Translation Strategies of Long and Difficult Journalistic Sentences From the Perspective of Semantic Translation and Communicative Translation Theory

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Peter Newmark's semantic translation and communicative translation theories play a guiding role in translation practice. Translating long and difficult English sentences into Chinese has been a focus of study among translators. The paper explores how to translate long and difficult journalistic English sentences into Chinese from the perspective of semantic translation and communicative translation theories, advancing four effective translating strategies for handling long and difficult journalistic English sentences: sequential translation, splitting translation, reversing translation, and recasting translation, so as to improve the readability and faithfulness of the Chinese version.

Keywords: semantic translation, communicative translation, long and difficult journalistic sentences, translating strategy

Introduction

With the development of globalization, the relationship between China and the world is getting closer and closer, and reading English news can make people more intuitive and accurate to grasp the current world news facts. This provides some opportunities as well as challenges for the translation of journalistic English. The occurrence of long and difficult sentences in journalistic English is more frequent, which undoubtedly increases the obstacles for translators. Therefore, if we want to translate English news reports accurately, we must first overcome the translation of long and difficult sentences.

According to Newmark's theory of semantic translation and communicative translation, semantic translation attaches importance to the facsimile of the source language culture and content, while communicative translation emphasizes the receptive ability of the target language cultural readers and the actual communicative effect. These views of Newmark play a guiding role in the translation of news reports. Based on Newmark's theory of semantic translation and communicative translation, this paper expounds the theory and analyzes the translation examples of long and difficult sentences in journalistic English, and explores the effective translation methods of long and difficult journalistic sentences, thus it has a certain guiding significance for the translation of long and difficult journalistic sentences.

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The Characteristics of Journalistic English and the Definition of Long and Difficult Sentences

Journalistic English reports the latest developments and achievements in the fields of politics, economy, military, science and technology, culture, sports, and so on. Due to the limited pages of news reports, it is necessary to ensure that the information conveyed is accurate, objective, and specific, so that readers can clearly understand what has happened. The stylistic features of journalistic English can be summarized as follows: (1) concise and clear words, using a large number of short words to save valuable pages; (2) extensive use of extended simple sentences to clarify news facts and describe the development of events; (3) extensive use of direct and indirect speech to increase the objectivity and authenticity of the report.

At present, there is no unified definition of long and difficult sentences in academic circles, but Wang Wei (2017) gives a definition of long and difficult journalistic sentences by establishing a corpus of journalistic English and synthesizing the research achievements of many scholars on long sentences in journalistic English. He believes that in journalistic English texts, when the length of a sentence is longer than or equal to 40 words, such a sentence is a long news sentence. Accordingly, we define the long and difficult journalistic sentences in journalistic English as a sentence with a length longer than or equal to 40 words and containing multiple multi-level clauses.

Semantic Translation and Communicative Translation

Peter Newmark, a famous British translation theorist and translation educator, makes an in-depth study of translation theory, translation skills, and so on, and puts forward his own translation theory. Its core is semantic translation theory and communicative translation theory. Newmark believes that the contradiction between faithfulness to the source text and faithfulness to the target text can be reconciled in translation theory and practice.

According to semantic translation theory, the translator should, from the author's point of view, be faithful to the original text and attach importance to the emotion and personality embodied in the original text. The translator should not only convey the literal meaning of the original text, but also express the deep meaning of the original text as much as possible. At the same time, it should be consistent with the writing style and means of expression of the author in the original text as far as possible. On the other hand, communicative translation theory holds that the translator should be reader-centered and attach importance to the reader's response and receptive ability from the reader's point of view. Due to the wide range of readers, translators need to re-edit, rewrite, and repackage in the new context. Therefore, news translation is actually the re-creation of the translator in the context of the target language (Zhang, 2008, introduction). Therefore, when translating long and difficult journalistic sentences, translators should avoid using a single translation method, combine with specific contexts, and alternately use semantic translation and communicative translation strategies to achieve better translation results.

Journalistic English pays attention to the authenticity of information, so the semantic and syntactic structure of the translation should be as close as possible to the meaning of the source text and accurately convey the content of the source text and its context, and semantic translation theory can achieve this effect.

However, considering that the readers of news reports are ordinary people and non-professionals, it is more appropriate to adopt the theory of communicative translation. From this point of view, the translation

criteria of journalistic English are not absolute and single, but relative and diverse. In translation, we should choose semantic translation theory or communicative translation theory or a combination of both according to the specific context.

E-to-C Translation Strategies Under the Theory of Semantic Translation and Communicative Translation

Generally speaking, all the statements in journalistic English are objective facts; therefore, the translation steps of long and difficult journalistic sentences are as follows: first analyze the grammatical, semantic, and logical relations of the English source text; and then adjust the word order according to the expression habits and language features of the translation to accurately present the semantics of the source text; finally, the translation is revised.

On the basis of studying and summarizing the achievements of previous studies on the translation of long and difficult journalistic sentences, and combining with own translation practice, the writer explores four translation strategies of long and difficult journalistic sentences: sequential translation, splitting translation, reversing translation, and recasting translation.

Sequential Translation

Some English long sentences narrate a series of actions, which are arranged according to the time when the actions occur. Some English long sentences are arranged according to the logical relationship, which is consistent with the Chinese expression method. Therefore, they are generally translated according to the original word order.

Example 1: (1) Though Pantone selecting two colors might be seen as hedging its bets—(2) a gray or yellow, depending on how 2021 unfolds—(3) Pressman and Eiseman want people to consider the colors' impact as a unified pair, hinting at the importance of solidarity in the coming year.

Translation: 尽管潘通选择的这两种颜色好似在两面下注，是灰色还是黄色更合适，取决于2021年的走向。不过普雷斯曼和艾斯曼希望人们将这两种颜色作为一个统一的整体来看待其影响，暗示着来年团结一心的重要性。 ((1)—(2)—(3))

Splitting Translation

Sometimes the relationship between the main sentence and the subordinate sentence, or between the main sentence and the modifier is not very close. In translation, the subordinate sentence or phrase in the long sentence can be changed into a separate sentence according to the habit of using phrases in Chinese.

Example 2: (1) Aside from the four UK countries, (2) the company can also take on special requests for any other specific UK locations, (3) and say they've recently fulfilled an order from a Welshman (4) who requested a sample of air from the mountainous region of Snowdonia in northwestern Wales.

Translation: 除了这四个英国地区外，该公司还可以根据特别需求采集英国特定地区的空气。该公司称，最近他们刚完成了一个威尔士人的订单，从威尔士西北部斯诺登尼亚山区采集了空气。 ((3) is a compound sentence with attributive clauses, which translates (4) into an independent clause.)

Reversing Translation

Some English long sentences have different or even completely opposite expression order from Chinese, so it is necessary to start from the back of the original text and change the order of the original text.

Example 3: (1) The zero-tariff list (2) is among the latest of the policies that have been released by the central and Hainan provincial authorities to promote construction of Hainan FTP, (3) following the issuance of the Master Plan for the Construction of Hainan Free Trade Port on June 1.

Translation: 零关税政策是在今年6月1日《海南自由贸易港建设总体方案》正式公布后，中央和海南省政府推进海南自贸港建设的最新举措。 (According to the habit of Chinese adverbials before the main sentence ((1)—(2)—(3))

Recasting Translation

Some English long sentences are too complicated to express the meaning of the original text completely and smoothly by using only one translation method. At this time, we should disrupt the word order of the original sentence, split each component, and integrate the whole situation according to the time or logical relationship.

Example 4: (1) "We know new content is the lifeblood of theatrical exhibition, (2) but we have to balance this with the reality that (3) most theaters in the US will likely operate at reduced capacity throughout 2021", (4) Ann Sarnoff, chair and CEO of WarnerMedia Studios and Networks Group, said in a statement.

Translation: 华纳媒体工作室和网络集团的主席和首席执行官安·萨尔诺夫在一份声明中说："我们知道新内容是剧院的生命线，但我们必须与眼前的现实相平衡，美国的多数影院可能在整个2021年都会客流量不足。" (This sentence consists of two main clauses and an appositive clause. The whole sentence has four meanings: Issuing a statement, new content is the key to the theatre, the current reality, insufficient passenger traffic. (4) is the introduction of the speaker, which is referred to the translation at the beginning of the sentence according to the Chinese custom, and the communicative translation strategy is adopted here to make it easier for the reader to improve readability. Both (1) and (2) adopt semantic translation strategies and smooth translation of words. According to the habit of the adverbial of time in Chinese, the adverbial of time is translated by the method of variable translation in order to make the translation more in line with the Chinese habit and belongs to the communicative translation strategy.)

Conclusions

The information reported in journalistic English is true and reliable, with standard style and accurate words. Although there are differences between English and Chinese, and the differences in syntactic structures will bring some difficulties to translation, the analysis of these differences and syntactic structures will make the translation more accurate and fluent. When translating long and difficult journalistic sentences, we should make rational use of semantic translation theory and communicative translation theory, clearly locate the audience of journalistic English reports, carefully analyze the sentence structure of long and difficult sentences, effectively adopt the method of sequential translation, and reasonably use the method of translation. Only by flexibly adopting the method of variable translation and comprehensively using various translation strategies can we translate a translation that conforms to the habits of Chinese expression and the cognitive characteristics of Chinese readers.

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