ANALYSIS ON INTERPRETATION CASES UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF PIERRE BOURDIEU’S THEORY OF PRACTICE --BY TAKING ZHANG LU’S INTERPRETATION OF PRIME MINISTER’S PRESS CONFERENCE DURING 2015-2019 AS EXAMPLES

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ARTICLE DETAILS

ABSTRACT

Combining the Field, Capital, Habitus of Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice with the interpretation of prime minister’s press conference during 2015 to 2019, the paper attempts to find out appropriate ways of professional interpreters and successful strategies on different occasions for improving the performance of interpreters. Some suggestions are given by analyzing the professional interpreter Zhang Lu’s performance.

KEYWORDS

Pierre Bourdieu’s Practice Theory [2]; Field; Capital; Habitus; the interpretation of prime minister’s press conference.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is regarded as a symbol of thought and expression of culture, and language activities have a long history. The history of interpretation is as long as the history of mankind, but after World War I that interpretation has developed into an independent discipline. A researcher in Western Interpretation Research: History and Status Quo in 2002 divides Western interpretation into four stages, namely the early stage of the 1950s, and the experimental psychological research stage in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Xiaoyan, 2002). From the 1970s to the mid-1980s, it is the stage of the staff research department, and the vigorous development stage was the booming stage from the late 1980s to the present.

Domestic research of interpretation is still in infancy, and there are problems such as non-standard interpretation industry, imbalanced supply and demand of professional interpretations. This is because the characteristic of interpreting is the immediacy. Interpreters need to finish bilingual and even cultural conversion in a short time, which make it difficult to have a standard for judgment. On the other hand, interpretation is a complex language and cross-cultural social activity. Therefore, it has become a trend to put interpretation into a large social and cultural background to analyze it. It is very necessary to carry out interpretation analysis from the perspective of sociology. The three core concepts of Pierre Bourdieu, Field, Capital, Habitus have opened up a new world for interpretation research. Moreover, the domestic research on Bourdieu’s sociology in the field of interpretation not only starts late, but also the depth and breadth of the research are not enough (Yuechen, 2011). Therefore, the paper hopes to find out the successful strategies adopted by professional interpreters on different occasions by combining Bourdieu’s view and interpretation of prime minister’s press conference, and find appropriate methods to help improve the practical performance of interpreters on different occasions. Some suggestions are given by analyzing the professional interpreter Zhang Lu, a professional interpreter at the press conference of Chinese and foreign journalists, author summarizes some suggestions for improving the performance of interpreters.

2. PIERRE BOURDIEU’S VIEW OF PRACTICE AND PRESS CONFERENCE

Bourdieu is one of the most prestigious sociologists in the world. He has published the classic sociological book Summary of Practical Theory in 1972. Due to the wide applicability of his sociological theory of practice, many scholars began to use his theory in interpretation and interpretation studies in the 1990s. Some Chinese scholars also discuss the social factors of interpretation from the perspective of Bourdieu’s sociological theory (Lijji, 2008). But compared with the achievements of Western countries, Chinese scholars still need to have a long way to study. Some researcher analyzes the relationship between cultural capital possession and discourse power in the field of interpretation culture from Bourdieu’s cultural field (Hongman, 2007). Practice is the product of the dialectical relationship between habitus, field and capital.

Bourdieu explains the relationship between practice, field, habitus and capital in the book Practice and Reflection, namely (Habitus * Capital) + Field = Practice (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2004). This formula can be understood as “actors” with habitus and capital competing in a field to...
carry out specific social practice activities. Therefore, it is of great significance to use sociological theory to carry out substantive discussions in the context. The paper will analyze the interpretation content of Premier Li Keqiang’s press conferences for five consecutive years, namely 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. The main purpose is to explain that interpretation is not a simple and isolated language conversion behavior, but an organizational activity carried out in a historical, social and cultural context. The behavior of the interpreter is the common result of field, habitus and capital.

In order to promote mutual understanding and communication between both parties, self-study and the ability of interpreters should be strengthened. For different occasions, the environment and external factors and proper play are also very necessary. The press conference is a window to learn about the foreign policy adopted by the Chinese government. The Prime Minister and the reporter who raises the issue will discuss the hot and sensitive issues of the past year. The main purpose of holding a press conference is to organize good relations with the news media. It is also an effective means of disseminating various types of information and seeking objective coverage in the press. It is also a very important form of international exchange.

3. Interpretation Practice = (Interpreters’ Habitus * Interpreters’ Capital) + Interpretation Field

Bourdieu’s practice concept applied to the field of interpretation and interpretation can be explained as follows: Interpretation practice = (Interpreters’ habitus * Interpreters’ capital) + Interpretation field. Interpreters compete in interpretation practice through interpretation habitus and interpretation capital to complete interpretation practice activities. Interpretation activity is a practical activity with institutional background, with its own history and unique culture. This is a small scene in this big social world. At least three parties, the spokesperson and the listener speak different languages, and the interpreter translates these two languages to participate in the interpretation process. It is also a place where various field, habitus and capital come together to play its role.

3.1 The influence of Field on the interpretation of the press conference

The field is a network of objective relationships between various locations (Bourdieu and Pierre, 1993). In a highly differentiated society, the social world is composed of relatively autonomous social small worlds, and these small worlds are spaces with their logical and objective relationships. These “social small worlds” are various “fields”. At the recent press conference of Premier Li Keqiang from 2015 to 2019, he answers a total of more than 80 questions. To be precise, the interpretation space of the press conference is unstable and does not possess the autonomy characteristics of independent fields. This is because the press conference is mainly conducted by specific government agencies and will be affected by the relevant field and the habitus of interpreters. In the press conference, the field of interpretation involves both political fields and cultural fields. It has been the case for many years in a row.

The interpretation of the press conference is in the same place, which is the lobby. Under the guidance of the interpreter’s own habitus, the parties involved as interpreters are engaged in actual activities in this field with the accumulated capital they own. Interpretation activities require interpreters to make full use of relevant knowledge and skills in interpreting practice, follow loyal, accurate, equivalent and neutral norms, and provide equal language and cultural services to all parties concerned. Therefore, the interpreter should be responsible for the interpretation at the press conference. Moreover, the behavior of individual interpreters at press conferences does not always represent themselves. It usually represents the interests of the country. The content of interpretation is closely related to national policies. Therefore, this is a very formal activity, and interpreters are not only responsible for themselves, but also for the country. In other words, when the interpreter has accumulated enough symbolic capital in the field of interpretation, he will have a certain influence in the field of interpretation. Zhang Lu’s interpretation feature is to use some vivid and authentic spoken expressions, flexibly handle metaphorical expressions, easy to understand and accumulate a strong capital position.

3.2 The impact of Habitus on the interpretation of the press conference

Habitus is constituted by a series of historical experiences accumulated and deposited on actors, which is external common internal social rule and internalized form of values (externalized internalization) of actors, formed as an interpretation model that guides oneself in understanding the operation of the world, judging things and how to act. This section will analyze the specific performance of professional interpreter Zhang Lu in the press conference from the perspective of political sensitivity, information addition and deletion, and interpreter’s tone. Finally, some suggestions are given for the promotion of interpreters.

3.2.1 Case analysis of political sensitivity

In 2019, a reporter from Peng Xin News Agency asks the Prime Minister that he mentioned technical issues among the issues concerning Sino-US trade. On technical issues, whether the Chinese government will force Chinese companies to help them monitor other countries. Premier Li Keqiang replies,

Example 1. I believe, in the曲折和前行- 继续前行这个大趋势是不会、也不应该改变的.
Zhang interpreted: …So I expect this relationship to continue forging ahead despite twists and turns.

When talking about Sino-US relations, Premier Li Keqiang’s ‘I believe’ when expressing his opinion, Zhang Lu interprets as “expect”. During the interpretation process, Zhang Lu converts most of the words with subjective words into positive colors Vocabulary. It can not only reflect our principle of peaceful coexistence, but also our country’s foreign policy. In addition, in 2018, Premier Li Keqiang answers questions raised by reporters on changes in the situation on the Korean Peninsula. He says,

Example 2. 我们希望看到各方拿出诚意，付诸行动，尽快把半岛核问题拉回到谈判桌上来，使半岛无核化与半岛和平稳定能有新的进展，这对有关各方、对世界都是好事.
Zhang interpreted: China will continue to do all it can to take forward the denuclearization process and uphold peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. We hope that all parties …We believe this serves the interests of all parties and the world at large.

When talking about international relations, Premier Li Keqiang used the Chinese character “我们”. But Zhang Lu does not interpret it into the equivalent of “we”. At the press conference, when the Chinese government tries to convey China’s position and policies, Premier Li Keqiang represents China. Therefore, it is more objective to use “Chinese government” instead of “we”, which in turn highlights the identity of the country and reflects the political sensitivity of the interpreter. In most interpretation or interpretation environments, neutrality and fairness are the basic moral requirements for interpreters. The interpreter should remain indifferent throughout the process and should not participate in any party or take a stand.

As the only person with bilingual cultural capital, interpreters manipulate the language to enhance the power of the institution that hired her. In 2017, a reporter from CNN mentions the remarks made by their new President Trump, saying that China has been stealing American jobs. The following is a summary of Premier Li’s answer,

Example 3. 虽然中方是贸易顺差，但是企业生产的产品利润 90%以上是美国企业拿走了 中国的生产生产企业拿到的利润最低只有 2%－3%.

Zhang interpreted: ... He said that although China runs a surplus in trade with the US, for his company, over 90% of the profits go to US firms, and the profit margin of his business is a mere 2 to 3 percent.

Zhang Lu interprets "拿" as "go" instead of "take". The word "take" often means something subjective, which may leave a bad impression on reporters that China accuses the United States of doing so. On the contrary, if "go" is used in this sentence, then subjective attitude will not be involved in this case. As the holder of social capital and symbolic capital, such as knowledge, resources, systems and prestige, Premier Li is in a favorable position in the current field, while reporters who raise questions are clearly in a weak position in communication. Zhang Lu believes that if she directly interprets "take", it may confuse the reporter and even leave a bad impression on him. By making full use of the power conferred by the bilingual cultural capital of interpretation in the interpretation process, Zhang Lu demonstrates her subjective initiative in the co-construction of meaning through interpretation. Premier Li simply says the truth of the status quo and hoped that the United States can see it clearly in a more objective way.

3.2.2 Case analysis of information addition and deletion

A reporter from Peng Xin News Agency in 2019 asks the Prime Li about the relationship between China and the US, Premier Li Keqiang replies.

Example 4. 中美合作两大经济体，经过几十年的发展，合作，可以说是你中有我，我中有你，是为了一起推动两大经济体间，使得不现实的，也是不可能的。

Zhang interpreted: China and the US, as two large economies, have become closely intertwined through years of development and cooperation. In the answer of Premier Li Keqiang, "你中有我，我中有你" is interpreted "entwined", one word is used to highly condense these 8 words, and it can also reflect the relationship between the two countries. The main function of the interpreter in the interpretation process is to convey the meaning of the speaker in a clear and simple manner.

In 2018, Premier Li Keqiang says in response to a reporter from China Daily about the reform of "deregulation and service".

Example 5. 这是一个很重要的问题，上届政府伊始，我们抓住转变政府职能这个“牛鼻子”，推动简政放权、放管结合、优化服务改革，就是要理顺政府和市场的关系，激发市场的活力和社会创造力。

Zhang interpreted: You asked a very important question. The transformation of government functions was high on the agenda during our first term ... "牛鼻子" in Chinese metaphors the main contradiction of things or the key to the overall situation. It is reasonable to explain the meaning of such words. If Zhang Lu interprets it directly without further explanation, it would confuse our foreign friends. But if explains, time is not allowed. Therefore, Zhang Lu adopted the most commonly used "high" in English, which clearly and concisely expressed the attitude and viewpoint of the Chinese government.

In 2016, the questions raised by CCTV journalists were:

Example 6. 我的问题是关于五险一金的，现在社会上降低五险一金的呼吁是比较多的......

Zhang interpreted: A question about contributions by the general public and businesses to the five major social insurance programs and housing provident fund. There is a rising call by the general public for cutting personal contributions to these social security packages and housing provident fund.....

The first half of the question involves the five major social insurance plans and housing provident fund issues. According to the interpretation of the 2016 press conference, this is not the first time the term “五险一金” appears, which means the five major social insurance plans and housing provident funds. Although it has appeared in press conferences in recent years, it is still uncertain that all the audience present at the 2016 press conferences have a specific and clear concept of this phrase. However, the interpretation practice that has taken place before has formed the habitus of interpreters. Therefore, when the interpreter is in a similar field with similar conditions, the interpreter is likely to act unconsciously and perform similar behavior. Therefore, when an interpreter was required to explain the word during the first interpretation, considering the time limit, Zhang Lu only makes a simple literal conclusion, namely the five social insurance plans and housing provident fund.

This may confuse journalists who are not familiar with the term, and is not conducive to the correct and complete transmission of information. More importantly, the habitus formed by the former habitus may become an obstacle to interpretation. In addition, every second is important in interpretation. It is very important and necessary for the interpreter to quickly identify repeated information and simplify the target language. Therefore, interpreters should be familiar with the content and lay a solid foundation for interpretation.

In 2017, Shenzhen News reporters asks Premier Li Keqiang whether public entrepreneurship and innovation will last. Premier Li says,

Example 7. “双创”可以说是应运而生，在全球化、“互联网+”的时代，我们推动“放管服”改革，也促进了“大众创业、万众创新”。

Zhang interpreted: We believe our initiative of mass entrepreneurship and innovation is a response to the call of our time, the government self-targeted reform of streamlining administration and delegating power is also to boost this public enthusiasm for business start-ups and making innovations.

On this issue, since the reporter mentioned the phrase “大众创业万众创新”, Premier Li simplified the term to “双创”. When dealing with the word, Zhang Lu first interprets all its meaning, that is, our initiative of mass entrepreneurship and innovation, and then she simplified it to “this initiative.” “大众创业万众创新” is also mentioned at the 2016 press conference. This phenomenon shows that in the field of interpretation, interpretation is regarded as a product of society. Practitioners in the field of interpretation have a certain degree of stability. It comes from social history and is also a hermit in the body of practitioners. As for Zhang Lu, this habitus combines her past interpretation experience, and from time to time plays various roles of perception, judgment and behavior. Therefore, when faces with complex and diverse situations, Zhang Lu will put forward the most reasonable response. Therefore, when “放管” appears for the first time, Zhang Lu can easily find the corresponding complete interpretation and successfully explained it.

3.2.3 Case analysis of interpreter’s tone

In the interpretation of Zhang Lu every year, we found that the overall voice and intonation are very comfortable. Moreover, as a female interpreter, Zhang Lu gives the impression of being more friendly. In 2019, Reuters reporters asks questions about the intensity of tax cuts and charges. Premier Li Keqiang told reporters,

Example 8. 这位记者朋友喜欢单刀直入，那我也开诚布公。

Zhang interpreted: You went straight to the point in your question and I will not beat about the bush.

In this sentence, the Prime Minister used a total of two Chinese idioms, one is “单刀直入” and the other is “开诚布公”. “单刀直入” metaphor speaks straightforwardly. “开诚布公” means to treat others with sincerity, be honest and selfless, open your heart, and treat others with sincerity. Zhang Lu interprets the single knife straight into the straight straight to the point, a very clear and concise interpretation, let people understand the
profundity of our Chinese.” “开诚布公” is interpreted as beat about the bush, which also uses an alliteration, not only a very authentic spoken expression, the meaning is clear at a glance.

In 2015, in the last few minutes, Premier Li Keqiang tells reporters.

Example 9: 我可以在回答你一个问题。

Zhang interpreted: You can ask me the last question.

In this sentence, the subject uses the second person "You" to make foreign journalists feel China's friendly sincerity and respect. In a very simple sentence, if you use "I" as the subject, you will feel a sense of superior and inferior. Therefore, Zhang Lu makes a good judgment and deal with it accordingly. And we observe Ms. Zhang Lu’s interpretation, and the frequency of parallel sentences is very high. This is due to the difference in sentence structure between Chinese and English. Logical connectives are rarely used in Chinese texts, but English relies too much on logical connectives to organize texts. When interpreters convert Chinese into English, the interpreter needs to add a large number of functional conjunctions to make the interpretation conform to the English expression habits (Wen and Han, 2013). In the case of time constraints, choosing a parallel sentence connected by “and” is a safe interpretation strategy. They have to fully interpret what the prime minister wants to express and export it in a way that is acceptable to both parties. The accumulation of years of practical experience in interpreting has improved Zhang Lu’s level of interpretation, and cultural and symbolic capital have also become stronger.

3.3 The influence of capital on the interpretation of the press conference

Capital is an effective resource in a specific field. Capital embodies a kind of labor formed by accumulation, which is accumulated in the form of materialization and physicalization. Capital can be divided into economic capital, cultural capital, social capital and symbolic capital (Jian, 2019). In interpretation practice, this paper will deeply discuss the role of interpreters in various relationships in the process of competitive capital, analyze the capital held by interpreters and how they use various capitals to change the target structure. Among the various forms of capital in the interpretation field, cultural capital is the most important capital and can be transformed into other capitals, shaping the hierarchical structure and function of the interpretation field (Bourdieu, 1990). Born in Shandong Province, junior high school was sent off for outstanding academic performance, high school showed extraordinary talent in English. In 1996, he was admitted to the Diplomatic Academy. On March 7, 2010, when Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi answers questions from reporters, Zhang Lu is the interpreter. As of March 2019, Zhang Lu has served as an interpreter at the premier's press conference for 10 years. Zhang Lu has powerful interpretation capital and cultural capital in the interpretation industry. In particular, the interpretation of Chinese classical poems, “亦余心之所善兮，虽九死其尤未悔”. Zhang Lu’s interpretation is for the ideal that I hold dear to my heart, I'd not regret a thousand times to die. Among them, “nine death” is interpreted to a thousand times, it expresses the original meaning vividly. Not only can she deliver Chinese voice to the world comprehensively, accurately and vividly, but she also plays a vital role with high-quality interpretation activities.

4. CONCLUSION

The paper mainly discusses the application of Bourdieu’s three sociological concepts in the interpretation of Zhang Lu. By analyzing cross-cultural interpretation and interpretation texts, the author draws conclusions that are closely related to practitioners, trainers and producers who study professional standards and specifications of interpretation, and users of interpretation services. The paper studies Zhang Lu’s practice and interrelation in interpreting, demonstrates the necessity of sociological research in interpreting press conferences, and puts forward some reasonableness to readers and interpreting training institutions or schools. Suggestion: While emphasizing the importance of interpreter skills in professional training, self-study and enhance the ability of interpreters should also be strengthened in order to provide professional and standardized interpreter training through Bourdieu’s sociological theory. For different occasions, the environment and good external factors and proper play are also very necessary. However, the cited examples have not yet reached the empirical quantification standard for interpreter behavior research. Although other scholars have made similar points, these points have not attracted enough attention. All factors, the interpretation field, the habits of the interpreter, or the various capitals possessed by the interpreter have an intricate relationship with the related fields, such as the field of power and the field of culture. Therefore, one can observe the intricate relationship between interpretation and society, culture and globalization. All stakeholders including interpreters should participate in the discussion and begin to think more deeply about interpretation.

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