uses ecological translation theory to carry out actual practice projects outside the school, aiming to enable students to personally experience the core position of the translator community in translation ecology through practical projects. The teaching design of this model is carried out from three aspects: student identity, teacher liaison, and translation activities.

1. Student identity: Students assume the identity of translators, that is, trainee translators, which is the core community of the entire translation ecosystem. In the actual translation ecology, students experience the interrelated and interactive translation community, which is conducive to establishing students’ translation ecological view in the actual translation ecology;

2. Teacher liaison: Teachers are not only the organizers of translation activities and the guides of translation tasks but also the critical liaison between the translator community and other communities. Teachers should guide and assist the translator community (students) in the translation project to establish a healthy ecological network with other communities;

3. Translation activities: The translation project is an actual project. During the translation activity, students will directly or indirectly connect with other accurate translation communities, including authors, readers, funders, publishers, reviewers, etc., and finally complete the translation activities.

Conclusion

In this study, the concept of ecological translation studies was integrated into the translation classroom of MTI colleges and universities, and a “dual-mode teaching of MTI talent cultivation based on translation community” was designed by applying the three theories of ecological rationality, translation community, and ecological aesthetics, which emphasized the translator’s principal position in the translation ecological environment and his active experience of the translation ecological environment. As far as the expected effect is concerned, it is helpful to improve students’ translation ability, enhance students’ awareness of translation aesthetics, establish students’ ecological translation concept, and cultivate students’ critical innovation, teamwork, and adaptability to the market. The subsequent research can adopt the empirical method to investigate the teaching effect, existing problems and improvement ways of this model by combining qualitative and quantitative research, so as to test and improve the MTI translation teaching model from the perspective of ecological translatology in practice.

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