

# Strategies of English Translation Teaching on the Background of Chinese and Western Cultural Differences

Baohua Yan

Teaching and Research Institute of Foreign Languages, Bohai University, Jinzhou, 121013, China

yanbaohua2008@163.com

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**Abstract:** Cultural differences exist objectively and have an important impact on translation practice and translation teaching. In order to improve the accuracy of students' cross-cultural translation, according to the characteristics of English and Chinese, they should follow the principles of reflexivity, comparability, practicability and graduality to deal with cultural differences, and use the literal translation, free translation and annotative translation and other translation methods to deal with cultural differences, combined with the correct strategy. This article proposes the following strategies for English translation teaching in the context of cultural differences between China and the Western: strengthening students' understanding of cultural differences between China and the Western, improving students' cross-cultural communication skills, cultivating students' cultural empathy, guiding students to use multiple translation skills, carrying out two-way cultural teaching and carry out all-round cultural penetration in the teaching process.

## 1. Introduction

Culture is the sum of the nation's knowledge, experience, belief, value, attitude, religion, thoughts, and habits. Culture is variety and reflects the politics and economy of society. People can only master cultural knowledge through language communication, and the language used must also reflect the cultural characteristics of society and history. The relationship between culture and language is inseparable. Language, as the carrier of culture, inevitably reflects the differences between cultures. English is the main media language of international communication. Under the environment of increasingly frequent cross-cultural communication between China and the Western, in order to achieve more efficient cultural and economic communication, English translation teaching must deepen the understanding of culture. The teaching goal of college English is to cultivate students' comprehensive application ability of English, that is, the ability of "listening, speaking, reading, writing, translating" and other language activities through the comprehensive application of English language and cultural knowledge, which is finally reflected through the translation level of students. The level of translation is a comprehensive reflection of students' ability in all aspects of English language and cultural knowledge. In the current college English teaching, translation teaching has not attracted enough attention, and students' translation ability is still quite weak.

Translation is the key part of the communication process. With the help of language translation and content conversion, different cultures can achieve undifferentiated communication, further highlighting the importance of English translation teaching. However, at present, in the English translation teaching under the cultural differences between China and the Western, the communication, fusion and collision between Chinese and Western cultures coexist. Misunderstandings exist between Chinese and Western cultures, food culture, social conditions, natural environment and development history. Differences in connotation and diversity, whether it is a cultural habit, language thinking, or even specific cultural communication, can form communication and integration in the continuous practice process, which has become the key strategy of current English translation teaching. The key to English translation is to release cultural

concepts and flexible and specific contextual language applications. For English translation activities under the cultural differences between China and the Western, whether it is the specific use of translation teaching material content or the implementation form of translation teaching requires cultural communication. Under the general environment, it is constantly improved and continuously updated. Grasping the deep semantic structure of the two languages, deeply studying the social and cultural background of the two languages, and cultivating students' cultural awareness and sensitivity to the language they learn are very important for improving their translation abilities.

## **2. Analysis of Chinese and Western Cultural Differences**

Cultural differences refer to differences in language, knowledge, belief, view of life, value, ways of thinking, morality, customs and habits formed by people in different ecological and natural environments. The two languages of English and Chinese are rooted in very different cultural backgrounds between the Eastern and the Western. Inevitably, there are huge cultural differences, which are mainly reflected in the following aspects: first, differences in thinking methods, Chinese people are more humanistic and ethical; westerners focus on nature and science technology. Different ways of thinking determine the linguistic characteristics of people with different social backgrounds, and can reflect different cultural connotations from daily language, proper nouns, idioms and folk proverbs. Second, historical and cultural differences. Historical culture reflects social interpersonal relationships, including historical traditions, customs and behavior patterns. Ancient Chinese civilization originated in the Great River Basin, which belongs to agricultural civilization, and the culture is relatively conservative; Western Ancient Greek civilization, which originated along the Aegean Sea, belongs to marine civilization and likes to explore outwards, and people are more outgoing. Third, the differences in behavioral norms. Westerners aim at pursuing private interests, do not attach importance to affection, and rely on laws to resolve conflicts. The development of the rule of law in Western countries is closely related to the values of rights. Under the influence of traditional Confucianism, Chinese culture places more importance on justice than benefit. Treating love and justice as the highest criterion, we can not see the benefits and forget the justice, and the legal awareness is relatively weak. Fourth, there are differences in religious belief. The Chinese believe in Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, and the three religions are in one. Religion has largely entrusted people with too many material desires. No matter what religion is in the Western, people's belief is spiritual. They do not pray for material prosperity, but only pursue spiritual liberation.

## **3. English and Chinese Language and Cultural Differences**

The difference between English and Chinese language and culture is reflected in the following aspects: first, vocabulary. The difference between English and Chinese vocabulary is not only reflected in the semantic context used, but also includes the specific cultural connotation of the vocabulary formed during the language development process. Some of the corresponding vocabulary in English and Chinese languages, although they have the same literal meaning, will cause people to experience different emotions in their respective cultures; there are also situations where the literal meanings are different but the extension meanings are the same. The second is the sentence. The differences between English and Chinese in sentence structure and word order are obvious. In English sentences, there are many modifiers, complex juxtapositions, multiple language levels, and even the reverse of word order. It is used to express more complicated meanings in long sentences. The word order of subject, predicate and object in Chinese sentences is relatively simple. Sentence expression focuses on the relevance of meaning, focusing on short sentences. There is no need to use too many connecting words between sentences. The third is text. Text is a communicative unit. It is produced in a certain cultural context. Discourse must be understood in its existing cultural context. Chinese text belongs to a spiral cultural thinking model, which is good at generalization and introverted. English text belongs to a linear cultural thinking model, focusing on

analysis and deductive reasoning. Only by understanding the text can we deeply understand and hide the cultural content it carries. Fourth, idioms. Idioms are a fixed form of expression formed during the use of language, including idioms, proverbs, slang words, and allusions. The two languages, English and Chinese, have a long history and contain a lot of idioms. They are not only concise, but also vivid and interesting, giving people beautiful enjoyment. English and Chinese idioms carry the cultural characteristics and cultural information of different nationalities, are important representatives of cultural traditions, and are the main performance of cultural differences.

#### **4. Principles of Dealing With Cultural Differences in English Translation Teaching**

English translation teaching dealing with cultural differences should follow the following principles: first, the reflective principle. When there is a conflict between Chinese and Western cultures, while learning Western cultures, constantly summing up and reflecting, and comparing the culture of your country, you have a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of cultural differences. Through reflection, you form a flexible and open thinking form. Second, the comparable principle. Compare Chinese culture with Western culture, find similarities and find differences. Deepen your understanding of Western culture, understand the Western way of thinking and value orientation, deeply understand different cultural behaviors, and avoid using your own standards to translate or explain others' behaviors. Third, the practicable principle. When teaching translation, pay attention to the content and methods of teaching. The content is suitable for the language level and cognitive ability of the students. The relationship between historicity and synchronicity. Fourth, the gradual principle. In the teaching process, according to the academic situation, rationally arrange the learning content of different periods, not only they should pay attention to the internal logic and systematicness between knowledge, but also pay attention to the sequence and correlation between knowledge at all levels, guide students from the perspective of sensibility and rationality, we can comprehensively understand the differences between Chinese and Western cultures and help students cross the cultural gap.

#### **5. Methods of Dealing with Cultural Differences in English Translation Teaching**

English translation teaching mainly uses some variety of methods to deal with cultural differences: first, literal translation. Literal translation refers to the method of preserving the referential meaning of the original words in translation and finding the content and forming consistent without transgressing the original social culture. Literal translation focuses on technical processing at the linguistic level, while preserving the form of the original language, without distorting the meaning. In short, the original expression method is used in the translation. The sentence structure is similar to the original sentence, but it does not exclude certain adjustments at the phrase level. The second is the free translation. Free translation means that when the translator is limited by the social and cultural differences of the target language, he has to abandon the literal meaning of the original text in order to match the content of the original text and the similarity of main language functions. From the perspective of intercultural language communication and cultural communication, free translation emphasizes the relative independence of the target language cultural system and the original language cultural system. Therefore, free translation is mainly used when the original language and the translated language show huge cultural differences. The third is the annotative translation. Due to the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, some cultural words in English have no equivalent words in Chinese at all, forming a vacancy in the meaning of words. In this case, the annotative translation is often used to make up for the vacancy. By annotating the relevant cultural background and incorporating the relevant cultural knowledge, it will help to correctly handle the cultural interference, deeply understand the communication culture, and make the translation easy to understand.

## 6. Strategies of English Translation Teaching on the Background of Chinese and Western Cultural Differences

In order to effectively solve the impact of cultural differences between China and the Western, this article proposes the following English translation teaching strategies:

(1) Strengthen students' understanding of the differences between Chinese and Western cultures. The two languages of English and Chinese come from different cultural backgrounds and carry different cultural connotations, which will inevitably lead to many differences in the expression of the two languages. Cultural differences are all-encompassing. It is the collision of cultural differences that broadens human thinking and vision and promotes human cultural development. Therefore, strengthening the correct understanding of cultural differences can help improve the accuracy of translation. Only by correctly understanding the cultural differences between China and the Western and strengthening students' understanding of the connotation and extension of culture can we reach the perfect standard of expressiveness and faithfully to carry out cultural communication.

(2) Improve students' cross-cultural communication ability. The survival and development of language are inseparable from the social and cultural environment on which it grows. Translation is essentially a cross-cultural communication activity, not only the symbol reproduction of the original text, but also a cross-cultural communication and conversion. Therefore, only by cultivating students' cross-cultural communication skills, and improving students' intuition and sensitivity to cultural differences, can translation skills be improved. Achieve the improvement of students' cross-cultural communication ability, it is necessary to help students acquire a large amount of cultural content. In addition to learning English language knowledge, they must also be exposed to the rich cultural connotation of English and explore channels for training cross-cultural communication ability.

(3) Cultivate students' cultural empathy ability. Cultural empathy means that in the face of cultural differences, the translator can stand in the perspective of the other's culture, use the thinking of the other's culture to analyze the problem, and consciously transcend the thinking of the nation. People in China and Western have great differences in value, ethics, religious belief and lifestyles. During the translation process, the two cultures inevitably collide. Cultural empathy directly determines the translator's ability to successfully cross the cultural gap. If students have strong empathy ability, they can smoothly get rid of the shackles of their own culture and thinking, and accurately convert between Chinese and English languages.

(4) Guide students to use a variety of translation abilities flexibly. Pay attention to the interpretation of translation skills, allowing students to use a variety of translation abilities flexibly in the translation process. Conversion of word classes is an important translation ability. The word meaning is selected according to the part of speech in the sentence. The internal rules of English and Chinese are different. In many cases, it must be increased or decreased in order to faithfully express the original meaning; original sentence is too long and complex, and the translation cannot be expressed in one sentence, it can be split into two or several sentences; in order to make the translation clear and fluency, some short sentences can also be split; translate the positive into the negative, and the negative into the positive.

(5) Carry out two-way cultural teaching extensively. The implementation of two-way cultural teaching in the process of English teaching means that English culture and Chinese culture are compatible, deepen the understanding and recognition of the two cultures, enable students to develop in a balanced manner, and improve students' cultural sensitivity and cultural identity. The teaching of language knowledge and the introduction of cultural knowledge are carried out simultaneously. The relevant cultural knowledge is infiltrated in the textbooks to explain the background of the teaching content, so that the students can accurately grasp the ideological and cultural connotation of the teaching content. Integrate excellent traditional culture into the English teaching system, understand the essence of Chinese and Western cultures, and possess two-way cultural communication and Chinese traditional culture communication awareness

(6) All-round cultural penetration in the teaching process. Cultural penetration refers to the developed countries promoting their own culture to other countries, so as to achieve the purpose of achieving economic benefits and assimilating other countries. The cultural penetration in English teaching means the integration of each other. The systematic development of multiple cultural resources will enable students to have a deep interest in language. Through the understanding of culture, it will bring about knowledge innovation and improve the level of communication and translation ability. The specific penetration content includes three aspects: pragmatic culture, culture related to language structure; semantic culture, culture related to background knowledge; pragmatic culture, culture related to communicative ability.

## 7. Conclusion

From the perspective of the development process of students' translation ability, translation ability includes two levels that are both connected and different from each other, the shallow literal translation and the deep inferential translation. The shallow level of literal translation mainly relies on vocabulary and grammatical abilities; the deep level of inferential translation involves a deep understanding of the two cultural backgrounds and situations. While people are learning a national language, they are learning the culture of that nation. Culture involves not only some unique social customs, but also the perspective of language expression. Language also includes the cultural connotation, text structure, logical thinking and translation equivalent of words. In the context of cultural differences, successfully translate Chinese and English and improve students' translation level, we must cross the cultural gap, understand the cultural background of the language, and apply appropriate strategies and methods to give full play to the communicative function of the language.

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