***Ван Юеси***

**A pragmatical study of cultural and appellation (address form) differences between Chinese and English**

Address form is an important part of studying the target language and grasping its culture. Address form is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but social and cultural ones. Different nations have different systems of appellation, whose complication represents their own cultural connotations. (Bao Nanhui p.31) In the broad sense, the address form includes all the names of people and things, whereas in the narrow sense it could only refer to people, that is to say, the appellation is particularly used in human communication, which is also what this paper mainly concerns. Every address system is a product born within its nation's social communication. It is the reflection of the nation's culture and customs. (Bao Nanhui p. 50) As early as the late 60s, Roger Brown, Albert Gilman, Marguerite Ford published some related articles. Since then, the address form has become one of the main themes in sociolinguistics. For instance, Brown and Gilman concentrate on the use of the second person pronoun. In their turn Brown and Ford analyze the appellation system of American English, especially the use of titles with the last name (LN) and first name (FN) but Leviso and Zwicky prefer to perceive the address form as deixis and believe that it is not only a reference but a separate linguistic behaviour. Based on the previous study of address forms, this article mainly focuses on the pragmatic function of the address form in Chinese and English from a cultural angle.

Sapir once said: "Language is basically a product of culture and society. Therefore, it must be understood from the perspective of culture and society." As it is well known to all, western culture is believed to be a "self-oriented culture" or "individualism culture". On the contrary, Chinese culture is thought to be a "we-oriented culture" or "collectivism culture" (Yin Fulin p. 26) Giving due attention to this simple definition, we could better understand language and its usage.

There are several culture-related aspects connected with the address form in Chinese and English. The first one is equality and patriarchy. In English culture, sex, age, social status and position all have great influence on the address form. The point is that closeness is not the matter of kinship or family bonds where the address form is involved, while in Chinese culture, patriarchy is the most important element in social communication. Blood kinship is of great significance since this factor plays a decisive role when all interpersonal attitudes are being built up. This can be demonstrated by the complexity of address forms within kinship. In Chinese culture, people pay more attention to the generation and sex, showing respect to the elder and taking care for the younger as well as differentiating their relatives from other people. (He Ziran p,5) That is the reason why there exist tremendous official and unofficial titles in the traditional Chinese address form. The second difference lies in the distance between "myself" and other people. Western culture emphasizes individualism which includes self-consciousness, self-existence, self-presentation, self-realization, character-independence, etc. Americans treat themselves separately from the world and other people. They could find the sense of safety outside the group. This personal sense of safety is built upon the success of personal career. Such an opinion on individualism makes them believe that individual activity is more important than their connection with the other people in the group, whereas Chinese culture concentrates on collectivism. Family, especially its paternal part, belongs to one important part of social groups. Chinese culture emphasizes the influence of "family" on society. Therefore, people strive to enlarge the circle of their acquaintances and their "family" and build various networks of nepotism. (Liu Ping, Zeng Wenhua p. 103) Meanwhile, the Chinese absorb the sense of safety in human communication, at the beginning from the relatives and their familiar social community and only then from the whole society. From the perspective of address forms, there is much more appellation in Chinese than in English, either in addressing relatives, or in addressing nonrelatives.

Filmore, Zwicky, and Levison, having studied the address form from the aspect of reference and social communication, believe that the English address form has the pragmatic function of presenting identity, puissance (power), context, dignity. The relationship of closeness reflects a social distance between people. In the English address form, there is no obvious hint showing the relationship of closeness, which has a strong connection with the idea of individualism. They will frequently use the nickname, such as, Johnny and Willy instead of John, William respectively. Sometimes the elder will call the younger one by "son" in order to show closeness. Closeness in Chinese is mainly reflected in the titles of relatives and acquaintances, which could clearly show the relationship in kinship: for instance, direct blood kinship - grandmother, grandfather or collateral kinship - aunt, uncle. In the title of nonrelatives, there is a structure showing the relationship of closeness: "**older (Lao)/ younger (Xiao)+ family name**" e.g. **Xiao** Li (**younger** Li) **Lao** Zhang (**elder** Zhang). This structure is not only used to address friends or intimate colleagues, but also newly-acquainted people or colleagues. Besides, structures like "**family name/ given name + the title of relatives**", "**the title of occupation + the title of relatives**" can also be used in addressing people, e.g. **Feng (given name) Jie(sister), Di (the taxi driver)** **Ge (brother)**. Here the title of relatives does not mean that there exists any blood kinship, but only shows a kind of respect.

Generally speaking, social status is a crucial factor in communication in the English speaking countries, that is to say, if the addresser and the addressee are equal in matter of "puissance", both of them would call the other by name, for example, Tom, Lily. Otherwise, the superior would address the inferior by name, while the inferior would address the superior by "title + family name", for example, President Obama, or "corresponding title + special title", for example, My lord. However, usually, the communicators address each other by name which represents the relation of equality. Chinese is strongly influenced by the idea of patriarchy, therefore, that can be definitely showed by the identity and social status of the addressee: for example, "family + title of occupation" (doctor Li), "family name + official title"(professor Li). Meanwhile, these titles of status, when they are connected with **Jin, Qian** (the respective words in Chinese), reflect the traditional Chinese hierarchy and produce many respectful titles and address forms, for example,addressing the officer by their titles, addressing the elder by adding the word " lao, shi", e.g. Lao Taitai, Shi Wong, addressing other's son and daughter by adding " ling, xian", e.g. Ling Lang. All these titles have sense within them. Because of different cultures and lifestyles, the language users of different nationalities have different emotions towards address form. In Chinese, "older" is the synonym of witty, experienced, which falls under the category of respectful title. Chinese even call foreigners as **Lao(elder) Wai(foreign).** In western society, "older" is not a favorite word, "older" has the connotation of old, useless, conservative etc. In that case, people would rather be addressed by their name.

All in all, address form attracts the attention of many branches, such as sociolinguistics, pragmatics, lexicology, etc. And it also interweaves with some aspects of culture. The difference of address form in Chinese and English is due not only to the language system, but the pragmatic meaning as well. The way of presentation and understanding has a close relation with cultural background. (Zhang Xinhong p.285). It is of great significance to analyze and study address form under the guide of culture. Additionally, it could cut some unnecessary misunderstanding when we are in cross-culture communication.

**Bibliography**

1) 张新红,何自然. 语用翻译:语用学理论在翻译中的应用[J ] . 现代外语,2001 , (3) :285 - 293.

2) Sapir E. Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech