

Word Conversion in Diplomatic English-Chinese Translation

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Abstract

Cultural differences between China and the west countries lead to great differences in the expression of Chinese and English. In order to make the translation more accurate and fluent in foreign affairs translation, it is often necessary to use the translation strategy of word conversion. However, cultural differences increase the difficulty of word conversion. Aiming at this problem, this paper analyzes some methods and Strategies of word conversion in foreign affairs English- Chinese translation through examples.

Keywords

Foreign affairs translation, Word conversion, English-Chinese translation.

1. THE DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TRANSLATION

Since human beings have a complete system of languages, translation activities are closely linked. Translation makes it possible for human beings to communicate between various languages and cultures. With the continuous development of reform and opening up, foreign affairs translation has become an integral part of diplomatic activities between China and other countries. Foreign affairs translation is the translation of discourse of foreign affairs. It means that in foreign affairs activities, one language is expressed in another language according to the foreign affairs language norms, which produces the same effect between the target language and the target language audience. [1] The content of foreign affairs translation, with the characteristics of political, contemporary and flexible, and it requires translators to have strong political sensitivity, firm political position, and excellent translation skills, which determine that it is different from other areas of translation. Translation should not only be faithful to the original, but also convey the meaning of the original smoothly. Therefore, it is necessary to deal with the translation flexibly. Word conversion is the most common translation method in foreign affairs .

2. THE NECESSITY OF PART OF WORD CONVERSION

There are lexical and syntactic differences between English and Chinese. For example, English is strictly restricted by grammar, and there is an inseparable relationship between subject and predicate. Moreover, because the predicate in English sentences can only be acted by verbs, the predicate verbs have a great influence on the other components of the sentence and the structure of the sentence. On the contrary, the predicate in Chinese can be used not only as verbs, but also as adjectives, nouns and other words of part of speech . Therefore, in the process of English-Chinese translation, if the translator is too rigid in the grammatical structure of the original text and translates word by word, the translation will be stiff and even unintelligible.

Even in very simple sentences, if we only stick to the original part of speech, there will be too "foreign" translation.

Eugene Albert Nida, an outstanding American linguist, put forward the core translation theory of "Functional Equivalence". This theory includes four aspects: lexical equivalence, syntactic equivalence, textual equivalence and stylistic equivalence. He also pointed out that "translation is to use the most appropriate and natural equivalent language to reproduce the information of the source language from semantics to style". [2] Therefore, according to the principle of "lexical equivalence", when translating, we should not force one-to-one correspondence on the surface of the text, but make the two languages achieve equivalence in function and meaning. [3] In the process of English-Chinese translation, we should not stick to the equivalence of nouns, verbs, adjectives and other parts of speech. On the basis of full analysis of the context, we should transform the words in the original text into parts of speech if necessary, so as to play the role of functional equivalence, accurately reproduce the cultural connotation of the source language in the target language, and reduce the occurrence of "translation syndrome". Part of speech conversion is an important way to break through the syntax and structure of the original text, and turn the block into the access. Without the necessary part of speech conversion, there will inevitably be stiff and awkward words, or even obscure translations. Therefore, in order to make readers understand the content better, it is necessary to change the part of speech in translation. However, it should be noted that the principle of "faithfulness and fluency" should be followed in the process of part of speech conversion, so as to make the sentence fluency and conform to the expression habit of the target language without changing the meaning of the sentence.

3. THE DIFFICULTY OF WORD CONVERSION

3.1. Differences Thinking Modes Between Chinese and Western Thinking

British and American people attach importance to logical thinking, while Chinese people attach importance to image thinking. From the functional aspect of English part of speech, we can see that English and American prefer to use abstract words instead of concrete things. In contrast, Chinese people especially like to express their feelings by using concrete and figurative words to describe abstract things. [4] People's thinking activities and thinking ability have formed a distinctive way of thinking. The process of English-Chinese translation is the mutual transformation of these two ways of thinking. Translators engaged in foreign affairs translation need to be clear about the different ways of thinking and expression between English and American people and Chinese people, and adopt the translation method of part of speech conversion flexibly if need be: when translating English into Chinese, translator should make the translation better conform to the Chinese way of expression; when translating Chinese into English, translator should make the translation better conform to the English and American way of expression.

3.2. Differences Language Usage

The usage of Chinese and Western languages is also very different due to cultural differences. There are differences in the use of parts of speech, for example, nouns are used most frequently in English, while verbs are preferred in Chinese. In addition, there are also semantic differences, such as 小康社会 (a moderately prosperous society), 改革开放 (reform and opening-up) and other words with Chinese characteristic, which can not be found in English. Therefore, in the work of foreign affairs translation, it is necessary to understand the language characteristics and expression habits of the source language and the target language, so as to accurately understand the meaning of the original text and flexibly use translation methods such as word conversion.

4. WORD CONVERSION IN DIPLOMATIC ENGLISH-CHINESE TRANSLATION

4.1. Conversion of Chinese Verbs

Chinese is a dynamic language, which uses many verbs, and in addition to a large number of verb object structures, there are more than two verbs, such as continuous verb and concurrent verb; while English is a static language and prefers to use nouns and prepositions, but it uses less predicate or other words which express the meaning of action.

4.1.1. The Mutual Conversion of Chinese Verbs and English Nouns

Example1: 近年来,全球气候变暖,北极冰雪融化加速

Translation: Global warming in recent years has accelerated the melting of ice and snow in the Arctic region. [5]

Example2: 回顾近代以来的世界历史,我们可以清楚地看到,不同选择曾经给世界带来迥异的历史轨迹。[6]

Translation: A review of the world's modern history clearly shows that different choices would lead the world onto different paths.

Example3: Beijing's reaction to the antigovernment demonstrations in Hong Kong is likely to cause British officials to watch closely for signs of Chinese influence. [7]

Translation: 北京对香港反政府示威活动的反应,可能会导致英国官员密切关注是否存在中国政府施加影响的迹象。

Example4: Less than 48 hours later, the Hong Kong company went public with its offer, hoping for strong shareholder support for the deal.[7]

Translation: 不到48小时后,这家香港公司公开了自己的报价,希望得到伦交所股东对这笔交易的大力支持。

The mutual conversion of Chinese verbs and English nouns is one of the most common methods in English Chinese translation. In example 1, "变暖" and "融化" are verbs. According to the grammatical structure of English, only one predicate can be found in a sentence. Therefore, these two verbs are skillfully converted into gerund, which preserves the meaning of the verbs. At the same time, the Chinese clauses are combined into one sentence, making the translation more concise and clear. In example 2, there are two verbs "回顾" and "看到" in the original text. In the process of translation, the "回顾" is changed into the noun form "review" to ensure the correctness of grammar and the consistency of meaning. In example 3 and example 4, the noun "influence" which is derived from the verb and the noun "support" with action meaning are translated into the Chinese verb "施加影响" and "对..支持" respectively, which not only achieves the principle of "faithfulness" in translation, but also makes the translation more consistent with Chinese expression habits.

4.1.2. The Mutual Conversion of Chinese Verbs and English Adjectives

Example5: 认识北极就是要提高北极的科学研究水平和能力,不断深化对北极的科学认知和了解,探索北极变化和发展的客观规律,为增强人类保护、利用和治理北极的能力创造有利条件。[5]

Translation: To understand the Arctic, China will improve the capacity and capability in scientific research on the Arctic, pursue a deeper understanding and knowledge of the Arctic science, and explore the natural laws behind its changes and development, so as to create favorable conditions for mankind to better protect, develop, and govern the Arctic.

Example6: You do a heroic job. We know that this crisis is putting a huge burden on you and your families. We know you are stretched to the limit.[8]

Translation: 医务工作者正在英勇奋战。我们知道这场危机给你们和家人带来了巨大的负担。我们也知道，你们在竭力工作，身心疲惫。

Chinese prefer to use verbs, there will be many verbs in parallel, but in English grammar structure, there can only be one predicate in a sentence, so we can't translate Chinese verb form into English verb form word by word. Chinese verbs can be converted into adjectives as well as nouns. In example 5, the verb "深化" is translated into the adjective "deeper" to modify "understanding", which is in line with the syntactic structure of English and more able to express the meaning to be conveyed in Chinese. The four character structure is a very frequently used lexical phenomenon in Chinese. The use of the four character structure can increase momentum and express vividly, which is also in line with the characteristics of many Chinese verbs. Example 6 the English adjective "heroic" (英勇的) is translated into the Chinese verb "英勇奋战", which is more authentic and vivid than the direct translation of the part of speech into "做英勇的工作".

4.1.3. The Mutual Conversion of Chinese Verbs and English Adverbs

Example7: 要携手帮助公共卫生体系薄弱的发展中国家提高应对能力。[9]

Translation: G20 members need to jointly help developing countries with weak public health systems enhance preparedness and response.

Example8. I am speaking to you at what I know is an increasingly challenging time.[10]

Translation: 我知道这是一个充满挑战的时期。

In Example 7, "携手" and "帮助" are both verbs, which do not conform to the rule that an English sentence has only one predicate. Therefore, translating the Chinese verb "携手" into the adverb "jointly" with the same meaning, which conforms to the grammar rules of English while being faithful to the original; Example8, if you translate it directly into "我知道这是一个越来越具有挑战性的时期" it is as stiff as a poker, but you can convert the English adverb "increasing" into the Chinese verb "充满". Then, the translation of the whole sentence is "我知道这是一个充满挑战的时期." which is more fluent than before.

4.1.4. The Mutual Conversion of Chinese Verbs and English Prepositions

Example9: 未来已经来到我们身边。[6]

Translation: The future is already with us.

Example10: 我们应该审时度势, 科学决策, 引领新科技革命和产业变革朝着正确方向发展[6]

Translation: We should gain a keen understanding of the complex dimensions of this issue and make the right decision. This will enable us to steer the new scientific revolution and industrial transformation in the right direction.

Example11: Both China and the UK support multilateralism, free trade and rule-based international trade system. Both are permanent members of the UN security council and are countries with global influence. [12]

Translation: 中英同为联合国安理会常任理事国, 都是有重要影响的大国, 都倡导多边主义、支持自由贸易, 都主张维护基于规则的国际贸易体系。

In English, prepositions make sentence order coherent, but in Chinese, they are not used so frequently. In fact, many verbs can be transformed into prepositions with action meanings. Therefore, in the process of Chinese-English translation, Chinese verbs can be converted into English prepositions if necessary. For example, in Example 9, Chinese Verbs "来到..." was translated into English Preposition "with", in example 10, the Chinese verb "朝着..." was translated into preposition "in"; Some prepositions, though not directly derived from verbs, have the same action meaning in a certain context. If necessary, English prepositions can also be converted into Chinese verbs, which is more in line with Chinese expression habits. In

example 11, "with" is the part of speech of preposition in English was translated into "有...", which is converted into the part of speech of verb in English-Chinese translation.

4.2. Conversion of Chinese Nouns

Although Chinese verbs are commonly used, Chinese nouns are also very important. In English, nouns can be derived into verbs, adjectives, adverbs and other forms, but it is difficult to find corresponding words to replace them in Chinese. Therefore, when translating from English to Chinese, we can use Chinese expression habits to flexibly convert them into famous words. In Chinese-English translation, nouns can also be converted into verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc., so as to get a smooth translation.

4.2.1. The Mutual Conversion of Chinese Nouns and English Verbs

Example12:提高教育和医疗水平所作努力的前提下, 参与北极资源开发利用, 使北极地区居民和土著人成为北极开发的真正受益者。[5]

Translation:.....and improve education and medical services, so that the Arctic residents, including the indigenous peoples, will truly benefit from the development of Arctic resources.

Example13: These financial titans have over \$50 trillion to invest. [7]

Translation: 这些金融巨头的投资金额超过了50万亿美元。

In example 12, the sentence "受益者" emphasizes the action meaning brought by a series of measures, the whole sentence is to express the benefits for the Arctic and indigenous people. Therefore, the term "beneficiary" is changed into the verb "benefit" in translation, after the change of part of speech, it can better reflect the meaning expressed in the original sentence, instead of changing the meaning expressed in the original sentence. In example 13, "have", which is common but not easy to translate in English, if translated directly, "有超过50万亿美元去投资", which is clumsy. Therefore, the verb infinitive "invest" is converted into fame It is more reasonable to translate it into "投资金额". Although the part of speech has been transformed, the original meaning of the original text has not been changed, so that the translation is more in line with the Chinese expression habits.

4.2.2. The Mutual Conversion of Chinese Nouns and English Adjectives

Example14:通过全球、区域、多边和双边等多层次的合作形式, 推动北极域内外国家、政府间国际组织、非国家实体等众多利益攸关方共同参与, 在气候变化、科研、环保、航道、资源、人文等领域进行全方位的合作。[5]

Translation: Through global, regional, multilateral and bilateral channels, all stakeholders — including States from both inside and outside the Arctic, intergovernmental organizations, and non-state entities — are encouraged to take part in cooperation on climate change, scientific research, environmental protection, shipping route development, resource utilization and cultural activities.

Example15: It is not clear what will happen. Shares in the London stock exchange group rose 6.6 percent to 7, 254 pence on Wednesday. That is still below the HKEX offer, suggesting that the London company's shareholders are sceptical that a deal can be done. [7]

Translation:目前尚不清楚会发生什么。伦敦证券交易所集团的股价周三上涨6.6%, 至7254便士。这仍低于港交所的报价, 表明这家伦敦公司的股东对交易能否达成持怀疑态度。

Example16: We commit to take all necessary health measures and seek to ensure adequate financing to contain the pandemic and protect people, especially the most vulnerable. [13]

Translation: 我们承诺采取一切必要公共卫生措施, 争取提供足够资金来抑制此次大流行病, 以保护人民, 特别是最脆弱群体。

In example 14, "全球", "区域", "多边和双边" are transformed into adjectives "global", "regional", "multilateral and bilateral" to modify channels. After the part of speech conversion, it conforms

to the principle of "functional equivalence", keeps the meaning consistent, and makes the translation more concise and clear; in example 15 "skeptical" is an adjective. If it is directly translated into "怀疑地", it will inevitably make the readers confused. Therefore, according to the context and the expression habits of Chinese, When translating from English to Chinese, "怀疑态度" is more in line with the logic of writing; Similarly, in example 16, According to the grammar rules of English, definite article plus adjective means "a certain kind of people", so it is necessary to translate them into nouns when translating them from Chinese to English, that is, to translate "the most vulnerable" into "最脆弱的群体".

4.2.3. The Mutual Conversion of Chinese Nouns and English Adverbs

Example17: 城际公路客运普及和城际轨道加快建设促进了城市群一体化发展，城乡交通一体化让城乡经济融合更紧密。[14]

Translation: The growth of intercity highway transport and the development of intercity rails have facilitated the integrated development of urban agglomerations, and the integration of urban and rural transport is bringing the urban and rural areas closer economically.

Example18: 新冠肺炎疫情正在全球蔓延，给人民生命安全和身体健康带来巨大威胁，给全球公共卫生安全带来巨大挑战。[9]

Translation: The COVID-19 outbreak is spreading worldwide, posing enormous threat to life and health and bringing formidable challenge to global public health security.

Example19: Against such background, China has grown in size economically and is consequently having greater weight on the world stage; it's quite natural that people want to know where China stands.[12]

Translation: 在此背景下，随着中国经济体量和世界影响力的增大，人们自然而然地想知道中国持何立场。

In example 17, the word "城乡" has already been used as an object, so the word "经济" which is originally a noun is transformed into the adverb "economically", and at the same time, the structure of "subject predicate object" in the original sentence is transformed into the structure of "subject copula predicative" to express more concise and conform to the habit of English; In example 18, the word "全球" is translated into the adverb "worldwide" to modify the adjective, because the English language is restricted by grammar, so the part of speech must be changed to conform to the English expression. On the contrast, if we directly translate "全球" into "world", then the whole sentence translate into "新冠肺炎疫情是传播的世界", the sentence meaning is not clear, which will make the reader confused. Example 19 is also a common way to convert English adverbs into Chinese nouns. In example 19, if "economically" and "consequently" are translated directly into the corresponding adverb meaning "economically, consequentially", the whole sentence meaning is obscure. Therefore, they need to carry out the word conversion respectively, and are translate into the derived noun meaning "经济" and "影响力", so as to "中国经济体量" and "世界影响力" form a juxtaposition, making sentences more concise and understandable.

5. CONCLUSION

As China's "one belt, one road" policy continues to be pushed forward, China's contacts with other countries are becoming more frequent. Foreign affairs translation is becoming more and more important in foreign affairs. Based on Eugene Nida's "Functional Equivalence" theory, this paper analyzes the necessity and difficulty of English Chinese translation of foreign affairs, and analyzes several common word conversion phenomena in foreign affairs translation with specific examples, including the mutual conversion between English nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and Chinese verbs, and the mutual conversion of English verbs, adjectives, adverbs

and Chinese nouns. Through the above analysis, I hope to find out the experience methods and strategies that are conducive to the improvement of English-Chinese translation and foreign affairs translation level, which is of positive significance to the practical application of translation.

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