Domestication and Foreignization of English-Chinese Translation in the Context of Cross-cultural Communication

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Abstract

In recent years, cross-cultural translation has gradually become a new topic in the field of translation. Translation is no longer a transformation of language symbols, but a way to transform culture. This paper mainly discusses the domestication and foreignization of English-Chinese translation in the context of cross-cultural communication.

Keywords

Cross-cultural background; English-Chinese translation; Domestication and foreignization; Discussion of strategies.

1. Introduction

With the continuous development of economy, the economic, political and cultural exchanges of the international community are becoming closer and the communication between countries has become increasingly smaller, "global village" has become the main trend in the development of today's world. Nowadays, cross-cultural communication has become a very important way of communication in order to let the people of different countries gain a better understanding of each other's way of life and the way of thinking. As one of the most important means, translation has been playing an increasingly important role in human cultural exchanges. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to better analyze the domestication and foreignization strategies of English-Chinese translation in the cross-cultural context.

2. Cultural Differences between China and the West

As the world becomes more and more open, exchanges between countries are becoming increasingly more frequent. In order to better understand the domestication and foreignization of English-Chinese translation in the context of cross-cultural communication, it is necessary to know the differences between Chinese and Western cultures from the following aspects in order to make the process of English-Chinese translation more smooth.

2.1. Differences in Historical Traditions

Because different countries and nations have a very long history, they represent different historical traditions in their development. Most of the traditional Chinese culture is based on philosophy and Confucianism. In fact, its internal civilization also emphasizes the good timing, geographical convenience and harmonious human relations, and more often reflects the idea of harmonious development. However, on the basis of western civilization, what is actually emphasized is the natural phenomenon. The society is composed of different individuals, and each individual also needs to better find his own value[1]. In fact, there are some differences between most historical traditions.

2.2. Differences in Ways of Thinking

As the external carrier of thought, language can often better express different ways of thinking. It is precisely because of the differences in the way of thinking that Chinese and Western cultures are also different. Chinese culture advocates the "theory that man is an integral part of
nature” in order to effectively unify man and nature. Actually, it pays more attention to subtle images. However, in western culture, the idea of "man can conquer nature” is advocated in order to put man and nature in the opposite relationship, so that more people can better explore the mysteries existing in nature on the basis of understanding nature. As there are certain differences in the ways of thinking related to Chinese and Western cultures, there are essential differences in English grammar, word formation and other aspects. Most typically, when translating a sentence of "study hard and make progress every day”, When professionals cannot follow the sentence “good good study, day day up”, they cannot translate in the most traditional way, but should directly adjust the structure according to the original meaning of the sentence.

2.3. Differences between Religious Beliefs
Before the Sui and Tang Dynasties, Confucian culture was always in the traditional position in China, and many words related to Confucian culture appeared in Chinese. In fact, in our daily life, there are similar expressions, such as "do one's best and leave the rest to Heaven". Then with the introduction of Buddhism, a large number of Buddhist words appeared in daily life. However, English is actually rooted in western capitalist societies, and many of the words come from Christianity. Words such as "angel" and "creator" come from within Christianity, and words like "My God" appear in English expressions. In fact, religion has always played a very important role in western society. However, the Chinese people's own religious concept is not as fanatical as the West shows.

3. Overview of Domestication and Foreignization
The above analysis focuses on the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, which lays a good foundation for the development of domestication and foreignization below.

3.1. Concepts of Foreignization and Domestication
The concepts of domestication and foreignization in English were put forward by Lawrence, a famous translation theorist, in 1995. As the two most basic translation concepts, domestication and foreignization are not only the unity of opposites, but also complement each other. However, there is no foreignizing translation strategy or domesticating translation strategy in an absolute sense[2]. Most translators need to flexibly apply different translation strategies on the basis of specific analysis of the characteristics of different types of languages.

3.1.1. The Concept of Translation Domestication
Domestication in translation is to better develop the original language towards localization, and take the target language and translation as the final destination. The ultimate purpose is to let the relevant readers express the content in the original text by traditional means of expression. In the actual domestication of translation, not only should translators continue to draw closer to the readers, but also the majority of translators must be able to have a direct dialogue with the readers and directly turn the works into their own language. Compared with other translation methods, domesticating translation can help readers understand the original translation better and enhance the readability and appreciation of the translation better.

3.1.2. The Concept of Translation Foreignization
When adopting the strategy of foreignizing translation, most translators try not to influence the will of the original author, in order to bring the readers closer to the author directly. In addition, the characteristics of foreign cultures must be integrated as much as possible in translation, and the expressions of corresponding source languages should be adopted[3]. The ultimate purpose of using foreignization strategy is to better preserve and reflect the language characteristics of different nationalities on the basis of actual consideration of national cultural differences, so as to make the majority of translations full of exotic flavor.
4. Main Factors Affecting English Translation Strategies

4.1. Motivation and Purpose of Translation

In all translations, the final effect is related to the motivation. If the motivation and purpose are different in the process of translation, the method of translation applied will naturally be different. When translating “谋事在人,成事在天”, it can be translated as “Man proposes, Heaven disposes.” In fact, the word “Heaven” can also be changed to “God”. If it is changed to “God disposes”, such translation can better convey Chinese culture and civilization, which is also in line with the essence of domesticating strategy. If the British and American readers read such a sentence, they will naturally learn more knowledge. In fact, the essence of translation is to better meet the demands of foreign translators, most of the motivations and purposes of translation will be different.

4.2. Text Types

Different types of text can actually affect the strategy of translation. Generally speaking, different types of text naturally have different characteristics, so translators need to use diverse translation principles. If some film and television works or literary works need to be translated, foreignizing translation is needed so as to maximize the cultural characteristics of the foreign land. However, if the translation includes news reports, advertisements, technical information and other different materials, the naturalization method can be used for direct translation. Therefore, translators need to choose different translation strategies for diverse texts in practice.

4.3. Readers’ Response and Acceptance

Translation strategies are also directly related to readers’ response and acceptance. Therefore, the translator needs to coordinate the original text with the content of the translation, so as to make the readers feel as if they were in the original text when they read the translation. Different readers have different reactions to various versions of translation, and their translations actually change with their own level of education, social development factors and other different information. Therefore, all translators should give full consideration to the response and acceptance of readers and translators in the process of translation. It is better to adjust different translation strategies based on the prediction of readers’ expectations in advance, so as to make readers and translations resonate effectively[4].

5. English Translation Strategies in the Context of Cross-Cultural Communication

5.1. English Translation Methods under the Domesticating Strategy

In the context of cross-cultural communication, the main methods of English translation mainly include the following points:

5.1.1. Free Translation

In the context of free translation, professionals need to discard the original text form directly in the process of translation and better improve the quality of the original text. Therefore, the purpose and form of expression of the original language are indeed very different, but the actual meaning of expression is just more of the same. Therefore, translators need to better ensure the fluency of sentences in translation. In the cross-cultural context, free translation can actually play an important role. For instance, when translating “When does the master follow his trade? Whenever he needs money.”, this sentence can be translated as “店主什么时候开始营业？当他需要钱的时候。” It can be seen that free translation is adopted for the "master" in the above sentence.
In translation, homophones are often used to achieve the same meaning. In the context of cross-cultural communication, some of the words within the culture often have different meanings in the process of translation. For example, although red also means good luck in Chinese culture, it actually means bad luck in Western culture. So "her face is very red" cannot be translated as “她喝醉了” or “她脸是红色的。” In fact, it cannot be translated directly into “红光满面” either.

5.1.2. Substitution
In the practice of domestication translation, the majority of translators use English to directly correspond to the original text in translation, so as to make the meaning inside the original text more vivid. Even in different languages, more people use alternative words to achieve better results of expression. For example, when you translate "friends in need", you can translate it into "all-weather friends.” For another example, when translating "粽子", there is no professional equivalent in English and thus "a fowl" is preferred directly as a substitution.

5.2. English Translation Methods under Foreignizing Strategy
5.2.1. Transliteration
Transliteration is one of the most common foreignizing strategies, which is actually translating directly according to different pronunciations of words. For example, the translation of the term “The Gordian knot” represents a thorny issue[5]. Similarly, the word “Sauna” can be translated into “桑拿”. These are examples of the most commonly used transliteration method in translation.

5.2.2. Borrowing
With the help of culture, translation can be carried out directly. The most fundamental thing is to introduce a cultural characteristic directly into different languages. As an important part of social development, culture is actually the result of cross-cultural communication. Similarly, “As timid As a rabbit” can be translated into “胆小如鼠”. “Look for a needle in a stack” can be translated to “大海捞针”. If it is really necessary to use the direct translation method, it will not achieve better results. However, if borrowing can be used for translation, better results can be achieved naturally.

6. Conclusion
With the continuous development of globalization and the deepening of cultural exchanges between countries, people have acquired more and more knowledge, and an increasing number of people begin to be curious about foreign cultures. Therefore, the translation of English sentences should not stick to a specific translation strategy, but should better ensure the correctness of the translation based on the analysis of different cultural characteristics so that diversified cultures can be effectively integrated together.

References