

文化差異與翻譯困境

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中文摘要

語言既是人與人之間溝通的媒介，也是誤解的來源，這句話在翻譯學界可得到更深刻的印證，試想，如果我們透過翻譯機來將一篇中文譯成五種不同的語言，會得出什麼樣的譯文？可想而知，其結果一定是中文不像中文、外文不像外文，那是因為我們在這個語言轉換過程中流失了它的重要「密碼」～文化！

語言是文化的載體，不諳外語者需要透過筆譯或口譯來溝通，漏譯及誤譯的肇因往往源自於文化誤解，其中含括文化意象轉譯過程中所衍生的各種難題，而這些難題不只無法透過日漸精密化的翻譯機得到解決，就連人工翻譯過程也頻遇困境，因為廣義的文化內涵含括一個國家民族社會長久以來的歷史演變，政治、經濟、社會、宗教、文藝、民俗、生活觀、價值觀、世界觀等等差異均使「等效翻譯」的境界成為一種不易達到的理想。

有鑑於此，本文試圖從比較文化角度切入，來審視文化差異所導致的翻譯困境，文中除了分析語言與文化的關聯之外，也將結合筆者多年的實際翻譯經驗，舉例說明在文化意象轉譯過中所衍生的誤釋及誤譯。

最後，我們也希望能透過這個研究強調多元文化素養在專業譯者培養過程中的重要性。總之，小到如何成功傳譯「話中有話」(understatement)的句子；大到如何達到「化中有化」(文化交融)的境界，讓不同的文化透過譯者的專業與巧思搭建交流的橋樑，其中都一再突顯文化素養在翻譯技巧層面的重要性，希望透過本文呼籲教育當局在急切推動英語教育的同時，兼重翻譯專才的培養，譯事技巧及能力的培養應含括功能的(functional)、文化的(cultural)及批判的(critical)等三層面。

關鍵字：語言與文化、文化意象、文化差異與翻譯困境、比較文化觀點、多元文化素養

Culture checkmate and translation problems

~ A Cross-cultural Perspective

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Abstract

Language is the source of communication and misunderstanding. Although all languages have concepts, they do not have the same concepts. Each language conceptualizes in a different manner, packaging the phenomena of reality together in different ways and then reinforcing such distinctions by naming them. Each language has its own system for arranging concepts into different parts of speech and makes it risky to seek one-to-one equivalents. What happens when a Chinese article is translated by computer between five different languages? Despite the improvement of translation software, the resulting half-Chinese, half-foreign article bears almost no resemblance to the original. What we lost in translation by computer is culture code.

Translation is the process of transferring the meaning of utterances in one language to another. It recognizes that different languages encode meaning in differing forms, yet guides translators to find appropriate ways of preserving meaning while using the most appropriate forms of each language. The key skills of the translator are the ability to understand the source language and the culture of the country where the text originated, and render that material into the target language. Translation is therefore not a matter of substituting words in one language for words in another. It is a matter of understanding the thought expressed in one language and then explaining it using the resources of another language. Qualifications of a good translator include general erudition and intimate familiarity with both cultures of the source language and target language, which means, background knowledge related to politics, economy, philosophy, literature, legend, religion, art, science, medicine, customs, habits, as well as significant events and profiles of outstanding figures in the history of both culture.

Symbols provide aspect to the psyche of a folk or a nation. However, sometimes even the same symbol has different cultural meanings. Literature encodes worldview derived from the evolution of one culture. Take Chinese people as an example, we are not only good at figurative speeches, but also good at using sounds and pictures to convey a meaning. In this article we try to explicate problems encountered by translators and illustrate the culture checkmate with examples related to metaphor, simile, irony, sayings, puns and forms of figurative expression, such as synecdoche, euphemism and hyperbole and idiom. An idiom is an expression which is unique to a language and cannot be understood simply from the meaning of its individual words.

A cultural clash occurs when something in culture of the source language has a distinctly different cultural value from the same thing in the culture of the target language. In such cases, the translator should keep the original meaning by adjusting the form of the cultural symbol or adding enough background information to indicate to the target language users what the original cultural value is. Otherwise, readers of the translation will get the wrong meaning. Translation is one way of building bridge for communication for two different cultures. Communication effect is important, however, a qualified translator should be aware of his highest priority ~ faithfulness. Faithfulness refers to how closely a translation preserves the meaning of the original.

Through this paper, our reader will attain a clearer picture about culture codes and translation problems. Illumination of the influences that brought by translation is one of our main concerns. Cross-cultural awareness is in our views a key craft for translator and interpreter.

Keywords: language and culture, culture codes, culture clash, culture checkmate, cross-culture awareness