

Functional Equivalence in News Translation

Haiqing Jiang

School of Foreign Languages Yancheng Teachers University, Yancheng 224002, China

ABSTRACT. *Under the background of cultural diversity and technological information development, news has become an important carrier for the public to understand social information. Among them, English news provides a way for Chinese people to understand the world and a window for people from all over the world to understand China. Therefore, English news plays an important role in the cultural exchange between China and the West. This paper aims at the translation of English news, based on the discussion of the characteristics of English news, and the application of functional equivalence theory in English news translation.*

KEYWORDS: *Translation, News, Functional equivalence*

1. Introduction

On the one hand, news translation must abide by the basic principles of translation, that is, “faithfulness and smoothness”, on the other hand, it should embody its personality, that is, the characteristics of news translation. It has been proved that one of the characteristics of news translation is how to deal with the growing translation of news words, and what can be used to effectively guide the translation of news words is the principle of “functional equivalence”.

2. Translation Principles of News English

The basic principle of translation is faithfulness and smoothness. The so-called “faithfulness” is to convey the content of the original faithfully, to display the style of the original faithfully, and to embody the meaning of the original faithfully. The so-called “fluency” means that the language of the translation must be fluent, understandable and in line with the norms. Style is closely related to translation. In order to get the translation with both form and spirit, and to make the content accurate, we must study and reflect the style of the original. Therefore, in the process of translation, the translator should not only faithfully convey the original meaning, express the original point of view, attitude, emotion and thought, but also try to conform to the style of the original and convey the verve of the original. News English is a common style. For this particular style of translation, Eugene A. Nida's translation criterion of “dynamic equivalence” is more applicable. Nida's theory of “dynamic equivalence” includes two aspects: ideological content and formal style. He believes that the reactions, influences and feelings of the target readers should be roughly the same as those of the original readers. Therefore, the translator should find out various effective means of expression of the target language and express the equivalent information of the original text in the closest and most natural way. When translating, we should pay attention to: (1) being faithful to the content of the original; (2) being consistent with the text genre of the original; (3) readers' acceptance of the translation; (4) what kind of environment the translation will be used in [1].

3. The Basic Concept of Functional Equivalence

In 1964, Nida put forward the concepts of “formal equivalence” and “dynamic equivalence”. “Formal equivalence” refers to the equivalence of surface structures such as words and syntactic structures, while “dynamic equivalence” refers to the equivalence of meaning in deep structures. Due to the differences between culture and language itself, formal equivalence is seldom used in translation practice, while dynamic equivalence should be emphasized in translation, with information content as the main factor and language form as the secondary one. The so-called “fish and bear's paw” can't have both. There are often “conflicts” in translation, that is, Equivalence in both form and meaning can't be achieved in the meantime. At this time, the principle of translation is that meaning equivalence must take precedence over form equivalence. In reality, however, the word “dynamic” is easy to be misunderstood, Nida put forward the view of “functional equivalence” in “from

one language to another language”. “In contrast, the theory of” functional equivalence “seems more persuasive. The “function” of language refers to the speech function that speech can play in use. Different languages have different forms of expression, either in pronunciation, grammar or expression habits, but they can have the same or similar functions with each other. The connotation of “functional equivalence” and “dynamic equivalence” is basically the same, both of which take “reader’s response” as the test standard, and seek to make the target readers have the same or maximum similar psychological response with the original readers [2].

4. The Application of Functional Equivalence in English News Translation

4.1 Sequential Translation Strategy

Sequential translation strategy refers to translating according to the grammatical structure of the original text in the process of translation. The selection of this translation strategy can achieve the equivalence of language content and situation, so it is consistent with the requirements of functional equivalence theory. In this kind of translation, the translated version has the same fluent logic and the same meaning as the original language. In the process of translation, the translator only needs to translate according to the order of the original sentence, and make appropriate segmentation of the sentence and the addition of conjunctions and verbs, so the translated sentence can be consistent with the expression habits in Chinese. In addition, in the translation of English news, “reportedly” is a frequently used word, which can be translated into “learned” in Chinese. The meaning of this word is that it can make English news report highlight the real and objective characteristics, so as to improve the persuasiveness of English news content. In the original English, this word often appears in the middle of the sentence, but in the process of translation, the translator needs to put this word at the beginning of the sentence. In this way, the translated sentence will conform to the Chinese expression habits. In translation practice, the translator needs to take the idea of the original text as the starting point, rationalize the logic of the original text on the basis of re-integrating the sentence content, and make the sentence more fluent by adding some connectives, so as to ensure that both Chinese and English readers can get the same information and the same reading experience from the sentence, which is also functional equivalence to the important embodiment in English news translation [3-5].

4.2 Translation Strategies of Transposition

Because of the differences of expression habits between Chinese and English, the translator can't translate every sentence in order. Therefore, the translation strategy of changing order has become one of the important strategies that the translator can use under the guidance of functional equivalence theory. In English news, passive sentences and extended sentences are different from Chinese expression habits. In the process of translating these sentences, the translator can only scramble and rearrange the order of the original sentences on the basis of understanding the connotation of the original sentences, so as to adapt to the language acceptance habits of Chinese readers in the process of reading news[6-8]. For example, “Obama’s health care reform plan steps are not good for teachers, and the situation occurs repeatedly in the first month.” From the original point of view, there are not too many broken sentences in the sentence, but in order to show the connotation of the sentence, the choice of broken sentences in the translation process can be better accepted by the readers. In addition, in the translation of this sentence, the use of four character phrases for translation is also consistent with the expression habits of Chinese and the language acceptance habits of the Chinese audience. From the aspect of expression characteristics, in addition to the negative and disappointed attitude of the original text towards Obama’s health care reform, the repeated expression methods and the use of reduplicated words in the original text, while the four character phrases in the translation not only have the characteristics of concise and comprehensive, but also can convey the expression mood very similar to the original text. Therefore, this translation strategy not only achieves the equivalence of sentence meaning, at the same time, it realizes the equivalence of views and positions in sentences, which can reflect the guiding role of functional equivalence theory to a large extent[9-10].

5. Conclusion

In news translation, many factors should be taken into account, and the theory of functional equivalence must be taken as the basis to make sentences and styles concise and vivid after translation. Functional equivalence can be achieved by changing long sentences into short ones, adjusting the position of sentence components or adding or deleting words; when there are rhetorical devices such as pun, rhyme or metaphor in the original text, we

should carefully consider the corresponding words in Chinese to make the translation functionally equivalent. Last but not least, the readers' psychology should be fully considered, and the uncommon expressions can be modified to reflect the functional equivalence.

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