

Study on the Subjectivity Consciousness of Interpreters in Business Negotiation Interpretation

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Abstract. In business negotiation interpreting, an interpreter should bring the subjectivity consciousness into play so as to ensure the successful communication between two parties. This paper explores into the application of subjectivity consciousness in business negotiation in the process, before and after the negotiation.

Keywords: Business negotiation; Subjectivity Consciousness; interpretation.

1. Introduction

With the development of global economy, business negotiation has become an vital part in international business cooperation and communication. Adequate interpreting can contribute to the success of the business negotiation. For interpreters, only parroting surely will not suffice the need. To ensure the smooth progress of business negotiations, subjectivity consciousness of an interpreter plays a significant role.

2. Subjectivity Consciousness of Interpreters

Lv Binghua holds that interpretation is also an object activity, which always reflects the main position of the interpreter, show their unique personality, value orientation. He defined the interpreter's subjectivity as "subjective initiative and creativity to achieve the communicative purpose of the speaker, with the characteristics of self consciousness, self discipline, active and strong purpose".

In general, the interpreter utilizes the subjectivity consciousness with an aim to overcome various interpretation barriers, convey the speaker's true intention, ideology, cultural psychology and aesthetic attitude, thus ensuring the smooth business communication. In addition to being equipped with an excellent bilingual ability and good interpretation skills, it is also essential for the interpreter to grasp the importance of interpreter's subjectivity and to help the business activities carry out smoothly and achieve satisfying results.

3. Application of Subjectivity Consciousness During Business Negotiation Interpretation

3.1 Application of Subjectivity Consciousness in the Linguistic Level

In the practice of interpretation in business negotiation, there are several strategies which can be adopted to play the role of subjectivity consciousness. They respectively are addition, deletion, and conversion.

According to the theory of language morphology, Chinese is a analytic language which emphasizes the parataxis and uses fewer conjunctions. On the contrary, English is a synthetic language with the features of emphasizing hypostasis, using more conjunctions and focusing on logic. Therefore, in the interpreting between Chinese and English, addition and deletion are often used to keep sentences smooth. For example:

Source text: 多年来贵方供应的产品、装船数字极为紊乱。贵方传真通知的数量、船代理提供的装船数量、舱单的数量、副本提单的数量和正本提单的数量经常不一致。

Translated text: For years the figures showing the quantities of the products shipped by you have been in a complete mess-up. Discrepancies were often found among those stated in your fax, indicated in the manifests and in the original and duplicate bills of lading as well as of the loaded goods reported by the ship agent.

In the example, there are five “quantities” in the source text which are necessary in Chinese. In Chinese, some repetitive expressions can play a role of emphasis, but if those expressions are directly interpreted in English, they will seem to be redundant, awkward and even semantically weakened. Therefore, the interpreter needs to take the deletion method to avoid the wordiness and inflexibility.

Conversion refers to the non-equivalence in terms of part of speech for the same word between the source text and the target text. Compared with English, Chinese has richer verbs, but fewer prepositions and no participles. Therefore, conversion in interpreting is often applied with a view to render a readable and coherent text.

Source text: I hope my presence here tonight is further proof of the importance we attach to the relations with your enterprise.

Translated text: 我希望我今晚到这里来就是进一步证明, 我们重视和你们企业的关系。

In this example, the nouns “proof” and “importance” in the source text are converted to verbs “prove” and “attach importance to” in Chinese in the target text so as to make a readable and coherent sentence.

3.2 Application of Subjectivity Consciousness in the Culture Level

Chinese and western people have different ideas in moral, value orientation, and relationship with nature. Due to the existence of the cultural diversity, interpreters should bring subjectivity consciousness into play and handle cultural elements with tactics. Generally, the method of enriching cultural elements, omitting cultural elements and finding cultural counterpart in the target language can be adopted.

Source text:: 江西素有“鱼米之乡、红色摇篮”之称。如果我们合作成功, 我们的第一个市场就定在江西, 我相信这里会是我们的福地。

Translated text: Jiangxi Province is known with a reputation of " the land of fish and rice and the red cradle " . That is to say , with abundant natural resources and a revolutionary spirit. If we cooperate successfully this time, we will make the first market in Jiangxi, I believe it will be our lucky land.

In the above-mentioned example, “鱼米之乡、红色摇篮” are the traditional Chinese idioms. But literal interpretation without any explanation can not deliver the cultural connotation and meaning fully to the foreign party. The method of enrichment like adding the explanation “with abundant natural resources and a revolutionary spirit” can further make it clear that Jiangxi is a place with abundant natural and spiritual legacy.

However, in some cases, some cultural elements shall be omitted if their delivery will only cause confusion or even misunderstanding by the other party. For example, when we are in a business negotiation interpreting, the Chinese spokesman used idiom “鹬蚌相争,渔翁得利”. In this case, interpreters should omit the cultural elements like “a snipe and the clam fight ,while a fishing man get the them”. It would be better to interpret into“ If we continue to our unnecessary competition, the third company will easily to seize the opportunity to get our profits ,while we both get nothing”.

In the course of civilization development, both Chinese and western countries have produced a large volume of idioms and phrases which convey rich connotation with few words. More often than not, the similar meaning will be expressed in different ways. Therefore, in interpreting such cultural-loaded words and expressions, the interpreter shall find their cultural counterparts in the target language to achieve faithfulness and readability at the same time. For example, when we describe someone who stops our way to the succeed, in China ,we call “a tiger in the way”, while it is “a lion in the way” in the West.

4. Application of Subjectivity Consciousness before and after Business Negotiation Interpretation

4.1 In the Preparation of Business Negotiation

Good and adequate preparation can help the negotiation parties to have advantages in negotiating. For interpreters, it is also necessary to make preparation so as to perform better in the interpreting process of business negotiation. Subjectivity consciousness is embodied in the preparation of business negotiation.

Firstly, the ultimate goal of the negotiations is to promote the transaction. So, to better serve for the negotiation, the interpreter must have a good understanding of the subject of the negotiation. Moreover, The specialized vocabulary is inevitable in the business negotiation. For example, in terms of export, there are frequently-used specialized words such as export credit ,export subsidy , dumping, bonded warehouse and so on so forth. Without preparing for those specialized words and the meaning those words represent in the mind, the interpreting may turn out to be a disaster.

Last but not the least, interpreters for business negotiation shall also prepare for business etiquette. Interpreters should master the basic etiquette in the business negotiation to avoid impoliteness in formal occasions. The learning of etiquette includes sitting, standing, walking, expression, image, costume, social manners, dining etiquette, and so on. For example, straightening out the thumb up in China means praise, but in many Middle East countries it is a rude gesture. Business negotiation often does not only start or end on the negotiation table. It often already begins the moment two parties meet each other. The interpreter should utilize the subjectivity consciousness and prepare for serving as a linking bridge in all aspects.

4.2 In the Self-reflection after the Negotiation

The conclusion of the business negotiation doesn't mean the work of interpretation is finished. The self-reflection after the negotiation is also a very important part that can not be ignored. For example, interpreters should foster the habit of making a record of their delivery by a voice recorder and listening back to the delivery in the negotiation to identify the incorrectness and inappropriateness. It is also advisable for interpreters to listen back to early cases to make a comparison in terms of the performance and analyze the reasons for the improvements or retrogress. The process of self-reflection can make interpreters find out their shortages and imperfection in their work. After the reflection on the long-term basis, interpreter can also accumulate experience, thus helping to reduce the same mistakes in the interpreting in the future.

5. Conclusion

Interpreters are counted on in order to ensure smooth and successful business negotiation. For an interpreter in a business negotiation, it is vital important to apply the subjectivity to overcome the various obstacles in interpretation, and convey the speaker's true intention and ideology.

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