Logicality in Text Translation

LOGIQUE DANS LA TRADUCTION DU TEXTE

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Abstract: Similarities and distinctions in logical structures of the Chinese and English languages are due to different but interrelated logical systems of China and the West. We may well say Logics influences translation and monitors the whole process of translation. In order to make translation more suitable to the target language's logical system, this paper views from the aspect of logic and discusses some practical and feasible logical translation methods by analyzing examples. The paper puts forward some suggestions on logical text translation. 1) When translating texts showing the three universal laws of Logics, i.e. the law of identity, the law of non-contradiction and the law of excluded middle, and the law of space, translators should translate them according to the logical sequence of the source language. Chinese and English are different in leading inferential modes, therefore, translators should reorganize the logical sequence according to the phenomena that Chinese focus on "induction" and English focus on "deduction". 2) When translating texts showing the law of time and the law of cause and effect, translators should also reorganize the logical sequence according to the target language's features.
Key words: logical law, text, Chinese translation, English translation

Résumé: Les similarités et les différences dans les structures logiques des langues chinoise et anglaise sont dues aux systèmes logiques différents mais étroitement liés de la Chine et de l'Occident. On peut dire que la logique influence sur la traduction et dirige le processus entier de la traduction. Afin de rendre la traduction plus adaptable sur le système logique de la langue cible, cet essai discute, en analysant des exemples, des méthodes logiques de traduction pratiques et faisables. Il propose des suggestions sur la traduction logique du texte. 1) Quand la traduction présente les trois lois universelles de la logique : loi d'identité, loi de non-contradiction et loi de millieu exclut, loi d'espace, le traducteur doit traduire les textes suivant l'ordre logique de la langue source. Le chinois et l'anglais sont différents en ce qui concerne le mode d'inférence directeur. Ainsi, le traducteur doit réorganiser l'ordre logique selon le fait que le chinois insiste sur l'induction et l'anglais sur la déduction. 2) Quand la traduction présente la loi de temps et la loi de cause et effet, le traducteur doit réorganiser l'ordre logique d'après les caractère de la langue cible.
Mots-Clés: loi logique, texte, traduction chinoise, traduction anglaise

1. INTRODUCTION

Logic has a strong influence on translation. According to Liu Miqing (2001), logic monitors the whole process of translation. If we simply define translation as a process of decoding and re-encoding, correct translation can only be built on the correct understanding of the source text. In which process, translators have to apply correct logic analysis and inference to gain a correct understanding of the source text (ST). Re-encoding should also be taken seriously. The target text (TT) should adapt to the logic system of the target language to make it readable and natural to target readers through optimizing and selecting. Differences and similarities between Chinese and western logic systems will definitely influence the quality of translation. Based on logic, the thesis is meat to find out the influence of these similarities and differences on English and Chinese text translation, and propose some feasible and practical methods to make translation logical and more acceptable to the logic system of the target language.

2. UNIVERSAL LAWS TO BE FOLLOWED IN TEXT TRANSLATION

Regardless of different nations and cultures, humans have to share and conform to some common logical laws: the law of identity, the law of non-contradiction, and the law of excluded middle. Therefore, these laws

are to be concerned in terms of text translation. In translation process, besides the grammatical structures of the text, we should also focus on the logical laws. Only on the basis of clear analysis of the logical relations can we make logical translation. For example, ST: All this good cheer was plainly too much for human nature, which seems to crave a regular dose of impending doom. That was not missing in '88, when fears about the environment loomed larger than ever before. Ocean pollution seemed to touch every continent; medical wastes washed up on America's Atlantic beaches, and dying seals on the shores of the North Sea.…

TT 1: 對於心裏似乎總是想著大禍即將臨頭的人們來說，這一切令人歡欣鼓舞的好事顯然是太好了。在 1988 年人們對環境的擔憂比以往任何時候都是更爲加劇的一年裏，那種令人歡欣鼓舞的事也沒有缺掉。海洋污染似乎已觸及各個大陸，廢棄的醫藥垃圾已冲到美國大西洋沿岸的沙灘上，奄奄一息的海豹也漂浮到北海的海灘。

（Li Yunxing, 2001: 163）

The main clue in the ST is: a regular dose of impending doom—That—fears about the environment—ocean pollution—medical wastes-dying seals…Its logical connotation of the clue is "general concept—reference—specific concept—example". In the TT, we may find it is difficult to connect "那種令人歡欣鼓舞的事"(a good cheer) and environment pollutions as a logical whole, because environment pollution cannot be "a good cheer". The translator misunderstood what "That" referred to. Therefore, it violates the law of non-contradiction. The right translation should be:

TT 2: 對人的本性而言，好消息實在是多的過分了，因爲人們似乎總是想聽到末日即將臨頭的壞消息。在人們對環境問題比以往任何時候都更加憂心忡忡的 1988 年裏，倒也不乏這樣的壞消息。海洋污染似乎已殃及各個大陸，廢棄的醫藥垃圾被冲到美國大西洋沿岸，奄奄一息的海豹也漂浮到北海的海灘上。

3. DIFFERENT LEADING INFERENTIAL MODES

The main logical inferential modes of Chinese and English are different. Chinese focuses on *induction* which aims at reasoning based on similarities and from specific to general. Contrarily, English emphasizes on *deduction* which is characterized by reasoning from general principles to a particular case. Such differences lead to the phenomenon that Chinese sentence is end-weighted while English top-weighted. And in many English texts, the generalization or the head sentence of a paragraph is usually placed at the beginning of the

paragraph. While in Chinese, it is usually placed at the end. Therefore, when translating, we should readjust the logical sequence according to target language's feature to make translation works natural. For example,

ST: *Engles spoke with the authority and confidence,* born of forty years' closest friendship and intellectual intimacy, during which he had grasped, as no other man had, the significance of Marx's teaching.

TT: 由於四十年最親密的友誼和思想默契，恩格斯對馬克思學說的意義比任何人都瞭解徹底，*他就是以這四十年所給他的資格和信心說這番話的。*

Here, "Engles spoke with the authority and confidence" is a generalization of the whole sentence. English focuses on deduction, with the generalization placed at the beginning of the text. In the light of Chinese induction, the TT rearranges the original text structure by shifting the generalization to the end. That is why the translator places "他就是以這四十年所給他的資格和信心說這番話的" at the end of the sentence.

4. THREE LOGICAL LAWS TO BE FOLLOWED IN CHINESE AND ENGLISH TEXT TRANSLATION

In Zhou's *C-E Contrastive Studies and the Transformation in Translation*, he proposes three logic laws to be follow in Chinese and English (C-E) translation: the law of time, the law of space and the law of cause and effect.

4.1 The Law of Time

The law of time means to follow the temporal sequence, that is to say, to describe one thing according to the time sequence. The logical sequence of Chinese sentence normally follows the temporal sequence of processes, forming "chain sentence" or "flow sentence". Generally, English follows this law, however, in many instances, sentences are ordered disregarding the temporal sequence by applying inflections or formal markers to show the temporal relations. For instance,

ST: 老栓正在專心走路，忽然吃了一驚，遠遠看見一條丁字街，明明白白地橫著。他便退了幾步，尋找一家關著門的鋪簷子，蹩進去，靠門立住了。

TT: Absorbed in his walking, Old Chuan was startled when he saw the cross road lying distantly ahead of him. He walked back a few steps to stand under the eaves of a shop in front of its closed door.

Analysis: The ST is a typical example of "flow sentence" in which the whole event is described according to the natural flow of events. The TT also follows the temporal sequence of processes. However,

many inflections and formal markers are used to make the temporal sequence explicit, such as "absorbed in his walking", "when", etc.

4.2 The Law of Space

Chinese, in terms of spatial relations, generally adopts the "big-small" sequence, while English from "small-big". But, this distinction is not that absolute. It is both acceptable to rearrange the spatial sequence or not in translation. Here, the law of space refers to Chinese "big-small" sequence.

ST: Arable lands are few and limited; with but slight exceptions the prospect is a broad rich mass of <u>grass</u> and <u>trees</u>, mantling <u>minor hills and dales</u> within <u>the major</u>. Such is the vale of Blackmore.

(Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*)

TT: ①長莊稼的地塊數不多，面積有限，全副景物，除了很小的例外，是<u>大山</u>抱<u>小山</u>，<u>大谷</u>套<u>小穀</u>，而在那些小山小谷上蓋著一片綿連、茂盛的<u>草和樹</u>。布蕾穀就是這個樣子。（張穀若譯）

②這裏的耕地不多，面積也小，一眼望去，除了幾處例外，滿是綠<u>草和樹木</u>，豐美芊綿，覆蓋著<u>高山大穀</u>之間的這片<u>丘陵小穀</u>。這就是黑原穀的風光。（孫法理譯）

③可耕的<u>土地</u>數量不多，面積有限。除了很少的一部分之外，整個景色就是遼闊的<u>草地和茂密的樹林</u>，<u>大山</u>抱著<u>小山</u>，<u>深谷</u>套著<u>淺穀</u>。這就是布萊克摩山谷。（吳迪譯）

Hardy's sequence is from "grass and trees", "minor hills and dales" to "the major (hills and dales)", which is a "small-big" sequence. The sequence is handled differently in the three target texts. Zhang follows the Chinese big-small sequence, which is totally opposite from the original sequence, by describing "the major" first. Sun's version follows the sequence in the ST. Wu adjusts partially the original sequence, by describing "grass and trees" first, then "hills" and then "dales". We can deny that all the three versions are right. But from the law of space, Zhang's is the most acceptable to Chinese readers.

4.3 The Law of Cause and Result

Here, the law of cause and result refers to many kinds of logic relations, such as that relate to cause, purpose, adversity, condition, concession, etc. Research by Peng Weixuan (2000) shows the major rule in English is that subordinate clause is normally after the main clause. Contrarily, in Chinese, subordinate clause is normally placed before the main clause. English uses connectives as well as inflections, tenses and aspects to show the relations among clauses. Chinese is absent in inflections. Therefore, English can place its clauses more freely,

which can be place at the beginning or the end of the sentence. Chinese, except some connectives to signal the relations among clauses, should arrange the position of clauses according to temporal sequence and logical laws, that is, to describe the event according to chronological order, and cause-effect sequence. Take the following as an example,

ST: 知彼知己，百戰不殆；不知彼而知己，一勝一負；不知彼不知己，每戰必殆。（孫子，《謀攻》）

TT: You can fight a hundred battles without defeat <u>if</u> you know the enemy <u>as well as</u> yourself. You will win one battle <u>and</u> lose one battle <u>if</u> you know yourself <u>but</u> leave yourself in the dark about the enemy. You will lose every battle <u>if</u> you leave both the enemy <u>and</u> yourself in the dark.

The ST has only one connectives "而". But, in the TT, six connectives are used to signal the logic relation. Besides, in the ST, main clause is followed by the conditional clause. While in the TT, the situation is opposite.

5. METHODS TO MAKE TRANSLATION LOGICAL

5.1 Copying

For three common laws, the law of space, we can simply copy the logic sequence used in the original text to the target text, on the basis of conforming to these laws.

5.2 Reorganization

For different leading inferential modes, the law of time, the law of cause and effect, we have to reorganize the logical sequence in translation by adding or reducing conjunctions, or even, reorganizing the whole logical sequence.

As for the law of time, Chinese prefers to describe an event according to the natural temporal sequence, while English does not. When translating from Chinese to English, we should add formal markers or use inflections to signal the logical relations whether we break the natural temporal sequence or not. Whereas, when translating from English to Chinese, we should translate according to the natural temporal sequence, adding conjunctions if necessary.

As for the law of cause and effect, we cannot simply notice the difference on hypotaxis and parataxis. In translating English to Chinese, conjunctions can be omitted in Chinese informal texts. However, conjunctions are necessary in Chinese formal texts in order to achieve clarity. In translating Chinese to

English, we have to add appropriate conjunctions to make the text explicit. The places of main clause and subordinate clause should also be concerned. In Chinese, subordinate clause is normally places before the main clause; while in English, it is placed after the main clause.

Besides, Chinese focuses on induction, English on deduction. It is therefore necessary to rearrange the sentence order according to target language's feature.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we find that logic influences translation to a great extent. Therefore, translator should bear in mind the differences and similarities on Chinese and English logic systems, and their influence on languages and translation. If we can translator according to the logical features of the target language, the product will be more acceptable to target readers. Methods proposed are anticipated to improve the quality of translation, and to solve the existing illogical translation.

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