

Cultural Connotation and Translation of “Red” in English and Chinese

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Keywords: English and Chinese language, “red”, Culture connotation, Translation, Research

Abstract: The appearance of color words is the inevitable result of the continuous development of human language and culture. Due to the obvious differences between Chinese and Western countries in terms of culture, color words have different cultural connotations. Therefore, this paper objectively explores the cultural connotation and translation of “red” in English and Chinese from different perspectives. From the perspective of English and Chinese, this paper makes a comparative analysis of the cultural connotation of “red” through in-depth understanding, and flexibly USES color words like “red” in accurate translation.

1. Introduction

Language and culture are closely related. Color words, including red, black, purple and white, are the key components of language [1] and are frequently used by people. Because China and western countries in the history, culture, religious beliefs, aesthetic concepts, customs, etc, red of this kind of color words in English and Chinese language culture also has certain differences, will be in English and Chinese language practice in the process of further exploration, detailed analysis of this kind of color word “red” culture connotation, through different paths continuously explore feasible methods, techniques and strategies, correct translation objective show red at the same time this kind of cultural connotation of color words.

2. An analysis of the cultural connotation of “red” in English and Chinese

As a common color word, red has rich and diverse connotations, which can objectively reflect the cultural charm of China and western countries. In the tide of globalization, cultural exchanges between China and western countries are increasingly frequent, and a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the cultural connotations of various color words is the necessary basis for cross-cultural communication. From the perspective of English and Chinese, the cultural connotation of red is discussed in this paper.

2.1 The Cultural Connotation of “Red” in English

In English culture, red mostly means derogatory. In the eyes of westerners, red symbolizes “disaster”, “war”, “danger”, “violence”, “bloodshed” and “death” [2]. For example, red revenge is full of bloody revenge. Red alert; To catch somebody red-handed is an idiom which means that the murderer had blood on his hands. For example, the *Scarlet Letter* is a novel written by Hawthorne. Red means adultery, obscene infidelity, and disobedience to women. The Red Light district is a euphemism for all types of erotic activity in the city. In western countries, red is also closely associated with finance and economy. For example, in the red means in debt, and red figure means in loss. In Addition, in English culture, red also means commendation and symbolizes “celebration”. For example, when meeting important people, red carpets will be rolled out. An important festive and memorable day is called “a red-letter day”. Red also symbolizes “romance”. Westerners regard red roses as tokens of love, representing sincere and pure love.

2.2 The Cultural Connotation of “Red” in Chinese

In the world, the first nation to use fire was the Chinese nation. As a result of living a life of drilling wood for fire and slash-and-burn fire, they had a deep understanding of fire and had a

certain affinity for red. It can be seen that the Chinese nation has a long history in its preference for such color words as “red”. In the eyes of Chinese people, red symbolizes “jubilation”, “auspiciousness”, “enthusiasm”, “happiness” and “beauty” [3]. For a traditional Chinese wedding, it is called a “red wedding event”. Red is the main color. The bride wears a red dress and a red headscarf. At the same time, the Spring Festival is one of China's traditional festivals, red is also the main color, people will use red to decorate the house, for example, paste red fu character, couplets, window flowers, hung red lanterns. Red has a strong visual impact, symbolizing “warning” and “danger” [4]. For example, at a traffic light at an intersection, the signals given by the red and green lights are opposite, the red light means stop and the green light means walk, which can serve as a reminder to pedestrians and avoid safety accidents caused by running the red light. In addition, red is organically related to revolution and politics, symbolizing “success” and “power”, such as red base areas and red revolutionary regimes. Red also symbolizes loyalty. In traditional Chinese operas, the red facial makeup symbolizes honesty and loyalty. It symbolizes “luck”, “honor”, “wealth” and so on. For example, red man, bonus. On the whole, in the Chinese language, as one of the color words, red has rich and diverse cultural connotations. It mostly means commendation, rarely derogatory, and at most only moral expressions, such as red cheating and envy.

3. Translation Methods of “Red” in English and Chinese

Translation is an important way to intuitively present the cultural connotations of various color words. In the process of deep thinking, exploration and practice, a variety of translation methods should be flexibly applied to accurately translate and objectively present the cultural connotations and symbolic meanings of color words to avoid ambiguity. Accordingly, the following is an objective discussion on the translation of color words like red in English and Chinese, focusing on literal translation, literal annotation and free translation.

3.1 Literal Translation

Literal translation means that when translating English into Chinese, one can translate the original text word for word. If the connotation of English culture and Chinese culture are the same and the semantics can overlap, the literal translation method can be applied flexibly when translating color words like “red” from English to Chinese. For example, red-green blindness is translated as red-green blindness; Red blood cells are translated into red corpuscle, and red books into red paper or red book. For example, red ribbon translates into red ribbon. (red) translated to red squirrel; Red flag translated as a red flag; Blood-red translates to blood-red. As for red roses, in Both English and Chinese cultures, they symbolize “romance” and “love” [5]. When translating from English to Chinese, the literal translation method can be applied, namely “red rose”. The advantages of literal translation method should be maximized to reduce the difficulty of English-Chinese translation fundamentally, and the meanings of the color words red in Chinese and English should be visually, vividly and concretely presented, so as to prevent cultural conflicts and objectively show the connotations and characteristics of English culture and Chinese culture.

3.2 Literal Annotation Method

The annotation method of literal translation can be called “additional translation”, that is, after literal translation, the meaning of words cannot be accurately expressed, so words should be added appropriately on the basis of literal translation and annotations should be made accordingly. From the perspective of grammar, syntax and semantics [6], make the translation more fluent and fluent, and make the meaning of the translation more accurate and clear. In terms of color words, have metaphorical meaning, symbolism, in English-Chinese translation, not found with the matching words, add words, it is necessary to annotate, can be the original author wants to express the meaning of the accurate, maximize improve translation consistency on the semantic level, prompting a translation, both the original high fit degree. For example, her eyes became moist. The circlet of her eyes became moist.

4. Free Translation Method

In short, free translation is just the opposite of literal translation. There is no need to translate the original text word by word, but only on the basis of grasping the main meaning of the original text. English and Chinese are two different languages, have certain differences, presents the cultural connotation in the process of English-Chinese translation, needs to be filled with considering the language differences, cultural background, context, such as [7], flexible adjustment of translation methods, not blindly use literal translation method, literal translation filling method, the original translation, from set out actually, English-Chinese translation to penetrate free translation method, otherwise, easily into the translation error.

4.1 Add Color Words

In terms of color word translation, free translation method is not a single, for example, adding color words, change color words, need to comprehensive analysis of red cultural connotation and translation of this kind of color word characteristics, influencing factors and matters needing attention, etc., according to the actual circumstance of English-Chinese translation, reasonable use a variety of free translation method, and enhance the accuracy of the translation rate. If there are no color words with the same meaning in English culture and Chinese culture, we should start from the actual translation, deepen the analysis of cultural factors and add appropriate color words to accurately express the meaning of the translation.

4.2 Change the Color Words

Under the influence of cultural differences between Chinese and English, there are many cases in which the color words like red have different connotations. For example, when red is changed to green, it is translated as “green-eyed”. Red wine, change red to purple, translate as “Purple wine”; Brown sugar is translated into “brown sugar”. In the process of mutual translation, based on cultural characteristics, the color words in sentences should be changed reasonably, the functions of different color words should be given full play, and the meaning of sentences should be accurately expressed. In the case of black tea, the color of black tea is similar to black tea before brewing, but turns red after brewing. As westerners attach great importance to abstract thinking, the color changes of black tea before and after brewing should be fully considered in translation, and “black tea” should be translated instead of “red tea”. In the case of “Yihongyuan”, such words are originated from ancient Roman culture. Red is easy for Westerners to have fear and associate with “danger” and “evil”. For example, when bullfighting, Spanish bullfighters use red cloth, which represents “provocation”. For the difference between English and Chinese culture, in translating “Yihongyuan”, the color word needs to be replaced by green, which is “green delights”.

4.3 Omit Color Words

Ellipsis is also one of free translation methods. In the process of mutual translation, color words such as “red” can be omitted according to the semantic meaning and context, so as to fully show the cultural characteristics of English and Chinese and maximize the application effect of color words. For example, “mantang”, which in Chinese means to do something well, should be omitted when translating from Chinese to English the color “red”, namely “to win a full victory”. He is a red neck of the woods. He is a red neck of the woods. For example, red tape is translated into a fixed pattern rather than a red bag. Red cap is translated as a porter, not a red cap; Weddings and funerals translate into funerals and funerals into a beautiful girl.

5. Conclusion

In a word, language is one of the forms of culture, and color words play an important role in the development of human language and social culture. Standing in the point of view of English and Chinese language, the study of this kind of color word red culture connotation, translation strategy, it is of profound significance, to be on the basis of theoretical research, practice exploration combined with optimization method and path of the color word translation, accurate translation and

deepen the understanding of “red” has the cultural connotation, to better show in China and the west culture.

Acknowledgement

Doctoral Research Foundation of Zunyi Medical University.

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