

Cultural Differences and Translation Strategies in Business English Translation under the Guidance of Functional Equivalence Principle

Li Sufen

School of Foreign Languages, Heze University, Heze, China

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Abstract: Functional equivalence theory plays an important guiding role in business English translation. This paper applies this theory to the analysis and discussion of business English translation. Starting from Mr. Nida's "functional equivalence" theory, this paper expounds and analyses the phenomenon of cultural information equivalence in international business English translation, and puts forward some practical methods to deal with the communication barriers caused by cultural differences flexibly so as to achieve the information equivalence in international business English translation, hoping to benefit those engaged in international business English translation.

1. Introduction

Under the background of economic globalization, business activities and cultural exchanges between countries are becoming more and more frequent. Due to the language barriers between countries, there will be some language barriers[1]. Therefore, the translation of business English comes into being in this environment. As a very important branch of ESP, Business English has been widely used in international trade, international marketing and other fields. It is used in the fields of international finance, foreign trade, investment invitation, technology trade, international transportation, foreign labor contract and contract, foreign insurance and so on[2]. It has unique linguistic features. Business English involves international trade, business negotiation, economy, finance, insurance and marketing. Its vocabulary is professional, which constitutes the most prominent linguistic characteristics of business English[3]. With the further deepening of the opening up, business English has played an increasingly prominent role in international business English activities. Business English has also received more and more attention in recent years. Nowadays, most business English translation is carried out from the perspective of stylistics or comparison between English and Chinese, focusing on vocabulary, sentence and text analysis. However, this analysis is still superficial and needs further study[4].

2. Overview of Functional Equivalence Theory

In 1964, Eugene Nida, an American translation theorist, put forward two concepts of dynamic equivalence and formal equivalence in his Preliminary Study of Translation Science[5]. Dynamic equivalence needs to restore the desired information in the original sentence with the most accurate target language, both semantically and stylistically; formal equivalence means that the meaning expressed by the target language is consistent with the meaning expressed in the original text to the greatest extent. Nida analyzed the dynamic equivalence and emphasized it[6]. Based on the concept of functional equivalence, Nida put forward the concept of functional equivalence which can influence the world. Catford's discourse on translation theory follows the same research model as Nida's. In his book *The Linguistic Theory of Translation*, he pointed out clearly: "Translation is the work of language operation: that is, translating one language text into another language text. Any translation theory must make use of linguistic theory and general linguistic theory[7]. Nida's concept of functional equivalence divides the levels of functional equivalence into low-level functional equivalence and high-level functional equivalence[8].

As far as functional equivalence theory is concerned, the core content is the reader's reflection theory. For a long time, the controversy in translation circles has focused on the relationship between the source language and the target language. For translation, the awareness of the source language should be respected to the greatest extent, which requires that the translated language be accurate and higher-level[9]. The pursuit is to pursue the smoothness of the translated language and the acceptability of the translated text. Nida's introduction of reader reflection theory into translation evaluation criteria has made a breakthrough in the two-point relationship between the target language and the source language. In addition, Nida believes that translation needs to interpret many kinds of information contained in your source language through equivalents[10]. Because the target readers and the original readers belong to independent individuals, their information habits are different, and their information receiving abilities are different. In order to achieve the equal transmission of translation information, Nida believes that translation should be carried out in a specific translation process. It is necessary to change the form of the original text so as to make it more acceptable to the readers of the translated text, thus effectively promoting the realization of functional equivalence. In practice, what needs to be emphasized on the basis of linguistic differences is also relative equivalence.

3. Business English Translation Strategies

3.1. Cross-cultural communication in business english translation

In today's globalization and internationalization, cross-cultural communication is the key to business communication activities. Cooperation among people from different countries, regions and cultures is a kind of intercultural communication activity. Figure 1 is a comparison of common sentences.

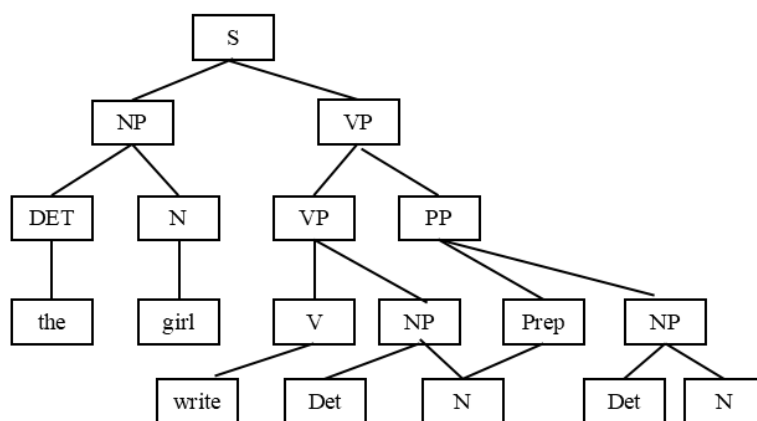


Fig.1. Comparison of common sentences

Business English translation is not only the transformation of linguistic symbols, but also the transmission and transformation between different cultures. Diversified countries, regions, historical backgrounds, social customs, habits and beliefs affect people's thinking and cognitive patterns to some extent. Lotus, for example, has rich cultural connotations. In Japanese culture, lotus is often associated with Memorial and ghost world. India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and other countries regard lotus as holy flower, which is related to their respect for Buddhist culture. There are also descriptions of lotus in Greek mythology. Greeks have the custom of eating lotus leaf rice, so some food companies use the word "lotus" as a brand of food.

3.2. Translation principles

Business English is very practical and professional vocabulary is widely used. Foreign businessmen should not be arbitrary in this respect, and they should have strict norms. Especially in business contacts, standardized and professional business terms often leave a rigorous and mature impression on them and lay a solid foundation for their success. Therefore, business English translators should not only have rich professional knowledge and professional vocabulary

accumulation, but also be able to combine professional knowledge with English knowledge. They should be proficient in using functional equivalence theory in translation, use more formal and standardized language while maintaining the original meaning unchanged, and adhere to professional translation. Principle. For example, in business English correspondence, professional terms are widely used, including trade terms, legal terms and so on. For example, basic trade terms such as letter of credit (letter of credit), firm offer (firm offer), confirm (confirm), etc. and legal terms such as null and void (invalid), etc.

Business correspondence translation often pays more attention to practical effect, its main function is to accurately convey information, rather than to achieve aesthetic effect and appreciation effect. Nida believes that translation criteria should be based on functional equivalence rather than formal equivalence, and strive to transform the reader's response in the context of source culture into that in the context of target culture. Therefore, translators should accurately grasp the full text and express relevant information in equivalent language as much as possible, and abide by the principle of accuracy. In view of this, business English translation should pay attention to improving the accuracy and clarity of sentences from an easy-to-understand point of view, try to abandon the translation methods used for the beauty of the translation, and translate every word in place, so as to truly reflect the original information accurately and truly, and strive for the accuracy and validity of letter translation.

3.3. Translation equivalence of business english correspondence words

According to the theory of functional equivalence, translation flexibility should be emphasized on the premise of lexical equivalence. Translators should have a good knowledge of business English and related foreign trade topics, and know exactly which meaning of the term is used in which business activities. For example, "C.W.O", the abbreviation is very strange in many people's eyes. The exact meaning of the abbreviation "cash with order" means "cash with order", which is one of the international common payment methods. This requires translators to accurately remember the payment methods, types and abbreviations in international business activities. Therefore, teachers should guide and encourage students to memorize a lot so that they can have a solid vocabulary foundation in business English correspondence. Only by mastering a large number of professional vocabulary and accurately understanding the original information of business English correspondence, can students truly achieve the meaning equivalence of information transmission in correspondence translation.

In the classroom teaching of Business English Correspondence and Telecommunications, teachers should pay special attention to students' English-Chinese translation of legal terms and Keywords. They should be closely related to the professional content of business English letters so as to achieve accurate, rigorous and standardized translation. Taking the word "draw" as an example, it is correct to translate it into "drawing, drawing and attracting" in ordinary English. But in international business English, it can only be translated as "ticket issuance". Another example is "enquiry", which is correctly translated into "inquiry" in ordinary English. But in international business English, it can only be translated as "inquiry". For example, "L/C covering your Order No. 123" should be translated into "L/C covering your Order No. 123". D/A (documentary against Acceptance) should be translated as "D/A".

Business English correspondence, as an important medium of communication in business activities, is a very formal style of official correspondence. Its terms should be standardized, formal, rigorous and concise. Business English correspondence often uses synonyms instead of spoken and ordinary English vocabulary, such as "confirm" instead of "think", inform instead of "tell" and "purchase" instead of "buy", and prepositional phrase "with reference to" instead of preposition "for" and so on. At the same time, many words in business English have the characteristics of polysemy. In order to avoid the ambiguity of meaning caused by different understandings, both sides of business activities should discuss the true meaning of synonyms in order to ensure that both sides accurately understand each other's content and agree with each other, so as to lay a foundation for the smooth conclusion of their final business.

As business English correspondence represents the image of the enterprise, the use of words should not be too colloquial and informal, and some very formal and remote words are often used to show the normative and binding force of legal documents. For example, use *prior to*, preceding or previous to instead of before; use *supplement* instead of add to, use “deliver” instead of “send” and use “certify” instead of “prove”. Commercial contracts are legal documents, and their regularity is also reflected in the use of a large number of legal terms or words with legal characteristics. Such as where as (in view of), in witness where of (hereby), negligence (fault), limitation (limitation) and TPND (TPND), irrevocable L/C at sight (irrevocable letter of credit at sight) which express the terms of commercial terms.

Business English contracts are very precise and thoughtful in terms. A large number of idioms and terms with clear meaning and scope are used instead of flexible small words or colloquial words. It is difficult for those who do not have professional knowledge or legal knowledge of business correspondence to understand the terms and conditions of these contract formulas. For example: endorsement (endorsement), discount (discount), banker's bill (bank draft), opening L/C (levy), duplicate order form (renewal order), and so on. In addition, jargon, abbreviations, loanwords and so on are widely used in business letters, such as amate's receipt, alongside lading, T/T (Telegraphic Transfer) translated into “wire transfer”, and so on.

From the sentence level, English contract has a long sentence pattern and a stylized expression structure. In order to clarify the rights and obligations of the parties concerned, English business correspondence often uses the passive voice, while Chinese sentences tend to be more concise and long sentences are less. In view of these differences between English and Chinese, when encountering long sentences in business English letters, it is necessary to fully understand the functions of conjunctions and modifiers in sentences, as well as the relationship between clauses, and to adopt different translation methods in combination with the characteristics of corresponding Chinese expressions.

Because of the differences in religious beliefs, values and education between China and the West, there are huge differences between cultures. Business English translators need to understand these differences in order to achieve cultural translation equivalence through appropriate methods. When we teach English-Chinese translation of business correspondence, we often encounter some unique cultural vocabulary. It is difficult to find the corresponding words in Chinese, which is caused by cultural differences. For example, in business English correspondence negotiation, American culture emphasizes “separation of personnel” and is interested in substantive issues. After brief greetings, timely exchanges of information related to work are conducted. In the way of thinking, Americans tend to decompose complex negotiations into smaller issues. Big tasks consist of a series of smaller tasks, such as raising prices, packaging, delivery and so on. In terms of vocabulary, for example, “dragon” represents evil in the West and “dragon” in China is a symbol of auspiciousness. We should pay special attention to the translation of business English product names, otherwise it will have a negative impact.

4. Conclusion

Business English translation is not only a language activity, but also a cultural activity. In today's globalization and internationalization, any communication between different cultures needs to overcome cultural differences in order to achieve the purpose of communication. As a link between different languages and cultures, translators need to understand the cultural differences and their causes, try to make these differences disappear in translation, reduce losses and avoid gains as much as possible. According to Nida's “functional equivalence” theory, translators must strive for equivalence rather than consistency. Business English translation should abide by this principle in order to achieve communicative effect and communicative equivalence, so that the translation reaches the closest equivalence to the original text. Through the realization of semantic information equivalence, stylistic equivalence and cultural information equivalence, business communication can be more smoothly and successfully promoted.

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