

# Research on Business English Translation Strategies under the Background of Cultural Differences

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**Abstract:** With the development of globalization and closer exchanges between countries, business English translation has increasingly shown the importance of cultural and language communication functions. To do a good job in business English translation, we must understand the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, fully study business translation theories, better translate business content into English, and make corresponding changes and adaptations according to different cultures. Based on a cross-cultural perspective, this paper analyzes the cultural factors affecting business English translation by expounding the cultural differences between China and the West, and proposes business English translation strategies under the background of cultural differences.

**Keywords:** Business English, Translation, Cultural differences.

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## 1. Introduction

With the globalization and diversification of the world economy, business exchanges between countries are becoming more and more frequent. As a commonly used business and trade English, English cannot be ignored in business activities. It is not only the carrier of language, but also the bridge of culture. However, due to its professionalism, logic, brevity and style, business English is influenced by the cross-cultural factors of Chinese and Western cultures, which puts forward higher requirements for translation. Business English translation focuses on the realization of communicative intention. In order to achieve this goal, we must correctly understand the influencing factors of cross-culture, especially customs, language rules and communication environment, and adhere to the guidance of the theory of reciprocity. Apart from adhering to the form of the original text, we can only guarantee the achievement of the translation and the equivalence of the information. Based on the practice of business English translation, this paper briefly introduces the basic connotation of functional equivalence theory, analyzes the cultural factors affecting business English translation, discusses the necessity of functional equivalence theory from a cross-cultural perspective, and discusses the importance of business English translation. From a cross-cultural perspective, specific measures are put forward from the theory of functional equivalence in English translation to provide a reference for improving the actual effect of business English translation and the accuracy of information transmission.

## 2. Organization of the Text

### 2.1. An overview of cultural differences between China and the West

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In the whole process of the development of human civilization, the formation of cultural differences between China and the West is not achieved overnight, but after long-term accumulation and precipitation, and is clearly reflected in regional culture, customs and religion. Specifically, the

formation of regional culture is closely related to its natural conditions and geographical environment. It has distinct characteristics and has different views or attitudes towards the same object. For example, in Chinese cultural thought, when it comes to "东风", the first thing that comes to mind is the grass growing and warblers flying and the feeling of warmth. But in British regional culture, this is not the case, "biting east winds" is translated as "棘手的东风". The formation of customs and habits is closely related to local politics, economy, art, etc., and largely reflects the ethnic characteristics of the area. When using language, it must be combined with local customs to avoid ambiguity in understanding, otherwise, it will inevitably affect cultural exchanges. As an important part of human spiritual civilization, religious belief entrusts people with their desire for a better life. Religious beliefs vary widely from region to region. China believes in Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism, while most Western countries follow Christianity. English translation should pay attention to the essence of religious culture between the original language and the target language, and retain its own characteristics.

#### 2.1.2. Business English Translation and Principles

Business English is constantly developing in international business communication activities. It provides services for international trade to ensure that it runs smoothly. Therefore, once Business English appears, its language form and content will be different from general English expressions.

In modern business English translation work, most translators still adhere to the traditional English translation attitude, that is, to be "faithful, expressive, and elegant". However, this kind of translation is too simple and impractical for business English translation, because business English itself involves a wide range, and the language has distinct characteristics. "Ya" is very difficult and very inefficient in practice. Therefore, in view of the complexity of business English itself, a variety of translation methods should be adopted, that is, the translation standards adopted according to different business styles are also different. In the actual translation process, the translator needs to translate according to the business English text and the actual use of the language, and grasp the scale and related principles of business English translation. Because business English is a cross-cultural

communication, which involves a wide range of fields and covers many fields. When translating, the translator must not only fully understand the translation skills and the cultures of the two countries, but also Fully know and understand business professional knowledge, fully grasp the expression methods of its professional language, and ensure that the translation process is as faithful as possible to the original text. Especially when translating some legal norms and provisions, it is necessary to use accurate and rigorous words. This is not only the accuracy of the translation, but also the solemnity of the law. Only in this way can we show respect for the relevant laws. When translating advertising language, it is necessary to highlight its flexibility, vividness and appeal as much as possible. The titles of various articles on international trade should generally be concise and attractive. Therefore, in the process of translation, according to different styles, the direction and feeling of translation are also somewhat different, rather than blindly pursuing the accuracy or rigor of translation. In actual translation work, it should still depend on the situation.

## **2.2. Analysis of Cultural Factors Affecting Business English Translation**

### **2.2.1. The Influence of Cultural Traditional Symbols and Customs on Business English Translation**

Culture is the wealth jointly created by human beings, but each country has its own traditions and customs. Due to the differences in traditional culture, China and the West have created different customs and cultural symbols. In terms of festivals, for example, the Mid-Autumn Festival, Spring Festival, and Lantern Festival are traditional Chinese festivals, while in the West, April Fool's Day, Christmas, and Thanksgiving are regarded as important festivals. These festivals reflect the cultural background of different countries and influence people's daily life. When translating such festival words with strong cultural characteristics, it is necessary to explain the festival and explain the meaning of the festival, so as to facilitate the understanding of the translator's language readers. In terms of cultural symbols, for example, the "龙" has been regarded as the god of all things in China since ancient times, and is a symbol of the history of the Chinese nation. The Chinese are also called "the descendants of the dragon" and possess the "spirit of the dragon". The West regards "dragon" as a symbol of evil. In the Bible, the devil Satan is called "the great dragon". In the West, "dragon" represents war and cruelty. Therefore, in commercial translation activities, it is necessary to pay attention to the use of corresponding cultural symbols to convert their meanings when translating such words to avoid adverse effects on commercial activities.

### **2.2.2. The Influence of Cognitive Thinking Style on Business English Translation**

Under different cultural backgrounds, China and the West have different understandings of the same thing. Different ways of thinking exist when people live in different cultures, beliefs, and cognitive domains. This article takes numbers as an example. Numbers inevitably appear in business activities. In China, the number "4" is a homonym for "death", which represents misfortune. The number "18" symbolizes hell in the eyes of Chinese people, and also represents bad luck. Therefore, Chinese people try to avoid using these numbers in daily life such as license plates, telephone numbers, floors, etc. For Western countries, the number with the same meaning is "13". It is said that the 13th is the Good Friday of Jesus and

the number of people who participated in the Last Supper was also 13. Therefore, 13 is regarded as a symbol of misfortune and betrayal, and Westerners try to avoid it. Use this number. The above examples show that different cultural cognitive thinking styles have a certain impact on people's understanding of the same number.

### **2.2.3. The influence of language expression on business English translation**

Factors affecting business English translation also include language expressions. The Chinese people have emphasized the virtue of the word "modesty" since ancient times. One of the peculiarities of speaking or writing is the modesty of words used. For example, commercial contracts in China often include clauses such as "fairness" and "after repeated negotiations" to express a position of respect and equality. Business English communication follows the principle of politeness, and the word "please" is often added in Western English communication, such as "would you mind repeating it, please?", "we are pleased to inform you that..." while Chinese often use English The "you" in the translation is "您, 贵方, 您方" to show respect for the other party. Expressions in different languages affect commercial communication activities. During translation, it is necessary to ensure that sentences that conform to the expression habits of the target language are selected during the translation process, so as to promote the smooth progress of commercial activities.

## **2.3. English translation strategies based on cultural differences between China and the West**

English translation work based on the cultural differences between China and the West is very important and necessary, and is the basis for effective cultural communication. According to the above analysis and the facts of the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, this paper proposes the following English translation strategies:

### **2.3.1. understand background culture**

Different types of English translations have different requirements. Take Business English, for example, a very precise and heavily used English. Most of them make commercial sense. Once information loses its original value, it can cause damage to the company. Business English vocabulary has different meanings in different professional disciplines, and the phenomenon of multiple values of a word often appears. English translation must analyze the cultural meaning of words in order to accurately express the content. For example, "discount" as an important means of marketing means "折现, 减价". In international trade, "discount" means "贴现". In international finance, the term means that the forward exchange rate is lower than the spot exchange rate, also known as post. "Security" originally meant "安全", and evolved into the meaning of "担保", "抵押品" and "债券" in commercial activities. When translating, it is necessary to understand the cultural background and choose the corresponding meaning according to the language environment. Another example is that we often hear foreigners say "oh my God!" when expressing shock, or see "God knows i owe you so much." in articles, where "God" most of the time we will translate Becoming God, but it is just an image here. If it is translated with accurate words, it will appear too straightforward and lose the original soul of the sentence. The main way to solve this problem is to understand

the connotation of Chinese and Western cultures in order to better deal with the impact of Chinese and Western cultural differences on English translation. In this process, you can make full use of the Internet to strengthen independent learning, expand your knowledge horizon, and learn Chinese and foreign cultures. Translation is not only an information guide, but also a messenger of cultural transmission.

### 2.3.2. Appropriate wording notes

English translation based on cultural differences between China and the West often faces problems such as misunderstanding. In some translation methods, in order to preserve the original cultural color and not mislead readers, appropriate annotations can be added to help readers understand. For example, the English sentence "It was Friday and soon they'd go out and get drunk", at first glance, the sentence has no grammatical and comprehensible problems, but why drink on Friday? Actually, Friday is payday, so some information could be added in a specific translation, which translates as "Friday is payday and they're going out to have a good drink", which is a more appropriate version. Letter of credit (L/C) can be used when translating 信用卡, irrevocable L/C can be used when translating 不可撤销的信用证, confirmed L/C can be used when translating 保兑信用证, transferable L/C can be used when translating 可转让的信用证.

### 2.3.3. Adjust sentence structure

The famous American Chinese scholar John once pointed out that every language obtains life and nourishment from culture. Therefore, we should not only pay attention to how to translate the content of one language into another language, but also strive to reduce the traces of translation so that the translation reads more in line with the reader's language expression habits. Differences between Chinese and Western cultures are also reflected in the expression of sentences. The Chinese sentence focuses on the back and has many short sentences, while the English sentence focuses on the front and has many long sentences. This feature is also reflected in Chinese and English business documents. The sentence structure can be appropriately changed during translation. Or layout to make it more in line with the characteristics of business meeting sentences. For example, "We acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 5th this month and regret to learn that you are unable to extend the subject letter of credit" can be translated as "We acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 5th this month and regret to learn that you are unable to extend the subject letter of credit" It is deeply regrettable that the letter of credit has been extended." In the process of translating English to Chinese, the structure of the sentence is adjusted according to the Chinese language expression habits, and the time is placed at the beginning of the sentence. At the same time, the long sentence in English is translated into a short sentence in Chinese, and the focus is placed on the end of the sentence. The expression is more in line with Chinese jargon.

### 2.3.4. master translation skills

Business English refers to the selective use of English vocabulary and grammatical resources in business situations, in order to achieve their own business goals, follow industry conventions and procedures, and be influenced by social and cultural factors. Its language features are concise and rigorous. Therefore, when translating business English documents, according to actual needs, translators need to choose literal translation, paraphrase, conversion, transliteration, etc. or use

multiple translation techniques together. Taking the translation of business terminology as an example, when there are significant differences between the two cultural backgrounds, it is necessary to use appropriate translation skills to achieve information equivalence between the two different cultures, and to effectively convey information and complete business activities. For example, when translating "most-favored-nation treatment", choose the literal translation method and translate it as "最惠国待遇". If "龙头企业" is translated literally into "dragon head enterprise", for readers in Western countries, such a translation will increase the difficulty for readers to understand. However, the method of literal translation and annotation is used to supplement it as "dragon head enterprise-literally, like the head of a dragon, used to refer to the leading enterprise". This kind of translation process will make it clear to the translator's language readers. It can be seen that proficient use of various translation methods and techniques can help translators successfully complete translation work and obtain ideal translation results. Choosing the right translation skills is an ability that translators must master. Only by using various translation methods flexibly in different translation occasions can we fully express the true meaning of the original text and provide assistance for business activities.

### 2.3.5. Fully accumulate the cultural knowledge of the source language country and the translation language country

To understand a country, we must start with its culture. The cultural background of each country has its own characteristics, and no country has the same development story. The culture of a country has been deeply integrated into all aspects of social life during the long development process, so to translate correctly, it is necessary to accurately understand the cultural background of the country. This requires translators to accumulate cultural knowledge of the source language country and the target language country at any time and any place, so that when there are cultural differences, they can solve the problem in time and avoid cultural conflicts. In order to accumulate cultural knowledge, translators can obtain cultural knowledge in various ways, such as going deep into the local area, understanding local customs, reading related books, or using multimedia technology to compare Chinese and Western cultures. At the same time, understanding each culture also deepens the identity of national culture. But it is worth mentioning that this kind of learning and accumulation is a long process that needs to be continued so that the accumulated cultural knowledge can be better used in business English translation.

### 2.3.6. Improve professionalism

Commercial English translation has a certain professional level. Business English involves all aspects of international economic exchanges, covering different subject areas such as international trade, international finance, international marketing, and international business law, including many professional and standardized business terms and abbreviations, such as "insurance coverage (承包范围)" "free from particular average (平安险)" "OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Chemical Corporation)" "SINOPEC (China Petroleum Chemical Corporation)" "ATT (American Telephone and Telegraph pany)". In the long-term business activities also accumulated a large amount of Archaic vocabulary such as "de contrahendo (缔约承诺)", "Pactum de

retrovenendo (回购协议)" and other proper nouns. Therefore, in the process of business English translation, the translator not only needs to master the corresponding translation skills, but also needs to translate In daily work and study, personnel should conduct in-depth research and accumulate business terminology, and properly establish a corpus to improve the efficiency and accuracy of business translation.

### 3. Conclusion

To sum up, cultural differences are one of the main factors affecting business English translation. Therefore, in business translation work, we must first respect the cultural differences between China and the West, and conduct business translation activities on the basis of understanding Chinese and Western cultures and customs. Secondly, it is necessary to analyze the style and characteristics of business texts, and collect relevant terms and materials. Finally, choose the appropriate translation skills to ensure the accurate transmission of information between the source language and the target language, and ensure the smooth progress of business communication.

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