

Chapter 19

Developing Business CAT Teaching System and Course for Chinese Universities

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes that business CAT be introduced as the reform of a course in Chinese universities. Firstly, the authors describe the conceptual framework and design of business CAT course and textbook, the newly developed “Computer-Aided Business Translation Teaching System (Business CAT), with a focus on learner translation training and teacher management platforms. Secondly, the authors discuss the constructed “Business English-Chinese Parallel Corpus” that supports the system. Finally, the authors show that business CAT contributes positively to the improvement of college students’ CAT competence and development of CAT education in China.

INTRODUCTION

In second language acquisition, a computer is mainly used in four areas (Chapelle, 2001): 1) computer-aided language learning (CALL), 2) computer-aided language test (CALT), 3) computer-aided research (CAR), and 4) computer-aided translation (CAT). CALL is the best-developed one

among the four areas. Multimedia and web-based language learning and teaching has developed significantly in China’s college English teaching reform (Yi & Yao, 2006). Multimedia courses and courseware are well used in listening, speaking, reading and writing courses (He, 2003). With the increasing development and promotion of computerized foreign language tests, online tests and automatic computer score system in recent years, such as TOEFL iBT and CET4 online tests, com-

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puterized language testing has become the largest industry second to CALL. As corpus linguistics has developed and various kinds of workshops and seminars on CAR methods appear, more and more foreign language teachers have learned and used CAR in their research-driven teaching (Wang & Liang, 2007). CAT is one of the most important trends in the translation field of the 21st century (Wang & Wang, 2008). However, its course and data resources are under-developed (Gao, 2005). Since 2007, some colleges and universities have installed CAT teaching system, and offered CAT course in response to the demand of the National Advisory Committee for MTI Education. Nevertheless, qualified courses, teaching materials and faculty are in great demand (Lv & Mu, 2007). Up to now, even though 32 Chinese colleges and universities have offered BA business English programs granted by the Ministry of Education, no business CAT course is available. In some colleges and universities where business translation courses are offered, the concept of computer-aided translation and related software are not introduced.

Here, we try to describe the new-generation “business CAT teaching system,” co-developed by the University of International Business and Economics and one IT company. The concept of the business CAT course and the contents of the textbook are proposed, which consists of a huge and classified Chinese-English parallel corpus. It is our hope that it can contribute to the development of business CAT teaching and learning in Chinese institutions of higher learning.

CONCEPTULIZING BUSINESS CAT COURSE

Rationale of Business CAT Course

With the globalized economy and China’s opening up to the outside, a large proportion of document translation, such as business letters, bank statements, legal contracts and sales reports become a

challenge to the business English majors. These documents are suitable for computer-aided translation as they are very professional and formatted with regular terminologies (Wu, 2006). As a result, business CAT skills are one of the core competencies required for business English and translation students by translation companies. Unlike machine translation, computer-aided translation mainly adopts translation memory (TM) technology, which can automatically memorize and retrieve repeated or similar words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs as well as storing the translated texts. During the process, the system gradually creates a huge database in the computer. It automatically retrieves the most suitable and various versions of the same translation in the corpus, thus increasing translation accuracy and efficiency dramatically.

The authors think that a business CAT course should be included in teaching programs for business English and translation students so as to train their abilities of CAT techniques and business knowledge and translation skills. In China, translation and business English students, translation students and teachers as well as college translation programs should have far-sighted vision to reform their courses and curriculum, so that students learn the competitive and professional skills for future employment.

Framework of Business CAT Course

In order to better satisfy the college business English teaching requirements, the project team has developed the outline of the textbook: *Introducing Computer-Aided Business Translation*. This course contains 12 major topics as follows: 1) Overview of CAT development; 2) Introducing business CAT; 3) CAT of business correspondences and practice; 4) CAT of products manual & services and practice; 5) CAT of business advertisements and practice; 6) CAT of bidding documents and practice; 7) CAT of legal contracts and practice; 8) CAT of bank documentation and practice; 9) CAT of business reports and practice; 10) CAT

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