Brief Discussion on Cultural Construction in English Translation Practice

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ABSTRACT

In cross-cultural communication, people have many different views on the language cognition and application due to cultural differences. This paper mainly introduces the relevant theories of cultural construction in English translation practice, and then analyzes the specific application of cultural construction in English translation practice. By analyzing the reasons of cultural differences between China and western countries, the author puts forward the way to strengthen the cultivation of cultural construction in English translation practice in classroom teaching. It is hoped that this study can give some guidance to the cultural issues that Chinese people should pay attention to while communicating with foreign people.

KEYWORDS

English translation; translation practice; cultural construction; translation principles

INTRODUCTION

In cross-cultural communication, one side must first make an accurate expression of their own ideas, so that the other side can understand the language to ensure the smooth conduct of communication. In order to ensure the language in cross-cultural communication is proper and conformed to the cultural background and social norms of the other side, it is essential to master the pragmatic knowledge. People are increasingly concerned about the pragmatic phenomenon of politeness in cross-cultural communication. Linguists have noticed that people always maintain their “face” in communication and try their best to make their wordings cautious and appropriate, aiming to avoid hurting others and hoping that their words and deeds can be recognized and praised by the other side. However, in foreign language teaching, learners cannot accurately grasp the cultural contents behind speech acts and also have a misunderstanding of language functions and cultural connotations in a certain context. Therefore, it is of positive practical significance to deeply study the cultural construction in English translation. In foreign language teaching, teachers should pay attention to the cultural construction in cross-cultural English translation practice under different cultural backgrounds.
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION PRACTICE

In China, the emphasis on foreign language teaching has always been the cultivation of thinking and speaking the foreign language in corresponding way. That is because the foreign language speaking, and writing mingled with Chinese thinking often makes learners get into the misunderstanding due to the divergence caused by differences between the two language cultures. Therefore, learners must do corresponding communicative activities combining the foreign language thinking, improve the sensitivity of cultural differences and cultivate the cross-cultural awareness, so as to speak the foreign language properly and correctly. The cultivation of cross-cultural awareness is of great significance to the future development of students. In order to improve students' ability in cross-cultural communication, it is the foundation to cultivate their cross-cultural awareness. Students can implement intercultural communication properly Only by being guided to have a preliminary cognition and understanding of difference between Chinese and western cultures and cultivating their cross-cultural awareness to respect, appreciate and tolerate different cultures[1]. If they don't know enough about cultural differences, they will leave an impression on foreigners and even generate communication failures and conflicts. Therefore, in the process of English translation, it is necessary to realize cultural construction scientifically and rationally and cultivate the sensitivity of cultural differences between China and the western countries, so as to reduce cultural differences as much as possible. Eastern civilization and western civilization are all produced and developed in specific social and historical conditions, and thus there are inevitable differences between Chinese-style and western-style politeness. The reasons can be considered from the following two aspects:

Differences in cultural patterns

Most western countries, especially the United States, are the nation of immigrant with multi-culture. American culture is a modern civilized palace constructed in accordance with modern people's wills and mode of thinking. It only has 200-year history which is much shorter than China. The ethical idea of American culture is based on the law of free competition, so it advocates freedom and equality. This cultural background is the most fertile soil for individualism. Freedom, self-reliance, autonomy, equality and respect are the cultural and psychological features of Americans. In the western society, people regard the individualism as the center and regard and equal relation as the value orientation. Personal interests, personal rights, personal privacy, personal freedom, personal field, personality liberation and self-realization are all regarded as sacred and inviolable[2].

Although the Chinese traditional culture contains Confucianism, Mohism, Taoism, Legalism, Buddhist culture and other cultural schools, the Confucian culture is dominant. This determines that Chinese people attach great importance to the face and dignity and everything mars their face and dignity is unforgivable in their mind. Most Chinese people are influenced by the behavioral rules of “modesty and self-cultivation” and “do not treat the others as you would not like to be treated”. Therefore, the Chinese tend to collectivism in the interpersonal relationship and the concept of group-first has become ingrained in the mind of Chinese people. “Courtesy” is an outstanding spirit in Chinese culture and also a traditional virtue of the Chinese nation. Under such a cultural
background, the cultural psychology of Chinese people has the characteristic which takes the bloodline as its foundation and ethical harmony as its moral purpose. Confucianism advocates “the benevolent loves others”. The bloodline-based relationship cannot be cut off and has become the first cornerstone of Chinese culture based on the patriarchal society. From “Boya playing the qin” to “Zhao's orphan” and from “the Nineteen Ancient Poems” to Tang poetry and Song Ci, “love” can be found everywhere. The traditional ethics and morals are established according to the different levels of interpersonal relationship. For example, the behavior norms between the monarch and subjects, between the parent and offspring and between the husband and his woman are all different at different levels. Therefore, the Chinese culture has always stressed a non-risk way, such as “a great tree inspires the wind” and “don't be the trailblazer”; what it advocates is not flaunting personal honor but modesty -- modesty helps one to go forward and a modest can be modeled by others[3].

In short, there are various differences between Chinese and Western cultures, such as ancient and modern culture, nationality and diversity, cultural bipolarity and multipolarity, introversion and openness, Confucian culture and Christian culture, and so on. Therefore, the expressions and behaviors of courtesy are different between Chinese and western cultures.

**Differences in thinking mode**

Human thinking is the function of human brain when it developed to advanced stage in production practice, and it is also the product of the long-term development of human history. Thinking observes and reflects the objective world from different angles and aspects, and it is also a process of analyzing and integrating the objective world. A nation developed certain experience and habits based on the understanding of reality over time, formed ideas with the help of language and then vested the ideas some certain way, which finally formed the unique thinking mode of the nation. The mode of thinking is the bridge to communicate culture and language, which is closely related to the both. The difference in the thinking mode is one of the important reasons for cultural differences [4].

Westerners belong to linear thinking, emphasizing efficiency and reason. In the final analysis, all western theories begin with philosophy. The definition of philosophy is “the knowledge of loving wisdom”. Aristotle's logic and Archimedes's geometry is also the product of highlighting wisdom. Westerners are accustomed to treating problems form the part to the whole. They pay special attention to logical analysis and have a strong ability to solve problems. Therefore, the western culture is characterized by open, direct, frank and pragmatic, and it emphasizes the content of language [5].

Oriental culture belongs to a circle-style thinking mode, emphasizing being adaptable and flexible. People are used to treating the problem from the whole to the part and from large to small, seeking stability and paying attention to the unity of contradiction. This kind of thinking mode is general and fuzzy. People often look back as they look forward and analyze failures when they will achieve success, trying to draw lessons from failures. The so-called “failure is the mother of success” is the manifestation of this way of thinking. Oriental people are very sensitive to the environment. They pay attention to “face” and “courtesy” and regard speaking and acting cautiously for virtue. The emphasis on ethics and morality makes it easy for people to obey some specific authorities in group activities. They do not like insisting
on individual rights, and take “harmony is the most precious and tolerance is high” as the principle of life. Therefore, the language features of oriental culture are introverted, concise, euphemistic and implicit, emphasizing the form of language.

STRENGTHENING THE TRAINING STRATEGY OF CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN CLASSROOM TEACHING

In the classroom teaching, the strengthening of the cultural construction of English translation can be carried out from three aspects: the teacher-student relationship, teaching content and teaching method:

Good maintenance of teacher-student relationship

In the student-centered classroom teaching, the teacher-student relationship should be equal and harmonious. In the process of classroom teaching, the teacher communicates and negotiates with learners in a people-oriented communication strategy. At the same time, a harmonious atmosphere full of humanistic care should be created to promote the successful completion of classroom tasks, so as to ensure learners' effective study of the foreign language. Only when the classroom teaching atmosphere is harmonious can students really relax and enjoy the fun of learning, which will lay a good foundation for the following classroom teaching activities [6].

Systematic planning of teaching contents

The teaching content should adopt authentic verbal communication events to adapt to the communicative approach and improve learners' awareness of cultural construction in English translation. The teacher's teaching should be based on the characteristics of speech acts. For example, request, persuasion and other verbal acts are essentially impolite actions, and thus sentence structures (general question, etc.) at high level of politeness should be employed to express courtesy. This is because the general question can give the listener room while maintaining the speaker's face. Moreover, the teachers should pay more attention to increasing the explicit audio-visual materials about communicative occasions and other communicative factors. It is also feasible to make use of some chapters of related books, articles on recent newspapers and magazines or radio and television news, so as to ensure the authenticity and cultural characteristics of verbal communication activities [7].

1. Focusing on spoken English in classroom teaching

Different teachers have different levels of arrangement for the same course, and thus it can be said that teaching is an artistic achievement of a teacher. The teacher should put his highest enthusiasm in the process of imparting knowledge. In guiding students to learn, he should create a good learning environment for foreign language teaching by making the students appreciate the teacher's care, tolerance and care while not making students have a sense of distance. The teacher should create the listening and speaking circumstance flexibly based on contents of the course teaching, so that students can learn with fun.

2. Transforming the teacher-centered teaching way to the student-oriented one

It is no exaggeration to say that the teacher is the ruler of the classroom in traditional teaching and the students are only the bearers being forced to receive knowledge. It is
widely believed that the teacher should play a leading role in teaching according to educational ideas today. However, the teacher is only the initiator, and students should be the focus of teaching. Therefore, the teacher should change his concepts and change the traditional cramming teaching mode to guide students to be the master of the classroom. Some students cannot absorb all the knowledge given by the teacher because of their poor foundation. Therefore, the teacher needs to employ various approaches, including making specific teaching programs, taking individual counseling and one-to-one communication, to create form-focused instruction, preventing the class to be obsolete, dogmatic and boring.

**Scientific use of teaching methods**

The interactive teaching adopted in the English class should pay attention to both the completion of teaching tasks and the application of cultural construction of English translation. Learners' psychological environment, such as motivation, interest, self-confidence, personality and other emotional factors, is formed in the interaction with the teacher and classmates. First of all, the teacher should create a classroom environment for active communicative activities and establish a suitable classroom communicative tone, and then, the students can understand related cultural context factors, ascertain the purpose of communication tasks and clearly know the pronunciation, intonation and communication of the role they play. During the course of tasks, the teacher acts as the consultant and helper to guide the students to participate in the language task and encourage them to do appropriate verbal behaviors, promoting the completion of the task and the development of habits.

In addition, special attention should be given to the appropriateness of courtesy. The appropriateness indicates that the use of culture in English translation should be based on the requirements of the context, that is, it should be used according to the actual occasion, object and content of the conversation in the verbal communication. In formal social occasions, the language that both sides use in the communication should follow the relevant cultural construction principles of English translation. Generally, the two sides should abide by the norms of appropriateness and choose a polite cultural construction means of English translation. If the speaker wants the listener to meet his own formal request, some sentences like the following are commonly used:

- Could you possibly lend me your bike?
- Is there any chance you can help me to find a place to stay?

In daily life, requirements of the language culture are relaxed. If the speaker asks the listener to do something trivial, the speaker often uses more casual words and pays little attention to the cultural level of the language. Simple imperative sentences are generally uses in the case of such kind. For example:

- Allow me to introduce Dr. Smith, Dean of faculty of education.
- Come and meet my friend Jack.

The corresponding methods of translation and expression should be determined according to the different conversation object. The language used in the communication between friends is different from the one between the superior and subordinates. The latter needs to highlight courtesy and discretion and wordings should also conform to their respective identity, because there are differences in rights between the two sides.
CONCLUSION

Foreign language learners should follow the principle of translation and their cultural connotations in English translation, so as to avoid the pragmatic failures of speech acts caused by the differences between Chinese and western cultures. In the actual learning and communication, learners should hold an attitude of cultural equality, study the courtesy principle and communicative principle of different cultures, and gradually improve verbal competence in cross-cultural communication. Culture is the sum of material wealth and spiritual wealth created by human beings in the course of social and historical development. It contains the deep psychological accumulation that a nation formed for a long time. The development of different cultures may have many similarities due to the restriction of environment and people's own conditions. But because different countries or nations keep differences in the history, local customs and practices, traditional customs, life style, literature and art, behavioral norms, ways of thinking, values and many other aspects, people in different societies have different preferences and choices for things or life as well as different interpretation and behaviors to the same symbol. The full understanding of differences of courtesy principle in the above aspects will help us be free of our own cultural limitations and learn to accept and tolerate various ethnic customs and cultures, so that we can reduce the errors in cross-cultural communication as far as possible to achieve a more natural and harmonious communicative effect.

REFERENCES