

## Application of Discourse Analysis Theory in English Translation

Fangying Gong

University College London, London, WC1E 6BT, UK

g1277908761@163.com

**Keywords:** Discourse, Analytical theory, English translation

**Abstract:** This paper discusses in detail the basic concepts and principles of discourse analysis, and clarifies the influence of discourse analysis on translation thinking. On this basis, with the help of specific cases, the application of discourse analysis theory in English translation is deeply explored from the following aspects: understanding the structure of the text, grasping the theme of the text, identifying the relationship between the texts, understanding the meaning of words with the help of context, and focusing on context translation, so as to lay a solid foundation for further enhancing the quality and efficiency of English translation and promoting cross-cultural communication.

### 1. Introduction

A discourse is a continuous, complete, and meaningful speech or text composed of a series of organically combined sentences. A complete discourse should contain clear topics or themes, and be able to express complete meaning and information. With the progress of globalization, English translation plays an increasingly crucial role in cross-cultural communication. As a way of thinking in translation, discourse analysis has become an essential tool in English translation. This paper will start from the characteristics of discourse analysis theory and explore its specific application in English translation.

### 2. Characteristics of Discourse

Discourse is one of the fundamental units of linguistic research and a basic means of understanding language. Its main characteristics include the following. Discourse is an organic combination of multiple sentences and must be a complete and meaningful whole. A discourse should be able to express a clear topic or theme and form complete meaning and information. There should be close connections and logical relationships between each sentence in a discourse, which can form a continuous discourse. This continuity can be achieved through various means such as vocabulary, grammar, intonation, and tone. Discourse should be able to convey rich semantic information, including concrete facts, abstract concepts, emotions and attitudes. The richness of information in a discourse can be achieved through sentence structure, vocabulary selection, rhetorical devices, etc. Discourse is usually generated in a certain context and background, with specific cultural, social, and historical backgrounds. Therefore, when understanding a discourse, it is essential to consider the influence of these background and contextual factors to better explain the meaning of language expression. Discourse is usually generated to achieve a certain communicative purpose, such as stating facts, expressing emotions, explaining reasons, and so on. Therefore, discourse has clear functionality and can meet specific communicative needs and purposes.

### 3. Influence of Discourse Analysis on Translation Thinking

During translation, discourse analysis can help the translator recognize the original text more deeply, grasp its logical structure and language characteristics, and more accurately express the meaning of the original text. The influence of discourse analysis on translation thinking is mainly reflected in the following aspects. When conducting discourse analysis, translator need to grasp the relationship between each language unit and recognize the meaning and structure of the whole text.

Because the goal of translation is to convey the entire meaning of the original text, rather than just translating a single sentence or word. Discourse analysis requires the translator to focus on the details of language, such as the use of words, word order, rhetorical devices and so on. This kind of detail sensitivity can help translator better grasp the language style and expression of the original text, and more accurately choose the translated words and phrases. Discourse analysis can help translator recognize the cultural background and social phenomena reflected in the original text. Because the goal of translation is to enable the target audience to recognize the meaning of the original text. By understanding the cultural connotation and background of the original text, the translator can better choose appropriate translation strategies and expressions to make the translation more consistent with the target readers' language and cultural habits.

## **4. Application of Discourse Analysis Theory in English Translation**

### **4.1 Recognize Discourse Structure**

In English translation, text structure can help the translator better organize the language, clarify the logical relationship and language style of the original text, and accurately express the meaning of the original text.

Taking the English translation of *The Dream of Red Mansion* as an example, it is a classical Chinese novel that describes the family and love stories of Jia Baoyu. Understanding the discourse structure is crucial in the translation process. For instance, in the first chapter, the original text describes Jia Baoyu's birth and family background, as well as the situation of Rong Mansion and Grandmother Jia. These contents are very crucial in the whole story, and they are the contents that the translator needs to focus on understanding and expressing. In addition, when understanding the structure of a text, translator should also focus on the language style and cultural connotation of the original text. In the original text, the author uses a large number of idioms and colloquialism, reflecting the characteristics and wisdom of traditional Chinese culture. The translator needs to recognize the meaning and usage of these idioms and colloquial expressions through discourse analysis theory, and use appropriate English words and phrases in translation. For instance, Jin Ling Shi Er Chai can be translated as "The Twelve Beauties of Jin ling", Rong Fu can be translated as "Rong Mansion", and Jia Mu can be translated as "Grandmother Jia".

### **4.2 Grasp the Theme of the Discourse**

Fully playing the advantages of discourse analysis theory can better grasp the language characteristics and cultural connotation of the original text, make the translation closer to the original text, achieve higher quality translation effects, and fully display Chinese culture <sup>[1]</sup>.

Taking the English translation of *Journey to the West* as an example, this is an ancient Chinese mythological novel that tells the journey and adventure stories of Sun Wukong and others to the Western Heaven (ancient Chinese Buddhists' name for India). It is very crucial to grasp the theme of the text during the translation process. For instance, in the first chapter, the original text describes the struggle between Sun Wukong and the Jade Emperor, as well as Sun Wukong's journey under the Wuzhi Mountain. These contents are the core of the whole story, and are the contents that the translator needs to focus on and express. In the original text, Sun Wukong's actions and words are full of the characteristics and wisdom of traditional Chinese culture. The translator needs to recognize these cultural connotations and language styles in the original text through discourse analysis theory, and use appropriate English words and phrases in translation. For instance, Da Nao Tian Gong can be translated as "Rebelling Against Heaven". Hua Guo Shan can be translated as "Mountain of Flowers and Fruit", and Qi Shi Er Bian can be translated as "The Seven Two Transformations" <sup>[2]</sup>.

### **4.3 Identify Discourse Relationships**

In English translation, identifying textual relationships can help translator better recognize the relationship between sentences and paragraphs in the original text and accurately translate the

meaning of the original text [3].

Taking the English translation of *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* as an example, it is an ancient Chinese literary masterpiece that tells the historical stories and heroic legends of the Three Kingdoms period. Identifying discourse relationships is crucial in the translation process. For instance, in the first chapter, words such as “San Shi Liu Ji”, “Yong Bing Zhi Dao”, and “Ruo Xiang Ren Bu Zhi” appeared in the original text. The translator needs to recognize the relationship and meaning between these words through discourse analysis theory, and use appropriate English words and phrases in translation. For instance, San Shi Liu Ji can be translated as “thirty-six strategies”, Yong Bing Zhi Dao can be translated as “The Art of War”, and Ruo Xiang Ren Bu Zhi can be translated as “if you want to keep something secret”. In addition, when recognizing textual relationships, the translator needs to focus on the logical relationship and context between sentences and paragraphs in the original text. In the first chapter, the original text describes the dialogue between Lv Bu and Chen Gong, and Lv Bu invites Chen Gong to provide suggestions. When translating, the translator needs to focus on maintaining the emotion and language style in the original text, and use appropriate English expressions to convey the emotion and meaning in the original text [4].

#### **4.4 Use Context to Recognize Word Meaning**

In English translation, understanding the meaning of words with the aid of context can help the translator recognize the words in the original text more accurately, and use more appropriate words and phrases in the translation process. This can ensure that the translation is not only grammatically correct, but also in line with the context, conveying the author’s intended meaning [5].

Taking the English translation of *All Men Are Brothers* as an example, it is an ancient Chinese novel that tells the stories of 108 heroes. It is very crucial to recognize the meaning of words through context during the translation process. For instance, in the first chapter, words such as “Song Chao”, “Kai Feng Fu”, and “Song Hui Zong” appeared in the original text. The translator needs to recognize the historical and cultural background represented by these words through the context, and then use appropriate English words and phrases in translation. For instance, Song Chao can be translated as “Song Dynasty”, Kai Feng Fu can be translated as “Kaifeng Prefecture”, and Song Hui Zong can be translated as “Emperor Huizong of Song”. In addition, when applying discourse analysis theory, translator needs to focus on the coherence of context and the restoration of language style. In the first chapter, the original text describes that the predecessor of the Liangshanpo Insurrectionary Army, the Imperial Guard, was transferred to the border to fight, leaving a group of officers and soldiers in the local area. When translating, the translator needs to keep the coherence between this description and the story that appears later, while maintaining the language style of ancient novels, and using Chinese unique rhetoric and language habits to better convey the feelings and meanings in the original text [6].

#### **4.5 Emphasize Contextual Translation**

In English translation, focusing on context translation can help the translator better recognize the meaning of words, phrases and sentences in the original text, and choose the most appropriate English expression in the process of translation. This can ensure that the translation is accurate, natural, and able to convey the author’s intended meaning [7].

Taking the English translation of *The Romance of West Chamber* as an example, this is an ancient Chinese opera that tells a love story of outstanding talent and firm belief. In the translation process, it is very crucial to focus on contextual translation. For instance, in the first scene, words such as “Xi Xiang”, “Chun Xiang”, and “Suo Lin Nang” appeared in the original text. The translator needs to recognize the cultural background and symbolic meaning represented by these words through the context, and then use appropriate English words and phrases in translation. For instance, Xi Xiang can be translated as “West Chamber”, Chun Xiang can be translated as “Chun xiang”, and Suo Lin Nang can be translated as “Locked Linen Bag”. In addition, when applying the discourse analysis theory, the translator needs to focus on the restoration of the original emotion and language style. In the first scene, the original text describes the dialogue between Chunxiang and

Zhang Sheng, in which Chunxiang confides her love to Zhang Sheng. When translating, the translator needs to maintain the emotion and language style in the original text, and use appropriate English expressions to convey the emotion and meaning in the original text<sup>[8]</sup>.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper aims to explore the application of discourse analysis theory in English translation, so as to enhance the quality and efficiency of English translation and promote cross-cultural communication. It is believed that the theory of discourse analysis will play a more crucial role in English translation.

## References

- [1] Wu Yanli. Discussion on the Application of Discourse Analysis Theory in English Reading Teaching [J]. *New Silk Road: Mid-term*, vol.6, no.17, pp.84-86, 2021.
- [2] Wang Liang. Research on the Application of Discourse Analysis Theory in the Teaching of Textual Grammar Test in Senior High School [J]. *Middle School English*, no.20, pp.154-156, 2021.
- [3] Zhao Lihua. An Empirical Study of Translation Teaching in CET-4 under the Theory of Discourse Analysis [J]. *Overseas English*, no.1, pp.126-128, 2022.
- [4] Tang Li. A Case Study of High School English Discourse Teaching from the Perspective of Multimodal Theory [J]. *International Education Forum*, vol.3, no.3, pp.23-25, 2021.
- [5] Zhou Fang. Teaching Research on the Application of Discourse Analysis Theory to the “Five out of Seven” of English Reading Comprehension in Senior High School [J]. *English Teacher*, vol.22, no.12, pp.112-116, 2022.
- [6] Chen Ruiling. Translation of folk culture words in Hawkes’ English translation of *A Dream of Red Mansions* from the perspective of discourse analysis [J]. *Journal of Jiamusi Education College*, vol.37, no.2, pp.79-80, 2021.
- [7] Shan Chengqiong. Application of discourse analysis theory in the teaching of English reading in senior high school -- Taking the teaching of Module3 Unit2 English and its history in senior high school English (Translation Edition) as an example [J]. *Extra-lingual Learning*, vol.6, no.11, pp.70-71, 2021.
- [8] Xiao Weina. The Application of Grammar and Lexical Cohesion in Discourse Analysis Theory in College English Reading Teaching [J]. *Business Information*, no.4, pp.120-122, 2022.