DIFFERENT WAYS OF EXPRESSION BETWEEN ENGLISH AND CHINESE

Recently, I have been fascinated with English novels. Actually, I spent a lot of time reading famous literary works when I was a college student. At that time, reading was a way to spend spare time. Immersed in the world of heroes or heroines, I always forgot my own world. I have to admit it is a really wonderful feeling, for I can experience all kinds of life, peaceful or exciting. It's really amazing.

However, five years later after graduation, I find a different state of mind in reading. No longer obsessed with interesting plots, I turned to appreciate the words, phrases or sentences that are elaborately chose by authors. It's equally marvelous.

Such a change may be the result of my commitment to an excellent English translator. To become a qualified translator, I should, in the first place, have a thorough understanding about the native and target languages, and the most effective way is to read extensively.

The novel I am so crazy about is Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell. Besides the romantic story between Scarlet and Rhett, I am also deeply impressed by the difference ways of expression between Chinese and English.

As we know, Chinese and English belong to two completely different language families. English is an Indo-European language, but Chinese a

Our Services

Document Translation Services

Interpretation Services

Desktop Publishing Services

Video Translation Solutions

Sino-Tibetan language.

To translate Chinese into English, one must thoroughly understand and grasp the different ways of expression between English and Chinese. Taking Gone with the Wind for example, I'd like to share some difference between the two with you.

Firstly, English pays more attention to static expression, while Chinese dynamic expression. Putting it specifically, English often adopts nouns (or transformed from verbs), phrases, adjective and so on instead of verbs, flexible and variable in grammar but compact in structure and logistically strong.

Chinese is inclined to use verbs, short in sentence and loose in structure, but powerful and dynamic. Therefore, we can try to translate English link-verb structure into dynamic or verbs in Chinese, for example:

1) Gerald was on excellent terms with all his neighbors in the Country. □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

In this sentence, it's hard to literally translate the link verb, so we borrow a verb in Chinese, which makes the translation quite smooth and easily understood.

2) Scarlett came back to earth with a jerk, at the sound of the word "marry". □□□□"□□"□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

In English, verbs are seldom used together, but it's common in Chinese. In this sentence, "at the sound of" equals to the verb "hear" as far as its Chinese meaning is concerned.

3) By contrast with his own miserable existence, they were well-fed, well-clothed and looked after in sickness and old age. □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

Our Services

Document Translation Services

Interpretation Services

Desktop Publishing Services

Video Translation Solutions

□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

Well-fed and well-clothed are adjective words here, but they are translated into verbs, which can express the Chinese meaning more vividly.

Secondly, English puts more stress on objects, but Chinese human beings. No matter whether it is the subject or other element, English highlights the object and emphasizes objective facts.

On the contrary, Chinese always takes “people” as the subject. So we should consider replacing the subject which is in the form of an object in English into a “person” in Chinese, for example:

1) Scarlett’s conscience smote her at this last, for it had been months since she had been to church. □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

Thirdly, English tends to ellipsis, but Chinese repetition. English sentence is formed according to a certain rule, so its structure is much clear. However, it’s also customary to apply ellipsis in English.

On the one hand, it is for conciseness. On the other hand, English is well structured, and the omission of some elements wouldn’t affect its meaning. It commonly exists in parallel structures and can be classified into nominal ellipsis, verbal ellipsis and clausal ellipsis, for example

1) She learned that his compliments were always two edged and his tenderest expressions open to suspicion. □□□□