

## Research on the Application of Portfolio Assessment in C-E Translation Class

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### Abstract

**This research integrates the students' portfolio assessment with teaching content and teaching methods and builds a teaching system that combines both the top-down and the bottom-up approach. After a semester of teaching practice, the research uses the reflections in students' portfolio as the research object. The research uses grounded theory to carry out qualitative analysis, and explore the effectiveness of the evaluation of the Chinese-English translation. The results show that the reflection in the portfolio evaluation reflects that students have improved their basic knowledge, core abilities, and emotional cognitive abilities. At the same time, the promotion of reflection on these three abilities is a cyclical process, and the content of reflection is directly related to teaching settings and teaching methods.**

### Keywords

**Portfolio Evaluation; Grouded Theory; Reflection.**

### 1. Introduction

Portfolios have emerged as a significant tool in ESL/EFL education, offering a comprehensive and holistic approach to student assessment and learning. The importance of portfolios in promoting learner autonomy, self-reflection, and a process-oriented approach to language learning has been emphasized in recent researches(1,2). The effects of portfolio assessment has been verified in a lot of studies(3,4). Portfolio assessment can lead to a more student-centered and reflective approach to writing, fostering a deeper engagement with the language. The application of portfolio has been discussed in a few literature. The researchers emphasize the need for a systematic and transparent scoring process that aligns with the educational goals and learning outcomes of the course. The practical issues of portfolio assessment, including the challenges of grading and the need for clear criteria to ensure fair and consistent evaluation is also emphasized(5). In digital age, how technology, particularly e-portfolios, can enhance the traditional portfolio assessment process, offering new opportunities for feedback, collaboration, and student empowerment is also explored(6).

Portfolios serve as versatile tools that can enhance learning, promote self-assessment, and provide a more comprehensive picture of student progress. However, the implementation of portfolio assessment also presents challenges, particularly regarding the establishment of clear assessment criteria and the integration of technology. As the field continues to evolve, further research is needed to explore the potential of portfolios in diverse educational contexts and to address the practical concerns that arise from their use. In China, it is promoted that each course should take advantage of its teaching curriculum and all kinds of teaching resources to promote students' overall development, particularly the fostering of their overall mentality status. Thus, the paper want to explore how portfolio assessment can be used in the Chinese to English translation course in order to promote overall development of students.

## 2. The Value of Portfolio Evaluation in Classroom Teaching

In the context of classroom teaching, portfolio evaluation is not just about grading; it's about understanding, guiding, and celebrating the educational journey of each student. It's a flexible and personalized approach that can adapt to various educational settings and objectives.

In this light, the author believes that portfolio can be applied in the classroom to observe the trajectory of students' overall development and progress. The core idea of the portfolio aligns with the goals, content and focus of the reform of all-course-based ideological and political education proposed in Chinese mainland. Firstly, portfolio is an effective supplement to standardized testing, based on cognitive learning theory and constructivist theory, which promotes students' autonomous thinking, active construction, objective evaluation, and emotional cultivation in real and complex situations., the core purpose and main step of this emerging form of evaluation is self-reflection, which can track, diagnose, test, and provide feedback on the "growth" process of students, in line with the modern teaching requirements of "shifting from describing the performance of groups to encouraging the progress and development of individuals" (7). Secondly, the portfolio is a powerful means to promote critical thinking, self-reflection, and independent learning (8), and it is a self-regulated form of learning that guides students to enter a calm, rational reflection after classroom interaction and experience, internalizing the learned principles and externalizing them in actions. The more frequent the reflection and self-evaluation, the more the external values are internalized. This process requires a spiral ascent through a cycle of absorption, reflection, and understanding. Therefore, the concept of the portfolio is a good way to promote the internalized process.

Lastly, the design of curriculum objectives, revision of teaching syllabi, selection and review of textbooks, and the preparation of teaching plans and courseware, should be integrated into every aspect of classroom instruction, teaching discussions, experimental training, and homework and thesis writing. The academic portfolio focuses on academic objectives and collects various materials, mainly the student's work in a particular subject, over a certain period of time. The learning portfolio should correspond to specific subject training objectives, clear teaching purposes, and specific teaching activities, that is, it should directly reflect the content of the syllabus and teaching objectives, and provide meaningful and useful feedback for teaching.

In summary, the portfolio teaching method and portfolio assessment, with reflection as the core, can reflect students' linguistic and metalinguistic cognition, emotional attitudes, and value judgments. It can be used to examine the changes in students' self-awareness and identification with culture and values, and their active practice of Chinese cultural values.

## 3. Research Questions and Methods

### 3.1. Research Questions

This study attempts to apply portfolio assessment to the practice of Chinese-English translation theory and practice courses and tries to explore the following questions:

What are the contents of student reflection in portfolio assessment?

Which abilities does the reflection in portfolio assessment promote in students?

How does portfolio assessment promote the enhancement of students' translation abilities?

### 3.2. Portfolio Design

Based on the design of translation course portfolios by previous researchers (9,10), this study collects students' works over a semester, reflecting on the continuous collection of translation assignments to reflect the progress of students' translation abilities. The content of the translation portfolio includes reflection journals, initial drafts, final drafts, peer review

manuscripts, teacher correction records, student presentation video images, student presentation PowerPoint slides, text correction, and translation practice projects. All documents are stored in two forms: electronic file information and paper-based information.

Based on the current research foundation, combined with the characteristics of the translation course, taking the student growth portfolio as a path, the setting of the growth portfolio is organically integrated with teaching content, teaching methods, evaluation methods, and teaching environment in multiple dimensions, mutually supporting the construction of a multi-dimensional interactive system at the teacher and student levels. This system highlights the student growth portfolio as a means to enhance the feedback from students from the bottom up to promote teaching, highlighting students' autonomy and creativity, and further enriching the integrity of the multi-dimensional construction of teaching. Moreover, during the teaching process, it intuitively collects students' reflections, evaluations, experiences, and works, providing a strong basis for the implementation effect of the teaching system.

The first phase of the teaching content mainly includes an introduction to translation, vocabulary translation, sentence translation, and correction of mistranslations. Based on the teaching content, there are small tests, supporting exercises, text correction records, text correction annotations, classroom report videos, and classroom report slides. Teachers analyze types of translation errors in class, and after class, they assign a text with many translation errors, asking students to identify errors in language, culture, and pragmatics, and mark the error types. This task mainly cultivates critical thinking and the ability to identify errors. The classroom report allows students to freely choose a topic of interest in Chinese to English translation, 3 minute report in class, and make self-evaluation and peer evaluation based on three dimensions: content, logic, and helpfulness. The reflection form for this stage mainly refers to the situation of various exercises and tests, correction records, and revision records, classroom presentations, as well as self-evaluation and peer evaluation records during that period, focusing on the changes in knowledge, abilities, and emotions. To allow students to clearly express their ideas, the language for summarizing and self-reflection can be in either English or Chinese.

The second phase of the teaching content mainly focuses on paragraph translation, coherence, cohesion, and peer evaluation training. Based on this teaching content, the portfolio sequentially contains the initial translation draft, peer evaluation records, second draft of translation, teacher's correction records, final translation draft, and records of multiple revisions. After several rounds of peer evaluation of paragraphs, students reflect on this activity, focusing on the changes in knowledge, abilities, and emotions.

The third phase of the teaching content primarily involves project-based translation practice. The theme of the project in this study is to select or adapt a Chinese story with a word count between 150-200 words and translate it into English. After peer evaluation and teacher revision, a final draft and revision records are formed. This process mainly examines students' ability to analyze the original text, comprehensive translation ability, and critical thinking skills. After the project is completed, students complete their third reflection.

All documents are distributed according to the learning progress, and the results of self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and teacher evaluation are promptly fed back to the students. During the implementation process, the portfolio is kept by the students themselves. At the same time, all paper materials are scanned in a timely manner and stored on the online platform to facilitate students to review, modify relevant content at any time, and experience the growth and progress in the learning process.

## 4. Research Methods, Data Collection and Results Analysis

### 4.1. Research Methods

This study aims to analyze the content of reflections in portfolio assessment to explore the process by which the application of portfolios promotes student reflection, using qualitative research methods and grounded theory analysis. Grounded theory research method is one of the most influential qualitative research methods proposed by American scholars Glaser and Strauss. It is a process of systematically collecting and analyzing data about a phenomenon and then discovering, developing, and testing theories from the data (11). The key to grounded theory research is the coding of raw data materials, which involves continuously questioning, comparing, generalizing, and categorizing the data to construct a theory (11). Careful coding of data, that is, classifying specific phenomena in the data into codes, is the core of grounded theory, resulting in three main types of coding: open coding, axial coding, and core coding. Open coding refers to the phenomena derived from the analysis of the data, axial coding refers to the relationships between the phenomena of open coding, and core coding is the process of continuously comparing categories to form a comprehensive and highly abstract term.

### 4.2. Data Collection

This study collected 57 reflection texts from 19 third-year English majors who took the "Chinese-English Translation Theory and Practice" course over a semester, with each student having 3 reflections per semester, totaling approximately 22,600 characters. Students reflected on their knowledge, abilities, and emotional changes during each stage of the teaching process in three stages. There were no requirements for the language and length of the self-narration, and students were allowed to use Chinese for reflection writing. In practice, all students used Chinese for writing, and for the convenience of analysis, this study collected and analyzed the Chinese text of the 57 reflections.

### 4.3. Results Analysis

By analyzing the students' self-narrated reflection content and using the grounded theory qualitative analysis method, the study first extracted 31 concepts from the text reflection data, then summarized 11 categories based on similar concepts, and finally, based on the similarity of categories, summarized them from the perspective of relevance into three major core codes: basic knowledge, core abilities, and affective cognition. The following is the analysis of the data results.

The first category of core code is basic knowledge, which includes four types of axial coding: general knowledge of translation, knowledge of vocabulary translation, knowledge of sentence translation, and knowledge of paragraph translation. General knowledge of translation includes Chinese and English differences, translation standards, and translation methods. In students' reflections, vocabulary translation includes basic concepts such as the deep meaning of vocabulary, cultural connotations of vocabulary, pragmatic connotations of vocabulary, stylistic significance of vocabulary, contextual meaning of vocabulary, principles of vocabulary translation, word selection principles, translation of Chinese characteristic proper nouns, translation of idioms, and proverbs. Sentence translation includes the translation of the subject, the translation of the predicate, the logical relationship of complex sentences, the translation of the central information of the sentence, the analysis of the main structure of the sentence, breaking down long sentences, and the translation of multiple verbs within a sentence. Paragraph translation includes grasping the context of the original text, the coherence and cohesion of the translation, the logic between sentences, the logic between sentence groups, the adjustment of word order within a sentence group, and the consistency and symmetry of Chinese sentence structures. It can be seen that the content of students' reflections is quite comprehensive, including various translation techniques and overall knowledge of vocabulary,

sentences, and paragraphs. In terms of quantity, students reflect the most on vocabulary translation. As the basic operational unit of translation practice, vocabulary is the main focus of students. However, after learning, students have taken the paragraph as the reference unit for translation, indicating that students have a certain awareness and ability for overall planning and control.

The second category of core code is core abilities, which includes four types of axial coding: cooperative learning ability, autonomous learning ability, literature search ability, and critical thinking ability. Cooperative learning includes concepts such as affirmation of group cooperation, negation of group cooperation, and affirmation of peer evaluation. Autonomous learning includes self-awareness, self-adjustment, and self-management. In terms of self-awareness, some students reflected on their shortcomings in translation, such as making assumptions, not delving into research, and being constrained by the language of the original text. In addition to shortcomings, students also reflected on their progress, including the ability to identify translation errors, increased self-confidence, and a sense of achievement brought about by the improvement of translation skills and the expansion of knowledge. In terms of self-adjustment, students reflected on changes in learning attitudes, learning strategies, attitudes towards peer evaluation, and the flexibility of translation strategies. Especially the change in attitudes towards peer evaluation, some students reflected on their change from not accepting to humbly accepting and bravely facing their own translations and actively making modifications. Self-management includes learning plans, learning strategies, and learning pathways. The literature search ability that students reflected on mainly involves the use of translation tools, multi-platform verification, and information filtering capabilities. Critical thinking includes critical analysis of the original text, questioning so-called authorities, and critical analysis of existing translations. From the second category of core codes, it can be seen that students have made significant improvements in cooperative learning ability, autonomous learning ability, literature search ability, and critical thinking ability after a semester of classroom learning, translation practice, and internalization of reflections.

The third category of core code is affective cognition ability, which includes three types of axial coding: subject affective cognition, national affective cognition, and collective affective cognition. Subject affective cognition includes concepts such as professional responsibility, translator's literacy, and the positioning of English majors. National affective cognition includes concepts such as current affairs, national policies, national pride, cultural cognition, interest in traditional culture, the profoundness and magic of Chinese, and cultural confidence. Collective affective cognition includes concepts such as gratitude, fairness, equal dialogue, common progress, and listening and communication.

At the same time, by carefully reading the content of students' reflections at different stages, it is found that the reflections at different stages are highly related to the teaching content. In the first stage, students' reflections focus on linguistic semantics and an overview of translation knowledge, with the largest number of concepts being the various meanings of vocabulary translation. In the second stage, in addition to linguistic semantics, students' reflections focus more on paragraph translation and the coherence and cohesion in the translation process. At the same time, after a large amount of peer evaluation training, their abilities for self-assessment, self-regulation, and self-management have been enhanced. In the third stage, students need to independently complete a translation task. They are asked to freely select or adapt materials and translate them into English stories. In this stage, different students' reflection points begin to focus on the overall planning of translation, literature search ability, and flexible handling of original text analysis and conversion skills.

The third category of core code, affective cognition ability, is scattered throughout every stage of teaching and accounts for the smallest proportion in the number of reflections. Affective cognition ability is the highest stage of translation ability development and is also the main goal

of classroom education. Wang Shugui (12) pointed out that the highest stage of translation skill development is the "Tao of Translation." In the Tao of Translation stage, translators can reflect on the social value of translation, translation ethics, translator's responsibility, and the translator's life value orientation. Therefore, the number of reflections on affective cognition ability is relatively small, mainly because students have fewer insights into this high-level stage, which is far less than translation knowledge and translation skills, and also less than the cooperative, literature search, and autonomous learning abilities accumulated in practice. During the undergraduate study stage, students' insights into these goals do not come from rich translation experiences but from classic cases of other translators or excellent translations. This process is involved in every stage of classroom teaching, or students can occasionally encounter it when learning from online resources outside class, so this type of reflection is sporadically scattered throughout the reflections of each stage.

## 5. Conclusion

From the students' self-narrated reflection content, it can be seen that portfolio assessment can promote the improvement of students' basic knowledge, core abilities, and affective cognition, which are the three major abilities. It can also promote the development of 11 aspects, including translation overview knowledge, vocabulary translation skills, sentence translation skills, paragraph translation skills, cooperative learning, autonomous learning, literature search, critical thinking, subject affective cognition, national affective cognition, and collective affective cognition, specifically reflected in 31 items. This clarifies that reflection promotes the students' learning process and fully reflects the effectiveness of portfolio assessment.

Portfolio assessment shows that students have basically acquired the basic abilities required by the translation course. Wang Shugui (12) believes that translation ability includes six major abilities: language-discourse-pragmatic ability, cultural ability, strategic ability, tool ability, thinking ability, and personality coordination ability. He has also summarized and deduced the development trajectory of each of the six abilities. The content of students' self-narrated reflections shows that students have initially acquired these six major abilities. Although some abilities are still in the early and middle stages of development and have not yet reached the advanced stage, such as language-discourse-pragmatic ability. From the reflections, it can be seen that students paid the most attention to the various meanings of vocabulary in the first stage of learning. In the second stage, they gradually focused on discourse, and a few students also paid attention to the pragmatic meaning of vocabulary, but there was less analysis of pragmatic functions from the discourse perspective. The reason is that as translation learners, they have little perception of real translation tasks and do not yet have the ability to analyze and grasp translation tasks, reader needs, and market demands. In terms of cultural ability, most students have noticed the cultural connotations of vocabulary and the difficulty of transformation, indicating that they have a certain level of cultural cognition and comparative ability. However, their ability to transform and coordinate culture is relatively lacking. In terms of strategic ability, some students' reflections show that they have an overall concept of planning and the process of flexibly choosing translation strategies according to the context. In the process of peer evaluation, they demonstrated a certain ability to assess and judge translations. In terms of tool ability, students' reflections reflect their awareness of using multiple ways to search for information and verify it, but in practice, they often fail to do so. In terms of thinking ability, the original concepts in students' reflections, such as sentence main structure analysis, key information analysis, and complex sentence analysis, all reflect related thinking abilities. Students' reflections show that they are gradually shifting from a one-sided personality stage to a comprehensive personality stage (12), gradually changing in qualities



such as fairness, resilience, responsibility, self-criticism, confidence, and cooperation with peers.

The portfolio also reflects students' change in attitude goals, mainly in subject affection, national affection, and collective affection. This is consistent with the overall goals of the Chinese-English translation course, which require national confidence, patriotic enthusiasm, family and country feelings, responsibility, perseverance, openness, modesty, and unity and cooperation. However, the number of reflections in this area is not large because such goals are the highest level of translation ability and are not easy to achieve in a short period of time, especially for beginners in the undergraduate stage of translation. Therefore, in the next stage of research, there should be more investment in teaching materials, strengthened supplementary learning both inside and outside the classroom, and further immersion of students in Chinese culture and Chinese translation affairs.

This study shows that the promotion of these three aspects by reflection is not unidirectional but simultaneous. Based on the above analysis, this study has formed a framework diagram of students' reflection content and process, as shown in table 1.

**Table 1.** three levels of codes of students' reflections

Core Code	Axis Code	Open Code (examples)
basic knowledge	general knowledge	Chinese and English differences, translation standards, translation methods
	knowledge of vocabulary translation	deep meaning of vocabulary, cultural connotations, pragmatic connotations, stylistic significance of vocabulary, contextual meaning of vocabulary
	knowledge of sentence translation	the translation of the subject, the translation of the predicate, the logical relationship of complex sentences, breaking down long sentences, and the translation of multiple verbs within a sentence
	knowledge of paragraph translation	grasping the context of the original text, the coherence and cohesion of the translation, the logic between sentence groups, and the consistency and symmetry of Chinese sentence structures
core abilities	cooperative learning ability	concepts such as affirmation of group cooperation, negation of group cooperation, and affirmation of peer evaluation
	autonomous learning ability	self-awareness, self-adjustment, and self-management
	literature search ability	the use of translation tools, multi-platform verification, and information filtering capabilities
	critical thinking ability	critical analysis of the original text, questioning so-called authorities, and critical analysis of existing translations
affective cognition ability	subject affective cognition	professional responsibility, translator's literacy, and the positioning of English majors
	national affective cognition	current affairs, national policies, national pride, cultural cognition, interest in traditional culture, the profoundness and magic of Chinese, and cultural confidence
	collective affective cognition	gratitude, fairness, equal dialogue, common progress, and listening and communication

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