Original Paper

Study on the English-Chinese Translation of Linguistic Terms From the Perspective of Skopos Theory

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Abstract

The development of linguistics in China is closely related to the terminology of the discipline and its translation. With the increasing number of linguistic terms, the translation of terms is bound to be inconsistent and even chaotic. Based on an overview of the characteristics of linguistic terms and their translation bottlenecks, the translation and clarity of linguistic terms are crucial in interpreting complex linguistic theories. Therefore, it is imperative to explore, identify and correct the translation of linguistic terms and put forward the feasible ways of translation. As far as the translation of linguistic terms is concerned, hermeneutic theory is operable in this application, and many problems in the translation of linguistic terms can be reasonably explained and caused by hermeneutic theory. Based on the translation practice of linguistic terms, this paper discusses the translation methods of linguistic terms from the perspective of Skopos theory, combining the theoretical research of Skopos theory with the author's translation practice.

Keywords

Linguistics, Terminology translation, Skopos Theory

1. Textual Characteristics of Academic Texts

1.1 Lexical Level Features

Terminology is a typical feature of academic texts, and it is also an important and difficult point in the translation process. This translation mainly deals with linguistic terminology, including specialized terms in corpus linguistics, language teaching and other fields. In contrast, other types of vocabulary, which are less difficult, do not affect reading at the vocabulary level. Therefore, in the process of translation, most of the terms that need to be read and searched are glossary words. By consulting parallel texts and dictionary reference books, the translation of terms that best match the meaning of the original text is selected. The translation of linguistic terms is difficult and of great significance, and the translator has high requirements. Whether the translator can correctly handle the translation of linguistic terms directly affects the translation quality of the whole text. Jiang (2005) believes that the principles to be followed in term translation are accuracy, readability, transparency and convention. But the accuracy here is relative and can be analyzed and adjusted according to the specific situation of the text. For example, Chomsky's core term language performance has been translated into many different names in different literatures, including "language use", "language use" and "language performance". Therefore, when searching for terms, we should choose the most suitable term translation according to the actual situation, and maintain unity in the translation.

1.2 Sentence Level Features

Academic works are formal in style, precise in wording and compact in sentence. Compound sentences, compound sentences and passive sentences appear in parallel. Both compound sentences and compound sentences belong to the normal sentence pattern of English syntactic structure. In this text, the non-restrictive attributive clause led by which appears most often. The proportion of passive sentences is also large, which is not difficult to understand. Academic works are intended to convey objective and true information, and the characteristics of passive expression are formal, unemotional, concise and objective.

1.3 Text Level Features

Academic texts have strong standardization in the organization of the text, and the structure of each chapter is roughly the same. The concept of linguistic terms is usually introduced first. The second is the research process, so that readers have a general understanding of the definition of the term and the main research, and then continue to elaborate the specific content, and finally the content of this chapter is summarized. The context of each chapter is tightly structured, with cause followed by effect, and the description of phenomena followed by the purpose of action. This reminds me that in the process of translation, the author should not only ensure the coherence of the source text, but also directly translate according to the order of the original text. Instead, the author should find out the center or key point of the text and adjust it according to the differences between English and Chinese to achieve the best conversion.

2. Studies on Skopos Theory

Skimeballing through the landscape of translation theories, one stumbles upon the purposeful terrain of Skopos theory. Crafted in the late 20th century by German linguist Hans J. Vermeer, it introduces a seismic shift from a word-for-word translation approach to one that's centered on the purpose or function of the translated text. Essentially, Skopos theory posits that the aim of any translation is defined by its intended use and the target audience, rather than strictly adhering to the source text.

The major work on Skopos theory is *Towards a general theory of translational action: Skopos theory explained*, a book Vermeer co-authored with Katharina Reiss. In this book, they gave some "rules" of the theory (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984, p. 119). These are:

(1) A TT is determined by its skopos.

(2) A TT is an offer of information in a target culture and TL concerning an offer of information in a source culture and SL.

(3) A TT does not initiate an offer of information in a clearly reversible way.

(4) A TT must be internally coherent.

(5) A TT must be coherent with the ST.

(6) The five rules above stand in hierarchical order, with the skopos rule predominating.

Rules 4 and 5 touch on general skopos "rules" concerning how the success of the action and information transfer is to be judged: the coherence rule, linked to internal textual coherence, and the fidelity rule, liked to intertextual coherence with the ST.

Over the years, Skopos theory has evolved and expanded, influencing not just academic discussions but also practical translation work. It has sparked debates about fidelity to the source text versus the creative freedom of the translator, leading to a more nuanced understanding of translation as both an art and a science. The theory has branished itself into various sectors such as legal, medical, and literary translation, highlighting the diverse applications of its core principles.

3. Translation of Linguistic Terms under the Guidance of Skopos Theory

According to Skopos theory, translation is a purposeful act (Vermeer, 2014, p. 29). The translator can make different adjustments to the translation according to the different purposes of translation activities. Therefore, in the translation of texts containing linguistic terms, it is first necessary to determine the purpose of the translation according to the characteristics of the text and related requirements, and then formulate translation strategies to carry out specific translation activities.

According to the text characteristics summarized above, several purposes should be achieved in the translation of linguistic terms. Firstly, the format should meet the relevant requirements; secondly, the corresponding terms should be used for clear description; and secondly, on the basis of clearly expressing the meaning of the original text, the text should be smooth and easy to understand, so that the content can be better understood by readers.

3.1 Standardization of Forms

According to the purpose principle of Skopos theory: translate/ interpret/ speak/ write in a way that enables the text/ translation to achieve its intended function in the context in which it is used and in a way that is consistent with the way the user of the text/translation wants to achieve its intended function (Nord, 2014, p. 29). That is to say, regardless of the differences in format between the Chinese and English versions, the expected function is to describe clearly, and these titles and content should be converted according to relevant requirements.

3.2 Terminology Accuracy

Example 1: 言语事件 (speech event); 环境特征 (environmental characteristic); 语言变体 (language variety)

Terminology is highly professional and is a generalization of important concepts and definitions of the discipline. There is only one translation method, and the method should be able to accurately express the concepts contained in the term itself. Therefore, the principle of accuracy is the principle that must be followed when translating terms. In order to ensure the accuracy of the translation of terms, translators should fully understand the original meaning of terms in the context in which they appear before translating terms, and avoid the translation of terms based on daily context. In addition, translators should also avoid applying interpretations of the term in other disciplines to current disciplines. For example, the same term is often used in different disciplines, and some translators are easy to apply the translation of the term in other disciplines to the current discipline, which is likely to lead to great changes in the original meaning of the term. Therefore, when translating terms, translators should adjust the target language of terms according to the current context to ensure that the target language of terms is more accurate.

3.3 Readability of the Target Text

Example 2: Speech and writing enable individuals and groups to express themselves, to give vent to feelings and thoughts. Sometimes they do this whether or not they are aware of any recipient for what they have to express, and whether or not they take much notice of their immediate setting or environment. 言语和文字让个人和群体能够表述自我、抒发感情、表达思想。有时他们这样做，不一定意识到他们要表达的内容是否有接收者，也不管具体语境。

The translation of terms under the principle of transparency has more color of original meaning, but it is difficult for most readers to accept this way of translation. Skopos theory believes that the translator "should be oriented towards the target audience in the target culture" (Nord, 2001, 139), that is, in the process of translation, the special situation of the target audience should be fully taken into account, so as to translate the text acceptable to them. If the translator uses literal translation method here, the meaning will be unclear. Therefore, "immediate setting or environment" is translated directly into "具体语境".

4. Conclusion

It can be seen from the above translation commentaries that in the process of translation practice, the author adopts a series of strategies to deal with translation under the guidance of Skopos theory. As Skopos theory points out, the goal of translation behavior determines the whole process of translation behavior, that is, the result determines the method. In this paper, the author analyzes the purpose to be achieved by each part of the translation, and adjusts and modiifies the translation with the help of Skopos theory, so as to achieve the purpose. The whole article describes the author's thinking and research process. When translating the text of linguistic terms, it is first necessary to understand the differences in format between the Chinese and English texts. In order to meet the relevant requirements, the format should be converted. Moreover, in order to make readers in this field understand, it is necessary to translate relevant terms accurately, convey the meaning of the original text clearly, and ensure the readability of the translation. In this paper, examples from translation practice are given to illustrate how to achieve these goals by combining concrete translation practice with skopos theory.

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