

A Study of Case Database Building of MTI Courses in Guizhou Normal University

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Abstract

This paper introduces the database building of MTI courses in Guizhou Normal University. The case database contains plenty of translation theories and practice cases, and integrates a variety of translation theories and practice materials. The construction of the case database will be devoted to solving the problems existing in the teaching and research of MTI courses.

Key words: Database; MTI; Course

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INTRODUCTION

The case-based approach is a teaching method that emphasizes practice and focuses on cultivating comprehensive ability. It does not set the so-called "correct" answer, but guides students to autonomously explore the problems in cases, try to analyze the problems from different perspectives, and finds solutions by the students themselves. As to the definition of case-based teaching, Zhang Minjie (2006) points out that teachers use cases as teaching assistants, combined with teaching themes, and through the interactive teaching process such as discussion, question, answer, etc., learners therefore can understand the major concepts or themes. It is not

only a method for teacher's teaching, but also a method for learner's learning. Although a great number of scholars define the term from different perspectives, their understanding have some things in common: using real cases as learning materials, learners become masters of learning, and the cultivation of students' comprehensive ability is valued.

The use of cases in education can be traced back to the previous two centuries. In 1870, Randall, Dean of Harvard Law School, first introduced cases to teaching. He advocated the use of cases as learning materials in education, and organized teaching in the form of communication. At that time, the case materials of the school were real cases, mainly derived from courts. In more than 40 years of practice, it accumulated lot of experience in various fields. In 1918, this teaching method was confirmed as "case teaching" (Wang & Zhao, 2009). It was implemented in Business School of Harvard in 1920 and achieved remarkable results. Since the 1950s, the case method has set off a climax in the global management education field and developed a lot of case resources for teaching and scientific research. In the following decades, it began to gradually expand to many areas such as medicine studies and teacher's training. In the 1980s, "Sino-US Dalian Project" introduced the western business education teaching cases to Dalian University of Technology in China for the first time. In 1987, the university built the earliest teaching case base in China. In 1999, the University established the case study center for the School of Management. (Fu & Wang 2008, pp.38-50). Nowadays, there are many universities in China own case databases.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As an experience-based, case-based innovative teaching method, case studies can bring new changes to classroom teaching and adapt itself to the plan of teachers training.

The Ministry of Education once issued a document stating that “undergraduate education is the most important basis for improving the quality of higher education.” Professor Zheng Jinzhou put forward that “case and case related research will become a bright landscape in the development of China’s education in the 21st century”. He believed that the task of building and application of cases should be placed on teachers, and proposed that teachers should write cases by themselves, “only by writing cases themselves, can they really make use of the cases”.

Although there are plenty of works on case databases, most of the monographs focus on the development of case database, and they are mainly introductory and case-based. Two of the most representative monographs are *Growth in Experience and Reflection: Case Development and Teacher Professional Development* (Wang, 2008) and *Handbook of Case Teaching* (Zheng, 2000). In the first one, Wang (2008, pp.20-30) believes that the method has not been widely used in Teacher Education in China. Teachers do not know much about it and its new development, and there are even some misunderstandings on it. In the second book, Zheng (2000) does not discuss cases in a specific field, instead he focuses on the aspects such as the general principles and methods of cases, how to write cases, the format and examples of cases.

According to CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure, a famous search engine for academic studies in China), there are 9593 articles on database since 13 February 2020, in which only 59 articles focus on database building of specific courses; and there are 143 thesis (Xiao, 2019; Yuan, 2015; Song, 2010; Wang, 2009; Song, 2005) and 4 PhD dissertations (Feng, 2019; Sun, 2019; Ouyang, 2018; Yi, 2014) focus on database building.

From the perspective of time span, although the number of published articles is on the rise, there are the following problems: in the first place, there is a lack of case resources dedicated to teaching, especially the number of theoretical cases is seriously insufficient, and there is a lack of classic and scientific cases; in the second place, the classification of cases is not clear. There is no clear research on which cases are more suitable for teaching and how they can play a role in teaching; last but not least, there are only some scattered discussions on how to collect, develop and integrate the teaching case bases, and there is still a lack of systematic research.

SHULMAN’S THEORY ON TEACHING

Lee. S. Shulman, an American educator, who studies how and why the case-based approach should work in teacher education, has made outstanding contributions to the research of teacher education. He focuses on normal education, and believes that the case-based teaching may involve various phenomenon including teachers’ problem-

based reflective learning and the uncertainties in teaching. He suggests that cases can be apply to support teaching. Cases teaching may get involved with the concepts or principles of a theoretical nature, morals and ethics, precedents of practice, dispositions and habits of the mind. From the perspective of him, cases can increase the students’ motivation for learning and provide images for them. Based on the ideas of Shulman(1992) and combined with the current situation of education in Guizhou, the author set up a theoretical framework of this study, and it can be summarized as the following model:

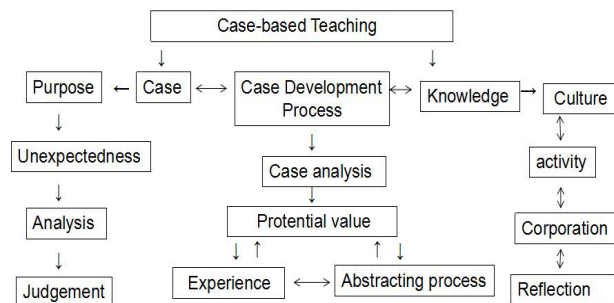


Figure 1
Case-base teaching model

Case-based teaching is an approach that highlights the use of cases as either a part or the central focus of the curriculum. How to choose the right cases, how to improve the cases and how to practice them as pedagogical tools in classroom activity are the three main questions which the teacher need to concern about before class. Case development process depends on many factors such as purpose, experience, knowledge, and culture. The power of cases not only rest on their content, but also in whether it is lectured about, simply read, fit for activity, and group corporation. Even though the teacher prepares well for class, he or she may encounter unexpectedness in class. Therefore, case analysis is of high importance. It helps the teacher to rethink the cases and to judge their value and application. Besides, whether the cases can contribute to the teacher’s reflection and research is also important. By constructing Case database, it is easy and convenient for the teacher to get plenty of detailed, professional, and contextualized cases to support his or her teaching and research.

CASE DATABASE BUILDING OF MTI COURSES IN GUIZHOU NORMAL UNIVERSITY

MTI refers to Master of Translation and Interpreting. It is one of the main 20 professional degrees in China. In 2007, the first batch of 15 MTI experimental teaching units approved by the Degree Committee of the State Council included Peking University, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Fudan University, Guangdong University

of Foreign Studies, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Hunan Normal University, Nanjing University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, Nankai University, Shanghai Foreign Studies University, Tongji University, Xiamen University, Southwest University, Central South University and Sun Yat-sen University. There are more than 200 universities or colleges in China now which offer MTI program. Historically, MTI is divided into two types: full-time and on-the-job. They are also called autumn class and spring class. On-the-job MTI initial test needs to take GCT, and reexamination focuses on translation practice. Since 2010, MTI has gradually promoted the cancellation of on-the-job masters, and all of them have been changed to a unified full-time system. Upon successful completion of all courses and defense of the degree thesis, students can apply for the postgraduate diploma and the degree of Master of Translation according to the application procedure. The main aim of MTI program is to train the students to be qualified translators in many fields with language competence, professional integrity, a good command of translation skills, and also, a wide range of knowledge.

MTI Program in Guizhou Normal University

Guizhou Normal University is currently the only three universities in Guizhou which offers MTI courses, and it is the university in Guizhou with PhD teachers who study minority languages. Combining the current domestic and international practice of ethnic cultural translation studies and the reality of MTI education's emphasis on practice, the university regards ethnic culture translation studies and dual-tutor system training as teaching features of MTI program. MTI graduates should not only master solid translation theory knowledge, but also flexibly use a variety of translation skills. They pay close attention to the new academic trends and at the same time, be familiar with the colorful national cultures and have good command of a wide range of translation skills. According to the discussions between teachers and students, questionnaire and course evaluation online organized by the university, students generally report that the teaching is efficient. In the past two years, the teachers have published 25 papers about MTI program, including 13 papers in key journal (1 in SSCI indexed journal, 6 in CSSCI indexed journals, 5 in Peking University indexed journals, 4 in international journal, etc.); and teachers get 8 research programs supported by the government.

MTI is a quiet new program for the university, so there is not enough teaching cases. Many students found they have trouble with the application of theories to practice. And for their thesis, there is a very important part called case analysis where they need to build a theoretical framework and try to do case analysis with the guidance of a specific theory. Unfortunately, for most of them, theory and practice just like two separate parts; it is difficult to find the relation between them. In order to ensure the long-term and effective implementation of case

teaching, it is necessary to construct a case database as a powerful support system to provide rich case resources. This study focuses on the cases from the two courses of MTI: "Introduction to Translation" and "Stylistics and Translation". It will build a case-based database and explore the positive role of case teaching methods in training MTI students.

The Contents of the MTI Database

The education and instruction Commission defines the training goals for postgraduates majoring in translation as: having a broad humanistic vision and good professional literacy, a solid English-Chinese bilingual foundation and bilingual translation capabilities, which can meet the needs of the country's economic, cultural, and social construction. According to the training objectives of the teaching directors, and in combination with the training program and curriculum of MTI in our university, the MTI course database may contain cases for the main two courses.

The Database of Two Courses

The study focuses on the cases of the two courses. The first one is Introduction to Translation, and the second one is Stylistics and translation.

Introduction to Translation is a compulsory course for the major of Master of Translation and Interpreting. The course aims to enable students to understand the history of translation vertically and grasp the translation process and the relationship between each horizontally. Through improving theoretical literacy, gaining translation experience, developing translation ability and forming translation confidence, students can lay a solid foundation for their future thesis writing. The teaching cases of "Introduction to Translation" are mainly self-compiled cases of translation theory summarized by the teachers of the course after reviewing the history of Chinese and Western translation studies. It may build more than 15 cases, including: western literary translation theories proposed by Nida, Catford, Benjamin, Venuti, Derrida, Gentzle etc. and Chinese translation theories proposed by Zhi Qian, Dao An, Lin Shu, Ma Jianzhong, Qian Zhongshu, Yan Fu, Lu Xun etc .

Stylistics and Translation is also a compulsory course for the major of Master of Translation and Interpreting. The purpose of the course is to let students master the important contemporary stylistic theories both at home and abroad, and can use stylistic theories to guide translation practice. It aims to help the students understand the definition of stylistics, and clarify the important role of stylistic research in translation; understand the similarities and differences between Chinese and English in terms of word order, grammatical form, sentence structure, discourse features, and rhetorical methods; learn to appreciate the advantages of famous translation, to master the skills of various stylistic translation, etc. The teaching cases and practical cases of Stylistics and Translation include existing cases and self-made cases. Existing

cases refer to mature cases written in textbooks, books, or published in magazines and the Internet. Self-compiled cases are translation theories and practical cases compiled by teachers based on years of translation practice and translation experience. It may build 15 teaching cases of the course, mainly including: stylistics and translation studies, history and development of stylistics, basic concepts of stylistics, use of stylistics and language, English to Chinese and Chinese to English translation skills, and translation of English long and difficult sentences, translation of proper nouns, translation of English idioms, literary translation, translation of legal documents, translation of foreign trade correspondence, translation of notices and announcements, and translation of advertisements etc. The teaching case of Stylistics and Translation may center on the above contents to organize and compile translation examples from translation strategies such as literal translation and free translation, foreignizing translation and domesticating translation, full translation and part translation, general translation, and thick translation.

Features of Cases

In terms of case selection, the cases must be relevant and open, and each case accommodates the theme and related information components based on non-linear structures such as complementary differences and competitive synergy. In terms of writing specifications (writing requirements and typesetting requirements), it is proposed to standardize the basic structure and related requirements of the case text and instructions for use. The selected cases need to be relevant and open. Each case accommodates cases and related information components based on non-linear structures such as complementary differences and competition and coordination. Case information should be detailed, and each case should include information such as number, title, editor's profile, summary, case presentation, case analysis guide, and case summary guide.

It may also contain writing guidance for case teaching from the aspects of class preparation, classroom organization, after class resources, etc. The guide instructs teachers to show and apply cases to students through various media forms such as video playback, PPT display, and WORD document editing.

CONCLUSION

The MTI course case database may contain a large number of translation theory and practice cases, and integrate a variety of translation theory and practice information. The construction of this case database will be devoted to solving the problems existing in the teaching practice and research of MTI courses, especially the problems in the construction and application of the case base of the relevant courses. It can provide references for MTI courses (including more than 30 cases, of which no less than 60% are original cases). The study closely follows the training objectives and requirements of the

teaching directors, builds a case database for MTI courses, and strives to build a digital comprehensive case database to accommodate a considerable number of complete translation teaching cases. The cases mainly cover the overview and application of Chinese and Western translation theories, the reading of literary translation works, the strategies, and techniques of stylistic translation, etc. The construction of this case database will be devoted to cultivating compound translation talents with both academic literacy and strong practical ability.

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