

A Brief Analysis of Culture-Loaded Words C-E Interpretation Based on the Interpretive Theory--Taking the COVID-19 Chinese-English Glossary as an Example

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ABSTRACT. *As a big eastern country with a civilization history of 5,000 years, China's international status has been rising in recent years, and its political, economic and cultural exchanges with foreign countries have become increasingly frequent. Due to the particularity of Chinese language and cultural deposits, a series of expressions with Chinese characteristics often appear in foreign expressions, among which culture-loaded words are typical representatives. In interpreting activities, it is also difficult for translators to accurately translate culture-loaded words in a short period of time. Taking The COVID-19 Chinese-English Glossary given by the Academy of Contemporary China and World Studies and the China Academy of Translation as an example, according to the classification and characteristics of culture-loaded words and based on interpretive translation theory, this paper provides translation strategies for the translation of culture-loaded words in interpretation activities, with a view to improving the accuracy of culture-loaded words translation in interpretation activities.*

KEYWORDS: *Culture-loaded words, Interpretive theory, The COVID-19 chinese-english glossary, Strategy*

1. Introduction

How to successfully fight against COVID-19 is a tough battle faced by people all over the world. As the first country in the world to successfully control the covid-19 outbreak, China has provided experience and assistance to all countries in coping with coronavirus spread and cure. In this process, how to properly translate the contents of expressions and exchanges between China and the rest of the world in a short time is a task that the interpreter must pay attention to. Culture-loaded words, as the carrier of Chinese expressions and conveying Chinese culture and Chinese ideas, appear frequently in the exchanges, so its interpretation is the translation section that translators must attach great importance to.

The COVID-19 Chinese-English Glossary is a compilation of the expressions of interpretation and translation activities during the exchanges and mutual assistance between China and foreign countries in the fight against the COVID-19 virus. All the expressions are the crystal of the wisdom of the interpreters in the major press conferences and exchange activities, which can be used for reference and guidance of follow-up interpretation activities.

2. Culture-Loaded Words

In the language system, the Culturally Loaded Words also called culture-specific items. Culture-specific items are usually expressed in a text by means of objects and of systems of classification and measurement whose use is restricted to the source culture, or by means of the transcription of opinions and the description of habits equally alien to the receiving culture [2]. It refers to those words or phrases which convey a certain kind of cultural connotations or associations which may or may not be found in other languages or cultures, including classical Chinese poems, proverbs, colloquialism and other sets of words and expressions. CLWs can best embody the language carrying cultural information and reflecting the social life of the human. Based on this definition, culture-loaded expressions can be easily found in the manuscript.

3. The Interpretive Theory

Interpreting is the basic form of translation [1]. Based on experiences as interpreters, Danica Skeleskovitch and Marianne Ledrere, French translation scholars from ESIT (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3) proposed the

Interpretive Theory which is also called the Theory of Sense. The theory holds that translation is interpretation; it is an interpretation of the meaning of the source text by the translator through linguistic symbols and his own cognitive supplement; what the translator should pursue is not the equivalence of the language unit, but the equivalence of the meaning or effect of the original text.

In Interpretative Theory, the process of translation can be divided into three stages: comprehension, de-verbalization, and reformulation [1]. Translation is described as a triangular process: from one language to sense and from sense to the other language. Without the de-verbalization stage, meaning cannot be generated and real translation cannot be realized [3]. This theory has been excessively identified and applied in various interpreting activities.

4. An Analysis of C-e Interpretation of Culture-Loaded Words

There are many types of culture-loaded words. Here, the interpretation of the three-character and four-character words, colloquialism, and classic Chinese poetry is analyzed as an example. It is necessary to flexibly choose an appropriate coping strategy by combing literal transliteration with free translation in accordance with the special cultural connotation of culture-loaded words. Interpreters could convey the original meaning completely and accurately in a limited time through corresponding expressions, addition, omission, substitution, restructuring and explanatory interpreting.

4.1 The Interpretation of Three-Character and Four-Character Words

Three-character or four-character words are generally composed of three or four Chinese characters in neat and symmetrical sentence patterns, and they are often related to culture, environment and history. Chinese four-character case is a unique word combination phenomenon in Chinese, which contains not only idioms but also non-fixed four-character structures. Therefore, in the process of interpretation, the translator usually adopts the translation strategy of free translation to accurately interpret the connotation of the words, rather than being confined to the expression of the words.

Case 1 is “Heedless of their own safety, medical workers headed for the frontline against the virus.” These two phrases describe the courage and determination of medical staff towards this anti-COVID 19 war. This interpretation explained the deep meaning of “wearing the armor” and “going in opposite direction” rather than literally interpret them, though their original mean that medical staff put on their armor and be ready to the frontline and go in opposite direction. Based on that, the interpreter used a long sentence to explain inner meaning of the two four-character words.

Case 2 in English is to remain vigilant and never slacken our efforts. These three Chinese three-character words are the leaders' warning to all staff to be alert to the epidemic situation at all times, not to be taken lightly by the temporary victory and the length of the epidemic. And the latter two phrases express the same meaning, so the interpreter restructured it, omitted the last one and did not translate according to the original sentence structure.

Case 3 is five three-character words with an interpretation of early detection, reporting, diagnosis, isolation and treatment. These five three-character words simply and clearly sort out the attitudes and practices that ordinary people should hold in the fight against virus. Chinese parallelism sentence pattern is very rhyming and is often used in various expressions. The translator uses literal translation here to make the meaning accurate and the sentence pattern consistent with the original text.

4.2 The Interpretation of Colloquialism

In a broad sense, common sayings include proverbs, Chinese two-part allegorical saying, idioms and idioms commonly used orally, which come from a wide range of sources, not only from the oral creation of the people, but also related to famous poems, sayings, aphorisms, historical allusions, and so on. In interpreting, the interpreter should make the translation easy to understand, avoid interpreting without real understanding and often adopt the method of corresponding expression and semantic interpretation.

Case 4 is in different sentence structure comparing with the former three cases. In English its meaning is systems of holding provincial governors accountable for grain supplies and city mayors for daily food supplies. Here the interpreter uses explanatory interpreting to interpret the real meaning of “rice bag” and “basket for carrying vegetables and food items”, therefore, the public could clearly know what policies the government has taken and the foreigners could know whether and how to learn from the practice.

Case 5 in Chinese only five Chinese characters with an interpretation “combined use of anti-viral, anti-shock, anti-hypoxemia medication, and measures to prevent secondary infections; to maintain the water and electrolyte balance, acid-base balance and microecological balance”.

Concise and brevity are the difference between Chinese and English. This colloquialism is only 5 characters, if the interpreter interprets it literally, nobody could understand the meaning. In order to interpret precisely, the interpreter uses addition to complete the meaning of the words in the source text, so as to make the translation accurate.

Case 6 has the same structure with case five. Its literal meaning is the most beautiful people who goes in opposite direction. But the interpreter interpreted it in a different angle and the final interpretation is “heroes who put themselves in harm’s way”. This expression has the same effect as case one.

The interpreter omits Chinese words “the most beautiful people” and directly translates “who goes in opposite direction” into “heroes who put themselves in harm's way”, which expresses people's praise and gratitude to the medical staff working in the frontline, and conveys both the original intention and feelings through the method of omission and explanatory interpreting.

4.3 The Interpretation of Classical Chinese Poetry

Since the global outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic, China has actively assisted many overseas countries, and posted poems or famous quotes of celebrities from all over the world on the boxes transporting medical supplies. Classical Chinese poetry, as a cultural treasure, is simple and concise but rich in connotation. It is also the most difficult and easy-to-encounter part in the interpreting of culture-loaded words, which requires the interpreter to have a profound knowledge of Chinese and ancient culture.

Case 7's interpretation is “Great distance cannot separate us; We all live in a united world.” This sentence comes from the sentence “Though separated by a mountain, we'll share the same clouds and rain. The bright moon belongs not to a single town.” a quote from Tang poet Wang Changling's poet named *Seeing Off Imperial Censor Chai*.

In the former sentence “the same green mountain”, the interpreter's interpreting combined the situation at that time instead of using its original meaning and many in China and Japan were touched by the poetic expression of support during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Case 8 is poem from *The Book of Songs*, conveying a meaning of deep friendship between China and Europe. The interpretation is “We are waves of the same sea, leaves of the same tree, flowers of the same garden.”

Here the interpreter directly used corresponding expression from ancient Roman philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca, which showed profound knowledge of Chinese and English literature.

5. Summary

In interpretation, the meaning of the source language is the essence of information transmission. When translating culture-loaded words, translators can comply with the principle of interpretive theory, analyze the inherent meaning and logic contained in the words, break the word structure framework of the source language, and adopt appropriate interpretation strategies in order to convey the meaning of the source language completely and accurately.

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