

A Study of Metaphor Translation Strategies from a Cognitive Embodied View

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ABSTRACT. *The shift of metaphor research from rhetoric one to cognitive one in cognitive linguistics has brought inspirations to the study of metaphor translation. Metaphor is one of cognitive ways and necessarily based on human experience. Various experiences construct different metaphorical conceptual systems. Therefore, when translating metaphors, translators should adopt different translation strategies to facilitate the mapping between conceptual domains, so as to achieve the optimization of language transformation.*

KEYWORDS: *Cognition; Embodied View; Metaphor translation*

1. The introduction

The study of metaphor can be traced back to thousands years ago. As early as in ancient Greece, Aristotle, from the rhetoric way, took it as the rhetoric phenomenon on the level of words and held it as ubiquitous in daily talking (Fauconnier&Turner, 1998:22); Sapir pointed out that it was almost impossible to talk about any non-spatial situation without using the metaphor(Evans& Green, 2006); Sweetser(1990) viewed metaphor as a constructive force in semantic change, by which one can understand one thing as another without considering whether the two are objectively identical; German philosopher Blumenberg in 1960 firstly used the term "metaphor", which set an essential foundation for metaphor study(Sullivan, 2013); Since the 1970s, the study of metaphor has gradually attracted the attention of scholars in philosophy, linguistics, psychology and other fields, and has become a research hot spot in many fields. Lakoff and Johnson(1980) is seen as a representative figure in the field of cognitive metaphor research. Their representative book "*Metaphors we live by*" is widely regarded as one of the greatest works in cognitive linguistics research. They regarded metaphors as a basic mode of human thinking within cognitive structure and was inseparable from our survival and social surroundings. With the publication of this work, the study of metaphor has been brought to a new stage and has become the research object of disciplines including linguistics, philosophy, psychology and translation; Nowadays, cognitive linguists generally believe that the essence of metaphor is not a purely rhetorical phenomenon

at the linguistic level but a cognitive behavior based on experience and interaction, which is both a language tool and a result of human cognitive activities (Wang,Y, 2007:406).

In China, before 1970s, the translation of metaphor has been classified as similar to the translation of common rhetoric, little study of the deep structure was carried. In the late 1970s, with the study of conceptual metaphor at home and abroad, metaphor translation has risen to the cognitive level and the cognitive features of metaphor translation was given close attention by scholars gradually. Embodied view is the theoretical basis of cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphor. Lakoff& Johson(1999) argued that human mind and language meaning was both based on daily physical experience fundamentally. This paper will discuss several basic issues of metaphor translation based on the embodied view.

2. Embodiment philosophy and of language translation

Lakoff &Johnson (1987)fight against the objective views of empiricism and rationalism in language research and put forward "non-objectivism", namely,"experiential philosophy". The connotation of experiential philosophy is divided into three basic principles: the experiential nature of mind, the unconsciousness of cognition and the metaphorical nature of thinking. Limited by words, this paper mainly discusses the experiential nature of mind the metaphorical nature of thinking.

2.1 The experiential nature of language translation.

Categories, concepts, reasoning and mind are neither objective or mirror-reflected of external reality nor innate. They are formed through cognitive processing based on people's perception and experience of the external world. Language is also a sort of practical, realistic consciousness that exists subjectively for others to some extent. So language is experiential. When different people are exposed to the objective reality, their mind and external environment are usually various, so the image schema formed in their mind is also different. When people try to use language to "solidify" their cognitive thinking, language will vary from person to person, and there will be many different expressions of the same thing. For example, for the image of "moon", there are more than 20 kinds of Chinese expressions and English expressions, which indicates that different ethnic groups with different thinking who experience the same objective reality will even lead to their language variety. Therefore, the experiential philosophy holds that the cognition, category, concept, meaning, reasoning and understanding of language are all derived from human perception and experience of the basically identical real and objective world. As a cognitive activity, translation is also experiential. To be specific, the author obtains cognition (or creative inspiration) based on his own experience of the objective outside world and creates with the help of language. Only when translators and readers share basically the same objective world with authors, they have roughly the same thinking. On the contrary, if authors, translators

and readers cannot share an objective outside world and can not have the same experience of things, then the experience of the whole translation process will be incomplete, and translation activities will inevitably be far from satisfaction.

2.2 Metaphorical nature of language translation

Embodiment philosophy pays high attention to the importance of "man" or "subject" in human cognition, opposes absolute objectivism and subjectivism, and puts the interaction between subject and object on the top priority. Metaphor provides a way to describe the subjective field of experience with the mental image of the perceptual domain, that is, to map the inference type from the source domain to the target domain. As a whole, language is metaphorical, and thinking is inevitably metaphorical. As a bridge connecting different languages or different variants of the same language, metaphor plays an important role in translation. Therefore, as the subject of daily life, human beings build a bridge of translation through metaphors. The thinking of translation subject is metaphorical, while intersubjectivity is the collision, integration and dynamic transformation of different metaphorical thinking. Therefore, the metaphorical nature of intersubjectivity determines that in translation, the translation subject (especially the translator) should pay extra attention to the metaphorical culture of the source language and treat it as an appropriate expression adapted to the culture of the target language. Of course, this process is embodied in the metaphorical intersubjectivity.

In short, language is mainly formed through cognitive processing based on people's perception and experience of the real world, and is the result of subjective and objective interaction. Among them, experience is the basis and the main way to connect reality and language. Of course, translation is the transfer of ideas and cultural transfer through the material shell of language, and the translation that falls on the language conversion is inevitably marked with the brand of experience. Metaphorical thinking is everywhere, which is also reflected in the main body of translation. Therefore, the successful realization of inter-subjective metaphorical transformation is also the practice of translation from the ideological level.

3. The nature of metaphor translation

There are many correlations between translation activities and metaphorical structure. First of all, translation is fundamentally a metaphorical activity, which is also characterized by experience and creativity. The essence of metaphor is to use one thing to understand the other, which inevitably involves our cognitive ability. However, the similarity between the two things is the most fundamental basis for the realization of metaphor, and the relevance of concepts is also based on experience. In the same way, the translator tries to switch the concept between source language and target language meaning through cognitive ability when two conceptual domain entities are conflict, one will be using the correlation between the two entities, especially the similarity to dissolve the contradiction to achieve consistency. Secondly, the basic functions of translation and metaphor are the same. Translation

is an activity to experience the conceptual structure of another language and culture with one language culture. Metaphor is the projection of a concept from one thing to another. Therefore, translation and metaphor are fundamentally interpretive.

Metaphor translation is embodied. The philosophy of embodiment serves as the ideological basis of cognitive linguistics and also exerts important influences on translation studies. Cognitive linguistics holds that language is related to all human cognitive abilities, and language is the comprehensive product of interaction of cognitive abilities, physiological basis, social reality and other elements (Zhao Yanfang, 2004:7). In the past, translation studies have treated metaphor as a purely linguistic phenomenon. However, from the cognitive view, the contradiction in metaphor transformation is caused by different experiences, which will also lead to language differences. According to the Sapir-whorf hypothesis, different languages and cultures result in different ways of thinking . Therefore, on the basis of the embodied view, there are similarities and differences in conceptual metaphor structures between different cultures. For example, in English we can find the sentence "You are my sunshine". In Chinese we can translate it without experience barriers into "Ni shi wo de yang guang "due to same experiences of sunshine, namely, bringing warmth, pleasing people and so on.

However, the same metaphorical image may have different metaphorical concepts. The famous anthropologist Dell Hymes once gave an example:

1)Your father has a tree figure.

For this sentence, the following figures from different regions may have different understandings: A man from northern California would translate as "Your father is high and mighty"; one from Australia may translate as "Your father is thin"; A man from the Godavilla valley in India would translate as "your father is stooped". The reasons lie in the following: there is a kind of large and stout redwood throughout northern California, and more than 70% of the trees in Australia are of a slender eucalyptus species while a curved sandalwood grows widely in this valley of India. This shows that the differences in experience have a profound impact on metaphor understanding, which once again shows that metaphor translation is embodied.

4. Types of cross-language metaphor and translation strategies

Experiential conceptualization has a guiding effect on translation, so language research should be conducted from the perspective of experiential philosophy. From the cognitive view, metaphor translation is to transfer the metaphorical concepts from the source language to the target language. Translators must combine the relevant encyclopaedic knowledge and fully understand the differences between the concepts of two languages so as to achieve the optimization of the metaphor mapping and the accurate communication of information.

4.1 Types of metaphor translation

On the one hand, due to the differences in the cultural traditions, the English and

the Chinese have different ways of understanding the world, so there are various differences between Chinese and English metaphors. On the other hand, thanks to the universality and universality of human thinking, metaphors also share many similarities.

4.1.1 Full consistent metaphor

In different cultures, people's way of thinking shares certain commonness in the process of cognition, and their cognition of the external world is similar. Therefore, the mapping between source domain and target domain are the same in both English and Chinese languages, that is, the metaphorical meaning is nearly the same. For example, the metaphor of "fox" in English and Chinese culture has a common connotation. Because of their small size, foxes in nature have to resort to subterfuge to hunt and evade attack. So, in both Chinese and English, the fox is associated with cunning. The Chinese word for "old fox" and the English word for "old fox" both refer to a crafty person. There are many metaphors in the complex language that are similar in Chinese and English. For example, sheep means cowardice, laurel means honor and so on.

4.1.2 Half consistent metaphor

Due to the cognitive difference of human thinking mode, people from different cultures often map the same target domain with different source domain, that is, different metaphors correspond to the same metaphorical meaning. For example, Chinese idiom "to look for a needle in an ocean" is partly in line with the English one "to look for a needle in a haystack", with the same meaning "to find someone or something very difficult". When it comes to indicate "someone is eager for quick benefit", the Chinese metaphor "kill the hen to get the eggs" also partly strikes in parallel with "kill the goose that lays the golden eggs". They are different in one domain, but have the same metaphorical meaning.

4.1.3 Conflict metaphor

Metaphor is a reflection of culture. There are similarities between different cultures, but the cultural individuality is also a common place. The two cultures' different concept of the same entity will cause people to map different target domains with the same source domain, that is to say, the metaphorical meaning may just conflict in the two languages. If there is no metaphorical parallelism to solve this incongruity, metaphorical conflict will result. For example, the dragon is a virtual animal in both Chinese and English, but the two cultures have completely different perceptions of the dragon. The worship of "dragon" in Chinese culture has a long history. Emperors are regarded as "the real dragon and the son of heaven". The Chinese nation also claims to be the "descendants of the dragon". And in English culture, however, "dragon" usually appears in the bible and other works as an evil image, which is opposite to Han people's emotion of advocating "dragon".

Such cognitive differences can easily lead to misunderstandings and contradictions in cross-cultural communication.

4.1.4 Vacant metaphor

In Chinese and western cultures, there is even a phenomenon of metaphor vacancy when an object has rich metaphorical meaning in one culture, but there is no similar metaphor in another culture. Due to the extensive and profound Chinese culture, Chinese idioms contain many metaphors unique to Chinese. For example, the 24 solar terms, the eight diagrams of Yin and Yang, the heavenly stems and earthly branches cover a large area in Chinese metaphors but find no space in English.

4.2 Translation strategies

For the different types of metaphors above between Chinese and English, this paper will provide some translation strategies in the following way.

4.2.1 Direct connection

As mentioned above, metaphor is experiential. So some common human experience can help us reconcile the differences in language. When the experience of a metaphor in two languages is similar, we can use the direct Connection method in the following way:

2) Love is a glass of wine.

In both Chinese and English cultures, human beings have a similar perception of love: love makes people dizzy or hurt, and it's true of wine.

4.2.2 Transplanting

According to Sapir's language theory of relativity, language, as a culture carrier, also reflects the differences in thinking modes of different cultures. Therefore, the same concepts in English and Chinese may have different metaphors. When translating, translators should also switch information shifting between metaphors so that translators can have a more accurate understanding of the original text:

3) Tom is as nervous as a cat on the hot roof.

This sentence mainly shows the "excited mood" by use of "as nervous as a cat". However, if the "cat" is directly switched to the Chinese context, the meaning is even difficult to understand. The translation of "an ant on a hot pot" not only reflects the psychological state of "nervous", but also is in line with Chinese language habit and easy to follow.

4.2.3 Interpretation

Due to various cultural experience, there are huge differences between eastern and western cultures. Especially, many linguistic expressions about religion and regional culture in English also produce metaphors which is unique. For these expressions, it is difficult for Chinese translators to find conceptual counterparts in Chinese, and even sometimes the corresponding objects are exactly opposite in concept. In this case, the translator has to find a new way to explain the meaning reflected by the source language in a non-metaphorical way:

4) Don't beat the air anymore.

“Beat the air” is a metaphorical expression derived from *The New Testament* and doesn't mean “strike the air” but “make futile efforts”. We can't find another corresponding Chinese metaphor and it's best to explain its meaning directly.

4.2.4 Supplement

Some metaphorical concepts in a language may be partially integrated into a language culture and only known to some people in the language community. Therefore, to both retain the original cultural effect and ensure the comprehensibility, the translator need add interpretation as supplement after the original metaphor:

5) The praise from his rival is nothing but a Judas kiss.

The term "A Judas kiss" comes from *the Bible* and was later used to refer to a seemingly kind but actually malicious act. If we translate directly, it's understandable for some readers with relevant background knowledge but confusing for the others. The supplementary translation of this metaphor not only retain the original cultural effect, but optimize the comprehensibility of all readers

5. The conclusion

Essentially, metaphorical language is not only a rhetorical device but also a way of thinking. Metaphor is also embodied so that one needs to grasp both language and embodied differences in metaphor translation based on the embodied view. This paper makes a rough discussion, provides basic strategies for metaphor translation and the research is still inadequate, still leaving enough room for the future study to follow, ranging from translation strategies for different sorts of metaphor to various translation for more languages.

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