

Typology and the Translation of Interpersonal Meaning

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Abstract—In translation, the study of meaning is the most important basis. Translation is a dynamic process. The transfer of meaning from one language to the other one depends on a lot of factors. Typology is one of the important factor to affect translation. Translator has to consider the situation of the context, the purpose of the translated material when choosing the words, the tone to express the exact meaning, especially the interpersonal meaning. This paper used literary style, technical style speech and business letter as the examples to show the importance of interpersonal meaning and the way to transfer it.

Index Terms—interpersonal meaning, translation, typology

I. THE INFLUENCE OF TYPOLOGY ON TRANSLATION STRATEGY

Different typology has its own contextual, text-typological, pragmatic conventions, so different typology requires different translation strategies, that is to say different contexts call for different translation solutions. The different types of text based on communicative functions are used to be the basis of translator's decisions. In her translation-oriented text typology, Katherina Reiss set out from the hypothesis that the decisive factor in translation was the dominant communicative function of the source text. This would mean that any particular text, belonging to one particular text type would allow just one way of being translated. Failure to recognize the text-type can be a major stumbling-block in translation practice. Hatim and Mason (1990) found from the translations by the 12 translator trainees that text type was the biggest hinder in translation practice. If translators misinterpreted text type, they would produce unsatisfying translation product. So it is one of the most important goal to recognize text action and text type in translation practice. Because of the standard communication ways are used repeatedly, certain conventions can be formed in different genre conventions. Ways with the same function will be accepted as common practice in certain situations. Genre conventions are the norms thus play an important role in text production. The translator should attempt to give a correct and complete representation of the source text's content and should be guided, in terms of stylistic choices made by the author contribute to the meaning of context, producing a certain effect on the readers. This effect is the most important element, so it has to be taken into account in translation. The stylistic choices in translation are naturally guided by those made in the source text and its context. Generally speaking, people can easily detect the differences of styles and they also can provide suitable utterance in their own culture and language, but when it comes to the foreign language, they will lack of this kind of sensitivity. This requires the deep investigation of the translation theorists in this field.

Text genres are characterized by conventional features, and genre conventions play an important role in text production. The second chapter has analyzed the relation of genre and register, then what is the strategy to analyze their role in translation? The principal criteria that turns a collection of communicative event into a genre is some shared abstract and macroscopic features. In this sense, text type can have a two-level typology. At the macro-level, genre affects the whole strategy of the text, so understanding the genres of the original text is essential to decide the global strategy in translation. At the micro-level, the individual features are determined by context of situation: field, mode and tenor, so on the lexical level or grammatical level, all the individual components of the original and the target text have to be corresponding. In fact, the most common way of recognizing text type is through the situation and the compositional features of the text, so before we translate, we have to examine the translation brief (Nord, 1996). The translation brief contains information about the source language and the target language, the time and the place of the translation practice, the medium of the translation and the motivation of the text production.

Vocabulary and grammar are not the only things the translators have to deal with in their translation. There are some other factors that affect the translation strategy. As to the translation of the interpersonal meaning, these factors seem even more important.

In the paper "*Interpersonal Meaning and Nature of Translation*", the writer has examined the relationship between context and meaning, and this section will study how interpersonal meaning is expressed in different styles in translation. We will use some styles as examples to explain this question.

II. BRIEF ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENT TYPOLOGY AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON TRANSLATION

Equivalence is the ideal aim in doing translation work. On the word level, translators have to use the most equivalent term between the target language and the source language. They must have the same sense on the level of tense, gender

and the number of the words. On the grammatical level, it is much more difficult considering the different grammatical structure of the source and the target language, so the translators have to change according to the rules of target language (Thompson, 1996). Another very important aspect is textual level. Three factors including the target audience, the purpose of the translation and the text type have an vital influence on the translator to decide what kind of tone should be used to keep the coherence in the target language. The following paper will discuss the translation strategy of several text types. The first one is literary style. In this kind of text type, the translator has to consider the interpersonal meaning in the original source language, in which the writer would be more likely to use lexical ways to express the interpersonal meaning. So whether the interpersonal meaning is expressed to the right point is one of the most important criteria in evaluating a translation of literary work.

Literary style:

e.g. *He loathed politics, hated business, and avoided everything that might upset the even tenor of his ways.*

He lived on a small income which he spend in its entirety without even toughing the capital. He was quite devout, would never contradict anyone, and as he had a bad opinion of everybody he spoke well of them.

If you mentioned politics to him he would say, "I'm nothing-neither one side or the other: I don't care which party runs the government. I'm just a poor sinner who wants to live at peace with everyone.

His meekness, however, was of no avail against the finality of death. It was the only definite thing he ever did in his life.

These paragraphs are taken from a short novel. Usually novel language doesn't express the content by telling what happens, but also using the imagination of the readers, so the language must be vivid and has the function of stimulating the interest of the readers. From these paragraphs we can see that all the sentences are declarative sentences giving information to the readers, and the language can make the reader thinking about the hero's personality.

In this part, the interpersonal meaning is expressed by verbs, adverbs, adjectives, nouns, and even the management of these paragraphs.

1. declarative sentences

2. verbs: loath, hate, avoid, contradict

3. adverbs: ever, quite, never, only, just

4. adjectives: small, devour, poor

5. nouns: sinner, meekness, no avail

6. management of the paragraph: each of the paragraph is very short, and many sentences in these paragraphs are short. These short sentences and short paragraphs give us the feeling that the author wants to tell the readers every aspect of the hero.

7. modality: might

All the above mentioned methods transmit some sense if interpersonal meaning, and the reader can read the emotions of the author between the lines, so in translation, the translators should use words that can clearly show the sentiment of the original text.

他厌恶政治、耍手腕，凡是扰乱他平静生活的一切他都躲着。

他靠这微薄的收入维持生活，花钱节俭。整个开销从不动用本金。他待人十分诚恳，从来与人无争，即使他对大家有什么看法，也尽拣好的说。

你若向他谈及政治，他总会说：“我什么都不是——既不是这一派，也不是那一派。无论哪一个党派执政我都不在乎。我只不过是一个罪人，愿同大家和平共处。”

虽然他秉性温驯，也奈何不了了终有一死。这是他唯一做得很果断的事情。

Though the language is very prosaic, the author tells us about the hero with a clear sentiment, and it is this sentiment that makes the readers feel that they are very near to the hero, so when the translators translate, they have to pay attention to the interpersonal meaning of the original. From the translation we can see that there is no one to one equivalence between the source language and the target language. For example, in the first paragraph, “凡是，都” is used in Chinese to translate the word "everything" of the original text, and in the second paragraph, “即使...也” is used to translate the original conjunction "as". In novel style, many of the lexical meanings can show the sentiment, so the translation has to convey the sentiment meaning to the target text, that is to say, the translators should use corresponding commendatory terms and corresponding derogatory terms. Besides these features, some conjunctions can also clearly show the interpersonal meaning.

Language in novels should have the function of creating a kind of atmosphere that the readers would feel no distance with the heroes in the novel. It should try its best to create the effect that the readers are in the place where the matter happens. In English, this can be realized by using tense. Now let's look at the following example.

e.g. *There are no speeches, for who can speak at such a moment? A comrade advances and reads out the names of the provinces and towns represented at the funeral, the coffin is to lie on the platform until four o'clock.*

It is now ten o'clock in the morning. The guards of Honor, chosen from the various factories, provinces, organizations, and regiments of the Red Army, is to be changed every ten minutes. Only the Kremlin chimes break through the silence. Then a comrade again advances and cries, "workers of the world, Unite."

This is the description of Lenin's funeral. The author used present tense to describe what happened in the past to

create a vivid effect. It will make the readers feel that they are looking at the funeral and deeply impressed by what happened. So in these two paragraphs, the interpersonal meaning is expressed by the finites. There are no such corresponding usages in Chinese, so Chinese has to use lexical ways to translate the interpersonal meaning which is expressed by tense in the original text.

A very important literary style is poem. The translating of poem is so hard that is far beyond the ability of many translators. Some even argue that poems are the source language that can never be translated into a target language satisfyingly. So far from the translations, we can find that some contemporary poems have been translated either from English to Chinese, or from Chinese to English or other languages. When translating poems, translators must bear in mind that form and sound are as important as meaning. The conveying of the ideas in the original is not enough, the art and beauty that are expressed by certain forms and rhythms are also very important. Usually it is impossible for the translator to translate the poem into the target language using the same form, because the quite different language structures. Translators need to make up the loss of the meaning in a flexible way. The most important factor to decide whether it is satisfying is to see whether the original conception and style have been kept.

Technical Style:

The biggest difference between technical style and other styles is that there are a lot of terms which are not often used in other styles. When translating this kind of text, the translators should be aware that the words in the original are usually neutral, and in the translation the corresponding terms should be chosen. These technical terms make the meaning of the articles objective and impersonal.

e.g. *"In offices the automation equipment used to store information, carry out computations and make routine decisions is called an electronic computer." The simplest computer once filled a room. "While processing the data, it can store 60,000 characters for reference purposes on magnetic drums like this." Now it fills your spare time. Forget that file-o-fax, instead you can carry your E-mail, your current projects, your phone numbers and your daily schedule in a palm sized device that weight less than 6 ounces and costs far less than the cheapest laptop. You write on the screen. The machine recognizes your writing and translate into text. An entire industry read the writing on the wall and translated that into money.*

Hawkins figured that to succeed, his palm-sized computer would have to do four things. It would have to work faster than a proper organizer, and be able to share information with a PC. It would have to cost less than \$300 and fit in a shirt pocket.

In these two paragraphs, there are few words that show any sentiment. It is just tells the readers a fact and let the readers know some new knowledge, and it doesn't need the readers to imagine something when they read the text, so the function of this kind of style is to provide information. Technical style doesn't show feelings or emotions in the original language, so in translation, the words that are chosen in the target language should transfer the meaning objectively, and the sentence structures in the translation are more connected than the literary style. The translation of these two paragraphs is as the following.

“在办公室里，用来储存信息、执行计算和做出日常决策的自动化设备叫做电子计算机。”最原始的计算机曾有间房子那么大。“当处理数据时，它可以在像这样的磁鼓里储存 6 万条供参考用的数据。”现在它完全占据了你的业余时间。把那些文件夹和传真机忘记掉，取而代之的是，你可以把你的电子邮件、最近的工作文件、电话号码和你的日程表都带在一个手掌大小，不足 6 盎司重，远比最便宜的手提电脑还要便宜的设备里。你可以在屏幕上书写，它确认你的书写并译进正文文本。整个电脑业都看准机会推出这种产品赚钱。

霍金斯认为要成功，它的掌上电脑必须具备四个条件。那就是它的速度一定要比记事簿快，能跟个人电脑分享资讯，价钱不能超过 300 美元并且可以放进衬衣的口袋里。

e.g. *The paper introduces the design approach of aerodynamic structure of quasi-high speed electric locomotive that is based on the foundation of conventional locomotive with the two streamlined ends. This approach has been used to the design work of several other kinds of aerodynamic structure of SS8 quasi-high speed electric locomotive. This approach is feasible since it has been proved by the data from the wind-tunnel mode.*

本文介绍了以传统机车外形为基础、对机车端部适当流线化的准高速机车启动外形的设计方法，并具体应用到韶山 8 型准高速电力机车启动外形多方案设计，最后风洞实验证明此种设计方法是可行的。

In this paragraph, there is no lexical or grammatical way to show any mood or modality. It just talked about the design of this locomotive objectively. So in the translation, translator can transfer the meaning in an objective way, without showing any emotion. And in technical style, in order to show objectivity, passive voice is often used.

Speech Style:

Speech style can also be classified as literary style. Here, speech style is talked separately to show its features in a clearer way. Usually facing a big audience, the speaker will choose some vocabularies which can give others a deep impression. These usages can be illustrated using the famous speech *Apology* made by Socrates.

In the speech, Socrates addressed the listeners by calling them "oh, judges". The exclamation word "oh" can emphasize his mood. He used contrast in the sentence, "no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or death after". In fact, contrast is the common way in a speech to show the speakers feeling. "They have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good." Facing death, the great philosopher was still showing his humor. Another sentence that can show the clear opposite meaning in the speech, "I to die, and you to live." Socrates used this sentence

to end the speech and he was sentenced to death after the speech. Some adjectives and adverbs in the speech can clearly show the speakers love and hate. Socrates used inverted order to show the emphasis meaning in the sentence, "he and his are not neglected by the gods; nor has my own approaching end happened by mere chance".

In the speech, Socrates talked about death in a calm way, which showed his braveness. In the speech, he made contrast to enhance the tone. All these emotions have to be transferred in the translation version using lexical and grammatical ways. In the translation of this speech, translator has to find the equivalent expressions in Chinese vocabularies.

Business letter:

Dear sir/madams,

On June 1st, we have received your letter. In the letter, you have listed the prices of the farming machinery. Since we are quite interested in this line of machinery, we often got inquiries about them from our partners in the USA. We shall be able to give you favorable orders, if the quality of the product is acceptable and the prices moderate. We shall be grateful if you like to send us some samples with the best terms and reasonable prices at your earliest convenience.

Yours truly,

In this letter, the writer used vocative "dear", adjectives, "suitable, moderate, best, considerable", adverb, "often" and modal operator "shall" to show the clear characteristics of the business letter. All these usage can express the politeness of the writer and his wish to establish business relationship with his counterpart. All the above usages make the tone of the letter very moderate. In Chinese, we have some specific phrases that are used in letters, such as "贵", "兹", "谨", "乞谅", "收悉", "承蒙", "为盼". These phrases can express the respect to the counterpart and the modesty of the writer. The translation of the speech is as the following.

敬启者:

贵公司于6月1日的来函已经收到。我们已获悉贵公司的农用工具价格。我公司对此类产品颇感兴趣,我方经常收到美国有关客户的来函询价,如贵公司提供的商品质量优良,价格适中,则可向贵公司大量订购。望早日收到贵公司的样品与最优惠的条件,谢谢。

谨上

III. CONCLUSION

The study of meaning is the basis of translation and translation practice is by no means an easy job. It requires not only a translator who has a command of two languages, it requires linguistics messages and training of translation strategies in a more serious way.

Translation is not a direct change of words from the source language to the target language. It is a craft, to some degree, an art which demands the translators' personal competence in translation professionals (Munday, 2001). It demands linguistic skills as well as language command. It calls on the ability to make clear the distinctions, not only in the source texts to be translated, but also of the contexts, including the situation in which the translation takes place. By analyzing the differences of those text types, we can also see the importance of context. Different situations call on different translation methods on the lexical and sentence structure level and textual level. During these years, on the construction of translation discipline, the dispute whether translation is science or art has been argued for a long time. In the writer's view, science or art is not so important as the method and laws of the translation practice. If we want to present satisfying translation, we should have a full knowledge of the both languages since each language has its own characteristics. Since it is possible to express the same meaning in two languages, it is possible to convert the meaning from one language to the other. To be a qualified translator, one has to study and compare the two languages. In the study, translator has to summarize the differences and similarities of the two languages and understand the laws behind them.

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