

A Study on the Teaching Methods for University Translation Courses Based on Schema Theory

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Abstract: For a long time, the use of schema theory in teaching has been concentrated on reading class, with little connection with translation teaching. Based on the current problems in the teaching of university translation courses, this paper discusses teaching methods to improve the effectiveness of university translation courses based on the nature of schema theory and the characteristics of the translation process, in order to provide teachers with new teaching ideas and feasible paths, offering a scientific and directional approach to the teaching of translation courses. This paper mainly adopts the method of literature review with a comprehensive analysis of the association between schema theory and the features of translation teaching. Based on the discussion and analysis, this study proposes a “five-step teaching method”: teachers should intentionally teach the knowledge of schema theory; help students build a good language foundation and continuously accumulate and enrich language schema; focus on cultivating students’ thinking quality and constructing source language schema and translation language schema respectively; strengthen students understanding of structural schema with emphasis on logical and stylistic exercises; Activate students’ existing schema and help to build and enrich them.

Keywords: Schema theory; Translation teaching; Language; Teacher

1. Introduction

Nowadays, schema theory has been widely applied to teaching in China. Studies have shown that research is mainly focused on linguistics and English language teaching. (Xi tong & Fu xiaodang, 2021) However, fewer scholars have noticed the connection between schema theory and translation teaching. Meanwhile, there are some problems in the current university translation teaching, such as paying little attention to translation teaching; classes are dominated by traditional teaching mode, which emphasizes exercises; students' poor language foundation, insufficient expression and comprehension ability etc. Therefore, combining the current problems of university translation teaching, this paper takes schema theory and the translation process as the theoretical basis, discusses how to use schema theory to guide translation teaching, to help teachers improve their teaching methods, Progressively improving the effectiveness of teaching in university translation courses.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Schema Theory

Schema theory is proposed by Kant, developed by Bartlett, and then further applied to teaching by Piaget. Bartlett (1932) considered schema to be the positive organization of past responses or past experiences. Researches related to schema theory in China started in the 1980s, mainly applied to language cognition, with a particular focus on reading comprehension. At present, schema theory is not only being applied to English, but also to languages and mathematics. Besides, the scope of application of schema theory is continuing to expand and involve more subjects, showing a development trend from theory to practice.

2.2 The Translation Process

Translation is a process of decoding and re-encoding, understanding and expression. (Wang Zhenhua, 2008) Translation is the conversion of language, but also the conversion of thinking and the intermingling of cultures. (Cheng Shuli, 2007) comprehension and expression are the main components in the whole translation process. Comprehension means to interpret the

relevant information by activating the existing schema in one's brain; expression means organizing the content of the original text and presents it in one's own way. Another way of explaining the translation process is that it consists of three parts: preparation, problem solving, collation and checking. Preparation focuses on the translator's knowledge of the relevant background; problem solving focuses on the translator's mastery of the original text; and collation and checking tests the translator's use of grammar, style and conjunction.

2.3 The Relation between Schema Theory and Translation Process

The main schemas commonly used in the translation process are content schemas, structural schemas, and linguistic schemas. Content schemas refer to the translator's background knowledge of the content and are related to one's ability to read and comprehend. Structural schema, refers to the translator's background knowledge of the rhetorical structure of the text. Linguistic schema, refers to the accumulation of basic linguistic features in the translator's mind. In addition, there are two main ways in which schema theory can be used in the translation process, one is activation-assimilation, in which the translator stores the newly acquired information under an existing schema. The other is activation-compliance, where the newly acquired information cannot be accepted by the original schema, causing a change in the cognitive structure to adapt to the stimulus. Therefore, current translation teaching should place more emphasis on helping students to enrich their schemas.

3. "Five-step teaching method" for university translation courses based on schema theory

3.1 Teachers should teach schema theory intentionally, with an emphasis on theory alongside practice

At present, many universities attach little importance to the teaching mode and theoretical support for university translation courses. Many teachers still teach with old teaching concepts, and many students focus only on translation practice and neglect to support their behaviour with appropriate theories. Schema theory actually plays an important role in the whole translation process, and mastering the content and application conditions of schema theory is helpful for students to do well in translation.

Therefore, teachers should also transferring relevant knowledge to students. It is important to form a teaching model in which students are actively involved, gaining a sense of experience and cognition to constantly update and construct their schema networks, and in which teachers provide scaffolding teaching.

3.2 Develop students' thinking quality and help them construct schema of the source language and the target language

Thinking quality has an important place in university translation. Both Liu Mingdong and Liu Kuanping(2004)believe that the process of translation is actually a process of schema transformation. There are two kinds of linguistic schemas in translation, the source language schema and the target language schema. In the whole translation process, the translator has to achieve the translation from the source language to the target language by understanding the original language accurately and expressing it reasonably. There are three main situations between this two types of schema. One is a similarity between the two schemas, that is, the two language schemas have similar perceptions of certain features and attributes. The other is a difference between them, which the two schemas have completely different properties for certain types of things. There is also a situation of absence between the two schemas, which a schema is present in the source language but not in the target language.

It is therefore important to develop the students' thinking quality and to help them build up and enrich the source and target language schemas respectively.

3.3 Help students lay a good language foundation, building and enriching their language schema

Linguistic schema are the basis for content schema and structural schema, and linguistic foundations include knowledge of the vocabulary, syntax, rhetoric, pragmatics and other aspects of language. The translation process is a process of dealing with language. Both Song Yan and Wang Hongxi (2020) emphasize that "the accuracy of the information conveyed depends largely on the translator's understanding of the original language and the accuracy of the expression of the target language. " Accurate understanding of the original language requires the translator to have a sufficiently rich and accurate schema of the source language, and accurate representation of the target language requires the same. Therefore, in the teaching process, teachers should pay attention to students' linguistic foundation and urge them to enrich other language schema while learning their

own language well.

3.4 Teachers strengthen students' understanding of structural schema, focusing on logical and stylistic exercises

Structural schema emphasizes the nationalization of the text in terms of style, headings, paragraphs and other chapter layout. As Xu Xianghui(2008) emphasized, "A good translation should be consistent with the original text in terms of form, content and style as far as possible. " For example, when the words "but" and "however" appear in the original text, it means that the content following the word needs to be emphasized. It can be seen that structural schema play an important role in translation teaching, and teachers should help students to summarize and accumulate it from practice in their daily lessons, and pay attention to the logic and style of the translation in order to make it reasonable.

3.5 Continuously activating students' existing schema, encouraging construction of new schema

It is generally accepted that schema are the knowledge stored in the mind. However, schema also include the processes of assimilation, adaptation and balancing. In the process of translation, when the translator faced with new knowledge, he or she can create a collision between the existing and emerging knowledge. As Yu Xiangyue(2016) emphasizes, "activating, constructing and expanding relevant schema can improve the translator's translation ability". Therefore, throughout the teaching process, teachers should encourage students to activate, enrich and actively construct schemas.

4. Conclusion

In the teaching of translation, it is not enough to master translation skills alone. The schema theory plays the role of a bridge in the translation process, which connects "understanding" and "expression" in the translation process, realizing the process from source language understanding, through decoding and re-encoding, and then to expression. Language schemas, content schemas and structural schemas are used throughout the translation process. At the same time, when translating a text, the translator undergoes a process of 'activation-assimilation' and 'activation-adaptation' between existing and new knowledge. The use of schema theory will help students to complete their translation tasks to a large extent. Teachers should teach students schema theory, develop their schema-transformation skills, pay attention to their linguistic foundations and encourage them to enrich, construct and expand schemas.

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