

A Report on E-C Translation of *This May Hurt a Little*

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Abstract: Humorous fiction, as a form of popular literature, focuses on real-life episodes that are laugh-out-loud funny. The protagonists of such novels are often characterized by comical or silly traits, or fools who always meet with misfortune in their acts of kindness and helpfulness. By skillfully depicting the weaknesses and flaws of these characters as well as a series of coincidences and misunderstandings, humor novels successfully reflect the real face of life and the author's creative ideas. This form of literature not only brings readers a relaxing and enjoyable reading experience, but also allows them to appreciate the fun and wisdom of life while reading. The author of the translated material is Eric Nicol, a writer who specializes in writing humorous works and has won numerous awards related to humorous books. The work, entitled *This May Hurt a Little*, tells a heartbreaking story about the tragic loss of the main character's decaying tooth and the ups and downs of his emotions during a visit to the dentist. The author describes with sardonic wit how he copes with his rotting and bleeding tooth. This paper chooses Eugene Nida's Functional Equivalence to analyze the humorous novel in an attempt to preserve the style and linguistic expressions of the original text, so that the target language readers can get the same feeling as the readers of the original text. The content of this paper includes 5 parts. The first part is an introduction to the work and the author as well as the linguistic feature; the second part is an introduction of the theory of functional equivalence translation; the third part is an introduction of the translation process; the fourth part is a case study under the theory of functional equivalence translation including the translation of words and sentences, and the fifth part is the conclusion, i.e., the enlightenment and the lesson.

Keywords: *This May Hurt a Little*; Functional Translation; Humorous Style Translation.

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction of the Source Text

1.1.1. The Book and its Author

Humorous fiction, a genre of popular literature, is renowned for its focus on hilarious real-life vignettes that elicit uncontrollable laughter. The protagonists of these narratives are typically endowed with comedic or absurd attributes, portraying figures who often encounter misfortunes despite their benevolent and helpful intentions. Through meticulous portrayals of their weaknesses, flaws, as well as a series of coincidences and misunderstandings, humor novels offer a profound reflection of the intricate nuances of life and the author's ingenious creativity. This literary form not only provides readers with a relaxing and enjoyable reading experience, but also fosters an appreciation for the humorous and wise aspects of existence, thus enriching their understanding of the world.

The translation material, authored by Eric Nicol, a renowned humorist and recipient of numerous accolades for his humorous works, is titled *This May Hurt a Little*. It delves into a heartfelt tale of the protagonist's encounter with decaying teeth and the emotional fluctuations he experiences during a visit to the dentist. Nicol employs a witty and engaging tone to narrate the protagonist's handling of his aching and bleeding teeth, offering readers a humorous yet poignant glimpse into the complexities of human emotions and the absurdities of daily life.

1.1.2. Linguistic Feature

This humorous article tells the tale of a protagonist whose unhealthy habits lead him to seek dental assistance. The author masterfully crafts a narrative that humorously depicts the protagonist's fears and anxieties surrounding a tooth extraction, offering a vivid and engaging portrayal. Through

the use of hyperbole, simile, personification, and other rhetorical devices, the author infuses the narrative with humor and wit. For instance, when describing the cavity, the author humorously anthropomorphizes it, likening it to a storehouse preparing for winter, aptly capturing the deplorable condition of the hidden dirt within the tooth. The article's sentence structure is intricate and diverse, ranging from concise phrases to elaborate compound sentences, enriched by numerous subordinate clauses. The text is also notable for its rich vocabulary, which not only adds humor and precision but also brings the characters to life in vivid and three-dimensional detail.

1.2. Introduction of the Functional Equivalence

In the process of translating the Bible, Nida noticed that the Bible contains a large number of cultural elements and culturally loaded words, and these cultural phenomena are unique to Western culture. Therefore, if one follows the traditional idea of translation, strictly follows the form and expression of the original text, and carries out a word-for-word direct translation without any processing, then the translation will be very rigid and stiff, and in many cases the readers of the translated text will not know what the original text is trying to express at all. In many cases, the readers of the translated text do not even know what the original text is trying to express, and they do not know what it means. (Nida) believes that such a translation is ineffective because the readers of the translated text cannot grasp the meaning and content of the original text through reading the text, and cannot understand the original text. Therefore, Nida put forward the concept of "dynamic equivalence" in his book *Translation Theory and Practice*, which compares the responses of readers in the source language with those of

readers in the target language, based on his own translation practice and repeated thinking. Then in *From One Language to Another*, (喻立) Nida replaced “Dynamic Equivalence” with the more rigorous and scientific “Functional Equivalence”, arguing that “Translation is the process of reproducing the message of the source language from semantics to style in the most appropriate, natural and reciprocal language”. It is believed that “translation is to use the most appropriate, natural and equivalent language to reproduce the information of the source language from semantics to style”. Nida believes that the primary task of translation is to accurately convey the content and ideas of the original text to the readers of the translated text, and the translation should put the content and the readers' feelings in the first place, and the consistency of the form of the original translation can be discarded if necessary, in order to let the readers of the translated text get the same or similar reaction as the readers of the original text.

2. Translation Process

There are three parts in this chapter: pre-translation, while-translation and post-translation.

2.1. Pre-translation

Preparation is crucial when translating literary texts; it not only helps her to better understand the original text, but also improves the accuracy and fluency of the translation. The following is the preparation work she did for translation:

First, the author read the original text carefully in order to understand its theme, style and context. She tried to gain an in-depth understanding of the author's intention, as well as the cultural and social background implicit in the original text. This step can help her better grasp the essence of the original text so that she can accurately convey it in her translation.

Next, she consulted relevant dictionaries such as Longman and reference materials to ensure a correct understanding of specific words and expressions in the original text. She paid special attention to some words with special cultural meanings and tried her best to find the corresponding words that can best convey the original meaning.

Before translating the text, the translator first read through the whole text, sketched out the words that he did not know in the text, the words that were difficult to understand, and then looked them up on the Internet. Before translating the text, the translator used the Longman dictionary to look up all the difficult words involved in the article and marked them in the text in order to help understand the original text. For the names of people involved in the article, she used Baidu to look them up and deeply understood their cultural connotations. For example, Carlsbad Cavern in the article is a very deep hole in the United States, so the translator used the method of direct translation.

2.2. While-translation

In translation, the translator translates by comprehending the original text. Translation necessitates attention to the precision and eloquence of language expression. As the original texts of this text are all humorous, when dealing with the sentences in the article, the translator also thought carefully about the wording and chose a humorous tone for the translation as much as possible.

2.3. Post-translation

After completing the translation practice report, the translator carried out meticulous proofreading and touching up. First of all, the translator checked the translation for grammatical and spelling errors to ensure that the language was fluent and conformed to the specifications. For some specialized terms, the translator checked the relevant information to make sure the translation was accurate.

In order to improve the naturalness of the translation, the translator made appropriate adjustments to the statements to make them more in line with the expression habits of the target language. At the same time, the translator pay attention to retaining the semantics and style of the original text, and strive to convey the flavor of the original text while conveying the information of the original text.

In addition, the translator also paid attention to the coherence and completeness of the translation. For some long sentences and paragraphs, the translator made reasonable splitting and merging, so as to make the translation easier to understand and accept.

After completing the above work, the translator made several reviews and revisions to ensure that the quality of the translation reached a high level. Finally, the translator formed an accurate, fluent and natural translation of the translation practice report. Through this work, the translator not only improved her translation ability, but also accumulated valuable translation experience.

3. Case Analysis under the Guidance of Functional Equivalence

3.1. Word Translation

Example 1:

ST: With all my heart I hoped the new Pockle would be born with two heads and four sets of wisdom teeth.

TT: 我衷心希望小布克尔生下来就有两个脑袋和四颗智齿。

Analysis:(Nida)According to the theory of functional equivalence, the translator is not required to translate the original text word by word, i.e., lexical equivalence is not so important as long as the original meaning of the text can be translated. According to the context, the author complained about a patient called Pockle, who canceled his appointment so that the author has to see the dentist; he wants to make a joke that the patient's wife was having a baby and he wants to curse that the little baby will be born to have four sets of wisdom teeth. The author didn't rigidly translate new Pockle into “新的布库尔”. Instead, the author translated it into “小布库尔” in accordance with the context.

Example 2:

ST: You're going to let him weasel out of his appointment with a fairy tale like that?

TT: 你就准备让他略施小计, 以这样一个童话故事蒙混过关躲过预约问诊?

Analysis: The theory of functional equivalence is based on the target language and culture, focusing on the translated text and its readers. It emphasizes that the audience's response to the translated text should be similar to the response of the original text's audience. “Weasel out” means to avoid doing (something) by being dishonest, by persuading someone in a clever way, etc. Based on the writing style and humorous tune in the source text, the author used the amplification to display

the original scene by translating it into “略施小计，蒙混过关” in a way to let readers gain more insight into the humorous tune of the author.

Example 3:

ST: As I was leaving I was shaken to note that Dr. Burcher's office had two doors, one for incoming patients, one for outgoing.

TT: 当我离开时我惊奇地发现屠夫医生的办公室竟然有两扇门（病人从一扇门进去，另一扇门出去）。

Functional equivalence theory can be said to be very inspiring and creative, which breaks away from the inherent viewpoint that translation must be centered around the original text and the author, and the readers must passively accept it, and places the readers of the translated text in a more important position, and boldly puts forward that only the translation that the readers understand and accept is a good translation. When translating Burcher's, the translator used a translation method called transliteration to translate it so as to fit into the humorous style of the source text and express the author's fear of the dentist. Another reason for why the translator translated the name into “屠夫” is that the author has said the process of pulling out of the teeth is a slaughter. Therefore, in order to make the readers of the targeted text the terrible feeling with the original readers, the translator translated the name into “屠夫”.

Example 4:

ST: These were shrewdly arranged so that persons waiting for their turn couldn't see their predecessor leaving.

TT: 安排得真鸡贼，这样排队的人就不可能看到前一个人出去。

Analysis: The theory of functional equivalence is based on the target language and culture, focusing on the translated text and its readers. It emphasizes that the audience's response to the translated text should be similar to the response of the original text's audience. Utilizing Nida's functional equivalence theory to analyze the translation from English to Chinese of the given sentence, we can observe some points of interest. The source text (ST) “These were shrewdly arranged so that persons waiting for their turn couldn't see their predecessor leaving” effectively conveys a sense of cunning or clever manipulation in the arrangement, designed to conceal the departure of those ahead in the queue from those waiting. In the target text (TT), “安排得真鸡贼” captures the sense of cunning or shrewdness intended in the original text, and it may be understood by some readers as a humorous or informal way to express cunning, it may achieve the same level of functional equivalence as the original in terms of style and cultural acceptability.

3.2. Sentence Translation

Example 5:

ST: I suppose some people actually do brush their teeth twice a day and see their dentist at least twice a year, but I don't. I brush my teeth once a day, with a brush whose few remaining bristles look hail-struck, and I never see my dentist until it's too late.

TT: 我不知道是否真的有人每天刷两次牙，一年至少看两次牙医，但是我是绝对不会这样的。我只会每天刷一次牙，使用的牙刷上毛也寥寥无几，像是被冰雹砸过一样。不到万不得已，我誓死不从，绝不会去光顾牙医。

Analysis: (郭建中) According to the Functional equivalence, if meaning and culture cannot be taken into

account at the same time, the translator has no choice but to give up the formal equivalence and change the form of the original text in the translation in order to realize the purpose of reproducing the semantic meaning and culture of the original text. When translating “I never see my dentist until it's too late, the author didn't blindly follow the sentence order of the source text. In order to realize the purpose of reproduce the semantic meaning and culture of the source text, the translator gave up the original order and use the translation technique called negation to express the author's determination of refusing seeing dentist.

Example 6:

ST: For a moment I stared at her uncomprehendingly, like Bette Davis when her lover tells her he's decided to go back to stamp collecting. Trapped. Tricked by somebody named Pockle.

TT: 有一刻，我毫不理解的盯着她，就像贝蒂·戴维斯的爱人告诉她他决定回去集邮一样。完蛋了，被一个叫布库尔的人给耍了，中了他的圈套。

Analysis: (Nida) “Translation is the process of reproducing the message of the source language from semantics to style in the most appropriate, natural and reciprocal language”. After reading the original text, the translator, as a reader, felt that the author wanted to express his disappointment in a funny way when he heard that Pockle gave up seeing the dentist. By translating “trapped and tricked” into “完蛋了，中了他的圈套，” the translator centered around the original text and made the sentence more acceptable for the targeted readers.

Example 7:

ST: Fine, go ahead, fellows, it may be your last chance.

TT: 好嘛，继续，伙计，这可能是你最后一次蹦跹了

Analysis: (Nida) According to Nida, the reader of the targeted language can get the same reaction of the reader of the original language. The source text (ST) “Fine, go ahead, fellows, it may be your last chance” is a phrase expressing a mix of acquiescence and warning, likely in a context where the speaker is allowing an action to proceed but implies that it could have serious consequences. By reading through the original passage, it is not difficult to find that the humorous way is adopted to express the original author's frankness to his rotten teeth. In the target text (TT), “好嘛，继续，伙计，这可能是你最后一次蹦跹了” captures the general sentiment of the original and make the text acceptable to the targeted reader, who can understand the humorous tone of the original author.

3.3. Figure of Speech

Example 8:

ST: My spine quivered like a hurled javelin.

TT: 我的脊梁骨抖的像一个投出去的标枪

Analysis: It can be seen that Nida believes that the quality of translation depends on the reaction and feeling of the readers after reading the translated text, and if it is close to or the same as the reaction of the readers after reading the original text on the surface of the source language, then the translation can be regarded as successful. There are lots of figure of speech used in the source text. Metaphor is used in this sentence. In order to let the targeted readers have the same reaction, the translator remained the original language style in her translation.

Example 9:

ST: For all they knew he may have been sitting in the Chair one minute and going straight out through the roof the next,

like a Nazi V-2 rocket.

TT: 他们所知道的是,他可能上一秒还坐在像电椅的椅子上,下一秒就会像纳粹的 V-2 火箭一样从屋顶直冲出去。

Analysis: Nida believes that the primary task of translation is to accurately convey the content and ideas of the original text to the readers of the translated text, and the translation should put the content and the readers' feelings in the first place. When the translator began her translating work, she has found that the author has capitalize the first letter of Chair. It seems that it is not a simple chair or the author wouldn't capitalize the C. After reading the following part of sentence, she got to know that the author might use a metaphor to express the chair. So she translated it into “像电椅一样的椅子”. Additionally, hyperbole is used in the phrase “like a Nazi V-2 rocket.” This is because the author wanted to express his scare of the chair at the dentist's. Thus, the translator translated the hyperbole in her translation in order to put the content and the readers' feelings in the first place.

Example10:

ST: He tries to drag it out. It puts up a battle; it likes it in there.

TT: 他试着把它扯出来,它在里面顽强抵抗,因为它似乎更喜欢留在原处,

The original English text, “He tries to drag rotten tooth out. It puts up a battle; it likes it in there,” anthropomorphizes the “rotten tooth,” ascribing human qualities and actions to it. This personification adds drama and emotional depth to the narrative, making it more engaging for the reader. In the Chinese translation, “他试着把它扯出来,它在里面顽强抵抗,因为它似乎更喜欢留在原处,” the personification is successfully maintained. The “rotten tooth” is personified as an entity capable of “stubbornly resisting” and “seemingly preferring” its original position. This translation preserves the rhetorical effect of the original, allowing the reader to visualize and empathize with the situation. Furthermore, the translation is functionally equivalent to the original text in terms of meaning, style, and cultural sensitivity. The use of “顽强抵抗” accurately captures the sense of active and determined resistance exhibited by the “rotten tooth” in the original text. Similarly, “似乎更喜欢留在原处” effectively conveys the idea that the tooth seems content or comfortable in its current position, matching the sentiment expressed in the English text. Overall, the translation achieves a high level of functional equivalence, successfully preserving the rhetorical impact and emotional nuance of the original text while adhering to the linguistic and cultural norms of the target language. It demonstrates a sound understanding and application of Nida's functional equivalence theory in the context of translating texts with personification.

Example11:

ST: These wads soak up the blood, so that you can quietly bleed to death without realizing it

TT: 这些棉花团会吸收血液,让你在不知不觉中悄然失血而死

Analysis: The original English text, “These wads soak up the blood, so that you can quietly bleed to death without realizing it,” exaggerates the effect of the cotton pads by suggesting that one could die unnoticed from blood loss. In the Chinese translation, “这些棉花团会吸收血液,让你在不知不觉中悄然失血而死,” the exaggeration is retained. The phrase “悄然失血而死” effectively captures the sense of a silent and gradual death from blood loss, maintaining the

rhetorical impact of the original text. The translation achieves functional equivalence by preserving the meaning and intent of the original text while adapting it to the linguistic and cultural norms of the target language. The exaggeration is not overstated or understated, but rather conveyed in a way that is both accurate and effective in evoking the desired emotional response in the reader. Overall, the translation demonstrates a successful application of Nida's functional equivalence theory in the context of translating texts with rhetorical devices such as exaggeration. It preserves the rhetorical impact of the original while ensuring readability and cultural appropriateness in the target language.

4. Conclusion

4.1. Enlightenment

In the process of translating literature, the translator deeply felt the emotion and story behind the words. Every sentence and every word carries the writer's heart and emotion. In the process of translation, the translator endeavored to restore the context of the original text to ensure the fluency and accuracy of the translation.

Literary translation is not only the conversion of language, but also the exchange of culture. In the process of translation, the translator deeply felt the differences between Chinese and Western cultures. In order to better convey the meaning of the original text, the translator constantly consult materials and discuss with her classmates, and strive to incorporate more cultural elements on the basis of maintaining the style of the original text.

The road of translation is long and difficult. In practice, the translator realized in her shortcomings, such as my understanding of certain literary techniques and rhetoric is not deep enough. But it is these challenges that motivate me to keep learning and improve her translation level.

This literary translation practice has made me cherish the pen in my hand more and understand the power of words. the translator hope that in the future, the translator can continue to contribute to the exchange of Chinese and Western cultures.

4.2. Lessons

In the process of carrying out this English-Chinese translation practice This May Hurt a Little, the translator deeply feel that it is not easy to translate. Originally, the translator thought she could easily cope with it with her language foundation, however, in practice, the translator encountered many challenges.

First of all, the translator found that direct translation often fail to fully convey the meaning of the original text. In order to more accurately convey the emotion and context of the original text, the translator needed to give more consideration to the cultural background and language habits.

Second, the translator realized the deficiency of insufficient vocabulary. When the translator was translating, the translator was often confused because the translator could not find suitable vocabulary. In order to solve this problem, the translator needed to keep accumulating vocabulary and improve my language expression.

In addition, the translator also realized the importance of grammar. In the process of translation, the translator has revised my translation many times because of grammatical errors. This made me understand more about the necessity of grammatical rigor for translation.

Overall, this English-Chinese translation practice has made

the author deeply realize the complexity and challenge of translation. It not only requires us to have a solid language foundation, but also needs us to have rich cultural knowledge and flexible language utilization ability.

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