A Comparative Study of Cohesive Devices in Chinese-English Translation

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Abstract: English is a common language and has become one of the main subjects in China. With the rapid development of text linguistics, static words and sentences are no longer regarded as units in translation, but discourses are transformed into units. The core of a discourse is cohesion, which is equivalent to the tangible network in the discourse and is also important in translation. There are some differences in thinking mode, social culture and cohesion between Chinese and English. Therefore, it is important to grasp the differences in cohesive devices between languages and apply appropriate translation methods in Chinese-English translation, which needs to be further explored in Chinese-English discourses. This paper mainly analyzes four cohesive devices used in Chinese-English translation, namely, anaphora, substitution, omission and connection.

The basic content of discourse analysis is to study discourse cohesion. There will be some differences between English and Chinese. In order to guide the actual language communication accurately, it is necessary to make a comparative study of discourse cohesion between English and Chinese. With the continuous deepening of discourse analysis, some scholars have a strong interest in discourse cohesive devices between English and Chinese and pay attention to in-depth research [1]. The application of discourse cohesive devices needs to be combined with different languages, and a comparative study between the two languages is required.

1. Key Points and Difficulties in Chinese-English Translation

1.1 Difficulties in Translation

The most common difficulties in translation are the proper nouns and the differences between English and Chinese. In most discourses, difficult words are often found, such as organizational, leadership, and inventory. Some words seem to be familiar, but it is difficult to understand what they mean when they are placed in context. There are also some professional terms related to professional knowledge. It is difficult for translators to understand these words thoroughly without knowing the meaning of professional knowledge. Coupled with individual unfamiliar terminology, it is impossible to determine the meaning after accessing the information. For example, some institutional names, the difficulties in these terms will bring difficulties to translation. In addition, there are certain differences between English and Chinese languages [2]. English and Chinese are two different needs systems. For example, the focus of English is the objectivity of facts. There are more passive sentences, while active sentences are more commonly used in Chinese. English pays more attention to the form of sentences, and the sentence components are connected by various relational words and connecting words. Chinese emphasizes the meaning of sentences. It is rarely or not commonly used in connection means. The lines in the words contain logical relations and grammar, and long sentences account for a large part of English sentence making, and short sentences are used more in Chinese. In view of the above differences between English and Chinese, it is necessary to correctly understand the re-integration of sentences to accurately understand the meaning of the original text.

1.2 Key Points in Translation

The most important point in the actual translation process is the language expression. The

previous paragraph has already explained the differences between English and Chinese, especially in relational and connected words. There are differences between English and Chinese in terms of conformity and meaning, prominent subject and topic, which can be reflected in the cohesive devices used in texts such as anaphora, substitution and omission. Therefore, in Chinese-English translation, translators must master the cohesive characteristics of English and Chinese, and establish articles that in line with Chinese expression habits.

2. The Means of Cohesion in the Translation of English and Chinese

2.1 Anaphora

Anaphora refers to the reference of one component in a discourse as another component, including personal anaphora, deictic anaphora and comparative anaphora. Personal anaphora refers to the establishment of certain semantic and logical relations by using personal pronouns, corresponding restrictive pronouns and nominal possessives, such as her, me, their, etc. Deictic anaphora is the establishment of logical relationship of language by using demonstrative pronouns, corresponding determiners, and articles. When expressing the distance of time and space, it takes the time and place where the speaker is, for example, "this, these, here" means near, and "that, those, then" means far, "the" is neutral. Comparative anaphora is considered as the establishment of the logical relations of languages by using the adjectives, adverbs and comparative levels are used to compare the differences of things. "Identical and identically" denote adjectives and adverbs that are completely similar, "additional and similarly" denote adjectives and adverbs that are generally similar; "different and otherwise" denote different adjectives and adverbs. For instances, those who work for money are afraid to encounter more money. In Chinese, we need to put a word "more" in front of the adjectives, which can better reflect the comparative level of adjectives.

2.2 Substitution

Substitution refers to the replacement of phrases, clauses and other grammatical structures with substitute words, mainly includes nominal substitution, verb substitution and clause substitution, which are less used in Chinese than in English. In English, one name is often used to replace another name, that is, nominal substitution. There are many words with the function of nominal substitution, among which personal pronouns, relational pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, possessive pronouns, interrogative pronouns, indefinite pronouns and possessive case of noun are more common. The verbs or verb phrases that can be replaced by the verb "do" is known as verb substitution. The substitution, especially in object clause, can be replaced by "so / not" in some sentences, is clause substitution, "so" represents affirmation, and "not" represents negation.

2.3 Ellipsis

Ellipsis refers to the omission of a certain element in a language structure. The function of ellipsis and substitution is to avoid repetition, and they can be used instead of each other. Some linguists also use ellipsis as a "zero substitution". Ellipsis in English and Chinese includes nominal ellipsis, verb ellipsis and clause ellipsis. In Chinese, ellipsis is used only to express the meaning, while in English, the content of ellipsis is usually the words that appear before. The purpose of verb ellipsis is to avoid repetition and highlight information, which can connect context closely. The verb ellipsis in Chinese is similar to that in English, but there is fewer verb ellipsis in Chinese compared with English, and Chinese tends to repeat in verbs. Moreover, Chinese language regards parataxis as the main thing, most of which omit the subject, while English can't omit the subject. Besides, the mission of clauses takes the function of ellipsis to the extreme, and its expression is concise. Different text cohesive devices can be used for different languages, and all of them are used to ensure the integrity of the text. There are differences and consistency among different languages, and they are no exception in English and Chinese [4].

2.4 Connection

Connection mainly refers to the logical relationship between sentences in the text. The

application of connectives can fully reflect the logical relationship between various components in the text, and also help people to understand the semantic relationship between sentences. There are some differences between English and Chinese language systems. When we want to show the logical relationship in sentences, we usually borrow conjunctions. In Chinese, the meanings between the clauses are mostly reflected in the lines of the words. Therefore, translators need to take into account the characteristics of different languages, show various semantic relationships, and connect sentences, paragraphs and paragraphs in an orderly way. Connection can be divided into supplement, transition, cause and effect, and time.

(1) Supplementary connection

After the speaker finishes a sentence, he / she adds some new content. The supplementary connection applied in English can reflect the turning, negation and supplementary relationship between sentences. The leading words often used include "nor, neither, or, and", among which "and" is more common in English. For example: the pay gap places the American Black family squarely at the bottom and without finances they have little hope of surviving all the legal battles that place them at a disadvantage. The sentence can be translated as: The income gap has left African American families directly at the bottom of society, and lacks financial support, making it a disadvantageous and unfavorable position in all litigation. It further shows the potential sense of hierarchy in the sentence and conveys the emotion the author wants to express.

(2) Turning connection

The turning relationship and expectation are different, that is, the meaning of the former sentence is different from that of the latter, and the commonly used turning words in the application are "but, however, thought", which are not different in Chinese, and the words "but" can also be used.

(3) Causal connection

The application of causal connection in discourse is mainly to show the relationship between specific causes and results [5], and the common words are "because, since".

(4) Time connection

There will be sequence between any events. The words used to express time relationship in English are "when, then". When translating, the translator needs to consider the meaning of the word itself, and also needs to analyze the specific context of the text to ensure the proper expression, so that the translation can be smooth.

3. Summary

This paper analyzes the key points and difficulties in Chinese-English translation, and combines the sentences and nouns commonly used in English and Chinese to conduct practical research, and also studies the role of various textual cohesive devices and translation strategies in English and Chinese, so that language learners can use the cohesive devices correctly to understand the differences and consistency between English and Chinese, and express the language more accurately, and create a more   accurate translation.

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