Study on MTI's Interdisciplinary Path Against the New Liberal Arts

Ruixin Zhang, Changqing Li

School of Foreign Language, Shandong University of Technolog, Zibo, Shandong 255000, China

Abstract

Against the New Liberal Arts, the traditional single-discipline knowledge reserve can no longer meet the social needs. The development of the new era requires translation talent who"specializing in". Master of Translation&Interpreting (MTI) postgraduates need to break through the traditional barriers of single linguistic centralism and acquire jargon expression in a certain industry through interdisciplinary, so as to be competent for the language service in this field. This paper study how to realize the collaborative innovation between MTI and other disciplines from the construction of pluralistic knowledge structure and interdisciplinary expansion method.

Keywords

New Liberal Arts; MTI; Interdisciplinary.

1. Introduction

Since October 2018, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Technology have jointly launched the "Six Excellence and One Top" Plan 2.0 in China, and actively promoted the construction of New Liberal Arts, which has become a wind vane for the cultivation of interdisciplinary talents in universities in new era. Comparing to the traditional humanities, the China's New Liberal Arts programme embodies four characteristics: international, interdisciplinary, cutting-edge and theoretical. Meanwhile, Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI), as a subject between humanities and social sciences, has an inseparable relationship with the natural science and technology, also has the above characteristics, and interdisciplinary is its core. Additionally, MTI in the comprehensive or the science and technology universities are free to more resource for interdisciplinary learning than general language university. Therfore, how to effectively utilize this advantage and become an interdisciplinary translation talent is of great significance to both university and postgraduates. This paper is based on the pluralistic trend of the translation job market in China and propose that MTI should be provided with the ability to establish a pluralistic knowledge structure and analytical thinking, and explore the interdisciplinary path.

2. Pluralistic Trend of the Translation Job Market

The Ministry of Education released the *New Liberal Arts Construction Declaration* at its new liberal arts construction conference on November 3, 2020. Y. Wu, the secretary of the Department of Higher Education, has defined the New Liberal Arts as a short words policy: Seeking change, innovate and develop. This era is an international high-tech era. The mutual penetration and integration between humanistic culture and science and technology is irreversible. The single foreign language and basic skills talents in the past can no longer meet the needs of market economy in China. And the demand for foreign language talents in society has shown a pluralistic trend.

The degree of MTI has been piloted since May 2007. By 2022, there are 316 universities setting up MTI in China, and the number is still increasing. However, there is still talent shortage in

translation field in China. That has been shown in the *National MTI Education and Employment Survey Report* by Q.L. Cui et al., "MTI training objectives are generally narrow and limited, and cannot adapt to the progress of national and social for language talents", he said [1].

Meanwhile, with the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, China's interests have spread all over the world, involving a series of fields and disciplines such as diplomacy, military, business, law, culture, infrastructure construction and external communication, which resulted in rising the demand for practical translation talents [2]. Y. Wu further proposed that we should targeted train various professional technicians and management talents who master foreign languages for the need of external constructions such as the Belt and Road, and train international talents with a global vision, familiar with international rules, skilled in using foreign languages, and proficient in Chinese and foreign negotiations and communication[3].

In this era, interdisciplinarity is the necessity of social progress, which reflects the progress of scientific research and education. Only by obeying and serving the needs of economic and social development, taking social needs as the first criterion for the establishment and optimization of MTI, and actively adapting to the new technologies, industries and models in China, can the society's demand for translation talents be satisfied.

3. Constructing Pluralistic Knowledge Structure

3.1. Interdisciplinary Learning Ability

The translator is not capable of translating in one specific industry if he only relies on the translation skill without relative expertise and jargon expression. J.G. Cai, the professor of Fudan University, in his paper *From Translation Specialty to Language Service Specialty: A Paradigm Shift*, the translation paradigm shift means from translation skill to skill plus the expertise and jargon in the field[4].

Since the implementation of the New Liberal Arts, Zhejiang University, as a comprehensive key university in China, has made outstanding achievements in promoting the cross-integration of English and other disciplines such as science, industry, agriculture and medicine. E.g The professors from School of International Studies, the College of Computer Science and Technology and Affiliated Hospitals jointly formed the Whole Brain Project cross-innovation team to undertake intelligent analysis of communicative behavior of autistic children[5]. Since the team was established from 3 years ago, it has published nearly 30 papers in key academic journals at home and abroad, and its cross-study has also achieved certain social benefits. This project not only provides a good interdisciplinary academic atmosphere for Zhejiang university students, but also instructive for the construction of foreign language discipline in comprehensive or science and technology universities in China, and for the interdisciplinary learning of MTI postgraduate.

MTI postgraduate can try to dabble in different discipline fields in accordance with the demand of subject development, individual interests and knowledge reserves, so as to improve their interdisciplinary learning ability. And optimize and improve the knowledge structure through the integration of translation skills with a theoretical jargon. Secndly, MTI postgraduate also can make use of their own English advantages to strengthen the connection with postgraduate study in other discipline, and achieve the resource sharing and complementary advantages between school so as to deepen the intergration of knowledge structure between different disciplines.

Although the MTI education aims to cultivate postgraduate to practical translation and interpreting talents, we can't ignore the training of own scientific research ability. It will promote practice, and practice is the basis of theory. Only through multiple practices can a specific knowledge structure and research direction be formed. The two complement each other and are indispensable. Only through multiple practices can we form a specific knowledge

structure and theoretical basis, which complement each other and are indispensable. Encouraging graduate schools to host postgraduate academic forum and strengthen interdisciplinary exchanges among postgraduate from different disciplines, so as to realize the dual improvement of ability of scientific research and interdisciplinary learning; The MTI postgraduate can participate in academic or industrial meeting for exchanging matters jointly held by enterprises, research institutes and universities, so as to know the operation process and jargon expression of different industries, and to become an Industry-university Research (IUR) language service talents.

3.2. Analytical Thinking

Language is a carrier of knowledge as well as a thinking tool. Foreign language acquisition is a process of expressing thinking in mother tongue, and the translation is actually a process of thinking transformation. Therefore, analytical thinking is one of the core qualities of translators. So, what's the analytical thinking? Y.Z. Sun made a defination to it from the two aspects of emotional attitude and cognitive skills, and this paper mainly focus on the cognitive skills, that means people can give elaboration, analysis, assessment, reasoning and explaination for the elements of evidence, concepts, methods, standards, and backgrounds[6]. Authoritative scholars at universities in China have no lack of profound insight about the cultivation of analytical thinking. Teacher should keep a speculative interactive atmosphere in class and adopt "analytical content-based" translation teaching to cultivate postgraduate's analytical thinking, and use research-based teaching to provide study resources and guidance for autonomous learning[7]. The teaching content is from the problems encountered in the translation practical training, and the problems are analyzed, reasoned and evaluated by means of collaborative learning and critical framing in the teaching process[8]. In view of this, the formation of analytical thinking is mainly dominated in universities, which provides an atmosphere of independent thinking, collaboration and sharing, and free exploration for MTI postgraduate.

For MTI postgraduate, in the face of various thoughts, cultures and viewpoints, they should insist to uphold an open and inclusive eye, learn and accept these ideological cultures, which is an important channel to improve their analytical thinking; Participate in academic forum held by the school, strengthen exchanges with tutors of different disciplines, and improve communication skills, which will also help to improve analytical thinking; In terms of cognitive ability, postgraduates should focus on the cognitive process, accumulate professional knowledge in a certain field, and deepen the content understanding by integrating the information, technology, concept and theory of the knowledge systems, and strengthen the connection and application of interdisciplinary knowledge in the translation process, so as to improve the professional level of translation[9].

4. MTI Interdisciplinary Expansion Approach

4.1. On-campus Interdisciplinary Courses and Faculty

Universities is the cradle of cultivating interdisciplinary translation talents, and interdisciplinary learning naturally starts from the school curriculum. How to make the effective integration of translation theory and interdisciplinary learning in limited class periods, and the teacher with interdisciplinary literacy is necessity to it.

MTI's teaching material needs to improve, in addition to the diversified translation content, there are lack of material with the characteristics of the times, reflecting reality and close to practical translation. Therefore, when compiling or selecting teaching materials, it is best for tutors to form a teaching database for universities to choose from it[10]. In the MTI curriculum, the comprehensive or the science and technology universities can try to reorganize the

translation skills and featured majors, and jointly formulate teaching objectives, plans and assignments by tutors of MTI and featured majors. The method can enable knowledge to be transmitted among postgraduate from different subject backgrounds, and it's no longer just a one-way flow of information to students.

Lead postgraduate to participate in project practice in an interdisciplinary way. Y.Y. Huang also put forward that "As a practical teaching, practice must be suffice". So, the study for the first academic year is mainly focus on the intergration of translation skills and one major's theoretical knowledge, and construct the knowledge structure of it while paying attention to the cultivation of analytical thinking; For the second academic year, MTI postgraduates can try to make interdisciplinary practice under the guidance of the tutor. These projects can be scientific research projects of the tutor or jointly proposed by cooperative units (such as enterprises, governments, et al.), or can be based on daily learning, Internships or projects of interest in life.

Against the New Liberal Arts, MTI tutors ought to have interdisciplinary consciousness and professional accomplishment, follow the principle of translation talent training, and try to transform traditional teachers' leading role, take the student as the center to stimulate their initiative. In daily class, tutors also should guide them to find problems, analyze problems, and find solutions, cultivate their translation practice ability.

4.2. Interdisciplinary Learning Tool

Interdisciplinary would entail rich knowledge in various subjuects. Although the MTI postgraduates have been always improve their knowledge structure by learning, and there is no infallible in knowledge reservation. Most of the time, translators still need to query data and build the terminological bank and translation memory with the assistance of volunteers big data , artificial intelligence, cloud computing and so on. Therefore, the intelligence of the language service field is also gradually mature. According to the comprehensive translation course system proposed by Y.X. Yang et al[9]. (Figure 1), it can be seen that, in addition to the basic theoretical courses, most of the courses through online platform (such as MOOC and Microlecture et al.) or translation auxiliary software, which played a positive role in interdisciplinary learning.
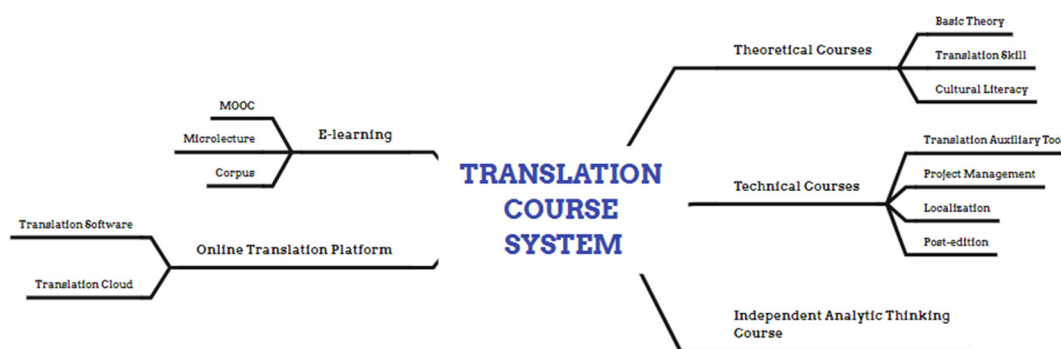

Figure 1. Y.X. Yang, et al

Therefore, while building an interdisciplinary learning community, we should also pay attention to the supporting role of technology in interdisciplinary learning. For example, some related hardware and software resources need to be matched, and the universities pays for the right of some computer-aided translation software, such as MemoQ, Trados, etc. Interdisciplinary learning tools also need to be innovated so that for the support of group

learning activities, for instance, MTI postgraduates can try to develop a translation auxiliary software work together the postgraduates majored in computer science of the university. On the one hand, the research and development of that software requires technical personnel to take algorithm design and data processing; on the other hand, language analysis such as grammar and syntax is also inseparable from language talents, which is also a path for interdisciplinary learning through practical projects. Meanwhile, interdisciplinary learning can't do without the multifunctional network platform. For example, tutors and postgraduates can publish interdisciplinary viewpoint or papers through Knowledge Forum, Zhihu or other platforms to express their views, contribute ideas and disseminate knowledge.

4.3. Interdisciplinary Exchange and Practice

4.3.1. Interdisciplinary Practice

The proposal of the New Liberal Arts creates a mature opportunity for interdisciplinary practice, and as an practical translation talent, MTI needs to be honed through continuous and repeated practice inside and outside the university. J.K. Li et al[8]. said that "Professional translation practice is the best compensation for empty teaching".

MTI postgraduates can join in enterprise or production workshop for a period of practical experience to know the management system, job responsibilities, company development strategy, quarterly business plans of manufacturer and channel business. For them, it is also a multi-level to understand the external development trends of the industry.

Cooperating with the local government and enterprises, the universities can follow the principle of "government, industry, university and research", and ensure the interests of the three parties to open 3-6 months of practical projects for postgraduates. The project can be led by the tutors, and it's development not only take into account the interdisciplinary, scientific and innovative, but also the practicality and sustainability. Through the internship project, postgraduates can define their job responsibilities refer to the division of the team. However, due to the limited quantity of personnel and the extent of expertise, postgraduates need to play multiple roles in the practical project and with multi-level knowledge reserve. By the end of the project, they have improved the breadth and depth of professional knowledge in this field. At the same time, in the process of practice in the face of rapidly changing economic environment and the external pressure, as well as many jobs are intertwined, apply, also improve their analytical thinking and the ability to solve practical problems, to strengthen the integrated use of knowledge. And through mutual cooperation and hands-on experiments by themselves, constantly improve the awareness of innovation and entrepreneurial ability.

4.3.2. Teamwork

MTI postgraduates generally for independent completion in academic research same as liberal arts students, which is lack of team spirit. But for science and engineering postgraduates, Teamwork is the basic mode when doing scientific research, so it is relatively easy to conduct interdisciplinary cooperation between them. In order to improve the MTI graduate team cooperation, we can take Peer Education. That refers to some people with similar age, background, experience, socio-economic status and even the same gender share information, ideas or behavioral skills together to achieve educational goals[11]. It making use of the desire to have more discourse among peers can well help postgraduates form learning groups and realize efficient teamwork among peers. At present, few universities in China that incorporate Teamwork and Peer Education into the postgraduate development. In a complex project, encourage team members with different disciplinesbackground by sharing their learning experience and ideas, and in the process of multiple discussion thought collision, found and concise the key problems, so as to mutual cooperation, analyze problems, find solutions in a limited time at last. In teamwork, postgraduates gradually realize the benefits of team

cooperation, learn to manage time, resolve differences among members, and build an efficient, cohesive and effective work team.

5. Conclusion

MTI postgraduates must be qulified with the pluralistic trend of the translation job market. This paper brings forth proposal that how to build the pluralistic of the knowledge structure and improve profesional expertise of practical translation talents for the interdisciplinary path of MTI graduate in China. However, it must be pointed out that this paper just puts forward suggestions from the development advantages of MTI postgraduates in comprehensive and science and technology universities. Everyone should find an interdisciplinary path suitable for himself based on the professional advantages and career development planning, and improve the professional ability through continuous practice, so as to truly become an applied interdisciplinary translation talents with "specializing in".

References

[1] Q. L. Cui: National MTI Education and Employment Survey Report (Beijing:University of International Business and Economy Press, 2017).

[2] Y.Y. Huang: Setting Up a Nurturing Mechanism for Pragmatic Translators, Shanghai Journal of Translators, (2019) No. 4, p. 1-2.

[3] Y. Wu: Reform and Development of Higher Foreign Language Education--New Missions, Greater Mindset, New Arts and Humanities Deciplines, Macro Foreign Languages, Foreign Language Education in China, Vol. 2 (2019) No. 2, p. 3-7.

[4] J. G. Cai: From Translation Specialty to Language Service Specialty: A Paradigm Shift, Shanghai Journal of Translators, (2019) No. 4, p. 54-59.

[5] L.Z. He: New liberal Arts and Foreign Language Discipline Construction--Exploration and Practice of Comprehensive University, Foreign Languages in China, Vol. 18 (2021) No. 1, p. 8-9.

[6] Y. Z. Sun: iPBL: A Localized Project-based English Teaching and Learning Model, Foreign Languages in China, Vol. 12 (2015) No. 2, p. 23.

[7] Y.X. Huang: The Cultivation of Students'Speculative Ability in Translation Teaching, Theory and Practice of Education, Vol. 37 (2017) No. 6, p. 51-53.

[8] J. K. Li, L. L. Li, S.Y. Xu: Research on the Mechanism of Improving the Speculative Ability of Postgraduates Relying on Practical Education, Shanghai Journal of Translators, (2018) No. 1, p. 51-57.

[9] Y. X. Yang, X. L. Wang: Critical Thinking Cultivation Path for Translation in Ubiquitous Learning Era, Foreign Language Research, (2020) No. 5, p. 65-70.

[10] L. C. Tao, Y.Y. Huang: On Translation Discipline Construction and Talent Nurturing in the New Era: An Interview with Mr. Huang Youyi, Foreign Languages Education, Vol. 42 (2021) No. 1, p. 10-14.

[11] J. J. Ye: Peer Education Service and Experience of University of Guelph Library in Canada, Journal of Library Science, Vol. 42 (2020) No. 11, p. 101-105.