

An Exploration on the Innovative Model of Bilingual Textbook for International Relations

Baisong Wang

Law School of Shandong University of Technology, Zibo Shandong, 255049, China

wanggreatpine@163.com

Abstract: *The bilingual textbook is an important part influencing the equality and effect of bilingual teaching. At present, the four types of textbooks are being used in the bilingual teaching of international relations in colleges and universities in China, including original-version textbook, photocopying textbook, self-compiled textbook and loose-leaf English teaching materials.*

Key words: *International relations; Bilingual teaching; Textbook construction*

Based on the new request about the bilingual teaching offered by the Ministry of Education since 2001, the bilingual courses have been opened and the bilingual teaching has been regarded as the top priority in higher-education teaching reform in many universities. Therefore, only by improving the construction of bilingual teaching materials can we break through the dilemma of bilingual teaching. Based on the analysis of the current bilingual textbook model of international relations, the paper focuses on the innovative model how to compile the bilingual teaching materials independently to provide a valuable reference for the development of bilingual teaching in China's universities.

1. Basic model of current bilingual teaching materials of international relations in China's universities

1.1 Original-version textbook

Without doubt, it is very obvious for the advantages of the original-version textbooks of international relations in the bilingual teaching. Firstly, the Strong novelty, practicability and participation of knowledge are utilized in the teaching contents. Secondly, The natural integration between knowledge and English language can also be realized. So, the advantages of original-version textbooks of international relations will become the primary choice for the bilingual teaching of international relations in China's universities on the basis of the higher English level for both students and teachers. However, some problems in the teaching process for the original-version textbooks related to international relations cannot be ignored. (1) The original-version textbooks are in short of pertinence, are not suitable for the knowledge system of curriculum syllabus, cannot reflect the domestic reality effectively and moreover cannot connect with other professional courses reasonably. (2) Due to the various contents of the original-version textbooks, their teaching value will be greatly reduced under the limit of the current bilingual teaching level in China's universities. (3) Some key knowledge in the original-version textbooks will result in the different understanding because of different

cultural background and educational system between East and West. (4) When choosing the original-version textbook, we find that its excessive price is beyond the financial ability of the students from the poor families, which is also a problem that the bilingual teacher have to focus on.

1.2. Photocopying textbook

The photocopying textbook is the English book that is authorized by the foreign publishing house and officially published by the China's publishing house, including the photocopying textbooks with or without translation. This kind of textbook combines basically the original-version teaching materials with the domestic professional curriculum standard, not only guarantees the normative and pure language, and the concise and moderate contents for the bilingual textbook, but also reflects the students' cognition ability in China's universities. Meantime, the price of this kind of textbook is also several times lower than that of the original-version textbook, and can be easily accepted by both students and teachers. But this kind of textbook also contains the obvious disadvantages, especially its organization and knowledge system need to be further improved.

1.3 Self-compiled English textbook

The self-compiled English textbook means that the teacher will combine the original-version teaching materials with the domestic authoritative textbook on international relations according to the teaching syllabus, and so compile the English textbook meeting the teaching needs. Such textbooks provide the higher adaptability and practicability, reflecting the cutting-edge trends in the field of international politics as well as the characteristics of domestic courses. But this kind of textbook has higher requirements for the writer. Firstly, the writer should have a good command of English. Secondly, the writer must be highly qualified experts in the field of international relations and willing to devote the sufficient time and energy to the preparation of bilingual textbook. Otherwise, the self-compiled textbook is not authentic in language, more importantly, the part of the self-compiled textbook selected from the original-version textbooks may possibly cause the copyright infringement.

1.4 Loose-leaf English teaching materials

The loose-leaf English teaching materials mean that the teacher either copies some chapters of original-version or photocopying textbooks which are close to the bilingual teaching or compiles independently some teaching contents without selecting a truly suitable foreign original-version or photocopying teaching materials. This kind of loose-leaf teaching materials with the stronger pertinence and flexibility are economical and practical, and can give full play to the teacher's teaching personality. However, its inherent defects don't make it the first choice of bilingual teaching materials because of many disadvantages. For example, "the bilingual teaching without the textbook will not make the students improve their English level or grasp the knowledge system for the whole course".^[1]

Thus, the current bilingual textbooks for international relations in China's universities are not fully in line with the actual needs of bilingual teaching, and have been the main

bottleneck affecting the quality and effect of bilingual teaching. The selection of bilingual textbooks has been an important task for bilingual teaching. Therefore, it has become one of the most urgent tasks for the teachers to explore and develop the bilingual textbook of international relations for the teaching practice in China's universities.

2. The innovative model of the bilingual textbook of international relations in China's universities

Based on years of teaching and practical experience accumulated in the provincial bilingual demonstration course of international relations, the author has independently explored and compiled a bilingual textbook entitled *An Introduction to International Relations* (The bilingual textbook was published by Science Press in 2011) for the bilingual teaching objective of international relations in China's universities. Its publication has filled in the gap that there are no formal English publications on international relations theory teaching in China's universities. To a certain extent, the innovative model of the English textbook has accumulated many valuable experience for breaking through the dilemma of bilingual textbooks in China. In particular, the innovative model on *An Introduction to International Relations* mainly focuses on the following aspects.

2.1 Clear writing objectives and ideas

John Dewey, a well-known American educator, analyzed carefully the role of the textbook. For him, the textbook is "the collection of the facts and ideas observed, recalled and discussed in the development of a purposeful situation."^[2] Before *An Introduction to International Relations* was written, the knowledge, language and thought objective had been determined as its primary compilation target. That is, this bilingual textbook not only aims to cultivate the students' thinking ability of international relations through a complete knowledge system, but also to improve their communicative competence in the professional foreign language and the ability to use foreign languages to think about the international issues through the concise and idiomatic English expressions.

2.2 Reasonable choice between original-version textbooks and English websites

A standard bilingual textbook should not only contain the basic theories of the discipline, but also reflect its latest research results at home and abroad and the innovation of scientific research and teaching experience as a chief editor. The important materials of the textbook of *An Introduction to International Relations* are to select and modify the contents of authoritative Chinese and English textbooks and English website materials, from which we can get the essence of Chinese and English materials. For example, the basic concepts and theories are mainly directly quoted from the original-version textbooks of British and American authoritative dictionaries of international relations and the original discourses of English websites related to international relations. The classic cases try to select the materials from the original-version textbooks and bring together the information accumulated by the teacher in the scientific research. For the contents of the original-version textbooks or websites, we should not simply copy them, but give notes to those directly quoted. In addition,

we should take a prudent attitude towards the improper description, and make more choices by referring to the opinions of domestic authorities and combining with our own understanding. So “a good bilingual textbook is by no means an anthology or an excerpt from several original-version textbooks, but a collection of hundreds of materials and teaching achievements”.^[3] The contents of the textbooks of international relations need to be constantly improved and updated, and should reflect the latest theoretical research results. For this, at the end of each chapter of the textbook, the author lists a link website to facilitate the students to further consult the relevant literature materials and obtain the latest case information, thus giving full play to the combination of static textbooks and dynamic cases.

2.3 Indispensable theory of international relations with Chinese characteristics

The original-version textbooks of international relations rarely contain Chinese theories of international relations, but the English textbooks compiled by Chinese scholars should embody the essence of theories of international relations with Chinese characteristics. One of the innovations of knowledge system of *An Introduction to International Relations* is to increase many ancient Chinese thoughts on national security, which is also the full manifestation of the integration of internationalism and patriotism in this textbook. The Chinese thoughts on national security have a unique ideological connotation, and their ideological essence have become an important part of the knowledge pedigree of contemporary international relations theories. These thoughts are embodied in this bilingual textbook, which can not only help the students deeply understand the reasons for China's pursuit of peaceful development, but also enable them to feel the contribution that China is making to the world peace and development, thereby increasing their feelings of internationalism and patriotism.

2.4 Developing energetically the three-dimensional teaching materials

The three-dimensional teaching materials are an integrated teaching plan of the curriculum, which is based on the main teaching materials and the integration of teaching resources by various medias. According to the requirements of the provincial bilingual model curriculum, the three-dimensional textbooks of international relations should be fully reflected in the bilingual curriculum website. To this end, we learn from the foreign related curriculum website construction model, and set up a three-dimension teaching materials construction platform in the curriculum bilingual website. The three-dimensional teaching materials we have built and used include the electronic teaching plan, electronic book, multimedia presentation, course video, professional terms database, test questions database, classical cases database and student BBS . The establishment of three-dimensional teaching materials for international relations has promoted the positive interaction between teaching and learning and the full play of their respective positions.

In a word, the construction of bilingual teaching materials for international relations is a complex and systematic project. The compilation of the bilingual textbook always follows the core of curriculum reform and pays attention to the standardization of the advanced contents

of idiomatic knowledge of language and innovation of the system. The bold exploration and practice for the bilingual textbook of international relations can not only promote the further development of bilingual curriculum of international relations, but also provide the reference value for the compilation of the bilingual textbooks of other similar courses in China's universities.

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