

# Research on Translation of Business English from the Perspective of Functional Equivalence Theory

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**Abstract:** Business English is a kind of English, which mainly used in business cooperation and has very strong practical functions. The most important thing to translate business English is to realize the interconnection of sentences in different cultural and linguistic contexts so that they can be accepted by people in different contexts. Functional equivalence in business English translation is the prerequisite for effective translation. Only in this way can we improve our business English translation ability and achieve greater success in future employment. From the perspective of functional equivalence, this paper explores the problems that should be paid attention to in business English translation to further study and explore.

## 1. Introduction

With the progress of economy and the frequent trade exchanges between countries, the important role of business English has attracted more and more attention [1]. At the same time, people pay more attention to the accuracy and professionalism of business English translation. More and more linguists have begun to enter the field of business English translation. However, most of the studies focus on stylistics or contrastive analysis of English and Chinese, and mainly focus on the analysis of vocabulary, sentence or stylistic features, which play an increasingly important role in business English translation. It is necessary for us to make a more in-depth and systematic study of it. Therefore, business English translation needs systematic translation theory to guide it. As a special-purpose language, Business English has its own unique textual characteristics. Business English translation cannot be done without the guidance of professional theory. This paper quotes Nida's functional equivalence theory as a theoretical basis and analyses its application in business English translation.

## 2. Summary of Functional Equivalence Theory

Eugene A. Nida was a famous translation theorist in the United States. His translation theory has exerted a very important influence on the translation field. In 1964, Nida put forward two concepts of "formal equivalence" and "dynamic equivalence" in *Towards a Science of Translation* [2]. Formal equivalence means that the information in the target language should be as consistent as possible with the different components in the source language; dynamic equivalence means that the information in the target language is reproduced in the most appropriate natural equivalence from semantics to style. In terms of formal and kinetic equivalence, Nida emphasizes the latter. Later, he synthesized his views and put forward the concept of functional equivalence. According to the different suitability of functional equivalence, Nida proposed the lowest level of functional equivalence and the highest level of functional equivalence. The lowest level of functional equivalence refers to the ability of the target readers to imagine how the target readers appreciate and understand the source text, which is the basic requirement of translation. The highest level of functional equivalence is that the comprehension and appreciation of the target text by the target readers are basically the same as that of the source text by the target readers, which is the ideal situation of translation. Nida believes that translation is to reproduce the information and style of the original text in the most appropriate and natural way in the target language. Meaning is the most important, followed by style. A good translation should not read like a translation. Translation is not a word-for-word translation. Nida

does not advocate formal equivalence in translation. He believes that strict adherence to the linguistic form of the original text will destroy the content and thus the quality of the translation. In order to achieve functional equivalence between the target text and the source text, it is necessary to get rid of the constraints of the original language structure and style. The translator should carefully study and discuss the similarities and differences between the original language and the target language in terms of syntactic structure, linguistic idioms and grammatical structure. The equivalence theory of translation can be shown as follows:

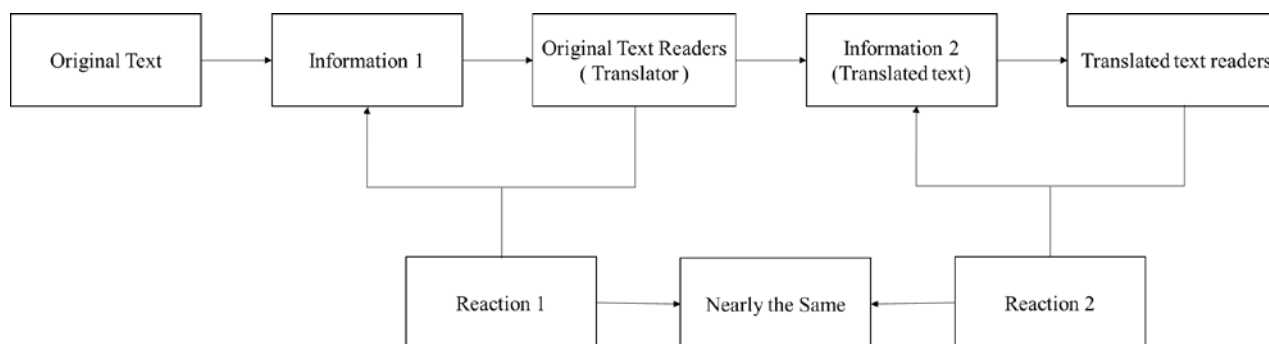


Figure 1. The flow and result of equivalence translation

### 3. Guidance Function of Functional Equivalence Theory on Business English Translation

Nida's translation theory focuses on the original readers and the target readers [3]. It takes the reader's response as the criterion and judges the quality of the translation by looking at the reader's response to the two kinds of information. Therefore, this theory has more guiding significance for business English translation with the main function of transmitting information, because the specific readers of business texts are both parties to the transaction, and accurate understanding of each other's intentions and principles is the key to ensure the success of business. In business English translation, the choice of language form and style should be subordinate to this function. Long-term business translation practice has also proved that this form-independent dynamic equivalence theory can meet the requirements of international business communication to the greatest extent and is widely used as a guiding strategy for business English translation. In specific business activities, the translator first deals with the professional fields involved in the activity and learns the skills in the field of professional translation. The purpose is to ensure that he can obtain more accurate information about the activities and facilitate the future business cooperation and business communication activities involving a wide range of professional knowledge. In the principle of ensuring the effectiveness of business-to-English translation, the translator improves his professional awareness. Level enables the acquirer to obtain all the information contained in the original text. Business English, as its name implies, is the language used in business activities as economic exchanges. Business activities involve the economic interests of both parties. The accuracy of business English translation can avoid economic disputes arising from communication problems. The principles of professionalism and accuracy in business English activities all emphasize the accuracy of information transmission. The training goal of business English requires that business English translation should pay attention to user's feedback. In fact, this feedback corroborates Nida's core idea of functional equivalence. Therefore, Nida's functional equivalence theory plays an important role in guiding English translation [4].

## 4. Translation Strategies of Business English Based on Functional Equivalence Theory

### 4.1 Equivalence at Word Level.

Business English translation pays great attention to the accurate translation of vocabulary meaning, and many business terms are used in various business fields. When translating these words, translators must grasp their meanings and translate them correctly to achieve lexical equivalence.

Business English has many business terms, emphasizing the accurate translation of vocabulary meaning. The professionalism of business English words can reflect the ideas and intentions of the original communicators. Therefore, translators must grasp the exact meaning of these words, interpret them correctly in translation practice, and achieve lexical equivalence. Vocabulary is the most basic element of English translation, and the basis and premise of the whole translation work. When translating business English, the most important thing is to pay attention to the accurate use of vocabulary. Hedge, damages, forward pricing, barcode, etc. These words are very specialized words. They cannot be replaced by other words in the process of translation. Otherwise, their meanings will change greatly. If words are improperly used in the process of translation, ambiguity will arise. This makes it difficult for others to see the meaning of the article at a glance, so it is difficult to achieve the desired effect. In addition, because of the rich content and thought of Chinese characters, a word can often be combined with many words to produce more other meanings. But English words are different, especially as business English words, the meaning of words is very precise. "Fu" can be translated to vice, associate, assistant, deputy, lieutenant and so on, but vice-president translates vice-president, assistant manager is assistant manager. It tells us that in learning English vocabulary, we should pay attention to individual situations and improve the accuracy of translation.

#### **4.2 Equivalence at Sentence Level.**

In business English translation, lexical equivalence is the basis. However, lexical equivalence alone is not enough. In business contracts, we often see complex and logical sentences. If the translator fails to understand its structure and translates it correctly with the corresponding structure in the translated text, it will bring about wrong information exchange. In sentence translation, the mastery of professional vocabulary knowledge is the basis of translation work. In business translation, it is difficult to translate sentences. Business English text sentences themselves have strong logic and complex structure. This requires translators to correctly set up and reorganize the logic in sentences, to correctly express logical ideas, and to avoid affecting the effect of business translation. Sentence structure and sentence pattern integrity also play an important role in the process of business English translation. Articles are composed of different sentences. Only by translating each sentence smoothly and beautifully can the overall translation be better accepted by all. Therefore, translators need to achieve functional equivalence in business English translation. For example: You kindly enclosed with your letter dated the third of May particulars of product description, for which we thank you. Because the reference part is too long, according to English usage, this part is independently placed at the beginning of the sentence. If we do not change the structure of this sentence, it will be translated as "the product description attached to your letter of January 2nd, we appreciate it very much." The translation obviously does not conform to the logic of the Chinese language. The correct translation method should be based on the change of sentence structure and the use of harmony syntax to translate the sentence: "We thank you very much for the product description enclosed in your letter of the following month and day". In addition to syntax, in translating long sentences in business English, translation techniques such as component segmentation and sentence change must also be used.

#### **4.3 Equivalence at Discourse Level.**

In terms of text translation, due to the differences in language usage habits between the two partners in business cooperation, the overall structure of the text will also be different. Therefore, before translating, translators need to have a specific understanding and mastery of the language usage habits of the countries in which the text involves to ensure that the overall structure and meaning of the text can be accurately translated in the process of translation. In fact, the text equivalence in functional equivalence is to pay attention to the distinct structure of the main body of the article. In the process of organizational structure, it is very important to have a plan, not only to have clear ideas, but also to achieve effective cohesion and connection between different paragraphs and different contents of the article. For business English translation, to achieve the equivalence of articles is to carry out organized and planned English translation. In the process of business English translation, there will be many words with similar meanings. At this time, translators should pay attention to the problem that the same meaning should be used as few words as possible, and a few

words should be used to represent this meaning. This can effectively support the structure of the whole article, and at the same time, the words can serve as clues for this article. Use, strengthen the coherence of the article, let the reader read, feel the clear thinking of the article. Another point worth noting is that we should grasp the structure and thinking of the article from the macro and overall point of view, instead of entangling a sentence or some words blindly. If we can make our translated articles understood in general, we can also understand and accept the minor defects in individual parts of the article in time. But if the article cannot be understood as a whole, it means that the overall idea of the article is not clear enough and needs to be further connected. In this case, even if a sentence or some vocabulary is classical, it will not help. This is the importance of article equivalence.

#### **4.4 Equivalence at Style Level.**

Business English has obvious characteristics of professionalism and professionalism, and has strong practicability. In business cooperation, besides signing out contracts, there are also many different text forms in business contacts, such as letters, faxes, e-mails, contracts and so on. There are also some differences in the style of writing among different texts. Moreover, the style of the text has different effects on the overall purpose preference of the text, which is of great significance in translation. Therefore, in the translation of business English, translators need to pay more attention to the overall style of the text, ensure the equivalence of the text style in writing, and ensure the normal communication between the two partners. The translation of business English should embody the equivalence of style, which can smoothly carry out business communication activities. Business English has the characteristics of correct, complete, concrete and clear style, which are the important planning and principles followed in business English translation. The so-called style refers to the cultivation of the text itself, which is the specification and mode of the text composition. It is a unique cultural phenomenon. It reflects the overall characteristics of the text from content to form and belongs to the category of form. Stylistic equivalence is another problem that should be paid attention to in the process of business English translation. Language translation is meaningful only when the style or style is the same or similar. If the style is not equal, then the translated articles or sentences will be beyond the human mind. Business English translation is more focused on explanatory or textual style, and seldom doped with personal emotions. Only in this way can business English translation be successful. But if you add personal emotional color, it will give people an impersonal feeling, it is difficult for people to believe the authenticity of this article. This reduces the credibility of the article invisibly. Therefore, when we study business English translation.

#### **5. Conclusion**

The unique characteristics of business English determine the choice of translation strategies. Functional equivalence theory has certain guiding significance for business English, a special applied style. As a functional variant of English, Business English involves language, communication skills, business knowledge and other elements, and has its unique linguistic features. Mastering business background knowledge and fully understanding the linguistic features of business English are the prerequisites for doing business English translation well. Translators should not only can control two languages, but also master a lot of business knowledge and business terminology to achieve the closest equivalence between business English translation and the original text.

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