

Analysis of Language Environment and Translation Methods in English-Chinese Translation

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ABSTRACT

There are significant differences between English and Chinese in structure, logic, and cultural connotation, often leading to rigid and misreading translation content. The language environment becomes the key to solving translation problems; it can guide the translator in judging when to add implicit information and simplify redundant expressions. Therefore, this paper discusses the function of language environment in English-Chinese translation and translation methods, aiming to reveal the dynamic relationship between language environment and translation strategies and provide feasible translation strategies for translators. It is expected to improve the accuracy and fluency of English-Chinese translation and the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication, as well as promote the development of translation practice.

KEYWORDS

English-Chinese translation; Language environment; Social customs; Cultural information processing

1 Introduction

With the continuous deepening of globalization, the demand for English-Chinese translation is also growing, involving many fields such as science and technology, literature, business, and daily communication. However, the problem exposed in the translation process is the sense of estrangement, which can be traced back to the lack of attention paid by translators to the complex context behind the language environment. There are significant differences in cultural ecology between English and Chinese. The former makes good use of the passive voice and abstract nouns, while the latter mainly uses active sentences and verbs together. If translators do not consider this problem, they will fall into the trap of "Translationese," leading to frequent cultural misreading.

On the whole, the influence of language environment on translation is reflected in three aspects: firstly, in theory, it breaks the mechanical cognition of "Equivalent translation" and reveals the dynamic law of meaning reconstruction in language conversion; Secondly, at the practical level, it helps translators to reduce communication barriers caused by misjudgment of the language environment. Thirdly, at the cultural level, it promotes in-depth cross-civilization understanding and further eliminates cultural prejudices. This article will focus on exploring the mechanism of language environment in English-Chinese translation and put forward effective translation strategies, aiming to make the translated text not only convey the intention of the source language accurately but also naturally integrate into the receptive environment of the target language, and then achieve the goal of building meaning resonance in language differences.

2 The main types of language environment in English-Chinese translation

2.1 Words and sentence environment

With the increasing international influence of China, cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries have become more frequent. Translation is an important medium for cultural exchanges and a bridge and link to communicate cultures and ideas between nations. The language environment is a very important factor in translation; it is more important than the theory of language rules and the meaning of the language itself; translation and language environment are like fish and water. In order to grasp the author's intention and avoid misunderstanding, translators must thoroughly study the specific position, collocation, and overall paragraph atmosphere of words and expressions in the original text. The influence of the sentence environment of words and expressions on translation is reflected in many aspects. When a word exists alone, there are multiple interpretations, but it appears in a particular sentence or paragraph. Its meaning is defined and cleared by the surrounding words and expressions ^[1]. The translator needs to carefully analyze the combination of the word and the words and expressions and choose the most appropriate meaning. The context at the sentence level is more complex. The structure of sentences, the logical relationship of internal components, and punctuation convey important information. English sentences often use a variety of connectives and clauses to construct complex logical relations. When translating into Chinese, we must consider the overall structure of the original sentence, understand the relationship between its internal parts, and find the most appropriate expression in the target language.

2.2 Social customs and concepts

English-Chinese translation requires the translator to convey not only the exact linguistic information of the source text but also the cultural background, ideas, and social customs of the source language to the target readers. The concept of social customs is an important part of the cultural language environment, which contains a series of unwritten rules and shared understandings of how to behave, see the world, and express emotions; it shapes the way language is used. Translators should know that language carries a particular cultural group's identity, history, and worldview. If the deep environment of social customs is ignored, the translated article will not convey the correct English semantic meaning, and it will not achieve the purpose of cultural exchange. The influence of social customs on translation can be found at all levels of language. Daily Greetings, expressions of thanks, and apologies follow different rules and customs in different cultures. Basic social norms such as family values, social hierarchy, attitudes towards time, and understanding of personal space will profoundly affect the choice of language and the grasp of tone. Understanding and respecting the social customs of both sides requires translators to be highly cross-culturally literate and to be able to flexibly use the expressions in the target language by their customs for reconstruction, making the translated article read naturally and fluently, thus enhancing the readability and cultural adaptability of the translated Article ^[2].

3 The specific influence of language environment factors on translation methods

3.1 Selection and definition of words and expressions

Words and expressions themselves often have multiple paraphrases. A dictionary usually provides a collection of these potential meanings. However, when words and expressions are used in specific sentences or paragraphs, the surrounding words and expressions, sentence structure, mood, and style of expression constitute a specific semantic field. The translator must look closely at the exact position of the words and expressions, what they describe, what they modify, what the central message of the sentence is, and comprehensive analysis to accurately grasp its true meaning in the current text, which is the most basic screening function of the language environment ^[3]. The meanings of many words and expressions are loaded with rich emotional colors and cultural associations, and specific language groups endow these additional meanings in their long-term everyday life. In translation, the translator needs to determine what positive and negative connotations the words and expressions usually have in the source culture, what specific cultural imagery or social customs the words and expressions are associated with, and whether there is a corresponding word in the target culture that evokes similar emotions and has similar cultural weight, to ensure the naturalness and correctness of the translation.

3.2 Arrangement and adjustment of sentence structure

English and Chinese have their unique sentence-building habits and internal logic. English sentences rely on many connectives, relative words, prepositional phrases, and clauses. Chinese sentences rely on the natural cohesion of meaning and the order of words and expressions to express logical relations, and the use of connectives is relatively rare. In the face of a long English sentence with a complex structure, the translator will translate the article word by word into Chinese, leading to a lengthy translation that is difficult for readers to understand. The function of the language environment here is to help the translator clarify the core meaning of the original sentence and the logical relationship between the various parts and then disassemble, reorganize, and simplify the structure according to the Chinese expression norms so that the translated article reads more naturally and smoothly, more in line with the target language reader's way of thinking and acceptance habits. The passive voice is widely used in English to express objectivity and emphasize the action taker, which is very common in scientific and legal texts. In a similar language environment, Chinese are more accustomed to using the active voice or generic subjects—"People" or "Everybody." the retention of English passive structure often makes the Chinese-translated article seem awkward and unfamiliar. In addition, the overall style of the text is also an important factor in the language environment. A sentence of a legal contract and a sentence of lyric prose, even if similar in grammatical structure, the translation of sentence length and rhythm is bound to differ ^[4]. Therefore, the adjustment of sentence structure is the result of the comprehensive effect of the language environment, which requires the translator not only to understand the literal meaning and grammatical structure of the source language but also to grasp the cultural logic and expression intention behind it so that the translated text in the structure not only faithfully conveys the original information and logic, but also easy to understand.

3.3 Processing and transformation of cultural information

In English-Chinese translation, the language environment can help the translator reveal the emotional tone and

familiar scenes of a concept or a metaphor in the source culture and understand how it works in synergy with the surrounding information to build a complete semantic picture. Ignoring the language environment, the translation of cultural information will either be superficial and lose its essence or produce misunderstandings and distort the original meaning. In the face of cultural differences, the translator should try his best to adapt to the cultural habits of the target language readers based on preserving the cultural characteristics of the source language. If the author emphasizes the cultural uniqueness of the source text, then the translator should retain the cultural characteristics and be faithful to the spirit of the source text. If specific cultural imagery is the core symbol of the text and supports the theme, in this case, it should be preserved even if annotations are needed. The language environment also requires the translator to pay attention to the overall harmony of the transferred cultural information, that is to say, whether the translated article is consistent with the other parts of the translated text in style and tone and whether it will cause obstacles to the target language readers' understanding needs to be fully considered. In the translation process, whether to use literal translation, free translation, or other methods, it is necessary to seek the best balance point based on a deep understanding of the source language environment and the target language environment to better convey the language's meaning.

4 The ways to deal with the environmental factors in English-Chinese translation

4.1 Addition and omission of information

The purpose of supplementing and omitting information in English-Chinese translation is to bridge the understanding gap caused by the linguistic and cultural differences between English and Chinese and to ensure that the translated article is accurate, natural, and readable. In this process, the language environment is the basis for determining when to add and when to omit. Supplementary information occurs when the source language text contains self-evident information for the reader. However, the target readers are unfamiliar with the background knowledge and emotional color, which is an indispensable part of understanding the original text. Suppose the translator does not explicitly add this implicit information to the translated article. In that case, it will be difficult for the target reader to completely grasp the source text's intention, leading to comprehension deviation. The supplementary content must be the elements needed in the target language, and the purpose of the supplementary content is to make the target reader obtain the understanding experience and emotional resonance as close as possible to the source language reader. Under the guidance of the language environment, ellipsis is used to identify and eliminate the redundant and repetitive elements in the target language. The frequently used possessive and personal pronouns in English can be omitted when the context is clear. Some English words purely for grammatical structure have no real meaning in Chinese. In addition, some words in English are repeated for grammatical correctness or emphasis; they only need to appear once under the logic of Chinese expression. The ellipsis requires the translator to deeply understand the essence of Chinese expression, remove unnecessary words and sentences, and retain and highlight the core semantics.

4.2 Transforming the form of expression

In English-Chinese translation, the language environment requires the translator to flexibly change the form of expression to make the translated text sound natural and authentic in the target language while accurately conveying the intention and information of the original article. The familiar passive voice in English is widely used when emphasizing the action itself, but Chinese are more accustomed to active expression; in translation, the translator needs to transform the passive structure into the active structure, which is more common in Chinese according to the language environment. In the Chinese language environment, complex concepts expressed in long sentences in English need to be broken up into several semantic sentences and rearranged in the Chinese logical order. If the translation is ignored, the translated article will be full of "Translationese," awkward to read, and difficult to accept by the target readers^[5]. Language is a reflection of thinking. English and Chinese have different cultural perspectives and cognitive styles. If translated literally, it is difficult for Chinese readers to grasp the meaning and connotation of sentences correctly. Therefore, the translator must look for expressions with equivalent functions and similar effects in the target culture to transform. This process involves the adjustment of lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical styles. For example, in the Chinese language environment, an English expression that emphasizes personal views needs to be adjusted to a modest expression more in line with the Chinese collective cultural habits. The exaggerated or strong adjectives used in the English text when translated into Chinese and the strength of the diction should be adjusted according to the language environment to conform to the Chinese tradition of reserved expression. The core goal of all these transformations is the same, that is, to make the translated text not only faithful to the original article in terms of information but also in terms of emotional color, cultural connotation, expression style, and reception effect, in the target language environment, it can trigger similar resonance and understanding with the original readers, so that communication across language barriers becomes truly natural and

smooth.

5 Conclusion

To sum up, context is the key factor in determining the accuracy and readability of translation, which requires the translator to be sensitive to the language environment, cultural background, communicative intention, and readers' cognitive habits of the source text; accordingly, the form of the translated article should be flexibly adjusted. By supplementing implicit information or omitting redundant elements, the information density of bilingualism is balanced, and the barriers to readers' understanding are eliminated. At the same time, creative transformation is carried out in sentence structure, voice expression, rhetoric style, etc., to make the translated article conform to the natural expression habit of the target language. Future research can further refine the applicable situations of translation strategies and integrate interdisciplinary perspectives to promote translation studies to serve better the needs of in-depth language communication in the era of globalization.

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