

## Article

# A Study on the Promotion of Translation Activities on Primary School Students' Linguistic Intelligence from the Perspective of Multiple Intelligences Theory

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**Abstract:** With the continuous deepening of basic education curriculum reform globally, quality-oriented education has gained increasing attention and prominence in primary school English teaching. In this context, the Multiple Intelligences Theory, originally proposed by Howard Gardner, offers innovative and highly effective new perspectives to break away from the traditional, single-mode teaching approach that often limits student engagement. Based on extensive internship experiences and rigorous teaching practice conducted in public primary schools, this comprehensive study explores practical and theoretical approaches to seamlessly integrating translation activities into primary school English classes. Specifically, it systematically sorted out the core connotation of the Multiple Intelligences Theory and critically examined its intrinsic connection with the development of linguistic intelligence. Furthermore, the research demonstrated the practical feasibility and pedagogical value of incorporating translation activities in current teaching environments. To achieve this, the study designed specific, actionable instructional schemes meticulously tailored to align with primary school students' unique cognitive characteristics and developmental stages. The empirical findings clearly show that well-designed, strategically implemented translation activities can significantly enhance students' vocabulary application and sentence transformation abilities. Moreover, these activities substantially improve both the accuracy and flexibility of practical language use in real-world contexts. Ultimately, the integration of such methods serves to promote the coordinated, holistic development of various cognitive intelligences, thereby effectively facilitating the overall enhancement of students' linguistic intelligence and long-term academic success.

**Keywords:** multiple intelligences; translation activities; primary education; linguistic intelligence; english teaching

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## 1. Introduction

Education that fosters wisdom and cultivates students with individual strengths has become a central theme in the ongoing reform of China's education system. The English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education emphasize the importance of quality-oriented education and the need to address the diverse needs of all students in its foundational teaching principles [1]. Since the introduction of these standards, schools across various levels have actively worked to implement student-centered teaching methodologies. These approaches prioritize students as active participants in the learning process, with teachers serving as facilitators and guides, and advocate for the holistic development of students. Despite these efforts, challenges persist in the practical application of these principles, particularly in primary school English teaching. Teachers often rely on uniform teaching methods, which fail to account for the diverse learning needs and individual differences among students. This misalignment between the theoretical teaching philosophy and the actual classroom dynamics has contributed to a

growing disparity in students' English proficiency, with polarization becoming evident from the early grades.

Translation activities have historically been overlooked and, in some cases, misunderstood within the context of primary school English teaching. Traditional perspectives often suggest that translation is a skill better suited for older students or those pursuing advanced language studies, while primary school English education should focus predominantly on developing listening and speaking abilities, avoiding reliance on the mother tongue [2, 3]. However, from the standpoint of second language acquisition, completely excluding the mother tongue from primary English education is neither practical nor scientifically sound. The cognitive processes involved in language learning naturally incorporate the interplay between the mother tongue and the target language. Therefore, understanding how to effectively leverage this conversion mechanism to enhance primary school students' language competence presents a valuable area for academic exploration. By integrating translation activities thoughtfully into the curriculum, educators can potentially bridge the gap between theoretical language acquisition models and practical classroom strategies, fostering a more balanced and effective approach to language learning.

This study employs a combination of research methodologies to investigate the integration of translation activities into primary school English teaching. The literature research method is utilized to systematically analyze existing studies on the application of the Multiple Intelligences Theory in English education, providing a comprehensive theoretical framework for the research. The observation method is applied to document the behavioral patterns and learning outcomes of primary school students during English lessons, offering empirical insights into their engagement and progress. Additionally, the case analysis method is employed to design and implement specific translation-based teaching activities, enabling a detailed examination of their impact on students' linguistic intelligence development. By combining these approaches, the study aims to provide a robust foundation for understanding how translation activities can be effectively incorporated into primary school English classrooms, ultimately contributing to the refinement of teaching practices and the enhancement of students' language skills [4].

The Multiple Intelligences Theory, introduced by Howard Gardner in his seminal work, outlines eight distinct modalities through which individuals learn and solve problems. This theory offers valuable insights into the diverse ways students process information and acquire knowledge. Integrating translation activities with this theoretical framework can significantly enrich the pedagogical strategies employed in primary school English teaching. Translation activities, when designed to align with the principles of the Multiple Intelligences Theory, can cater to the varied cognitive strengths of students, fostering a more inclusive and effective learning environment. Furthermore, through the implementation of specific teaching cases, this study explores practical methods for incorporating translation into English lessons, providing actionable strategies for educators. The findings demonstrate the positive transfer effects of translation activities, not only in enhancing students' proficiency in the target language but also in strengthening their understanding and use of the mother tongue. This dual benefit underscores the potential of translation as a powerful tool in primary school language education.

## **2. Theoretical Foundation**

The core of the Multiple Intelligences Theory emphasizes the diversity of human intelligence, highlighting that each individual's intelligence is not a singular construct but exists in varied and multifaceted forms. This theory identifies eight distinct types of intelligences: linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, and naturalistic intelligence. These categories underscore the complexity of human cognitive abilities and provide a framework for understanding how individuals process information and solve problems in unique ways [2]. By recognizing

these diverse intelligences, educators and researchers can better appreciate the breadth of human potential and tailor educational approaches to suit different learning preferences and strengths.

The Multiple Intelligences Theory asserts that each student possesses a dominant intelligence domain and a unique learning style, suggesting that targeted education and training can help individuals maximize their potential. Linguistic intelligence, one of the core domains, encompasses the ability to use language effectively for expression, comprehension, and appreciation. In the context of cultivating students' English linguistic intelligence, educators should prioritize developing their ability to think critically and creatively in English. Translation teaching, guided by this theory, should respect individual differences among students, acknowledging that linguistic intelligence varies significantly. For instance, some students may excel in oral communication, while others may demonstrate stronger skills in written comprehension. To accommodate these differences, translation tasks should be designed hierarchically, allowing students to engage in activities that align with their strengths. Furthermore, translation exercises should incorporate real-life scenarios closely related to students' daily experiences, enabling them to apply language skills in practical contexts [5, 6]. By creating authentic and relatable learning environments, educators can foster deeper engagement and enhance students' ability to understand and use language effectively.

### **3. Current Situation and Feasibility Analysis of Translation Activities in Primary School English Teaching**

#### *3.1. Current Status of Linguistic Intelligence Cultivation in Primary School English Classrooms*

Through internship observations, several significant challenges have been identified in the current state of primary school English teaching. These challenges highlight the need for a more balanced and effective approach to language education, particularly in fostering students' comprehensive linguistic abilities and practical application skills [7].

Traditional primary English classroom teaching often places an excessive focus on the rote learning of basic language knowledge, particularly the mechanical spelling and repetitive reading of isolated words. Teachers frequently emphasize vocabulary memorization and grammatical rules, while neglecting the situational application of language in authentic, everyday contexts. Under such a narrow teaching framework, students may excel in reading new words aloud and reciting textbook passages under teacher guidance. However, they are rarely provided with opportunities for meaningful language output or interactive practice. This lack of practical engagement hinders their ability to apply learned knowledge flexibly and express personal ideas effectively in real-life English communication scenarios [8]. Consequently, students often struggle to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical language use, which is essential for achieving true language proficiency.

Another prevalent issue is the disproportionate emphasis on the teaching principle of "prioritizing listening and speaking." Many teachers allocate substantial classroom time to training students in the imitation of standard pronunciation and accurate intonation. While phonetic competence is undoubtedly important, this approach often comes at the expense of fostering students' deeper comprehension of linguistic meanings and textual logic. As a result, students may develop the ability to read English sentences and passages fluently with proper pronunciation, yet fail to grasp the core content, emotional nuances, or logical relationships within the texts. This mechanical learning approach limits students to surface-level reading abilities, preventing them from achieving meaningful language acquisition and critical thinking skills that are vital for advanced language use.

Misconceptions about translation teaching are also widespread among primary school educators. Many teachers mistakenly view translation as a superficial process of literal conversion between English and Chinese, leading them to exclude systematic translation activities from their daily teaching practices. Even in rare instances where translation exercises are incorporated, teachers often provide direct Chinese

interpretations without encouraging students to engage in independent thought. This passive learning approach deprives students of the essential cognitive processes involved in linguistic analysis, bilingual comparison, and active language conversion. Consequently, students miss valuable opportunities to develop their comprehensive thinking abilities and bilingual competence. A more structured and interactive approach to translation teaching could significantly enhance students' cognitive engagement and overall language proficiency.

### *3.2. Feasibility of Introducing Translation Activities in the Primary School Stage*

From the perspective of cognitive development, primary school students are in the concrete operational stage, where their thinking activities rely heavily on concrete and visual images. Translation activities, if designed thoughtfully, can act as an effective bridge connecting students' tangible life experiences with abstract linguistic symbols. Younger primary school students often show a preference for English learning activities that engage bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, musical intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and spatial intelligence. In contrast, older primary school students tend to favor activities that involve spatial intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, logical intelligence, and musical intelligence. This highlights the importance of tailoring translation activities to align with the cognitive characteristics and developmental needs of different age groups. Integrating translation with engaging formats such as games, picture books, nursery rhymes, short plays, and other creative methods can significantly enhance students' enthusiasm for English learning. By leveraging these interactive and visually stimulating approaches, educators can foster a deeper connection between students' everyday experiences and the abstract concepts inherent in language acquisition, thereby promoting both interest and comprehension in the learning process.

## **4. Design of Translation Activities for Promoting Linguistic Intelligence from the Perspective of the Multiple Intelligences Theory**

### *4.1. Design Principles*

#### *4.1.1. The Principle of Interestingness*

Traditional primary school English translation teaching often relies on rigid and repetitive word-for-word translation exercises. These monotonous training methods are not only tedious but also fail to align with the cognitive development and learning preferences of young students. Prolonged exposure to mechanical drilling can lead to learning fatigue, diminish classroom engagement, and weaken students' intrinsic motivation for English language acquisition. To address this issue and foster a more dynamic learning environment, educators should move away from formulaic translation teaching approaches [9, 10]. Instead, they should incorporate diverse and age-appropriate teaching methods, such as English nursery rhymes, illustrated picture books, and situational short plays. These engaging and visually stimulating learning tools can significantly enhance students' interest in translation activities. By making the learning process more interactive and enjoyable, these methods encourage active and voluntary participation in bilingual conversion exercises. Furthermore, such approaches can help students develop a deeper understanding of language nuances and cultural contexts, ultimately promoting their linguistic intelligence and fostering long-term enthusiasm for English learning.

#### *4.1.2. The Principle of Differentiation*

Primary school students demonstrate significant individual differences in their foundational knowledge of English, their ability to absorb new information, and their cognitive development levels. These variations make differentiated teaching strategies a critical component of effective education. Teachers should implement hierarchical and scaffolded translation tasks tailored to the diverse language proficiency levels of their students. Such graded teaching arrangements ensure that learners across all skill levels encounter appropriately challenging tasks, fostering a consistent sense of accomplishment

and motivation throughout their learning journey. Furthermore, primary English education should be viewed as a comprehensive developmental process that extends beyond linguistic intelligence. It contributes to the balanced development of students' bodily-kinesthetic, musical, logical-mathematical, and interpersonal intelligences, aligning with the principles of multiple intelligence education. This holistic approach underscores the importance of nurturing diverse capabilities to support well-rounded growth.

#### 4.1.3. The Principle of Integration

Guided by the multiple intelligence theory, translation teaching should embrace a student-centered integrated teaching concept that prioritizes the holistic development of learners [11, 12]. Teachers are encouraged to seamlessly incorporate diverse intelligence elements into everyday translation activities, ensuring that the learning process is both engaging and multifaceted. By leveraging students' strengths in areas such as spatial imagination, musical perception, and physical expression, educators can utilize these non-linguistic intelligences as valuable supplementary tools for language acquisition. This approach not only enhances systematic linguistic training but also fosters a synergistic relationship between multiple intelligences and linguistic competence. Consequently, this integration promotes the comprehensive development of primary school students' English literacy, enabling them to achieve sustainable learning outcomes and equipping them with the skills necessary for long-term academic growth and adaptability in diverse contexts.

#### 4.2. Typical Case Design

##### 4.2.1. Case 1: Chinese Translation of English Picture Books

Teachers may select age-appropriate English picture books that align with the cognitive development of primary school students. Among these, "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?" is a widely recognized and practical teaching resource. At the start of the class, teachers guide students to carefully observe the intricate and colorful illustrations. These visual aids provide intuitive support, enabling students to form a foundational understanding of the story's context. This approach effectively stimulates spatial intelligence and fosters curiosity for learning. Research has demonstrated that young learners heavily rely on visual thinking, with approximately 85% of primary school students showing a preference for picture-assisted learning. The use of vivid images reduces comprehension challenges and transforms translation practice into a more engaging and less intimidating activity. By leveraging such visual tools, educators can create a more interactive and supportive learning environment that caters to the developmental needs of young learners.

Following the visual observation phase, teachers introduce simple English sentences from the book, progressing page by page. Students are encouraged to deduce the meanings of these sentences using illustration-based clues and attempt to translate them into natural Chinese. This process is followed by peer evaluation, where students compare various translations and reflect on which versions are more accurate, fluent, and suitable for children's discourse. Such reflective practices enhance linguistic sensitivity and expressive skills over time. To reinforce the learning outcomes, teachers motivate students to design and create their own bilingual picture books. This creative task not only consolidates their understanding but also allows them to apply their knowledge in an artistic and meaningful way. Displaying their work in class further boosts their sense of accomplishment and confidence. This integrated learning approach effectively strengthens students' bilingual conversion abilities while deepening their comprehension of language through a blend of creativity and structured practice.

##### 4.2.2. Case 2: Translation of Campus Public Signs

Campus public sign translation serves as an effective method for integrating classroom translation knowledge with practical, real-world applications. Teachers organize activities where students explore the campus environment to identify areas

requiring bilingual signage, such as libraries, canteens, playgrounds, and restrooms. These tasks involve translating common directives like "Keep quiet" and "No smoking" into standardized and idiomatic Chinese expressions [4, 13]. By engaging in these activities, students gain hands-on experience in applying translation principles to authentic scenarios, bridging the gap between theoretical learning and practical implementation. This approach not only enhances their linguistic proficiency but also deepens their understanding of cultural nuances and contextual appropriateness in translation practices.

During group discussions, students leverage their diverse skills and strengths to collaboratively complete the translation tasks. Some participants focus on researching authoritative definitions to ensure linguistic accuracy, while others concentrate on designing layouts and visual patterns for the signs [14, 15]. Additionally, certain students take responsibility for facilitating communication within the group and summarizing the outcomes. Once the group work is finalized, each team presents their bilingual sign designs, showcasing their creative and linguistic efforts. Teachers then guide students in comparing various translations and analyzing their pragmatic differences in real-world contexts. For instance, discussions may highlight why "No smoking" is preferred for public signs due to its concise and direct nature, as opposed to the more verbose "Smoking is not allowed." This activity not only enhances students' contextual and pragmatic awareness but also fosters their collaborative abilities and critical thinking skills. By engaging in meaningful translation exercises within authentic campus settings, students develop a deeper appreciation for the practical applications of translation and its role in effective communication.

## **5. The Promotional Effects of Translation Activities on Linguistic Intelligence**

### *5.1. Improvement of Language Competence and Cultural Perception*

Translation activities can significantly enhance students' understanding of English vocabulary and sentence structures. In traditional English learning environments, many students rely on rote memorization of English words by associating them with their direct Chinese meanings. This approach often neglects the nuanced semantic shifts that words undergo in different contexts. Translation, as an active learning method, encourages students to focus on the contextual meanings of words, thereby strengthening their comprehensive grasp of lexical usage. For instance, when translating campus signs and slogans, students must carefully analyze the pragmatic styles and determine the appropriate linguistic expressions for specific scenarios. Similarly, during the translation of picture books, learners are required to interpret the tone and emotional undertones embedded in characters' dialogues, which fosters a deeper understanding of language subtleties and emotional resonance.

Sustained attention to pragmatic factors during translation practice helps students develop the ability to apply language appropriately in real-life communication. This process not only enhances linguistic proficiency but also serves as a valuable tool for cultivating cross-cultural awareness. By engaging in comparative analysis between English and Chinese, students gain a clearer understanding of the cultural distinctions inherent to Eastern and Western societies. Such insights enable learners to appreciate the diverse ways in which language reflects cultural values, traditions, and social norms. Furthermore, translation exercises often require students to adapt their linguistic choices to align with the cultural expectations of the target audience, thereby reinforcing their ability to navigate complex intercultural interactions with sensitivity and precision.

### *5.2. Cultivation of Thinking Quality and Emotional Attitude*

Translation activity is not merely the superficial conversion of linguistic symbols, but also an in-depth cognitive thinking process. In the process of English-Chinese linguistic transformation, students are required to engage in comprehensive textual analysis, rational judgment, and deliberate linguistic selection. This sequence of mental exercises significantly enhances learners' logical reasoning abilities and critical cognitive skills. The

tangible outcomes of translation practice can provide students with a profound sense of achievement, which effectively stimulates intrinsic learning motivation and supports sustained educational engagement [16]. Furthermore, translational practice offers an effective method for students who struggle with language acquisition to rebuild their self-confidence and develop a positive attitude toward learning. By fostering a sense of accomplishment and encouraging perseverance, this approach can help learners overcome barriers and achieve long-term success in their academic pursuits.

Students with limited foundational knowledge in English may possess exceptional talents in areas such as graphic design, artistic creation, and innovative expression. By integrating the development of multiple intelligences, individual differences can be fully acknowledged and respected [1]. This inclusive approach enables all students to explore their unique strengths and uncover their distinctive advantages within the context of comprehensive translation learning. Through this process, learners can develop a deeper understanding of their personal capabilities and cultivate a sense of self-worth. The integration of diverse skills not only enriches the learning experience but also promotes holistic development, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive academically and creatively.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the Multiple Intelligences Theory, this paper conducts an in-depth study on the promotional effects of translation activities on the development of primary school students' linguistic intelligence. The main conclusions are as follows: First, under the guidance of the Multiple Intelligences Theory, age-appropriate translation activities have a significant promotional effect on the development of primary school students' linguistic intelligence. Through the two-way processing of language input and output, translation activities deepen students' understanding of vocabulary and syntax, cultivate their pragmatic awareness and cross-cultural perception, exercise their thinking quality, and effectively stimulate their internal motivation for English learning. These activities serve as a dynamic platform for students to engage in meaningful language use, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Second, the design of translation activities for primary school students must strictly follow the principles of interestingness, differentiation, and integration. By ensuring that activities are engaging and tailored to the diverse needs of learners, educators can fully mobilize the collaborative participation of various intelligences, thereby fostering a holistic development of students' cognitive and linguistic abilities. For instance, integrating storytelling or gamified translation tasks can enhance student engagement while simultaneously addressing multiple intelligences. Third, it is feasible to introduce translation activities in the primary school stage, provided that educators accurately grasp the cognitive characteristics and learning needs of primary school students. Translation should not be reduced to a tedious word-for-word conversion but should instead function as a bridge connecting language and thinking, the mother tongue and foreign language, and learning and daily life. This approach not only enhances linguistic competence but also nurtures critical thinking and cultural awareness, equipping students with skills that extend beyond the classroom.

Certainly, this study has some limitations due to objective factors. Firstly, due to the limited research time, it fails to conduct a long-term follow-up observation on the sustained effects of translation activities on students' linguistic intelligence development. A longitudinal study could provide deeper insights into how consistent exposure to translation activities influences language acquisition and cognitive growth over time. Secondly, the coverage of case design is limited, failing to include all grade levels and all types of intelligences in the Multiple Intelligences Theory. Expanding the scope of case studies to encompass a broader range of age groups and intelligence types could yield more comprehensive findings and allow for the development of more inclusive teaching strategies. Thirdly, the study lacks sufficient support from quantitative data, and the measurement of students' linguistic intelligence development needs to be further refined and standardized. Future research should prioritize the creation of robust, standardized

assessment tools to quantitatively evaluate the impact of translation activities on linguistic intelligence. Additionally, it is recommended to carry out long-term follow-up studies to observe the sustained impact of translation activities on students' language competence. Developing more diverse translation activity cases to cover different grade levels and different types of intelligences is essential. For example, incorporating digital tools and interactive platforms could enhance the effectiveness of translation activities by making them more accessible and engaging. Furthermore, exploring the possibility of in-depth integration of translation activities with information technology could provide more diversified and effective teaching schemes for primary school English teaching. This integration could include the use of artificial intelligence-driven language tools or virtual reality environments to simulate real-world language use, thereby enriching the learning experience and fostering a deeper connection between language skills and practical application.

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