

# On High-School Students' Translation Education From the Perspective of OBE

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This study takes high-school translation practices as examples to investigate the current problems in high-school translation teaching. Using OBE (Outcome-Based Education) as the guiding theory, this study explores the measures to improve students' knowledge, ability, and emotion in translation education, in order to provide some ideas for high-school translation teaching.

*Keywords:* OBE education concept, translation test, translation abilities

## Introduction

College Entrance Examination (Gaokao) English and its reform have always been the focus of the field of foreign language education and even the whole society. Since 1985, Shanghai has independently set English test papers, added a single-sentence translation (Chinese-English translation) part in 1998, took the lead in the implementation of two tests a year in 2017, and began to implement a series of major reforms such as listening and speaking tests by machine from 2024, which has played a leading and exemplary role in the national examination instructions issued by Shanghai Education Examination Institute.

It is always clearly pointed out in the examination instructions issued by Shanghai Education Examination Institute every year that the examination aims to test the candidates' basic English knowledge and language application ability, among which the examination focuses on the assessment of language ability (Shanghai Education Examination Institute, 2016), and the learner's translation ability is an important representation of the dual guarantee of their basic English knowledge and language application ability. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss how to improve students' translation abilities.

## Literature Review

"Shanghai College Entrance Examination English" was used as a keyword search on CNKI. Many scholars explored the translation test or teaching attempts of Shanghai College Entrance Examination English from the perspective of translation strategies, theory, and ability. Among them, Ma Jinxin (2019) explored the translation strategies of Chinese four-character cases, and analyzed the translation test based on literal translation, free translation, deletion, and so on. Wang Yang (2016) explored the analysis of translation test constructs and exam trends from the perspective of the general constructs of translation; Tian Wenqin (2014) and Ding Huibin (2012)

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explored the use of translation theory to guide English translation teaching in Shanghai senior high schools; Han Yuyin (2008) analyzed the difficulties in English translation of the Shanghai College Entrance Examination and put forward relevant strategies. The above studies only focused on the translation problems and strategies guided by a single theory in the process of translation teaching, and did not discuss how to effectively improve students' translation ability in English teaching.

And translation is the key to reflect the students' comprehensive ability to use English, so this problem needs to be solved.

In the field of education, many scholars have paid attention to the positive role of translation in English teaching. Bao Tianren (2004) proposed in the four-in-one English teaching method that the gradual stage should focus on the simultaneous development of five skills, among which the simultaneous development of five skills raises translation to the same level as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Guo Jingjing (2012) discussed that translation can promote high school students' vocabulary learning and memory, and at the same time help improve students' reading and communicative skills. However, translation is also underestimated in high school English teaching. Ma Mengyun (2013) pointed out that China's high school education paid one-sided attention to the teaching of word and grammar, which makes translation not widely valued. The *General High School English Curriculum Standards* (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2017) divided the curriculum objectives into different levels, and explains the ways of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and reading at the language level. However, the translation part is not designed for the course, and it only appears in the English-Chinese translation course of the elective part. It is not difficult to see that the importance of translation is not proportional to the importance it has received in high-school English teaching.

### **The Definition and Principles of the OBE Educational Philosophy**

The theory of Outcome-Based Education (OBE), which is translated as output-oriented or goal-oriented education, was proposed by the American education scholar William M. Spady in 1981. And it was applied to the basic education field in the United States and Australia, and then the education concept was rapidly paid attention to and recognized in 2013. Since our country was accepted as a member of the Washington agreement, the OBE education concept began to rise in our country. The principles were followed: determine the goal, build the curriculum system, determine teaching strategy and self-referential evaluation, and then reach its peak step by step, which is results-oriented and student-centered continuous improvement.

### **Measures to Improve Translation Education in High School in the Light of OBE**

OBE is outcome-oriented, which goes through the construction of curriculum system, the implementation of teaching strategies, and the student-centered learning, and finally the results of teaching.

Based on the OBE educational philosophy and the requirements for learning objectives in the *Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline (Trial)* (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2001) and *General High School English Curriculum Standards* (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2017), "knowledge and skills", "process and method", "emotion, attitude and value", are three dimensions that teachers should follow.

Feng Qide (2007) pointed out that knowledge meant the summary of human cognition and experience, skill meant the ability to be competent for a certain job or complete a specific task, process meant the sequence of the development of things, method meant the measures and procedures to solve problems, emotion meant the

individual's subjective experience of external stimuli, attitude meant a certain tendency to others or things, and values were the views and opinions of others or things. To sum up, three-dimensional teaching goals attach importance to the cultivation of students' knowledge, ability, and emotion, and are reflected in English translation teaching as followed by taking the translation test of classroom practices as an example.

### Measures to Meet the Requirements on the Knowledge Dimension

The knowledge level is embodied in the learning of translation theory, strategies, and skills and the accumulation of vocabulary and grammar.

Example 1. 上任以来, 镇长始终将了解民生、听取民意视为重中之重, 利用工作之余走访了镇上的每家户 (call on)。(学科网组合题<sup>1</sup>)

Translation<sup>1</sup>: Since taking office, the town mayor has always attached great importance to understanding people's livelihood and listening to public opinion, and has called on every household in the town in his spare time.

First of all, the key vocabulary knowledge of this sentence is “上任、重中之重、工作之余、每家户”, which is specifically manifested as Shanghai Gaokao syllabus vocabulary and Chinese four-character phases. Therefore, teachers should teach vocabulary knowledge by sections in order to guide students to memorize them, so as to consolidate their basic language knowledge.

Secondly, in addition to vocabulary knowledge, the logical relations of Chinese sentences are also the key points to pay attention to. In Chinese-English translation, the first step of English sentence construction is to clarify the logical relations of Chinese clauses according to the meaning of the sentences. The second step is to set the important meaning as English main sentences and use appropriate English cohesive words. The third step is to choose the appropriate subject and predicate in the main sentence to convert the Chinese topic sentence into English subject-predicate sentence.

For example, this Chinese sentence has three clauses, and the first step and the second step are for the hierarchical determination of the main sentence. According to the meaning of the sentence, the last two sentences are judged as the core sentence meaning, so it is determined as the main sentence, with the use of co-translation method for translation in AND connection. Then, the first sentence is treated as a non-predicate sentence, reflecting the second role.

According to the accumulated knowledge of words and phrases, the third step is to determine the subject of the main sentence. It can be found that “镇长” (the town mayor) is the subject, and the predicate is “将……视为重中之重” (attach great importance to).

Therefore, teachers should guide students to learn corresponding translation strategies and the awareness of the syntactic differences in the process of translation teaching.

### Measures to Meet the Requirements on the Ability Dimension

The ability level is embodied in the ability of recognizing special sentence patterns and parts of speech.

Example 2. 正是因为贯彻“顾客为本”的理念, 那个落寂已久的社区商场才得以重回大众视线 (It)。(学科网组合题<sup>1</sup>)

Translation<sup>1</sup>: It was due to the implementation of customer-oriented philosophy that the deserted/desolated community shopping mall was brought back to the public eye.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.zxxk.com/docpack/2941803.html>.

First of all, on the premise of the basic language knowledge such as vocabulary and grammar above, teachers should also guide students to learn the special sentence patterns of English in translation teaching. In addition to the general sentence construction consciousness mentioned in the knowledge level, the guided teaching of the conversion consciousness of special sentence patterns is also indispensable. And teachers should teach thematically, such as emphatic and inverted sentence patterns.

For example, this sentence reflects the emphasis of the sentence pattern with the two words “正是”, which is the key to the conversion of Chinese-English sentence patterns. It is translated as “It was due to...”, and that's the results of thematic teaching under the guidance of the OBE education concept.

Secondly, the awareness of difference between Chinese and English should also be an important concern of teachers in translation teaching. For example, many scholars have pointed out that English prefers nouns and Chinese prefers verbs. Lian Shuneng (1993), in her comparative study of English and Chinese, has made an in-depth summary of the law of English prefers static and Chinese prefers dynamic statement. The verb “贯彻” in this sentence is treated as the static expression “the implementation of” in Chinese-English translation, which is the manifestation of the parts of speech recognition ability in translation.

Therefore, the teaching of English special sentence patterns and parts of speech recognition ability should also become an important part of teachers' training of students' translation ability.

### **Measures to Meet the Requirements on the Emotional Dimension**

The emotional level is reflected in the cross-cultural consciousness to publicize China's traditional culture, and cultivate cultural confidence and patriotic consciousness.

Example 3. 这条运河历经数百年才修建而成, 如今虽无昔日繁荣之景, 但仍然是横跨东西的重要水道 (as...as)。 (学科网组合题)

Translation: Although this canal, which took hundreds of years to be constructed, is no longer as prosperous as it used to be, it is still an important waterway running from the east to the west.

In addition to the hard power of knowledge and ability analyzed above, the cultivation of soft power should also become an important part of teachers' translation teaching. The cultivation of soft power should focus on cross-cultural awareness and the awareness of external publicity based on cultural self-confidence.

The affective dimension is embodied by knowledge and ability, that is, culture should be highlighted at the knowledge level such as the translation strategy of appropriate English vocabulary and grammar. In addition, it should be based on the awareness of differences between Chinese and English, that is, English condenses meaning while Chinese emphasizes the beauty of the contrast of forms with some unnecessary words or category words, and thus these expressions should be omitted in translation. In this way, the emphasis can be highlighted in the Chinese-English sentence conversion, so as to achieve the emotional purpose of publicizing Chinese culture.

For example, first of all, the knowledge of this sentence such as “运河、繁荣、横跨东西”, and the ability to convert between Chinese and English with a definite clause as an insertion (emphasizing the “tenacity” of the centurial construction) when constructing a sentence, constitute an external representation of the perseverance of Chinese, that is, the expression of the emotional dimension. Second, the core semantics of the original text “繁荣之景” is “繁荣”, which should be based on the characteristics of English condensing the core meaning, and omitting the Chinese redundant words “之景” and condensed it as “prosperous”. Therefore, teachers should cultivate students' cross-cultural awareness and external publicity awareness when teaching translation, and pay attention to the elaboration of the emotional dimension under the foundation of knowledge and ability.

### **Extra Measures to Improve Translation Education in the Light of OBE**

The OBE education philosophy emphasizes student-centeredness, and the role of teachers changes from leading to guiding, assisting students in learning, treating students as the protagonists of the classroom, stimulating their interest and enthusiasm in translation learning, and gradually mastering translation knowledge and applying it to practice. Based on the OBE educational philosophy and the requirements of students' learning ability in the *General High School English Curriculum Standards*, students should be guided to broaden their learning channels and try to integrate new technologies into classroom teaching in order to improve students' learning efficiency.

#### **Utilizing More Learning Channels**

Results-oriented method adopts a variety of teaching methods such as mixed teaching and inquiry teaching, especially focusing on the mixed teaching mode of online and offline, and adopting the setting of reverse teaching content (Guo, 2023), that is, students' learning channels are divided into offline teaching and online teaching.

Traditional education is limited to the way that offline teachers teach students to learn. OBE emphasizes student-centered teaching and gives students the dominant power in the classroom.

Therefore, based on students' independent learning, offline education can promote students' active learning through group presentation of students' speech, students' assessment, practice and translation appreciation and analysis (Horn & Steck, 2016). With students' learning outcomes as the center, the results-oriented teaching strategies and evaluation objectives are optimized, so as to improve translation ability. Online learning can carry out active learning based on translation resources given by teachers, such as online teaching videos and translation public account learning, so as to improve students' perception of translation and provide perceptual material basis for deepening their rational knowledge.

#### **Integrating "New" Elements in Classroom Teaching**

The explosive growth of innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence virtual reality, physical sense interactive holographic technology, Internet plus, and 5G has brought profound changes to human society (Wang, 2021). The Outline of the National Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)<sup>2</sup> emphasizes that the revolutionary impact of information technology on the development of education should be of prime importance. The above policies and discussions all explain that the digitalization of education is the general trend.

As a part of classroom teaching, the transformation and innovation of translation teaching are unstoppable, and emerging translation teaching technologies and models such as ChatGPT translation and multimodal translation teaching should also become new elements of English translation teaching in high schools in the new era.

Teachers can try to use ChatGPT as a translation teaching aid, and assign relevant translation comparison and appreciation tasks, so that students can be guided to feel the humanistic moods and charm of translation and improve students' translation appreciation ability. With the help of playful multimodal teaching, students' interests and abilities in translation can be effectively guided and improved.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A01/s7048/201007/t20100729\\_171904.html?](http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A01/s7048/201007/t20100729_171904.html?)

## Conclusion

English translation teaching in high school is a long way to go, and the strength of translation ability is directly related to students' English ability. Therefore, it is extremely necessary to cultivate students' translation ability in English teaching. Based on the guidance of OBE results-oriented teaching model, this paper briefly analyzes the English translation tests of classroom practices, and focuses on the three dimensional "results-oriented teaching goal design" (knowledge, ability, and emotion) and "students-centered translation classroom designs". In doing so, this paper aims to provide some ideas for English translation teaching in high school to improve students' translation abilities.

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