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硕 士 学 位 论 文

Cultural Information in English-Chinese Dictionaries

英汉词典中的文化信息

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List of Abbreviations:

AECD: A New Advanced English-Chinese Dictionary

BDPF: Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable

COD8: The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English

ECD: A New English-Chinese Dictionary

LDELIC: Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture

NAECD: New Approach English-Chinese Dictionary

NECD: A New English-Chinese Dictionary

OALD4: Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English

ODCIE: Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English

TECD: The English-Chinese Dictionary

L1: first language

L2: second language

FL: foreign language

TL: target language

SL: source language

EFL: English as a foreign language

EIL: English as an international language

ESL: English as a second language

Synopsis

Language is a symbolic communication system, which is an important carrier of culture and even a part of culture. As a language can reflect a given culture, lexicon in a language will inevitably have cultural connotation. In foreign language teaching and learning, the importance of the relationship between language and culture in intercultural communication has gradually been recognized.

Bilingual dictionaries deal with two language systems as well as two cultures. By coordinating the lexical units of one language with those of another language which are equivalent, a bilingual dictionary can act as a decoder of the source language and an encoder for messages in the target language. Therefore, the bilingual dictionary serves as a bridge between two languages and two cultures.

This thesis is an exploration of cultural information in bilingual dictionaries in general and English-Chinese dictionaries in particular. The distribution of cultural information in bilingual dictionaries is analyzed from macrostructure and microstructure respectively. The macrostructure is discussed in terms of coverage of vocabulary, front matter and back matter. The microstructure is studied in spelling and pronunciation, equivalents, illustrative examples, cultural notes, etymological information, and pictorial illustrations.

In an analysis of cultural information in four existing English-Chinese dictionaries, i.e. *ECD*, *AECD*, *NECD* and *TECD*, various methods of treating cultural information have been discovered, and deficiencies revealed. For example, etymological information and pictorial illustrations are rarely provided in the dictionaries, which may be detrimental to the usefulness of the dictionaries.

In the last part of the thesis, research findings in intercultural communication and foreign language teaching and learning are introduced. The relationship between language awareness and cultural awareness is emphasized, which justifies the importance of bilingual dictionaries in EFL. Stereotype in intercultural communication is analyzed, and the issue of how to cultivate intercultural communicative competence in EIL context is explored. Bearing in mind these research findings, tentative suggestions are given to improve cultural information in English-Chinese dictionaries.

Key words: cultural information; bilingual dictionaries; intercultural communication

摘要

语言是表达观念的一种符号系统，它既是文化的一种重要载体，又是文化的一部分。语言反映民族的文化，一种语言中的词汇就必不可少地带有文化内涵。在外语学习以及跨文化交际中，语言与文化相关的重要性已逐渐得到认识。

双语词典涉及两种语言符号系统，同时也涉及两种文化。双语词典本身就是两种语言和文化的一种综合体现。通过在一种语言中的词汇单位寻找另一种语言中对应的词汇单位，双语词典既可以作为源语的解码器，也能作为目的语的编码器。因此，双语词典在两种语言与文化之间起着桥梁作用。

本文探讨的是双语词典中的文化信息，特别是英汉词典中对文化信息的处理。文化信息在双语词典中的分布，可以从宏观结构和微观结构两大方面加以说明。宏观结构中的文化信息表现在收词、前页材料以及后页材料中。微观结构中的文化信息则体现在拼写、发音、对应词、例证、文化注释、词源信息以及插图等方面。为了揭示现存英汉词典在处理文化信息方面存在的问题，本文研究了四本主要英汉词典，即《英华大词典》、《最新高级英汉词典》、《新英汉词典》和《英汉大词典》，分析了各本词典在处理文化信息的实践中所采用的不同方法，以及所存在的一些问题。例如，《英汉大词典》和《英华大词典》未收录任何插图，《英华大词典》和《新英汉词典》则缺乏词源信息，等等。

从 EFL 角度来看，双语词典在培养跨文化意识方面有着重要作用。在跨文化交际中，对定型的作用不可忽视。在 EIL 语境下，应建立新的跨文化交际能力培养新模式。根据这些理论，本文提出了一系列改善英汉词典中文化信息的建议。

关键词：文化信息；双语词典；跨文化交际。

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Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Cultural information in bilingual dictionaries

Cultural information is, according to Hartmann and James (1998: 32-33), knowledge about the social, intellectual and artistic achievements of a particular group or civilization as presented in reference works. Such information is usually associated with encyclopedic dictionaries, but other types also often contain cultural details.

Culture is all-inclusive, covering such aspects of human society as experience, knowledge, science and technology, education, language, lifestyles, ways of thinking, etc. As distinctive features are shown in different nations, cultural differences are manifested in language. Language is one of the most important carriers of culture, and culture has an indispensable impact on language. Lexicon is a basic element of language, and cultural differences are widely and well illustrated in lexicon. Different cultural backgrounds will, to a certain degree, determine the different meanings of different languages.

Dictionaries deal with lexicon. Thus, cultural information should be treated in dictionaries to best illustrate the lexicon in particular and the language and culture in general. Written in two languages, the bilingual dictionary will inevitably deal with two different cultures and perform the task of helping intercultural communication. Therefore, cultural information should receive close attention in compilation of a bilingual dictionary. As Zgusta (1971) points out, all dictionaries are somehow encyclopedic. Bilingual dictionaries are informative, providing information about words and phrases, natural and social science, names of places and people, etc. Therefore, bilingual dictionaries should have the function of spreading cultures.

1.2 The research into cultural information in English-Chinese bilingual dictionaries

Modern linguistic research findings show that in order to master a foreign language, learners must try to achieve linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and finally cultural competence.

There are great differences between English and Chinese and their cultures. There is a considerable number of culture-bound words in each language. For example, some words denote objects or concepts peculiar to Chinese culture, like “馒头”, “气功”, and “风水”. Similarly, there are English words that denote things peculiar to western culture, such as “drugstore”, “cremtea” and “squash tennis”. Learning the English language, we need to know about cultural backgrounds of English countries. Thus, an English-Chinese dictionary, as a reference book for Chinese learners to learn and understand English language and culture, will have to pay more attention to the treatment of cultural information.

Today, more dictionaries are culture-conscious in practice. Some researches into cultural information in English-Chinese bilingual dictionaries are also done by lexicographers, discussing issues like the importance of cultural information and the practical methods of including cultural information, which will be discussed later in the thesis.

1.3 Organization of the present thesis

The thesis is written primarily to give a detailed account of cultural information in bilingual dictionaries in general and English-Chinese dictionaries in particular. The importance of cultural information is shown; related researches are reviewed, and ideas and suggestions are given on how to treat cultural information.

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