


## REVIEW

# The Empowerment of Pragmatic Competence towards Translation Teaching and the Pedagogical Implications in China—A Systematic Review

Danyang Zheng 

*School of Foreign Languages, Tianjin University, Tianjin 300350, China*

## ABSTRACT

Grounded in the rationale of pragmatic competence empowering translation teaching, this study explores the integration of pragmatic competence into translation education, emphasizing its critical role in enhancing translation practices. Through bibliometric analysis using CiteSpace, the research systematically examines the intersection of pragmatic competence and translation studies, revealing a strong theoretical alignment and pedagogical complementarity between the two fields. The bibliometric findings indicate that existing research predominantly focuses on pragmatic processing methods within translation texts, and future research trends are likely to centre on the acquisition of pragmatic translation competence. Based on the bibliometric insights into curriculum implementation and observations of the current state of translation teaching in China, this study advocates for developing a joint pragmatic-translation classroom model. This model emphasizes a process-oriented, constructivist approach to address the current challenges in translation education. It introduces pragmatic real-life contexts and explicit teaching of pragmatic theory and knowledge, supplemented by tools such as Discourse Completion Tests to cultivate pragmatic competence, while focusing on the importance of teacher-student feedback. The proposed model aims to enhance student autonomy, improve cognitive abilities, and promote lifelong learning, ultimately preparing students to navigate the complexities of professional translation tasks. Further empirical research is recommended to refine these pedagogical reforms and assess their long-term impact on translation proficiency.

**Keywords:** Pragmatic Competence; Translation Teaching; Bibliometric Analysis; Process-Oriented Approach; Joint Pragmatic-Translation Classroom Teaching Mode

### \*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Danyang Zheng, School of Foreign Languages, Tianjin University, Tianjin 300350, China; Email: [danyangzheng0906@126.com](mailto:danyangzheng0906@126.com)

### ARTICLE INFO

Received: 6 September 2024 | Revised: 27 September 2024 | Accepted: 29 September 2024 | Published Online: 8 December 2024  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v6i6.7219>

### CITATION

Zheng, D., 2024. The Empowerment of Pragmatic Competence towards Translation Teaching and the Pedagogical Implications in China—A Systematic Review. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*. 6(6): 450–462. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v6i6.7219>

### COPYRIGHT

Copyright © 2024 by the author(s). Published by Bilingual Publishing Co. This is an open access article under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).

# 1. Introduction

With the advent of the AI era, machine translation has gradually become more intelligent, featuring deep learning and experience-based analysis capabilities, making it a vital assistant tool. Despite recent advancements in AI in the areas of natural language processing and sentiment analysis, AI-driven language translation has yet to reach the ideal state due to its shortcomings in handling the pragmatic features of texts. Translation is not merely a technical transformation of language forms; it also requires consideration of pragmatic factors such as context, discourse intent, and the social relationship between the author and the reader. Translators must accurately and felicitously reproduce the content and form of the original work. Therefore, the current translation practice and training challenges should still focus on pragmatic translation.

As one of the branches of linguistics, pragmatics plays an indispensable role in language teaching and linguistics education by reducing the process of meaning encoding and decoding influenced by semantic meaning, syntactic forms, and even extralinguistic factors such as sociocultural differences.

The establishment of the term “pragmatic competence” can be traced back to the 1980s. There are already numerous qualitative and categorical descriptions of pragmatic competence in academia<sup>[1–5]</sup>. To name a few, pragmatic competence as the ability to use language effectively to achieve a particular purpose and the ability to understand how to use language in a specific context<sup>[1]</sup>; from a multi-dimensional perspective, pragmatic competence is divided into pragmatic competence into four types—linguistic pragmatic competence, social pragmatic competence, cognitive pragmatic competence, and discourse organizational competence<sup>[5]</sup>.

As a significant reflection of learners’ linguistic ability, the learnability, teaching significance of pragmatic competence, and its close relationship with linguistic competence have received particular attention. Increasing observational and interventional studies indicate that second language pragmatic competence is teachable<sup>[6–8]</sup>, suggesting the pedagogical significance of studying pragmatic competence; however, few studies, both internationally and in China, concentrate on the impact of pragmatic competence on translation practices.

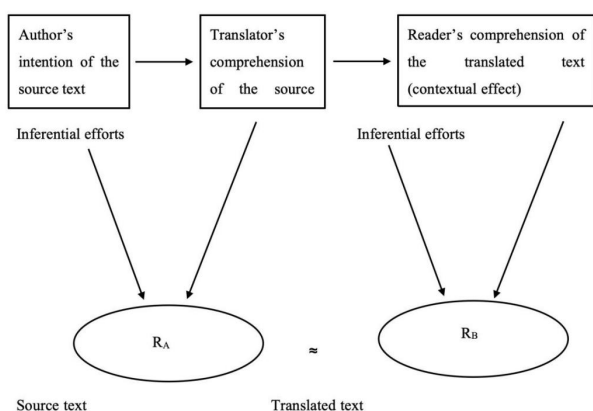
Fundamentally speaking, translation is a special kind of linguistic communicative activity where the reader/listener

of the translated text engages in a dialogue with the original text through the medium of the translation<sup>[9]</sup>. The close relationship between pragmatics and translation arises from their shared research subject (i.e., linguistic meaning and extralinguistic meaning), and they mutually guide and cooperate.. Whether in interpersonal communication or translation activities, the meaning discussed should transcend literal and structural meanings, encompassing both the explicit and implicit meanings produced by the text and speaker within certain contextual constraints and the overall intended meaning of the author’s pragmatic intentions. The first step in the translation process is to recognise and interpret the meaning of the source text, and the translator’s pragmatic awareness and competence become crucial factors in the decoding and encoding stages.

The close relationship between translation and pragmatics has drawn the attention of many translation theorists, leading to the proposal of corresponding theories to elucidate this relationship. Among the most famous are the Dynamic Equivalence theory proposed by Nida and others, and the Communicative Translation theory put forward by Newmark. According to Nida’s theory, translation should not be about a binary relationship between the author and the translator but rather a triadic relationship that includes the reader of the translation. In line with pragmatic perspective, translators should follow several key principles when dealing with the implied intentions in dialogues: “Firstly, the implied intentions in the author’s writing as well as characters’ dialogues must be retained in the translation; secondly, no ‘confiscation’ or cancellation of certain implied intentions; thirdly, no need to add a pragmatic implication or change the original explicit expression to a pragmatic implication<sup>[10]</sup>.” The above methods are necessary for different literary genres. Through the translator’s judicious handling, they maximize the preservation of the original text’s fidelity in its discourse and sociocultural context while establishing a connection with the reader, ensuring the translation is actively and positively received by the reader. **Figure 1** displays the triadic relationship and the treatment procedure of translation activity from the perspective of relevance.

In this regard, the translator’s pragmatic competence (i.e., whether they can contextually supplement and pragmatically enrich information gaps, breakpoints, etc., to achieve adequate communicative information; whether they can base

their translation on the reader to complete pragmatic enrichment and accommodation, find the most appropriate translation, and maximize pragmatic equivalence etc.) becomes of paramount importance in translation.



**Figure 1.** The Communicative Activities Between the Author of the Source Text, the Translator and the Reader of the Translated Text in Translation<sup>[11]</sup>.

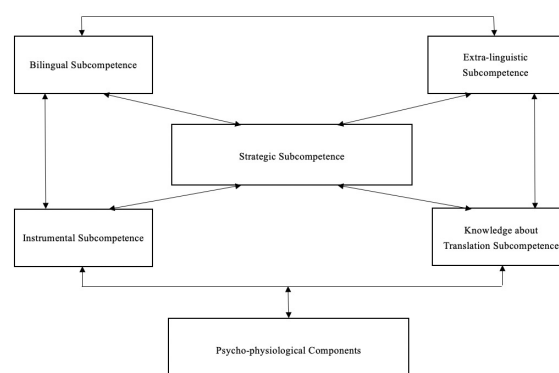
This article aims to comprehensively review the studies of the relationship between pragmatic competence and translation practices, mainly focusing on the interfacial research between the two perspectives. It proposes the necessity and rationality of implementing the cultivation of pragmatic competence into translation teaching from the perspectives of theoretical adaptability and empowerment effect.

## 2. The Rationale of the Empowering Relationship Between Pragmatic Competence and Translation Practices

### 2.1. Pragmatic Competence in Translation Competence Model

Pragmatic competence is included in the translation competence model in translation studies. The evolution of translation competence has progressed through various models, including the “Natural translation” theory, the “Multi-component” competence model, and the “Minimalist” competence model. Currently, the PACTE translation competence models<sup>[12–14]</sup> are widely accepted. The detailed translation competences are illustrated in **Figure 2**, which is recog-

nized as the most complex model. This model highlights the significant roles of “Extra-linguistic Subcompetence” and “Bilingual Subcompetence,” both influenced by pragmatic competence, which includes knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics. Although PACTE’s model is theoretically robust, it has limitations in its application to university translation teaching, as it primarily reflects the processes of expert translators rather than learners.



**Figure 2.** Translation Competence Model Note<sup>[13]</sup>.

The concept of translation competence was further examined through the lens of communicative language competence, suggesting an integrated approach that encompasses several key components. These include bilingual communicative competence, the ability to transfer meaning between languages, a solid foundation of translation knowledge, and proficiency in using translation tools<sup>[15]</sup>. This advocates curriculum reformation of MTI translation education and suggests a more tailored model suitable for the actual learning conditions of translation students.

### 2.2. Pragmatic Failure in Translation

The impact of pragmatic competence on translation skills can also be indirectly observed through translation failures. Apart from specific cultural constraints<sup>1</sup>, scholars<sup>[16, 17]</sup> have pointed out that translators’ lack of sociocultural and cross-cultural communicative knowledge can lead to mistakes in word or sentence structure choices, which are significant reasons for pragmatic translation failures. The misuse of pragmatic knowledge can also lead to translation failures. An example of a study on translation errors caused

<sup>1</sup> For example, when a translator knows that an indirect translation of a discourse might lead to inevitable pragmatic translation failures due to violating Grice’s Cooperative Principle, they are compelled to do so because of the cultural constraints of the target language.

by pragmatic inaccuracies analyzed a mistranslation of place names, where a regular beach in China was inaccurately translated as “Oriental Hawaii”. This is representative of descriptive studies that explore how pragmatic mismatches lead to translation issues.<sup>[18]</sup> This translation partially reflects the translator’s pragmatic awareness, but it also indeed represents an inappropriate pragmatic translation due to the misuse of the Relevance Theory.

Here are two examples to illustrate the impact of pragmatics treatment on translation effects:

(1) Interpersonal functional equivalence of deixis:

这里茗烟走进来，便一把揪住金荣问道：“你是好小子，出来动一动你茗大爷！”（曹雪芹：《红楼梦》）

*By now Mingyan had grabbed hold of Jinrong and yelled: “If you’ve any guts, come and take on your Master Ming”*<sup>[19]</sup>.

In this version, “大爷” (literally, “big uncle”) is translated as “Master” rather than the direct translation “uncle”. While “大爷” in Chinese is sufficient to reflect the social status difference between the speaker and the listener, the English “uncle” lacks this interpersonal function. Thus, translating it as “Master” emphasizes the pragmatic appropriateness of the translation.

(2) Pragmatic equivalence of conversational implicature:

风声、雨声、读书声，声声入耳；  
家事、国事、天下事，事事关心

*The sounds of wind, of rain, and of reading aloud all fall upon my ears;*

*The affairs of the state, of the family, and of the world are all my concerns*<sup>[20]</sup>. This couplet was inscribed by Gu Xiancheng<sup>2</sup> at the Donglin Academy in Wuxi during the late Ming Dynasty. When lecturing at the academy, he often criticized politics and criticized the times. In addition to the essential characteristics of a Chinese couplet, such as equal word count, same word classes, matching tones, and relevant meanings, the poet’s political ambition beneath the literal meaning of the original text is the most important thing. However, this political ambition is not explicitly stated; it

appears in a form that satisfies Grice and Levinson’s Quantity Principle. The listener needs to decode the conversation meaning of the discourse through the Quantity Principle, and the decoding process is also one of the author’s pragmatic intentions. Therefore, it needs to be appropriately presented in the translation process. For example, translating “风声” (“wind sound”) and “雨声” (“rain sound”) as “The political rain and wind” would make the author’s communicative intention too explicit, which is not what the author intended. Not only does it rewrite the author’s intention, but it also diminishes the reader’s aesthetic experience<sup>3</sup>.

This paper employed bibliometric methods to conduct a detailed and systematic investigation of the research outcomes related to the empowering rationale of pragmatic competence on translation practices and forecast future development trends. Additionally, it addressed the current challenges and pain points in translation education, proposing reforms in teaching methods.

### 3. Methods

In this study, the following research questions are examined:

- (1) What are the main research focuses at the intersection of “pragmatic competence” and “translation” as identified in SSCI core journals?
- (2) What research findings have been established on the relationship between pragmatic competence and translation?
- (3) What gaps or unexplored areas exist in the current literature on pragmatic competence and translation, and how can future research address these gaps?
- (4) In what ways have various aspects of pragmatic competence been incorporated into translation studies, and what are the implications for the development of translation theory and practice?

This paper utilizes bibliometric methods to analyze the quantitative characteristics and trends of research materials, providing an objective reflection of the development and changes in the field. The study employs CiteSpace (version

<sup>2</sup>Gu Xiancheng (1550–1612), known as “Master Donglin” by later generations, was an official and great thinker during the late Ming Dynasty. Together with contemporary thinkers and statesmen such as Gao Panlong, he rebuilt the Donglin Academy, where he lectured and discussed state affairs. He also founded the Donglin School of thought. The couplet quoted in the text served as the motto for the Donglin School.

<sup>3</sup>JoséVasconcelos Calderón’s concept of “aesthetic logic” endows aesthetics with both sensory and rational characteristics, with a particular emphasis on the presence of aesthetic rationality, where the aesthetic experience is obtained through reasoning by the beholder.

6.2.R7) visualization software to create scientific knowledge maps.

The data for this study is sourced from the Web of Science database, specifically SSCI journal articles published between 2003 and 2024 that include the keywords “pragmatic competence” and “translation.” After manual selection, a total of 50 journal articles were identified and included in the final analysis.

## 4. Results and Analysis of the Bibliometric Study

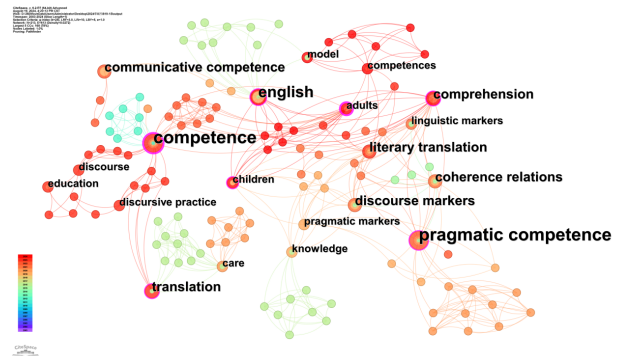
### 4.1. Keywords Co-Occurrence

This study analyzes the contribution frequency and clustering of the keywords “pragmatic competence” and “translation.” The results are shown in the following figure.

One of the main approaches in the co-occurrence of keyword analysis is to extract bibliographic information, such as keywords and abstracts from citations, and then statistically form an intuitive knowledge map. By studying high-frequency keywords, research hotspots in a particular field can be interpreted over time. In this paper, based on the pre-set thresholds, keywords were extracted, resulting in 213 high-frequency keywords and 613 connections. The co-occurrence map of the literature’s hotspot keywords is shown in **Figure 3**. In **Figure 3**, the nodes’ size and text represent the frequency of keyword occurrence, while the lines between nodes indicate the connections established over different periods. The thickness and density of the lines represent the strength of keyword co-occurrence. It can be observed that “competence” is the largest node, fol-

lowed by “pragmatic competence” and “English.” From the time span statistics provided by the software, keywords such as “semantics and pragmatics of verb tenses,” “contrastive semantics,” “evolution,” “epigenetic regulation,” and “elements” appeared earlier, whereas more recent keywords like “learning disability,” “behavioural difficulty,” “disorders,” and “impairments” may indicate new directions for future research.

The betweenness centrality of keyword occurrences is a crucial indicator for identifying research hotspots in a given field and an important criterion for determining scholars’ focal points. From the perspective of betweenness centrality, which reflects the bridging role of nodes (see **Table 1**), besides “competence”, “pragmatic competence” and “translation”, “adults”, “English”, “comprehension”, “children”, “literary translation” and “knowledge” both exhibit strong connections with other hotspot keywords, indicating their frequent position along the communication paths with other keywords. This suggests they play a significant role in the co-citation relationships within the literature.



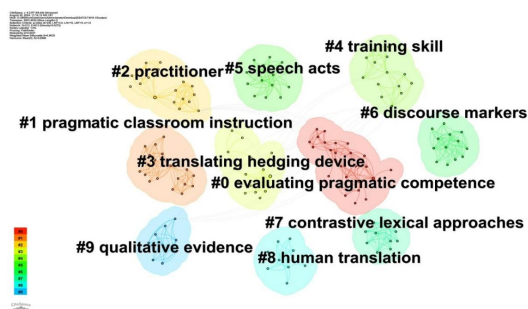
**Figure 3.** Co-occurrence Network of Keywords Related to Pragmatic Competence and Translation.

**Table 1.** Top 10 Keywords by Cluster Centrality.

Rank	Keywords	Frequency	Centrality
1	competence	25	0.36
2	adults	17	0.34
3	English	20	0.18
4	translation	9	0.17
5	comprehension	16	0.16
6	children	15	0.14
7	pragmatic competence	13	0.11
8	care	18	0.09
9	literary translation	14	0.08
10	knowledge	12	0.08

## 4.2. Keyword Clustering

Research hotspot topics are the focal points of interest for scholars in a specific academic field and reflect the main issues being discussed in that field during a particular period. Keywords, as an essential part of academic papers, encapsulate the essence of the paper and are often used to study and explore the hot topics in a field. Based on this, the present study uses CiteSpace software (v.6.2.R7) and the LLR (Log-Likelihood Ratio) algorithm to conduct a clustering analysis of keyword co-occurrence to visually reflect the research hotspots. The resulting keyword clustering view is shown in Figure 4, where the colour blocks represent the clustering areas, and the keywords within the blocks represent the clusters. The network consists of 213 nodes ( $N = 213$ ) and 613 edges ( $E = 613$ ), with a network density of 0.0272. The modularity value ( $Q$ ) is related to the density of the nodes; the larger the  $Q$  value, the better the clustering effect, which can be used for scientific clustering analysis. The average silhouette value ( $S$ ) can be used to measure the homogeneity of the clusters; the larger the  $S$  value, the higher the homogeneity of the network, indicating that the clustering has high credibility. From **Figure 4**, it can be seen that  $Q = 0.8437$ , indicating good clustering within the network structure, and  $S = 0.9635$ , indicating high homogeneity, with well-defined cluster divisions. The figure shows nine major clusters, with “evaluating pragmatic competence,” “pragmatic classroom instruction,” and “practitioner” being the most prominent. The average year of the top five clusters is around 2017–2022, indicating that related research matured during this period. The largest cluster is “evaluating pragmatic competence,” dated 2019, containing 26 keywords, with the main keywords being “evaluating pragmatic competence,” “a case,” “translation,” and “language competence” among others.



**Figure 4.** Keyword Clustering Network of Keywords Related to Pragmatic Competence and Translation.

## 5. Systematic Review of Related Pedagogical Studies

Based on the statistical results of keywords, this chapter pays particular attention to a comprehensive review of the pedagogical aspects of pragmatics and translation teaching.

### 5.1. Pragmatic Instruction in Translation Classroom

On the teachability of pragmatic knowledge, it was found that explicit pragmatic instruction is more effective than implicit instruction<sup>[21]</sup>. Therefore, it is necessary to teach students pragmatic knowledge and sociopragmatic knowledge in the classroom clearly and explicitly. A model for explicit teaching of pragmatics in the classroom, focusing on speech acts, suggests four key stages: (1) providing metapragmatic information; (2) providing real-context input; (3) conducting functional practice; and (4) providing timely feedback<sup>[5]</sup>. Specific approaches to pragmatic competence classroom teaching include role-playing and pragmatic games in the classroom.

As mentioned, pragmatic teaching methods can be divided into two types: explicit and implicit. The former emphasizes that the teacher provides relevant metapragmatic knowledge through explicit explanations, such as the various usages and functions of a certain pragmatic feature in different contexts, thus drawing learners' full attention to the learning objective. In the latter, teachers pay attention to the relevant communicative activities and achieve implicit representation repeatedly to enable learners to grasp language rules. Explicit and implicit teaching methods do not have clear boundaries; the various conditions for implementing explicit and implicit teaching should be a continuum, reflecting the interactive nature of the teaching procedure between teachers and students.

In translation teaching, there is an emphasis on using process-oriented teaching methods, as demonstrated by PACTE's 2003 proposal on the process of acquiring translation competence:

“(1) A dynamic, spiral process that, like all learning processes, evolves from novice knowledge (pre-translation competence) to expert knowledge (translation competence); it requires learning competence (learning strategies) and dur-

ing the process both declarative and procedural types of knowledge are integrated, developed and restructured.

(2) A process in which the development of procedural knowledge and, consequently, of the strategic sub-competence are essential.

(3) A process in which the translation competence sub-competencies are developed and restructured.”<sup>[12]</sup>

Departing from students' mistranslations in a translation competition, recommended teaching steps are provided in **Table 2**:

**Table 2.** Teaching steps for translation classroom<sup>[22]</sup>.

Minutes	Content	Activity Scale	Requirements	Goals
10	Movies or video clips playing	Whole class	Recording	Background introduction
5	Paraphrase	2–3 students	Complementary comments from peers	Language features analysis
30	Reading comprehension and translation	Individual reading	Individual translation	Translation practice
20	Discussion of difficulties and obstacles	Team discussion	Blackboard lecturing	Opinions exchange
15	Translations comparison and comments	Team discussion	Share insights	Commenting skills development
10	Summary and homework	Whole class		

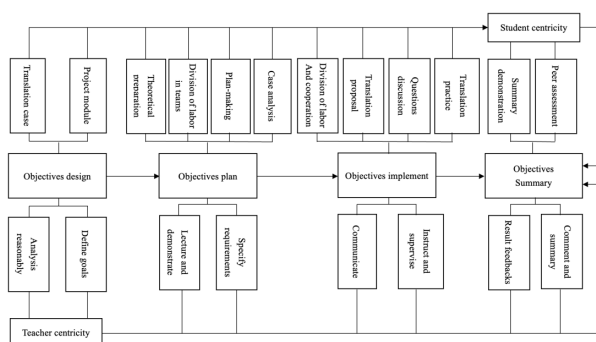
Among the teaching modules, the procedure of showing movies and video clips aims to provide contextual elements for the text to be translated. In translation practice, translators need to pay attention to eight types of contexts: context of discourse, time, place, source, receiver, topic, code, and mode of communication. All these contextual factors intertwine to form a communicative information network with special pragmatic meanings.

The “project-based & task-driven” translation teaching method, emphasizing the integration of project teaching, task-driven teaching, and case teaching into a cyclic teaching design involving both teachers and students, is a holistic and dynamic approach to translation education<sup>[23]</sup>. The specific model is as follows **Figure 5**:

The two teaching models mentioned above emphasize contextual processing and the collaboration between teachers and students, providing a scientific and rational approach for integrating pragmatic training into the translation classroom.

Regarding the teaching methods of pragmatic competence cultivation, introducing the idea of “Pragmatic Competence Testing” can provide us with a goal-oriented approach. Among the various testing methods, discourse completion is one of the most commonly used tools in cross-language pragmatics research. It is a written questionnaire providing a brief context description to examinees, prompting them to judge and complete the missing part of a dialogue (usually reflecting the speech act part of the conversation). Role-playing is a simulation method of different situations, under which participants are assigned roles within a pre-designed communicative framework or context and make specific actions based on these role relationships<sup>[5]</sup>. Discourse completion and role-playing measure the examinees’ pragmatic competence from both written and oral perspectives. At the same time, as objectives under measurement, they can also be used as teaching methods. Combined with context, speaker-listener relationships, and other situational and extralinguistic factors, they guide the cultivation of students’ pragmatic competence.

Existing research on pragmatic teaching is predomi-



**Figure 5.** “Project-based & task-driven” translation teaching method<sup>[23]</sup>.

nantly descriptive, with few empirical studies. The limited number of empirical research studies focus on the teaching effect of explicit and implicit teaching methods. The typical teaching steps regarding pragmatic competence include: Demonstrating Teaching Objectives—Awareness-raising Activities—Planning—Communication—Feedback<sup>[24, 25]</sup>.

## 5.2. Curriculum and Methods of Pragmatic Teaching and Research

Three traditions of L2 pragmatic testing can also be used as pragmatic teaching methods<sup>[26]</sup>. The first tradition focuses on speech acts and politeness. This tradition involves testing instruments like Discourse Completion Tests (DCTs), multiple-choice comprehension/recognition tasks, and rating scales. These tests typically measure explicit processing and often follow an analytic psychometric tradition. The second tradition broadens the construct from speech acts to other aspects of pragmatics, notably implicature and routine formulae. The tests in this tradition also employ instruments like role plays and dialogue completion but focus more on practical and socio-pragmatic aspects of language uses, assessing learners' knowledge and processing of implicit pragmatic cues. The third tradition emphasizes interactional competence, focusing on managing extended conversations and creating meaningful interpersonal exchanges. This tradition aligns with Conversation Analysis and uses role plays and extended monologues, with scoring often conducted by raters. It measures the ability to navigate and contribute to interactions rather than just understanding or producing isolated speech acts.

These three traditions represent the evolution of L2 pragmatic testings and cultivation, from an initial focus on speech acts and politeness to broader socio-pragmatic and interactional competencies, reflecting the complexity of real-world language use.

The current pragmatic teaching curriculum is mainly centred on the first and second traditions, particularly focusing on pragmatic speech acts and discourse markers while neglecting the mastery of dynamic interpersonal pragmatic competence within a sociolinguistic context.

Activities such as Role-playing and Discourse Completion used in the pragmatics classroom align with Constructivist Theory and Social Interaction Theory. Constructivist Theory advocates that education is a social activity that

empowers learners with independent thinking, emphasizing learners as constructors of meaning and problem solvers. In practical application, educators pose questions and concepts to students through problem-solving while the students themselves explore the answers. Language learning guided by constructivism combines foreign language knowledge with personal experiential ability. Social Interaction Theory holds that even in the activity of learning, learners should focus on interpersonal communication opportunities with peers, fully leveraging the “mediation role” of both parties in interaction. Through communication among classmates in a natural language environment, learners' linguistic and social cognitive abilities are influenced. Incorporating “self-assessment” and “peer discussion” into the teaching steps helps to maximize students' autonomous learning consciousness and motivation. Providing opportunities for knowledge-sharing among students effectively hones their organizational and adaptability skills, enhancing their sense of academic honour.

## 6. The Current Dilemma of Translation and Pragmatic Competence Cultivation in China

Most research on students' translation competence training in China is based on theoretical interpretation and descriptive comparison<sup>[27, 28]</sup>, with relatively rare empirical studies.

As for the empirical investigation on the empowerment of pragmatic competence in translation teaching, current Chinese and foreign research is mostly used to explain the following two issues: firstly, the method of cultivating students' second language pragmatic competence through translation teaching<sup>[29, 30]</sup>; and secondly, the guiding significance of pragmatic teaching towards translation outcomes after a period of pragmatic instructions in translation classrooms<sup>[31, 32]</sup>, ignoring the pedagogical importance of pragmatic teaching towards translation and no relevant research has appeared in China at this stage.

On the basis of the previous research about translation teaching in China, the following dilemmas are observed:

Firstly, university translation teaching needs an overall plan design. Translation teaching needs a unitary plan based on projects, failing to establish actual or near-real translation tasks that link the text with specific situations. Authentic



translation projects or plans require teachers to establish real discourse contexts (such as legal consultation contexts, cross-cultural refusal actions etc.). In addition to this, teachers also need to establish a socialized classroom, allowing students to enhance their cognitive and learning abilities in autonomy and collaboration, and to acquire a lifelong learning awareness.

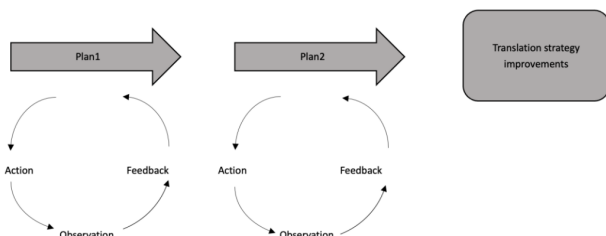
Secondly, traditional translation teaching methods overly emphasize translation knowledge while neglecting the importance of the translation process. Conventional translation teaching is teacher-centric, focusing on theory explanation—exercise—explanation, overlooking students' translation process.

Thirdly, there is an emphasis on studying translation products while overlooking the subjectivity of students. Students' learning outcomes are the ultimate manifestation of translation teaching, and overemphasizing translation theory and techniques is not conducive to the cultivation of translators' subjectivity and critical thinking in translation teaching.

Fourthly, for the evaluation of translation competence, the translation scoring criteria under different educational systems vary slightly. The common methods in China are holistic and analytical scoring<sup>[33, 34]</sup>.

To summarize, a portfolio of better-designed curriculum plans and teaching methods for translation teaching is highly advocated for its practical significance. The plan here refers to the initiating step in action research. Action research, also known as practitioner research, is a practical research method, usually aimed at solving a specific problem through critical self-reflection<sup>[35]</sup>. The main application of action research is practical education issues, advocating from practice to practice. Practical research on teaching methods in classroom teaching often adopts action research methods.

The repetitive and dynamic nature of action research is illustrated through its four stages, as shown in Figure 6.

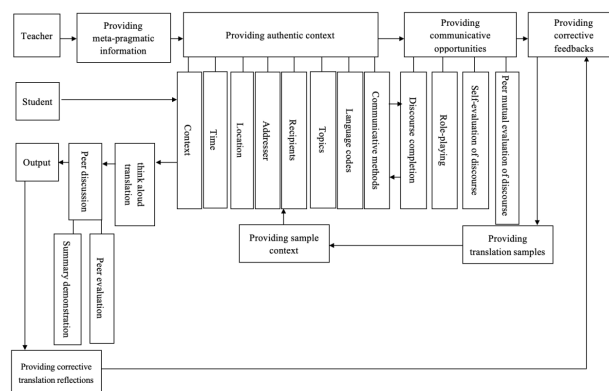


**Figure 6.** The Procedure of Action Research in Translation Teaching.

Translation teaching should be treated as the subject of action research, in line with the characteristics and processes of action research. The teaching methods of translation teaching should also be people-oriented, maintaining students as the main body and teachers as the guide in an ecological development system. Emphasis should be placed on the dynamic process of translation teaching, starting with the teaching plan and repeatedly refining the action process (action-observation-feedback are all essential) to ultimately achieve the output of translation and patterns.

## 7. Pragmatics-Translation Joint Classroom Model—An Initiative

Combined with the methods of pragmatic competence assessment and the eight dimensions encompassed by the pragmatic context, this article advocates highlighting students' autonomy in translation teaching. The integrated model effectively and scientifically allocates teacher-student roles, forming respective cyclic procedures; students' participation is closely reliant on the classroom guidance provided by the teaching instructor, yet they clearly exhibit their own thinking, discussion, and output processes. See Figure 7 for the specific process.



**Figure 7.** Pragmatics-Translation Joint Classroom Teaching Process and Teacher-Student Task Allocation.

Compared to the models shown by Table 2 and Figure 5, the *Pragmatics-Translation Joint Classroom Model* introduced in this paper offers significant advantages. First, this model places greater emphasis on the interaction between teachers and students, forming a cyclical process of continuous improvement through clear task allocation and feedback mechanisms, such as peer discussion, evaluation,

and corrective feedback. In translation teaching, this cyclical model is used to systematically refine translation strategies. Through repeated observation and feedback, teachers can identify the difficulties students face and adjust their teaching methods accordingly. This iterative process allows for dynamic adjustments based on real-time performance, ensuring that the strategies employed continue to evolve and improve. The goal is continuously refining teaching strategies to align translation strategies with student needs, thereby enhancing overall learning outcomes.

Additionally, the model highlights the importance of context and communicative opportunities, detailing the contextual elements in teaching (such as time, place, sender, and recipient), which helps students practice translation in authentic language environments. This model not only addresses the dual objectives of pragmatic and translation teaching but also promotes critical thinking and practical skills through multiple learning stages, including the provision of meta-pragmatic information, self-evaluation, and peer evaluation. Overall, this model provides a more comprehensive and interactive teaching framework, making it particularly well-suited for integrating pragmatic competence with translation skills in the classroom.

Teachers explicitly provide meta-pragmatic information (such as discourse markers, speech acts, conversational implicatures, etc.). Students undertake a series of independent classroom exercises by providing the real-life contexts for each piece of meta-pragmatic information or knowledge, including eight aspects of context such as discourse context, physical context, and the social relationship between the speakers. During communicative practice, teachers should provide corrective feedback on pragmatics. Immediate and appropriate feedback in the classroom can help to reduce “pragmatic fossilization”<sup>4</sup>. This is the portion dedicated to pragmatic teaching. Afterwards, teachers provide translation examples, also presenting the eight aspects of context for each example. Students are organized to practice translation using the think-aloud protocol, followed by peer discussions (e.g., through peer reviews and summary presentations) before finally generating the translated text. Teachers should also provide corrective feedback on these translations and combine this with feedback on pragmatics to summarize the

class. The joint pragmatic-translation classroom introduces the following teaching ideas:

Firstly, integrating pragmatic competence training into translation teaching, establishing a joint pragmatic-translation classroom.

For a long time, foreign language teaching in China has emphasized teaching the language system, not paying enough attention to language usage and students’ communicative abilities, and neglecting the importance of context and cross-cultural pragmatic factors, leading to the delay of cultivating learners’ pragmatic competence. Effective pragmatic teaching can significantly enhance students’ pragmatic knowledge, competence, and awareness, further developing a translator’s translation competence (like extra-linguistic sub-competence and bilingual subcompetence). The joint-class model utilizes the textbook *Pragmatics*<sup>[36]</sup>. This textbook focuses on the scientific and empirical study of pragmatics, providing a clear and comprehensive introduction to key concepts, theories, and applications, making it a valuable resource for students in linguistics and related disciplines. With examples drawn from over 500 languages, it offers significant insights into cross-cultural communication, aiding in the development of students’ intercultural communication skills. It is suitable for both implicit and explicit methods of pragmatic instruction. Therefore, *Pragmatics* is an ideal resource for the joint-class model, supporting its educational objectives by establishing a solid foundation in pragmatics and preparing students to analyze real-world language use in diverse contexts. Content-wise, the following pragmatic knowledge and awareness can be taught explicitly:

(1) Speech acts: enabling learners to connect socio-pragmatic factors (i.e., power, distance, politeness, face, etc.) to semantic formulas by establishing the contextual basis for different speech acts (i.e., suggestions, requests, apologies, thanks, etc.).

(2) Discourse markers: based on conversational/discourse analysis, promoting learners’ understanding, prediction, and production of discourse markers (like response markers, stance markers, etc.).

(3) Conversational implicatures: through the explanation of theories related to Grice’s conversational implicatures and neo-Gricean theories, students are encouraged to

<sup>4</sup>Trillo defines pragmatic fossilization as “the phenomenon by which a non-native speaker systematically uses certain forms inappropriately at the pragmatic level of communication (2002, p. 770)”.

break free from semantic constraints and successfully infer, produce, and restore the conversational implicatures of the original texts.

(4) Relevance theory: training translators in cognitive reasoning and establishing inferential interpretations and contextual relationships through relevance. Translators seek the best relevance from the original communicator's multiple inferential communicative acts, conveying their understanding to readers of the translated text. Context is an essential referential point in relevance translation, encompassing not only discourse context and real-world context but also expectations about the future, scientific hypotheses, religious beliefs, memories of anecdotes, various assumptions about culture, and various beliefs about the speaker's state of mind (Sperber & Wilson, 1986).

Secondly, the teaching model must be reconstructed to harness student autonomy fully and enhance their pragmatic awareness.

By adopting the Flipped Classroom approach, students switch their roles from passive recipients to active researchers. The classroom content and teaching methods shift from traditional lectures delivering knowledge to student-led exploration, independent learning, and collaborative discussions. This approach embodies the teachers' guiding role and students' central roles. The teacher's guiding role is to activate students' existing knowledge and experiences related to the current learning context, guide students through the exploration process to reach accurate conclusions, and serve in a "teacher-centric" form while in reality being "student-centric". Assigning specific translation tasks to students and guiding them through the "think-aloud" method during the translation process allows for an analysis of students' translation strategies and methods based on the collected think-aloud data. This inductive observation of students' translation activities aligns more with the cognitive development process of their translation abilities.

Thirdly, to integrate translation teaching and pragmatic teaching.

Embedding the content and methods of pragmatic teaching into translation teaching simultaneously cultivates students' explicit and implicit pragmatic and translation compe-

tence. This approach heightens students' pragmatic sensitivity, reducing the chances of pragmatic misinterpretation. A systematic improvement in translation competence can be achieved by enhancing students' extralinguistic and bilingual capabilities. A distinct cyclic procedure for teacher-student translation/pragmatic teaching is established by harnessing the content and context of pragmatic teaching. This approach strongly emphasizes students' central role within the learning environment, fostering their innovative practices and confidence.

Fourthly, regular evaluations should be conducted, and teaching feedback should be valued.

As a vital component of the teacher-student communication model IRF<sup>5</sup> [37], the follow-up move serves as an essential cognitive regulation mechanism. Teachers should enhance students' cognitive engagement and independent learning through timely in-class feedback and regular evaluations. Depending on the persons providing the feedback, it can be categorized into teacher feedback, peer feedback, and student self-feedback<sup>6</sup>. All three types coexist, balancing the teacher-student division of labour and maximizing the teacher's authority and students' initiative. The feedback within the teaching framework advocated in this article is formative feedback aimed at regulating students' thought processes and behaviours during learning to improve learning outcomes.

## 8. Conclusion

This study highlights the crucial role of pragmatic competence in improving translation practices, particularly in understanding both explicit and implicit meanings in texts. The literature review shows that pragmatic competence aligns well with existing translation competence models, such as the PACTE model, providing a strong theoretical foundation for integrating pragmatic teaching into translation curricula. Empirical studies further support the effectiveness of explicit pragmatic instruction in enhancing translation outcomes, and promoting more interactive, context-based, and student-centered teaching approaches. As a result, this study proposes a Pragmatics-Translation joint classroom model

<sup>5</sup>IRF, which stands for Initiation-Response-Feedback, is a three-step teaching process. In this process, the teacher first asks a question to the students, the students respond, and then the teacher provides feedback or evaluation.

<sup>6</sup>Scholars generally believe that learners' self-feedback and self-correction are more conducive to language acquisition than teacher correction.

that emphasizes the importance of context, sociocultural awareness, and interactive learning in developing both pragmatic and translation skills. However, as a literature-based study, the proposed model has not yet been tested through classroom experiments. This study calls for further empirical research to examine and refine this teaching model and to explore the long-term impacts of such curricular reforms on translation proficiency.

## Funding

This research received no external funding.

## Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

## Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

## Data Availability Statement

The data can be available by contacting the corresponding author upon request.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## References

- [1] Thomas, J., 1983. Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics*. 4(2), 91–112.
- [2] Fraser, B., 2010. Pragmatic competence: The case of hedging. In: Kaltenböck, G., Mihatsch, W., Scheneider, S. (Eds.), *New approaches to hedging*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited: Bingley, UK. pp. 15–34.
- [3] Ifantidou, E., Tzanne, A., 2012. Levels of pragmatic competence in an EFL academic context: A tool for assessment. *Intercultural Pragmatics*. 9 (1), 47–70.
- [4] Kasper, G., 2001. Four perspectives on L2 pragmatic development. *Applied Linguistics*. 22(4), 502–530.
- [5] Chen, X.R., 2019. *Pragmatics and foreign language teaching*. Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press: Beijing, China. pp. 51–63.
- [6] Koike, D.A., Pearson, L., 2005. The effect of instruction and feedback in the development of pragmatic competence. *System*. 33(3), 481–501.
- [7] Takahashi, S., 2001. The role of input enhancement in development in developing pragmatic competence. In: Rose, K.R., Kasper, G. (Eds.), *Pragmatics in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press: New York, NY, USA. pp. 171–199.
- [8] Yoshimi, D.R., 2001. Explicit instruction and JEF learner's use of interaction discourse markers. In: Rose, K.R., Kasper, G. (Eds.), *Pragmatics in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK. pp. 223–244.
- [9] Mo, A.P., 2017. *Pragmatics and translation*. Higher Education Press: Beijing, China. p. iv.
- [10] Qian, G.L., 1997. *Pragmatics in Chinese Culture*. Qinghua University Press: Beijing, China. pp. 274–276.
- [11] Li, Y., 2004. Relevance and Translation. *Foreign Languages and Their Teaching*. 1, 40–42.
- [12] PACTE, 2003. Building a Translation Competence Model. In: Alves, F. (Ed.), *Triangulating Translation: Perspectives in Process Oriented Research*. John Benjamins: Amsterdam, The Netherlands. pp. 43–66.
- [13] PACTE, 2005. Investigating translation competence: Conceptual and methodological issues. *Meta: Translator's Journal*. 50 (2), 609–619.
- [14] PACTE, 2017. PACTE Translation Competence model: A holistic, dynamic model of Translation Competence. In: Hurtado Albir, A. (Ed.), *Researching Translation Competence by PACTE Group*. John Benjamins: Amsterdam, The Netherlands. pp. 35–43.
- [15] Zhang, X.L., Liu, J.L., 2017. Re-examining translation competence from the perspective of communicative language ability. *Shanghai Journal of Translators*. 5, 15–21.
- [16] Tang, J., 2013. Analysis of pragmatic failure from the perspective of adaptation. *Cross Cultural Communication*. 9 (3), 75–79.
- [17] Al-Saidi, A.H.S., Rashid, S., 2015. Investigating socio-pragmatic failure in cross-cultural translation: a theoretical perspective. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Special Issue on Translation*. (4), 113–126.
- [18] Ye, M., 2005. Lvyou ziliao de yuyong fanyi [Pragmatic translation of tourism materials. *Shanghai Journal of Translators*. 2, 26–28, 58.
- [19] Yang H., Yang, G., 2001. *A dream of red mansions*. Foreign Languages Press: Beijing, China. p. 183.
- [20] Xin, X., Yang, N., Xie, G., 2002. *Essence of Chinese-English messages of goodwill*. Sichuan Cishu Press: Chengdu, China. p. 152.
- [21] Kasper, G., Rose, K.R., 2002. *Pragmatic Development in a Second Language*. Blackwell: Oxford, UK. pp. 1–352.
- [22] Hu, M.L., 2002. The Development of Translation Competence and College English Teaching: Reflections on Improving College English Translation Instruction

- Based on a Translation Competition. *Chinese Translators Journal*. 23(6), 52–54.
- [23] Han, S.Q., 2020. An Integrated System of “Teaching, Assessment, and Evaluation” for MTI Translation Competence Development: A Discussion Based on the PACTE Mode. *Shanghai Journal of Translators*. 2, 51–56.
- [24] Duan, L.L., 2009. An empirical study on the teachability of pragmatic competence in the context of foreign language teaching in China. *Journal of Tianjin Foreign Studies University*. 16(4), 67–74.
- [25] Farahian, M., Rezaee, M., Gholami, A., 2012. Does direct instruction develop pragmatic competence? Teaching refusals to EFL learners of English. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*. 3(4), 814–821.
- [26] Ellis, R., Roever, C., Shintani, N., et al., 2024. Measuring second language pragmatic competence: A psycholinguistic perspective. *Multilingual Matters*: Bristol, UK. pp. 18–20.
- [27] Pan, W.M., Li, W., 2007. Geshita lilun dui fanyijiaoxue de qishi [Gestalt theory and translation teaching]. *Shanghai Journal of Translators*. 2, 35–38.
- [28] Tan, Y.S., 2016. A construal-centered cognitive approach to understanding translation competence. *Chinese Translators Journal*. 37(5), 15–22.
- [29] Crezee, I., Burn, J.A., 2019. Action research and its impact on the development of pragmatic competence in the translation and interpreting classroom. In: Tipton, R.R., Desilla, L. (Eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Pragmatics*. Routledge: London, UK. pp. 335–372.
- [30] Alos, J., 2015. Explicating the implicit: an empirical investigation into pragmatic competence in translator training. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*. 9(3), 287–305.
- [31] Akbari, A., Bazarbash, M.G., Alinejadi, R., 2021. Evaluating pragmatic competence: A case lost in translation training. *International Review of Pragmatics*. 13(1), 29–60.
- [32] Ravesh, M.M., Tabrizi, H.H., 2017. The effect of teaching interlanguage pragmatics on interpretation ability of Iranian translation students. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*. 8(3), 44–54.
- [33] Mu, L., 2006. Fanyi ceshi yiji pingfen wenti [Translation testing and grading]. *Foreign language teaching and research*. 38(6), 466–471.
- [34] Yang, Z.H., 2012. Quantitative assessment of translation quality: Models, Trends and implications. *Foreign Languages Research*. 136(6), 65–69.
- [35] McNiff, J., 2013. *Action Research: Principles and Practice*, 3rd ed. Routledge: New York, NY, USA. pp. 15–26.
- [36] Huang, Y., 2014. *Pragmatics*. Oxford University: New York, NY, USA.
- [37] Lawson, P.O., Sinclair, J.M., Coulthard, R.M., 1977. Towards an Analysis of Discourse: The English Used by Teachers and Pupils. *TESOL Q*. 11, 203.