



## The Theoretical Study on New Development of Linguistic Approach Translation

DONG Jinyu<sup>[a],\*</sup>

<sup>[a]</sup>Associate professor. School of Foreign Languages, Northeast Petroleum University, Daqing, China.

Research areas: Linguistics and business English teaching.

\*Corresponding author.

**Supported by** Humanities and Social Sciences in Hei Longjiang Province (General project): Study on the Strategies of Spirit of Daqing Going out (NO.13B009).

Received 2 February 2014; accepted 2 April 2014

Published online 11 April 2014

### Abstract

Since the emergence of linguistics approach translation, there has been studies and discussions and it has been developing and making progress. This thesis studies the development of linguistics approach translation from philosophical origin, the development of concept system and the use of those concepts such as mediation and contextualization.

**Key words:** Linguistics approach; Translation; New development

DONG Jinyu (2014). The Theoretical Study on New Development of Linguistic Approach Translation. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 10(3), 65-68. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/4568>  
 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/4568>

### INTRODUCTION

The cognition of new development of linguistics approach mainly involves in two kinds of knowledge: one is empiricism; another is about concepts and theory, which deals with systematical elaboration of the latest studies' position, basic concepts, main methods and objects. This simplified knowledge frame is crucial for study on linguistics approach translation. Linguistics approach studies have lots of branches and theories, but we believe they have the same foundation. Linguistics-oriented scholars are different when referring to theory inheritance,

research focus, adopted examples and analysis tools, but when they observe translation phenomena, most of them regard translation as a special practice determined by culture and insist that the nature of translation is language procedure. They focus on the text features, the analysis of language structures and they believe the factors influencing translation are sure to leave language traces. Functions of translation are revealed by subtle text and language feature analysis. Thus, versions are regarded as a kind of proof. By observing the version's language and the related phenomena, scholars can review the methods of decision-making procedures and furtherly cognize the nature of translation.

### 1. THE PHILOSOPHICAL ORIGIN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT OF LINGUISTICS APPROACH TRANSLATION

Philosophy is a final explanation and basic thinking activity and the purpose of it is to query the basic matter of scientific and cognition matter and rationality of methodology, including natural and humanistic science activities. The study on philosophical origin of new development of linguistics approach makes us more clearly understand its development and variation from cognition level. As the main theoretical source of linguistics approach translation studies, linguistics is closely related to philosophy. Philosophical schools have their respectively philosophy foundation: Bloomfield's descriptive linguistics is deeply influenced by empiricism philosophy; Chomsky is the representative of rationalism for his transformation-generative grammar. Focus of contemporary linguistics changes from construction to behaviors, form and back to behaviors. It is influenced by philosophical cognition variations. The academic basis of linguistics approach translation studies is linguistics, so it is indirectly influenced by philosophy. But the theoretical sources of linguistics approach in all stages are distinct

from each other. The theoretical sources of early language school are mainly from the structuralism of Geneva school, while discourse analysis research originates from functionalism of London school and Prague school. What's more, CTS is based on data and demonstrated with numbers. Its philosophical orientation is positivism influenced by natural science. So, the philosophical origin of linguistics approach translation studies is multiple and complex. The research situation centered by linguistics does not exist anymore. What replaces it is the diversified pattern mixed with teleology, normativism, manipulative theory and postcolonial studies. Since 1990s, linguistics approach translation studies still focus on translation rules like translation universals, but the obvious change has suggested the influence of empirical philosophy. For example, they pay more attention to the real life's language use and research of language facts. Also, they stress the constructions among the translation text's formal structure, the participants' psychological intention structure and the social macroscopic structure of translation activities. Since the new century, the researchers combined scientific analysis of language and humanistic researches about social cultural have been increasing. But this empiricism does not originate from mainland interpretation philosophy. Since 1990s, lots of translation studies with the help of pragmatic, discourse analysis and semiotics follow the tradition of British and American analysis philosophy, and mainly benefit from ordinary language school studies in analysis philosophy which are against foundationalism epistemology and follow the route of empiricism. Besides, critical linguistics deeply influenced by Frankfurt and learn a lot from the culture criticism of post-structuralism raised by French philosopher Foucault. When entering the new century, linguistics-oriented translation studies show the tendency of comprehensiveness research. This thesis reflects the increasing trend of reconciliation between the British and American analysis philosophy's scientific tradition and mainland interpretation philosophy humanistic researches' tradition. These two mainstream schools of philosophy are both inclined to philosophize and humanize the meaning matter to context matter. So, when referring to the translation field, linguistics field, literary field or even the scientific field, contextualization study is becoming an increasing focus of scholars.

## 2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPT SYSTEM

We have to point out that as the theoretical source of linguistics approach, linguistics is not a single subject and its studies are not limited to one topic. In addition, there are disagreements between scholars in fundamental views, like the proper linguistics research objects. What's more, there is not a set of completely coincide analysis tools with linguistics. When the focus of linguistics turned to language application, the previous developed set of

general linguistics terms and concepts is not enough. The new-developed terms like discourse strategy, class type which are relatively dynamic reflect the uncertainty of theory. Thus, the translation studies learn from them also have the features of uncertainty.

### 2.1 Core Concepts

Core concepts reflect the methods and perspectives researchers use to deal with objects and determine how to treat the objects, what should we regard them as, what we can see or neglect from them. With the development of linguistics approach, scholars have made disagreements with the previous on equivalent translation and mediation as a crucial concept has been widely accepted.

### 2.2 The Definition of Translation

Different translation view and linguistic view will bring different translation research paradigms. Structural linguistics has led to the closed and static linguistic research mode and it adopts a self-sufficient language-centered view. The important concept discourse is used in translation studies but is not absorbed in discussion about instrumental concepts. There are several reasons: first, this concept in linguistics is multiple and complex; second, there is not strictly distinction between text and discourse; third, just some inner parts of the translation are used. But the definition of discourse varies with the variation of research field. The meaning of every level in original text can be translated. From this view of translation, structural linguistics approach stresses the expression and transmission of the text and it holds that the content of the text can be expressed by transferring from this language to another, the purpose of translation studies is to discuss the rules with which language can transfer from different systems. Jakobson (1959)'s claim about meaning means that translation is not to transfer or copy but to create the meaning positively and it stresses that the meaning itself is a process of being explained and translated again and again. This claim appears when seeking for certainty of research discourse, so what it stresses is not liberation but the dispersion of meaning.

Since 1990s, we can find translation definitions in lots of linguistic-oriented research. Hatim & Mason(1992) pointed that translation is a process of meaning negotiation between the text producer and receiver, and translation activity is a communication process in social context. Baker holds that translation is the record of real communication events. Mason points that translation is a kind of communication activity, which involves different texts of related intentions and users preset, indicate and deduce meaning from the texts. Those definitions do not show the concept of equivalence appearing frequently in previous definition and they regard translation as communicative concept in which meanings change. Translation is no longer regarded as a static make-up article, but a dynamic communication process. Also, it undoubtedly involves the social context and participant

factors during the translation activities. Setting Mason's definition as an example, his claims actually highlight the factor of translation activity participants and stress the relationship among text structure, language expression and the intention of translation activity participants. Also, it combines the text's objectivity and the participants' directivity and shows the position and perspective of meaning creating and producing matter in the linguistic-oriented research since 1990s.

### 2.3 The Discussion About Equivalence

Equivalence is crucial for traditional linguistic schools' translation theory. Many researches are about it and adopt it to conventionally define translation-transfer the text materials of one language into the equivalent ones of another. To discuss equivalence concept from language equivalent perspective suggests a static translation view in which the original text is regarded as the starting point and the difference between the original text and translation are measured. At the same time, it denies the existing creative and primordial behaviors. Supremacy of the original text is obvious. Like Nida, no matter how to stress the focus on reader's reaction, he still thinks it is a bad translation to rewrite by adding, deleting or retorting information or use it to cater different culture modes. In fact, there are disagreements to understand from the beginning. For Jakobson's views like Equivalent in difference, there are different comprehensions: trying to obtain equivalence in difference and discrepant equivalence. They make the focus of research change a lot. Early language school scholars preferred the former comprehension and they are trying to seek for the same in their works. They also believe the core of translation practice is to seek for the equivalence of target Language. The key task of translation theory is to define the nature and condition of translation equivalence.

The concept of equivalence is marginalized rapidly in most of the translation studies after 1990s. Although Baker wrote a coursebook on translation with the clue of equivalence, she made a clear distinction with this concept at the beginning. She pointed that she used it not because it plays an important role in theory; she used it for lots of translators are used to it. She also stressed its limited usage and said that though we could get equivalence in some extent, it is relative because of the influence of language and culture factors. Certainly, it does not mean scholars abandon the concept. Many studies still have discussions about this term and the theoretical hypothesis is not completely abolished. Pym (1992) expanded the connotation of this concept with economics views and he thought this relationship can be regarded as a result after value trade and then be developed into negotiable entities. He also stressed that the concept of equivalence had irreplaceable position in translation and cited others' words to point out equivalence is a unique intertextual relationship. And people never expect to discover the relationship any other observable genre.

Most of the linguistic-oriented scholars hold throughout the description between translation and the original text and they don't put particular emphasis on the translation methods and reception in target language culture like studies from other channels. So this concept as a hypothesis's reference objects between texts is still used in this field. Linguistic-oriented scholars not only continue to use the concept in studies, but they make theoretical discussions about it. Aiming at the position of translation thought history, classification, equivalence nature, interlingual and textual equivalence, the empirical and theoretical concepts of equivalence about the equivalence concept, Kelmy made several analysis and stressed it is the core concept of translation and translation theory. Baker specially wrote an essay discussing about equivalence, stressing that it has isolated the meaning as the same explanation. She also elaborated the variation of it in translation thought history. In her view, equivalence has always been used as semantic category traditionally and this view is from representations theory's meaning part and the function of language is to represent reality. Later, translators of Bible like Nida use the concept of dynamic equivalence to observe the translation's effect and bring the factor of human in concept connotation. But because there are not reliability methods to measure the reader's effect and the intention of the original writer can't be copied, it in fact destroys equivalence. Replacement selection emerged in 1980s, which is about the equivalence of function rather than effect. But the scholars in Germany immediately attacked the hypothesis in which translation function is determined by the original text and they regarded equivalence as the purpose of translation request or the function of delegation. Then, equivalence was not so attractive any more because it suggested the negation for translation's originality. And no matter how to define, it always means the same. What's more, as semantic category, it offers accuracy but it has no relation to the real life, like adaptation and pseudo translation. Baker also stresses that because of the relation with other important theoretical concepts and the discussion about translation units, equivalence still plays a key role in translation studies and we can not abandon it. Malmkjaer (2001) pointed that linguistic-oriented researchers are criticized to be puzzled by equivalence concept itself and the equivalence phenomena, so their studies can not become the important theories to research translators. But this theory is important to guarantee the practical translation criticism and rational, objective translation description because it's hard to abandon equivalence or the similar concepts. If the version is regarded as the translation of the original text, there must be relationship between them. And this concept will be important to deal with some typical matters.

Scholars' different comprehensions about this concept make them transfer their attention to practical language use and pay attention to the function of text in different

context rather than abstract language system analysis. But equivalence may more or less lead to some bad effect on research- to neglect the relation and factors not about the original text and translation like value orientation and ethical position.

### 3. THE USE OF CONCEPTS LIKE MEDIATION AND CONTEXTUALIZATION

With the change of people's views about the creation of translation and meanings, the abolition of equivalence meaning concepts, translators are not regarded as simple porters. No matter as individuals or groups, participate in the translation practice by using unique methods of them. As an important term to describe translators' behaviors, mediation has been widely used to translation discussions. On the one hand, it emphasizes translators' mediation job between culture and language; on the other hand, it suggests the distance between text and discourse and admits there can not be completely copy and consistent. What implies is the affirmation translators put on original writers. Mediation is borrowed from text linguistics at the beginning, which means the process of someone's putting his current beliefs and goals into texts. Hatim & Mason elaborates mediation by writing an essay titled translators as mediators. He thinks there are two levels of definition in this concept: one is the delivery process of mediation-stress the intermediary function in different cultures and translators' position trying to eliminate the cultural difference. The other is translators' subjective interference function to the translation process- original text must be entirely transmitted through translators' views on reality. That means we can comprehend this concept as mediation or inference. This view suggests that there are some contradictions between the idealized and realistic translation-translators try to eliminate differences but still lead to them. Later, when Baker conceives the possibility to large-scale translation corpus construction, he points that corpus drives mediation shaking the validity of the explanation phenomena with traditional concepts like message and equivalence, etc. Mason analyzes the interpretation record between the officials of British immigration office and immigrants and finds that there are phenomena about under determinacy of meaning in face-to-face interpretation activities. Also, the choice of interpreters' language will directly affect the participants' discourse world. Thus, Mason claims that some existing interpretation theories regard the original text and discourse as scattered utilities and their meanings are fixed stably in texts by codes rather than produced in interaction process. They will not effectively describe and explain the real mediation work of interpreters during the interactive communication process.

The concept of mediation stresses the translators' initiative function and suggests that translators' activities will be a part of social life all along and affect it. This

reminds people to think more aspects beyond language, which makes scholars pay more attention to the dynamic factors between people and context in practical translation activities. Some scholars stressed that translation studies cannot be separated from lots of factors affecting translation production. She noticed during studies that in the text-making context through mediation like translation, the integrated versions are not always produced on the basis of integrated original text. For special requirements, texts are likely to be used as excerpts during translation. Even for the whole translation, we still need to consider text-making conditions and the service purposes of text in their respectively culture. We can say, the mediation concept promotes people to understand more about translators' motivation and the complicated phenomena of social culture context.

### CONCLUSION

Translators' mediation function and translation's contextualization process are closely related. With the increasing use of mediation, contextualization gradually appears in translation studies documentaries in the context of linguistics. Contextualization is used to study the formation and evolution process of translation text and discourse. It is based on the contextualization view, which means context is not a static entity but an interactive relationship between the communicator and others. Also, it is changeable. Baker once cited Blum's elaboration for the distinction of translationese and the author's intention and court interpreters' contextualization example to correct suspects' ambiguous expression to explain that people don't make response to the context entities in the world and that they just react to the perceived intentions of other participants or the world's hypothesis.

Contemporary linguistics approach studies have changed a lot in methodology from specification to description, from microcosmic view to the combination of macroscopic and microcosmic view, from contrastive analysis of the original text and the version to the diversification analysis. This essay introduces, analyzes and also uses mimda's typical examples to illustrate these changes.

### REFERENCES

- Baker, M. (1999). The role of corpora in investigating the linguistic behaviour of professional translators. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 4(2), 281-298.
- Jakobson, R. (1959). In V. Lawrence (Ed.), *On linguistic aspects of translation* (pp.113-118). London: Routledge.
- Hatim, B., & Mason. (1992). *Discourse and the translator*. New York: Longman.
- Malmkjaer, K. (2001). *Cooperation and literary translation*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Pym, A. (1992). *Translation and text transfer: An essay on the principles of intercultural communication*. New York: Peter Lang.