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跨学科视角下的 口译交际策略研究

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN INTERPRETATION FROM
CROSS-DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

■ 刘庆雪 著

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作 者: 刘庆雪 著

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Abstract

With the increasing communication and cooperation between countries in the world, much attention has been paid to the study of interpretation. Interpretation is an extempore and unpredictable oral activity in which information is transformed from a source language into a target language. It is regarded as a dynamic cross-cultural oral communication process. As the work of the interpreter is the key to the success of the cross-cultural communication, the interpreter is usually faced with much stress. However, different from written translation in which only the translator is present, the presence of all the parties involved in the interpreting communication brings pressure as well as some advantages in communication.

The nature of interpretation requires an interpreter to com-

plete the decoding and encoding processes in a fairly short time. During interpreting, the interpreter often encounters difficulties caused by psychological problems, insufficient knowledge of the language and the cultural gap. These problems will impede the interpreter's understanding, memorizing and re-expression, resulting in misinterpretation or leakage in the interpretation and undermining the performance. Thus, the interpreter has to employ communication strategies to achieve the goal of communication.

The strategic study covers many disciplines such as general linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology, cross-cultural studies, etc. This book focuses on the study of communication strategies in interpretation from the cross-disciplinary perspectives of psychology, linguistics and cross-cultural studies. The strategy is an analysis platform between epistemology and methodology, the transitional phase between theory and practice. Therefore, the study here focuses on the theoretical analysis and inductive analysis of those strategies together with examples of practical performance aimed at introducing theoretical guidelines to solve the specific problems.

Bachman proposed a model in which he believed that communicative competence includes three main parts: language competence, strategic competence and psychological mechanisms. In this model, we can see that the strategy is a part of communication competence. The study of strategies in cross-cultural inter-

pretation can facilitate the study of communicative competence in bilingual communication. Communication strategies are one of the important aspects of an interpreter's translation competence employed to achieve the communicative goal. The effective use of communication strategies relies on the interpreter's mastery of systematic knowledge. Besides the language capacity, as a psychological plan of language, the usage of communication strategies is subject to the constraints of cognitive mechanisms and psychological factors, and it is also subject to the constraints of the working condition such as the time and place of the interpreting, etc. As interpretation is a bilingual communication, the use of communication strategies is bound to be under the constraints of cross-cultural factors.

Based on substantial related research, combined with the characteristics of interpretation, the author makes a detailed analysis on the coping strategies of the interpreter to deal with the problems caused by psychological, linguistic and cross-cultural factors from the perspective of communication strategies, analyzing frequently used communication strategies in interpretation, such as inference strategies, stalling strategies, avoidance strategies, note-taking strategies, repair strategies, compensation strategies, cooperation strategies and non-verbal strategies. The author also describes the selection of the employment of the communication strategies. A competent interpreter does not just have a mastery of all kinds of knowledge, but he/she knows how to

use various strategies for dealing with the numerous unknown problems awaiting him/her in interpreting.

Compared with simultaneous interpretation, the pause between the listening phase and the reformulation phase in consecutive interpretation, which is the more widely used interpretation in daily life, leaves interpreters free of heavy time constraints and makes it possible for them to use some communication strategies discussed here, such as note-taking strategies, cooperation strategies and non-verbal strategies to deal with possible communication breakdown. Thus, in this book, the communication strategies discussed here are suitable for interpretation in general, especially for consecutive interpretation. Most of the examples are taken from consecutive interpreting materials. As a part of communicative competence to facilitate communication, the study of the communication strategies employed in interpretation is of great significance.

摘要

随着各国交往的日益加深,人们越来越重视对于口译的研究。口译是指用口头表达方式将原语信息转换为译语信息的一种即席翻译活动,是动态的跨文化口头交际的过程,具有即席性,不可预测性。译员往往面临着巨大的压力,是交际双方是否交际成功的关键。但与只有译者在场的笔译相比,口译交际的双方都在场,也有利于交际的顺利进行。

口译活动的即席性决定了译员必须在较短的时间内完成解码、编码的全过程。而在口译交际现场,译员常会遇到各种困难,有心理因素造成的,也有语言因素造成的,还有可能来自跨文化交际中的文化差异。这些因素对译员的理解、记忆、表达产生影响,导致错译漏译的情况,影响口译交际效果,所以译员必须采取有效的交际策略来克服这些障碍。

口译策略的研究涉及了众多学科,如普通语言学、心理

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Significance of the Study

Comparatively speaking, interpretation is a new discipline that is attracting much attention and interest now as traditionally, more efforts were given to the theoretical study of written translation, partly because of the fact that cross-cultural communication of earlier historical periods mostly took place in the form of written language. Recent decades, however, have witnessed a number of technological advances both in transportation and communication, especially since the information revolution of the 20th century. With the marked increase in cross-cultural communication brought about by mass media and by the development of

modern transport, oral interpretation has become much more frequent in people's daily lives now, as people can travel faster and farther across the world and have more contacts with each other. The ever-increasing communication and cooperation between different countries in the world has made international and cross-cultural communication become a part of people's lives. Thus, oral interpretation, as a bridge across different cultures, is attracting much attention of researchers now.

Ever since the beginning of the 20th century, when English became the dominant language in diplomacy, economics and culture, etc., there has been some research on interpretation. Recently, due to the increased exchange between different countries, greater importance has been attached to interpretation and interpretation research. However, many of the studies focus on the linguistic aspects of interpretation. The strategic study of interpretation has been ignored to some degree due to various reasons. In fact, because of the characteristics of interpretation, its communication strategies are also very important.

Interpretation must be done on the spot, timely and independently. Additionally, it is an on-the-spot activity, and once the interpreting has been done it cannot be revised the next time. In spite of the full preparation the interpreter has done in advance, he/she may encounter some emergency situations during the actual interpretation. It is common for the interpreter to get a general understanding of the contents that need to be interpreted

in advance. However, even if the interpreter can read the written materials of the talk prior to the interpretation, there will always be something unexpected that happens during the actual interpretation. According to Liu Miqing (2006:182), strategy is needed in interpretation to solve the problems and to get rid of the constraint. He believes that the strategy is an analysis platform between epistemology and methodology, and it has a feature of problem-solving, and can help the interpreter solve the problems through the application of theory. The study of interpretation strategy sits at an intermediary level in interpretation and is the transitional phase between interpretation theory and interpretation practice. An interpreter needs to know some of the strategies that deal with the on-the-spot problems. Otherwise, it will be difficult for the interpreter to have a good performance. Thus, this book attempts to make the analysis of the strategies for deconstraints, aiming at providing theoretical guidelines to the practical operation. The study here focuses on the theoretical analysis and inductive analysis of those strategies together with examples of practical performance aimed at introducing theoretical guidelines to solve the specific problems.

The characteristics of interpretation make the strategies important. Unfortunately, little attention has been paid to the study of those strategies, especially the coping strategies dealing with on-the-spot emergencies. Some of the strategies are mentioned just from personal experiences and are neither dealt with under

the guidance of theory and nor are comprehensive. As interpretation is a communicative act, it is necessary for the interpreters to employ some communication strategies to cope with the difficulties in the interpretation in order to achieve communication goals. Consequently, this book aims at a comprehensive study of the communication strategies of interpretation from cross-disciplinary perspectives under a related theoretical framework in order to improve the effectiveness of the interpreting activity.

1.2 A Brief Review of the History of Interpretation

From ancient China to the 21st century modern world, interpreters have enabled communication between speakers with different languages. Interpreting is one of the ancient human practices in which people from different cultures seek to communicate with each other either in the West or in China. Old as it is, it did not take its modern form until 1919 in the West.

1.2.1 Foreign Studies on Interpreting

Modern interpretation of English started from 1919. In 1919 the peace talks after the First World War marked the beginning of conference interpreting in which English was used as the working language for the first time. The interpreting was then recognized as a profession and thus the interpretation study also be-

came a profession. With the invention of equipment for simultaneous interpreting by Edward Filene, a businessman, Gordon Finlay, an electrical engineer, and Thomas Watson, the president of IBM, simultaneous interpreting was first used at the International Labor Organization Conference in Geneva in 1927. However, due to technical difficulties, not until twenty years later, after the Second World War, was simultaneous interpreting provided in English, French, German and Russian at the Nuremberg Trials.

Ever since then, many researchers have studied interpretation from different perspectives based on many cases and practical experience. Some conference interpreters wrote about their own experiences. However, those were mainly personal memoirs and more like historical documents than research into what exactly was going on when an interpreter was at work. In 1940, the University of Geneva School of Interpreting was founded as was the Vienna School of Interpreting in 1943. Georgetown University Division of Interpreting and Translation was founded in the United States in 1949. AIIC, the International Association of Conference Interpreters was set up in 1953. In 1957, two schools of interpreting were established in Paris, ISIT and ESIT.

More and more interpreting schools and courses were established in the West. Academics began to do research into interpreting. According to Xiao Xiaoyan, the interpreting study in the West can be divided into four periods, namely 1950s to early

1960s, pre-research period; 1960s—early 1970s, experimental psychological period; early 1970s—1980s, practitioners' period; late 1980s—present, renewal period (肖晓燕, 2002:72). Some early research was not very scientific, being based more on personal judgment than on verifiable results (Phelan, 2008:3). Early research was mainly based on practical experience and personal reflection. The researchers, mainly the interpreters, focused on the requirement of the language and relevant knowledge, the difficulties in their work, the influence of the relationship between the interpreters and the clients on the production of interpretation, etc. However, there were two classical books published in that period, among which *La prise de notes en interprétation consécutive* written by Rozen, J. in 1956 became one of the most influential books in interpretation. In this book, Rozen focused on the analysis of the basic principle and methods of taking notes in consecutive interpretation. These early authors mainly focused on describing the conference interpreter's task, the abilities and skills required.

According to Phelan, the 60s research was mainly done on Ear-Voice Span, i. e. the time lapse between when the speaker said and when the interpreter spoke. Some psychologists and psycholinguists studied the cognitive problems under the guidance of psychological and psycholinguistic theoretical framework.

The practitioners' period started from the early 1970s and lasted to the 1980s during which the practitioners did the re-