

# Study on English Translation Skills from a Cross Cultural Perspective

Yuan Wang

School of Foreign Languages, Maanshan Teacher's College, Maanshan 243041, China

**Abstract.** This article explores English translation techniques from a cross-cultural perspective, and conducts in-depth analysis from cultural differences, language habits and expressions, homophones, idioms, and cultural metaphors. It reveals the complexity and importance of cross-cultural translation and proposes corresponding translation strategies and techniques. Combined with practical case analysis, it highlights the cross-cultural challenges and solutions in advertising translation and interpretation.

**Keywords:** Cross-cultural Perspective; English Translation; Translation Skills.

## 1. The Impact of Cultural Differences on Translation

The handling of homophones, idioms, and cultural metaphors is one of the challenges facing cross-cultural translation. Chinese homophonic culture is often used in some commercial advertisements. For example, the advertising slogan "Up to date" of "7Up" has been translated into "Seven up, more energetic after drinking" in Chinese Mainland, which uses the homophonic characteristics of "Seven up" and "happy" to carry out creative translation. This kind of homophonic treatment may not be directly reflected in English, so translators need to cleverly transform it based on cultural background. Idioms are unique expressions in every culture, often containing rich cultural connotations and symbolic meanings. For example, "discussing military affairs on paper" is a commonly used idiom, meaning to only discuss military matters on paper without practical experience. In English, to accurately convey this meaning, it may be necessary to use similar expressions, such as "armchair strategy". This demonstrates the differences in the expression of the same concept between Chinese and Western cultures. The translator needs to find similar expressions in the target culture to convey the meaning in the source culture. Cultural metaphor, on the other hand, is based on the implicit meaning of specific cultural background knowledge. In the translation process, translators need to possess a wide range of cultural background knowledge and be able to transform it into easily understandable forms in the target culture.

## 2. English Translation Skills from a Cross-cultural Perspective

### 2.1. Planning Strategy Skills

When formulating translation strategies, translators should consider the language logic and cultural compatibility of translating English into Chinese, and adjust the content expression of the original sentence while ensuring semantic consistency. For example, the word 'suggest' is used in For any Englishman, there can never be any discussion as to who is the world's greatest poet and greatest tragedy Only one name can potentially suggest it to him: that of William Shakespeare. Here, the meaning of "suggest" is to come to someone's mind, to cause someone to think of something. Based on this meaning, we can translate this sentence into: "He may only think of one person's name, which is Shakespeare." In terms of form, Chinese sentences are very different from the original English sentence. The latter has the subject "one name" and uses the expression of an English sentence, while in Chinese sentences, it is changed to "he", resulting in a change in the entire sentence structure. Although the structures of Chinese sentences and English sentences are different, their meanings are the same. From the writing perspective, the translation uses the personal pronoun "he" as the subject,

which precisely refers to "any British person" in the previous sentence. The two sentences are closely connected and appear natural and smooth.

## **2.2. Language Structure Conversion Techniques**

In the context of Chinese culture, people tend to use active voice to express ideas and convey information when using language. This is closely related to the subjective thinking mode in Chinese culture, emphasizing the active role of individuals in society and the natural world. However, in the British cultural environment, the frequency of passive voice usage far exceeds that of active voice. This is closely related to the objective thinking style in British culture, which focuses on the individual's dynamic role in society and the natural world. In specific translation practice, the task of the translator is not only language conversion, but also to make appropriate adjustments to the language structure while retaining the original meaning. This requires translators to have a solid language foundation and a keen cultural awareness. Only in this way can we ensure that the translation is both faithful to the original text and in line with the reading habits of the target readers. For example, with the development of speech, the number of cases producing additional experiences of pleasure increased, and since laughter was closely associated with speech, man had this means of expressing his pleasure.

## **2.3. Image Conversion Techniques**

The technique of image transformation mainly lies in transforming Western expressions and adjusting translation strategies according to the cultural background of China. In the actual translation process, translators should fully understand the cultural differences between the East and the West, master various translation techniques, and achieve the original artistic conception of the original text. In the translation process, literal translation and free translation are two common translation methods. Literal translation refers to presenting the original text directly to the reader while ensuring grammar and structure; Free translation focuses on conveying the original artistic conception, rather than completely following the vocabulary and structure of the original text. In image transformation, translators should flexibly use literal and free translation according to specific situations to achieve the best translation effect.

For example, the English idiom "You must be pulling my leg!", if translated directly as "You must be pulling my leg!", then this translation is not only obscure and difficult to understand, but also confusing. In fact, the true meaning of this idiom is "you must be joking with me.". Therefore, the correct translation should be to naturalize it and translate it as "you must be joking with me.". If translated directly, "He likes the feeling of standing head and shoulders above others.". Because the actual meaning of this idiom is "he likes the feeling of standing out from the crowd.". So, it should be naturalized and translated as "he likes the feeling of standing out among the chickens."

The wind had gone and there was a perfect silence, save for the age of the stream, but a few steps reward the genre of the little runs could be heard in their deep cut, dark and dark channels. The entire sentence should be translated as "the wind has ceased, everything is silent, only the restless sound of the river water remains.". However, a few more steps forward, you can still hear the sound of the creek flowing and tinkling in the deep and narrow ditch.

## **3. Example Analysis**

### **3.1. Actual Case Analysis**

#### **3.1.1. Advertising Translation in Different Cultural Backgrounds**

Advertising language focuses on product recommendations and often uses puns, metaphors, and other means to write advertising slogans. When translating advertisements, translators need to pay attention not to literal translation, but to consider the theme and cultural background of the advertisement. For example, LG's mobile advertising slogan is "I chocolate you." which means I like you, but the theme

of the advertisement is a chocolate shaped phone. Therefore, the focus of translation is on "loving chocolate", which can not only express the cultural connotation of chocolate representing love, but also promote the phone. Translators need to explore the deep meaning and prominent advertising themes of advertisements in the context of language and culture. Advertising translation needs to face challenges in language expression and vocabulary selection. Different languages have their own unique expressions and vocabulary systems, and translators need to master these differences proficiently in order to accurately convey the original meaning in advertising translation. For example, when translating words with puns, the translator needs to determine whether similar expressions exist in the target language to avoid misunderstandings. In addition, advertising translation also needs to pay attention to the conversion of grammar and sentence structure to ensure that the translation is smooth and easy to understand.

In 2015, Coca Cola launched a series of advertising campaigns with the theme of "Share a Coke", aimed at encouraging consumers to purchase cola cans or bottles with different names and share them with friends and family. This activity has achieved great success globally and has been translated into multiple languages. However, in some cultures, there are translation issues with this activity. In Chinese culture, people usually use their surname instead of their first name to address others. Therefore, when translating the slogan "Share a Coke with...", the translation team in the Chinese market chose to translate it as "Share a Coke with XXX", where XXX is the consumer's surname. However, in English culture, people usually use their first name to address others, so in the English version, this slogan is translated as "Share a Coke with... (name)". This example demonstrates the importance of considering cultural differences in the process of advertising translation. Translators need to understand the social customs and cultural background of the target culture, and find appropriate ways of expression to ensure the dissemination and reception of advertisements.

### **3.1.2. Interpretation Challenges in Cross-Cultural Communication**

Language barriers are one of the most common challenges in interpreting. The significant differences in vocabulary, grammatical structure, and expression between different languages may lead to difficulties for interpreters in conveying information. For example, in English, the word "love" can represent multiple meanings, such as "love", "love", etc. "torrent" is directly translated as "torrent", but in programs, it means a text file, which has polysemy in the English language, requiring interpreters to accurately translate based on the specific context of the context. In addition, some languages also have issues with accents, dialects, etc., which require interpreters to have good auditory discrimination ability. In response to language barriers, interpreters can enhance their abilities by expanding their vocabulary, strengthening language learning, and participating in interpretation training. Meanwhile, in the actual interpretation process, interpreters can utilize modern technological means such as translation equipment and online dictionaries to improve interpretation accuracy and efficiency.

Cultural differences are another important cross-cultural interpretation challenge. Values, customs, beliefs, and other factors from different cultural backgrounds can affect the communication and understanding of information during the interpretation process. Cultural differences may lead to difficulties for interpreters in terms of word selection, metaphorical understanding, and etiquette norms. For example, in English, idioms are often used to express meanings that may not be immediately clear when translated directly into another language. For example, the phrase "training cats and dogs" actually does not refer to pets falling from the sky, but to heavy rain. A skilled interpreter must be able to recognize these idioms and accurately express their intentions in the target language. If interpreters fail to understand this cultural difference, it may lead to distorted information transmission. To overcome the challenges posed by cultural differences, interpreters need to possess cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity. They need to have a deep understanding of the characteristics and differences of various cultures, respect and understand the differences between different cultures, in order to avoid interpreting errors caused by cultural misunderstandings.

### **3.2. Comparison of Translations in Different Cultural Backgrounds**

When conducting cross-cultural translation, there are various differences between different cultural backgrounds, which are not only reflected in language structure and vocabulary selection, but also in cultural cognition, values, and social customs. The translation differences between Western and Eastern cultures are particularly evident, as they carry different histories, traditions, and ways of thinking.

In Western culture, individualism and direct communication are prominent characteristics. Therefore, when translating, Westerners tend to express their opinions and ideas more directly. For example, a commonly used expression in spoken English, "I don't think that's a good idea", literally translated as "I don't think that's a good idea", may be translated as "I don't think it's a good idea" in Chinese because Chinese culture places more emphasis on euphemism and politeness in expression. On the contrary, in Eastern culture, respecting others, avoiding conflicts, and maintaining face are very important values. Therefore, when translating, Easterners may be more inclined to use implicit and indirect language to express their opinions. For example, the commonly used Chinese phrase "this issue may need to be reconsidered" may be translated as "We may need to reconsider this issue" in English, as English culture tends to express issues and suggestions directly.

The impact of cultural transformation on translation results cannot be ignored. When translating from one culture to another, the meaning and emotions of the original text often change. This cultural shift may lead to misunderstandings or loss of information, affecting the accuracy and fluency of translation results. When translating the title of a movie or TV series, one also faces the challenge of cultural transformation. For example, translating the title of the movie "Gone with the Wind" into Chinese. Literally translated as "fate in the wind" may not accurately convey the emotions and themes of the original work. In this case, translators need to understand the background and cultural connotations of the original work, as well as the cultural background of the target audience. This film is a classic American Southern historical romance film that reflects multiple themes such as war, love, and family. Translators can choose a translation method that is closer to the habits and emotional resonance of Chinese audiences. A common translation in China for "Gone with the Wind" is to translate it as "Gone with the Wind", which is widely known in Chinese translations. Through such cultural transformation, translators can not only preserve the core meaning of the original work, but also stimulate resonance among Chinese audiences on themes such as love, family, and history. This translation method is more in line with the taste and cultural background of Chinese audiences, improving the attractiveness and dissemination effect of the movie. Therefore, when conducting cross-cultural translation, translators need to fully understand the characteristics of the target culture, avoid using simple literal translation methods for the language and expression of the source text, and should translate freely based on the habits and preferences of the target culture.

### **4. Conclusion**

This article studies English translation skills from a cross-cultural perspective and finds that cultural differences have a profound impact on translation work. Cross cultural translation not only requires language conversion, but also considers the transmission and transformation of cultural connotations, which puts higher requirements on translators. Translators need to have rich cultural background knowledge and flexible translation skills. In the future, with the acceleration of globalization, the demand for cross-cultural communication and translation will continue to increase. Therefore, translators need to further study cross-cultural translation techniques and explore more flexible and accurate translation strategies.

### **Acknowledgments**

One of the phased achievements of the 2024 Anhui Province Key Project for Humanities and Social Sciences Research in Higher Education Institutions, "Research on C-E Publicity Translation of Cultural Heritage in the Ma'anshan Region from the Perspective of Ecological Translation Studies".

## References

- [1] Yang Lingying. Research on English translation skills under cross-cultural perspective transition [J]. Journal of Heihe University, 2023,14 (12): 119-122.
- [2] Cai Shanshan. Exploration of Cross cultural Perspective Transformation and Translation Techniques in English Translation [J]. Campus English, 2023 (49): 187-189.
- [3] Niu Yanmin. Analysis of cross-cultural perspective transformation and translation skills in English translation [J]. Overseas English, 2023 (20): 53-55.
- [4] Deng Hanyu. A Study on English Translation Skills from a Cross Cultural Perspective [J]. Campus English, 2023 (36): 180-182.