

A Brief Analysis of Equivalence of Translation and Similarity of Translation

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Abstract

This paper is devoted to translation equivalence and translation similarity. The equivalence and similarity of translation reflect the two different views of translation between China and the West, and at the same time, they are also the reflection of different cultural traditions and logic. Translation equivalence is a core category in western translation theory, which involves many fundamental issues, such as the nature of translation, evaluation criteria, translation principles, the purpose and function of translation and so on. This paper examines the state of the translation equivalence at present, classifies deep meaning in translation equivalence, with some common translation techniques according to different levels of equivalence. While similarity is gradually covering the equivalence. Nida suggested that the word "equivalent" be replaced by the more flexible word "similar". This paper also compares the difference in English and Chinese idiomatic expression in logic.

Keywords

Equivalence; Similarity; Translation.

1. Introduction

The equivalence and similarity of translation reflect the two different views of translation between China and the West, and at the same time, they are also the reflection of different cultural traditions and logic. The West advocates science and rationality, and pays attention to the analysis and accuracy of thinking. It throws western linguistics into the application of scientific terms to the analytical study of language. Modern translation studies are based on linguistics, which analyzes the translated text from the phonological, semantic, syntactic and textual levels, and puts forward the corresponding concept of equivalent translation. While the East pays more attention to ethics and morality, which is obviously manifested as integrity and vagueness in thinking, emphasizing perceptual perception such as intuition, inspiration, epiphany and so on. In China, there has always been an old saying, "the book is not full of words, words are not full of meaning". There is an end to words but no end to meaning. So, the expression of meaning in language can only be a kind of similarity and approximate. The translation process from understanding to expression is the perceptual perception and the fuzzy expression process. When translating, there have been already some differences in the understanding of the original text. It is even harder to express all of what you have understood. Therefore, the essence of the Chinese translation tradition based on faithfulness is that it does not seek precision in details, but similarity in the entirety.

2. Translation Equivalence and Translation Similarity

2.1. Equivalence of Translation

The concept of equivalence can be said to hold a central position in translation studies. Nevertheless, it has been a rather controversial one, causing many heated debates among translators as to its nature, definition and applicability.

Translation equivalence is a core category in western translation theory, which involves many fundamental issues, such as the nature of translation, evaluation criteria, translation principles, the purpose and function of translation and so on. Equivalence= equal + value. "Value" in mathematics, it often refers to the number of numbers or symbols. The word "equivalent" has always been used as a scientific term for accurate calculation. The scientific view of computational language of "equivalence" has greatly influenced the development of modern translation theory. Based on this theory of language value, machine translation has made a substantial breakthrough. People compile language symbols into codes that can be recognized by the computer, and do logo assignment. Through the formulation of grammar conversion rules, the computer can complete the automatic translation. The process of machine translation is actually the process of searching for equivalent language symbols in different languages for matching and transformation.

There are two levels of language equivalence in translation, namely, surface meaning equivalence and deep meaning equivalence. The surface meaning is the literal meaning expressed in the language, and the surface meaning equivalence refers to the transformation from the surface structure of the source language to the corresponding surface structure in the target language, and its meaning remains unchanged.

Example 1:

Source Text: Strike while the iron is hot.

Target Text: 趁热打铁。

Example 1 is equivalent to literal translation in the traditional sense, which not only retains the language form, but also achieves literal equivalence. There is one-to-one correspondence between source text and target text, such as, "strike" in source text means "打" in target language. And "while" in source text means "趁" in target language. The equivalent of "the iron" is "铁", while the equivalent of "hot" is "热". Although the word order is not one-to-one correspondence and the part of speech of the equivalents have changed, they achieve transformation from the surface structure of the source language to the corresponding surface structure in the target language, and its meaning remains unchanged.

Example 2:

Source Text: All that glitters is not gold.

Target Text (True) : 闪光的东西并非全是金子。

An error in translation: 所有闪光的东西都不是金子。

Example 2 illustrates there are great differences between Chinese and English in terms of the usage of parts of speech and sentence structures. Many translations that seem to be completely equivalent in surface meaning are completely wrong. The translation of words with complete equivalent meaning is relatively simple and is only a process of finding corresponding words. In example 2, there is an error in translation because the translator didn't figure out the special grammar in English-complete negation and partial negation. The structure "all + not" means not all. It can highlight the meaning of partial negation. Therefore, while analyzing the surface meaning of the language, we should also pay attention to analyzing its deep meaning, instead of literal translation in order. That is, the implied meaning or metaphorical meaning.

We know that language is the material form for human beings to understand the outside world, and it also reflects the psychology and emotion of the cognitive subject, so language is subjective. First of all, we must carefully analyze the surface structure of the source language, explore the

implied meaning under the surface structure, and then express this meaning in the surface structure of the target language. In other words, the target language should choose equivalents with the same or similar meanings as those expressed by the source language.

There are two ways to achieve the equivalence of deep meaning: one is not only to do the equivalence of deep meaning (meaning and metaphorical meaning), but also to preserve part of the surface sense of symmetry.

Example 3:

Source Text: 雨后春笋。

Target Text: Spring up like mushrooms.

In Example 3, the emergence of a large number in Chinese often using "bamboo shoots after a spring rain", while English uses spring up like mushrooms (mushroom). Although the English mushrooms is different from the Chinese meaning of "bamboo shoots", the deep meaning is equivalent here. Examples like this can be found in English and Chinese, especially in idioms.

Another is to do only the equivalence of the deep meaning (meaning and metaphorical meaning), and completely give up the symmetry in the surface sense, for example:

Example 4:

Source Text: She expects loyalty, not fidelity.

Target Text: 她期待（丈夫）对她在名分上始终保持不变，而并非对她在性关系上专一。

In Example 4, both loyalty and fidelity can be translated as "loyalty" when they are used to describe the relationship between husband and wife, but they appear at the same time and have different meanings, so it is necessary to show the deep meaning of the two words. In the source text, there is lack of object. So, when translating it into target text, "丈夫" is added to be the object in Chinese sentence. What's more, there is also an additional translation in describing the deep meaning of the two words-"loyalty" and "fidelity". Loyalty means the quality of being faithful in your support of sb or sth. While, fidelity means the quality of being faithful to your husband, wife or partner by not having a sexual relationship with anyone else. Then figure out the deep meaning "名分上忠诚" and "性关系上专一".

2.2. Similarity of Translation

Nida is one of the most influential translation theorists in the translation field. In Nida's translation theory, functional equivalence theory is the core, and was introduced to China in the 1980s. It studies Chinese translation theory and translation practice. Have an important impact on Chinese translation. Based on the research of functional equivalence translation theory, Nida suggested that the word "equivalent" be replaced by the more flexible word "similar". When it comes to linguistic identity, we abandon the word "equivalence" and say: "at least 90% of the basic structure of all languages is quite similar." When discussing the essence of translation, Newbert even uses three "similar": ".....yield similar information to similar readers in essentially similar situations". With the end of the linguistic study of translation, the western translation equivalence theory has also completed the development process from the absolute "equivalence" with strong mathematical and logical meaning to the relatively vague "similarity".

The thought of Chinese translation seems to go straight to the "original intention" from the very beginning. Between accurate language description and vague semantic confession, and between "reality" in speech form and "emptiness" in rhetorical meaning, the choice is the latter.

The "expensive book is not decorated" put forward by An Shigao in the early days is to focus on the content without adding more textual embellishments. Zhiqian's "abandoning the text and preserving the quality" also pays no attention to the language, but has the original intention. Just as Zhiqian set the standard for translation in the Preface to Dhammapada, "its followers should make their translation easy to understand, do not lose their meaning, and it wouldn't be better if they do." However, the language is different, if you want to get "easy to understand", the language form is bound to change. Moreover, the understanding of meaning varies from person to person. Therefore, in order not to lose its meaning, the "righteousness" here can only be an similar (not equal) grand meaning. The similar meaning of faithfulness is the so-called "faith". This argument about "faithfulness" can be regarded as a precedent of "translation similarity".

Besides, the means of relevance between English and Chinese sentences are basically the same. Sentences and sentences are "connected into chapters" through a visible and invisible net. However, English pays more attention to relevance (hypotaxis hypotactic) through grammatical means anaphora, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, etc. And lexical means repetition and co-occurrence relations, etc. While Chinese pays more attention to relevance through semantic logical relations (parataxis paratactic), and adopts identification only when the logical relations are not clear enough or easily lead to ambiguity. Therefore, in English-Chinese translation, English markers are often omitted, while in Chinese-English translation, it is necessary to clarify the relationship between sentences and increase the translation of markers.

Example 5:

Source Text: 霞，是我的老朋友了！她是我童年最熟悉最美丽的小伙伴。

Target Text: Rosy clouds are my old friend! She was my closest and most beautiful little companion in my childhood.

In Example 5, The references of "霞", "朋友" and "她" are very clear and closely related. Obviously, after being translated into English, there is confusion and loss of relevance between "Rosy clouds", "friend", "she". So it's necessary to pay more attention to the similarity of translation instead of equivalence and output the original meaning and logical relevance in the source text.

3. Conclusion

As one of the basic concepts of western translation theory, translation equivalence is produced under the influence of modern linguistic theory. It is emphasized that there should be an equivalent relationship between the target text and the source text, and the essence of translation is to seek the equivalent components of the language. Chinese traditional translation theory has never sought precision in detail, but sought similarity as a whole, emphasizing resemblance in spirit rather than resemblance in form, so it embodies the typical idea of "translation similarity". It can be said that the equivalence and similarity of translation reflect the two different translation views of China and the West, and also reflect the different cultural traditions and ways of thinking between China and the West.

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