

Consecutive interpreting techniques studies on intercultural communication of Zhuang Medicine culture from the perspective of speech act theory

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore Consecutive Interpreting techniques needed to facilitate Intercultural Communication of Zhuang Medicine Culture from the Perspective of Speech Act Theory, based on ASEAN Guangxi International Workshop on TCM Zhuang and Yao Medicine. It is found that the Speech Act Theory can effectively guide the C-E International Zhuang Medicine Workshop classroom interpreting and contribute to better classroom communication. Meanwhile, the application of techniques such as semantic deverbilization, amplification and negation can facilitate imparting of Zhuang Medicine Culture knowledge.

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1. Introduction

China and Asean countries all have a history of using traditional medicine [1],[2],[3]. With the establishment and development of Asean economic zone, traditional medicine has been included in the key areas of economic and social cooperation between China and Asean Countries. Against such background, various international workshop or training courses for Chinese traditional medicine have emerged [4],[5],[6]. As an important part of Chinese national medicine, Zhuang Medicine shines in the new era. It is believed that actively promoting the intercultural communication of Zhuang Medicine is a new form of protecting and developing the traditional medicine culture. The training courses with hopes to promote the exchange of TCM culture between China and ASEAN countries, and to give impetus to the innovative cooperation in the field of traditional ethnical medicine to a higher level [6],[7],[8],[9]. The trainees come from different ASEAN countries, such as Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore and Malaysia. Through the training, the trainees are expected be able to master the Zhuang Medicine Culture and therapeutic techniques of the Zhuang people, the second largest ethnic group in China. Against this background, this study aims to explore the Consecutive Interpreting techniques employed in the international Zhuang Medicine training courses to help better imparting of Zhuang Medicine Culture knowledge and skills.

2. Theoretical Framework

The Speech Act Theory was introduced in 1962 by Oxford philosopher J.L. Austin in book *How to Do Things with Words* and further developed by American philosopher J. R. Searle. Austin (1962) thought that language itself contains the power of action, that is, the power of Speech Act [10],[11]. The theory holds that speaking is doing what one says, and in certain situations, we not

only speak but also act by speaking to others [12],[13],[14],[15]. The combination of the two constitutes a speech act. According to this theory, sentences we say contain the following three basic speech acts, which is very enlightening for us to understand the transmission and reception of information, the formation of communicative effect and the speech mechanism involved: Locutionary Act refers to the utterance having a determinable propositional meaning; that is, what is said [16]. Illocutionary Act refers to the meaning of the utterance in a communicative context, that is, what is intended. Perlocutionary Act refers to the intentional or unintentional effect of the utterance on the listener's feelings, thoughts or actions; that is, what is expected [17]. The Speech Act Theory has been used in the field of pragmatics, teaching and literature, and even the development of artificial intelligence in past decades. But there is little study about its application in interpreting [18],[19],[20].

Many philosophers and linguists study the Speech Act Theory as a way to better understand human communication [21],[22],[23]. "Part of the joy of doing speech act theory, from my strictly first-person point of view, is becoming more and more mindful of how many surprisingly different things we do when we talk to each other". Levinson (2010) holds that Austin put forward the Speech Act Theory on the basis of declarative sentence and performative sentence, which laid a foundation for the study of Speech Act. Searle reclassifies speech acts into five categories based on Austin's assertion, command, commitment, expression and declaration, which provides a new perspective for Speech Act research [14],[24],[25]. In pragmatics, Grice (1975) links the interpretation of meaning with the real intention of both parties, and further explains conversational implicature. In their Relevance Theory, Sperber and Wilson believe that the difference between direct and indirect speech acts can be explained as the degree of relevance between discourses [26],[27]. Levinson (2010) also points out the effect of perlocutionary act or the indirect speech act is closely related to context specifically. make clear how multiple factors simultaneously come to bear on speech act recognition: conventional content, including clausal mood and the corresponding semantic type, background information and presuppositions, the interlocutors' evident goals and plans and the question under discussion.

Speech act has been studied from different angles. The research is not only carried out in the single language environment, but also in comparative analysis in the fields of cross-language or cross-culture [28],[29],[30]. Especially in interlanguage pragmatics, the most common is about foreign language teaching research [15]. Conducted a comparative analysis of Chinese EFL Learners and American native English speaking students by means of DCT test and quantitative statistics. In addition, foreign scholars began to study speech act from social, cultural and testing perspectives [31],[32]. In the field of teaching and testing, it is found that explicit and implicit pragmatic teaching methods can have different effects on the cultivation of students' pragmatic competence, which has become a new international trend in pragmatic research [33]. Until now, the scholars have never stopped studying speech acts, even in the field of artificial intelligence. In the article "Speech Act Theory as an Evaluation Tool for Human-Agent Communication", the authors evaluate the agent's verbal communication while collaborating with humans and study the impact of human perceptions of the agent's speech acts on the perception of collaborative performance with the agent [15].

3. Method

Qualitative research method is used in this paper [34]. The study will exemplify the Consecutive Interpreting techniques of Zhuang Medicine Culture with cases in C-E International Zhuang Medicine training course. This workshop, one on international exchange of traditional ethnic medicine, is characterized with specialized medical background knowledge, medical vocabulary with multiple syllables and difficult pronunciation, and many other proper nouns [35]. As the training course is skill-intensive, the lecturer's speech not only carries the message (or the locutionary sense), but also an illocutionary force and a perlocutionary result [36]. In the whole workshop, though there are many C-E Consecutive Interpreting cases, a quantitative study is not suitable for this situation, so the study will mainly focus on the variety of Consecutive Interpreting techniques analysis with qualitative method [35].

As for the research procedure, firstly, Interpreter's extensive and adequate preparation is the indispensable part of a successful interpreting. An interpreter is expected to build up his/her think

tank related, such as terminological knowledge and background information, and spare no effort to learn about the background of the speakers and audiences before the task. And then he/she must know how to operate the interpreting equipment as well [37],[38]. Moreover, an interpreter is supposed to get psychologically prepared for coming interpreting assignments. Secondly, try to finish Terminology building. Thirdly, carry out the Consecutive Interpreting with the guiding of Speech Act Theory. And Typical cases are picked out to exemplify the strategies. Finally, analyze the effects the imparting of Zhuang Medicine Culture knowledge and make conclusion.

4. Results and Discussion

The Speech Act Theory is a basic theory in pragmatics, which states that language is not only used for statement and description, but also often used to perform an action, that is, “act by words”. Applying the Speech Act Theory to the process of interpreting, the interpreter should not only convey the literal meaning (locutionary sense) of the speaker, but also realize his intention and purpose (illocutionary force), and be sure of what kind of effects may have on the target audience. The main task of an interpreter is to reproduce the full meaning of the speaker to the target audience as much as possible [39]. However, semantic meaning of a word is influenced by cultural factors and is determined by the speaker’s intention in a particular context. So it’s difficult to completely reproduce the pragmatic and cross-cultural meanings of the source language, which can be solved by some interpreting strategies and techniques. The explicit and implicit meaning of the speaker can be realized by appropriate expressions in the target language. How to convey the locutionary sense and illocutionary force and make sure of the perlocutionary effect by using interpreting techniques of semantic deverbilization, amplification, omission and negation, will be focused [40].

According to Austin (1962), the first speech act is locutionary act which is the basic production of meaningful utterance [15]. This act is much related to the hearer. If the hearer fails to understand what the speaker said, the speaker failed to do a locutionary act [35]. So the meaning of the speaker's locutionary act must be clearly and fully expressed, which is the premise of illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect. Semantic deverbilization refers to the ability of the translator/interpreter to perceive the meaning of an utterance in its proper context and thus convey its underlying message as compared to word-for-word or “literal translation”. Deverbilization also means that the interpreting should not be bound by the original text, but to convey the information by alternative statements or even explanations added, according to the audience’s language convention and background knowledge.

Example 1:

Text : 壮族先民是最早创用针刺疗法的开山鼻祖之一。我相信大家都有了解过我们的黄帝内经，医之始祖。黄帝内经中有说到“九针者，亦从南方来”。

Target Text: Zhuang people were one of the earliest pioneers of acupuncture. I’m sure all heard of Huangdi Neijing, the earliest medical classic in China with great influence across history. Huangdi Neijing that says, “the nine needles come from the South.”

A locutionary act is an utterance with particular form and sense or meaning, according to Austin. The above sentences are even difficult to understand literally in Chinese for their Four-Character structure and peculiar ancient prose. So to understand their meaning in the context is the first step for interpreter’s delivery. Otherwise, it is impossible to convey the speaker’s intention. Since it is inappropriate to take word-for-word strategy here, semantic deverbilization is an effective way to convey the speaker’s message. Phrases “开山鼻祖” and “医之始祖” are both typical four-character expressions in Chinese with rich cultural background, so the interpretation should be clear in meaning with appropriate words that the target audience can understand. “医之始祖” means first and foremost, so the words “earliest medical classic” and “great influence throughout history” are used in interpreting in the hope that the audience will feel the importance and authority of Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor from the speaker’s speech. To ensure the force of locutionary act, it is also an important task in interpreting to convey the feelings of the source language, no more, no less.

In uttering a sentence or word, one must have a certain intention. Most of the time people produce well-formed utterances on purpose, for instance the need to communicate something to

someone or to provide facts. This second dimension is called illocutionary act. An illocutionary act is accomplished via utterance with a communicative intention. A speaker may perform illocutionary act to make a promise, offer, explanation, etc., which is as proposed by Austin as illocutionary force (Austin, 1962).

Amplification is the addition in the target text of words that do not appear in the source text without affecting the original meaning.

Example 2:

Text : 详细的操作步骤首先呢, 要选择卧位, 或者是坐位啊。然后呢, 怎么来, 取穴, 事关重大。就是我们壮医的梅花穴。什么叫梅花穴呢? 有同学听说过吗?

Target Text: Now, I'm gonna talk about the detailed operating procedures. First of all, should we choose a recumbent position, or a sitting position? Secondly, choose the right acupoints. But how can we select acupoints? It is most important. The acupoints called "Meihua Acupoints". "Meihua" is "plum blossom" in English. What is "Meihua Acupoint"? Have any of you heard of it?

In this case, the speaker also uses some interrogative expressions such as "然后呢" and "怎么来". In the context, her intention is clear. She wants students to realize that learning how to pick the "Mei Hua" acupoints is very important. However, the speaker's source language is rather scrappy, and the author needs to grasp the meaning and purpose of the speaker in the context of the specific discourse before interpreting. Chinese four-character idiom "事关重大" is amplified into a complete sentence "It is most important", to express the speaker's intention of reminding the audience of the importance. What's more, in order to better communicate in the classroom, arouse the trainees' curiosity and better promote Zhuang Medicine Culture, the phrase "梅花穴" is transliterated as "Meihua Acupoints", but the sentence "Meihua is plum blossom in English" is added to help students better understand this term.

Perlocutionary act talks about producing the effect of the meaningful, intentional utterance. For example, if an utterance that intends to make someone drink coffee is successfully performed, the effect is that someone actually drank coffee. This is also known as perlocutionary effect. In this practice the author has used the technique of negation to ensure the perlocutionary effect. Negation is a technique of conversion, where positive or negative expression in the original language can be syntactically transformed into the negative or positive expression in the target language so as to facilitate interlingual communication.

Example3:

Text : ①我们这个壮医刺血疗法呢, 有其他疗法没有的优势。②它不需要特殊的这个设备条件, 不需要特别的场地, 操作不复杂。③它还是安全无副作用的。

Target text: The blood-letting therapy has unique advantages over other therapies. It can be conveniently operated in a daily environment with easily accessible equipment, which is free from side effects.

In this example, sentence ① and ② are both interpreted with negation technique. The clause "有其他疗法没有的优势" was interpreted to be an affirmative version that was "has unique advantages over other therapies", and sentence ② was also converted into an affirmative one that was "It can be easily operated in a daily environment with easily accessible equipment.". Nowadays, most of the Western medicine treatments for gout have side effects, but this therapy can solve the problem. Sentence ③ "它还是安全无副作用的" was interpreted into a non-restrictive attributive clause in affirmative form at the end of the interpreting, adding further explanation, highlighting the uniqueness of the therapy and impressing the trainees. It is obvious the speaker wants to convey the intention that the blood-letting therapy is an easy but effective therapy which deserves effort and time to study, and expects the listeners to get the same feeling so that they will devote themselves to practicing blood-letting therapy. The conversion of the negative into the affirmative in this example, compared with negative version, can not only strengthen the speaker's sense of pride and confidence in the therapy, but also try to prove its reliability with specific advantages such as "conveniently

operated in a daily environment”, “easily accessible equipment”, and “is free from side effects”. The perlocutionary effect was thus ensured to some degree as it was found that the trainees were really concentrated on the therapy learning in subsequent teaching.

5. Conclusion

The speech act theory can effectively promote intercultural consecutive interpreting, especially in C-E Zhuang Medicine training course. The locutionary act is the production of meaningful utterances and which leads to illocutionary act, the intention of producing meaningful expression and the perlocutionary effect consequently. Therefore, the expected perlocutionary effect is based on the interpreter's clear and complete conveyance of locutionary meaning and illocutionary force. In this way the interaction and communication in classroom teaching can be more effective. In addition, the techniques of semantic deverbilization, amplification, and negation are proven to be efficient to facilitate the students' understanding and learning in a cross-language training class of Zhuang Medicine Culture.

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