

On the necessity of context analysis in interlingual translation from the perspective of semiotics

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Abstract: Contextualized analysis can help participants in social communication to understand and apply context well. In translation, contextualization analysis can help translators accomplish the task of cross-cultural communication from two aspects of translation accuracy and readability. The core tasks of social semiotics and translation are related to exploring significance. Therefore, it is logical to study translation from the perspective of social semiotics, and it may become a more comprehensive and scientific methodology to study translation as a social and cultural activity. This paper attempts to explain some core issues of translation within the framework of social semiotics theory, which is different from other social semiotic translation studies. This paper demonstrates the necessity of applying semiotics to the study of interlingual translation in order to find a new breakthrough in translation studies.

1. Introduction

Translation is a cross-language and cross-cultural communication activity of human beings, and it is one of the important means to promote the progress of human society. It has made important contributions to the spread of civilization, information exchange and resource sharing among different countries and regions. Social communication relies on a mechanism, which can contextualize the behavior and activities of participants through the way of communication. In the process of speaking, the speaker always inevitably creates local context and provides the context as the continuous input of his behavior and activities [1]. This process is called "contextualization process", which is composed of a set of steps to connect various contextualized cues with participants' background knowledge [2]. Context is a dynamic multi-directional concept, which means that various factors of context will be reorganized and changed constantly.

Social semiotics originates from semiotics. The meaning of symbols involves the whole communicative activities in the social context. It is considered that all factors related to translation are meaningful symbols, and the realization of symbolic meaning must be put in the whole symbol system and its relationship with other symbols. In interlingual translation, the translator first decodes the original text, and then encodes the meaning according to the context of the target language [3]. This decision-making process is not only restricted by the original text, but also by the context in which the target text exists, such as the translator's translation intention, social and cultural context, readers' expectations and aesthetic requirements. Translation is an interlingual activity, the core of which is semantic transformation, and context analysis is the means to obtain equivalent semantics.

2. The relationship between social semiotics and translation

Social semiotics mainly studies the social significance of symbols constructed through symbolic forms and symbolic phenomena. The basic premise of social semiotics is that the meaning of symbols is realized by the joint action of participants who participate in social activities, and its main task is to study and analyze the theoretical framework of such meaning construction and generation.

Language text is the realization of meaning potential and a series of choices according to different situation characteristics. A situational feature consists of three complex dimensions,

namely, field, tenor and potential, which determine and predict the interpretation of text meaning. In addition, translation involves language, which is regarded by Saussure as the first symbolic system to express meaning, which is a process of symbol transformation. Although translation is essentially a linguistic activity, it should be semiotics. Because, on the surface, translation is the process of converting the meaning of one language symbol into another language symbol by using dictionaries and grammars, but there are some standards beyond the concept [4]. Social semiotics studies the generation, transmission and interpretation of symbolic meaning, which is the same as translation. Therefore, it is very reasonable to study translation from the perspective of social semiotics, which will provide a methodology for us to study interlingual translation as a human communicative activity.

3. Contextualization exploration and context classification involved in discourse

This paper focuses on the importance of contextualization in guiding translation, and tries to find the connection between context and translation in the process of contextualized analysis of translated texts. The author intends to analyze it from two aspects: deciphering the context of the original text and restructuring the context of the target language. Put all the contextual factors involved into a contextualized process framework, decipher and analyze the context of the source language text, and dynamically use various translation strategies to reconstruct and adapt the context, thus completing the task of cross-cultural communication. This paper uses contextualized analysis method to guide translation practice. The context classification in this paper is shown in Figure 1.

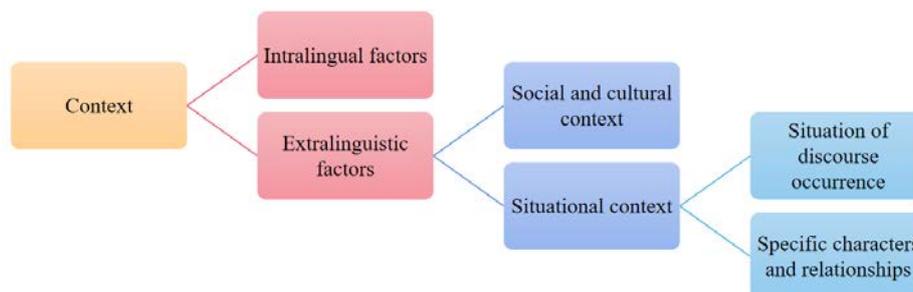


Figure 1 Context classification

Among them, the factors in language mainly refer to the context, that is, the context produced by the correlation of context plots. Extralinguistic factors are divided into socio-cultural context and situational context here. The purpose of the text is to analyze the context of the translated text more systematically by classifying the context involved in the text.

4. Translation of context participation from the perspective of social semiotics

4.1. Linguistic context

In the process of translation, it is very important for translators to determine and grasp the meanings of words, sentences and texts according to the specific context. Situational context refers to the immediate situation in which discourse occurs, that is, time, place, topic, formal degree of occasion, relationship between participants and their social status, etc. Cultural context refers to the specific social norms, communication methods and customs of a speech community. Every language has its own unique cultural background and has formed its own unique expression in its long history, so there are inevitably cultural differences and cultural conflicts in translation [5]. Context plays a guiding role in truly understanding the cultural connotation of discourse and its proper application, thus reducing or eliminating cultural conflicts.

Thus, since translation is a language activity, translation studies must include language studies. Language problems are mainly semiotic problems. To discover the true nature of language, we must know what language and other symbolic systems have in common [6]. Secondly, from the second

point that the essence of translation process is the process of information transformation, there is something in common between translation process and symbolic indication process. Any common words are symbolic symbols, such as "give", "bird", "get married" and so on. Symbols don't use things to express themselves. For example, we don't need to take out a bird to refer to it when talking about "bird", and we don't need to make the action of "marriage" to express the meaning of "marriage". The following figure 2 can help us understand the concepts of meaning process, interpreter and interpreter more easily.

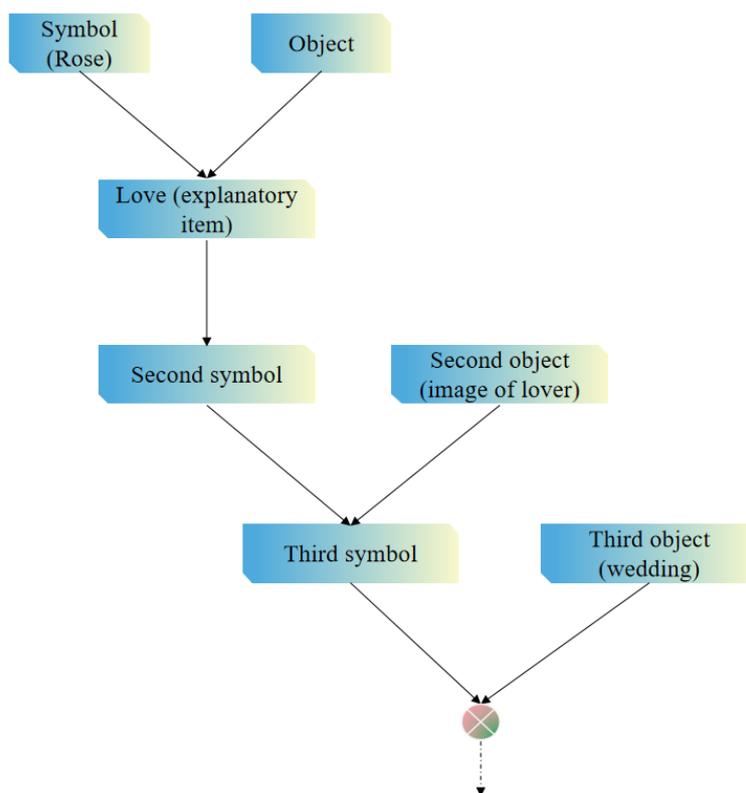


Figure 2 Meaning process

In the picture above, the word "rose" (the first symbol) generally gives people a concept (the first object), that is, a plant of Rosaceae, which usually blooms red flowers. This concept will arouse the concept of love in people's minds, which is an explanatory item and a symbol. Then, as the second symbol, this symbol will make people connect with the image of his/her lover. The good memories between lovers can be used as an explanation item of love, and this explanation item will be used as the third symbol, causing another idea (wedding). If possible, this process will continue indefinitely.

4.2. Literary tradition and literary norm of target language

The literary tradition and position in the cultural context of the target language also have a great influence on translation. Because the literary tradition of the target language occupies a dominant position and dominates the reading habits and expectation horizon of the target language, if the translator himself belongs to the target language culture, then his translation strategy choice must be consciously or unconsciously influenced by the dominant literary tradition at that time [7].

For example, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, many translators transformed foreign novels in the form of chapter return in the process of translating foreign novels into Chinese. Chen Duxiu translated "les miserables" and so on. Obviously, the translator's translation strategy is not only greatly influenced by the literary tradition of the dominant literary genre, chapter novel, but also to meet the readers' reading habits, aesthetic psychology and reading expectation at that time.

Similarly, the literary norms of the target language also restrict the translator's translation activities. For example, when Mr. Fu Donghua translated "Gone with the wind", he deleted a long description of the characters' psychology in the original book. In the original text, "some lengthy

descriptions and psychological analysis felt that it had little to do with the development of the plot and would make readers tired, then I honestly and rudely cut it down." On the surface, this strategy is for the reader's sake, but on the deep side, it is restricted by the literary norm that there are few large sections of characters' psychological description in traditional Chinese literature.

4.3. Context of non-linguistic factors

The context of non-linguistic factors refers to the context divorced from the text paragraph level. It contains social and cultural context and situational context. Socio-cultural context refers to the social and cultural information under the background of the novel. Situational context refers to the specific characters' characters and their mutual relations under the specific scenes (mainly dialogues) in novels.

(1) Social and cultural context

Translation is first restricted by the original text, which is the basis of the target text, and then restricted by many factors in the context in which the target text is located. The translation will be influenced by the translator's intention, the target readers, the social and cultural environment in which the translation takes place and the translator's subjective factors. In interlingual translation, the referential meaning of the original text will become the information provider of the target text, and it is usually the "information core".

Stories happened in different social stages and different times have different backgrounds. Novels are often marked by the times. Therefore, in the process of translating novels, we must grasp the background of the times. From the perspective of social semiotics, register also produces connotative meaning. Register is a semantic variant of occasions and situations, and it is a transformation way to discuss something for a specific purpose. It is realized by a series of special words and expressions. It usually reflects the subjective attitude of symbol users or their emotional attitude towards the meaning of symbols, and reveals their cultural identity, educational background, aesthetic taste, etc. If the translated text is considered to play the same role as the original text, then pragmatic meaning is the most important aspect in the decision-making process.

(2) Situational context

Situational context refers to the specific language environment under the situation where the dialogue takes place. This kind of context is usually influenced by many factors. One is the atmosphere when discourse occurs, that is, the atmosphere of dialogue, and the other is influenced by the character and relationship between the two sides of the dialogue. Translation is a process of decoding and encoding, and the translator is actually a symbol in the symbol system in the process of translation, which is regulated and restricted by other symbols. Therefore, this decision-making process is not arbitrary, but the magnitude of adjustment and restriction depends on various realities.

One of the national psychology of Han nationality embodied in Chinese language is identity psychology. Identity psychology refers to the language psychology that subjectively regards heterogeneous culture as homogeneous culture. Under the restriction of identity psychology, Chinese always nationalizes foreign culture as much as possible. In the contact between Chinese culture and foreign culture, the language psychology of identity always occupies a dominant position [8]. As an interdisciplinary subject of sociology, anthropology, semiotics and linguistics, it can consider all meaningful symbolic activities, language subjects and the outside world, explain information and meaning from the perspectives of ideology, social structure and social process, and analyze the process of symbolic meaning. The final meaning of the translated text is the result of the common cognition of the above-mentioned social people. The same meaning is expressed in different ways among people with different personalities. In this way, the translated version can more appropriately reflect the character of the parties and the relationship between the two parties.

Translation is a purposeful behavior, and the success of translation depends to a great extent on whether the target text meets the purpose of translation. Literary texts contain intralingual meaning, referential meaning and pragmatic meaning, which can achieve certain functions, such as information function, emotional function and metalanguage function. The approach of social

semiotics holds that translation is one of the ways of cultural communication, which involves not only two languages, but also the cultural systems of two different societies. The differences between social cultures will affect the transmission of information, and complete equivalence will not be realized, and sometimes untranslatability will occur. Cultural thinking in Chinese tends to focus on wholeness, linguistic parataxis, and grammar is implicit. However, English-speaking nations pay more attention to logical reasoning, which is hypotaxis in language, cohesive devices and explicit in grammar.

5. Conclusions

As mentioned above, there is a close relationship between context and translation. Firstly, context restricts translation. Secondly, translation depends on context. Compared with other translation theories, social semiotics has its unique advantages. It regards translation as an interaction of social culture, not just an activity of language operation. It emphasizes the role of social factors, especially the role of situational context and cultural context in decoding the original text and coding the translated text. Therefore, social semiotics is a more comprehensive methodology to study translation with the exploration of meaning as its core task. The contextual analysis of illocutionary context is helpful to better understand the social and cultural background knowledge contained in the text context of the source language, the relationship between characters and the specific situation in which the story takes place, so as to avoid some historical common-sense mistakes, wrong interpretation of the relationship between characters and wrong analysis of situational context.

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