

The Translation Strategy of Impersonal Subjects from the Perspective of Newmark's Communicative Translation Theory

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Abstract

English impersonal subject sentence is a common sentence pattern in English written language, and it is also a unique language phenomenon in English. Due to the differences in Chinese and Western cultures and ways of thinking, it is difficult for translation to understand and use this sentence pattern. The communicative principle emphasizes the translation of the translated text to maximize the communicative purpose and function of the original text. This principle is suitable for unique texts such as inanimate subject sentences. By applying this principle, the negative transfer of Chinese is avoided, the English thinking mode is formed, and the language The expression is more authentic and accurate.

Keywords

Impersonal Subject; Newmark's Communicative Translation Theory.

1. Introduction

Traditional Chinese culture has a strong concept of "the unity of man and nature" and "things are made by humans", so it emphasizes subjective thinking and tends to observe, analyze, reason and study things with human beings as the center. Reflecting on language expression, Chinese often uses "animate subject".

In comparison, the British and Americans "pay attention to the impact and function of objective things on people", are accustomed to object thinking, and tend to regard the objective nature as the center of observation, analysis, reasoning, and research. In terms of language expression, English mostly uses "inanimate subjects".

There is a big difference between the way of forming sentences in English and Chinese. In order to make the semantic content of sentences appear naturally in English, abstract nouns or abstract concepts are often used as subjects. This kind of subject is acted by inanimate nouns, called Inanimate subject. This special sentence pattern has a strong anthropomorphic or simulant color. However, there is no such usage in Chinese. How to translate it into Chinese based on the literal meaning will violate the expression habit. Therefore, we are required to deal with it according to the situation[1].

2. Newmark's Communicative Translation Theory

British translator Peter Newmark believes that the translation method used depends on the type of text. Based on the three text types he proposed, Newmark put forward the famous two translation theories, semantic translation and communicative translation in A Textbook of Translation. Communicative translation means that the effect of the translation on the target reader should be as equal as possible to the effect of the original text on the original reader. Therefore, communicative translation requires the translator to interpret the original text according to the language and culture of the target language, eliminate ambiguity, and leave no obscurity to the reader to achieve the purpose of communication. Yang Shizhuo (1989) pointed out that semantic translation focuses on the semantic content of the source language, while

communicative translation focuses on the reader's understanding and response[2]. Choosing to use communicative translation generally follows the following two principles:

2.1. The Purpose of Translation is Reader-centered

Communicative translation pays more attention to the reader. The purpose of communicative translation is to let the reader understand the meaning of the text more clearly and to make the communication more smoothly completed. Therefore, translators are very flexible when translating the original text. They only need to show the general meaning of the original text. They are not limited to translating the original text word by word to achieve the purpose of making readers more understandable and making communication between the two parties more convenient.

2.2. Faithful to the Source Text

We should use communicative translation to translate many texts and text fragments that are informative, imperative, interpersonal, partly aesthetic, and source language, because these texts do not need to be rigidly presented in the original text. The main purpose is to enable readers to deeply understand the meaning of the text.

3. Categories of Impersonal Subjects

English sentence patterns are mostly impersonal subjects, reflecting objective judgment, logic and accuracy. Impersonal subjects are generally divided into:

3.1. Nouns Expressing Specific Things as the Subject

Use the nouns of specific things as the subject, these nouns are inanimate, and these nouns are matched with smart verbs, and a lifelike feeling is on the paper. In Chinese, we are more accustomed to emphasizing human behavior in this sentence, using "I" as the subject [3].

3.2. Nouns Expressing the State of Mind and Body as the Subject

English often uses words that express emotions or physical conditions as subjects. When translating, it is necessary to transform the subject into people, because only people have emotions, and physical conditions also specifically refer to people's physical conditions.

3.3. Nouns Expressing Time and Place as Subject

In English, nouns that indicate time and place are used as the subject with a spiritual subject, which can make the expression of time and place lively and interesting, as if time and place have human characteristics. When translating, the time and place should be changed to time adverbial or place adverbial, which is easy to understand in Chinese.

3.4. Gerunds or Nouns with Verb Meaning as the Subject

Such subjects include the noun forms of some verbs such as "arrival, invention, sight", or some nouns with verb meaning such as "thought, idea", or gerunds such as "visualizing, seeing, looking at".

3.5. Sentence Pattern of Impersonal Pronoun "it"

In the first case, it is the subject. It is called an unmanned pronoun in English grammar. It represents time, weather, distance and measurement. It has no specific meaning. It is indispensable to act as a subject in a sentence.

The second case is that it is used as the formal subject. Sentences with It as the formal subject can generally be interpreted in the following two ways. One is to advance the clause; the other is to change the passive voice to the active voice.

4. The Application of Newmark's Communicative Translation Theory in Impersonal Subject Sentences

Zhao Lianbin (2012) pointed out that the translator's translation behavior was originally intended to meet the reading needs of readers of the target language text. Therefore, he should carefully grasp his own translation behavior and strive to translate "suitable" and "faithful" target language texts. Therefore, in this case, the translator needs to follow the principles of communicative translation. The form of communicative translation is more flexible. It makes the original content easier to be accepted by readers while retaining the meaning of the original text. Sometimes, some modifications are made to the original text to make its grammar more regular and remove some useless information. Using this method will enable readers to have a clearer understanding of the content of the original text and achieve the purpose of the text. Therefore, the following methods will be adopted when translating no one called the subject:

4.1. Adjust Word Order

The so-called "word order" is "the order of each level of language unit in the higher level of language unit". Since English is a morphological language, it pays attention to linguistic correspondence in form; Chinese is a semantic language and it pays attention to coherence in the meaning of writing. Therefore, in the communicative translation of the Chinese translation of political speeches, it is necessary to adjust the word order in time to conform to the habitual expression of the target language, enhance the readability of the translation, and pay attention to the communicative effect[4].

English is a morphological language; Chinese is a semantic language. If it is literally translated, the word order is not adjusted, and the translation will be incomprehensible and incoherent in the sense of writing. Translating regardless of the communicative purpose will only make the text lose its original expressive meaning and cause confusion to the target readers. Therefore, the translator adjusts the word order in time to conform to Chinese expression habits, so that the translation is coherent and smooth, and the meaning is clearly expressed.

[ST]Among the human figures are servants and actors, female dancers and musicians of exquisite grace. The 7th-century figurines are slender and high-waisted, while those of the 8th century are increasingly rotund and round-faced, reflecting a change in fashion (Kathleen Kuiper, 2011:168)

[TT]其中人物雕像有仆人、伶人、舞姬、乐师等，制作精致优雅。7世纪所作的人物雕像身材苗条，穿着高腰服饰，而8世纪的雕像身材脸型渐渐圆胖，反映出人们审美的变化。

4.2. Short Sentence

In English sentences, long sentences are used to express the purpose and express the logic of thinking. If it is directly translated into Chinese, the reader will not be able to appreciate the connotation of the original text, and will only feel boring and difficult to understand. Punctuation marks in Chinese, to a large extent, mean pause. Punctuation marks in English are structurally complete or not. Therefore, in Chinese translation, the translator should appropriately use punctuation marks to translate long English sentences into Chinese short sentences to enhance readability.

English sentences are mainly restricted by formal logic and can be structured into three parts: subject, predicate and object. Chinese sentences are mainly restricted by the logic of yin and yang, and can be divided into two parts of topic description in structure. English-Chinese translation is to change the three points of English sentences into two points of Chinese. Therefore, the translation breaks sentences at the right time and translates English clauses into Chinese sentences, with clear semantic expression, clear thinking logic, conforming to Chinese expression, and effectively conveying communicative meaning.

[ST] Bamboo suggests the spirit of the scholar, which can be bent by circumstance but never broken, and jade symbolizes purity and indestructibility. The dragon, in remote antiquity perhaps an alligator or rain deity, is the benevolent but potentially dangerous symbol of the emperor. (Kathleen Kuiper, 2011:154)

[TT] 譬如，竹代表宁折不屈的文人精神；玉代表纯洁，同时质地坚硬象征君子不屈的气节；龙在远古时代可能是类似于鳄的物种或雨神，象征着仁慈却又掌管生杀大权的君主。

4.3. The Thinking Difference between "Inanimate" and "Animate" Imagery

The image of the inanimate subject ranges from the congenial English language concept world to the common language beyond the cultural subject, and its image-meaning is re-recognized from the standpoint of different cultural subjects. Eastern traditional philosophical thinking emphasizes "the unity of man and nature", while traditional Western philosophical thinking emphasizes the "separation of characters". Chinese people who are accustomed to subjective thinking have the characteristics of subjectivity in their language expression, often expressed in personal subjects; habit British and Americans who are based on object thinking often put the narrative point of view on the action, the result of the action, or the recipient, which makes the language expression have object characteristics. This makes the imagery cognitive flexibility of inanimate subjects large, and the translation has a certain degree of difficulty. It needs to cross two levels: mental interpretation and image transformation. Here we will discuss in depth the image transformation of inanimate nouns in translation.

[ST] A pair of richly ornate temple vases dated 1351 (in the Percival David Foundation in London) are proof that the technique had been fully mastered by that time. (Kathleen Kuiper, 2011:174)

[TT] 那一对藏于伦敦珀西瓦尔大维德基金会的花瓶烧制于1351年原为道观察坛用，装饰非常华丽，足以表明当时的青白瓷技术已经达到炉火纯青的地步。

4.4. Rhetorical Image Transfer

The rhetorical means involved in rhetoric, such as personification, metonymy, synecdoche, etc., make language expression vivid and image by giving life to inanimate things. Chinese emphasizes personal (aim), and inanimate subjects cannot be matched with aimistic predicates. If the different expression habits of English and Chinese are not considered, unacceptable Chinese translation will inevitably occur. Therefore, when translating rhetorical English inanimate subjects, it is necessary to predict the ability of target language readers to accept the rhetorical metaphors formed by the accumulation of English and Chinese thinking habits and English culture. When translators consider the accumulation of heterogeneous cultures and the ability to accept different thinking habits, they should use the dynamic process of "events and use-case events—primary consciousness and reflective consciousness—image construction" to determine the image content of rhetorical inanimate subjects and representation, and image conversion, re-establish the subject of the Chinese translation, and change the subject image from "outlier" to "party", that is, from "hidden" to "explicit".

5. Conclusion

The proposal of communicative translation theory has made an important contribution to perfecting and promoting the development of translation theory, but it still has certain limitations. In order to achieve the communicative purpose of the text as much as possible in the process of translation, the translator may deviate from the core idea of the original text in the process of translation. Translators translated articles in this state are prone to "deception" and "fools" to readers. The translation conveys the content and values processed by the translator itself, rather than what the author intended to convey to the readers. No theory is

everlasting truth, and communicative translation theory is no exception. On the one hand, we must inherit the important thoughts of the predecessors in communicative translation theory; on the other hand, we should carry forward the past, enrich and develop communicative translation theory, break the limitations of communicative translation theory, and make it better serve translation practice.

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