

# **A Research of the Influence of Cultural Differences on British and American Literature Translation**

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**Keywords:** Cultural difference, English-American literary translation, Influence

**Abstract:** A good process of translating British and American Literature involves the application of knowledge in many aspects. It requires both translators to have good basic English skills and translators to have a certain understanding of the spirit of English and American culture itself. Cultural differences are natural obstacles to translation. Cultural differences may result in the lack of integrity and accuracy in the translation of British and American Literature, or even erroneously convey the spirit of literary works themselves.

## **1. Introduction to Cultural Differences**

### **1.1 Differences in Cultural Origins**

Taking Chinese culture and Anglo-American culture as examples, it is well known that the origin of Chinese is different from that of Anglo-American culture. Chinese culture originated from the Yellow River and the Yangtze River. After more than five thousand years of cultural inheritance, it finally formed the present Chinese culture. The Chinese are proud of the splendid Chinese civilization and the descendants of the Yellow Emperor. The birthplace of British and American culture came from Greece, and after the period of city-state disputes and the period of Roman Empire rule, its cultural development time was also very long. Different origins lead to natural differences between Chinese culture and Anglo-American culture from the beginning of its formation.

### **1.2 Differences in Cultural Values**

Among Chinese customs and habits, the Confucian cultural characteristics are the most prominent. The Chinese people regard benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom and faith as the principle of human beings, and advocate humility, benevolence, justice, credibility, and harmony as the most precious. Therefore, reflected in the culture is the cultural spirit of the mean, not prominent, not publicized. Westerners pursue the ultimate heroism, characterized by exaggeration, bravery and prominence, and pursue the beauty and strength of the body. For example, the image of "Caesar" created by people in Western culture is the best interpretation of heroism and the pursuit of power in Western culture. At the same time, Michelangelo and Leonardo's pursuit of the ultimate works of art is the most outstanding, perfect and ultimate manifestation of Western culture.

### **1.3 Differences in expression**

In Chinese expression habits, sentence structure pays more attention to the use of verbs and sentence patterns. Sentences generally present progressive bamboo structure. In western expressions, sentences generally emphasize the collocation of subject, predicate and object, presenting a tree-like structure. This kind of difference in expression makes translation not easy, but through the transformation and processing of sentence patterns by the brain.

## 2. Cultural Foundation for English-American Literature Translation

### 2.1 Understanding the roots of Anglo-American culture

As mentioned above, the birthplace of Anglo-American culture is in Greece, which is deeply influenced by Greek culture. So, from the perspective of historical research, if we want to deeply understand and master a knowledge system, it is a good choice to learn and understand the knowledge by means of historical research. Therefore, if we want to do a good job in translating English and American literature, we must be familiar with the source of culture. The mastery of ancient Greece and Rome is a very good way to have a deep understanding of culture. Because English originated in Greece, many etymologies are from Greece. The following table is as follows:

Table 1. A Contrastive Table of Etymology and Derivatives

Etymology of Ancient Greek/Roman Words	English words
Titan	titanic
The Muses	Music, museum, amusement
Cronos	Chronic, chronology
Flora	Flower, flour, flourish
Ceres	cereals

The word Titan comes from ancient Greek mythological figures and is a member of the giants who once ruled the world. In modern English, Titan refers to a tall and strong person or an important person. The derivative Titanic means huge and huge. Titanic, one of the most tragic vessels in human history, is named after it.

The Muses are the gods of art in Greek mythology. The word music derived from Muses is derived from Muses. According to the artistic meaning of Muses, museum is the place where art works are collected, so the word Museum came into being. The joy of art is amusement.

Cronos, the father of Zeus, feared that his children would rebel against him and devour his offspring. Like ruthless time, devouring everything. So the word "chron" means "time". Derivatives: chronic, for time-consuming, chronic, chronology for chronology, chronology.

Flora is the God of flowers in ancient Greek and Roman mythology. When she married Zephyr, the God of the West Wind, Zephyr gave her a garden full of exotic flowers and plants. In the spring, Flora and her husband Zephyr strolled hand in hand in the garden, where flowers blossomed all the way. Flora refers to "plants" in modern English. Derivatives: flower, flour, flourish.

Ceres, the God of crop protection, originated in ancient Rome. When ancient Rome suffered from drought, clergymen turned to witches for divination. The result of divination was to establish a new goddess Ceres. If people worship her, she will bring rain to the earth. Thereafter, Ceres became the patron saint of crops. Cereals officially evolved from Latin, representing cereals, breakfast cereals, etc.

### 2.2 Familiar with fixed phrases in English and American literature

In English culture, there are two elements with the most cultural characteristics: slang and fixed collocation of phrases. A veteran translator of English and American literature must have a good command of the most primitive English expressions of these two types.

#### 2.2.1 Understanding and mastering slang

Slang, refers to informal, more spoken folk sentences, is a popular and easy-to-understand words with local color summarized by the people in their daily life. Every language, after a long period of development, must have its own slang habits. Chinese has Chinese slang, English has English slang, India and Africa also have their own slang. The reason why slang should be understood is that slang is often used in English literary works. Of course, this is somewhat related to slang. Advantages 1: Using English slang can better create the ambience that literary works want to express, and make the life atmosphere of literary works more strong, vivid and clear. Advantages 2: Through the use of

slang, we can accurately describe and express the personality characteristics of the characters, which is of great help to the portrayal of the characters in the works. For example, it can clearly show the social status, identity, birth area and so on of people who use slang. Many famous literary writers use slang when portraying many characters, such as F. S. Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, Bernard Malamud, J. D. Salinger and others.

Although the use of slang is very helpful to literary expression, it is not easy for non-native speakers to master it. The reason why slang is difficult to grasp is that the meaning of slang is usually quite different from its literal meaning, or even the opposite. The following table is as follows:

Table 2. Examples of the application of slang

Slang	Examples	Meaning
kick ass	A:Wow, you fixed my computer in less than 10 minutes. You're good. B: Yep. I just kick ass	Admit myself, I am great!
Kiss ass	A: Mary, I'm sorry for cheating on you before. Do you see any chance that we can get back together? B: I don't know, but you can kiss my ass.	flatter
Got you	A: My sister just now called and said she's moving in with us. B: What? A: Got you!	cheat
maxed out	A: I'm working 70 hours this week. I'm totally maxed out. B: 70 hours? I'd be dead if I worked this hard.	be completely exhausted

### 2.2.2 Memory Grammar Fixed Collocation

Fixed grammatical collocation refers to some fixed grammatical habits, which play an important role in expressing specific meanings. For example, "Ascribe sth. to sb"/"Attribute / ascribe / owe... To" / "Take sb. in" and so on. These fixed collocations are the product of the development of English culture. Their meanings are relatively fixed and their usage is relatively definite. This means that when the author uses such collocations, he expresses an exact meaning. Therefore, as English translators, if they can not effectively memorize and understand these common or even uncommon grammar habits, it will seriously affect the effective completion of English translation.

### 2.3 Mastering English Translation Skills

For different English translation work, translators may be required to master different translation skills. For example, the translation of business English requires the accuracy of translation. Therefore, we should understand the professional terms of business industry in advance. We should fully analyze all kinds of discourse styles in the process of translation, so that we can accurately translate according to the language characteristics. However, the translation skills of science and technology need to be standardized. Because scientific and technological English articles may involve a large number of numbers, operations, charts, and accurate grasp of these elements, and translators have a full understanding of the relevant industry norms and standards, in order to correctly express scientific and technological concepts and content.

## 3. Possible impacts

### 3.1 Lack of Integrity in Translation

Based on the requirements of translators for their language literacy, cultural differences may lead to the lack of integrity in translating English literary works. Of course, this is a serious mistake, because on the whole, if a worker can't convey the complete meaning, then what about more

stringent "precise translation"

### **3.2 Failure to convey the original meaning correctly**

Generally speaking, most people engaged in literary translation are not native speakers of both languages. Then, there are inherent differences in their understanding of the two languages. Cultural differences are vividly reflected in translation. The influence of cultural differences on translation may have several aspects. Firstly, the translator can not understand the fundamental meaning of the original text from the perspective of the inherent fundamental meaning of words, phrases and sentences. Secondly, the translator can not be in the position and values of British and American people to explore and feel the spirit conveyed by the author. Then, such differences will be reflected in the sentence itself and the spirit of the article itself.

### **4. Conclusion**

English-American literary translation is a very professional matter, which requires literary translators to have a high level of English cultural literacy. Whether from the understanding and memory of English language itself, as well as the understanding of words, phrases and grammar, translators are required to have a profound understanding of the British and American literary environment itself, such as the origin of culture, the intrinsic values of culture and so on. However, the existence of cultural differences has created natural difficulties for translators to understand English literature. The impact may not only be the lack of integrity or accuracy of translation, but also the miscommunication of spiritual values.

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