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# A Brief Analysis of the Requirements for College English Translation (CET) Teaching in CET Translation Assessment

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**Abstract:** After the reform of Chinese English Test (CET) in 2013, the translation part was changed from single-sentence translation to paragraph translation, which increased the difficulty for both students and teachers obviously. The new translation test not only tests students' language application ability, but also requires them to be more aware of hot topics and vocabulary in Chinese history, culture, politics and economy, etc. In the meantime, The difficulty of the sentence structure and the translation of the logical relations between sentences have also been greatly increased. At least one or two long complicated sentences are included in each year's translation test, which require advanced English ability to accomplish. It not only puts higher requirements on students, but also brings greater challenges to the teaching work of college English teachers. By summarizing the main points of translation assessment in recent years and combining with the analysis of the current situation of college English translation teaching, this paper, guided by reform and problem-oriented, puts forward new strategies from aspects of enlarging vocabulary, handling sentence structure, handwriting and more practices for college English translation teaching that adapt to the reform, hoping to better educate and guide students' translation learning, improve students' translation ability and pass the test successfully.

**Keywords:** College English Test, Translation Assessment, Current Situation of Translation Teaching, Corresponding Strategy

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## 1. Introduction

In August 2013, the Ministry of Education issued the latest reform plan for the national College English Test Band 4 and 6. One of the most important changes is that the Chinese-English translation which previously examined simple phrases and sentence patterns, has been changed to the Chinese-English translation of paragraphs, which examines the overall expression of the article with a specific topic. This not only puts forward higher requirements on the translation ability of students in a large part, but also brings new challenges to the translation teaching in the process of college English teaching. Therefore, basing on the analysis of the key points and difficulties of college English translation assessment in CET, teachers should increase the proportion of translation teaching and adjust teaching methods in college English classes from comprehensive aspects according to the new requirements for students, guide students to enhance language application ability and expand cultural knowledge in all aspects, so as to enhance students' translation ability and successfully pass the test.

## 2. Key Points of College English Translation Assessment in CET

### 2.1. Vocabulary

After the reform, the requirement of vocabulary in the translation test has increased significantly, which is mainly reflected in the emergence of a lot of professional vocabulary that students need to master. It is not difficult to see from the translation questions of the test in recent years that the topics and contents of translation questions are very wide. There have been assessments of China's economy, history, culture, society, ecology and other aspects. Therefore, on the one hand, students should consciously accumulate some vocabulary related to traditional Chinese festivals, historical events, customs and habits; on the other hand, they should pay attention to the vocabulary related to China's economic, ecological and social development, and often read some articles in mainstream English magazines and websites that

reflect China's social development, so as to keep their vocabulary and comprehensive knowledge updated.

In addition, with the transformation of translation from single sentence translation to paragraph expression, the study and use of the most flexible and common verbs in English should be strengthened. Verbs are generally divided into four categories according to their meaning and function, that is, action verbs (also known as meaningful verbs), linking verbs, modal verbs and auxiliary verbs [1]. These types of verbs have a lot of knowledge points. When they are used in translation assessment, they should not only be used, but also be screened according to the actual situation of paragraphs and sentences. The use of verbs is not only the key point of assessment, but also the highlight of candidates' scores.

## 2.2. Sentence Patterns

After the reform, the translation test has changed from the original single sentence to paragraph translation. When translating every whole sentence, it is not only to translate the sentence. It is also necessary to grasp the use of sentence patterns in combination with the overall content of paragraphs. And the requirements of sentence patterns are significantly improved to test students' comprehensive use of grammar. Grammars and collocations are two of the biggest problems when translating sentences. Although grammar knowledge is boring, many core grammar, such as subjunctive mood, various clauses, inversion structures, non-predicate verbs, emphatic sentences, comparative levels, modal verbs, and so on, often appear in translation assessment. Fixed collocation is also a very important test point in translation assessment. When translating sentences, it is necessary not only to be grammatically correct, but also to have certain fixed collocations to make the sentences complete.

## 2.3. Logical Coherence

The examination of logic and coherence in translation mainly lies in the choice of sentence patterns and the use of conjunctions, which is a high-level examination of students' English level. On the premise of ensuring the correct sentences, how to make the translation more fluent and more complete is a high-level examination of students' comprehensive English language ability.

## 3. An Analysis of the Current Situation of College English Translation Teaching

The material must be familiar to the candidate so that he or she can translate it into English. Through the analysis of the translation questions in College English Test Band 4 in recent years, we can know that the content of the questions is in line with the requirements of the syllabus. In the recent five College English Test Band 4, it involves the introduction of the Yellow River and the Pearl River in China respectively, and also contains the symbolic meaning of red, white and yellow in Chinese culture. The content of these translation questions can highlight the cultural and economic

characteristics of our country, and the style of the questions tends to be the same, and the difference in difficulty is relatively small.

Most students lack the language environment for second language acquisition in the process of learning English. They lack the opportunity to communicate with foreigners in oral English both in learning and daily life. Consequently, they are not familiar with the authentic expression in English. Students neglect to practice and think, and can hardly avoid expressing themselves according to Chinese language habits. Additionally, as the traditional learning of English grammar is rather boring, leading to many students not interested in it. [14] And they rarely study independently after class, which leads to the confusion of grammar knowledge. Moreover, Language is the carrier of culture. Learning English is not only learning English language knowledge, but also more important for learning and understanding the culture of English-speaking countries. In order to translate smoothly between Chinese and English, we should not only learn the basic knowledge of English language, but also be familiar with the relevant Chinese culture and the general situation and culture of English-speaking countries. [13] In the current practice of college English teaching, due to various reasons, students not only know little about the background of Western culture, but also the knowledge of Chinese culture. In the translation of many paragraphs on cultural and historical themes in CET, it is not unusual to lose more points.

It is clearly pointed out in the College English Teaching Syllabus that each school should offer advanced English courses in the third and fourth grades according to the actual situation. Help students who have the ability to continue to improve their English application ability, and effectively ensure that college English learning for four years. [2] Translation is one of the suggested courses. However, the reality is that some schools offer translation classes as a public elective, with only two classes per week. Many schools do not even offer elective courses, let alone other aspects such as the use of textbooks and the exploration of teaching methods.

On the other hand, in the first and second years of college English courses, there are usually four to six classes per week, basically divided into trial lectures and reading classes, which only cover two aspects of the five basic skills of English learning: listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating. The other three parts are only explained by teachers "accidentally" in the teaching process. The teaching part of translation is also relatively limited, basically translating some phrases, more simple sentences. The latest CET-6 syllabus in 1999 of the Ministry of Education requires translation to be able to translate short English texts slightly less difficult than the text into Chinese with the help of a dictionary, understand correctly, translate meaning, and translate at a speed of 300 English words per hour. Be able to translate familiar Chinese text materials into English with the help of dictionaries, and the translation speed is 250 Chinese characters per hour. This is difficult for many students to meet the requirements. [3] CAI Jigang, a professor at Fudan University, pointed out: "Translation courses are no longer the preserve of foreign

language majors. With the change of form, the society's need for communicative competence in translation can no longer be satisfied by a few graduates of foreign language majors. It requires a large pool of people with this kind of application ability. Translation, a course of applied ability, will receive more and more attention in the college English community [4]. Many non-English majors, such as computer, business, law, tourism and other majors, have a solid professional knowledge. If we can strengthen the guidance on their translation theory and translation skills and cultivate their practical ability, they will often be better qualified for professional English translation work. College English teaching is the most important way to train translators with professional knowledge in our country. Therefore, college English teaching must pay attention to English translation teaching, improve students' translation ability and level, and enhance students' comprehensive English application ability.

#### **4. Formulate Corresponding Translation Teaching Strategies According to the Key Points of Translation Assessment**

It can be drawn from the transformation of the translation questions of CET in China: from the initial focus on vocabulary and grammar, to listening and oral expression, and now to focus on translation ability, discourse ability, cultural ability and language transfer ability. These changes urge college English teachers to make corresponding adjustments in curriculum, add traditional Chinese culture to classroom teaching, and introduce some translation methods to gradually improve students' translation and cultural abilities. Teachers should redistribute class hours, reduce the proportion of reading and writing courses, increase the class hours of British and American culture and Chinese traditional culture, reduce the teaching part of classroom teachers, and increase the self-reading and discussion part of students. [10] As the backbone of college English teaching reform, teachers should actively improve their own knowledge level, build their own cultural ideas, and become the advocates and transmitters of knowledge and culture. Teachers could implement the practice from several aspects.

##### **4.1. Expand Your Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is the foundation of language learning. Candidates should master the vocabulary specified in the syllabus of CET, which lays a foundation not only for translation, but also for other parts of CET which are reading, listening and writing. For the high-frequency words appearing in the CET-4 examination over the years, we should not only know their meaning and form, but also know their usage and collocation. In addition, students should be familiar with the vocabulary with Chinese characteristics. CET translation is about Chinese stories in many occasions, so there are often words with Chinese characteristics in the title. For example, in a set of questions in December 2020, "Reunion dinner", "Spring Festival Eve" and "dumplings" appeared. Students

should read more articles about Chinese culture and social development in English newspapers and magazines, such as China Daily and 21st Century English, to accumulate words with Chinese characteristics. At the same time, they can also cultivate the sense of language through reading.

The principle of translation is faith, elegance and elegance. First of all, faith comes first, meaning should be expressed correctly. The first step in translation is to choose English words or phrases with accurate meanings. If students can find English words or phrases that are equivalent to the Chinese words in the original text in terms of morphology and meaning, it is naturally perfect. But if not, they must first follow the principle of letter. Accurate meaning is more important.

Facing almost all English exams, one of the biggest problems reported by students is not large enough vocabulary, which is also one of the biggest problems preventing them from successfully passing the exam. Therefore, in the process of college English teaching, especially translation teaching, it is necessary to consciously remind and ensure that students strengthen the expansion and consolidation of vocabulary. [11] In addition to the necessary vocabulary memorization exercises, we can also deal with the vocabulary problem in the CET translation tests from the following aspects.

Firstly, by mastering the meanings of common prefixes, suffixes, etc., which represent different meanings, master many words by analogy based on familiar roots. For example, dis-, un-, in-, ir-, etc., means negative; re- means again; pre- means beforehand, and so on.

Secondly, in the teaching process, the English tree diagram learning method is used to guide the mastery of a familiar word related vocabulary. For example, master the word "compete" and learn its synonyms and antonyms and the adjective, noun, or synonym corresponding to an antonym of the same meaning. This method can also be reflected in guiding students to understand the vocabulary of its same category while mastering a certain word. For example, when you master the word "television", you should understand the English expressions of all household appliances. This sometimes plays an important role in the translation of key words in exams. For example, "Chinese knot" was tested in the previous exam. In the final stage before the exam, students are advised to memorize words of the same category, such as "paper cutting", "face changing", "engraving", "printing" and so on.

Thirdly, learn to use conversion of word classes flexibly. The expression of Chinese tends to use more verbs in peacetime because of its literariness and dynamics. While English expressions tend to be nominalized and prepositions in language use because of its abstractness and static nature. Therefore, in the process of translation from Chinese to English, it is necessary to guide students to flexibly change the parts of speech to make the translation more in line with English habits and more English flair. For example, in the Chinese sentence of "The whole family gets together to enjoy delicious mooncakes and enjoy the full moon, a symbol of abundance, harmony and luck." "Symbolize" is properly used as a verb in Chinese, followed by "abundance, harmony

and luck" are its objects. But if the translation also uses the verb "symbolize" to express, the structure of the whole sentence is not clean and idiomatic, so the translation uses "a symbol of", which makes the whole sentence more smooth.

Fourthly, In translation teaching, students are guided to flexibly use simple words to express new words beyond their vocabulary, that is, to translate around. It can be seen from previous translation exercises over the years that no matter what topic is examined, every sentence and every word in the exam question has been learned by the examinee, but it requires a process of thinking transformation. [6]

Fifthly, an easy way to expand your vocabulary is to develop the habit of knowing English words in life. In other words, students ask themselves what English expressions they see, hear, and even eat. In this way, it is more interesting to expand the vocabulary without memorizing words monotonous. In addition, it is very helpful to successfully pass the translation test, since a lot of the content of the translation test is also derived from life.

#### **4.2. Handle Sentences Correctly**

Sentence translation is the basic component of translation test. Students should be familiar with the basic grammar of English. Subjunctive mood, inverted sentence structure, clause and non-predicate structure are the basic grammar of CET, which should be paid more attention to. From the current situation of students' translation ability, many students understand translation by word, which inevitably results in syntax and expression errors and Chinese English in many cases. In the teaching process, students should be guided to form the habit of understanding and translating sentence by sentence. [12] Generally speaking, each test question contains a composition and one or several compound sentences, and the compound sentences often contain attributive clauses and adverbial clauses. It is very important to make clear the grammatical structure of each question for accurate and smooth translation. Many students find it difficult to do such tests, often because they are not clear about the grammatical structure or logical relationship of the sentences. In addition to the necessary grammatical structure analysis, sentence translation also requires certain skills. It is not desirable to translate word by word, we should do the necessary analysis and combination of the original text, so that the translation can conform to the grammatical structure and reading habits of Chinese. [7]

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Because of the difference between the two languages, it is necessary to guide the students to learn the conversion of sentence patterns in the teaching process. In most cases where a whole sentence is used as a unit to dissect and translate, the original whole sentence content needs to be adjusted and disrupted, but the content cannot be missing. That is to say, it

is not necessary to translate the order of the content of a sentence into English in full compliance with the original Chinese order. In the sentence pattern conversion of the original text, we should learn to use clause method and syntactic adjustment of the original sentence. Clause method is to translate one Chinese sentence of the original text into two or even more English sentences. Syntactic is the translation of two or more simple sentences of the original text into a single sentence. [8] Therefore, on the premise of ensuring the complete expression of meaning and correct sentence pattern, students do not have to abide by the format of translating a sentence from Chinese to English.

Because Chinese and English belong to different Sino-Tibetan families and Indo-European families, there are great differences in syntactic structure and expression habits between them. Therefore, in the process of English translation teaching, students should also be guided to pay attention to these differences and use the language that conforms to the English expression habit to translate Chinese. For example, there are many postpositives in English, but many prepositives in Chinese; English adverbial order is adverbial of way + place + time, while Chinese is adverbial of time + place + way; English sentences are long and loose, with the center of the sentence at the beginning of the sentence, while Chinese sentences are short and circular with the center of the sentence at the end of the sentence; In English, impersonal nouns are used as subjects, while in Chinese, personal pronouns are used as subjects; In English, the adjectives used to modify nouns are usually arranged in the order of subjective adjectives to objective adjectives, while in Chinese, on the contrary, the closest adjective to the noun is usually the most subjective adjective, and the farthest is the most objective adjective. [5] Voice choice is also very different in the two languages. The use of passive voice in English is very common, while in Chinese, we mostly use the active voice, and the passive voice is less used, even when it is used, it is more casual, and it does not have a fixed or unified form like English. Some Chinese sentences that express the existence, appearance or disappearance of things are often translated into English with inverted word order. Therefore, in the process of translation, students should be instructed to pay attention to changing voice, so that the translation is more in line with English idioms.

#### **4.3. Handwriting and Checking**

Handwriting is the easiest and most direct way for a marking teacher to see a student's attitude. If the article is written neatly, clearly, and reflected in the font, the examiner will light up after reading it and increase the impression points. In college English classes, students should be required to carefully write every letter, every word, to ensure the amount of writing. When training translation, train students to think about the key words and sentence patterns of each sentence first, so that they have a good idea of the habit of writing, and avoid thinking while translating, resulting in erasments and mistakes. In short, it does not require beauty, but cleanliness and clarity.

Checking at the end of translation is an essential part. In the process of translation teaching, it is very important to train students to form the habit of checking. After ensuring the previous correct translation methods, the inspection process is often to check some very small aspects, from the spelling of words, single or plural form, to the subject-verb agreement of grammar, tense agreement, etc., requiring students to avoid the most obvious mistakes as far as possible, so as to make the translation more smooth and complete.

#### 4.4. Practice Makes Perfect

Due to the limited number of college English hours, only by classroom practice and explanation, translation ability can not be effectively improved. CET preparation requires students to prepare after class, and translation needs practice. When it comes to preparation exercises, it is necessary to emphasize the role of exercises in previous tests. Many students do not want to do the previous translation exercises over the years, feeling that the questions which had been tested will not be tested again, rather spend time to do the predictive questions or simulation questions given by some websites or training institutions, which practice is actually improper. [15] What the students really need to do is go through the previous translations carefully, summarize the common vocabulary and sentence types. Students will gradually realize that many words and sentence patterns may be "reproduced" again.

There is an old saying in Chinese that goes "The more you know, the more you do; The more you do, the better you know". After clarifying the content and core test points of the translation test reform, and mastering the necessary translation skills, we should practice diligently, and only practice can overcome the mistakes of experience. Although many colleges do not offer special translation courses in reality, translation exercises can also be interspersed with other forms of English teaching classes such as visual lectures and reading classes. [9] While ensuring the explanation in class, teachers can even use the British and American TV series to assign some homework that is both educational and entertaining, so that students can develop the habit of practicing in life. In addition, we must ask students to do more translation exercises. Students are not supposed to think that some taking a glance at sentences is enough to understand how to translate, sometimes once written on the paper, they will make many mistakes, and even forget the spelling of some words. More practice not only can actually improve students' translation ability, so that students have a self-testing process, but also can eliminate the fear of translation examination, increase the practical ability of CET and finally improve the test score.

## 5. Conclusion

The reform of college English translation question type has far-reaching practical guiding significance for college English teaching reform. It shows that the direction of teaching training is transforming to language output ability

and comprehensive application ability. It is necessary to fully and appropriately integrate cultural background knowledge into college English classroom translation teaching.

After the reform, the new translation question types comprehensively test students' ability to use English language, which puts forward higher requirements for students and college English teachers. In the current college English teaching process, translation has not received enough attention and practice. But facing new questions and difficulties, teachers can adjust the teaching plan, formulate relevant strategies corresponding to test points in class, and infiltrate translation teaching into the teaching of other English ability cultivation, so as to improve students' translation ability as much as possible, so that they can successfully pass the test.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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