

Rhetorical Ways of Interpersonal Meaning and Translation Strategy

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Abstract—People use many rhetorical expressions to make the language vivid and expressive. Different languages may have different modes of rhetoric because of the different traditions and different modes of thinking. Whatever rhetorical speakers use, it shows kind of interpersonal meaning, so to transfer this interpersonal meaning of rhetoric appears very important. This paper examines the usual rhetorical expressions and their strategies of translation.

Index Terms—interpersonal meaning, rhetoric, equivalence

I. INTRODUCTION: RHETORIC AND TRANSLATION

A. *Rhetorical Ways in Communication*

Rhetoric began in ancient Greece two thousand years ago. It is a science in studying language. Rhetoric chooses the expressive ways in communication according to different situations. In daily interactions and all kinds of written texts, people use many sorts of rhetorical ways to express their meaning in a vivid way, which gives the listeners or the readers a deep impression. Rhetorical, to a great degree, determines whether the speaker is eloquent or the writer is versatile. Both English and Chinese have been researching and improving the art of using language, and each of them has a unique set of rhetoric. The rhetorical expressions in both languages share some similarities and also differences. Most of the expressions in English can find the similar or equivalent expressions in Chinese. But rhetorical expressions often show the features of source language which cannot easily be translated into the target language. Because of the different history, geography, tradition and living environment, people in different countries may choose different ways to express the same idea or concept. In translation, for these kinds of untranslatable expressions, translators have to translate in a flexible way. Sometimes, the forms of the original language cannot be retained in order to translate the meaning. In other words, it is quite difficult to translate meaning and form at the same time in the field of rhetorical usages.

B. *Translation and the Criteria of Translation Works*

Translation plays a very important role in cultural communication and international trade. It is also vital important in the spreading of religious beliefs. To decide whether it is an ideal translation, these factors are often considered. First, whether the translation is accurate. The meaning should be the same or as close as possible to the source language. Second, whether it is natural. The translation version should use the natural forms in the target language. Readers of the translation version can have the natural feeling as reading the works of its own language. The third is communicative. The translation version should express all aspects of the meaning in the source language (Bassnett, 1980).

Translation involves a lot of factors including the features of the two languages, the language competence of the translators and the situation in which the translation takes place. Translation can never be an easy transfer of words from the source language to the target language (Catford, 1965). The quite different language systems may add difficulty in the translation process. There are many kinds of translation modes, such as oral to oral translation, written to written translation, translation with pictures, etc. Whatever the mode, translation is always a dynamic process, and the translation products are different from different translators. For two thousand years, translation theory was concerned mostly with literary or religious works. No matter what kind of translation, a satisfactory translation is possible, but in most cases, an ideal translation is so hard to accomplish due to the extremely complicated factors of inter-lingual communication. For the last forty years, with the development of science of translation, theories about the translation of general language began to be emphasized (Hatim, 2000). The study of this paper is to summarize the rules of the rhetorical expressions in English and Chinese from the linguistic point of view, and then apply them in translation practice. In order to provide useful translation tips, some of the features that can be summarized should be declared in a definite way.

II. TRANSLATION OF RHETORICAL EXPRESSIONS

A. *Translation of Metaphor*

The study of metaphor has aroused the interest of many scholars, but the study of metaphor has been neglected in translation theory. In recent years, some scholars argue if metaphor could be translated due to the different thinking

modes of the two language systems. The biggest problem that hinders the translation of metaphor is that different cultures have concepts and symbols in varying ways, and so the metaphors are usually cultural-specific. Such as in the example "She is a cat", the sense is spiteful and evil in English, whereas in German, a cat is not associated with spitefulness or evil but with grace and elegance. So the literary translation from English to German would not communicate the metaphorical meaning. Another example shows that some metaphorical meaning in German cannot find the equivalence in English. "Sie ist eine alte Ziege" expresses a blend of stupidity and unpleasantness in German, however the negative meaning is not associated with goat nor cat in English. So the translation of metaphor, as Newmark puts it, "a new truth is created that requires a suspension of disbelief, a fusion of perception and imagination" (Newmark, 1985, P.296). The concept of "new" relies greatly on the metaphor itself. During the process of translation, it is often not so easy to keep the original form, that is to say, the formal equivalence is not easily maintained to transfer the same meaning. Otherwise it could provoke misunderstanding to the readers or audience of target language. Dynamic equivalence, which is defined as a translation principle that using various approaches to transfer the meaning instead of translating literally. Dynamic equivalence can obtain the same impact to the target readers that the one aroused in the source language. So dynamic equivalence has been favored by many translation theorists as the expressions are more understandable.

Another sense of metaphor that has to be mentioned is the fading metaphor, which is the result of lexicalization from the familiar quote. Some theorists argue that among the types of metaphors, the more bolder and more creative the metaphor, the easier it is to translate in other languages. Some severely criticize this, claiming that all metaphors should be translated literally. About whether a metaphor could be translated, Mary Snell-Hornby says "whether a metaphor is translatable means whether a literal translation could recreate identical dimension. How difficult it is to translate, how it can be translated and whether it should be translated at all cannot be decided by a set of abstract rules, but must depend on the structure and function of the particular metaphor within the text concerned." (Mary, 2001, P.58).

e.g. *She was born with a silver spoon in her mouth.*

The phrase "silver spoon" means that she was born into a rich family. The expression may be different in another language, but has the similar meaning. In this case, we can choose the public-accepted usages, instead of changing its form in order to get the equivalence with the source language. In Chinese, there is one expression "含着金钥匙出生" can equally describe this meaning. So the translation will be "她是含着金钥匙出生的。"

The problem of non-equivalence:

A great amount of factors including linguistic or extra-linguistic will influence the appropriate equivalence in a given context (Steiner, 2001).

On lexical level, the words and expressions in their situations are sometimes called lexical sets. Sometimes there is no direct equivalence for a term in the target language. Or the target language has the similar concept, but there is no such appropriate word. Or sometimes one language considers as the meaning may not have the same point of view in the target language.

Translators have to use strategies to solve the problem. One way that is frequently used is to translate the source language by a more general word. The opposite way is to translate the original language by a more neutral word with the less expressive meaning. In these two ways, the meaning is not transferred truthfully, so the translators need to have some notes to give some explanation.

In some cases, translators will choose to use a cultural-characteristic component or expression with a term in the target language which does not have the exact propositional meaning, but the term will probably cause a similar reaction in the target language.

Another way of solving this problem is to paraphrase using a related word. In the case when the idea expressed by the source language is lexicalized in the target language, but in a different way.

Using a loan word with some explanation can also solve the problem. This way is particularly common when translating culture-specific items. When a word in a text is repeated several times and there is no equivalent term in the target language, it is useful in using a loan word and it can be used later in the translation.

B. Translation of Simile

Simile uses the similarity between the object and the vehicle. In English, "like", "as" are often used to show this kind of rhetorical expression. Using some other easily-understood expressions to describe will create a vivid impression.

e.g. *Cool as a mountain stream! Cool as fresh Consulate.*

This is the advertisement of cigarette Consulate. This kind of cigarettes adds mint to tobacco, which makes a cool taste. So the advertisement uses a mountain stream to show the taste. When translate, translator can translate it literally:

凉如高山流水，爽似康斯丽特。

The Chinese version keeps the original simile "a mountain stream". The word "高山流水" gives consumers a cool and fresh sense. This kind of expression will arouse the interest of readers and the translation not only keeps the original meaning, but also expresses the meaning.

Another example is the sentence to talk about the comfort of shoes for children. It says, "They are as soft as mother's hands". It can be translated literally as "像妈妈的手一样柔软".

C. Translation of Parenthesis

Parenthesis is isolated from other grammatical elements, but it has the close relationship with the whole sentence. Parenthesis has the meaning of calculation, guessing or showing attitude of the speaker. Parenthesis is often put at the beginning or in the middle of the sentence. Between the parenthesis and other grammatical elements, there are usually prosodic pause. Usually parenthesis is used to stress or relax the intension, and sometimes, it may have very strong interpersonal meaning.

e.g. 你听我说, 我说这话绝对是为你好!

The parenthesis “你听我说” is put at the beginning of the sentence to show the leisure of the speaker, and it can also attract the attention of the listener. Parenthesis shows strong emotion of the speaker or writer. The interpersonal meaning in this kind of rhetoric is clear, and the translation version should express the same functional meaning.

e.g. The peasant woman receives nothing since whatever she earns is the property--as she herself is--of the husband who has brought her as his wife.

The parenthesis "as she herself is" emphasizes that the peasant woman has nothing, and even herself doesn't belong to her.

Translation strategy of parenthesis:

Usually the parenthesis in the original is also translated into the same kind of parenthesis in the target language.

D. Translation of Climax

When people arrange elements of language, they tend to be guided by their degree, that is, they will list their degrees from small to big, light to heavy, low to high, and slowly get to the climax. This arrangement can make the language well-balanced. The rhetorical method is often used in speech and argumentation, which can make the speech and the view of the argumentation powerful.

In climax, the choice of words is very important to show the degree, which makes the effect of rhetoric. The degree can arouse kind of emotion in listeners or readers.

Translation strategy: In order to express the original interpersonal meaning, translators have to understand the original meaning and keep the climax structure in the translation. Usually the climax shows the meaning is becoming stronger and stronger, so the translation version should keep the mood. In the way of choosing words in the target language becomes very important.

Anticlimax is the opposite side of climax, which can also create a rhetorical effect.

E. Translation of Antithesis

Antithesis is the rhetorical ways of putting the two quite opposite phrased in symmetrical structure.

In Antithesis, there is always an apparent contrast. By using contrast, the meaning that the speaker or writer wants to convey is more clear. And using the contrast, the interpersonal meaning that attached to the rhetoric is more easily grasped by the listener or writer. At the beginning of the long novel "A Tale of Two cities", the writer used many antithesis to show the contradiction of the city. And this paragraph is one of the most famous writing in the literature history, which is partly due to this kind of rhetoric. The antithesis shows the contradiction of the society and the author's disguise towards the dark society.

e.g. 横眉冷对千夫指, 俯首甘为孺子牛。

One attitude is the hatred to the enemy, and the other attitude is the broad love to the partners. When these two attitudes were put together, the interpersonal meaning is expressed more clearly. The translation strategy of antithesis is to keep the contrast in the original, and the contrast in the original can help us in our choosing suitable words.

The contrast makes the viewpoint of the original text stronger, and when translators do the translation work, they should keep the contrast in the original. But the target language may not have the similar form to express the contrast meaning, so translators have to deal with this kind of structure creatively. Translators have to bear in mind that antitheses use words in pair to express the strong mood, so it is better for the translators to use pair words in the target language.

F. Translation of Personification

Personification is a kind of rhetoric that uses human being to describe other objects, producing a more vivid picture. Personification is often used in commercials and advertisements. Consumers can have a sense of closeness and they can be more easily attracted by the artistic language.

e.g. *Whatever it hurts, we'll heal it.*

无论哪里有伤痛, 我们都会治愈。

This is one sentence from the advertisement of leather bag repair service. It uses the word "heal" to express the meaning of repair. Bags are treated as something like a person, so customers will be very happy to see that their bags are carefully taken care of. Translation can keep this personification.

G. Sentence Structure and Translation Strategy

Simple sentences have strong emphatic function. The short sentences have a strong rhythm, which may express a

series of action which happen in a short time, producing a feeling of anxiety and nervousness. The following example can show the effect that short sentences can produce.

In Ernest Hemingway's novel "*Big Two-Hearted River*", he used a lot of short sentences. These simple sentences can express the light feeling of the hero after he returns from the war.

Because the short sentences also have the function of expressing interpersonal meaning, translators should catch the meaning in their context and keep this sentence form in translation.

About language structure, there is another point that is very important and it needs to be paid attention in translation. English is characterized by hypotaxis, which means English gives more attention to the sentence structure, so formal cohesion is much emphasized, while Chinese is characterized by parataxis, which means that the sentence structure is not so close, and the relation between sentence parts is often loose and not clear. This is also the reason while there are more function words in English. Chinese clauses do not use so many function words and the sentence parts are related to each other through meaning. So it is said that Chinese sentence is like a bamboo, and the upper joint continues from a lower one, but the English is developed like a tree, with many branches extending from the stem. In translation, this kind of difference has to be paid more attention in order to present an ideal translation.

H. Translation of Repetition

To stress some kind of mood or sentiment, one particular word, phrase or sentence may be used again and again, which have a rhetorical meaning. Repetition can often be found in speech, poetry or other argumentation articles. It can attract the attention of the listener and give them more impressive impression.

e.g. In Tomas Hood's "*song of the shirt*", repetition is used as an important way to express the author's idea. In the poem, the word "*work*" is repeated six times. The repetition shows the hardship that the workers are enduring. By reading these repetitions, readers can sense the pressure in the worker's heart and their will to fight against the unfair treatment to them.

Generally speaking, if there is repetition in the original, we should also use repetition in the translation. Such as in the above example, "*song of the shirt*", in order to express the same interpersonal meaning, the same repetition should be used in the translation version. But there is some difference in this rhetorical usage. Some of the repetition in Chinese cannot have the same effect in English.

The translation doesn't use the same repetition, but it also can express the same meaning of the original. On the contrary, if translators use the same repetition with the original sentence, it would seem redundant.

In Chinese, there is always a repetition in the comparative structure. Such as the repetition in the following example.

这件事情条件成熟了的话可以去做，条件不成熟的话不要去做。

If the conditions were ripe it could be done, and not otherwise.

The repetition in Chinese is not translated into the same repetition in English. The only word "otherwise" can express the meaning of contrast with simple structure. In this case, translators can use the usages according to the features of the target language. In other words, keeping the form is not so important as the meaning. If the meaning can be expressed clearly without the repetition in the translation version, it can be dealt with flexibly.

On the contrary, sometimes in the translation, some elements that doesn't repeat in the original have to be repeated in the target language. So the strategies in the translation of repetition are various according to the different context. Translators can choose the suitable ways in the target language to convey the same meaning, without being confined to the repetition in the source language.

I. Translation of Parallelism

Putting phrases or sentences that have similar structure and corresponding mood in order makes parallelism. Because the sentence is composed by phrases or sentences with similar structures, this rhetorical means can create the effect of foregrounding, which in turn attract the attention of the readers. In argumentation articles, parallelism will make the article's orderliness and argument clearer to the readers.

e.g. And now, you who have so long been bound to the most narrow and material views, you who have denied the virtue of transcendental machine, you who have always derided your superior-behold!

诺，你这个一向目光短浅，见解鄙俗的人，你这个否认超常医学功能的人，你这个一贯嘲笑前辈的人，睁开眼睛瞧瞧吧！

J. Translation of Rhetorical Question

Using question to express the strong positive or negative meaning. It needs to answer of the speaker or reader. In rhetorical question, the positive form can express the strong negative meaning, and the negative form can express the strong positive meaning. Rhetorical questions can catch the attention of the listeners, and they even can make the listeners think, then the speaker and the listeners may reach the state of resonance.

In the speech made by Patrick Henry, *Give me Liberty or Give Me Death*, he used four continuous rhetorical questions. "*Why stand we here idle? What is that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?*" The series of rhetorical questions attract the attention of the listeners and make the speech very powerful.

e.g. 在战争时期，工程质量这样事关紧要的问题，难道是可以争论的问题吗？

Is the quality of projects which is of vital importance the question that can be argued during war time?

The rhetorical question shows that the question is definitely not arguable, and this rhetorical usage makes the interpersonal meaning clearer to the readers.

Since the rhetorical questions show the strong feelings of speakers or writers, translators should keep this rhetorical expression. Such as in the speech made by Patrick Henry, the four rhetorical questions should use the same pattern in the Chinese version.

K. Translation of Continuous Tense

In English the interpersonal meaning can be expressed by the tense, especially the continuous tense, which can show the feeling of anger, surprise, affection or impatience etc.

e.g. Fifty-seven his hair is just beginning to go grey.

The present continuous tense shows the feeling of surprise.

There is no corresponding usages in Chinese, so translators have to transfer the meaning with some lexical usage.

他五十七了才开始头发变白呢。

Paper napkins were costing the school \$28.57 per case but were available at just \$8.76.

学校为购买餐巾，每盒竟付款 28.57 美元，而其他地方价格仅为 8.76 美元。

So, Chinese can use “竟”“竟然”，“居然”to express the feeling of surprise, use “确实”，“总算”，“倒是”to express the feeling of agreement, and use “就”“竟”“倒”“到底”to express the feeling of disgust or censure.

III. CONCLUSION

The analysis of this chapter shows that many grammatical ways of expressing interpersonal meaning sometimes do not have corresponding usages in Chinese, for example, the four types of moods, the modality, the subjunctive mood, the repetition and the tense, etc. In these cases they have to be changed into lexical ways to express the interpersonal meaning. For some of the rhetoric, it is important to keep the original rhetoric if the two languages have the same usage in that kind of rhetoric. Translators can deal with the different ways of translation according to the context.

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