

# An Analysis of Newmark's Translation View

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**Abstract:** Throughout the long history of human translation, many outstanding translators have emerged both at home and abroad. I call them “ambassador”-the “ambassador” of their intellectual crystallization, the “ambassador” of cultural exchange collision between China and the West, and the “ambassador” of political and economic communication. These ideological collisions have promoted the development of Chinese and foreign translation, resulting in four major translation climaxes in the history of Chinese translation. In the West, it is embodied in the six climaxes of translation. In particular, in the sixth climax of translation, Hornby put forward the concept of “translation as an independent discipline” in his masterpiece “Comprehensive Approach to Translation Studies”, which has a profound impact on the development of translation. In China, Tan Zaixi 's masterpiece " Translation Studies: Seeking and Developing as an Independent Discipline " published in 2017 provides a systematic overview of the development of translation studies, which reflects the flourishing development of translation studies in the world. As an important tool for cultural communication, translation plays a unique role in the communication and development of Chinese and foreign cultures. It is worth noting that translators from all over the world have made great contributions to the history of translation with various translation theories summed up by their constant practice. Nowadays, the research and theoretical innovation of translation are based on the practical achievements of predecessors. Therefore, a thorough understanding of previous translation theories is the top priority. Based on the above ideas, this paper mainly analyzes Newmark 's translation theory, emphasizing the text classification, semantic translation and communicative translation, which provides some guidance for translation practice.

**Keywords:** Translation viewpoint; Newmark; Text classification; Semantic translation; Communicative translation.

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## 1. Introduction

As a famous English translator and translation theorist, Peter Newmark has completed a lot of translation practice through his life. His achievements in translation theory have an indelible impact on the translation field. His theoretical works, such as “Approaches to Translation”, “A Textbook of Translation”, “About Translation” and “Paragraphs on Translation”, are well known in translation field. Newmark’s main translation thoughts are mainly embodied in his book “Approaches to Translation”. In his book, he proposed the classification of language functions and the semantic translation and communicative translation known to the world, which are of great guiding significance to translation practice. Therefore, in order to guide translation practice correctly and efficiently, it is urgent to explore Newmark’s translation view.

## 2. An Overview of Newmark's Views on Translation

According to Newmark, translation is the process of translating the meaning of the original text into a different one according to the author's intention. Newmark values “meaning” and “text”. In his opinion, there are six categories of text types depending on their content and style. Thus, in this section, we discuss Newmark’s perspective of text type from the following points:

### 2.1. Types of Translation Texts

#### 2.1.1. Expressive Text

The so-called expressive text is to highlight the expressive function of language. The speaker, that is, the original author occupies an important position in the expression. The speaker uses his or her own language to convey emotions. Therefore, the original unique language style and content should occupy

the same important position. When dealing with this kind of text, the authority of the original author should be paid attention to, and the response of the reader takes the second place. For instance: “The law prohibits private individuals from manufacturing, importing, processing, and bearing reduces, mufflers and silences and ammunition appropriate for using with them.” This example can be translated into Chinese as follows: “法律禁止个人制造、进口、拥有和携带减噪器、消声器、消音器和与之相配套使用的弹药。” Legal documents are typically expressive texts, and the role of legal documents determines the requirements for translations-absolute fidelity to the original text. The purpose of listing many near-synonyms in legal documents is to do everything possible to prevent some people from taking advantage of the loopholes of the law. Legal documents are expressive texts, the translation of which generally adopts the method of semantic translation, that is, the translation tells the reader of the translation what the author of the original text and the reader of the original text are saying. Therefore, it is better to find the equivalent series of close synonyms when translating. In the above, “muffler” is American English and “Silencer” is British English, both mean the same. In Chinese, they can be translated as “消声器” and “消音器” respectively.

According to Newmark, the expressive text includes the following aspects:

First, literary works that involves imaginative and highbrow contents. Among them, novels bear the brunt, and also include poetry and drama. For example, the well-known ancient poem “Thoughts on a Tranquil Night” written by Chinese famous poet Li Bai, novels written by Chinese novelist Mo Yan, and the legend of Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai, they all contain the author’s strong emotion and imagination. When translating such literary works, translators should pay attention to the cultural expression in the text, and require the translator to have a deep understanding of the

original author's expression habits and the source language culture.

Second: In addition to emotionally rich literary works, expressive texts also include texts with a high degree of authority. In authoritative texts, the author has a higher status and trustworthiness, and at the same time possesses strong language expression, such as the more familiar political speeches. The speakers of such political speeches are generally important national figures, and the speeches of such people are not only about their personal positions, but also represent the national or even global Secondly, legal documents. Laws play a crucial role in the governance of the country, and the relevant legal provisions must be expressed accurately and appropriately, and ambiguous expressions are not allowed in legal documents. In addition, scientific and philosophical works are also included, the expressions of such articles are generally based on a large number of relevant studies, and the views they convey or the results they present are based on relevant grounds, so these texts are of higher authority.

Third: Expressive texts also include autobiographies, personal letters and other texts expressing one's emotions. When working on the translation of such texts, translators should pay special attention to the unique collocations, syntax and original metaphors of the authors in the texts. For example, Bacon's "Of Studies" is a typical serious expressive text. When translating expressive texts, the principle of "author first" should be followed to deeply reflect the content of the original author's thought and the original author's form of expression. Language style and ideological content are indispensable.

### 2.1.2. Informative Text

The core of informative texts, which emphasize the function of linguistic information, is the emphasis on the context beyond the information and the facts of the topic, in other words, the unity of "authenticity" and "realism". This type of text is characterized by the predominance of traditional idioms and metaphors, and rarely reflects individual language features. Encyclopedias contain a lot of information and convey objective information content to readers, which is typical of informational texts. In addition, informative texts include various types of textbooks used in schools, published academic reports, articles in newspapers and magazines, published papers, and records of talks. Depending on its style, informative texts can be classified as formal or informal, neutral or familiar. Reports from international conferences and institutions also fall into this category. The speeches of prime ministers at various conferences are informative texts. For example: "How can the European Union contribute to the development of a European film and television programmer industry which is competitive in the world market, forward looking and capable of radiating the influence of European culture and of creating jobs in Europe?" It can be translated into "欧盟应该怎样做才能对欧洲的电影、电视行业有所贡献,使它在国际市场上具有竞争能力,使它能够在发挥欧洲文化的影响力,并为欧洲创造更多的就业机会呢?" This is the text of a simultaneous interpretation at a conference. In simultaneous interpretation, in order to save time, the semantic translation method is often used as much as possible to translate according to the syntactic structure of the original text and avoid making major changes. When long sentences are cut into short sentences, it will inevitably create a feeling of discontinuity and

disconnectedness. Therefore, the short sentences can be flexibly added without affecting the meaning, so that the sentences can be smooth and not obscure.

### 2.1.3. Vocative Text

Vocative text focuses on the actions, thoughts and feelings of readers, and the response of readers is crucial. In short, vocative text is reader-centered. The vocative function of language is the characteristic of the text, and its vocative object is the reader or the object of dialogue. It is noteworthy that the audience that language calls for is not a single person, but a group of readers. Typical examples of this text include user instructions, various promotional materials, applications, case information, etc. When dealing with the translation of such texts, the linguistic and cultural background of the source language and the pragmatic effect of the target language should be considered by the translator. For example, the Chinese culture is extensive and profound, and the food culture is even more colorful. Some names of Chinese dishes are derived from Chinese allusions or are named according to their appearance. For example, "红烧狮子头" is translated into "Braised pork balls in soy sauce" instead of "Red Burned Lion Head". The literal translation of such dish names without considering the cultural background of the readers will cause misunderstanding. Therefore, "readability" is the key to the translation of vocative text, and easy to understand is the standard for the translation of infectious text. When translating, the translator should put the expression habit and text form of the target language first, and not get bogged down in the expression mode of the original text, so that the expression of the target text can achieve the same effect as the original language as far as possible.

### 2.1.4. Aesthetic Text

The aesthetic text emphasizes the aesthetic function of language. "Aesthetics" in the text is to satisfy the readers' expectations of the text through various rhetorical devices, and at the same time to please the readers' senses. The rhetorical devices endow the text with the characteristics of "beauty", while the readers are "the consumers of beauty". When these two conditions are satisfied, the aesthetic function of the text and the aesthetic pleasure of the readers are reflected in succession. For example, in poetry, children's songs, advertising words and other texts, the use of sentence pattern, rhythm, antithesis, onomatopoeia, alliteration, and step techniques to endow the original text with "beauty" and give readers aesthetic pleasure. For example, Mitsubishi Electric's advertising words "We Integrate, You Communicate" and Colgate's advertising words "Good Teeth, good Health" use rhyme to create a catchy effect, so as to achieve the aesthetic function of the text.

### 2.1.5. Phatic Text

A phatic text, as the name implies, emphasizes the phatic function that the text brings to the reader. It is a way to maintain good relations with the audience, or a conventional way of expression, and its meaning is only to serve as a greeting, not to convey new information. For example, "How are you?" and "Have a good day" are common in spoken language, they all reflect the speaker's intention to establish a certain communication relationship with the audience. Different nationalities and languages have different polite phrases. Imagine a scenario where a foreigner just comes out of the toilet and runs into his Chinese partner, who asks, "Have you eaten"? It would be an awkward social scene. Therefore, when expressing phatic words, the above-

mentioned phrase “Have you eaten” should only be translated into appropriate equivalents according to the cultural context and function. The phatic words should not be omitted, but they should not be over-translated either.

### 2.1.6. Metalingual Text

Metalingual texts emphasize the metalingual function of language, that is, the ability of language to interpret, name and criticize its own features. The metalingual function is a common feature of most languages. Only isolated languages lack this function. Translations should pay attention to some language-specific vocabulary based on appropriate contextual factors.

For example, the word *solid* can mean “很棒的” in Singaporean English, but it does not have this meaning in British English or American English, so the use of the word *solid* in Singapore must be judged by its contextual meaning. In addition, when it comes to interjections that have little meaning and only a certain function, such as “实际上、几乎”(Literally), “所谓”(so called), “给它下定义的话”(by definition), the translator must not underestimate, if translated one by one, the meaning may be very different from the original. For instance, “I literally coined money.” has two meanings: “我实际上已伪造了钱” or “我几乎走上了伪造钱币的绝路。” The translator should choose the appropriate meaning according to the context and function.

While determining translation strategies and translation methods based on the above text types, Newmark believes that it is also useful to classify text types based on the subject matter of the text and the translator's professional division of labor. Therefore, he proposes three types of texts: the first type is scientific text, which is usually handled by translation departments of enterprises, multinational companies and government departments. The second is social text (institutional text), which is handled by cultural, social science and business, mainly by international organizations. The third type is literary text, which is generally translated by freelance translators. Newmark points out that literary, cultural, and scientific texts are equally important for translation.

The implications of Newmark's text typology for translation methods are as follows: First, translation is based on equivalence, and the basis of translation is inseparable from text analysis, and different translation methods should be adopted for different text types. Secondly, when translating expressive text types, we should emphasize the need to retain the aesthetic characteristics of the original text. When translating informative texts, translators should translate truthfully and respect the expression of the original text. For the translation of phatic texts, both of them emphasize the response of readers. Awareness of the relationship between translation and culture, and acknowledgement of the fact that meaning can be lost in translation.

Newmark believes that a text may have multiple language functions, of which only one plays a major role. Therefore, translators should adopt different translation strategies and methods according to different text types. This is the core idea and main contribution of the application of functional linguistics and discourse analysis to translation and translation studies.

## 2.2. Translation Categories

Newmark divided translation into four categories: communicative translation, semantic translation, literal

translation and mechanical translation. Since the translation practice was conducted under the guidance of semantic translation and communicative translation theory, this section focuses on the semantic translation and communicative translation proposed by Newmark.

### 2.2.1. Semantic Translation

In semantic translation, Newmark believes that its purpose is to “accurately reproduce the meaning expressed by the original author in the original text within the scope of the language structure and semantic permission of the target language.” The original text and the original author are the center of semantic translation. Semantic translation pays attention to the form of the original text and emphasizes the intention of the original author, that is, it focuses on the original language, and does not include the context and form of the target language into the requirements of translation. Semantic translation highlights the translation of words and sentences in the original text, so it occasionally produces contradictory, semantic ambiguity, and even inappropriate expression of the translation. Semantic translation is generally applicable to literature, scientific and technological documents and other text genres that regard the language and content of the original text as equally important. However, it should be pointed out that Newmark himself also believes that semantic translation is not a perfect translation model, but a “middle way” between compilation and line-by-line translation in translation practice, just like communicative translation model.

### 2.2.2. Communicative Translation

Different from semantic translation, in communicative translation, the way of thinking and expression habits of the target language are the key factors affecting the translator's translation. The translator needs to translate the original language by using the language expression habits and pragmatic forms of the target language, so as to achieve the purpose of conveying information, instead of plain copies of the original language, as in the case of semantic translation. In the communicative translation, the translator can add explanations to the obscure parts of the original text according to the expression habits of the translated language, or adjust the order of the original text according to the coherence of the context, and at the same time change the style of the text to a form that is pleasing to the readers of the target language, or even modify the contents that are not in line with the values of the target language readers.

Communicative translation is to achieve a certain communicative purpose between the original language and the specific target language readers, and because of the differences in culture, expression, socio-historical background and politics among countries, the translation of the original language will be modified to a greater or lesser extent under the processing of different translators, breaking some limitations of the original language such as religious beliefs, cultural connotations and national customs. For example, when translating news reports involving political positions, we should not blindly translate the original text, we should modify the original text with the political views of our country under the condition that the core content of the original text is conveyed, so as to adapt to the political direction of our country and the reading needs of target readers.

For example, the Nanjing Massacre, a humiliating event in Chinese history, is described in Chinese history textbooks as a reminder to young people to remember history, not to forget

the national shame, and to honor the memory of the martyrs. This is not the case in Japanese textbooks, where the expressions are ambiguous and distort the historical events. If the contents of Japanese textbooks are copied without taking into account the historical facts of the country's development, the result will be self-evident. In addition, communicative translations are often used for public advertisements and other literary subjects.

### 2.2.3. Similarities and Differences between Semantic Translation and Communicative Translation

According to the investigation, semantic translation and communicative translation often appear in pairs. Based on these two translation models to guide practice, the complementary model of the two gives the translation a state of "faithfulness", "expressiveness" and "elegance".

The similarities between the semantic translation and the communicative translation are as follows: First, on the premise of ensuring equal translation, the two translation models must adopt the specific method of word-by-word translation, and the translation means such as adding words should be carefully used.

Secondly, if the original information does not have cultural characteristics and is more common, the expression of information content is much more important than the expression of translation methods and means in the re-translation process.

Third, semantic translation and communicative translation usually appear in pairs in a translation, that is, in the process of translation, some paragraphs can use semantic translation according to needs, while some paragraphs can use communicative translation. Therefore, in a sense, there is no absolute communicative translation and no absolute semantic translation.

The differences between the semantic translation and the communicative translation are as follows: First, the objects of faithfulness are different. Communicative translation takes the target language reader as the center, and the translation often adopts the expression that conforms to the target language culture, leaving no obscure and difficult place for the reader; Semantic translation is faithful to the original author's expression derived from the text. In translation, it can only be explained when the connotative meaning of the source text constitutes an obstacle to understanding.

There are two examples, the first one is as follows: "An inch of time is an inch of gold." (一寸光阴一寸金); "What's done is done and cannot be undone." (木已成舟, 覆水难收). In the first example, the original language is a proverb, and in order to reproduce the rhetorical style of the source language as much as possible, the translator finds the equivalent proverb in the target language: an inch of time is an inch of gold, thus reproducing the semantic and syntactic structure of the original language. In the second example, the rhetorical device of the source language is difficult to fit with Chinese in the language transformation, and it is difficult to find the corresponding semantic and syntactic structure in the structure of the translated language, so the translator gives up the original rhetorical pattern and finds the rhetoric corresponding to its meaning in the translated language, so that it can produce the same effect function as the readers of the source language. Another example is the translation of the phrase: "谋事在人, 成事在天". The two types of translation are: "Man proposes, Heaven disposes." (Semantic translation) and "Man proposes, God disposes." "天" (heaven) is the lord

of nature in ancient Chinese culture, while "上帝" (God) is the lord of nature in the minds of Western Christians. The semantic translation of Heaven faithfully preserves the Taoist concept of the original text, and the communicative translation transforms the Taoist concept into the Christian concept, which is suitable for the religious background and acceptance psychology of Western readers.

Second, the selectivity of effect and content is different. In the process of translation, when the content and effect of information are in conflict, communicative translation focuses on the effect, while semantic translation focuses on the opposite. The reason is that communicative translation focuses on whether the translation can be accepted by the readers of the target language, and the content from the text can be changed according to the expression habits of the culture of the translated language. Semantic translation, on the other hand, focuses only on the expression of the content derived from the text. For instance: "Wet paint!", it can be translated into "湿油漆" (Semantic translation) or "油漆未干, 请勿触摸" (Communicative translation). The first translation uses the semantic translation method, which only provides information to the reader, telling people that the paint is not yet dry. The second translation does not follow the form of the original English text, but uses the communicative translation method to convey the function of this notice, which is to ask people to be careful with the paint.

Third, differences in length of translation. Generally speaking, the translation of communicative translation is longer than that of semantic translation, because the latter often contains explanations to help understanding. Finally, the number of people required for translation is different. Communicative translation is a skill, and it can be undertaken by more than one person to translate the text together, while semantic translation is more like an art, and it is long undertaken by one person because each person has a different understanding of the content.

Newmark mainly advocates semantic translation and communicative translation. Both of his translation methods emphasize the original text and the source language as the basic points. Semantic translation focuses on the expression of the original text and focuses on the way. The translator should try to fit the original text when translating. When using the communicative translation method, the main purpose is to let the reader understand the situation of the original author when reading. At the level of translation steps, Newmark believes that the original text should be analyzed first, and then the appropriate translation method should be selected. The translation should focus on various levels, such as the textual level, referential level, cohesive level and the level of naturalness.

## 3. Conclusion

In summary, Newmark divides text types into six types, each of which has its own specific expressive function. At the same time, it should be noted that most of the expressive functions are concentrated in one text type, thus realizing the multi-functional expression of language. When translating, text analysis is essential for translators to determine text types on the basis of analysis and choose different translation methods and techniques for text types. When dealing with the translation of expressive texts, the structural form and expression characteristics of the original text should be preserved, and the translation should reflect the "original

flavor”; when translating informative texts, the translator should objectively and accurately translate the information of the original text without mixing with personal feelings. When translating phatic texts, emphasis should be placed on the reaction of the target language readers. The above three of the six text types are the common text types. The next is the familiar communicative translation and semantic translation. Nowadays, scholars mostly combine these two translation modes to study government work reports, operation guidelines, foreign propaganda materials, medical cases, etc., and also involve in subtitle translation, children's literature appreciation and other translation works.

In Newmark's translation theory, it is emphasized that semantic translation and communicative translation are considered as a whole. It is impossible to use a certain method in translation in isolation, and it is impossible to say which one is better: semantic translation or communicative translation, both of which are often used alternately in translation, only with different emphasis, and sometimes the two methods are combined into one. If the information conveyed is not restricted by specific time and space conditions, and its content and form are inseparable, as long as the readers of the translated text can obtain the information of the original work and appreciate the language and writing characteristics of the original text like the readers of the original text, there is no difference between semantic translation and communicative translation in this kind of translation. Therefore, the translators should better study the translation theories of ancient and modern China and abroad, learn from the strengths of all schools of thought, combine their own translation experience, and flexibly use various translation means to make the translations more faithful and characteristic.

It is believed that there will be more in-depth and meaningful translation practice research under the guidance of theory, and in turn, the depth of practice will promote the development and progress of theory, but the prerequisite is a deep understanding and mastery of translation theory before practice and theoretical innovation can be carried out on this basis, which is the significance of this thesis.

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