

# On Cultivating Interdisciplinary Business Interpreting Talents Based On Market Demand

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**Abstract**—Business interpreting talents are in badly need for local economic development, but currently there are problems of traditional business interpreting training mode in China. In view of the good opportunity for college business interpreters provided by international trading center development in Qingdao China and with the aim of being in line with market demand and enhancing business interpreters' employment competitive advantage, this paper aims to explore how to cultivate interdisciplinary business interpreting talents based on market demand.

**Keywords**—Interdisciplinary talents, business interpreting, market demand.

## I. INTRODUCTION

NOWADAYS Qingdao China is on the way to building international trading city. City development cannot separate from education. Surrounding the big direction of building international trading city, professionals from Qingdao did research and found that the popularizing rate for citizens to communicate in English and communicate and cooperate with foreign businessmen is related to foreign language teaching. English is an international language and important tool for information transfer. English level is an important factor of influencing city's construction of soft environment. In the process of constructing international trading city, it is more necessary to know western advanced achievement of human civilization, broaden horizon, enlarge knowledge, set up internationalization consciousness and cultivate talents suitable for social development in order to foster international cooperation. On the other hand, with the increase of international cooperation, it is more urgent to cultivate talents who are good at different languages, especially English. International personnel training project should be implemented by planning and English majors' training mode should be constructed in universities in order to output talents suitable for the modern and international development for the society. Also by the actual application, training and retraining, talents will improve their English level and foster international exchange and cooperation, thus supporting the construction and development of international trading city.

## II. THE NECESSITY OF CULTIVATING BUSINESS INTERPRETERS

With the development of Qingdao's international trading city, certainly inter-disciplinary business interpreters will be needed. As an important means and instrument of ensuring foreign

exchanges and business activities to go on wheels, business interpreting has increasingly attracted extensive attention from the whole society. Business interpreters have been ranked as "21st century scarce talents" by government departments. According to Qingdao business bureau, employees have the following problems in foreign trade activities: good English knowledge but poor English interpretation; good spoken English but lack of professional knowledge; not enough knowing about Qingdao economy, society and investment; lack of high-level English-Chinese interpreters. In view of these problems, it is necessary to construct business interpreting training mode under the environment of Qingdao's international trading city development.

Currently business interpreting course has not been constructed as key curriculum in any universities in Qingdao, neither a team of backbone teachers is established who can not only be on-site interpreters but be engaged in teaching and scientific research of major translation activities, which is apparently not complied with the requirements of Qingdao international trading center development. Based on the need of developing Qingdao international trading center, this paper aims to construct business interpreting training mode to meet the requirement of Qingdao "international trading center" and serve the local economy better.

## III. INTERPRETING THEORY

Western interpreting research started from 1950s' and experienced four developing stages. The first stage is Practitioners' Period. The representative theory is *theorie du sens*, which emphasizes that interpreting is meaning-centered instead of word-for-word translation. In 1986, a very important interpreting meeting [1] which was held in Trieste University in Italy became the turning point. Information-processing paradigm which has great influence up to now was popular in the second stage. Institut Supérieur d'Interpretation et de Traduction (ESIT) in Paris and *theorie du sens* represented by Seleskovitch [2] predominated in the third stage who advocated that interpreting is based on meaning unit and treat interpreting as three stages: a) listening comprehension; b) breaking away from language shell and getting expression content; c) target language expression. The fourth stage is the general empirical interpreting research with interdisciplinary input. Professor Daniel Gile from France is the most famous spokesman of empirical interpreting research with interdisciplinary input. He is the most productive writer in interpreting world up to now who has carried out a lot of empirical research.

It requires not only students' high-level English

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interpretation skills and Chinese knowledge but also related professional knowledge. Interpreting process includes three stages of understanding, memorizing and expressing [3]. Gile put forward the following pattern as to the understanding process of interpreting: C (comprehension) = KL (knowledge of the language) + ELK (extra—linguistic knowledge), which emphasized that the understanding process of interpreting is the result of the interaction between linguistic knowledge and extralinguistic knowledge. The main obstacle for students in the process of understanding is weak listening and lack of adequate sensitivity of cultural differences. These problems can be resolved by reasonable interpretation comprehension, memory and expression training. So the principle of interpreting class is that interpreting skill training should run through thematic interpretation training instead of mixing interpreting class with translation class or other courses aiming to improve students' language level.

Paris Interpretive school [4] also think interpreting is the process of source language comprehension which breaks away from language shell and target language expression. If business interpreters have abundant professional knowledge, their understanding of source language is more accurate, thus target language expression will be more in place.

#### IV. THE EXISTING PROBLEMS OF CURRENT BUSINESS INTERPRETING TRAINING MODE

Although interpreting teaching has been reformed continuously in recent years and a lot of valuable experience has also been accumulated for business interpreting teaching, there still exist many problems for the current business interpreting teaching, not adapting to cultivating innovative, inter-disciplinary business interpreters. The main problems are as follows:

##### 1. Conservative Educational Concept

We are in the information age now, so our educational concept should also adapt to the change of the social needs and make corresponding adjustment. Innovative, inter-disciplinary business interpreters cannot be cultivated under the fixed, unchangeable concept. Besides under the traditional teaching concept, teaching contents adopted will also be dated, which cannot cultivate students' abilities and interests and adapt to the needs of the development of international trading city in the new period.

##### 2. Curriculum Provision Problems

At present, interpretation curriculum provision in universities is single and the training of single interpretation skills is highlighted, which lack the training and cultivation of students' professional knowledge. Whether interpreting skills can be effectively developed depends on interpreters' familiarity of background knowledge to a large extent. The scope of business has been greatly expanded, covering many fields such as trade, finance, management and marketing. It is impossible and unnecessary for business interpreters to become business experts of various areas, but they must be familiar with basic knowledge, concepts, and terminology of business in

various fields.

##### 3. Problem of Students' Critical Thinking Ability

It requires rigorous ability of logical thinking and innovation to be a qualified interpreter. A large number of studies have shown that English major students' thinking ability is poor [5]. Their "absence of dialectic" can be considered from the following aspects: Firstly, the inherent law of English learning determines English major students' high ability of imitation and memorizing, but their ability of logical reasoning, analyzing and problem-solving is not good enough. Secondly, teachers ignore the cultivation of students' innovative thinking. Thirdly, students' scope of knowledge is narrow and the knowledge of humanistic social studies is scarcely involved so as to make students' thinking ability bad. In interpreting training mode, improving students' thinking ability has become the top priority.

##### 4. Detaching of Learning and Application

Business interpreting teaching is a complex process and such factors as language ability, communication awareness, inferential capability and strain capacity all influence the effect of business interpreting teaching directly, so it is very important to cultivate students' comprehensive abilities in interpreting teaching. Generally speaking, whereas, restrained by teaching condition, interpreting teaching is conducted in classroom. Although teachers have designed many themes and scenarios for students, students still face black and chalk teaching or multi-media teaching, constructing corresponding scenario by self-imagination, which brings certain difficulty for interpreting teaching.

Besides, Students have little chance to apply interpreting skills which they have learned from class. Firstly classroom time is limited. Secondly school lacks communication with society and students lack stable long-term practice base. Students lack opportunity of testing their language level and skill level in a real setting so as to test their psychological quality and exercise their own strain capacity in practice.

##### 5. Boring Content and Relatively Single Means of Teaching

In traditional business interpreting teaching, teachers pay more attention to seniority and experience, so some teachers will choose the same teaching material and teach students based on many years' teaching experience without preparing for corresponding teaching plan in advance. Although some teachers try to search relative material and perfect their teaching plan continuously, they will shrink back from difficulties because of lack of the source of material. Thus, teaching content will be dated and teaching methods and themes are basically changeless. Under such circumstances, classroom atmosphere will be dull and boring and teaching means will be more mechanized.

#### V. BUSINESS INTERPRETING TRAINING MODE AND MARKET DEMAND

Business interpreting training mode should change the traditional classroom teaching mode, with cultivating

professional high-quality business interpreting talents as the teaching goal in order to serve the development of local market economy. Therefore, new teaching mode should be based on the basis of market demand survey. Quantitative and qualitative data of business interpreting talents needed by market is achieved by questionnaire, interview and field investigation. These data should be analyzed objectively and accurately by combining the qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis.

On the basis of the research of interpreting talents demand and aiming at market demand, we should be clear that the training objective for English majors' interpreting course is to cultivate high-quality extravert, practical and inter-disciplinary business interpreters and to explore foreign trade and economic business interpreting training mode in order to cultivate high-quality, high-level professional interpreters suitable for the demand of market economy development for foreign enterprises. New interpreting teaching mode should follow the thinking of combining skill training and field training, unifying knowledge grasping and ability training by example teaching, collaborative interactive interpretation and modeling business situation in order to improve students' thinking ability and exert students' enthusiasm, cooperation and subjectivity. On the basis of classroom teaching, trainee and practice bases should be established. Study and application should be integrated [6].

#### *A. Inter-disciplinary Business Interpreting Training Mode*

R. Q. Du [7] pointed out that inter-disciplinary foreign language talents are talents who are good at many things and expert in one, that is, who should not only master a foreign language, knowing the basic knowledge of a foreign language but also possess other majors' basic knowledge and skills. Personnel training mode is defined as teaching organization form, with the teaching contents and the embodiment and way of curriculum system as the core.

The current foreign language talents training mode lays particular stress on majors' technicality and pays less attention to application. Although many schools are recruiting undergraduate students of translation direction, the entrance examination, training objectives, curriculum setting, teaching arrangement and dissertation writing are all carried out in accordance with the academic talents training mode. Even some schools completely ignore the cultivation of practical operational capacity in interpretation, leading to students' practical ability of translation less than satisfactory.

This mode is not conducive to the cultivation of advanced business interpreters, nor adapt to the knowledge and ability requirement of practical and professional translation talents. It is not in conformity with the training target of applied business interpreting talents in Qingdao. Interpreting has a high degree of specialization and strong applicability and operability. Compound training model should be introduced to cultivate inter-disciplinary business interpreters in line with market needs.

#### *B. Teaching Contents*

##### *1. Training Interpreting Basic Skills*

Business interpreting is a type of interpretation subdivided for specific occasion and special purpose, which should follow the basic teaching laws and characteristics of interpreting teaching. Y. C. Bao[8] has pointed out that interpreting skills are not only the nuclear but also the ultimate goal of interpreting class. H. P. Liu [9] also thinks that the aim for interpreting teaching is to let students master the bilingual thinking ability and transformation ability. Interpreting teaching should be skill-centered because interpretation is a complicated process of multi-task information handling. Interpreters should go through a series of cognitive processes of receiving, decoding, memorizing, encoding and re-expressing of language information. Meanwhile a variety of interpreting skills should be applied. Only the "proceduralization" and "automotization" of interpreting skills application is realized, can interpreters' overall information processing ability be improved and their interpreting level be improved fundamentally.

Therefore, interpreting teaching should regard skill training as the main line and follow interpretation laws. Teachers should arrange interpreting skill training in a planned way step by step through theoretical teaching and practical training, which mainly include such skills as short-term memory, interpreting notes, logical reasoning, identification of the original language theme, information reconstruction of the target language, interpreting strategies, skills and speech preparation and cross-cultural communication skills. Although practice is the main line for interpreting class, it is not pure practice class. It should follow the law of interpretation and interpretation skill training should be organized in a planned, procedural, guided way. More exactly, it is the training of interpretation methods. After methods are acquired, with the consistent practice, skill can be cultivated.

##### *2. Strengthening Obtaining Business Knowledge through Various Channels*

Whether interpreting skill can be effectively played out depends largely on interpreters' familiarity of background knowledge. Business scope has been greatly expanded, covering so many areas as trade, finance, management and marketing. It is not possible for business interpreters to become experts who are proficient in all business areas, but they must be familiar with the basic knowledge, concept and terminology of all business areas. In China, well-known interpretation teaching experts W. H. Zhong [10] has provided several reference ways to how to obtain this kind of summative and term-introduction courses. Firstly you can obtain them with the aid of minor courses and selective courses from university itself which can be easily realized in general universities. What teachers do is to list selective courses they recommend students to have. Secondly experts of all industries can be invited to open up encyclopedic knowledge seminars for students. Thirdly professional courses for specific areas can be set up reasonably according to social demand. At present, most

colleges and universities in Shandong Province have set up the direction of business English for English majors, providing students with main business courses including international trade affairs, marketing and international finance taught by English or bi-language, which provides a great convenience for interpretation teaching. For those colleges and universities which have not opened the direction of business English, teachers can recommend students to take a number of business courses as minor course or selective course from economic management department, reserving professional knowledge for business interpreting learning later. In addition, under today's circumstance which is rich in information, teachers should also encourage and guide students to accumulate all kinds of business knowledge through such multiple channels as newspaper, television and internet.

To cultivate qualified business interpreters, universities should create conditions for students and provide them with curriculum group of business knowledge which match business interpreting course. According to students' mastered business background knowledge, interpreting teachers should create various real specific business communication scene to cultivate students' interpreting skills and shorten their period of adapting to society. Take the course of international trade practice as an example, contract consultation and negotiation is the main content for business interpreters. Through the course, students can understand the whole process of import and export trade, including such negotiation step of trade terms as enquiry and offer and execution after signing the contract such as the packing of goods, customs declaration, customs check, transportation, payment, inspection, claim and arbitration. Teachers can apply the form of role play. Students can be divided into several groups and three students form one group. One student acts as the representative of foreign party and one student acts as the representative of Chinese party. The third person acts as the interpreter. Through the group simulation of economic and trade negotiations, interpreting skill and business knowledge are combined. From simulation activity, students can not only apply foreign trade knowledge they have already mastered to understand the knowledge in order to guarantee the quality of translation but also accumulate common expression and specific interpretation methods of terminology in foreign trade negotiation. As a result, they can improve their interpretation ability for future practical work.

### *C. The Approach to Inter-disciplinary Business Interpreting Training Mode*

#### 1. Establishing Training Objectives

Teaching syllabus for English majors in China ranks interpreting course as one of English basic skill courses. Teaching objective is to let students grasp basic theories of interpreting and skill of special consecutive interpretation, preliminarily learning interpretation memorizing methods, oral summary, interpretation notes and public speaking skills by teachers' teaching basic interpretation theories, interpretation background knowledge and basic skills of training interpretation with the aim of making students do

Chinese-English interpretation accurately and fluently. Business interpreting is to put the cultivating and training of interpreting skills into special business environment. Teachers are devoted to cultivating advanced inter-disciplinary foreign language talents who are not only familiar with business knowledge but also at higher interpreting level and cultivating and outputting high-level business interpreting talents for state organs, enterprise and public institution and foreign funded enterprises who are capable of all kinds of business reception, negotiation, marketing of new products and promotion of investment and small press conferences to foster the understanding, communication and cooperation among business parties.

So for business interpreting talents cultivation, the first thing is to establish educational concept adapted to the era and clear goal of talents cultivation. Under the current environment of developing international trading city, language should not be transmitted only as knowledge but be connected with practice, cultivating students' application ability. Therefore, we must change educational concept, cultivate inter-disciplinary talents and pay attention to the cultivation of innovation and practical ability in order to make students apply "what they have learned" and meet the demand of era.

#### 2. Constructing a Reasonable Course System

W. H. Zhong [10] thinks "interpreting skills" training should be treated as the core for interpreting training and several courses should be set up at the same time in the aspect of curriculum provision: 1) language knowledge and language skills courses; 2) encyclopedic knowledge courses; 3) interpreting skills courses. In interpreting teaching, traditional teaching involved in the primary surface phase of the language conversion process of language teaching should be followed and enriched. What is more important is to realize the advanced deep stage of interpreting teaching--the cultivation of cross-cultural awareness.

In business interpreting class, the problem that students reveal is that their listening ability is not good enough to interpret English into Chinese or Chinese into English properly. So relevant courses with interpreting should be strengthened macroscopically and such courses as listening, Chinese-English translation and newspaper reading can be set as the precedent courses of business interpreting. These courses which are related to one another in content and difficulty should be set together as group of interpreting class to strengthen students' basic language skills of interpreting.

On the other hand, due to the different regional economic development mode, standards of talents required are different, so curriculum provision should consider Qingdao regional characteristics and various courses should be set up to meet the regional development.

Students can choose these courses accordingly so as to cultivate their compound skills. Besides, teaching content must keep up with the development of time, not constrained in the textbook knowledge and change the single, boring status quo of traditional curriculum content

### 3. Cultivating Students' Thinking Ability

Students' thinking ability and innovation ability should be trained in interpreting training. Actually high level of thinking ability is required for Interpreting. Interpreters should be equipped with not only logical thinking and dialectical thinking ability but also creative thinking and ability to respond quickly. Therefore, training of cultivating thinking ability and related activities should be added in the interpreting teaching to train students' logical, dialectical and innovation ability. For example, students' logical thinking ability and oral expression ability can be trained by training students' public speaking ability.

Students' thinking ability can also be realized by intensifying interpretation practical training and realizing the combination between theory and practice. In interpreting skill training, multi-media language laboratory should be made full use of to create simulation of interpreting class. Students are trained to apply learned business knowledge and English knowledge and skill flexibly.

Besides, cultivating students' bi-lingual thinking ability is necessary. Firstly students' single language thinking habit should be broken. Most students' way of learning a foreign language is adults' way of acquiring a foreign language. That is to say, firstly they perceive language and then they are familiar with language. Language rule is firstly learned and by practice, cognitive language transform into customary language. Even some stay at the degree of perceiving language without transforming into being familiar with language. They can explain grammar very well but their oral English is very poor. Just because of the prior study of grammar, their understanding of English is constrained, forming fixed grammar thinking mode and being difficult to catch the deeper meaning by penetrating surface structure. So in order to break away from the original language shell and realize meaning transformation, traditional thinking habit should be broken and new thinking habit should be established. Language should be perceived from a new angle.

It takes more than a semester to cultivate students' bi-lingual thinking ability and establish interpretation ability. It is a long even life-long learning process. Those interpreters who have been engaged in interpreting for many years still face the problem of improving their interpretation ability continuously. University interpreting class can be treated as a good beginning for skill cultivation. What they learn mostly is the theory and methods of interpretation training.

### 4. University-Enterprise Cooperation

University-enterprise cooperation is a key way to cultivate business interpreters, helping foreign language major to find an entry point of serving society and economic development in the cultivation of talents, which is the survival point and development point for a major. At present foreign language teachers are almost cultivated under the traditional language and literature who lack industry knowledge and skills. Cooperation with enterprises, introducing excellent enterprise experts and technicians who can be full-time and part-time teachers participating in the actual teaching and field guide

through teaching guidance can solve the disjunct problem between foreign language teaching theory and practice, ensuring practicability of classroom teaching. Cultivated students can mount guard and operate directly, realizing connecting teaching and enterprise at close range. Through cooperation with enterprises, the demand research of industry key talents is carried out regularly to ensure the directivity and effectiveness of talent cultivation. Professional talents cultivation program will be established together with enterprises to make sure the adaptation of talent cultivation. So major must adapt to the regional development, follow the industry development and meet enterprises' demand for talents. In a word, teaching reform will be promoted and the quality of teaching and educating will be improved through cooperation between colleges and enterprises with the aim of serving the regional economy better.

### 5. Building a Reasonable Inter-disciplinary Team of Business Interpreting Teachers

Constructing international trading city requires high-quality business interpreters and teachers who are to cultivate talents, so higher requirements have been put forward for teachers. Currently, faculty for foreign trade majors is the main problem for business interpreting. And the main problem is that teachers lack relevant business background knowledge and business practice. Although it can be partly solved by university-enterprise cooperation, universities should also give support by absorbing talents, especially bilingual business teachers using favorable policy. For those selected business interpreting teachers, they are to be provided with chances for further study of business. What's more, teachers are allowed to enter enterprises, strengthening their won practical ability. By this way, teachers can reach a better teaching result and students can benefit a lot from it.

As for Qingdao, with the development of international trading city, its economy will reach a higher new level and with more foreign investment, more talents will be needed to provide relevant service, so a great number of qualified teachers are needed to make sure the implementation of business interpreting course. All in all a team of inter-disciplinary business interpreting teachers with reasonable age, knowledge, education background, and the title of a technical post should be built depending on Qingdao local characteristics. The process of constructing English business interpreter training mode cannot be separated from the construction of teaching staff. Various measures should be taken to improve teachers' quality and ensure the quality of teaching.

### 6. Learner Autonomy Strategy for Skill Training

Interpretation class teaching should guide extracurricular autonomous learning, which combine students' class training with extracurricular learning, paying special attention to students' adjustment and self-monitoring of cognitive process through such methods as planning, monitoring and assessment. Autonomous learning refers to a kind of learning mode that learners choose their own learning objective, content and

methods freely according to their own condition guided by teachers under the general macro-control of teaching objectives and then accomplish their learning activity by self-adjustment.

Interpreters can meet six types of discourses when interpreting such as narrative discourse, demonstrative discourse, introductory discourse, ceremonial speeches, encouraging speeches and dialogues. In order to train students better understand and apply how to express different discourses in English, it is impossible to finish this task only relying on teachers' explanation in class. In class, students can get ready for a speech or just give an extemporaneous speech and teachers can also provide the structure and features of different discourses.

Listening and repeating and retelling training can also be realized after class. Teachers can increase the difficulty of material constantly by checking and supervising students' sound recording. Take the practice of listening and repeating for example, based on students' behavior, after a period of practice of listening and repeating synchronously, teachers can let students repeat the original after a short time. As to the difficulty and theme of the practice material, teachers can supervise.

Note-taking is very important in the process of interpreting, so the practice of note-taking is also very important for autonomous learning after class. After class, students are required to listen to news from VOA or BBC or watch video material from CNN. At the same time, they should take down what they have heard. After that, they go through their notes and retell the content of the material in original language or translated language. As an English major, it is very necessary to listen to English material every day and it is feasible to add the step of taking notes which is quite helpful to improve their interpretation level.

Sight translation practice is suitable for students to practice autonomously after class. The function of sight translation practice is that it can expand students' knowledge, make them be familiar with the speech types and commonly used sentence patterns of two different languages and cultivate skill of segmenting words in an article. Of course, in class, teachers should impart the skill and standard of sight translation for students, such as the skill of segmenting words, the skill of adding more information and skill of controlling narrative rhythm. However there is a great gap between knowing these skills and putting them into practice naturally, thus requiring students to apply learner autonomy strategy and master all kinds of interpretation skills as quickly as they can. Every week, students should finish fixed amount of sight translation practice and record them in the form of video, which is not only convenient for teachers to supervise students but also helpful for students to know their own problems better by comparing their own front and back sight translation video material and comparing theirs with their classmates. By this way, they can communicate with teachers or classmates better and make practical progress in the end. Besides, large amount of sight translation practice is helpful for students to accumulate large amount of interpretation vocabulary. They can make a table of vocabulary which is helpful for their later interpretation study

and work.

During the process of autonomous learning for interpretation skill training, students should actively apply learner autonomy strategy while teachers should assist students favorably during their process of autonomous learning. Teachers can help students reflect on their own study plan timely and make corresponding adjustment by supervising students through such methods as questionnaire survey, interview, checking homework. What's more, in order to better develop students' learner autonomy, teachers should change the assessment methods of interpretation course accordingly, change traditional concept of interpretation teaching and avoid being teacher-centered in class. The final exam score should not be the only standard for teachers to assess students. The most important thing for the study of interpretation, the training of interpretation skill and the real improvement of interpretation ability is the process, students' learner autonomy throughout and teachers' assist.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Business interpreting talents cultivation conforms to China's current economic development situation and the need of constructing international trading center in Qingdao, which is an important move with practical significance. So foreign language majors of universities and colleges in Qingdao should actively create conditions for setting up business interpreting courses according to their own condition in order to provide enough quality business interpreters, improve the employment competitiveness of students and schools' professional ability of running a school.

Business interpreters cultivated in accordance with market demand will fit the development of international trading city and shorten the adaptive phase after students step into operating post. At the same time, the cultivation of high-quality, professional business interpreters will also improve students' comprehensive quality and competition ability. To a certain extent, it resolves university students' employment pressure and adapt to the development and change of market demand.

As long as teachers and students make efforts jointly, business interpreting class will reach a higher level. By combining in-class teaching and extracurricular learner autonomy effectively, English majors' interpretation level will be highly improved. As a result, university will cultivate interdisciplinary business interpreting talents to meet market demand and students' employment competitive advantage will be highly enhanced.

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