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## On the non-English major interpretation instruction directed by CBI teaching notion

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### ABSTRACT

CBI teaching notion is one which means language instruction on the basis of some discipline instruction or of theme instruction and aims to combine completely the language instruction with discipline learning. This notion symbolizes the new starting point in language instruction and it transfers the traditional language teaching method of achieving language competences, that is, instruction of language itself, to achieve language competences at the same time of studying discipline knowledge. Nowadays, there is a necessity to offer interpretation courses for the non-English majors for the needs of the social development and market. However, until now the non-English major interpretation instruction hasn't attracted enough attention, and the research about the non-English major interpretation instruction is also far from enough. This thesis intends to explore the application of CBI notion in the non-English major interpretation instruction, which is undoubtedly a helpful attempt, aiming to call on the researchers of interpretation to put more attention on the non-English major interpretation instruction.

### KEYWORDS

CBI teaching notion; Non-English major; Interpretation instruction.



## INTRODUCTION

With the deepening of market economy and the development of economic globalization, foreign exchange and cooperation has become more and more frequent, thus, social demands for translation talents, especially interpreting talents have greatly increased. More and more employment units prefer versatile talents with both professional knowledge and excellent communicative competences in English.

In recent years, the discipline system of undergraduate, master and doctor of translation has taken hold in China step by step. Until 2009, there have been 19 universities which enroll undergraduates of translation major. On March, 2007, the Academic Degrees Appraisal Committee under the State Council declared that 15 universities including Beijing University and Nanjing University gained the right to enroll students of Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI). Until 2014, the universities who have right to enroll MTI students have amounted to more than 200. Shanghai International Studies University and Guangdong University of Foreign Studies have set up master and doctor of translation studies autonomously under the first-class discipline of foreign languages and literature, and have got the permission of the Academic Degrees Appraisal Committee under the State Council. Generally speaking, our nation has enhanced the cultivation of translation talents for the needs of the society. The establishment of MTI symbolizes the extension of

English majors. In fact, it is reported that most of the staff engaged in translation work are graduates of non-English majors. Non-English majors are the main force in the field of translation and interpreting. Although our nation has gradually enhanced the cultivation of translation talents, the supply of translation talents, especially interpreting talents are far from enough for the demands of the market.

Under this background, it's very significant and practical to offer interpreting courses for non-English major college students and instruct basic interpreting knowledge and skills to them. After the instruction of interpreting courses, the teacher can urge some outstanding students to receive formal interpreting training and help them pass interpreting certificate examinations and conduct some authentic interpreting practice to improve their interpreting skills. In this way, some interpreting talents can be cultivated to fit into the demands of the society.

## INTRODUCTION OF CBI TEACHING NOTION

CBI(Content-based instruction) teaching notion derived from the west. Early in 389, St. Augustine put forward the viewpoint of "language instruction circling the meaningful content". Since 1960s, CBI teaching has started to get great attention and support from teachers and researchers, because it views foreign language as a media to convey the information which has a close relation with the learners and can also arouse the interests of learners. Thus, CBI teaching notion is defined as "the combination of content instruction and language instruction". Generally speaking, CBI teaching notion includes three teaching modes: theme-based language instruction, sheltered content instruction and adjunct language instruction. Among them, theme-based language instruction is more suitable for college English instruction. In the classroom of theme-based language instruction, language points in syllabus are subordinate to the themes, and theme discussion is the core. The theme can be presented by the practice of English skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating. In another word, the theme should be merged into the instruction of all kinds of language skills and serve the language skills. Therefore, the choice of themes should satisfy the academic and cognitive needs of the students.

CBI has four fundamental characteristics:

- 1) Subject matter core: subject knowledge is the basis of course's most fundamental framework;
- 2) Use of authentic texts: the core materials (text or audio materials) should be selected from the language materials made and used by the native speakers;
- 3) Learning of new information: the learners should use target language to know about new information and evaluate new information based on C1(Culture of the native)and C2(the target culture learnt gradually);
- 4) Appropriate to the specific needs of students: the topics, subject matters, teaching materials and learning activities should apply to the cognitive and emotional needs of the learners and apply to the language level of the class.

## NON-ENGLISH MAJOR INTERPRETATION INSTRUCTION DIRECTED BY CBI TEACHING NOTION

### Teaching objectives of non-english major interpretation instruction

Compared with English majors of the same grade, the advantage of non-English major students lies in their own majors, such as international business, biological engineering, medicine, auto engineering, etc., English is only a tool for them. Under the condition of the identical English level, non-English major students can reach a depth and width beyond the capacity of English majors when they understand and express some thoughts and information in their major field or relevant fields. On the other hand, non-English major students can't find as much time as English majors to learn English, and the periods of English courses for non-English major students are also far less than that of English majors. Thus, English level of non-English major students is inferior to English level of English majors. It is the disadvantage for non-English major college students to learn English interpretation.

From the perspective of the skills and knowledge needed, interpreting can be divided into conference interpreting and common interpreting. Conference interpreting includes consecutive interpreting and simultaneous interpreting, which needs all-rounded interpreting skills, versatile knowledge and super level of both languages of A and B. As for common

interpreting, the skills of consecutive interpreting can help fulfill the task, and the requirements of language are inferior to conference interpreting, which usually refers to expertise in some certain field.

Taking the factors into consideration such as the language basis, major advantages, the factor of market demand, people like to set a comparatively suitable teaching objective for non-English major interpretation instruction: the aim is to instruct the basic knowledge of consecutive interpreting, to train the skills of consecutive interpreting, to cultivate major-related common interpreting talents for students' major field and relevant fields and to find out outstanding students to attend more advanced interpreting training.

### **Selection of the objects of non-english major interpretation instruction**

In order to ensure high quality and smooth proceeding of interpreting class for non-English majors, the selection of objects of non-English major interpretation instruction is very necessary and important. Selecting the appropriate students to learn interpretation is the premise for the success of the interpreting class. Interpreting teachers should select appropriate students to attend the class with a very responsible attitude. But what are the criteria for selection?

#### **One standard is language competence and cultural**

knowledge. The interpreters should have better standard of both mother language and foreign language and have more abundant knowledge of culture compared with translators. The interpreters should also have excellent competences of listening comprehension, oral expression, etc.

Another standard is basic qualities of the students. The Students learning interpretation should have some special qualities. As for the mental competence, they should have a smart mind and a quick response, a wide scope of knowledge and extensive interests. As for the psychological and physiological aspects, they should have good memory, competence of high concentration, and good psychological qualities to deal with great pressure.

#### **Phases and methods of non-english major interpretation instruction**

English learning of non-English major college students can be divided into two phases: the foundation phase in the first and second years and the enhancement phase in the third and fourth years. Interpretation instruction should proceed by combining with English courses.

In the foundation phase, all-rounded interpretation training can't be arranged for the limitation of students' English level. However, some interpreting skills can be taught, which can promote English instruction especially instruction of listening and speaking and can also lay a good foundation for the interpretation instruction in the enhancement period. Concretely speaking, listening and comprehension skills, memorizing, note-taking, expressive skills and preparation before the interpretation can be taught according to the arrangement of English courses. In intensive English class, the teachers can choose some appropriate texts with apparent colloquial characteristics to conduct training of interpreting skills. In listening class, listening and comprehension skills can be merged in, including the analysis of information units and the logical connections of information units, how to get away from the confines of words and phrases and find out the implied meanings, and how to deal with numbers and terms, etc. In oral English class, the teacher can teach the students some skills of public speaking and some skills of controlling speaking speed and intonations after some students make speeches about certain topics after short time of discussion.

In the enhancement phase, the interpretation instruction should aim at enhancing all kinds of interpreting skills such as listening and analyzing skills, short memory skill, note-taking skill, expressive skill, and preparation skill before the interpretation, etc. Retelling, shadow-speaking can be used to train students' competence of short memory, deverbilization exercises in the comprehension process can be used to train the students' competences of listening and analyzing. Task-based teaching method can be adopted in the interpretation instruction. The teaching objective of non-English major interpretation instruction is to cultivate major-related common interpreting talents in students' major field and other relevant fields. Therefore, while designing the interpreting tasks, the interpreting teacher should take the students' majors, possible work fields into consideration. The teacher should choose some typical interpreting settings relevant to students' major field to conduct interpreting training.

#### **Teaching content and design of non-English major interpretation instruction**

As a training of professional skills, Professor Zhong Weihe stated that the content of interpretation instruction includes three blocks: block of linguistic knowledge, encyclopedic block and block of interpreting skills. As for the non-English major interpretation instruction, the teaching content should adopt the mode of "language knowledge + interpreting skills" based on the original professional knowledge of the students. In the beginning of the interpreting class, some ceremonial speeches such as toast, welcoming speech can be trained, and the theme interpretation can be conducted afterwards.

In the teaching process, the interpreting teacher can make full use of the theme-based teaching mode under CBI teaching notion to conduct the instruction. Theme-based teaching mode is the most widely used mode in the application of CBI in all levels of instruction. On the basis of theme-based teaching mode, the course is relatively independent, which doesn't depend on any other courses. This kind of course has strong flexibility in selection of content, organization and arrangement of procedures. The themes of the course should be chosen in accordance with the interests and needs of students, and should aim to gain information and improve language level.

In interpreting class, the interpreting teacher should design the themes delicately. On one hand, the themes should cover as many fields as possible, such as commerce, tourism, law, politics, education, physics, culture, etc. On the other hand, the themes should combine closely with students' majors. Supposed that students' majors are commerce-related, such as international trade, marketing, the teacher can design some detailed themes relevant to commerce such as business negotiation, commercial visit, commercial report, advertising promotion, international commercial cooperation, etc. Because the students have learned a lot about the above-mentioned commerce-related themes in major courses, they can deal with the tasks related to the themes more easily and smoothly. At the same time, these themes are also very likely to be contacted by the students in the future job, thus, they also have great practical values. While organizing the class, the teacher can also design some settings related to these themes, thus making the students bring their initiatives and creativity into full play and practicing and improving their own basic interpreting skills.

In the teaching process, the interpreting teacher can make full use of the characteristics of the materials relevant to the themes to serve the training of interpreting skills. For example, the materials about economy and trade can be used to practice number interpreting. While the materials about culture and tourism can be used to practice idiom interpreting.

Task-based teaching method can be used frequently in the interpretation instruction. For different phases of learning, different tasks can be designed to practice and improve interpreting skills of the students.

### **Pre-class phase**

In this phase, the interpreting teacher can ask some students to prepare for a speech relevant to the theme before the class. The students can prepare for the speech by finding out some materials from the Internet or library. In the class, the students will make speeches in the front part of the classroom. Some other students will be chosen at random to act as interpreters. In this way, some information relevant to the theme can be introduced by students' speech; meanwhile, some students can get the chances to practice interpreting skills.

### **While-class phase**

Variety is the spice of class. In the interpreting class, all kinds of tasks can be designed to arouse the students' interests and initiatives based on CBI teaching notion. Role play game is a commonly used method in college English teaching, which can break the routine classroom regulations and stimulate students' thinking and imagination. Role play game can also be applied in interpreting class. For example, the interpreting teacher can ask students to play different roles in business negotiation, one acting as the representative of the Chinese party, another acting as the representative of the foreign party, two acting as the interpreters for two parties. Through this role play game relevant to the theme, students' interests of learning interpretation can be stimulated and enhanced, basic interpreting skills of students can also be practiced and improved. Other students can give scores and comments for the interpreters' performances in accordance with the scoring standard handed out by the teacher beforehand. Mock press conference is also a good way to practice interpreting skills in the class. The interpreting teacher can divide the students into some groups, each groups consisting of 10 students. 5 students act as the news officials, and every official has his/her own interpreter. The teacher prepares some materials closely relevant to the theme or the teacher asks some students to prepare some relevant materials before the class. In the class, the officials give speeches according to the materials, then their interpreters make interpretation for the speeches. Other students will ask some questions relevant to the content of the speeches. The officials will answer the questions. The interpreters make the interpretation for the officials during the whole process of mock press conference. It will be conducted group by group. This mock press conference is not only an interpreting exercise, but also an exercise to train students' competences of public speaking. The questions raised by the journalists in the classroom are unprepared, the news officials need to use their own linguistic and cultural knowledge to answer the questions on the spot very confidently, and the interpreters also have to make interpretation on the spot.

### **After-class phase**

After class, the students can download some audio and video materials relevant to themes taught in the class from the course website and conduct interpreting exercises by themselves autonomously. Thus, the students can improve their competences of self-study, and they can also get some extra chances to practice interpretation. Through the network communication platform, the teacher can know about students' problems and puzzles in learning process, and then help them solve the problems and puzzles.

In addition, the interpreting teacher can offer some chances such as international commodities fair for the students to attend and practice interpretation. In this way, the students can strengthen the knowledge what they have learnt in the interpreting class and improve their interpreting skills.

## **CONCLUSION**

Instructing interpreting class to non-English major college students is a helpful attempt, which fits into the great needs of interpreting talents in the market and aims to help cultivate major-related common interpreting talents in the future. Selecting appropriate students to attend interpreting class is undoubtedly the premise for the success of non-English major interpretation instruction. Some interpreting skills can be taught in the first two years of English courses for the preparation of the interpretation instruction in the third and fourth year. In the interpretation instruction, CBI teaching notion can be

applied as the guiding teaching notion in different phases of instruction: pre-class phase, while-class phase and after-class phase. Task-based teaching method is often used to practice CBI teaching notion in the interpretation instruction. Various tasks closely relevant to the themes are designed for the students to fulfill. During the course of fulfilling the tasks, the students can learn the knowledge relevant to the themes, improve their interpreting skills and gain new interpreting knowledge. The after-class interpreting exercises and interpreting practice can help the improvement of students' interpreting knowledge and skills, psychological qualities, etc.

Generally speaking, the successful establishment of non-English major interpretation instruction can lay a good foundation for the students to become qualified major-related common interpreting talents in the future.

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