

# The Construction of Bachelor's Degree on TCSOL in OUC

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**Abstract:** The Open University of China has started the construction of a new major which is TCSOL since 2017. With specific methodologies such as literature research, data statistics based on the Constructionism, from both diachronic and synchronic angles, we have done an investigation on 60 universities and compared psychological theories to construct TCSOL under the perspective of ODE in a scientific and efficient way. During this research, we have found 3 bottlenecks in the development of the major TCSOL in which we want to transfer the teaching method from face-to-face to distant online education. The Open University of China (The Central Radio and Television University which was formerly called) combined with its own development characteristics and advantages, puts forward "Three-Step Development Strategy on the Construction of TCSOL Bachelor Degree" specialized in ODE, which are: Step 1: To renew teaching concepts of distance education and build the knowledge system of distance education on TCSOL. Step 2: To improve and activate the credit banking system, construct standards for learning outcome recognition, accumulation and transfer across regions, schools and majors, and integrate academic education with non-academic education. Step 3: To explore the diversification mode of TCSOL and link the profession, career, and industry.

**Keywords:** TCSOL, Open and Distant Education, The Construction of TCSOL, The Open University of China

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## 1. Introduction - Why Do We Do

The OUC has started the construction of TCSOL since 2017. During the research on the development the major, we found that total number of schools who had already constructed this major was keeping increasing recent years. By the end of 2015, "363 colleges and universities have offered bachelor's degree of TCSOL" [1]. According to official data released by the Ministry of Education, there were 9 new institutions registering for the major in 2017 [11], while 14 in 2018 [12], and 5 in 2019 [13] with a total number of 398 by the end of 2018, 113 more than a decade ago, with a growth rate of 39.65%. The Office of the State Council Academic Degrees Committee has approved and authorized institutions to confer profession degrees in TCSOL since 2007. At present, the number of institutions authorized to confer professional degrees in TCSOL has increased to 147, 6170 students have been enrolled in 2018. Professional Doctorate of Education in TCSOL has been established in 2018 to cultivate high-level talents. The first batch of pilot

projects has been implemented in Peking University, East China Normal University, Northeast Normal University, Shaanxi Normal University, Central China Normal University, Nanjing Normal University and Tianjin Normal University, enrolling 22 doctorate candidates [2].

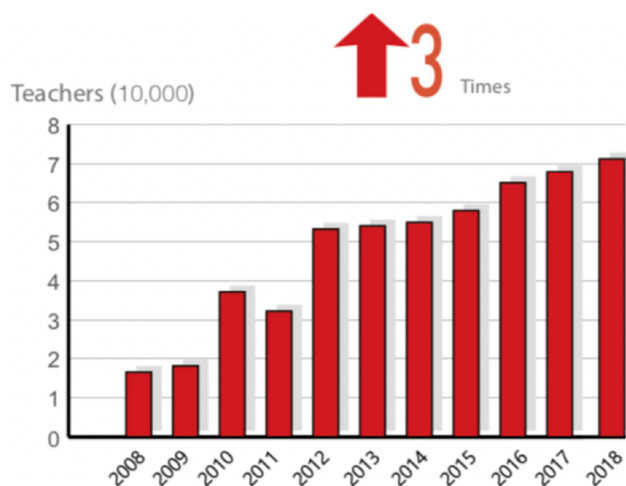
During the process of literary research, some interesting results have been showed up which were "bottlenecks" still existed even though so many schools had the major of TCSOL, and the diploma education system has been built up. That is why the OUC insists on constructing TCSOL to solve these problems.

**Bottleneck I:** The main battlefield of Chinese language education has moved overseas, and Chinese teachers trained at home cannot well adapted to the environment. As a result, there is strong demand for localization [17].

On the issue of "Three-T" (teacher, textbook and teaching methods), it was put forward that we should strongly advocate cooperation between China and foreign countries in the compelling teaching materials, cultivating localized teachers, and forming teaching methods suitable for different culture backgrounds. Zhang Xinsheng, the professor in Richmond, the American International University in London, pointed out

that in order to become an international language like English, Chinese localization should be encouraged to ensure the sustainable development of TCSOL, and the cultivation of localized teachers is the key [4].

In addition, according to the latest statistics from the Confucius Institute Headquarters, on the one hand, the total number of Chinese language teachers and volunteers sent abroad by the state has increased by about 1,000 separately every year in the past five years. On the other hand, by using the strategy of “Coming and getting to know us” and “Going into the local communities to spread the word”, the Headquarter is transforming the focus to training local teachers intensively, and the number of them has been increasing year by year (figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The number of local teachers trained by the Headquarters (2008~2018).

Through the random sampling survey and analysis, we find that some relatively developed European and American countries have a large number of high quality Chinese new immigrants, part of whom could transform to local Chinese teachers. while in some regions such as southeast Asia, Africa and South America, Chinese language teachers have diverse backgrounds, most of whom are lack of professional knowledge, or uneven teaching levels. Taking Indonesia as an example, 84.3% of the Chinese teachers have middle school degrees, while only 15.6% have college degrees or above. The Ministry of Education of Indonesia required that all primary and secondary school teachers must have obtained bachelor's degrees by 2020 [9]. The data above has shown that it is urgent to solve the problem of degree compensation and continuing education for the qualifications of Chinese teachers in Indonesia.

It can be conducted that as the increasing need in local teachers overseas, degree compensation cultivation conditions and long-term, traditional colleges and universities can hardly meet their needs. The OUC has the advantage in conquering problems in space and time.

Bottleneck II: The lack of clear understanding on the nature, characteristics and advantages of TCSOL - some colleges and universities set up the major blindly, and some students apply for the major following the trend.

Because of the exaggeration of "Chinese hot", huge gap of Chinese teachers broadcasting by social media recent years, we found some schools that have the major TCSOL were insufficient in professional strength, reflecting in setting up courses according to what teachers they had instead of what their students need actually. There were also some schools that lack of foreign students, limited in internationalization, for which it has limitation in real understanding and carrying out what they have learned. As a result, a large number of graduates cannot find their corresponding jobs, and some choose to continue their studies and escape the employment pressure temporarily.

Based on knowing these problems, the OUC do investigations to find efficient ways to make use of cooperation to provide more choices for graduates.

Bottleneck III: The relatively single training mode, variety of curriculums and out-of-date teaching resources make it difficult to take a break-through and have an innovation.

In 2012, the Ministry of Education merged three undergraduate majors – teaching Chinese as a foreign language, Chinese Language and Culture, and Chinese Studies into TCSOL [10], which actually put forward new requirements for professional reform. At present, TCSOL mainly concentrated in traditional colleges and universities, in whom most of the students and teachers are used to face-to-face teaching; teaching materials and methods are in low efficiency of iteration. While at the same time, more and more universities, experts and scholars have made new attempts in undergraduate professional training with the growing demand for professional reform [21, 5, 18].

If we want to make an innovation, it means we have to innovate in teaching concept, teaching mode, teaching method and resources. It is from these aspects that the OUC starts to develop the open and distance diploma education in the major of TCSOL.

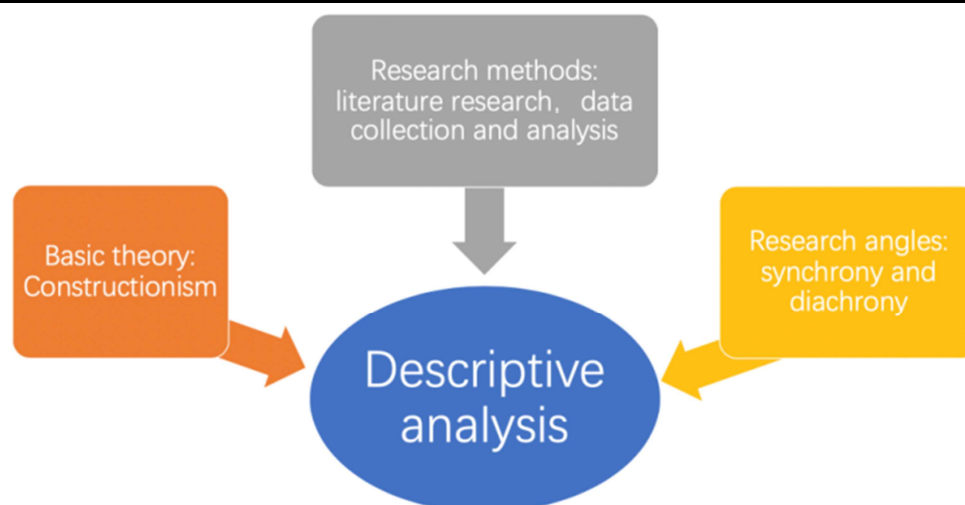
## 2. The Meet of TCSOL and ODE

With the bottlenecks we have found above, we try to find right ways in the OUC to construct this new major to meet the needs of our social, people and the development of the major itself.

### 2.1. Methodology

Based on the constructivism theories as the support, we take specific methodologies such as literature research, data statistics and so on, from both diachronic and synchronic angles (figure 2). In the survey of colleges and universities, we have chosen 60 of them in variety types in random<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> In the 60 colleges, there are 20 comprehensive colleges, 8 language colleges, 10 normal colleges, 15 science and technology colleges, and 7 ethnic colleges.



**Figure 2.** Methodology of the research.

## 2.2. Tendency

With the changes in the international situation and the continuous development of social politics, economy and culture, we have entered the "post-" era unwittingly -- post-modernism, post-methodology... Teachers start to reflect and promote self-change in teaching consciousness, improvement of teaching ability and innovation of teaching mode and method. All of these drives more and more teachers to broaden their horizon and integrate their major with other tools or professional knowledge. On April 13, 2018, the Action Plan of Education Informatization 2.0 was officially issued by the Ministry of Education, providing inspiration and new ideas for traditional education. Many people may ask what Educational Informaionization is. Briefly speaking, it is to take informationization as the goal of personnel training, making people know information, understand information and use information. Meanwhile, it is to take information technology as a means of talent training, imparting knowledge and improving the quality and efficiency of teaching. In modern society, "informatization is not only an important symbol to measure a country's comprehensive strength, but also an important symbol to measure the modernization of education in the educational reform of developed countries" [20].

At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, TCSOL and ODE meet and spark each other. With the development of modern education technology, some scholars predicted that the new revolution of TCSOL will occur, but most of them were still focused on establishing Chinese cognition and teaching consciousness, Chinese teaching under the multi-media assistant [18-20]. As a result, the main results during that period of time were mainly linguistic databases, multi-media resources/textbooks. In 2012, some top universities in the United States set up learning platforms to provide free courses online successively. It has led some experts and scholars to think about the training methods and

modes of TCSOL [16].

In 1999, China began to carry out the modern distance education in some colleges and universities as pilots, which was a very significant part in China's educational informatization. Over the past decade, China has launched online higher education programs in 68 pilot universities, including Peking University. Some have taking TCSOL as a testing major in Master's degree education. It is under the requirements of such education, technology and professional development that the OUC puts forward the new goal of distance undergraduate education of TCSOL with its own advantages.

## 3. How Do We Do

Since 2012, the OUC upholds the educational philosophy of "Openness, Responsibility, Quality, Diversity and Internationalization". Among them, the construction of TCSOL is an important embodiment of "openness" and "internationalization". According to the requirements of professional development, combining with its own development characteristics and advantages, and aiming at the bottleneck of professional development, the OUC puts forward a "three-step" strategy for the construction of TCSOL in ODE.

Step I: To renew teaching concepts of distance education and build the knowledge system of distance education on TCSOL.

In order to ensure the rationality of discipline construction, we go back to the source and start from the essence of learning. After studying the learning characteristics of contemporary students, we compared the seven modern psychological theories carefully, which were spiritual motivation, behaviorism, humanism, cognitions, social culture, biological psychology and evolutionism and build the theoretical framework of TCSOL in the OUC (figure 3).

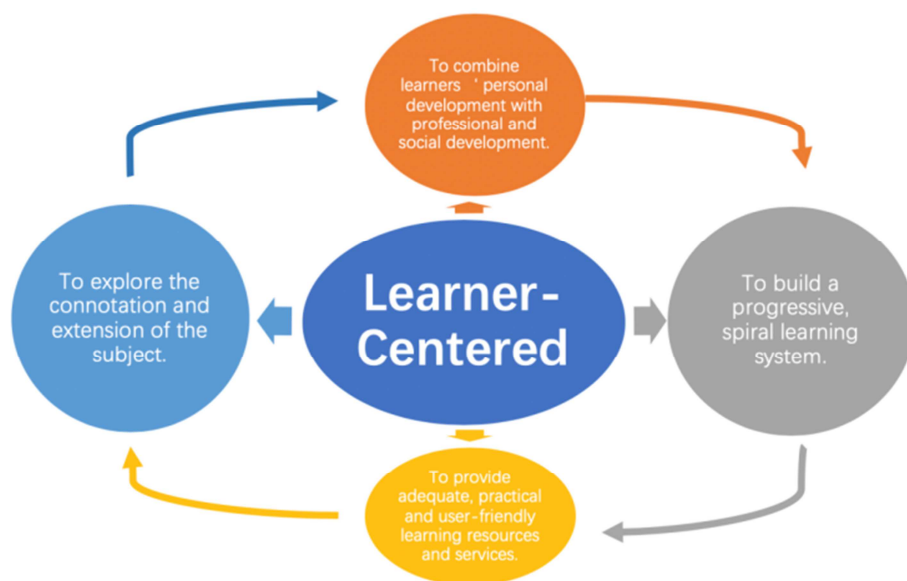


Figure 3. The theoretical framework of TCSOL in the OUC.

Since the audience of open education is mainly adult learners, on-the-job learners and learners with supplementary requirements for academic qualifications, we investigate the real needs of students in the construction TCSOL and explore the connotation and extension of the discipline (spiritual power). We set student-centered (humanism), conform to adults' cognitive characteristics (cognition), considering learners' personal development combined with occupation, social development (social cultural). To help students to build knowledge system in a progressive and spiral way (cognition), making full use of modern information, network and other teaching means to provide adequate and diversified learning resources and services, and ensuring that the curriculum is connected with social life practice -- adequate, practical and useful (humanism).

In the international congress of congratulations education informationization, president Xi Jinping has stressed that we should comply with the development of technology to promote education reform and innovation; to build the network, digital, personalization, lifelong education system; to construct the learning society that anyone could learn anywhere any time. Under the "six-network" [8] of integration, TCSOL in the OUC takes the professional features and advantages constructing a professional system with four elements "Internet" and "Chinese" "International" "Education" [6] if we translate the name of the major word by word in Chinese (figure 4). Taking advantages of ODE, on the one hand, Chinese refers to language philology, linguistics and applied linguistics; international refers to cross culture, including politics, economics, cultures, histories, philosophies etc., while education refers to education and educational psychology, including education policies, administration system and mechanism, culture broadcasting etc [6, 14].

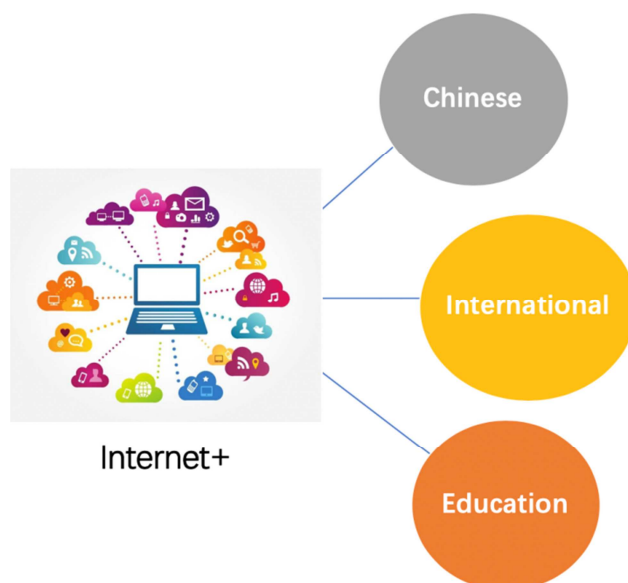


Figure 4. The knowledge system of TCSOL in OUC.

Step II: To improve and activate the credit banking system, constructing standards for learning outcome recognition [7], accumulation and transfer across regions, schools and majors, and integrate academic education with non-academic education.

In order to develop a universal and lifelong educational society, it is necessary to realize the recognition, accumulation and transformation of learning outcome across regions, schools and professions. At present, the OUC has initially established a standard system for this in China by referring to the achievements in many other countries and regions such as Britain, South Africa and Hong Kong, China. In the process of constructing open and distance undergraduate diploma of TCSOL, we will make use of this standard in teaching resources in a fragmented and integrated way at the same time, pay attention to students' learning process, and accumulate



and transform their learning outcome over a long period of time. In addition, combining with the Chinese Teachers Standards, we will integrate the academic education with non-academic education, such as training and selection of Chinese teachers. We will pay attention to improve the professional development of students' comprehensive quality and personalization, and launch talents at home or abroad for more practice so as to reduce the loss of high quality resources.

Step III: To explore the diversification mode of TCSOL and link the profession, career, and industry.

Facing the characteristics nowadays- big data, Internet, the Internet of things develop rapidly. The OUC is playing the advantages of open and distance education to make innovation in teaching methods and mode considering the differences of every course (figure 5). We are going to build a variety of learning support service system based on the undergraduate education, maximizing the advantages of online, offline, distance and face-to-face in blended learning mode. We will fully stimulate students' awareness of independent learning through preliminary research, building teaching group, designing and developing course resources, and providing them with comprehensive and three-dimensional learning support services according to their independent learning outcome. In this process, teachers are no longer knowledge creators and broadcasters, but resource builders, learning promoters, teaching designers, social norms of model and the sharing of experience, so as to fully realize student-centered.

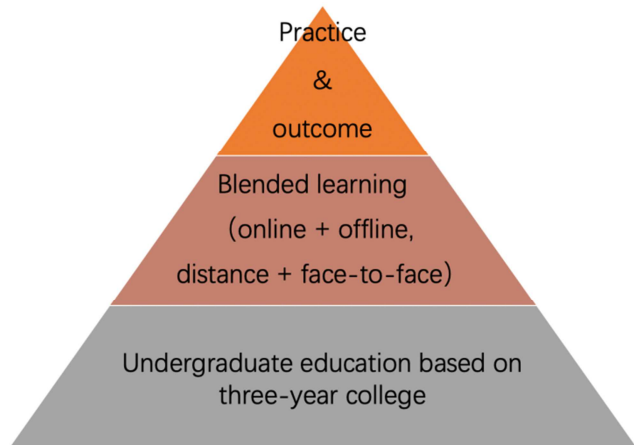


Figure 5. The trangle mode of TCSOL in the OUC.

Sun Zeping, the president of Chongqing College of Arts and Sciences, believes that "the most critical part of transformation is to connect majors with industries, while the adjustment of majors' structure is the core of the transformation." The OUC has made great achievements in the field of TCSOL. Since its establishment, it has accumulated a large number of professional and high-quality professionals in the industry or interdisciplinary fields, and its expert pool has grown to a large scale. At present, the OUC has established cooperation with many institutions, companies and universities inland and overseas such as Dhyana Pura university of Indonesia, Latvia, Riga where

Education Bureau of Riga, Latvia, Distance Education Center of France, the Confucius Institute of the Michigan State University, and Learning Center in Zambia and Tanzania. With the mode of blended learning, we have cultivated and exported a group of excellent Chinese teachers, while we have cultivated a large number of excellent local Chinese teachers for foreign countries by taking advantage of the open and distance education at the same time. These cooperative units overseas would provide a large number of internship and practice opportunities for both academic and non-academic cultivation of TCSOL, which could alleviate the shortage of overseas teachers in a large scale and long term.

## 4. Expectations and Prospects

The major of TCSOL is both a traditional and new discipline [15, 3]. It is traditional because it integrates a wide range of traditional social sciences in its teaching content. It is new because it needs more and newer ideas in the development of itself and the cultivation of talents, so that it can play its advantages and be unique. The construction of TCSOL open and distance education is in need. But we should make it clear that we are not going to cultivate a large number of Chinese teachers or workers to do related work, which is the goal of higher education in universities. What we are doing is to take advantage of the professional content and criteria, using modern information technology and blended learning methods to make students obtain the sense of responsibility, mission, and promote their civilization. As President Xi Jinping said, through them, we are going to "let the world know about a 'developing China,' an 'open China,' and a 'China that has contributed to human civilization.'"

The construction is in plan and star enrolment in the spring of 2019. We are preparing it step by step and each step need to be tested in real teaching, based on which we will update and revise our major in the future.

## Nomenclature

TCSOL: TCSOL refers to the name of the major – Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Language.

ODE: ODE refers to open and distance education.

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