

**INFLUENCE OF SOURCE CULTURE KNOWLEDGE ON THE QUALITY OF  
INTERPRETING: THE CASE OF CHINESE INTERPRETATION IN KENYA**

**BY**

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**DECLARATION**

This project is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree at the University of Nairobi or any other University.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study entails an investigation into the influence of source culture knowledge on Chinese-English interpreting in Kenya. Chinese interpretation is new in the Kenyan market with very few qualified interpreters and therefore this study aimed at analyzing how knowledge of Chinese culture affects the quality of interpreting of Chinese-English interpreters in Kenya. The study was guided by Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence. The research was conducted through Focus Group Discussions to analyze general perceptions of interpreters on the differences between Chinese and English culture and how it emanates in the language. Data was also collected through direct observation of interpretation of speeches with culturally loaded words and expressions. This was done by amateur interpreters with little cultural knowledge and contrasted with the renditions of professional interpreters with deep cultural knowledge. This was followed by an analysis of the speeches to look for errors and omissions during interpretation and what influence that had on the understanding of the message. The research established that an in-depth understanding of source culture knowledge led to fewer omissions and errors. The study shows why there is a need to increase interpreter training for Chinese- English interpreter and need for trained interpreters to emerge themselves in the source culture to give more interpretations that are effective

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Culture has always been intertwined with language especially because culture has to be transmitted from the older to the younger generation through education and this is mainly through language. Hence, language carries many salient and subtle cultural elements some of which can only be understood by someone with a deep understanding of the source culture.

Apart from recently invented languages like Esperanto, all languages have a long history of cultural attachment to them which has existed throughout their history and which grows with the language, hence when interpreting the interpreter needs to understand the source and target culture so he can adapt the message to the target audience .This is however difficult for amateur interpreters with little understanding of the source culture and even for bilingual interpreters who may not have been trained on how to establish some functional equivalence between the source and target culture when rendering the same message from one language to another.

The study shall focus on the influence of source culture knowledge on interpreting by using Mandarin Chinese to English interpreters as a case study. The Chinese culture is very distinct from western cultures and traditions, particularly in its etiquette forms of address politeness (Yin, 2009) and the way people express consent or lack of it. Chinese generally believe that “appearing humble will help maintain and enhance their face and image” (Chen, 1993: 55.)

A good interpreter therefore needs to take note of such differences and interpret them in a way that does not make the listener feel detached from the conversation by appropriately interpreting what certain cultural statements or references mean in the Chinese language. This was particularly addressed by Yanhui (2014) who researched on the issue of social and cultural interpretations of Chinese addressing strategies.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The Chinese language being rich in culture and full of color is difficult to interpret for most of the people in Kenya who are proficient in Chinese but lack a deep cultural understanding. This may either be because they might not have interacted enough with Chinese natives or because they are studying Chinese so far from where it is naturally found. The output of amateur interpreters may therefore lack accuracy, connotations and may not elicit the same reactions from the target audience as the speaker may have wished. This leads to a secondary difficulty in communication that is not based on the lack of a basic operational understanding of the source or target language but lack of an in-depth understanding of the source language culture.

The researcher hopes that through this research they shall show how source culture knowledge affects the quality of interpretation from Chinese to English and why it is important that an interpreter should be conversant not only with the grammatical language norms but with the cultural norms of the source culture and those of the target culture. This study therefore hopes to underscore the importance of in-depth understanding of the cultural norms of speakers of both the source and target languages

### **1.3 Objectives**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the main elements of Chinese culture that are difficult to interpret into English.
2. To explore the effect of source culture knowledge affects interpreting of Chinese to English and to what extent it does.
3. To analyze the effectiveness of selected coping strategies used by interpreters when handling cultural bound expressions (culture-entrenched expressions).
4. To compare listener perceptions of an interpretation of Chinese to English from an interpreter with intercultural knowledge with those of an amateur interpreter with little cultural knowledge.

### **1.4 Hypothesis**

The hypothesis of this study are that;

1. In-depth knowledge of source culture improves the quality of interpretation.
2. The challenge posed by culturally loaded words or expressions makes it difficult to interpret

3. Interpreters with good source cultural knowledge can overcome the challenges posed by culturally loaded words and find equivalents in the target language using coping strategies.
4. Interpreters with good cultural knowledge deliver the message as intended by the speaker.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited to only the Chinese to English interpretation directions and will not focus much on the return aspect that interpreters have to face in the field. This study is also limited to nonnative Chinese interpreters working in Kenya or Kenyan interpreters in China since they are more accessible to the researcher. There shall be no deliberate balance of genders since convenience and random sampling will be used to find the respondents.

It is assumed that the selected five interpreters who have lived in China or have their courses instructed in Chinese at university level up to a master's level have a deeper cultural knowledge than those interpreters who only studied Chinese language in Kenya and have not lived in China for an extensive period.

### **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

This study shall be guided by Eugene Nida's Dynamic Equivalence theory now referred to as Functional equivalence which he came up with in 1964 in his book *Towards a Science of Translation*. According to Nida, Words only have meaning in regards with the culture of which they are part of (Nida 2003: 77). Therefore even though fidelity to the source text is important in the act of translation it cannot serve the purpose of communication if applied blindly. According to Nida, any act of

translation should be done with the purpose of communication and hence even when we are loyal we should be keen on culture as cultural elements of a language may lead to a breakdown in communication .

The tenets of this theory are that translation must be:

- (1) Equivalent, which points toward the source-language message.
- (2) Natural, which points toward the receptor language.
- (3) Closest, which binds the two orientations together based on the highest degree of approximation (Nida, 1964).

All these points aim at arousing "similar response" between the source language audience and the target language audience. Hence, a good interpreter should try to establish an equivalence that would elicit the same reaction from source language audience and target language audience.

For an interpreter, Dynamic equivalence is key in his work and they should interpret thought for thought or from one idea to another rather than word for word, which more often than not will result in an unnatural rendition, which in the case of Chinese to English translation is referred to *Chinglish*. A good example is this utterance that may be made by an interpreter, who has no intercultural understanding,

*We shall go and look!* Derived from a direct translation of the Chinese statement  
我们 来 看! *Women lai kan!*

Intended meaning "We shall see"

## **1.7 Literature Review**

### **1.7.1 On the Aims of Interpretation**

According to Lado (1964), mastery of a foreign language only occurs when people cannot only express themselves in the foreign language but when they can interpret things the same way as a native speaker would have interpreted it. In Lado's words,

“the ability to use it, understand its meanings and connotations in terms of the target language and culture, and the ability to understand the speech and writing of natives of the target culture in terms of their meanings as well as their great ideas and achievements” (Lado, 1964, :25).

Hence, for an interpreter he must be able to not only understand what the speaker is saying but also know how a native speaker would have understood what was taught and use his knowledge of source culture to make his rendition to the target audience as he considers the norms of the target culture.

By doing that the interpreter will ensure that his interpretation elicits the same response from the target audience as would have been elicited if they directly understood what the speaker said.

### **1.7.2 Differences in Chinese and English Culture and Communication**

#### **1. Connotation and Denotation**

Chinese and English have some linguistic and cultural similarities but of interest in this research are the differences in culture that may lead to a breakdown in communication if not properly interpreted. Some of the main points of divergence in Chinese and English that may prove problematic in translation or interpretation are

culturally loaded words, idioms, words referring to social class systems and symbolic words (Chao, 2016).

i) Similar in both denotation and connotation;

These are words whose mention will have a universal referent in both languages mainly including realities that are present in both cultures and have more or less the same function such as body parts, in its most basic sense hand *shou* 手 will have the same meaning in both languages and expressions regarding it will have similar meaning.

ii) Similar in denotation but partially overlapping in connotation;

For example, white represents peace in both Chinese and English culture but in Chinese there is a further derived meaning of death and when mourning and in funerals people wear white.

iii) Similar in denotation but different in connotation

An excellent example of this variance could be the word dragon whose dictionary meaning for both languages is a flying snake like mythical creature who breathes fire. In English culture dragons are considered evil and in popular culture are represented as sly and shrewd creatures. However, in Chinese culture the dragon is revered and even honored as a godlike creature which is believed to bring good luck.

## **2. On the difference in politeness strategies**

Regardless of what form of speech or context that someone is interpreting there will be some politeness strategies. Politeness is universal in all languages and cultures and is therefore one of the most basic elements of intercultural communication as it is through etiquette and polite forms that we first break the ice in order to engage in intercultural communication (Shuang, 2007)

If the interpreter has an insufficient source culture knowledge, they can interpret some common Chinese icebreakers literally and this will lead the listener to giving an equally wrong reply which may digress from the meaning of the original speaker. Good examples are the following phrases which have sense in their own but should not be taken literally.

Chinese	literal translation	Actual meaning in context
吃饭了吗?	Have you eaten?	Hi
吃饱了吗?	Are you satisfied?	Hi
你去哪儿?	Where are you going?	How's the going?
你爸爸妈妈身体好吗?	How is your father and mother's health?	I hope all is well

The first two are greeting used when you meet someone around meal times most people will ask if you have eaten but they don't really expect a detailed reply it's just a way of saying hello or showing they care about your welfare.

The third and fourth sentence seem a bit rude and intrusive for someone not familiar with Chinese culture, an onlooker would wonder why a stranger would ask where you are going or about the health of one's parents. In fact that is unheard of in western cultures unless one is close to the speaker but it's quite an acceptable icebreaker in Chinese language and it actually shows "warmth and concern to the addressee" (Shuang, 2007:195)

### 3. Differences in addressing strategies

According to Yanhui, (2010), the Chinese addressing strategies show how unique the language is since they have very complex and hierarchical addressing strategies which are however changing with time.

Every family member in the family has a unique name showing whether they are *tang* (from the fathers side ) or *biao* ( alien , from the mothers side ) and also the order of birth of each member in the family unlike English which uses general terms like uncle or aunt to refer to both the mother's or father's brothers and sister with no distinction between who is older or younger .This makes it difficult to interpret accurately into Chinese a sentence such as “My uncle and grandmother are coming tomorrow ”(Which uncle, your fathers brother or your mother's? Is he elder or younger than your other uncles? Which grandmother?)

The same sentence if rendered from Chinese would be very accurate and clear to the listener. Yanhui Yin highlights title as another important element of address title may refer to what one does for a living or their sex, the word *shifu*, or master and *laoshi* are respectable titles in the Chinese culture and they carry a lot of respect with them, so if introducing someone as “Chen laoshi” there would be no need for the addressee to find out what he does for a living. Recently with globalization some titles have however changed in meaning for example “*Airen*” would be literally translated as lover but according to a government directive looking towards achieving gender equity in marriages, the Chinese people were encouraged to refer to their wives as “*Airen*” as compared to other titles that were seen as patriarchal. However, this can lead to misinterpretation.

A terms such as *xiaojie* initially referring to a prostitute have softened in meaning recently and now refers to lady or miss.

#### **4. Offering**

Chinese people really value modesty and *Mian zi* which we can loosely translate as face, they do everything in their power to save face while communicating and to show modesty if complimented while showing restraint in the presence of offers. In this regard, their offers will be direct, very bold and almost nagging while they will reject offers severally even when they are craving for the item being offered.

The Chinese guest refuses the offer as part of a politeness strategies that is culturally inclined and they have to be offered the item two or three times before they finally accept the offer, the English host on the other hand will not offer more than twice and will take the rejection literally.

“A Chinese speaker who visits an English speaker’s home would stay hungry and thirsty because his refusal had been taken seriously; while an English speaker who visits a Chinese home would probably suffer from indigestion because his ‘no’ will be taken as a polite form of “yes” (Zhou and Hu, 2002:49).

In this context the interpreter is therefore the only person in the room capable of preventing conflict based on misunderstanding of language and they must therefore act as cultural mediators between the Chinese and English speakers.

#### **1.7.3 Cross Cultural Concerns in Interpretation**

Studies have been done on the effects of cross-cultural issues in different domains for example how interpreters deal with cross-cultural concerns in court (Hale 2014).

However, not a lot has been written on the impact of knowledge of Chinese culture on interpretation. It is worth pointing, nevertheless that Shihua (2016) in her paper “Chinese to English translation: identifying problems and providing solutions” identifies knowledge of Chinese culture as one of the factors that affect Chinese to English interpretation.

## **1.8 Rationale**

This study seeks to inform interpreters on the importance of cultural emersion and preparation before any interpretation task. It also seeks to inform institutions or businesses looking for interpreters that simply being proficient in a language or bilingual does not make one a good interpreter and it is thus important to find a skilled interpreter with good cultural knowledge of the source and target language.

## **1.9 Research Methods**

This study used qualitative research methods to collect and analyze data. Data was collected from a group of interpreters and native speakers using speeches and Focus Group Discussions then analyzed using thematic analysis and in line with Nida’s Theory of dynamic equivalence.

### **1.9.1 Sampling**

The researcher conducted a Focus Group Discussions with 10 practicing interpreters sourced from the Kenyan Chinese speaking community that included five amateur interpreters and five experienced interpreters. The amateur interpreters were selected randomly since their cultural knowledge was limited mainly to what they study in class and they have more or less the same level of knowledge. The 5 experienced

interpreters were selected via purposive sampling, having few very qualified Chinese-English interpreters in Kenya the discussions were scheduled based on a preselected sample of seasoned interpreters based on when it was most convenient to meet them. The 5 experienced interpreters were selected based on those who have lived in China or have their courses instructed in Chinese at university level up to a masters degree level and therefore were deemed to have a deeper cultural knowledge of Chinese. The other five were people who have little experience interpreting professionally and who have not had extensive interaction with Chinese natives mainly those who learnt Chinese in Kenyan universities and colleges and have not been to China. The researcher also used direct observation to compare the quality of interpretation of a culturally rich speech between interpreters with little cultural knowledge and those with an extensive cultural knowledge.

Rowley (2012) points out that when interviews such as focus groups are well designed and the interview participants are appropriately selected, they will generate insights, understandings, and detailed information that are useful and may be difficult to obtain through other research methods.

### **1.9.2 Data Collection Instruments**

The data was collected using Focus Group Discussions and direct observation. The Focus Group Discussions had a group of ten interpreters both amateur and experienced to get their general perceptions and attitudes about how culture affects the language with examples from their own experience, which the researcher took note of. During the Focus Group Discussions, the researcher acted as a moderator to ensure the discussion is continuous and focused. Each discussion took around 30 minutes and the researcher had three interviews collecting data until a point of

saturation was reached. Questions were short and open ended the researcher only indulged the respondents further when a question lead to an issue of interest to this research, the respondent would then be asked for clarification and will be in line with the research objectives. All discussions were recorded in order for the researcher to retrieve all information during data analysis.

Direct observation was done to determine the extent to which cultural knowledge to interpreting and how interpreters deal with cultural issues that arise in the process of their work. Next, the researcher gave two short speeches, which were rich with cultural elements, and he asked two professional and two amateur interpreters to interpret the speech. The researcher specifically focused on the rendition of the cultural elements from the source to target language and the general flow of the output. The researcher took note of individual points where there were conflicting renditions and recorded the respondents to use their renditions for further analysis. Finally, the researcher gave the amateur and professional interpreters' speech to a native bilingual Chinese speaker and to if, he understood the message the way the source originally intended it to be understood and if it elicited the desired response.

### **1.9.3 Data Analysis**

Data collected was analyzed quantitatively using thematic analysis that involves identifying analyzing and reporting patterns within data, it focuses on the words that are spoken and thoughts of participants rather than how they are spoken. This will offer a rich interpretation of data. Using the common themes identified through this method, the researcher used comparative analysis to compare experiences of participants and identify similarities and differences that are evident throughout. This

helped the researcher to understand the extent to which source culture knowledge has affected Chinese/English interpreters and what they felt about their output.

### **1.10 Summary**

This chapter provides a background for the study outlining the reasons why we thought it was relevant to carry out the research, the objectives we hoped to achieve by the end of the research and the theory that guided our research. We have also explained the scope limitations and assumptions of our research how we intended to collect data and how we analyzed it to come to a conclusion on how if at all source culture knowledge affects the interpretation process from Chinese to English and vice versa.

## CHAPTER TWO: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHINESE AND ENGLISH

### 2.0 Introduction

The three cardinal points of language are phonetic element, grammatical element and lexical element and therefore to differentiate between Chinese and English we shall need to consider these three aspects of language and compare them to see how they affect communication. Finally, we shall see how cultural differences in Chinese and English influences the interpreter and what coping strategies interpreters use when they encounter culture laden terms /norms.

### 2.1 Grammar

When comparing Chinese and English we can say Chinese has much less grammatical rules and follows a basic grammar pattern. Chinese depends mainly on its word based on one or two characters that are the smallest unit of sense in the Chinese language to realize its grammatical functions. Unlike in English we do not use affixes but rather add auxiliaries to show tense moods voices etc.

For example

他吃面包

*Ta chi mianbao*

*He is eating bread*

The gerund is not represented by any extra character nor is the verb to be

Literally translated this sentence would be He eat bread

However, if we change it to past tense we will add the auxiliary 'le' to show completion of the action or past tense making the sentence

*Ta chi le mianbao*

Therefore, simply put the Chinese words does not change they have a fixed form that is the same no matter what they are used for it therefore depends mainly on different parts of speech to realize its syntax. English on the other hand depends mainly on changes on the word itself to show different grammatical rules. It is also important to note that since Chinese does not have article ‘a’ ‘an’ ‘the’ it may be possible for a Chinese to English interpreter of Chinese descent to miss the articles in their interpretation.

Chinese Speakers are more interested in clarity and precision than the flair of language and therefore most Chinese sentences are simple basic short sentences and very long sentences in English can be expressed in a series of short Chinese sentences. Therefore, it is very common to see long sentences in English using many modifiers, and in contrast, many short sentences in Chinese connecting with comma. Since most sentences are short in Chinese, pronouns like, he, she, you or demonstratives like ‘that’ are not common in Chinese sentences and nouns are used more than pronouns since in a short sentence the object or subject is clear.

The following examples clearly illustrate this,

1. I was so tired that I decided to take the road that I had been warned not to take.

我太累了，我决定走路，我被警告不要服用

*Wǒ tài lèile, wǒ juéding zǒulù, wǒ bèi jǐnggào bù yào fúyòng*

Literally: I very tired I decide walk (on the road), I had been warned never use.

2. The sights of Beijing are so numerous that one can spend several weeks here and leave without having seen all of the important ones.

北京的名胜很多，一个人就是在这儿呆上几个星期，离开时也没能把主要的景点看完。

(běi jīng de míng shèng hěn duō , yī gè rén jiù shì zài zhè er dāi shàng jǐ gè xīng qī ,  
lí kāi shí yě méi néng bǎ zhǔ yào de jǐng diǎn kàn wán。 )

Literally: Beijing's sights so many, a man can spend several weeks here, leaving time still has not seen all-important ones.

As is clear in this sentence the use of short simple sentences rather than a compound or complex sentence with pronouns and demonstratives like in English leads to a clear message.

While asking questions in English and most romance languages like French and Spanish, verbs and subjects are inverted from the normal subject verb object order.

For example

*Are you going to school?*

May easily be rendered by a Chinese speaker of English as,

You are going to school? (With a rising intonation)

## 2.2 Morphology

Duanmu (2000) describes morphology as dealing with two main issues the definition of the morpheme and the inflection and derivation of words. In Chinese the morpheme mostly corresponds to an orthographic character (a single syllable), and there is no apparent distinction between roots and affixes.

This is very peculiar to Chinese since in English there is a lot of inflection and derivation and the root is clear so to form new words we simply use affixation for example to show opposition

, for example *register –deregister*, the prefix ‘de’ that shows the undoing of an action is used.

Another example is

### *Function –functionality*

The sense of the word changes by the adding of the suffix *–ity*

Tenses are also shown by changes made to the verbs and plurals are similarly made by changes made to the nouns.

Chinese is an aspectual language and a lot of research in the last 30 years has addressed these notions in Chinese. It is arguable that this is probably because aspect markers are the only kind of morphology-like devices in the language. In Chinese, there is no inflectional morphology to express tense, number, gender, or case. Hence, aspect is a special grammatical category in Chinese. The main aspects in Chinese are *le, zhe, guo and zai*.

These aspects are used instead of tense markers like in English to show tenses.

## **2.3 Phonology**

Mandarin is a non-alphabetical, monosyllabic, and tonal language. As a non-alphabetic language, it does not have a symbol-sound correspondence as English and therefore Chinese speakers use characters to figure out the meaning and pronunciation of words. As a monosyllabic language, each character has only one syllable and cannot be analyzed at the phoneme level as English is. (Hong Xu, 2014). Elements of the sound system include not only the segments – the vowels and consonants of the

language – but also the tones that are applied to each syllable. Standard Chinese has four main tones, in addition to a neutral tone used on weak syllables.

It is also important to remember that there are phonemes in English that are nonexistent in Chinese. The following 15 phonemes in English that are not found in Mandarin contribute to a great deal of difficulties for Chinese learners, (**/b/**, **/g/**, **/d/**, **/v/**, **/θ/**, **/ð/**, **/z/**, **/s/**, **/ʃ/**, **/ʒ/**, **/h/**, **/tʃ/**, **/dʒ/**, **/r/**, **/j/**).


This results to challenges by Chinese English speakers where a sentence like *Thank you very much* may be mispronounced as “*sank you wery much*” since the most common coping mechanism is to replace the sound with the nearest equivalent in Mandarin. Some Chinese phonemes are similarly nonexistent in English phonemes such as **/dʒ/**, English has more vowels than Chinese resulting in faulty pronunciation of words with vowel sounds by Chinese English speakers.

Some of the words that may be difficult to pronounce due to this challenge are

*Ship/sheep it/eat /full /fool*

With regards to liaison; the linking of consonant finals of one word and subsequent vowel initials of the following word, Chinese speech sounds choppy as compared to English which sounds more fluid. This is mainly because Chinese words rarely end with consonants with the exception of **/n/** or **/ŋ/** (and **/r/** in Beijing dialect), this open syllables lead to a constant need to stop after a syllable and start again unlike English

pronunciation which is continuous and flowing since when words end with consonants it's easy to link them up with succeeding vowel sounds in the next word.

For example, in the sentence "he's out" said correctly, would lead to a pronunciation similar to *hez out* where the he is linked with the out in rapid succession by changing the /s/ to a /z/ 

Other consonant vowel combinations that have the liaison effect that may prove difficult for the Chinese English speaker are

[Change it]

[Get out]

[Come in]

[Made of]

[Dig up]

Since Chinese words rarely end with consonant sounds it is therefore difficult for Chinese speakers to pronounce words ending with consonants /d/t/k/ this leads to the addition of an extra vowel to the English word and leads to the pronunciation of a word like 'and' as *and-a*.

## 2.4 Culture

Culture is the complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities or habits acquired by man as a member of society (Tylor 1958: 1).

Newmark (1981:183-185) noted that the translation process has some cultural value and that language partly reflects culture therefore an interpreter or a translator cannot

simply translate words as they are but they need to consider the source and target culture. Vocabulary in language is influenced by and bears features of culture so in languages it is definitely vocabulary that has the biggest cultural loading ability. (Chao lei 2015) While discussions on the relationship between language and culture started in China in the 1950s (Luo, 1950), pragmatic studies of cross-cultural communication started only in the 1980s (Huang, 1984; Yan & He, 1985).

In his study, *The Pragmatics of English Dialogues in the Chinese Context* Feng (2000) tried to find out how Chinese second language users and English second language users communicate despite the cultural diversity in their languages in a Beijing university. His research concluded that even though at first the speech acts in the second language was strongly influenced by first language for both groups of speakers, Chinese people tend to speak English in a Chinese way and English people tend to speak Chinese in an English way. It was also noted that for both groups there was a lot of overgeneralization especially where the speakers had limited knowledge of their interlocutor's culture. For example, it was noted that the Chinese students would use the question. *Have you had lunch?* As a greeting. This seems to be an assumption that 你吃饭了吗. A common greeting around lunchtime in Chinese culture was a universal greeting and hence it would be okay to ask someone that. Another common overgeneralization was saying '*walk slowly*' as a farewell phrase, which is another Chinese direct translation of the expression 慢走, (*literally*) Walk slowly which is used to wish someone well as they leave for a journey.

Feng 2000 noted that even though continued exposure to the norms of the language, the second language speakers learn more “proper” ways of doing and saying things but they tended to overgeneralize the norms for example assuming that English people are all more formal and all Americans are informal in their communication while the English Chinese second language speakers assumed the Chinese are generally indirect and sometimes even unfathomable in their forms of address. However, he noted that despite the cultural differences there was an attempt at getting **common ground** where despite continued use of wrong forms of addressing strategies in showing concern, initiating talks, accepting offers and receiving thanks, the interlocutors would still manage to communicate because they knew “what the person who spoke meant” regardless of what he said.

This seems to be a good coping mechanism for speakers with different cultural backgrounds based on the Cooperative principle (Grice 1975) where the purpose of the speaker in a speech act is more important than what he says if the listener understands, what the speaker intended to achieve.

When native speakers were given transcripts of recorded conversations that were said to contain the culturally insensitive utterances, it was noted that the main problems occurred with regards to

- a. Initiating talks
- b. Receiving compliments,
- c. Accepting offers
- d. Giving advice or showing concern
- e. Receiving thanks

These were the same points of disparity in culture addressed by (Zhou and Hu, 2002,) and later (Yanhui, 2010).

Chao (2016) also highlighted connotation as another aspect that is culture bound in Chinese and we think may affect the interpretation of a culture rich speech into English.

It is important to note that these points of disparity in culture exist in the national value system and they stem from Chinese cultural values.

Ying Fan in his book *a classification of Chinese culture* (Fan 2000) came up with a list of 71 cultural values. This is an improvement of an earlier list by Chinese Culture Collection (1987). Fan's list summarized Chinese cultural values into core values, which were then grouped under eight categories: national traits, interpersonal relations, family (social) orientation, work attitude, business philosophy, personal traits, time orientation and relationship with nature. The values are summarized in Table 1

Table 1 below shows Chinese cultural values as summarized by Yu Fan (Fan 2000) grouped thematically

**Table 1: Chinese Culture Values**

<b>National Traits</b>	<b>Family Relations</b>
1 Patriotism 2. a sense of cultural superiority 3. Respect for traditions 4. *Bearing hardships 6. Governing by leaders instead of by law 7. Equality /egalitarianism* 8. Moderation, Following the middle way	22 Filial piety 22 Filial piety 23 Chastity in women 24* Kinship 25* Veneration for the old 26 Loyalty to superiors 27* Deference to authority 28 Hierarchical relationships by status and observing this order 29* Conformity / group orientation 30* A sense of belonging 31* Reaching consensus or compromise 32* Avoiding confrontation 33 Benevolent autocrat / Paternalistic 34 Solidarity 35. Collectivism
<b>Interpersonal Relations</b>	<b>Work Attitude</b> 38 Thrift (saving) 39 Persistence (perseverance) 40 Patience 41 Prudence (carefulness) 42 Adaptability
9. Trustworthiness 10. Jen –Ai/kindness (forgiveness, compassion) 11. *Li propriety 12. *People being primarily good 13. Tolerance to others 14. Harmony with others 15. Courtesy 16. Abasement /Humbleness 17. A close intimate friend 17 A close, intimate friend 18 Observation of rites and social rituals 19 Reciprocation of greetings, favors and gifts 20 Repayment of both the good or the evil that another person has caused you 21 Face (protecting, giving, gaining and losing)	<b>Time orientation</b> 64* Past-time oriented 65* Continuity / time viewed as circular rather than linear 66* Taking a long rang view
<b>Business Philosophy</b>	<b>Relationship with nature</b>
43 Non-competition 44* Not guided by profit 45* Guanxi (personal connection or networking) 46* Attaching importance to long-lasting relationship not gains 47 Wealth 48 Resistance to corruption 49. Being conservative 50. * Morality	67* The way (Tao) 68* Fatalism / Karma (believing in one's own fate) 69* Yuan 70* Harmony between man and nature

<b>Personal Traits</b>	71.Unity of yin and yang
51*Te (virtue, moral standard) 52 Sense of righteousness / Integrity 53 Sincerity 54 Having a sense of shame 55*Wisdom / Resourcefulness 56 Self-cultivation 57 Personal steadiness and stability 58 Keeping oneself disinterested and pure 59 Having few desires 60*Being gentleman anytime 61*Obligation for one's family and nation 62*Pragmatic / to suit a situation 63*Contentedness with one's position in life	

As seen in the table above it was noted that Chinese values revolve around modesty relations with others, love of knowledge and deep family and friendship ties. Therefore, the researcher believes it will be important to find out if the same factors affect the output of an interpreter who may not have the advantage of the cooperative principle since they receive the message for the first time in a booth and may not have had enough time to interact with the speaker. It will also be of interest to note if there are any additional values that are important in Chinese culture and may affect interpretation into English.

Another key point of interest in our research shall be to find out the different coping mechanisms for interpreters when faced with problems based on difference in culture if they don't have a good cultural understanding of the source language and also how

those with an in-depth understanding of source language and culture adapt their message to suit the target audience and the cultural norms of the target language.

## **2.5 Coping with Cultural Differences in Interpretation**

Because of these differences in culture and with the rise of globalization and international trade, it is therefore important for the interpreter to act not only as a simple bridge of communication but also as a cultural bridge for the two cultures. In order to reflect different range of topics, the first thing interpreters must do is that they need to have a good understanding of different topics represented by both source language and target language to eliminate intercultural misunderstanding. (Zhang, 2011). The interpreter must be able to communicate and elicit the same reaction in the target culture as in the source culture despite the challenges of having to work independently, render in a short period and the pressure of the kind of audience he is dealing with. The interpreter must therefore look for an innovative way of tackling the intercultural challenges that may arise in their line of work and this is well captured by Yang when he asserts that,

Translation confronts cultural differences by employing feasible and coherent strategies to accommodate the culture of the source text. Cultural awareness, identity, and subsequent appropriation are needed to help target language readers infer associations and relationship in translation.

(Yang 2013:66)

According to Nida, an interpreter should not only be linguistically proficient in both languages but also bicultural in that he understands both the source and target culture. Nida (2005) pointed out “For truly successful translating, biculturalism is even more important than bilingualism, since words only have meanings in terms of the cultures in which they function”.

Vinay and Darberlnet in Munday (2001p 56-60) came up with a strategy of translating cultural elements from the source to target language that included,

1. Borrowing
2. Calque
3. Literal translation
4. Transposition
5. Modulation
6. Equivalence
7. Adaptation

(Munday 2001,56-60)

This was an improvement from Mona Bakers proposed system of translating words with no equivalents in the target language (Baker, 1992) which was an improvement of Newmark (1988) theory of transference and componential analysis which had 17 strategies of establishing equivalence

## **2.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter we have dealt with the differences between the structure of Chinese and English and narrowed in on the cultural specific differences which include

- a) Initiating talks
- b) Receiving compliments,
- c) Accepting offers
- d) Giving advice or showing concern
- e) Receiving thanks
- f) Connotation and denotation

We shall observe through our research if the same key cultural differences influence interpretation and if there are some other intercultural differences between the languages that come up when dealing with non-native interpreters.

## **CHAPTER THREE: DATA COLLECTION AND PRESENTATION**

This chapter shall include the data collection mechanisms and shall have a summary of the data collected. The chapter includes a description of how Focus Group Discussions interviews were conducted and contains two speech excerpts rich with culturally loaded words and expressions used in data collection and shall include a summary of how the different subjects interpreted the culture bound terms in the two speeches.

### **3.1 Collection of Data**

Data was collected using Focus Group Discussions interviews and direct observation of speech interpretations from Chinese to English.

#### **3.1.1 Focus Group Discussions**

The researcher used Focus Group Discussions to gather information from practicing interpreters. The sample was 10 interpreters; 5 experienced interpreters selected via purposive sampling who are all who have had some training as interpreters and 5 untrained interpreters randomly selected from the Kenyan Chinese speaking community. The researcher also used convenience sampling to add two Chinese 'A' language respondents so as to understand what effect interpretations had on the final message. The 5 experienced interpreters were selected based on those who have lived in China or have their courses instructed in Chinese at university level up to a masters degree level and therefore are deemed to have a deeper cultural knowledge. The researcher also ensured each of them had some training in professional interpreting. The other five are who have little experience interpreting professionally and who have

not had extensive interaction with Chinese natives mainly those who learnt Chinese in Kenyan universities and colleges and had not been to China.

The researcher had three Focus Group Discussions meetings with the 10 interpreters and with native speakers each session was 30 minutes each and would help the researcher to understand

- a) How Chinese culture is different from western cultures.
- b) If the Chinese culture affects the Chinese language significantly.
- c) What words or expressions they thought were culturally loaded.
- d) How interpreters deal with culturally loaded words during interpretation when no direct equivalent exists.
- e) How interpreters deal with culturally loaded words during interpretation when they are not sure or unaware of the meaning of the expression.
- f) What strategies can be used in improving one's cultural knowledge?

All conversations were recorded with the consent of the respondents after a brief on what the study hoped to achieve and the researcher took notes during the meetings seeking clarification for any ambiguous response. The researcher had an interview guide presented in the list of materials used at the end of this chapter and it guided his questions though he let the discussion flow freely as long as it was in line with the research questions and objectives. All questions were open-ended and avoided any attempt to lead the respondents to certain responses.

After a series of Focus Group Discussions, when the researcher believed all these questions were sufficiently answered and that a point of saturation had been

achieved, he gave the speech excerpts to the interpreters and recorded their interpretations for use in data analysis.

### **3.1.2 Speeches**

Two speech excerpts were used during data collection. Both speeches were in Chinese and selected because they were very culturally rich with some culture bound terms and because to interpret them faithfully one would need to have a deep understanding of Chinese culture, history and modern Chinese habits.

Most Chinese interpreters in Kenya are liaison interpreters and therefore interpret short utterances in the consecutive mode therefore the researcher thought it would be best to give short culturally rich speeches and test the subjects using the consecutive mode. Since speeches with cultural bound terms and figurative language are difficult in themselves to interpret the speeches language difficulty was made intentionally intermediate so that any challenges that would occur in the speech would not be because of unfamiliar grammar patterns or advanced language level but rather focus more on the cultural knowledge.

The topics of the speeches selected are topics that would contain a lot of cultural bound term and figurative expressions. The first speech excerpts is a depiction of foreigners' misconceptions of China. Since China started opening up to the world after the Beijing Olympics of 2008, there was an influx of foreigners in China who were expatriates and students. , This group has created an excellent point of contrast between foreign cultures and Chinese culture and therefore the speech is full of cultural contrast .The speaker is a Chinese engineer who studied in the United States

and therefore has experienced western culture first hand and he tries to compare foreigners' misconceptions of Chinese martial arts, transport and communication and their manufacturing industry.

The second speech speaks about the changing perspectives of the ideal man for Chinese women. It shows how China is developing rapidly and this leads to some misconceptions about the ideal man, which is different from the traditional perspective. The speaker describes how materialistic and money oriented Chinese women have become and how they tend to think men who dress well or drive expensive cars are successful while in reality they may just be con artist. Romance and relationship is one of the very culturally rich elements of Chinese language and therefore the researcher thought this would be an ideal speech to test the interpreters understanding of Chinese culture.

Speech 1 is more of an informative speech while speech 2 is very colloquial and conversational which makes it slightly more difficult to interpret.

The speeches are around 2 minutes long but very culturally loaded.

### **3.2 Culturally Loaded Words**

The speeches excerpts I used shall be presented below with culturally loaded words highlighted in bold an English version of the same speech is given right below the speech to give a general interpretation of what the speech speaks about.

#### **Speech excerpt 1**

今天我们来说一下**老外**对中国的误解。很多老外来中国旅游会为中国**小吃**做事应但是呢很多老外都认为所有的中国人都会**功夫**，这可能是跟**李小龙**，**成龙**，

他们的功夫电影有关。在有点呢就是老外来到中国很多时候对我们的交通部适应因为很多的中国人太多了。远远多与欧洲的国家或者是美。在中国我们过马路，很多时候不靠红绿灯，人走了都一起走了但是在美国大家是非常征收佳通规则地。

在这老外对中国的山寨产品可能非常不适应因为在大概十年前的时间内中国的很多产品都是抄袭外国的设计 中国华的改造也有是所谓的改造但是这几年来我们对这自产得保护越来越多了。很多中国的文人中国发明家都越来越信服，因为他们靠自己的产品可以或很不错的收益。

虽然很辛苦但是我么的生活，中国人的生活正在变得好。

## Speech 1 English

Today we shall discuss some foreigners' misconceptions of China. When foreigners tour China, they easily adapt to Chinese **snacks** however they believe that all Chinese people are good at **Kong fu** maybe because of watching **Bruce Lee's and Jackie Chans** movies, Moreover when foreigners come to china they don't adapt easily to our transport system .Probably because Chinese population is very big this is different from European countries or the United States. In China if you need to cross the road most of the times you don't count on the traffic light; when people start to cross, you just cross.

It's also important to note that foreigners are not used to Chinese **counterfeit** products this is because in the last ten years many of the products manufactured in China imitate the design of other foreign companies and adapt it to Chinese ways. but lately we have made great efforts in improving and protecting Chinese products and many Chinese inventors and scientist are **quite happy** because they can rely on these products to earn a **modest earning**. Even though it's quite laborious our lives, the lives of Chinese people are becoming more and more bearable.

## Speech Excerpt 2

你看到中国的发展，中国 会慢慢的不感觉人都便道浮躁 起来，而且上学女孩子特别看懂的是经前跟物质方面的东西

有些跟爱情不管然后他们就。。有时候可以看难道开好车的人。。后男的有时候他咳哟觉得是个**富二代**非常有钱觉得因该是她梦想中的**白马王子**，结果呢也可能是个**骗子**因为他也可能是个**屌丝**用租来的车然后去**骗他**。呢他觉得这个人能给它**幸福**但是有些东西。。就是像是就是他是个**穷逼了逼**中国女孩的爱请况现在便能非常有趣。

## Speech Excerpt 2 English

Because of china's development people are slowly becoming complicated especially for ladies in school what really interests them is money and material things that have nothing to do with love so when they see someone riding an expensive car ,they believe he is a **nouveau riche/second generation rich kid** and believe he is their **prince charming** the man of their dreams but the man may be **dishonest** , he may be **a loser** using a rented car to swindle her , she may think that that's the man who will help her achieve **self-actualization** her but when you really look into it he may be **quite destitute**.

Chinese women's romantic perspective is getting more and more twisted.

### **3.3 Data Classification**

The researcher transcribed the speeches and identified key words and expressions that seemed to have a big cultural attachment and this will be highlighted below comparing on one side of the table the source phrase and the interpreted phrase on the other hand.

If the interpreter did not give an equivalent or if he skipped the section with the expression or culturally loaded word, the researcher wrote omitted on the interpretation side .However wrong or right equivalents have all been listed next to the source phrase and shall be analyzed in the next chapter .It was also put into consideration by the researcher that interpretation is not necessarily about words but transferring ideas as an interpreter .Therefore a provision was also made by the researcher where if he was satisfied the idea was captured by the interpreter despite not having a direct equivalent it would be noted as ‘explained’. The tables below contain the interpretation of the two speech excerpts from two amateur and two trained interpreters

#### **3.3.1 Interpretations by Amateur Interpreters**

Below is a summary of interpretations by amateur interpreters who have had little exposure to the Chinese culture and do not have any professional training as interpreters. All interpreters have Chinese as a ‘C’ language and are working into English as their ‘A’ language

## Table 2 A

### Speech 1 by Amateur 1

This table shows the interpretation of the first speech by the first amateur interpreter.

Source phrase	Interpretation
老外	Foreigner
小吃	Omitted
功夫	Tai qi
李小龙	Li Xiao Yang
成龙	Cheng Long
山寨	Imported Products
幸福	Successful
不错的收益	Omitted
辛苦	Omitted

The interpreter omitted 3 words out of 9, 李小龙 was rendered wrongly as Li Xiao Yang and 山寨 rendered wrongly as imported products both which could lead to a grave misunderstanding

### Table 2B Speech 2 by Amateur 1

This table shows the interpretation of the second speech by the first amateur interpreter.

Source phrase	Interpretation
富二代	Omitted
白马王子	Dream or ideal man
骗子	Omitted
屌丝	Omitted
骗他	Cheat
幸福	Omitted
穷逼了逼	Omitted

The interpreter omitted a majority of the 7 culturally loaded words, there were 5 omissions out of 7, the two that were rendered were accurately rendered.

**Table 3A**

**Speech 1 Amateur 2**

This table shows the interpretation of the first speech by the second amateur interpreter.

<b>Source phrase</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
老外	Foreigner
小吃	Omitted
功夫	Kongfu
李小龙	Bruce lee
成龙	Jackie Chan
山寨	Products
幸福	Happy
不错的收益	Omitted
辛苦	Tiresome

There were two omissions out of nine there was one misinterpretation

**Table 3B**

**Speech 2 Amateur 2**

This table shows the interpretation of the second speech by the first amateur interpreter.

Source phrase	Interpretation
富二代	Omitted
白马王子	Omitted
骗子	Omitted
屌丝	Omitted
骗他	Lie
幸福	happy
穷逼了逼	Omitted

A majority of the culturally loaded words were omitted only 2 out of 7 culturally loaded words were rendered.

### 3.3.2 Interpretation by Professional Interpreters

Below is a summary of interpretations by professional interpreters who have had extensive exposure to the Chinese culture have mastered the language and have some professional training as interpreters. All interpreters have Chinese as a ‘C’ language and are working into English as their ‘A’ language

**Table 4 A**

#### **Speech 1 Professional 1**

This table shows the interpretation of the first speech by the first professional interpreter.

<b>Source Phrase</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
老外	Foreigner
小吃	Snacks
功夫	Kong Fu
李小龙	Omitted
成龙	Omitted
山寨	Counterfeit
幸福	Enjoy
不错的收益	Better lifestyle
辛苦	Omitted

The interpreter omitted three out of nine culturally loaded words, both proper names 李小龙 and 成龙 were omitted though when prompted about them after the speech the interpreter had direct equivalents.

**Table 4B****Speech 2 Professional 1**

This table shows the interpretation of the second speech by the first professional interpreter.

Source phrase	Interpretation
富二代	Omitted
白马王子	The person who owns the car will bring them happiness
骗子	Person ends up lying
屌丝	Omitted
骗他	Explained
幸福	Happiness
穷逼了逼	Omitted

There were three omissions out of seven culturally loaded words. Interpreter explained twice when there was no direct equivalent for 白马王子 and for 骗子.

**Table 5 A**

**Speech 1 Professional 2**

This table shows the interpretation of the first speech by the second professional interpreter.

<b>Source phrase</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
老外	Foreigner
小吃	Snacks
功夫	Kong Fu
李小龙	Jet li
成龙	Jackie Chan
山寨	Chinese commodities
幸福	Successful
不错的收益	Omitted
辛苦	Tiresome

There was one omission out of nine .There was one misinterpretation of 李小龙 (Bruce lee )as Jet Li the other words were rendered accurately and even when no direct equivalent was offered the message was no misinterpretation.

**Table 5B**

**Speech 2 Professional 2**

This table shows the interpretation of the first speech by the second professional interpreter.

<b>Source phrase</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
富二代	Has a lot of money
白马王子	Prince
骗子	Liar
屌丝	Omitted
骗他	Cheated
幸福	Omitted
穷逼了逼	Omitted

There were three omissions out of seven the other four renditions were accurate and contained no misinterpretation.

**3.4 Summary**

The data collection mechanisms are presented in this chapter and a transcription of the two speeches is presented in Chinese and English, a summary of data collected through speeches the source expressions and their interpretation is also presented in this chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter shall include an analysis of data collected in Focus Group Discussions on how culture affects interpretation it shall also include an analysis of how speeches were interpreted and which coping mechanisms were used when the interpreter comes across cultural bound expressions. Finally, the researcher shall also analyze the report given by a native Chinese speaker after the interpretation was done to see if the message he wanted was communicated as he meant it to be communicated.

### **4.2 Focus Group Discussions Findings**

The researcher listened to the Focus Group Discussions that he had recorded, wrote transcripts and then highlighted areas that had strong points and common themes that were in line with the research objectives. The Focus Group Discussions involved interpreters and native Chinese people who have used interpreters or seen non-native interpreters at work in the building of the standard gauge railway.

The researcher used the Focus Group Discussions to discover if the interpreters were aware of the differences between Chinese culture and western culture and how this was manifested in the language the researcher was also interested in knowing what coping strategies the interpreters used when they encounter culturally loaded words in a speech. Below is a summary of findings.

#### **4.2.1 How Chinese proficiency and cultural knowledge was acquired**

The researcher noted that for all respondents, the knowledge of the Chinese language was acquired formally through the Confucius institute centers and learning in Chinese universities. However, cultural knowledge was acquired through a variety of extracurricular ways including,

- a. Talking to Chinese people
- b. Watching movies
- c. Living with Chinese people
- d. Making Chinese friends
- e. Engaging in Chinese cultural activities like festivals, dance , Chinese bridge

Some seemed to appreciate both formal and informal methods of acquiring the cultural knowledge for example one respondent said:

*My Chinese proficiency is Hsk 5. I learnt Chinese initially for 1.5 years but it's now 7 years and as you know language learning is continuous actually I'm still learning till now ..... I've learnt a lot I've been able to gather Chinese knowledge and culture more than in the 1.5 years I studied in china in that time there was more of the language only and not much of culture but through Interaction with Chinese people and reading widely I've been able to appreciate culture more*

Some learnt Chinese culture through socialization and watching movies

*I watch a lot of Chinese movies especially soaps on YouTube and this helps me to know the names of famous Chinese actors*

Another respondent with the same point of view said:

*I've gathered both coz during my stay in china for 3.5 years I had many Chinese friends who would invite me to their home for festivities and I also observed how they do business and I think that affects how you produce the language and I think pragmatics play a very big role in production of target language somethings can mean different things depending on the context for example if I meet you in the day and call me 小姐 xiaojie I'll take it as miss but if you see me at night and call me 小姐 xiaojie its offensive (means a prostitute) so definitely pragmatics play a very big role in interpretation of cultural terms .*

#### **4.2.2 Cultural elements in Chinese language**

The main uniqueness in Chinese culture and western culture that is displayed through the language was summarized as

- a. Concept of personal space
- b. Greetings
- c. Naming and family relations
- d. Accepting offers
- e. Accepting complements
- f. Conversational nature

#### **Space**

China is a communist country where the people are expected to live in a community and mindful of others in all their actions and therefore the concept of personal space is extended beyond the person the smallest unit being more a family and not an individual unlike in western culture

A respondent pointed out that even while eating they share everything round a table and one serves from central plate showing unity though maybe some westerners may

find that culture unhygienic to them it shows unity. It was also pointed out that while in Kenya we may want to close business deals in an office or a formal setting the Chinese would like to do it over a meal to get to know you better. Because of the extended concept of space, the Chinese may ask questions westerners may passive to be very personal and the respondents in the Focus Group Discussions highlighted some of these questions. They include;

*How old are you?*

*Are you married?*

How much money do you earn?

*How is your father and mother doing?*

Actually several respondents described their reaction to these questions when asked by strangers as shocked, however it's their way of showing affection and trying to show their desire to know you.

### **Greetings**

Another main different element of Chinese culture noted by respondents was that the way Chinese people greet each other is unique and includes some unique traditions. One main difference with western cultures was that the Chinese people generally do not shake hands as a greeting they mainly shake hands symbolically like at the close of a business deal. It was noted that some might bow slightly if they are greeting someone in a more senior position and some may clasp their hands together and

slightly bow in a 拱手 gongshou manner to show great respect and honor or as a special greeting during festivals.

Generally, the casual greeting is not *how are you?* 你最近怎么样? But hello/hi 你好

A unique greeting in china is 你吃反了吗. *Have you eaten?*

Which all respondents agreed had nothing to do with food but was just a greeting that contained a cultural element of Chinese that is caring for others' welfare. However, in English if you asked someone, *have you eaten?* That would probably mean that you had some food to offer.

### **Accepting offers**

One of the unique characteristics of Chinese culture is that they do not readily accept offers for help or invitations to something. For example if one was to offer a Chinese person food they'd refuse it severally before accepting it even if they were starving, this was confirmed by several respondents who had experienced the same. The researcher sought to find out what this refusal had to do with Chinese culture from the interpreters and this elicited a very interesting response:

*I think it's a test of a real relationship with you because if you really care about giving me a cup of tea that you shall insist not lie us where if you say no I withdraw the offer and if you do that they shall see that it's a start of the creation of a genuine relationship I think it's still part of guanxi (relation)*

One of the respondents also noted that with regard to accepting offers for help for example if someone wanted to foot the bill for a meal, the Chinese culture dictates they reject that offer since it leads to the lowering of the person offering especially if

it's a foreigner offering to foot the bill for a meal of a Chinese person in China. Even if the foreigner insisted and paid the bill the Chinese person will ensure they foot the next bill.

### **Accepting complements**

When questioned on how Chinese people react to complements the respondents stated that Chinese culture derived from Confucius teaching which encourages modesty and therefore they would not want to be seen to be glorifying themselves or enjoying the complement even if it was genuinely made and not mere flattery .

The respondents agreed that the typical reaction to a complement for example based on someone's look is

哪里哪里? Literally where? Where?

Or 没有 meaning not really

On inquiring on why they say that the researcher learnt that when they say that it might seem like they really do not accept it or when they do they accept it but do it in a respectable way so as not to elevate themselves. A respondent however noted that it might lack real sincerity and be more of a cultural norm than heartfelt.

*However, socially I think it's very pretentious I think Chinese people are not straightforward I think they want to save face, maybe to retain power distance maybe between them and their seniors.*

Respondents however noted that like in western culture where a complement may not suggest an added interest in something and it might just be a polite gesture in Chinese

culture; complements may lead to undesirable consequences to the speaker who maybe was just being nice.

*'If the complement was on how good the food was they shall keep adding more food , they shall keep saying 再来 zai lai (have some more )because they'd like to honor you even more as guests Its best to say 我起包了 (I'm full ) .'*

A respondent noted another undesired response to complements:

*'You also need to be careful on complementing them on somethings like art They may give them to you as a gift.'*

### **On general conversation nature**

The researcher started with inquiring Chinese natives on how they think their way of communicating is different from the western one. The respondent explained that their nature of conversations is dictated by the concept of what effect what you do or say will have on others and this is borrowed from their concept of personal space which is quite different from the western world .In Chinese culture you are responsible for your family and you community and each individual needs to reflect on the influence of their actions on the society.

According to the respondent “In the western world if you want to say something you say it.... English is simpler and direct ....”He quoted a Chinese sage who said 见却是最美的 *simple and true is best*. But in china the respondent noted that people prefer to be indirect and more poetic in their expression. On the other hand, a Focus Group Discussions with the interpreters revealed that this lack of direct communication had something to do with saving face and avoiding embarrassment.

“Chinese generally don’t want to talk about hard topics what I mean is something that may cause embarrassment they don’t want to come out straightforward with this thing. So it’s something they know off it’s like an elephant in the room but you can’t speak out because maybe it’s their way of life or because in their community when you speak out you are seen as a dissident and if you are you are punished I think this really discourages free expression .”

They are however keen on establishing trust but when they establish trust they start opening up about difficult topics it may not take a day or two but when they do they can share freely.

### **Naming and Family relations**

One of the main teachings by Confucius is filial piety which means being true to ones people and therefore the Chinese people have a deep attachment to their families and the Chinese language is rich in vocabulary that deals with family relations .One big difference is that their naming system has a unique name for all family members in the extended family just like in Kiswahili.

The respondents clarified that this avoids ambiguity in the event that the whole family resides together saying Zhang 3<sup>rd</sup> maternal uncle is a lot more precise than saying uncle Zhang which paves way to more questioning especially considering names are inherited and shared a lot by the Chinese people. When the researcher sought to know

from a Chinese native speaker what are the main differences in naming between Chinese and western culture the Chinese first language speaker elaborate it as follows :

*'Chinese people's live in big extended families so there must be a clear difference in naming*

*In china the family names we use have some relation with the history of the family for example 刘 liu is a kind of arm so the family with that name got it from the Tang or Song dynasty period where people would use it to kill animals or at war .*

*Surname 李 li (lee) is a type of tree (plum tree) and therefore the people with that family name are farmers*

*样 yang (goat )people with this family name are farmers or pastoralist.'*

Another interpreter added that unlike in the western world where we may refer to people by their first name even in a formal context the chinese have a very particular way of showing respect and honor to ones title in society they illustrated that *'Chinese names are followed by title for example a Mr. Han who is a company manager would prefer to be referred to as 韩主任 Han zhu ren by Chinese speaking individuals or manager Han, if he is a teacher he will want to be referred as Zhang laoshi or Zhang jiaoshou (professor Zhang ) which is quite different from western cultures where most people would be satisfied with being referred to Mr. or Mrs. followed by their name and their first names only in a casual setting'*

### **4.3 Speech Interpretation Analysis**

#### **4.3.1 Source phrase 老外**

This apparently simple term has been a source of great debate and controversy based on its connotations and what people believe its cultural roots are, it has been the

subject of research by Zhang and Chen (2008) and Liu and Zhang (2010) who studied the motivations of foreigners to use the term and the connotations of the term respectively.

- The contemporary Chinese dictionary (dictionary compilation office, 2010 p821) defines laowai as “foreigner “ that is used in a humorous way. 老外 is based on two characters 老 *lao* -old 外 *wai* outside and therefore has given birth to misinterpretation that it is a pejorative word by some foreigners though most use it not only casually but even in formal contexts .the justification being that 老 is often used to show honor or respect for example in the word *laoshi*-teacher literally old master

This phrase was rendered well by all interpreters probably because it is commonly used by Chinese people and in Chinese literature widely and because the interpreters may have come across it before even without extensive exposure to Chinese culture.

#### **4.3.2 Source Phrase 小吃**

All individuals must eat in order to survive but what people eat, when they eat and the manners with which they eat are all patterned by culture (Xu, 2012) The Chinese people have over 8000 dishes classified in 8 broad groups and part of this rich food culture is transferred to the language through unique words like *xiaochi* or *huo guo* (hot pot) which represent very Chinese concepts which may be difficult to interpret in other languages with a different food culture.

The word 小吃 is literally little eat and may refer to snacks , bites or fast foods what is very particular with *xiaochi* is that this are foods that are mostly sold in the streets

especially at night , *xiaochi* would generally not be made at home or in formal hotels but rather include roadside foods like omelets burgers rice cakes 饺子 (dumplings) 北京烤鸭 Beijing *kaoya* (Beijing roast duck) pancakes 糖葫芦 *tanghulu* (honey coated fruit on a skewers )*xiaochi* are not meals on themselves and are consumed as a sort of fast food for people on transit .

This phrase was skipped by both amateur interpreters and rendered as snacks by both professional interpreters, interestingly one of my pilot phase respondents rendered it as china's fast foods which would provide a little more cultural insight than simply saying snacks which is a good interpretation but this being a speech about cultural differences between the two

#### **4.3.3 Source Phrase 功夫**

According to the Pleco online Chinese dictionary, *Gong fu* can refer to an exceptional skill to do something or to anything that requires a lot of skill and patience to master. It may also refer to a type of martial arts. The oxford English dictionary defines the word kung fu as primarily unarmed Chinese martial art resembling karate. This illustrates how the meaning of the term has changed over time and how it is now used as an umbrella term for hundreds of Chinese fighting styles such as 太极拳 Taichi 气功 *qi gong* and others.

Only one interpreter out of the four sampled by the researcher interpreted this wrongly, the respondent replaced the word 功夫 with Taichi probably because they are similar and the respondent did not know the difference between the two. The impact of that error might be severe in this speech since it was a speech about culture

and hence it would have been safer to retain the Chinese version of the word if the interpreter was not sure or did not know of the English equivalent.

#### 4.3.4 Source Phrase 李小龙，成龙

These are proper names of two famous Chinese actors Jackie Chan and Bruce Lee who are well known even in the western world for their martial arts movies. The reason the researcher thought it was important to include proper names was so that he could observe if an interpreter was familiar with Chinese popular culture which includes knowing about Chinese music, movies and famous artists. The two have acted in films with English versions meant for the western world for example *Fist of Fury* 1972, *Enter the dragon* 1973 and *Drunken master* 1978 which tell a tale of Chinese martial arts culture and how they resisted Japanese occupation. Therefore, these two are very synonymous with Chinese martial arts and should be at the fingertips of an interpreter who understands Chinese culture.

This section had very diverse outcomes one amateur and one professional interpreter got both correct while one professional interpreter misinterpreted 李小龙 as *Li Xiao Yang* which is totally different from the expected direct translation *Li Xiao Long*, or the more natural Bruce Lee, as he is widely known in the target language English one professional interpreter interpreted 李小龙 as Jet li who is another very famous martial artist, the other three all interpreted 成龙 as Jackie Chan correctly.

When we look at the effect that had on interpretation rendering names in Chinese to a purely English target audience only confuses more since unlike if it were a Chinese audience where the Chinese name would still make sense to them even worse the

interpreter who rendered in Chinese got one name wrong which might again confuse the audience , If we go by Nida's dynamic equivalence ,the professional interpreter would be pardoned for saying Jet li since the two names were used as an example of martial artist actors whose movies are popular in the western world so the message would still be transferred even though accuracy would be reduced.

#### **4.3.5 Source Phrase 山寨**

Yu Huang (Yu 2009) Describes *Shanzhai* as a Chinese phenomenon which refers to businesses based on fake or pirated products, he explains that initially *shanzhai* referred to a bandit economy outside government control but is slowly becoming more and more mainstream and accepted as part of Chinese culture. He describes them as fast flexible innovative and willing to take risk. In the book *Shanzhai A Chinese phenomenon*, he explains that the *shanzhai* phenomenon is not about low cost fake products anymore it's about how this type of Chinese company achieves success without following conventional wisdom and develops a competitive advantage through innovation.

The speaker in the speech is of a similar attitude in fact he explains how the phenomenon came up driven by a great demand for localized products and that with time Chinese inventors have made a lot of headway in making genuine and reputable brands .Therefore the best interpretation in this context would be Chinese imitation products however there was a variety of interpretations of this phenomena some interpreters getting totally lost and losing the flow of interpretation from this point forward because of the term despite the fact that the speaker explained it in his speech .

Out of the four interpreter's only one interpreter, a professional interpreter got it right and expressed it as counterfeit products the others generally interpreted it simply as products or commodities but that misleads the end user of the information since the speaker was sequential saying they used to make counterfeits but now Chinese inventors are making their own protected products.

#### **4.3.6 Source Phrase 幸福**

This is one of the words with the deepest meanings and cultural attachment in the Chinese language, the most direct equivalent of this word is happy and when an interpreter wants the most direct equivalent as prescribed under Nida's formal equivalence happy would be the way to go.

But breaking down the word 幸福 *xingfu* we get 幸 *xing* and 福 *fu*. According to the earliest Chinese dictionary *shuowen* 幸 *xing* mean luck, fortunate while 福 *fu* means blessed therefore be summarized as a feeling of blessedness and fortune. A modern definition of 幸福 would be as defined by Jie Yang (Yang 2014) as a feeling of great pleasure and contentment derived from satisfaction with one life, which is quite in line with Confucius teachings.

In this speech, the meaning is more in line with contentment and satisfaction while in the second speech the same word may have a slightly different meaning. All but one amateur interpreter were able to bring back the general message of happiness and satisfaction, the interpreter who missed completely skipped the section

#### 4.3.7 Source Phrase 不错的收益

This expression has three parts *bucuo* 不错 , *de* 的 a possessive and *shouyi* 收益.

*Shouyi* 收益 refers to income, which can be directly translated without any difficulty however the expression whose interpretation the researcher was interested in observing was 不错 *bu cuo* since it's related with the Chinese concept of modesty and lowering their ego before others wanting to be seen as less important .*Bu cuo* actually means not bad but when the double negative is used to refer to income or prices of items its actually brings the meaning of modesty.

The two amateur interpreters omitted any mention of it while one tried to explain the concept by saying they will have a good life while the other one said they can have a better lifestyle both of which are acceptable since despite the failure to mention the income the message was that through their products their lives are getting better.

#### 4.3.8 Source Phrase 辛苦

In the the book *Beijing notes* Chuqiao Yang (yang 2011) describes 辛苦 by saying *It is hard to find a direct English translation of the word xin ku but it means difficult, hardworking earnest, committed etc .Essentially that a person with less discipline would have perished earlier on. But you continue...*

It is a common way to thank someone in china by saying 你辛苦了 meaning I appreciate your hard work and sacrifice. *Xinku* is not just hardworking as we use it in English it involves some form or the other of abnegation and therefore it is something virtuous and in line with Chinese cultures and traditions. As used in the speech it can be best interpreted as tiresome or laborious maybe even as difficult.

One amateur and one professional interpreter used tiresome while the rest omitted the word, tiresome transferred the speaker's message because he was talking of the struggle of the Chinese people and saying even though it is tiresome /laborious Chinese inventors are happy with their success.

## **SPEECH 2**

### **4.3.9 Source Phrase 富二代**

*Fu er dai* initially referred to people that benefited from the Chinese cultural revolution and amassed great wealth but right now the term refers to second generation rich kids who don't have to work or study for anything , their parents are rich entrepreneurs and they can mostly be spotted in very expensive sport cars. The maker of the speech actually refers to young men using expensive cars in his speech and says though they may be used to impress girls and cheat them into falling in love with the supposed second generation rich kid the car may actually be rented.

Therefore, if we look at the message that was to be passed it has to be that these men appear to be very rich though a reference to the second-generation wealth would be a plus since it is a Chinese cultural phenomenon.

### **4.3.10 Source Phrase 白马王子**

This is the Chinese equivalent of prince charming it is literally white horse prince the white horse itself is held in high regard by the Chinese people and symbolizes royalty therefore the prince who rides it must be very highly placed.

One amateur interpreter omitted it, one said dream or ideal man while the one professional interpreter explained and the final one said prince. The best interpretation would be prince charming though in this case the rendition of prince or ideal man would be sufficient if we were looking purely at whether the message the speaker intended was transferred to the target audience.

#### 4.3.11 Source Phrase 骗子, 骗他

骗子 *pianzi* a noun and 骗他 *pian ta* a verb followed by a subject were words that were of a lot of interest to the researcher *Pian* according to the Tuttle pocket Chinese dictionary (dong 2013) is to deceive, fool and *pianzi* is described as swindler, conman this pretty much gives the general description of the word but a deeper cultural understanding of the word as used in this speech is what is described in Using Chinese synonyms (Zhang 2010) that is charlatan. If we do back translation, a charlatan is someone who deceives for personal gain. This is the exact essence that is captured in the speech by the speaker, the men will borrow or rent expensive cars to deceive the girls and the girls fall for the trap, which benefits the charlatan. The reason the two words are analyzed together here is that a good interpreter can interpret the speech in a way that both senses of the word come out in a sentence or using one equivalent.

Both amateur interpreters omitted interpreting 骗子 *pianzi* and even though both had acceptable equivalents for 骗他 they seemed to miss the point that the person was not just lying it may be habitual, one professional interpreter rendered it as 'the person who the girls may think has a good car and a lot of money but he ends up lying' while the final professional interpreter rendered it as liar.

The researcher thinks that all interpreters made a genuine effort at showing the deception but the fact that maybe that deception was habitual and premeditated was not well communicated only the professional interpreter who used liar as an equivalent seems to have come close to communicating that.

#### **4.3.12 Source Phrase 屌丝, 穷逼了逼**

This word was borrowed from Chinese slang and is a buzzword that initially referred to underprivileged people who lacked many of societal gifts that one must possess (good appearance family background, a promising career or high social status)

This term is often contrasted with the term *fu er dai* or the second generation wealthy kids who are seen as a privileged elite who did not work for their wealth .A neologism of the word 屌丝 represents the Chinese average man's concept of the word they see diaosi not only as someone who is a poor loser but someone who has to work very hard to achieve it and because of that some middle class or well off Chinese people may want to be associated with this initially derogative identity in the same way that the word hustler in English has evolved from swindler or thief to someone who tries their best to make ends meet .However the speaker here refers to diaosi in its pejorative nature with the meaning , “loser ”

穷逼 low 逼 is actually part of Chinese popular culture mainly used by the young internet users it represents what we can best describe as a low life in English , destitute , very poor its used humorously to refer to someone who is seen to be always penniless .

It's used in a complementary way to reinforce the loser diaosi 屌丝 perspective of those who want to portray that they have wealth when in real sense they are penniless low lives.

These words 屌丝 and 穷逼了逼 were omitted by all 4 interpreters however one professional interpreter explained that the men may not have much money they just want to show off and *qiong bi low bi* maybe compared with the English word from popular culture 'slay kings / queens' which refers to people who try too hard to show off when they're really not as rich as they portray themselves to be.

#### **4.3.13 Source Phrase 幸福**

幸福 *Xingfu* was defined earlier as a state of gratefulness and blessedness but its definition like for any word depends on context .In this context the speaker explained that women may think that the men with expensive cars may fulfill them or make them happy but this may not be true since they may be very poor.

One amateur and one professional interpreter omitted *xingfu* while interpreting while the rest rendered it as happy .On the impact this had on the delivery of the message it may not have a very big impact if the interpreter interpreted the fact that the men may just be misleading them that they are ideal men when indeed they were not.

**Table 6: Summary of Errors and Omissions**

The table below shows a summary of errors and omissions from the renditions of amateur interpreters 1 and 2 and professional interpreters 3 and 4.

<b>INTERPRETER NO</b>	<b>SPEECH NO</b>	<b>OMMISSIONS</b>	<b>ERORS</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>SPEECH 1</b>	<b>3/9</b>	<b>4/9</b>
	<b>SPEECH 2</b>	<b>2/7</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>SPEECH 1</b>	<b>2/9</b>	<b>1/7</b>
	<b>SPEECH 2</b>	<b>5/7</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6/16</b>	<b>5/16</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>SPEECH 1</b>	<b>3/9</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>SPEECH 2</b>	<b>3/7</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>SPEECH 1</b>	<b>1/9</b>	<b>1/9</b>
	<b>SPEECH 2</b>	<b>3/7</b>	<b>0</b>
		<b>5/16</b>	<b>1/16</b>

From the table below we can see that out of a total of 16 culturally loaded terms amateur interpreters made 6 omissions and 5 errors as compared to 5 omissions and one error by professional interpreters.

A general summary of errors and omissions reveals that though the difference in omissions between amateur interpreters and professional interpreters seems very slight, when we look at the errors we see a big difference that shows that amateur interpreters committed more errors in interpretation for example interpreter 1 only missed rendering 3 out of 9 terms in speech one but they made 4 errors that shows there was a tendency to try interpret things they were unsure of did not have a deep cultural understanding of . Another important observation was that amateur interpreters would completely omit a big part of the speech and subsequently fail to

render key words shown by 5 omissions out of 7 in speech 2 by interpreter 2 .Post interpretation interviews also revealed that when professional interpreters omitted they either explained it or may have forgotten to render it however since the research was based on how the speech was rendered in the moment knowing a words equivalent and not rendering it when required definitely was a failure on the part of the interpreter .Post interpretation interviews of amateur interpreters revealed that they did not have equivalents or did not know meanings of most of the omitted words.

#### **4.5 Coping Strategies used by Interpreters**

The untrained interpreters omitted what they did not understand and followed a different method of interpreting the culturally loaded speech .The amateur interpreters seemed to rely on a process of listening deverbilisation then reproducing, mostly in reported speech using the third person. Trained interpreters followed the system of listening understanding visualizing deverbilisation then adaptation before rendering in the first person just as delivered by the speaker. Deverbilisation was noted as a key strategy used by both interpreters and was one of the coping strategies mentioned by the interpreters in the Focus Group Discussions. Since Chinese and English have different structure and the connotations of certain words differ completely it was noted that the speaker has to listen to the message understand the message regardless of the words used to express it, visualize it find an equivalent and when none exists but he understood the speakers message he could re-express it in a form acceptable by the target audience. In general amateur interpreters tended to use omission or guesswork as a coping mechanism for the culturally loaded word few omissions are acceptable if the result of the rendition would be a misinterpretation or if it would not gravely affect the message of the speaker but in this case it was noted the omissions

by amateur interpreters did gravely affect the message .Guesswork is generally not advisable in interpreting unless if the context helps one to be almost certainly sure of the meaning but for example guessing that 抄袭 *chaoxi* was supermarket which is similar but slightly different in pronunciation 超市 *chaoshi* gravely affected the message being delivered by amateur one in speech one, changing the meaning from ... *Chinese counterfeit products imitated European products...* to *Chinese products in supermarkets were imported from Europe.*

Another unique coping strategy used by a single amateur interpreter was to render the word in the source language with no change at all .This would work for some universal words and maybe scientific words for example when I say *Musca domestica* (house fly) regardless of the language I am interpreting into its acceptable to retain the Latin word. However for instances where a proper name changes depending on the country then it just leads to more confusion especially since the interpreter got one name wrong while trying to render it in the source language . Cheng long is Jackie Chan and most Chinese people know him by both names, same with *Li Xiao Long*, Bruce Lee who is known by both his Chinese name and his western name in china but since the speech was being rendered into English it would be difficult for the audience to understand who the speech was referring to unless if they were bicultural.

The trained interpreters used similar coping strategies including finding a direct equivalent and when there was none finding an acceptable equivalent in the culture for example 白马王子 *bai ma wangzi* (white horse prince) was not rendered literally but was interpreted as ideal man , prince though the most appropriate rendition would be prince charming. When they understood the message but couldn't find a direct or

cultural equivalent they tried to deverbilise the message, visualize and explain it was also noted by the researcher with some satisfaction in post interpretation interviews that even when the trained interpreter omitted a key expression it was mainly due to memory failing but they could give the equivalent when prompted right after the interview. In conclusion the findings of this study was that amateur interpreter use more risky and less effective coping strategies for culturally loaded language as compared to professional interpreters who manage to adapt and pass the message despite the challenges faced .

#### **4.6 Feedback from Native Chinese Speakers**

To confirm these findings and how efficiently the interpreters passed the message, the speeches were given to the speechmakers who Chinese are speaking bilinguals working in Kenya as engineers. The speeches were played sampled from one amateur and one professional interpreter and played to the Chinese speakers to see if they think the message was properly transferred and what reaction it would elicit from the audience.

The native speakers noted that some key ideas in speech one were:

- i) Many foreigners misunderstand Chinese customs
- ii) They easily get to Chinese foods BUT
- iii) They believe all Chinese know Kongfu
- iv) They don't understand why Chinese disregard Traffic
- v) DESPITE the fact that Chinese industries developed from the counterfeit manufacturing market brought by high demand for localized products they have gradually improved and patented their products and this provides a modest income for many inventors who are now happy.

Some of the words and expressions the native Chinese speakers insisted were key are

误解 *wujie* -misunderstanding

交通 *jiaotong* - traffic

功夫 *gongfu*- Kongfu

山寨 *shanzhai* -Counterfeit

辛苦 *xinku* -laborious

幸福 *xingfu*- happiness

It was noted that in speech two the central message was that

- i) China has undergone a lot of development
- ii) This has caused ladies perception of romance to change
- iii) Romantic relationships are now very materialistic
- iv) Because of the high expectations the women have most men pretend to be rich and mislead the young women into falling for them.
- v) A reiteration that romantic relationships are now very twisted

According to the speech maker key words and expressions in speech two that would influence the message if misinterpreted were:

物质 *wuzhi* -materialistic

好车 *haoche* -expensive car

富二代 *fu er dai*- second generation rich kid

白马王子 *bai ma wangzi*- prince charming

屌丝 *diaosi*- loser

The researcher then proceeded to play the two speeches from one amateur interpreter and one professional interpreter to analyse how well they had rendered the speech and if they had transferred the message in a way that would have effect on the target culture as in a situation where the speech had been rendered directly by the speaker to the audience in their native language.

The results of this test was that it was noted the amateur interpreters missed a few relevant cultural elements in the speech, it was also noted that though the professional interpretation was more precise and accurate the mode of presentation was seen as too formal for the kind of speech that was rendered by the speaker .It was noted that despite lacking some key elements the amateur interpretation sounded easier to understand and conversational to the native speaker. The researcher noted that though both speeches were about something cultural the second speech was more colloquial and conversational using even some neologisms and the tone was more conversational hence, a perfect interpretation to transfer the message and the emotion of the speaker would involve not just having cultural equivalents but adapting the mode of delivery to fit the audience and to reflect the speakers tone.

This section on the evaluation by the native speakers is too brief and casually handled. It lacks discussion that would have enriched this study. For example, it does not have specific illustrations pointing to the errors.

#### **4.7 Summary**

This chapter analyzed the Focus Group Discussions data through thematic analysis illustrating what the key areas of Chinese culture are .It summarized how interpreters acquired knowledge on Chinese culture and their opinions and attitudes about the role it plays in interpretation into English. The chapter also highlights the key coping strategies the interpreters thought would be effective in handling the problem .The researcher analyses how culturally loaded expressions were rendered and follows it by summary of the errors as we explained their impact on the delivery of the message. The actual coping strategies used by interpreters in the speeches were also discussed in this chapter; finally, it shows how the speechmakers reacted to the interpretations by the different interpreters and commented on their effectiveness.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter contains a summary of findings of the research, a test of hypothesis and a conclusion based on whether the objectives were met or not and some recommendations for further research in Chinese English interpretation and cultural studies.

### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

This study set out to investigate the differences between Chinese culture and English culture and how that affects interpretation into English. The researcher was also interested in finding out the different coping mechanism for interpreters when they encounter culturally loaded expressions or phrases that they may not be aware of or may not have direct equivalents for. The study was ultimately supposed to show if professional interpreters with more exposure to the Chinese culture which is the source culture could be able to understand and adapt the ideas communicated into English successfully in a way that native English speakers would understand the message and elicit the same response as speaker who addresses the target audience directly would have had with no help of an interpreter.

Data was collected through Focus Group Discussions, two speeches, which had many culturally loaded expressions, and words. The researcher transcribed the speeches, highlighted the key terms, and observed how four interpreters rendered them. The results were summarized in tables and explained in chapter 4.

The results were as follows

- i) Out of 16 culturally loaded words, amateur interpreters omitted 6 and misinterpreted 5.
- ii) professional interpreters who had more exposure to Chinese culture had 5 omissions and 1 misinterpretation,
- iii) All respondents confirmed that the language level was not a challenge; they understood the core message but some phrases and cultural words were unfamiliar to them.
- iv) The second speech that was conversational and colloquial caused both groups of interpreters more problems than the first speech that was explanatory.
- v) All interpreters had problems rendering words based on popular culture and neologisms.
- vi) Interpreters in general tended to use dynamic equivalence to find equivalents and there was minimum or no literal translation.
- vii) For amateur interpreters the most common coping mechanism was skipping the expression or guessing what was said.
- viii) For professional interpreters the most common coping mechanism was explaining when no direct equivalent came quickly to mind.
- ix) The amateur interpreters represented the message in a more direct and easy to understand way even if sometimes they were misinterpreting.

### **5.3 Hypothesis Testing.**

There were three hypotheses for this study stated as follows:

1. The challenge posed by culturally loaded words or expressions makes it difficult to interpret.
2. In-depth knowledge of source culture improves the quality of interpretation.
3. Interpreters with good source cultural knowledge can overcome the challenges posed by culturally loaded words and find equivalents in the target language.

The first hypothesis was that culturally loaded words make it difficult to interpret, from the findings presented in chapter 3 and 4 it is evident that that all interpreters had problems with some of the culturally loaded word with a total of up to 5 out of seven omissions in a speech and up to 4 errors in interpretation of a speech with 9 culturally loaded words or expressions. This difficulty was also noted in a break in the train of thought. When an interpreter encountered a culturally loaded word, some stammered hesitated or went silent for a while. This therefore proves the hypothesis that culturally loaded words makes it difficult to interpret.

The second hypothesis was that an in-depth knowledge of the source culture improves the quality of interpretation this would mean that interpreters who understand Chinese culture well shall interpret better than those who don't when they encounter the culturally loaded words or expressions .The findings of the study was that when we analyze omissions the interpreters with a deeper understanding of culture had slightly fewer omissions but since the researcher had differentiated between an omission and an error it would be vital to analyze the errors in interpretation. When we look at the errors we found out that the amateur interpreters were misinterpreting a number of the

words they rendered even though the difference in omissions were fewer .This brought us to the conclusion that in fact those with deeper cultural knowledge were actually more accurate and precise. This proves that deep cultural understanding of the source culture leads to one making a better interpretation therefore this hypothesis holds true.

The third hypothesis was that interpreters with good cultural knowledge can overcome the challenges posed by culturally loaded words .This was also tested and according to our research while amateur interpreters would get stuck, go silent or start to stammer or repeat when they came across a culturally loaded word which they were not very familiar with or had no direct equivalent, professional interpreters would find a way to communicate the message ultimately. This mainly involved explaining, forgetting the words and getting the message and trying to adapt the message to a way the target audience would easily understand. This therefore proves the hypothesis that interpreters with good cultural knowledge can overcome the challenge posed by culturally loaded expressions

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

The following were the objectives set to guide the research at the beginning of this study: To identify the main elements of Chinese culture that are difficult to interpret into English.

1. To highlight to how source culture knowledge affects interpreting of Chinese to English and to what extent it does
2. To analyze the effectiveness of coping strategies used by interpreters on cultural bound expressions.

3. To compare listener perceptions of an interpretation of Chinese /English from an interpreter with intercultural knowledge with those of an amateur interpreter with little cultural knowledge

The first objective was met since the researcher was able to identify the differences between Chinese and English structure, center on the cultural elements and highlight that the main cultural areas that were difficult to interpret from Chinese to English were Greetings, names and titles, accepting offers and the connotations of some words and popular culture. A few words were selected from this and tested through two speeches the outcome being that most interpreters had problems rendering these words or expressions into English.

The second objective was met fully because the researcher was able to show that source culture knowledge indeed affects interpreting and may go to the extent of distorting the meaning if one misinterprets or omits an important cultural element in interpretation because of lack of sufficient information. This was seen through omissions leading to ambiguity or lack of precision and misinterpretation of the message delivered by the interpreter.

The third objective sought to analyze the coping mechanisms and this was met also since different coping mechanisms such as skipping the expression, explaining, sticking to the form of the source were seen with explanation being the most used though finding a cultural equivalent in the target culture was seen to lead to more clarity.

The final objective was to compare listener perceptions of the interpreters by replaying the message to the native speaker of the language to see if the intended

message was communicated and would elicit the same reaction and this too was done effectively .The native speaker noted that interpreters with deeper cultural knowledge interpreted more accurately and the amateurs omitted some key elements of their speech even though their rendition sounded more easy to understand.

This results in summary show that source knowledge culture is very important in interpreting and so is choosing the best coping mechanism which should lead to a communication of the same message regardless of the words or form used to deliver it .It was also noted that even when the right cultural equivalents were found it is important to deliver it in a clear and concise way so as to avoid losing the clients message. Dynamic equivalence should guide the process of interpreting cultural terms and it was noted that in Chinese literal translation or guessing would often lead to odd constructions in English.

### **5.5 Recommendations**

This research showed the main differences in Chinese and English language and culture and showed how these differences affect interpretation however due to the challenge of not having enough trained Chinese interpreters in Kenya , this research was limited to contrasting amateur and trained Chinese interpreters' cultural awareness but more research needs to be done on trained interpreters and how they deal with intercultural awareness difficulties in specific domains like medical interpreting and court interpretation.

The study was also limited mainly to liaison type consecutive interpretation and therefore further research can be done into simultaneous interpretation and how

cultural awareness affects interpretation in other domains such as court interpretation of medical interpretation.

The researcher also noted that since most Chinese cultural knowledge is acquired informally, trainee interpreters need to have regular interaction with native speakers so as to increase their intercultural awareness. The biggest challenge in interpretation was in internet buzz words and neologism therefore it is vital that Chinese interpreters use the internet as a social and learning tool not just through books but through online interactions with native speakers so as to keep up with the latest neologisms.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

#### Personal information

- a. What is your highest Chinese language education level?  
 Certificate  diploma  undergraduate  masters
- b. Where did you study Chinese?  
 China  Kenya  both china and Kenya
- c. What was the main language of instruction?  
 English  Chinese
- d. How long have you been an interpreter?  
 0-1 year  1-2 years  over 3 years' experience
- e. Have you lived in china?  
 Yes  no
- f. If so, how long did you live in china?  
 Six months  one year  two years  3-5 years
- g. How did you acquire your knowledge of Chinese culture  
 Classroom  teaching  engaging in cultural activities  self-study
- h. What do you think are the reasons for mistranslation problems when translating Chinese to English? Please select all that apply.  
 Grammatical differences between Chinese and English  
 Using machine translation tools without professional translator editing  
 Lack of culture awareness

## **Culture and interpretation**

1. What key differences do you find between Chinese and English?
2. What are the specific culture related challenges you have had in your interpretation?
3. Do you find it hard interpreting etiquette into English?
4. How do you interpret elements of modest refusal into English?
5. Have you had a disagreement with a client over cultural differences during interpretation?
6. How do you express dissatisfaction into English?
7. Do you have problems translating idioms or sayings?
8. Do you think a longer stay in china increases ones cultural knowledge?
9. Does increased cultural knowledge improve one's Chinese to English interpretation?
10. How?
11. Do interpreters require specialized training on source and target cultures to improve on their interpretation?
12. Does a cultural brief of the client's culture help you to interpret better?

## **Speech transcriptions**

### **Amateur one speech 1**

Today we are going to discuss foreigners attitude about Chinese *wujie*.. I don't know what that is..and basically what understood is that when people come to china to travel ..gap.. gap ...gap ...they think all Chinese people can do *taichi* like *li xiao yang* or *li cheng yang* ..*Cheng Long* sorry. They think Chinese transport or traffic is not the same as in their country because Chinese people are many and I think the country's he was specifically talking about are U.SA and Europe. Then he goes on to say in china

we just walk and do not observe traffic ruled, Here he says foreigners. Something, .. Something.. Chinese products ... he says ten years before or ten years ago, most Chinese products in the supermarket were imported. That's something I got ...or those products were not really made in china but right now most Chinese specialists are becoming more successful because the Chinese people themselves are making their own products and slowly by slowly Chinese lives are becoming better

### **Amateur 1 speech 1**

This one is basically talking about love and he is saying right now love is interesting or something like that many Chinese ladies when they see someone with a nice car they think that that person has money they are really interested in that persona and think that person is their dream or ideal man but mostly while in real sense they don't have money it's, like that this men who decide to chest them may go and rent this car to cheat them and the Chinese lady will fall for that trap so its saying love is becoming commercialized or too complicated , that way .

### **Amateur 2 speech 2**

China has become more developed and more complex. Ladies have become so impulsive they see men with good cars and they think maybe that man will make her happy, buy her a house buy her a car.so relationships of most Chinese ladies have become more materialistic. Men may rent a car so as to show off and when ladies see that men lie to them and the ladies think they may make them happy and that's a lie , so the relationship of Chinese ladies have become more materialistic.

## **Amateur 2 speech 2**

There is a misunderstanding of foreigners coming to china they think all men know Kong Fu because of some movies by Jackie Chan and Bruce lee .There is also an issue with traffic its quite interesting that Chinese people don't follow traffic rules they just gather around the traffic light and they cross the road as a group, there is an issue about.. There is an issue about. What do we call.. products made in china, they think, you know some years before some products were foreign products with foreign design and architecture but now there has been a change and some of the Chinese companies have made their own products and they are happy about it, it's a bit tiresome but since they have their products they can make much more money and life can be much more better than before

## **Professional Interpreter 1**

### **Speech 1**

I'd like to talk to you about foreigners misunderstanding towards the Chinese ,even though foreigner come from far away countries like the U.S they get used to the local snacks but they're not used to how traffic is in china for instance when one person crosses at the traffic lights the rest will follow. This is not the same in the U.S where traffic rules are highly respected, also the foreigners are always suspicious about Chinese counterfeit products and this in the past probably about 10 years ago was the case there was a lot of knock off products but now there are more and more patent rights this people who make this products can enjoy better lives because now they have patents which means their products are protected.

## **Speech 2**

Alongside the rapid development of the Chinese economy crops up other society issues, for instance the Chinese ladies value money and other material things which are not related to love they look at a car brand and think the person who owns this car will bring them happiness and has a lot of money and the man ends up lying because he has rented a car and this lady ends up being cheated and therefore I believe the society is becoming twisted

## **Professional interpreter 2**

### **Speech 1**

Today let us talk about foreigners misunderstanding of China, when most foreigners come to tour China , they get suited with the snacks that are served in china but when it comes to other things they have a misunderstanding about china .Most foreigners believe that every Chinese knows Kong fu this is mostly because of movies they have seen about Jet li or Jackie Chan , also most foreigners don't get used to Chinese traffic this is because most Chinese people don't pay attention to traffic rules when they get to the road they just cross they don't follow traffic rules but most people from America or Europe pay attention to traffic rules also in china like ten years ago china used to import products from Europe but now most people are getting used to Chinese commodities , now most Chinese are trying to make their own things and although their life is tiresome they are living a good life.

## **Speech 2**

Because of Chinese development or the growth of china most Chinese girls are materialistic this things are not related to love, most Chinese girls see a guy who drives an expensive car and they think highly of him and she thinks they are the dream man or prince that she wishes would marry her but maybe he is not .Some of them think that they are men with a lot of money but maybe they're just liars so for now we can say that most of the Chinese ladies don't get into relationships because of material wealth or material benefits.