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Identification of Procedures for Translation of Vacuous Words from Chinese to English: A Materials-Based Examination of Translation Processes

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Abstract

Studying how Chinese empty words are rendered into English is the focus of this study. A parallel corpus of Chinese literary works and their English translations was established for this research, and their use to uncover translators' strategies for handling empty words is the initial step. After some time, a total of eight distinct translation processes are identified, including (but not limited to) (1) Match, (2) Paraphrase, (3) Shared Match, (4) Implicitation, (5) Amplification, (6) Grammatical Conveyance, (7) Borrowing, and (8) Omission (Mismatch). Grammatical Conveyance is being heralded as a groundbreaking scientific breakthrough. As a further step, we'll look at how widely adopted various procedures and non-procedures are (Shared Match and Borrowing). Two other major insights may be drawn from this research besides the translation of Chinese empty words into English. This is the first study of its type to take a comprehensive inventory of all Chinese empty words and analyse how translators deal with them. Second, the results demonstrate that the most challenging to deal with empty phrases are found in the adverbial and particle categories. To rephrase, "meaningless platitudes aren't as tricky to decipher as previously held beliefs would have you believe."

Keyword: Grammatical Conveyance, Amplification, Distinct Translation

INTRODUCTION

Researchers' interest in identifying translation procedures used in the English translation of Chinese empty words was sparked by reading former scholars' articles and books that discussed translation procedures or translation strategies based on materials in European language pairs or Chinese-English translation. Because the researcher is fluent in both Chinese and English, he thought he could make a valuable contribution to the field of translation studies by looking at Chinese-English translation. Another aspect driving the researcher to do this study was the fact that Chinese is so distinct from most other European languages in terms of grammar, culture, writing system, and phrasing that it may be possible to identify new translation processes.

The researcher was motivated by David Pollard's article Empty Words: Modal Adverbs to use Chinese empty words as study items (2001: 216-222). According to Pollard's research, modal adverbs, which are empty words, can be difficult to translate. He also explores the challenges of doing so in this study. To find out how translators handle such confusing terms, the researcher turned to me. He expects my findings to give a solution. Another interesting point is that no previous researcher has, to his knowledge, ever looked at the English translations of all Chinese empty terms at once. As the first study of its sort, my research is likely to have a significant impact on translation studies.

Literature Review

These days, the name "translation studies" is more commonly used, whereas "translation theory" is viewed as an extension of scholars' investigations of events that occur during translation and translation, with one of its main responsibilities being to explore the age-old question of equivalent. Many academics are beginning to integrate translation studies with another field to offer fresh ideas and unique research techniques to the study of translation, outside from the literal vs. free argument. Catford (1965), for example, begins linguistic debate concerning the changes that occur when material written in one language is translated into a different one. When we talk about shifts, we're referring to the modifications and adaptations that translators must make since the source and destination languages have different grammatical structures or phrasing. Every community has its own polysystem, says Even-Zohar (1978), which includes numerous subsystems including literature, politics, religion, and economy. A polysystem's subsystems are interdependent, and "their interactions are not random but mainly defined by their location in the total to which they belong," as the saying goes (Chang 2010: 258). Sub-systems have varying degrees of centrality; some are closer to the centre than others. The same sub-system, on the other hand, may have distinct positions in other civilizations. There is also a relationship and distinct status amongst polysystems (i.e. various societies). Even-Zohar conducts research into how the condition of the target polysystem and translation as a subsystem affect translators' translation techniques based on this idea. Human translation vs. computer translation is a topic that has been explored by Sager

(1993). As the audiovisual translation business grows, so does the need for subtitler training, as Diaz-Cintas (2008) explains.

Statement of the Problem

There are numerous researchers, translators in the field, and religious figures who have all tried to make the finest possible translations based on their observations and experience, because translation is such an essential tool for communication between people who speak different languages. Numerous theories and arguments have been put out in the western world, from Cicero to St. Jerome, Dryden, Dolet, Tytler, and Schleiermacher, to identify the ideal translation approach. Some translators advocate translating word-for-for-word, while others advocate translating sense-for-sense. For over two thousand years, the focus of translation theory has been the age-old debate between faithful and free translation, according to Mary Snell-Hornby (1988: 36) and George Steiner (1998: 275). Despite the fact that translation theory has been discussed for so long, it wasn't until the 1960s that it was taken seriously as an academic subject (Munday 2008: 5).

Objective of the Study

- To compare the researcher's treatments with those of former theorists and a thorough examination of their frequency of use.

Research Questions

- What phenomena that are worth discussing can we identify from the research results?

Research Methodology

The goal of this study is to examine the translations of all Chinese empty words in order to determine the methods used. This research work is based on a Chinese-English parallel corpus that was specifically built for it. It's also looked at how often different translation processes are used across various empty word classes to see if the most often used procedures differ across them.

Research Design

"Since translation strategies and choices at all linguistic levels are all highly sensitive to the particular conjunction of genre and subject matter realized in a given source text, it follows that if a corpus is to adequately serve any such purpose, it cannot simply be compiled from a random collection of data. Rather it needs to be designed as a representative and balanced sample of the data that exists (it is rarely possible to build a corpus that includes everything). If, for example, the goal is to create an MT system for pharmaceutical texts, then the selection of data for the corpus must represent that domain and not the domain of chemistry. Moreover, it must strike a balance between the various types of text that talk about pharmaceuticals – patient information leaflets, research papers, etc. – and between data from the various major manufacturers"(Hartley 2009: 110)

Data Analysis

The following three requirements must be satisfied by the translated materials for this project: There are three elements that are consistent throughout all three of these translations: 1) They are works of prose, theatre, or fiction; 2) They are based on material from modern Chinese; and 3) Their translators are people who speak English as their first language. There have been 63 volumes of Renditions published up to this point, and out of these 62 manuscripts, we have chosen the ones that best match these requirements.

CONCLUSION

The researcher advocated using meaningless Chinese words as a specific research material in order to identify translation processes in the action of translating from Chinese to English. The twelve academics whose work is extensively referenced in this thesis are only a few of many who have drawn similar findings from research papers in other language pairs. Vinay and Darbelnet's list of translation methods is a compilation of treatments gleaned through researching English to French translations.

Limitations of the Study

The proposed research was predicted to face a number of obstacles, some of which may be addressed while others may stay unsolved. In this part, we'll talk about potential problems that haven't been fixed.

1. The translation procedures/non-procedure were defined by the researcher, and it is possible that different people have dissimilar viewpoints.
2. The reasons translators employ certain procedures to tackle certain empty words have not been clearly identified. Why did this translator paraphrase this source word when there is a suitable correspondent to constitute a match? How come that translator omitted that word? In the proposed study, the researcher can only offer possible reasons from personal inferences, but it is likely that those translators did this or that for certain reasons. This is a topic which is worthwhile to investigate, by investigating which we will be able to understand translators' way of thinking, how they make decisions and what considerations affect their decisions.
3. Due to time restrictions, the researcher chose to look at twenty randomly selected samples of empty words for each whole word he examined. Despite his claim that this method will yield positive outcomes, there are both benefits and drawbacks to consider. This had the advantage of making the scope of the study reasonable over a period of four years while yet allowing me to analyse all empty words and identify methods by looking at several examples (approximately 5500 examples). Translators employ a variety of techniques for translating Chinese empty words, and this sum should cover all of them. However, the drawback is that it is hard to rule out the potential that certain cases that were not picked involve the application of methods that were not recognised (although he estimate the likelihood to be small owing to the huge number of examples being analysed).
4. Translation methods for Chinese empty words were identified as part of this study. Thus, translating empty words will be the primary focus, which might lead to an analysis that is

primarily concerned with word level. Consequently, it's likely that translation methods for more complex linguistic units (such as clauses, sentences, and paragraphs) went unnoticed.

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