



## **A Study On The Lexical Vacancy And Its Causes In Cross-Cultural Communication**

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### **Abstract**

Language is the main carrier and the communication tool of culture as well as an inseparable part, while vocabulary is its basis. Each country has its own unique culture, with each culture giving birth to the very idiosyncratic vocabulary, named the lexical vacancy. Nowadays, the intercultural communications occur so frequently. In order for a culture to achieve a smooth and effective communication, it should break through the obstacle of language, especially the lexical vacancy. By intercultural communication, people can get a glimpse of different customs and values, religions, aesthetics and so on through the lexical vacancy. However, these factors are barriers to international communication as well.

**Keywords:** Culture; intercultural communication, lexical vacancy, translation .

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### **1. Originality**

With the increasingly intense international exchanges, cross-cultural communication is becoming more and more frequent.

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However, in cross-cultural communication, people often encounter misunderstandings caused by different cultures, often leading to unsatisfactory communication effects. Cultural vacancy is one of the main reasons causing misunderstandings. Lack of correspondence between a country and its different cultures, that is, cultural differences, leads to this phenomenon. The cultural vacancy phenomenon is perceived by people only in the mutual impact and comparison between the two cultures. With the rapid development of Sino-Western cultural exchanges towards depth and breadth, the concept of vacancy in western cultures is constantly perceived with the increasingly frequent exchanges. Chinese culture and its unique concepts need to be introduced and disseminated. The concentrated reflection of this cultural vacancy phenomenon at the lexical level is the phenomenon of "lexical vacancy". Without removing this barrier, people from various cultural backgrounds cannot communicate effectively. Lexical vacancy was originally a specialized term in the field of semantic, and after that was introduced into the field of translation. It refers to the lack of appropriate words in a language to translate the existing words in the source language. This paper analyzes the category and causes of lexical vacancy, which plays a pivotal role in effective cross-cultural communications.

## **2. Introduction**

Chomsky's previous traditional linguistics and structuralist modern linguistics regarded language as a single self-supporting closed structural system, focusing on the description of language entities themselves, putting 'language teaching in a cultural "vacuum" for mechanical practice, and not paying due attention to research on the social culture and how it directly affects language and its composition, understanding and expression. The result is that linguistic theories cannot solve the practical problems of language. Although communicators have learned the basic knowledge of language such as pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, they often cannot communicate appropriately and effectively. The birth of sociolinguistics and pragmatics has transcended the barriers of traditional linguistics and structural linguistics, studying the use of language and all kinds of language behaviors from a more in-depth and broad perspective, deepening people's understanding of the sociality of languages, and also constructing a high-quality platform for the study of cross-cultural communications. With the acceleration of informatization and globalization, cross-cultural communication has become an important feature of the world today. However, it appears that because communicators do not master foreign language knowledge enough or do not understand the characteristics of foreign cultures, many mistakes often occur in cross-cultural communications, affecting their quality. Based on the above understanding, this paper performs a multi-dimensional and multi-level analysis and exploration of the related problems of lexical vacancy in cross-cultural communications, in order to provide some useful references for the personnel engaged in such communication, resulting into the improvement of cross-cultural communication ability.

## **3. Literature Review**

### **3.1 The Concept of Culture**

Culture is a concept that many researchers are interested in. Anthropologists, sociologists, artists and even politicians talk about culture, but how to understand this concept is often

challenging. At present, the word "culture" is widely popular in radio, television, newspapers, magazines etc. In many cases, culture seems to be abused. As long as the problems related to human society are crowned with the term 'culture', there is an array of suspicion that "it is dizzy and makes people clear". Here, it is necessary to explain culture. By quoting some typical view about culture, we can choose a more appropriate and realistic explanation to facilitate the line of argumentation in this article and avoid difficulties and troubles in understanding the following. We do not want to give a new definition of culture. This is not the purport of this article, and it is unnecessary.

In modern society, "culture" is a complex system, and the academic circles' understanding of this term, it can be described as "looking at the mountains horizontally and forming peaks on the sides, and varying in distance and height". There are numerous and colorful explanations of culture. According to statistics, there are "more than 500 definitions of culture at home and abroad" (Klopper, C. Krukhen, 1952). Following are some representative points of view:

(1) In 1871, the British scholar Taylor (E.B.Tylor,1987), the founder of cultural anthropology, said: "culture or civilization, in its broad ethnological sense, is a complex organization including knowledge, beliefs, arts, moralities, laws, customs and the abilities and habits acquired by anyone as a member of society".

(2) Culture is the accumulation of experience, values, knowledge, roles, beliefs, attitudes, spatial relationships, world view and material things and possessions they acquire through individual and collective efforts of a large group of people over many generations. Culture is expressed in language patterns and life and behavior forms. These patterns and forms are the model of people adaptive actions and communication methods, which enables them to develop in specific technologies stage, specific time, social life in specific geographical environment. (Hu Wenzhong, 1997, P276).

(3) Each community has a common history and has a common concept of what is important and what is unimportant, that is, a common value system. They share the same value about the right and wrong ways to believe, work, marry, dress, eat, and educate their children. All these are the social cultures that make up a nation (Kwadel, 2000, P64).

(4) Culture is a series of norms and norms. When social members act in accordance with them, the actions generated should be limited to the range that social members consider acceptable, "it is the traditions and lifestyles that social members acquire from society through learning, including repeated ways of thinking, feelings and actions (i.e. behavior) that have become behavior patterns". (Harvey, 1996, P111-P112)

(5) Culture refers to those aspects created by people in the whole human environment, including both tangible and intangible. The so-called "culture" refers to the unique lifestyle of human groups and their whole set of "survival patterns" (Krukhen, 1987, P117).

(6) "Culture refers to the whole way of life of a group of people, including everything people think, say, do and make." (Hu Wenzhong, 1985)

(7) Culture can be defined as what a society does and wants to do (Qi Yucun, 1992).

(8) Culture refers to the sum of material wealth and spiritual wealth created in the historical practice of human society (Ci Hai).

From the various definitions of culture listed above, we can see that culture has a wide range of radiation. Culture is almost omnipresent and inclusive. All wealth created by mankind belongs to the category of culture. Some scholars have divided the cultural category into levels.

The scope of culture actually includes three levels:

(1) material culture, which is expressed through various kinds of physical products made by people, including buildings, clothing, food, supplies, tools, etc. (2) system and custom culture, which is expressed through social norms and codes of conduct commonly observed by people, including systems, regulations and corresponding facilities and customs. (3) Spiritual culture, which is expressed through the ways and products formed by people thinking activities, includes not only values, modes of thinking, aesthetic tastes, moral sentiments, religious beliefs, but also achievements and products in philosophy, science, literature and art. This distinction is scientific and beneficial, making our understanding of culture more clear and specific. From the research topic of this paper, we think that the view of the famous German sociologist Maletsk can better represent the understanding of culture in this paper: "culture mainly refers to a system composed of beliefs, ideas and world views that exist not only in human behavior but also in his spiritual and material products. In short, culture refers to human life, as well as the methods of human self-realization and world transformation" (Maletsk, 2001).

### 3.2 The Concept of Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication refers to the communication activities between people with different cultural backgrounds (including different cultures in different countries and different subcultures within the same cultural system, this paper refers to the former). "Cross-cultural communication occurs when one cultural information must be interpreted by another culture" (Porter Samovar, 1991). Before discussing cross-cultural communication, let's briefly introduce the basic concept of communication.

The word communication in English is culture, which has a complex meaning. Its basic meaning is "sharing common information with others". There are different definitions of communication at home and abroad. There are more than 100 definitions, which can be basically divided into two schools: One is the "Persuasion" school. For example, Carl Hoffman believes that communication is a process in which the sender transmits information to the receiver through channels to cause a response, that is, the transmitter transmits stimuli to affect the behavior of the receiver. The other faction is the "sharing" faction. For example, Alexander Gofa believes that communication is a process unique to one or several people and shared by two or more people. It can be seen that the essence of communication activities is to connect a single person in a network of social relations. Human beings are social animals, a single person must form a certain relationship with others through social activities to form a society can survive well. Here we define communication as a social and cultural activity in which information sender and receiver (here refers to people, not organizations) transmit information and exchange thoughts and feelings. What needs to be explained here is that expression is not equal to communication. Sending a message that the other party understands is communication, but also when sending a message, the other party can be baffled too. This is not communication, does not produce effects or counterproductive effects. Such cases are common among different ethnic groups. From the perspective of communication methods, human communication includes verbal and nonverbal activities, with the former to be the most important one. Other means of communication are auxiliary and cannot be compared with language communication, such as gestures, objects, pictures, body postures, clothing, etc. Human beings are animals that can use symbols to communicate, and this symbol is language. Without the

help of language, communication activities cannot be so fruitful and colorful, human society cannot progress so fast, and human civilization cannot reach such a high level.

#### **4. Language and Cultural Vacancy**

##### **4.1 Vacancy Phenomenon**

Vacancy phenomenon was first proposed by the American linguist, Hawsett in the 1950s. He proposed the concept of "accidental vacancy" in comparing the grammatical patterns of two languages. When studying the language of Australian Aborigines, American cultural anthropologist Hull found that the nation lacked the name of the basic color possessed by other nations, so he used the term "blank, gap". Balhudarov, a former Soviet translation theorist, used the term "no equivalent vocabulary" when he studied vocabulary in different languages. In the late 1980s, Russian scholars such as Sorokin put forward the vacancy theory when discussing discourse and its cultural characteristics. These extensive discussions on the vacancy phenomenon have aroused the interest of scholars and later more research on the problems in this field was carried out.

The so-called vacancy means that the language or cultural phenomenon of one nation does not exist in another nation. Vacancies include language and cultural categories. The language vacancy associates with the vacancy caused by semantic and cultural information carried by language symbols, including phonetic, grammatical, lexical and rhetorical gaps. The cultural vacancy refers to the gap formed by the discrepancies of non-verbal means in the procedure of intercultural communication, such as the different perceptions of the national personality, thinking mode, psychological association of the communication subject, as well as the sign and the body language of different nationalities. The dominant factor causing vocabulary vacancy is the cultural vacancy.

The reason for the phenomenon of cultural vacancy is that every language has its own system, and every nation has its own style of habits, religious beliefs, cultural traditions, cultural psychology, values and ways of thinking. A complete match of semantic and culture between the two languages is extremely rare.

Scholars have their own perceptions of the definition of cultural vacancy: Wang Bingqin believes that cultural vacancy is a manifestation of cultural phenomena, a special phenomenon that a specific culture cannot be understood or accepted by other people, which leads to misunderstanding and vacancy in other cultures. Pan Huixia believes that special language and cultural norms characteristic of a country, which does not exist in other cultures.

Other theorists have also attempted to define cultural vacancy in their own language. Because of the cultural differences in historical backgrounds, social customs, religious beliefs, ideas, etc., each country has its particular stereotypes and concepts, and it seems almost impossible to find equivalent or corresponding words in the languages of other countries.

##### **4.2 Lexical Vacancy**

As a part of culture, language is its main carrier. It directly reflects the reality of culture and the unique cultural of all nations. As human languages and cultures share commonalities, there appears to be highly relevant equivalent elements between them (Ren Huili, 2020). However, due to the differences between languages and cultures, the cultural norms of different nations are likely to be reflected at the language level, manifesting in various language vacancy; one

language may have rich expression vocabulary for certain concepts, while the other language may lack such expressions, resulting in the vacancy of vocabulary and difficulties in understanding and translation. This phenomenon is called lexical vacancy.

In 1980, Tan Zaixi first put forward the concept of "lexical vacancy" in the English academic community. He believes that "when cultural personality is reflected in vocabulary, there will be vocabulary vacancy and vocabulary conflict". Several domestic scholars have tried to define lexical vacancy. Zhou Yuzhong(2001,P66) states that "there are relevant equivalent components between languages, but at the same time, due to cultural and linguistic differences, some words in one language may not have corresponding equivalents in another language, which is the phenomenon of lexical vacancy." Among them, Guo Aixias (1998,P189)definition of lexical vacancy is considered to be more comprehensive and scientific. He believes that "lexical vacancy refers to the vacancy of alien culture because the words or semantic that expresses unique things or concepts in one language cannot find equivalent components in another language due to cultural differences between different nations".

Lexical vacancy is manifested in the vacancy of form and content, that is, the vacancy of lexical referential meaning and the vacancy of lexical pragmatic meaning: the cultural information carried by the original vocabulary has no "equivalent" or "counterpart" in another language(Wang Zongyan,1993). Therefore, vocabulary vacancy is due to cultural and linguistic differences. That means some words in one language have no corresponding equivalents in another language. This mismatch exists between any different languages. The phenomenon of vocabulary gap seems to be the result of cultural vacancy at the lexical level. Some scholars also call "lexical vacancy" the "vacancy contradiction", "lexical vacancy", "lexical vacancy" or "culture loaded words". (He Weitang, 2000.)

## **5. Classification of lexical Vacancy**

### **5.1 Vacancies in Lexical Meaning**

#### **5.1.1 Full Vacancy Words**

Full vacancy words refer to the literal and extended meanings of words specific to one language, which does not exist in another language. The vocabulary of different languages is not equal. Due to the common of human life, many words can be shared among different cultures. However, in contrast, many words exist between one culture and do not exist in another culture. For example, the words "benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and faith" in Confucianism do not exist in the Christian West. However, in western countries, allusions from the Bible, such as "Babel, Venus, Zeus", can not be found in Chinese. Since the reform and opening up, many foreign words, such as "GPRS", "Bluetooth", "World Trade" and so on, which symbolizes new things, have entered the Chinese language. These words are vocabulary gaps before being translated into Chinese words. Accordingly, the "four persistence", "one-stop service" and "household contract system" in Chinese is also lexical gaps in English.

#### **5.1.2 Half Vacancy Words**

Half vacancy words refer to words that have rich cultural connotations in one language but not in another. For example, "bamboo" has rich connotations in Chinese culture. People often use

"bamboo" to describe a person with integrity. The verses such as "bamboo color gentleman's virtue" and "bamboo death does not betray integrity" all express the strong and noble character of bamboo, but westerners do not have such associations when they see bamboos. Another example is that Friday in English has a derogatory and unfortunate extended meaning, and there is the saying of "Black Friday" in English; In Chinese, "Friday" has neither derogatory nor commendatory meaning. In addition, taboos and language preferences in different cultures are also an important part of half vacancy words. For example, 13 is taboo in Christian culture. In some western countries, there are no 13 floors, because it will make people associate this with the "Last Supper". Because the word "fish" in Chinese is homo phonic with the word "余" in "surplus", people often say "surplus year after year" to be auspicious.

### 5.1.3 Conflicting Vacancy Words

Under different cultural backgrounds, words with the same meaning, but different or even diametrically opposite socio-cultural meanings are called conflict vacancy words. For example, the concept of "dragon" is different in Eastern and Western cultures. Our definition of "dragon" is wealth, auspiciousness, power, etc., But westerners regard "dragon" as monster, evil, etc. In China, people believe that "magpie" is an auspicious sign. In the fairy tale of 牛郎织女, magpies build a magpie bridge for 牛郎 and 织女, making lovers get together. In western culture, magpie is the symbol of thief.

## 5.2 The Vacancy in Lexicology

### 5.2.1 The Corresponding Word Vacancy

In English and Chinese words, there are often corresponding vacancy phenomena. For example, the kinship terms of "堂哥", "堂姐", "表哥", "表姐", "表弟", "堂弟" in Chinese clearly distinguish this identity, while the English word "cousin" cannot accurately express these kinship relations, resulting in a vocabulary gap. In addition, the corresponding vacancy phenomenon often occurs in the vocabulary of occupation.

For example: Professional in English is the synonym of clergyman, doctor, lawyer, architect and accountant, while Chinese lack the corresponding synonym to cover teachers, doctors, lawyers, architects and accountants; there are also differences in professional terms between English and Chinese. For example, the word "intellectual" in Chinese can refer to scientists, engineers, artists, teachers, doctors or journalists, while the object of "intellectual" in English is close to that of "senior intellectuals" in Chinese, which often refers to people with a certain temperament rather than a certain occupation.

### 5.2.2 Word Meaning Vacancy

Word meaning can be divided into denotative meaning, connotative meaning, associative meaning, emotional meaning, etc. There are some words in English and Chinese vocabulary that does not correspond or have vacancies in the meaning of a word, mainly as follows:

1. There are vacancies in denotative meaning, such as differences in the range of color. In Chinese, "green" refers to green, such as "green pepper", blue, such as "blue sky", and black, such as "black cloth". The denotative meaning of green, blue and black in English is much narrower.

2. For example, the Chinese word "yellow" has not only the meaning of "noble" (such as yellow robe), but also the meaning of "pornographic, low-grade and indecent", such as "yellow books" and "yellow movies", while the English word "yellow books" and "blue or obscene movies". Yellow Pages refers to "Yellow Pages telephone directory search, not yellow books and periodicals.

3. The vacancy of associative meaning. In English, words such as shepherd and castle have relatively rich associative meaning for English and American people, but not for Chinese people. In the same way, the association and interest of words such as wind, moon, river, tide, plum, pine, yin and yang to Chinese people will also make westerners feel at a loss.

4. The vacancy of emotional meaning. In Chinese, most of the idioms about "dog" are derogatory, such as "dog helps others", "dog looks down on people", "sell dog meat with sheep's head", and so on. However, in Western countries such as Britain and the United States, dog is a pet, and Longman Dictionary interprets it as man's best friend. It can be seen that "dog" and dog is only the same in reference, but their emotional meaning is very different.

### **5.3 The Vacancy in the Meaning of Words**

#### **5.3.1 The Vacancy of Referential Meaning of Words**

The referential meaning refers to the rational meaning of a word, which forms an abstract concept and also provides people with the referent of the concept. The referential meaning of words is the core of words and the most basic meaning of words. Due to the differences in national culture and the thinking mode, different nationalities will show differences in language and vocabulary when they react to or summarize objective things, natural phenomena and social phenomena. When some words represent unique things of one nation appear in the language of another nation, and there is no corresponding concept, there will be a lexical vacancy in the referential sense. Words that produce referential vacancies often express things unique to a nation. For example, Merry ladies refer to a woman's corset; Lazy Susan refers to an automatic turntable for holding food, which is convenient for customers to choose dishes. These words with unique British cultural background cannot be found in Chinese. Similarly, terms such as the heavenly stems and earthly branches, the Eight Trigrams of Yin and Yang, traditional Chinese medicine, the solar terms of the lunar calendar, and Qigong and martial arts in Chinese traditional culture also belong to the vacancy of lexical referential meaning in English. These words with Chinese unique cultural connotations are also difficult to find in English.

#### **5.3.2 The Vacancy of Lexical Pragmatic Meaning**

Pragmatic meaning refers to the meaning embodied by the relationship between language symbols and their users. It emphasizes the influence of language symbols on people, which is commonly referred to as implied meaning, associative meaning and symbolic meaning. Pragmatic meaning is the core concept of speech communication. Different cultures and social systems have created different objective or subjective concepts for people's understanding of the world. There are different views on the language expressions reflecting these understanding and values. Compared with referential meaning, pragmatic meaning has a stronger cultural specificity, which involves national psychological and cultural characteristics. The pragmatic meaning of some words in Chinese does not exist in English or has the opposite pragmatic

meaning. For example, "mandarin duck" is often used as a metaphor for couples in Chinese, while "mandarin duck" in English has no such meaning; "Goat" has no special meaning in Chinese, while "goat" in English, it means "lecher". Another example is that color is a common phenomenon of all cultures. In many cases, it has the same meaning, but sometimes different cultures give the same color different pragmatic meanings. "Yellow" means "cowardly" and "timid" in English, for example, "yellow dog" means "despicable guy", while yellow in Chinese means pornography. "Green" means "jealousy" in English, but "red" is often used in Chinese to express jealousy, such as "red eye" or "red eye disease". In addition, "green" can also mean inexperience in English, such as green hand, but it does not mean so in Chinese. These differences in pragmatic meaning caused by culture are the reasons for difficulties in understanding and expressing.

## 6. Cause Analysis

### 6.1 Difference in Values

Cultural values are some universal normative values that permeate the culture. They are a set of persistent beliefs about the best behavior of the people living in the same culture, or a system of beliefs arranged according to the degree of importance. Generally speaking, it is a set of shared beliefs of social members about what is important, what is unimportant, what is worth doing, and what is not worth doing, that is, it indicates the intention of "affirmation", "negation" or "ambiguity" (Li Yuanshou, 1991, P152). It is an obvious fact that people have different values in different cultures. Values are the core of cultures, which cannot be avoided in cross-cultural communications. Without understanding the values of a nation, we will not be able to fully understand its language expression and behavior patterns.

At present, the popular view is that the Eastern culture is characterized by the supremacy of Collectivism, while the Western culture is characterized by the supremacy of Individualism. China and the United States are typical representatives of these two cultures. The so-called "culture of community value supremacy" is a culture that advocates the values of communities and groups rather than personal values (Hu Mingyang, 1997, P188). According to this definition, the existence of communities is more important than the existence of individuals. In such a society, instead of seeking individuation, people require everyone to conform to the requirements of the group. Individuals become a member of the society, do not advocate individual prominence or the realization of personal value, and emphasize the group restriction on individuals, making it difficult for people to express their individuality and pursue the development of individuality. Therefore, Hegel (1983, P98) believed that "in the dawn of the East, individuality disappeared". Today, people are still used to taking "strong personality" as a person's weakness. Europeans and Americans can often understand this. In Chinese, words such as "people are afraid of being famous, pigs are afraid of being strong", "guns shoot out birds", "trees attract wind" and "troubles are all caused by being strong" often confuse Westerners. Those who believe in the supremacy of Collectivism not want to give distinctive opinions. Presenting their own behavior is considered to be immoral and disgraceful, personal heroism, "showing off", and a potential threat to collective harmony.

Western culture, which is in sharp contrast to the culture of community value supremacy, is the culture of personal value supremacy. It is a personal-based. It came into being in the

second half of the 14th century during the rise of the humanist movement in Europe. If we look back, we can trace back to the era when Homer praised heroes. This value is based on commercial economy and capitalist production relations. It emphasizes the value, role, dignity and interests of human beings, advocates individual liberation, freedom, equality and fraternity, and pursues individual independence and the right of independent choice. Such values played an integral role in the struggle against religious theology and feudal hierarchy, but it is still the proposition of the exploited class. When the bourgeoisie took power, this value was legally affirmed. In 1776, the American Declaration of Independence, declared in the form of a political platform, stated that all human beings are born equal and have the right to live freely and pursue happiness. In 1789, the French bourgeoisie, in the declaration of human rights, said "human beings are born free and equal in rights". Nowadays, in European and American culture, personality, individualism, personal freedom, personal initiative, personal privacy, self-realization, self-development, and even personal time and space has become very rigid and prominent characteristics. In this individualistic culture, society is only a means to achieve personal goals and all individuals are morally equal. Personal self-worth often depends on the extent to which they are different from others. Everyone learns to reflect their personalized self: personal confidence, self-determination, self-presentation, free expression of inner feelings without external constraints, and public expression of different opinions.

## 6.2 Difference in Ethical and Moral Concepts

Ethics is an organic part of social culture, and the difference of ethics is also one of the important reasons for the failure of cross-cultural communication.

Chinese traditional culture is a culture with ethics as the core. Ethics and moral concepts are like a dense network, which tightly binds people spirit. From the perspective of the social history development, the formation of Chinese ethical concepts has a traditional social structure system background. This social structure system is a feudal patriarchal clan system based on agricultural natural economy. "China primitive society entered the threshold of civilized society with the umbilical cord of clan system. The retention of the form of clan system was the key to the later development of Chinese society into a family centered patriarchal social structure"(Li Zonggui,1988,P16). After Zhou exterminated Yin, the clan and tribal organization of the Zhou clan expanded into the national political institution, gradually establishing patriarchal relations with the blood relationship of the clan as the link. The clan is the family, the family is the basic unit under the patriarchal concept, and the family is its cell and epitome. "The foundation of the world lies in the country, the foundation of the country lies in the home, and the foundation of the home lies in the body" (Mencius . Li Lou Zhang Ju ). The family has become the basic unit for the state to control individual behavior in Chinese feudal society. People daily life morality is related to the family and even family members who have close relations with them. Therefore, the patriarchal concept has become the core of Chinese history and culture and an important aspect of traditional culture and education. This patriarchal system has created two characteristics in people ethical concepts: one is to attach great importance to family (clan) kinship and the other is to emphasize grade differences. These two ethical concepts have an important impact on the use of language.(Lian Shuneng, 2010,P6)

In contrast to the ancient Chinese patriarchal system, ancient European civilized societies such as ancient Greece and ancient Rome were developed by liquidating the clan system and

disintegrating the clan commune after having the productivity of using iron. For example, the great migration of the Germanic nation in the fourth century A.D. led to continuous wars in French territory. "The long-term migration made it difficult for the Germanic clan commune to maintain the original kinship, and gradually evolved into a regional rural commune based on neighboring relations" (Liu Minghan, 1983,P36). At the same time, the economy of Western society was not dominated by farming, but establishing the country by handicraft and commerce in the early days. At that time, the people would not live in peace for a long time, but often moving. The society lacked tranquility and ease, but was full of danger and competition. This reflects the characteristics of industrial and commercial economy, but also cause people to weak concept of kinship. With the increasingly loose blood relationship, the sprout of interpersonal contractual relationship appeared in European societies very early. For example, the relationship between benefactor and corporal in ancient Rome; the loyal servant relationship between the young brave German and the old meritorious Samurai in the Middle Ages; there are also contracts and contractual relationships between poor and weak farmers and the rich and powerful, between free people and a few landlords, nobles, big landlords (see carton Hayes et al . 1976.P114). Up to the contemporary era, the social activities of westerners have not focused on kinship as most Chinese have, but on a variety of groups marked by age, social class, company, unit or fellowship activities. Therefore, the topic of westerners' daily social intercourse is rarely personal trivia, but turns to social life, public issues and so on.

### **6.3 Difference in Folk Customs and Ways of Thinking**

Folk custom refers to the life style that a country or nation has gradually formed, repeatedly appeared and learned from generation to generation in the long-term historical development process. It is a kind of social norms. It is expressed in clothing, food, housing, transportation, production, trade, folk beliefs, marriage and funeral, when the age of festivals and many other aspects. Folk custom vividly embodies the traditional characteristics of ethnic living habits, behavior, ethical concepts and psychological structure, which is one of the main contents of the history of national life and culture. Folk custom is not produced in a vacuum, a nation's politics, economy, religion, psychology, language and other factors determine and influence the emergence and development of folk custom.( Jia Wenbo,2007) Any folk custom is not an individual behavior, but by all members of the ethnic group in the common social life of the convention and by the society generally inherited. Therefore, nationality and collectivity are its two characteristics. Once a kind of folk custom comes into being, it will exert a great constraint on the thoughts and behaviors of the social members of the nation, especially the customs and habits with faith, which will have a greater constraint. The binding force is even greater, and there will be a sense of unease if any link is not established at all or not completely enough. It can be seen from real life that people have a unanimity in front of customs. This binding force of folk customs is an important supplement to social laws, and sometimes it plays a role the law cannot play.

The customs and habits of each ethnic group have their own specific content and requirements, and there are great differences between ethnic groups. Each ethnic group has special feelings for its own customs and habits, some of whom are proud of, and some of whom are sacred. It is not only self-conscious, but also not allowed to be read and violated by outsiders. Therefore, in cross-cultural interactions, there are often communication mistakes caused by the

lack of understanding of the other party folk habits and life style, which may even bring great conflicts.

#### **6.4 Negative Cultural Transfer**

When communicating with people from the same cultural background, both sides use the same language and proceed in the same cultural rules. These conventions are naturally learned and shared by people in the same culture. Therefore, “practice is not observable”, so there is generally no cultural difference in communication within the nation. (Zhang Yu, 2021, P58) The differences between the two sides of communication are only differences in personal knowledge, cultural cultivation and information. But the situation of cross-cultural communication is different. There are not only language problems, but also cultural problems. Sheng Yan (1990, P210) in his book "principles of language teaching" stated that “in the process of acquiring the first language, people have formed a kind of self-identity. This self-identity is closely related to the first language, and will show up when learning the second language, affecting the learning of the second language and forming a kind of ego-boundaries”. This kind of self-boundary fashion on the basis of self-identity emotion mainly refers to the cultural mode of a nation that has been formed by communicators before cross-cultural communications, with values, ethics, customs, behaviors, thinking modes, cognitive modes, and the language mode as the main content. Because culture is an unconscious phenomenon, when people come into contact with another culture, they often judge it on the basis of their own culture and frame of reference as the starting point, sometimes called cultural bias, or "ethnocentricity". Kolzs (1979, P19) believes that “people in every group and every culture are -- have always been -- ethnocentric, that is to say, they believe that their own solution to problems is superior to others, and that anyone with a correct, intelligent and logical thinking will admit its advantages”. What needs to be emphasized here is that ethnocentrism is easy to go to extremes, form cultural prejudice, and the thought that their own culture is superior to foreign cultures, and the values and customs of ethnic culture (including language) is biased or negative. Therefore, in cross-cultural communications, people are biased toward each other communication norms, they consider that their own national communication norms are as appropriate, and they resolutely use the communication methods advocated by their own national culture, to deal with each other, resulting in poor communication. Some even have national prejudice in each other language. These are communication attitudes that should be denied and criticized in cross-cultural communications.

### **7. Approaches to Deal with Lexical Vacancy**

#### **7.1 Transliteration**

Transliteration is a common way to substitute sound for meaning in cross-cultural communication translation. It is based on pronunciation and is the simplest way to deal with lexical gaps. Transliteration is mainly used in the translation of people's names, place names, trademarks, some new concepts or words with cultural characteristics.

There are three main forms of transliteration. The first form is a direct transliteration, such as Xiucai, Taichi, litchi, Wu Xing, Kungfu, kowtow, etc. The second form is to add category words on the basis of transliteration, which can help readers better understand the exact meaning of some words. For example, saxophone is translated into "萨克斯管", ballet into "芭蕾舞",

bowling into "保龄球", Jazz into "爵士乐", etc. The third form is to add notes on the basis of translation, which is suitable for translating those culture-loaded words. For example, 秦始皇 can be translated as "Qin Shihuang: the first emperor in Chinese history who unites China in 221B. C. In English and Chinese, there is Poseidon (the sea god in Greek mythology); the heel of Achilles: Achilles' heel - the fatal weakness.

## 7.2 Literal Translation

Literal translation refers to a translation method that preserves the meaning, syntactic structure and expression of the original text in the translation without causing wrong association or misunderstanding on the basis of conforming to the language scope of the target language. It is a common way to fill the lexical gap. Because in different languages, there are still many words and expressions that can be shared in structure and content, and they have the same or similar meaning and rhetorical meaning. Therefore, literal translation can preserve the original flavor of the original text, and make the translated language enable readers to better understand its meaning even without context. Literal translation can also make the translation concise and clear. Because the characteristics of literal translation, which can reflect the figurative image, national color and language style, make the communication more smooth and can enrich the expressive ability. Therefore, literal translation is also a translation method highly respected by many scholars.

## 7.3 Free Translation

Because there are many differences between languages, such as complete photo-translation, there is bound to be misunderstanding. At this time, free translation is needed. Free translation is a translation method that does not retain the form and rhetoric of the source language, but only transmits the meaning of the source language. The free translation method can be translated by careful analysis and deliberation of the deep meaning and cultural connotation of words rather than rigidly adhering to the construction mode of words. This translation method makes the actual meaning of words in the two languages consistent and consistent with each other, which is conducive to the transmission of cultural connotations.

## 7.4 Cultural Substitution

Due to the differences in the way of thinking and understanding of objective things among different nationalities, different concepts of words are used to express similar meanings in different languages. In order to better reflect the expression of the original text in the translation, cultural substitution is needed., its advantage is that the language used to replace it is very familiar to readers, which helps readers to understand and accept the original text. This is a good way to fill the lexical vacancy.

For example: The American ambassador may have a card up his sleeve. One thing is clear: he has been refraining from doing anything that could drag the United States into the conflict. Have something up one's sleeve. This is the same as "Having a plan in mind". In the translation, Chinese readers can understand its meaning more easily by translating it into "having a plan in mind".

## 8. Summary

Translation is the conversion between two language codes, aiming at enable the target readers to accurately understand the spirit of the original. In the process of code switching, we need to rely on various factors, not only the literal meaning of words, but also the environment and situation in which information occurs, and so on. From the perspective of cross-cultural communication, we can understand translation as a process: it is the transformation between two kinds of cultural information, and the transformation between these two kinds of cultural information is carried out by the transformation between languages. Therefore, translation is not only a cross-language communication activity, but also a cross-cultural one. Cross-cultural knowledge plays a vital role in the process of translation. A translator must be a professor and proficient in cross-cultural communications. Only in this way, can we achieve not only linguistic, but also real cultural equivalence.

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