

Common Problems and Solutions for Beginners in Translation From a Psychological Perspective

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With the continuous development of the translation market, more and more students are investing in the study of translation majors. However, for the education of translation majors, Chinese translation educators pay more attention to the imparting of translation theory knowledge and the cultivation of students' translation abilities. There is still room for further improvement in solving common psychological problems and cultivating the psychological qualities of translation beginners. Therefore, this article starts from the common psychological problems of translation beginners, analyzes their causes, and proposes relative solutions to help improve the level of translation psychological education in China.

Keywords: translation beginners, common problems, solutions, psychology

Introduction

The development of the translation market has placed higher demands on the abilities of translation beginners. However, due to the emphasis on imparting theoretical knowledge and cultivating practical translation skills in translation education in China, the psychological issues of students during the translation process have been overlooked. However, currently, research on the psychological factors of translators has not received sufficient attention globally (Courtney, 2019). Until the 1990s, with the emergence of translation psychology theory, it advocated that translation research should not only focus on the translation process, but also on the individual's performance in translation activities, which increased the attention of the translation community to the psychological issues of translators. However, currently, there is still a need to further strengthen the mental health education for novice translators in China.

For beginners in translation, common problems encountered during the translation process, such as low focus, slow translation speed, low translation quality, and lack of creativity, can be mainly caused by internal and external factors. The internal factors mainly refer to the influence of the personality, emotional intelligence level, and anxiety level of beginners in translation, while the external factors refer to the psychological impact of the environment, evaluation, and task itself on the translator during the translation process, such as pressure, anxiety, etc. Therefore, to solve the common problems of translation beginners, it is necessary to start from psychological factors, help them improve their emotional intelligence, regulate their anxiety, and enhance their ability to withstand pressure.

Common Problems for Beginners in Translation

According to a survey conducted by scholars on students majoring in translation, the common problems they encounter during the translation process are mainly manifested in the following aspects.

The first is low concentration. According to feedback from students majoring in translation, most of them face more complex and highly specialized texts, such as science and technology, finance, politics, and medicine. Due to the strong specialization of terminology, students generally lack relevant professional background knowledge, which makes it difficult to read and understand the source text, as well as to express the translated text in Chinese. For interpreting students, when faced with more formal and serious situations, it becomes more difficult to focus on the content that needs to be interpreted, and they may also experience stuttering and slow thinking when expressing the target language content.

Second, low quality and lack of creativity in the translation. According to some translation majors who participated in the survey, when teachers require translation tasks to be completed within a limited time in class, the quality of their translations is lower than that of texts translated without time requirements. At the same time, they also expressed that completing translation tasks within a limited time frame would make it more difficult to unleash creative thinking, resulting in a decline in the overall quality of the translation.

Third, low translation speed. According to some students who participated in the survey, being in an overly tense classroom testing environment can lead to a decrease in their translation speed. At the same time, when working on translation projects that require group collaboration, due to the personality traits of some translation majors themselves, compared to translation projects that require collaboration among group members, their individual completion speed is faster. In addition, for students majoring in interpreting, their translation speed significantly decreases in specific situations, especially formal ones. Meanwhile, in Pezeshki's (2017) experiment using an interpretation test, translators were asked to listen to three different audio files. In the first stage, he asked the participants to listen to three different audio files in order; in the second stage, he asked the participants to write down the translation of the audio content they heard in the first stage within 10 minutes, in order to better evaluate the quality of their translated text. It was found that the more anxious the translator, the slower their translation speed.

Fourth, difficulty in choosing appropriate translation solutions. According to a survey, some translation majors lack basic knowledge of translation solutions, English language, and cultural backgrounds of Western countries, making it difficult for them to choose appropriate translation solutions during the translation process. This further reduces their translation speed and leads to an overall decline in translation quality.

Fifth, personal factors can affect the translation process and results. According to the survey, students majoring in translation who are influenced by personal factors in their translation process and results can be divided into two categories. The first type is a lack of personal expression and language skills. The expression ability includes accuracy, fluency, richness, appropriate elaboration, clear organization, logical coherence, topic sentence expression, declarative sentence expression, and beginning and ending expression; language proficiency includes the translator's own grammar awareness, grammar knowledge, grammar application, sentence structure, semantics, vocabulary size, vocabulary usage, vocabulary types, vocabulary spelling, punctuation, etc. The second type is when the translator themselves suffer from psychological disorders, such as anxiety disorders. A survey shows that some translation major students themselves suffer from psychological problems, such as anxiety disorders, and prolonged high-pressure translation work can cause translators to experience fatigue and

anxiety, thereby exacerbating their own anxiety disorders and affecting the translation process and results of translation major students.

The Causes of Common Problems for Beginners in Translation

Based on the common problems encountered by beginners in the translation process, this chapter provides a further detailed analysis of the causes of these problems from a psychological perspective.

Hansen (2005) proposed that the emotional experience and cognition of translators determine their translation decisions. Therefore, psychological factors of translators have a significant impact on the quality of their translations. The psychological factors that affect translators' translation mainly include emotional intelligence and anxiety.

As for emotional intelligence, Salovey (1990) defined it as regulating the emotions and feelings of an individual or others, while identifying these emotions and using them to guide one's thinking and actions. Bar-On (1997) believed that emotional intelligence can be divided into five aspects: first, internal (emotional self-awareness, personal beliefs, self-esteem, self-actualization, and dependence); second, interpersonal (empathy, interpersonal relationships, and social responsibility); third, conformity (problem-solving, real-life experience, and flexibility); fourth, stress regulation (stress tolerance and emotional control); and finally, general mentality (happiness and optimism).

In addition, Husbscher (2013) found in a comparative study of emotional intelligence scores between literary and non-literary translators that translators with higher emotional intelligence are often better able to regulate their personal emotions and control the emotional factors of the text. At the same time, she also indicated that translators with a high level of appreciation for personal emotions can more effectively adopt appropriate language conversion solutions. However, scholars, Petrides, Pitar, and Kokkinakif (2007) found through studying the relationship between emotional intelligence and translation performance that the translator's problem-solving ability, satisfaction, and flexibility are also significantly positively correlated with translation performance. In Ghaemih and Bayatim's (2022) study, it was also shown that emotional intelligence is more significantly correlated with translation ability compared to fatigue. And it is proposed that emotional intelligence can promote a person to exhibit high levels of interpersonal interaction, adaptability, and high stress when dealing with translation problems.

Therefore, by understanding the concept of emotional intelligence and comparing the performance of translation beginners with different levels of emotional intelligence in the translation process, we can conclude that emotional intelligence is one of the main reasons for common problems in translation for beginners. Difficulty in choosing appropriate translation solutions, as well as personal factors, such as lack of expression and language skills, is all manifestations of low emotional intelligence.

In addition to emotional intelligence being one of the main reasons for common problems among translation beginners, research has found that anxiety is also a common emotion among translation beginners, and it is also one of the reasons for encountering common problems in the translation process.

Anxiety refers to the complex and unpleasant emotional state that an individual experiences, such as tension, unease, worry, annoyance, etc., in response to imminent or potential dangers or threats. Anxiety itself is a normal emotional response of humans, and moderate anxiety helps individuals mobilize their physical potential and resources to cope with the threats of reality. The famous American psychologist Holtz first proposed the concept of "Foreign Language Learning Anxiety" in the 1960s. He believed that "foreign language learning anxiety is a

unique synthesis of self-perception, belief, emotion, and behavior that arises from the process of foreign language learning and classroom foreign language learning” (E. K. Horwitz, M. B. Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Most domestic and foreign scholars have found through long-term research that the foreign language anxiety that students experience in the process of learning a foreign language is negatively correlated with their foreign language grades (Huang, 2002). Through the above research, we can find that anxiety has a significant impact on foreign language learning. In translation practice, some scholars have also found that anxious translators cannot focus on the text and cannot express themselves well in the translated Chinese text (D. Ravakhah & M. Ravakhah, 2015).

Regarding the impact of anxiety on the process of translation practice, scholars D. Ravakhah and M. Ravakhah (2015) have drawn the following conclusions through research. Firstly, he collected information on translator anxiety by using the Beck Anxiety Scale and found that there was no significant correlation between translator anxiety and translation accuracy, but it was negatively correlated with translation speed. Translators with high anxiety have significantly lower translation speed than those with low anxiety.

Secondly, scholar Pezeshki (2017) investigated the impact of anxiety on translators’ oral translation. He found through questionnaire surveys and interpretation tests that translators’ anxiety levels were significantly correlated with their translation performance. Through the above two studies, we can find that anxiety is a common problem among translation beginners, such as low concentration and slow translation speed. In addition, personal reasons of translation beginners, such as translators themselves suffering from anxiety disorders, are also one of the main reasons affecting their translation speed and quality.

Solutions of Common Problems for Beginners in Translation

In the previous text, we discussed the five common problems that beginners in translation face during the translation process, namely, low focus, low translation quality, slow translation speed, difficulty in choosing appropriate translation solutions, and other personal factors. Through further analysis, we found that from a psychological perspective, there are two main reasons why beginners in translation encounter common difficulties in the translation process, namely emotional intelligence and anxiety. On this basis, we will discuss in this chapter the solutions to help solve the common problems encountered by translation beginners from the perspectives of the translator and teaching.

Firstly, from the perspective of beginners in translation, the common problems encountered during the translation process, such as difficulty in choosing the correct translation strategy and language expression and comprehension barriers, can all be attributed to the lack of emotional intelligence? In the process of translation, the translator needs to be able to understand the original text and choose appropriate translation solutions based on different text types, which requires the translator to have high emotional intelligence. Translators with high emotional intelligence are able to analyze the emotional factors of the original text more sensitively, thus being able to make faster and more accurate decisions on translation solutions. In addition, translators with high emotional intelligence also have greater flexibility and resilience in the process of translation strategy decision-making. Therefore, in order to improve their understanding and expression of the original text, as well as their decision-making ability in translation solutions, beginners in translation need to enhance their personal emotional intelligence. Therefore, the author proposes the following methods to improve personal emotional intelligence for beginners in translation. Initially, improving self-awareness, emotional expression, and emotional regulation abilities. Self-awareness is the foundation for improving emotional intelligence. As a translator who will engage in language work in the future, it is necessary to first understand one’s own emotions, constantly pay attention to

one's feelings, and recognize how one's emotions affect thinking and behavior. Only by facing one's own emotions squarely can a good foundation be laid for personal expression. The prerequisite for developing good expression ability is repeated self-reflection and organization. This not only helps to improve the translator's language expression ability, but also helps the translator further understand themselves, thereby enhancing the translator's ability to handle pressure during the translation process. Subsequently, improving the ability to handle interpersonal relationships. Perhaps, the concepts of translation and interpersonal relationships may seem unrelated, but in fact, when we interact with different types of people, the process of understanding their emotions, considering their positions, and accurately and clearly expressing personal opinions and feelings is similar to the translator's process of understanding the original text, understanding the author's emotional expression, and selecting appropriate translation solutions. Therefore, translators can only fundamentally help themselves solve the problems of language expression ability and understanding the emotional factors of the author's text by improving their personal emotional intelligence. In addition to emotional intelligence, anxiety is the main reason why beginners in translation encounter low concentration, slow translation speed, poor translation quality, and poor ability to handle heavy translation tasks during the translation process. To address this issue, the translator needs to make improvements in the following two aspects. First and foremost, when beginners in translation are faced with texts that they find difficult and have a lot of terminology, they may experience anxiety, which can affect their ability to focus and translation speed. For this type of problem, beginners in translation need to correct their personal mentality, view tasks they consider difficult as opportunities to learn and accumulate vocabulary expressions, and learn more about common terminology expressions in the target text before each translation to expand their knowledge. Only through continuous learning can we help solve the source of anxiety for beginners in translation, which is their unfamiliarity with text types and related terms. Moreover, viewing anxiety emotions correctly. Many beginners in translation may suffer from anxiety problems when faced with translation, and prolonged anxiety may further lead to anxiety disorders, which not only affect the translator's translation skills but also their personal life. For beginners in translation who have such problems, it is necessary to actively seek professional mental health assistance. It is important to know that anxiety is a normal emotion that can help us unleash our potential and even discover our shortcomings in certain areas. For translators, mastering the ability to cope with anxiety can help them better cope with stress and continuously improve their translation skills in their future language work.

From the perspective of translation educators, the following measures should be implemented to address common problems encountered by beginners in translation. Firstly, translation educators not only need to impart theoretical knowledge and assign sufficient translation tasks to students in the classroom, but also need to provide objective opinions on students' translation achievements and give them more recognition and support. Under positive psychological suggestion, beginners in translation can better and faster grasp translation knowledge points, and improve their favorability towards translation tasks. Secondly, translation educators should observe students in different situations and try to provide personalized assistance to them as much as possible. For example, for students who already have anxiety disorders, teachers should provide more support and encouragement to help these students better utilize their personal translation skills. Finally, and most importantly, translation education in China should incorporate potential mental health issues for translators during the translation process into textbooks and provide corresponding solutions. At the same time, translation educators should actively respond to this part of the textbook, so that more translation beginners can understand the emotional problems they may encounter and their solutions at the beginning of learning translation. At the same

time, students should be introduced to the concept of emotional intelligence and assisted in improving their emotional intelligence, thereby helping them solve common problems encountered in translation and improve their translation skills.

Conclusion

This article summarizes the common problems encountered by translation beginners in the translation process, analyzes their causes from a psychological perspective, and proposes corresponding solutions based on the concepts of “emotional intelligence” and “anxiety”. It also discusses from the perspectives of both individual translation beginners and translation educators. Due to the slow development of mental health in China, there is less attention paid to mental health issues in the field of translation. Therefore, the author hopes to help more beginners in translation understand their personal psychological problems through this article, and hopes that the translation education industry can increase the attention paid to the mental health of translation majors, thereby helping to improve their translation skills and promote the development of translation education in China.

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