

Different Translation Methods of Chinese-English Idioms

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Abstract: English and Chinese are radically different languages and belong to the different language's groups. We see a distinction in the following grammatical segments: alphabet, phonology, spoken language, vocabulary, grammar, word sequence. Chinese is a language with tones, which make Chinese language expressiveness and give musical sound. In English, however, this is not a problem and the tone does not change the meaning of the word.

The translation of Chinese idioms into English and vice versa is one of the important topics of translation practice. There are quite a lot scientific papers on this topic, where are many practical examples that will help us to solve important problems during translation. According to the different cultures of two countries, many researchers feel that translating idioms is associated with the great difficulty. If we just follow the literal translation method, the metaphorical meaning of idioms will be lost. Despite our knowledge of the theoretical and practical aspects of translation, unless we know the characteristics and elements of English-Chinese to an appropriate level, it is still very difficult to create the equivalent of idiomatic expressions in any other languages. Thus, the translators work really hard to know how to use the proper methods to translate the exact meanings of English and Chinese idioms.

Keywords: English and Chinese Idioms; Free Translation Method; Literal Translation; Translating Methods; Translation Practice; Metaphorical Meaning.

1. INTRODUCTION

As essential elements of language, idioms represent an inimitable expression in its special meaning. They play an important role in people's daily lives. People are inclined to use idioms because they contain a concise and clear expression of opinion, by using these expressions, people can better understand the similarities and differences of their cultures. The use of idiomatic expressions prevents communication barrier between the different cultures.

2. TRANSLATING METHODS OF ENGLISH-CHINESE IDIOMS

A very interesting topic is the functional relevance of translating Chinese idioms into English. The first thing to keep in mind here is that literal translation is one of the main methods in the translation process. It requires that the duration of translation we must be faithful to the original and retain the original elements. The main type of literal translation is the direct translation used in two situations. The first is the conformity of the original signs and metaphorical meanings of Chinese idioms with the English language. In the second register, the idiomatic expression is translated directly into the original language, so that important information can be sequenced.

It is noteworthy that many idiomatic expressions derive from people's daily lives, in that Chinese and English idioms have a lot in common. The main concept of the ancestors of these two nations was the "heart", which was the central part of thinking, feeling and spirit. It is precisely that this gives rise to many expressions which contain the element of "heart." To illustrate, we present a few examples:

to set one's **heart** at rest - 放心

what the **heart** thinks the tongue speaks 言为心声

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Since these two countries are radically different in all aspects, the same element in idiomatic expressions may have a different meanings. An example is the word "dog." Englishmen love dogs so much that they look after them like their own family members. From their point of view, dogs are the kindest to their owners. They even have such idiomatic expressions: "as faithful as dog", "love me, love my dog". Here the word "dog" means "friend."

Let's Consider examples like this:

Lucky dog

A clever dog

Dog tired

Dog does not eat dog

We have seen the positive use of the word "dog" in idiomatic expressions and now let us consider its negative meaning in Chinese expressions.

狗腿子 - Lackey /tramp/

狗嘴里吐不出象牙 - A filthy mouth can't utter decent language/what can you expect from dog but a bark

It is very difficult to translate idiomatic expressions from one language into another that carry the national realities and these kinds of expressions are mostly translated by the free translation method. Consider an example: "有眼不识泰山," which translates into English as follows: "to fail to recognize a great person," but it should be noted that in the original language "泰山"- "Taishan Mountain" is one of the most famous mountain's geographical terms in China but if it was translated into a direct translation method, the reader would probably not be able to understand the allegory of "泰山" so it was conveniently compared to a "great person" by a translator and made the essence of the expression clear.

There are also idiomatic expressions that need to be annotated to translate from one language to another. For example, in English there is such an idiomatic expression "to carry coals to Newcastle," which is translated into Chinese as: "多此一举," which means "doing extra action." The Newcastle, which is the center of coal production in England, is unclear to the Chinese, so the Chinese also annotate the translated part.

3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion it can be said that presented examples illustrate a variety of methods of translating idiomatic expressions. We have discussed the literal, free, annotating methods of translation and when we translate the different expressions we need to know which method to use. We have to take into account the fact that there are many expressions of national reality in both Chinese and English, so their literal translation makes it difficult to understand the content. It would be better if we translate these kinds of expressions into a free translation method, which would make it easier for the readers to understand implicit thought and we can use the literal translation to enrich our vocabulary.

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