

Original Paper

Translation of Metaphor from the Perspective of Cognitive

Linguistics

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Abstract

Metaphor not only contains the characteristic connotation of the language itself, but also the words that cannot be expressed in a straightforward manner. The traditional metaphor view holds that metaphor is only used to beautify and modify language, but cognitive linguistics regards metaphor as a mapping of thinking, mainly through people's existing experience and knowledge to understand new things, that is to say, from a known concept domain to understand another unknown concept domain. Therefore, metaphor can be regarded as a medium for establishing connection between the source domain and the target domain, and it also plays an important role in our study and daily life. This paper analyzes the translation of metaphor from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. Through the translation of various metaphors, we find that in the process of metaphor translation, we need to distinguish the source schema from the image schema metaphor; also it is necessary to distinguish the type of text; as well as the cultural meaning behind the text and the value to be conveyed. The translation strategy of direct translation or free translation, naturalization or alienation is used to translate the target domain.

Keywords

cognitive metaphor, metaphor methods, metaphor practice

1. Introduction

Metaphor exists in every aspect of daily life, whether in the use of language or in people's thoughts and behaviors. Metaphorical language is more infectious than plain language, and it can exert people's imagination. Whether in Chinese or English, metaphor has become the main expression, main medium of expressing emotion and writer's style. Therefore whether a translator can successfully handle the translation of metaphor becomes whether a translator can truly handle the connotation of the source

language. The traditional view of metaphor holds that metaphor is only a rhetorical device, while the cognitive view of metaphor holds that metaphor is a thinking phenomenon. This article mainly based on the book *Cognitive Metaphor and Translation Practical Tutorial*, and has a comprehensive understanding of the concept and classification of metaphor from the perspective of cognitive linguistics then using the intentional schema theory to analyze the translation strategies of metaphors, so as to analyze the translation practice of metaphor in various texts.

1.1 Overview of Metaphor

Metaphor is a kind of analogy, different from Simile and Metonymy. The simile is usually marked by figurative words, such as “like”, “as”, “as if”, for example, friendship like a flower blooming (friendship is likened to the flower). And metaphor usually adopts hidden words, such as “is”, “become”, and “change”. Its characteristic is to compare something to another thing with which it has a similar relationship. The key point is “similarity”. For example, “Youth is the flower of the motherland”, while metonymy is usually when two things are not similar, but closely related, the two things can replace each other, the focus is on “association”, metonymy can sometimes replace the whole with part. For example: He has a good ear for music.

Metaphor usually implies allegorical meaning, that is, they convey the underlying meaning. In more general terms, metaphor is like having an outer packing, which hides the meaning of the language and the hidden feelings of the author and conveys the real intention in more euphemistic words. In Chinese, metaphor is usually said to be a code word, ontology and metaphor appear at the same time, and they are formally consistent. The structure is: A (ontology) is B (metaphor). The basis of metaphor formation is human perception of the external world, which is generally hidden in people’s subconscious and thinking. When people need to express a specific abstract concept, it will interact with the concept to be expressed, and then express the metaphor.

1.2 The Differences between Traditional Metaphor and Cognitive Metaphor

1.2.1 Traditional Metaphor

The earliest metaphor appeared in Aristotle’s *Poetics*. He thought that metaphor was to use the name belonging to one thing can be used by another, and there was a similar point between the two. The scope of its application ranges from subordination to species, from species to genus, or by analogy. For example, “A silver plate is rising up in the sky”. In this sentence, because there is a similarity between plate and moon, we can use plate to refer to moon. Based on Aristotle’s point of view, most people also think metaphor is abnormal phenomenon in language. Its role is only to beautify language. Therefore, it is more often seen in literary works and less studied in non-literary works. There are also rules for those who use metaphors. Not all people can use metaphors, and they are usually used by literati and scholars. So, its research is only at the rhetorical level.

The cognitive metaphor view is very different from the traditional metaphor view. The cognitive linguist Lakoff once described the traditional metaphor view: “Metaphor is for most people a device

of poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish—a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary languages”. “Metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003).

According to these descriptions, we can know that the traditional view of metaphor holds that metaphor is only a rhetorical device, belonging to the category of language, and has nothing to do with thinking. There are certain limitations on the scope of use of metaphors and the identity of people.

1.2.2 Cognitive Metaphor

In the 1970s, with the development of semiotics and cognitive psychology, many scholars began to pay attention to metaphor in linguistics. In 1980, Lakoff and Johnson pointed out in their book “*Metaphor We Live By*”, “metaphor is not only a rhetorical device, but also a specific thinking mapping, which has an important impact on people’s thinking, reasoning and association in daily life”. The essence of metaphor is to experience and understand one thing by borrowing its relevance to another. In simple terms, the idea of cognitive metaphor is that metaphor is usually based not only on such similarity, but also on the subjective experience of others. Metaphor is not only a rhetorical meaning, but also a reflection of thinking. At the same time, there is no clear definition of the scope of metaphor and people’s identity. In daily life, metaphor can be seen everywhere and most of them appear in advertisements, such as: “Toyota moves forward as your partner”.

Lakoff used the following sentence to describe the nature of cognitive metaphor: “Metaphor is so ordinary that we use it unconsciously and automatically; as a result metaphor does not belong to the category of literature only. In fact, metaphors in literature also rely heavily on every day one”. “Metaphor is not only a matter of language, but more importantly a matter of thought” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003).

According to the descriptions, it can be known that metaphor exists in any language and is not the exclusive property of scholars. People are born with the ability to use metaphor. It represents the normality of language and is quite common in daily language use. And it is manufactured systematically through the long-term accumulation of human experience.

2. Classification of Cognitive Metaphor

As we know, the previous research on metaphor has been limited to its rhetorical function, and it is considered that metaphor has little research value. However, since the study of Lakoff and others, this traditional concept has been broken, and it is proposed that metaphor should be understood from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. He and his collaborator Johnson divided metaphor into three types: first, structural metaphor, which refers to the concept that will belong to two different cognitive domains. Through some regular correspondence between them, one concept can be used to construct the other. For example: time is money. Followed by the metaphor of orientation, refers to the concept of spatial orientation, such as: up and down, left and right, before and after the organization of the

metaphor. In other words, to give a concept a spatial orientation, we can use this spatial orientation concept to understand the metaphor of this concept. For example: Happy is up, Sad is down. Up and down is a spatial concept, which can be used to express the concept of emotion. Finally, ontological metaphor refers to the entity and material metaphor, which is a metaphor to construct experience with the concepts of entity and material. To put it simply is to make abstract experiences concrete. For example, I can't accept your love. Love is originally just a feeling, an abstract concept, but people use the actual existence of the entity or material in real life to metaphor it, giving it a tangible concrete concept.

2.1 Image Schema Metaphor and Image Metaphor

The so-called image schema metaphor can be divided. The first image refers to an artistic image created by the objective object through the unique emotional activities of the creative subject. To put it simply, image is an objective object used to pinpoint subjective emotions. Then there is the schema, which refers to the existing knowledge and experience in human brain. Therefore, the image schema is a cognitive structure based on the cognition of a certain connection between two things. It is an organizational structure in which humans use their own experience and understanding to understand abstract relationships and concrete images, to understand the foundation of the intentional schema metaphor. In addition, the image schema is also a model for constructing metaphors. The common schemas are: up and down, inner and outer, whole-part and other basic schema. Taking the "up and down" as an example, the basis for the formation of this pattern is that when a person is born, he knows that the head is on the top and the feet are on the bottom. Normal people complete most of the daily life in a standing and sitting position, only when they are sick, and they will lie in bed, or will fall after someone dies. Because of this experience and feelings, we will project similar experiences and feelings into other target domains, and thus form an "up-down" schema metaphor. For example: I am feeling up today. He came down with flu. With the accumulation of knowledge and experience, new knowledge combined with existing experience will form an intentional schema in the human brain. Because this schema is usually a common phenomenon and experience in life, people of different cultural backgrounds can create a same schema, the intentional schema metaphor does not make a big difference in the daily translation process.

Image metaphor refers to the temporary mapping of a specific image to another concrete image. These objects used as metaphors will be different for different cultural backgrounds, and this kind of temporality, the long-term schema has not been established in the human brain, so the possibility that the metaphor of the image deviates from the conventional one is great, and it is not universal in the use of any language. In daily life, imagery metaphor is usually a special image. This particularity shows that the theme and artistic effect it wants to express will be great, and it is worthy of our study.

2.2 The Difference between Image Schema Metaphor and Image Metaphor

Firstly, image schema metaphor is a long-term feature due to the long-term memory and experience of the human brain. The imagery metaphor is just a specific image, and the temporary nature will be great. Secondly, the image schema is a recurring organizational form of knowledge. It is the basis for understanding and understanding the broader concepts, it is continuous and systematic. Therefore, for some image schema metaphors that can be perceived in daily life, it is easier to understand and to have the same opinion. Because the image metaphor does not establish the same schema in the human brain, we will understand this metaphor according to its own cultural background and context. Finally, relative to the image schema metaphor, because of the particularity of intentional metaphor, there will be more research value.

3. Cognitive Metaphor and Translation

3.1 The Relationship between Cognitive Metaphor and Translation

The understanding of metaphor is actually to map the concept of the source domain to the target domain, so as to achieve the purpose of re-recognizing the target domain. Therefore, we need to have a full understanding of the background of the source domain before translating a work. At the same time, we need to pay attention to the fact that people in different cultural backgrounds may have different understandings and expressions of the same metaphor, but the basic concepts will still have great similarities. Therefore, when translating metaphors, it is necessary to use the classification of cognitive metaphors, that is, on the basis of image schema metaphors and image metaphors; it can first have a basic judgment on the readability of the subject and target domains to be expressed in the source domain and then use a variety of translation methods.

3.2 Translation Strategies to Cognitive Metaphor

3.2.1 Literal Translation and Free Translation

The biggest similarity between literal translation and free translation is to accurately express the thought, style and content of the source language. But literal translation emphasizes the structural form and is faithful to the original text, both to preserve the content of the original text, but also to retain the original form. On the basis of maintaining readability, the original thoughts and styles can be completely preserved, usually appearing in informational texts. When the metaphorical cognition and representative content of the two languages are the same, literal translation can achieve the equivalences between image and style. It should be noted that for the image emphasized by the author, literal translation must be used in the process of translation to express the role of this image.

Free translation is based on meaning. It does not need to pursue formal equivalence like literal translation. It does not need to pay too much attention to detail. It only needs to convey the original meaning of the original text. Sometimes different ethnic groups have different cultural characteristics. Therefore, the meaning of an image used in metaphor may be completely different between the source

domain and the target domain. At this time, the meaning of the author can be conveyed by means of free translation.

3.2.2 Domestication and Foreignization

The theory of domestication and foreignization was first proposed by American scholar Venuti. He believes: "The method of naturalization is to use ethnocentrism to force foreign texts to conform to the cultural value of the target language and send the author home. The method of alienation is to use non-ethnic centralism to impose the language and cultural characteristics of foreign texts on the culture of the target language. Value, send readers out of the country" (Venuti, p. 20). Simply put, naturalization is to conform to the cultural conventions of the source language, and alienation is to conform to the cultural conventions of the target language. Different national languages and cultures have different language expressions. When translating metaphors, we need to use the foreignization method to translate the original image, which can reflect the cultural characteristics of the source language and be accepted by a wide range of readers. When there is a big difference between the source language and the target language, when translate the metaphor, we can choose the domestication method, because at this time, the translator needs to be reader-centered and establish the same schema with the reader, and the naturalization is just right, it can reflect the characteristics and culture of the target language.

4. Translation Practice of Cognitive Metaphor

4.1 *The Translation of Metaphor for Words*

The translation of lexical metaphor requires not only a rich knowledge base, but also an understanding of the cultural meaning behind the word. Sometimes, it is necessary to analyze the original text according to the context and understand the image represented by the metaphor. When translating words, we should have a comprehensive penetration of the concept in advance. When we encounter a metaphor, we can quickly establish a certain connection with the schema in our mind, so as to judge the translation of metaphor. For example, when we see red, in the traditional culture of China, red represents auspiciousness, and when we see sun, we think of light. These frequently used more extensive words in many people's minds have established the same schema, the general translation will not appear too big deviation. In English, metaphors usually take the form of nouns and verbs. Here are some examples:

- (1) Lots of tropical rain forests are disappearing alarmingly. The destroyers are actually destroying the **lungs** of our planets.
- (2) On Wall Street, if you are out to lunch, you are **lunch**.
- (3) When the economic **bubble** mercifully bursts, a lot of people are going to lose their jobs.

In addition to the noun metaphor do not necessarily appear directly, but the verbs are mapped through association and connection. Here are a few examples:

(4) The thick carpet **killed** the sound of my footsteps.

(5) The bird **wolfed** it.

(6) He **wormed** through the snow and peered over a snow—covered rock beside the roadway.

4.2 Translation of Metaphor for Phrases

The translation of metaphorical phrases is mainly applied literary works, news reports and daily life.

(1) The Use of Literary Works

It is doubtless a venture more demented than coupling with the pig, but it is our venture, our **white whale**, and by it or with it shall we be seduced.

(2) Use in Newspapers or Magazines

How should the world get out of this bind? Even as Mr. Trump puts up with astonishing irresponsibility, others must **keep their heads**.

(3) Use in Daily Life

Before so many audiences, I'm afraid I might **lay an egg**.

4.3 Translation of Metaphor for Sentences

The translation practice of metaphor in sentences, the two examples here use literal translation and free translation.

(1) Whole fashions in film are **born, thrive**, and **die** in twenty-four months.

(2) Talk of the Devil, and he will appear.

4.4 Translation of Metaphor for Paragraph

The application of metaphor in the text mainly chooses the opening paragraph in Austin's *Pride and Prejudice*: It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.

Analysis: the metaphor of this text belongs to the theme metaphor: marriage is a market. According to the law at the time, women cannot inherit property, only through marriage to obtain property and status. Therefore, a single male and female constitute a marriage market. The use of metaphor here fully reflects the important position of the property at the time in the marriage market.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Major Findings

This thesis mainly discusses the study of metaphor from Cognitive Linguistics. Through the classification of cognitive metaphors and some basic translation strategies, when encountering a metaphor, we can first judge the metaphor according to the context. It is an image schema metaphor or an image metaphor, and then according to the value of the metaphor and the cultural background behind the metaphor, then uses literal translation and free translation, foreignization and domestication to translate the metaphor. The main research value of this paper is to study and translate metaphor by applying the translation strategies mentioned in the previous article through the translation practice of

words, phrases, sentences and texts. Studying metaphors can enrich the cultural characteristics behind the words, and using metaphors in daily life can also enhance their own understanding and produce stronger artistic effects.

5.2 Deficiencies of the Research

The deficiencies of this paper are that the materials selected for translation practice are limited, and it is impossible to fully analyze and study the translation of metaphors. At the same time, although this article introduces some basic translation strategies of metaphor, it is inevitable that errors will occur in the process of practical application. Finally, due to the author's inadequate ability limited time, the examples in this paper are inadequate and inappropriate to analyze metaphor translation with various translation strategies. And there are not many examples to prove the translation strategies mentioned in this paper, so it deserves putting into practice. In the future, the author will continue to collect some examples of metaphors and carry out some translation practices to enrich the understanding of metaphor.

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