

# Application of Parallel Corpus in Translation Teaching

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**Abstract:** With the increasing needs of translation talents, how to train qualified translators has become a problem for all translation teachers. The application of parallel corpus in translation teaching will not only improve the effectiveness of translation teaching but also cultivate more qualified translators for the society. Corpus offers learners with electronic texts, visualized data, diversified analysis, scientific conclusion, and organic achievements. In traditional translation teaching, the teachers are likely to lay much emphasis on the using of strategies and skills without data supporting. Parallel corpus provides learners with many different translated versions of the same words or sentences. This helps the learners to have a better understanding of language differences and different translation skills used. These are all useful for the improvement of learners' translation abilities.

## 1. Introduction

With the rapid development of globalization and information technology, people have entered the era of ubiquitous computing. Language teaching has also been affected greatly by information technology. Frequent cross-cultural communication, massive information, and network and virtualization offer new opportunities to the development of translation industry. This not only brought a revolutionary impact on translators, but also profoundly changed the translation environment and ways of translation [1]. Traditional translation teaching focuses on linguistic structures and teaches the learners to translate from words to sentences and then discourses [2]. Under this teaching mode, it is very difficult to control the difficulty of translation materials. What's more, it failed to offer the learners with different translation versions. It is not a good way to cultivate learners' abilities in solving problems in translation because much emphasis was laid on mechanical practice. The application of parallel corpus can help teachers to organize teaching contents according to the frequency of different translated versions. Parallel corpus is a good tool to demonstrate word frequency in different languages and this will help the learners in choice of words when doing translation.

## 2. Theoretical Bases for the Application of Parallel Corpus in Translation Teaching

In 1980s, the rapid development of corpus linguistics has attracted attention of translation researchers, and launched a research on application of corpus in translation teaching. [3] pointed out that the application of corpus in translation teaching helped the improvement of their awareness, reflectiveness, and resourcefulness, which made them different from those amateur translators. [4] used monolingual corpora of the target language in translation teaching and found that the corpora helps translator in understanding of the content, choice of terminology accurately, and appropriate using of idiomatic expressions. [5] held that corpus can improve translators' comprehension of the source text, the abilities to use special expressions in target language, and their translation skills.

[6] thought that the use of corpora can help translators to understand the source text and to use the target language closer to native speakers. [7] considered that a translation evaluation corpus made up of parallel corpus and comparable corpus can help the teacher and the students to make a more objective evaluation on the translated text. [8], [9-10] proposed that multilingual data retrieve and parallel corpus help students to have a better understanding of related topics in translation, such as

finding a better equivalence or collocation in target language, and determining the translation norms, preferences and discourse structure. Thus helped the students to find those important conceptual information in their translation [11]. [12]believed that the corpus can provide a framework for assessment of the translated discourse and its linguistic features. [13]discussed the creation of Slovenian corpus for translators' training and practice.

### **3. Feasibility Study on Application of Corpus in Translation Teaching**

With the rapid development of China's economy and foreign exchange, there is an increasing demand for a variety of qualified translators. Currently, China's translation teaching has yielded encouraging results, but there are still many problems.[14] critically analyzed the traditional translation teaching in Chinese universities. He pointed out that the traditional translation teaching laid much emphasis on translation knowledge but neglected the training of translation skills. Then, he put forward some suggestions on the reform of translation teaching from both macro and micro levels. [15]analyzed the inadequacies of traditional translation from the teaching procedures in classroom. [16]illustrated problems in translation teaching from the perspective of teaching methods, guidelines, and teaching materials. These problems led to the enlargement of contradictions between translation teaching and social needs for translation talents, which embodied in the disconnections between translation theory and practice, what the learners have learned and the real needs of society, and learners' needs and the curriculum[17]. The application of parallel corpus in translation teaching offers a good opportunity for the improvement of translation teaching and cultivation of qualified translators. Compared with traditional translation teaching, parallel corpus have the following advantages as electronic text, visualized data, diversified analysis, scientific conclusion and organic results.

#### **3.1 Electronic Text**

A comparative study between the source text and the target text will facilitate learners cognition of differences between the two languages. Sufficiency of comparable bilingual texts plays an important role in translation teaching. In traditional translation teaching, teachers often rely on textbooks and materials collected by them, most of which are limited paper-based texts. This failed to meet learners' needs of comprehensive cognition on differences between source language and target language and to achieve an ideal teaching effect. It is only a superficial comparison between the source language and the target language [14].

Corpus-based teaching improved the traditional translation teaching. Bilingual parallel corpus provides a large number of examples of the translation of a structure under different contexts. This will not only make teachers' preparation of the lessons become easier but also save a lot of time for learners in searching for information. Various translated examples under real situation offer learners with opportunities to experience different translation skills in dealing with the same words, structure, and discourse. Parallel corpus allows the learners to compare different translation of the same or similar structure in different genres. Therefore, electronic text of the corpus saves time for discussion and interaction between teachers and students.

#### **3.2 Visualized Data**

Confined by limited resources and relatively simple knowledge presenting mode, activities in traditional translation teaching focused on discussion of translation knowledge but neglected the cultivation of learners' translation skills and analysis of translation process. Even realized the importance of skills and thinking ability in translation, teachers' cultivation is often based on their subjective judgment and fragment perceptions, which lacking of necessary data support.

Statistical functions of corpus help the realization of equivalent probability analysis among the translated texts. Therefore, this promotes the teaching of translation through datamation and visualization of different uses of words or structures in different contexts. Moreover, correlation analysis can also be obtained through the corpus retrieved by statistical software, which allows learners to intuitively understand the adoption of translation strategies in different contexts. In this

way, students got practice in developing their reasoning and induction abilities in choice of translation skills and strategies.

### **3.3 Diversified Analysis**

The traditional translation teaching is mostly teacher-centered translation knowledge presentation mode. Under this mode, the cultivation of learners' translation skills is neglected. Moreover, learners' different cognitive abilities in learning translation knowledge and training of translation skills are neglected too. As a result, it fails to satisfy the different needs of learners. Corpus has a powerful search function to realize the co-occurrence of dynamic context, which provides translation teaching and practice with the most natural corpus of related language and culture knowledge and a wide range of analysis. This help the learners with choosing of contains that they need to learn according to their personal interests or abilities, and making of learning objectives through consultation with their teachers. It changes the teaching mode from "teacher-centered" to "learner-centered" and meets the different needs of learners in cultivation of translation abilities.

### **3.4 Scientific Conclusion**

There is a need of making conclusion in translation teaching whether traditional or not. Because of over-reliance on subjective impressions, conclusions are abstract and vague, and even without specific data, in traditional translation teaching. Discussion in class becomes a way to express different ideas but not to reach agreements, which greatly reduced the quality of translation teaching. However, both teachers and learners make scientific conclusions with authentic materials and accurate statistics under the assistance of corpus. Even the conclusions sometimes different, they can see clearly different ways of translation with objective evidence from corpus.

### **3.5 Organic Achievements**

Unlimited expansion make it possible to accumulate organically a variety of translation research and teaching based on corpus which will support translation research and teaching in the future. It is this advantage that makes corpus-based translation teaching much better than the traditional one. Firstly, the participation of learners improves the collection and organization of corpus. Learners' different interests drive them to search and establish specialized or small corpus. On the one hand, learners improved their language competence in this process, on the other hand, the capacity of corpus realized dynamic growth, which provides a more comprehensive and objective corpus for future translation teaching. Secondly, the expansion of corpus enables the organic accumulation of learners' translation practice to build a translation learner corpus.

Translation learner corpus allows teachers to see clearly the inadequacy in learners' translation which improve the pertinence of teaching. Moreover, through the comparison between learner corpus and expert corpus teacher can organize learners to discuss their own translation and make adjustments. Analysis of translation strategies in different translation will help learners to have a better understanding of translation theory and techniques. In addition, it allows learners to understand their own learning progress and shortcomings through comparison. In short, under the support of corpus, teachers realized the longitudinal accumulation and horizontal comparison in their translation teaching, which made translation teaching become unprecedented organic.

Teachers can upload learners' translation works over years into the corpus and monitor the progress of each learner through comparative analysis. Moreover, the teacher can build a corpus of learners' translation works from different classes of the same grade, which will show the differences and progress among individual learners. In addition, the sharing of this information among teachers helps them to exchange teaching methods and thus improve the effectiveness of translation teaching.

## **4. Procedures for Using of Parallel Corpus in Translation Classroom Teaching**

Learners' learning of translation is not only an acquisition of knowledge from the teachers, but

also an accumulation of experience from translation practice. “Learner-centered” translation teaching refers to the teaching mode, in which students are taken into consideration in all aspects like the setting of teaching goals, choice of teaching materials, classroom teaching and evaluation of translation practice[18]. Specifically speaking: (1) to allow students to participate in the choice of teaching content and translation material; (2) to organize effective classroom discussion and group activities to improve students’ awareness of participation; (3) teaching methods should focus on the cultivation of students rigorous work style and critical thinking; (4) emphasis should be laid onto the analysis of mistranslations when evaluating students translated works.

1) Corpus presentation and stimulus: the use of parallel corpus helps learners concentrate their attention on the translation of the corresponding keywords or structures. Teachers select corpus, and students retrieve under the guidance of teachers or by themselves.

2) Browsing corpus: By examining the corpus, the students set up their own association between form and meaning.

3) Students report their observation and record significant findings: you can empirically demonstrate (or allow students to discover) many properties of the two languages through the corresponding corpus, which helps the beginners build awareness of language and translation skills.

4) Pre-test and post-test: test the effectiveness of corpus and students’ sensitivities.

5) Discussion: teachers and students can discuss the differences in translation strategies used in different translations presented by the corpus.

In this learning environment, learners’ observations may be partial or empirical, but can be test, modify, or enrich through new observations. By observing bilingual learner corpus, learners became more sensitive to collocation, semantic bias and other linguistic phenomena. Learners’ abilities of translation skills and strategies will be improved gradually through interaction between students and teachers and students.

## 5. Conclusions

Traditional translation teaching focuses on training students’ translation strategies and skills, in which teachers play the leading roles. In this teaching mode, students are often face a limited number of examples from the textbooks and the assessment of translation quality is almost entirely depended on the teachers’ intuitive judgment. This made it difficult for students to put their ability in autonomous judgment and self-construction into full play.

This study made some amendments to the traditional teaching concept and held that the goal of translation teaching is to improve learners’ abilities in solving problems with different skills and strategies flexibly. Therefore, the using of real translated materials in teaching will help learners to face problems when taking actual translation tasks in their future. Independent learning environment is the key to improve the translation teaching effectiveness and corpus is an important material condition for the implementation of independent learning. Thus, under the support of corpus, focus of translation teaching will change from teaching of translation skills to cultivation of students’ consciousness in using skills. Moreover, it will enrich the ways in assessment of students’ performance. This means not only the changes of traditional translation teaching concepts but also students’ learning concepts.

This paper discusses theoretically the advantages of corpus in translation teaching. Firstly, it makes learners get to know the diversity of translation when mastering some typical skills and reduce their blind accept of skills and the framework analysis in learning. Secondly, it maximizes potential of cooperative learning among learners. Thirdly, it offers opportunities for learners’ emotional inputs and self-evaluation and motivates learners self-learning engagement. Fourthly, it helps the cultivation of learners’ active comprehension of translation, independent thinking and willing to seek solutions to problems.

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