

Study on News Translation from the Perspective of Relevance Theory

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Abstract: As an important part of a country's soft power, the output of news is particularly important. As one of the hotspots in the field of translation under the background of globalization, news translation is inextricably linked with pragmatic theory. Relevance theory as one of the typical theories, through the effective combination of relevance theory and news translation, expands a new perspective for the in-depth interpretation of news translation, and further promotes the dynamic progress of pragmatics. Starting from Relevance Theory and taking bilingual news as the research object, this paper confirms the applicability of Relevance Theory in the translation of news headlines and texts through the analysis of common strategies in news translation.

Keywords: News translation; Relevance Theory; translation strategies.

1. Introduction

With the rise of online media and the increasing speed of information dissemination, news has become the mainstream of new media development at home and abroad. The "Internet Plus" strategy and the development of social networks have made news increasingly popular and become an important part of the daily life of people. The popularity, novelty, richness and interactivity of the news make their translations of great value and significance for cross-cultural communication and the spreading of Chinese culture. News translation can enrich people's spiritual life and make Chinese people have a better understanding of the world. Therefore, this thesis conducted this research in the interest of seeking a new theoretical perspective and translation purposes for the news translation.

This thesis mainly discusses the news translation under the guidance of relevance theory, summarizes the characteristics of the news, sorts out and analyzes various translation purposes of the news based on the relevance theory, and reveals its overall translation strategy in order to provide some help to the related researches on the news. This thesis aims to provide effective suggestions for the study of news translation, thereby improving the translation quality of news. In view of this, the present thesis attempts to investigate news translation from the perspective of relevance theory. In so doing, it is hoped that the present research can offer appropriate approaches for news translation based on relevance theory. It is also hoped that the research can throw fresh insight into the further in-depth study of news translation.

2. Literature Review

The universality and acceptability of news has intrigued the interest of many western linguists in the language, the components of speech, and the function of the news language. Western scholars study news from different angles, mainly involving three aspects: discourse structure, language function and the influence of ideology loading discourse.)The first view that is closely related to the discourse structure is embodied in Goffman's "frame" concept (Goffman, 1981) and

Bell's "narrative structure" view (Bell, 1991). Representative works related to the function and influence of ideology include the following topics: an interdisciplinary framework for critical discourse analysis.

Because of its wide range, news translation study has global reach in China and around the world. Domestic research on news translation started later than in Western countries, In 2004. Duan Liancheng's book *How to help foreigners know China* was published, marking the beginning of the combination of theoretical and practical research of news translation(Duan, 2004). There are various discussions on news translation, including research on words, sentences, rhetoric, punctuation, news headlines and news translation purposes. Scholars have used the different translation theories, such as functional translation theory, post-colonial theory and relevance theory to analyze news translation, especially the principles and methods of news translation.

Relevance theory is involved in a research field about pragmatics in linguistics. It was proposed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson in 1986 (Sperber & Wilson, 1986). Relevance theory studies and analyzes the understanding of different languages in a scientific cognitive way and extends them to understanding of different language concepts and locales, and then optimizes the reasoning mechanism. Wilson's student Ernst-August Gutt published *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and*

Context in 1991 (Gutt, 1991).

Considering the characteristics, logic and coherence of Chinese political news, translators need to process information by adding, cutting, reorganizing and constructing logical discourse in the process of translation.

According to relevance theory mentioned above, the smooth progress of communication activities depends on two conditions: one is the degree of explicitness of the two parties in communication, the other is the degree of realization of the optimal relevance.

Under the framework of relevance theory, the basic principle of news translation is relevance. According to the theory of relevance translation, the translator can adopt any appropriate translation method for different source languages, so that the target translation text can provide the reader with the most adequate context effect, obtain the optimal relevance,

and achieve the best communication effect. (1)

3. Theoretical Framework

Relevance theory is a theory of cognitive pragmatic that emerged in the 1980s. The theory was put forward by Sperber and Wilson in the book *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (Sperber & Wilson, 1986). It regards language communication as a purposeful and intentional cognitive activity, which is a process of ostensive-inferential communication. Relevance theory believes that in order to correctly understand natural language and achieve successful communication, it is necessary to find the optimal relevance of information through context in the process of accepting natural language information. The optimal relevance refers to the sufficient contextual effect that the recipient obtains after making an effective effort in understanding the discourse.

Ernst-August Gutt is the first to apply relevance theory to the study of translation. Gutt (2014: vii) believes that relevance theory contributes to the formation of a general theory of translation. The main purpose of his research is to explore a series of translation phenomena and explain how to explain these phenomena under the framework of relevance theory.

According to relevance theory, the key to the successful communication between two parties is as follows: Firstly, the two sides of the communication reach mutual ostensiveness to understand each other. Secondly, communication is a cognitive process. The reason why two parties can cooperate with each other and understand each other is mainly because of the best cognitive mode - relevance. Relevance theory believes that the strength of relevance depends on two factors: processing efforts and contextual effects.

Relevance theory has opened up a unique new perspective and provided a theoretical basis for translation studies. Relevance translation theory, which originated from relevance theory, regards translation as a cognitive-reasoning activity, a communicative behavior involving brain mechanisms. This communicative behavior consists of two ostensive-inferential processes. For one thing, the author of the original text expresses his communicative intentions to the translator, and the translator obtains the optimal relevance from the reader's aspect based on the original information, logic, and encyclopedic knowledge in his own mind. For another, the translator conveys the original author's explicit and communicative intentions to the target readers in the translation as a communicator, while the target readers should reason according to the information, logic and encyclopedia knowledge provided in the translation. The translator strives to get the optimal relevance finally. In relevance theory, translation is seen as a process of ostensive-inferential communication. In this process, the translator works as a bridge between the author of the original source text and the target text's reader, promoting successful intercultural communication through translation. This thesis will mainly use comparative analysis method to analyze the current situation of English translation of Chinese news hot words from the perspective of relevance theory and propose corresponding translation purposes and Principles.

4. Analysis of News Translation Strategies from the Perspective of Relevance Theory

News translation can be said to be a typical form of activity

in the dual information interaction behavior. Therefore, news translation will also affect the translation effect due to the level of the two indicators--the degree of ostensive communication of both parties and the degree of optimal relevance achievement. As an important medium linking the original author and the readers of the translated text, the translator must comprehensively consider the cognitive context of the translated text readers when carrying out translation work, effectively grasp the cognitive vision and cognitive tendency of the translated text readers, and choose an appropriate translation strategy so as to achieve the best relationship between the target language reader and the original author.

4.1. Analysis of News Title Translation Strategy

This work was financially supported by xxx fund. News headlines have the characteristics of conciseness and outline the main points of the news. In form, news headlines must be concise, accurate, and eye-catching, so that readers can get the most information in an instant with the least effort. The translation of news headlines requires finding the maximum correlation between the cognitive contexts of the readers of the original text and the readers of the target text in text communication, and finally forming news headlines with ostensive functional equivalence.

Example1: Japan's plan to release treated nuclear water. (VOA,2021.4.16)

中文: 日本出台强排计划。(VOA,2021.4.16)

The main point of this news is that Japan plans to discharge nuclear waste water into the sea. English is the original language.

Judging from the subject expressed in English, this is an "other" news report with a non-Japanese perspective. The primitive title is a phrase structure, and the verb "release" in "to release treated nuclear water" logically expresses the future tense, meaning planning to do something. The translator translated the original noun "plan" as "出台... 计划", highlighting the dynamic characteristics of Chinese. While the original verb infinitive "to release treated nuclear water" only selects the meaning of the verb "discharge", omits the logical object "waste nuclear water", and at the same time adds the communicative intention of the infinitive to express the content, that is, the implication - "强行", so it is refined into "强排", which is in line with Chinese semantic features. It not only shows that the translator strongly opposes Japan's attitude of disregarding international public opinion to discharge waste nuclear water, but at the same time, by omitting the discharge, it leaves enough room for the readers of the target language to imagine, and inspires the readers' curiosity for further reading, thereby enhancing the relevance of news headlines.

It can be seen that the translation of news headlines is a detailed interpretation and reasoning of the original language news headlines. In this process, the translator must not only convey the true intention of the original author to the target readers, but also integrate his understanding of the target context and target readers to create the maximum cognitive context effect and promote effective communication.

4.2. Analysis of News Main Contents Translation Strategy

The main body of the news is the supporting material of the

news headline, which complements and deepens the news lead, and is the most important link in news translation. Relevance theory divides translation intention into information translation intention and communicative translation intention. The translation of news subjects must first consider the cognitive structure of the readers of the target text, clearly show the information intention of the original text, including the self-evident meaning in the original text, convey it to the readers in an appropriate language form, and create contextual associations, so as to achieve the goal of conveying the purpose of communicative intentions with the readers.

4.2.1. Achieving optimal relevance of lexical expressions

In bilingual news, the use of new words is endless, for example, with the development of the Internet, online transactions are becoming more and more frequent, and a large amount of information related to online shopping has appeared. In addition, some words have added new meanings on the basis of the original meaning. For example, the word "mafia deal" originally means "黑手党交易", but in the following news reports, it generally refers to the behavior of putting morality aside for the sake of profit.

Example2: TikTok's roller-coaster ride in the US continued Monday as President Donald Trump said he would approve the video sharing app's sale to Microsoft only if the US government gets a cut, a condition that one expert called a "mafia" deal.

4.2.2. Achieving optimal relevance of rhetorical expressions

The use of rhetorical devices can make the content of news reports more concrete and improve the readability and attractiveness of news reports. Commonly used rhetorical devices include metaphors, exaggeration, and classics. In translation, news translations should not only find rhetorical expressions that are the same or similar to the original text, retain the original style as much as possible, but also conform to the cognitive category of the readers of the translation to accurately convey the meaning of the original text.

Example3: 中国有句俗语, “种瓜得瓜, 种豆得豆。”任何决定和行为都必须付出代价。英方究竟能够保持其独立自主地位, 还是甘心沦为美国附庸、为美国火中取栗?

Translation: We have a saying in China which basically means "you reap what you sow". All the decision and action come with price tags. Does it want to act in its own way of its pawn volition or is it OK with being a subordinate and a cat's paw for the US?

“种瓜得瓜, 种豆得豆” is an authentic Chinese saying, the translation uses the strategy of naturalization and translates it into the English proverb "You reap what you saw", which means that what you sow will reap. What, not only accurately expresses the meaning of the original text, but also close to the expression habits of the readers of the translation. "price tag" means the price of a commodity. It compares decision-making and actions to commodities with a price tag, expressing the meaning of the price to be paid, and the translation is more distinctive. The idiom “火中取栗” is taken from the fables of the 17th-century French poet La Fontaine. It is a metaphor for the miserable situation of being used by others to take risks for others but ultimately get nothing. In translation, the translator uses the image familiar to the readers of the target text to express the meaning of the original text, thus realizing the best connection of rhetorical means.

4.2.3. Achieving optimal relevance of news contents

In order to improve the readability of news reports, in news translation, in addition to the full translation method, the translator often adopts the method of compiling and excerpting to deal with the main content of the news. Compilation is "translation activities mixed with editing activities", while excerpting refers to "translators according to the needs of secondary dissemination...extracting...the passages or contents that convey important information are translated as translation objects" (Jin Minzhen, 2017).

Example4: 7月8日11时25分, 高考文科综合/理科综合科目考

试将要结束时, 平顶山市一中考点一考生突然情绪失控, 先后抓其右边、后边考生答题卡, 造成两位考生答题卡损毁。

目前, 平顶山市招考办已将损毁其他考生答题卡的考生违规情况上报河南省招生办公室, 将依规对该考生进行处理。

Translation: A female student who tore up the answer sheets of two

classmates in the national college entrance examination, or gaokao, in Pingdingshan city, will receive the punishment, the Higher Education Admissions Office of Henan province said on Thursday.

The translated news has modified the paragraph order according to the elements of where, when, what, who, how. The key information of the news report is retained in the most concise language, and unnecessary information is deleted. This abbreviated compilation adjustment is more in line with the reading habits of English readers and improves the readability of the translation.

5. Conclusion

Relevance theory considers the process and principles of news translation from a cognitive perspective. Since translation is an act of communication, thus the translator can make two ostensive-inferential processes on the basis of analyzing the differences between ST author's and TT readers' cognitive environment, so as to help TT readers generate contextual effect as much as possible.

When translating news, translators should take its features into consideration, making sure that the choice of source text is of news values and has great attraction to readers so as to meet their reading habit and expectation. In translation practice, the translator must not only convey the information content of the original text, but also fully consider the main role of the target readers, and use various translation techniques to achieve the optimal relevance between vocabulary, rhetoric and content. Only in this way can translations serve readers and reflect the value of bilingual news works.

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