A Translation Practice of *The Economist*

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Abstract

With the globalization of the world, it is becoming increasingly essential to keep up with the latest information on different areas such as economy, politics, culture, science and technology, and reading *The Economist* magazine is a prime and important way. In addition, because point of view of the essays on *The Economist* is very unique and its language expression is rich, the magazine is often chosen to be a source of a variety of domestic large-scale English exams, such as TEM 4 (Test for English Majors-Band 4), TEM 8, Post-graduate Entrance Exam and College English Test and so on.

In this translating practice, the translator is supposed to translate 8 pieces of essays about China from *The Economist* issued from January to April, 2017 fluently and accurately so that the translator and its readers can have a better understanding about China and at the same time improve their English. And the essays of this translation practice are downloaded from *The Economist* official website and are all about China. In this translation report, the translator firstly introduces the background of the translation. Then, the translator analyses the original texts. Finally, the author summarizes the difficulties that she has encountered in the translation practice and the strategies and lessons she has learned. The report shows that the translator needs to have a comprehensive understanding of the background information involved in the original texts, pay attention to the various processes of translation, and combine theoretical knowledge with practice. As *The Economist* covers a number of areas and the translation is related to the conversion of two languages, so to make the translation perfect requires a lot of accumulation in a long time. In the future, the translator will learn and practice more to better her translation.

Keywords: *The Economist*; news translation; translation practice; translation difficulties and solutions

1. Introduction

1.1 Project background

The Economist is an English-language weekly magazine published by the London Economist Newspaper Co., Ltd., founded in 1843 by James Wilson. Most of the essays in the magazine are witty, serious and humorous, and focus on how to tell the reader the most information using the least words. Many students are recommended to read *The Economist* to learn the most authentic English. The Economist contains several columns，such as Leaders, Business and Finance, United States, China, Europe, Science and Technology. It is about the latest news of the politics, economy, and technology of different countries all over the world. And these essays translated in this practice are all about China.

1.2 Project objective

In this translating practice, the translator is supposed to translate 8 pieces of essays about China from *The Economist* issued from January to April, 2017 fluently and accurately so that the translator and its readers can have a better understanding about China and at the same time improve their English. Besides, the translator herself desires to improve her translation and put the translation methods she has learned into practice.

1.3 Project significance

First, *The Economist* itself is worth reading because of its unique ideas and authentic language and it is necessary for us Chinese people to know China's position in the world and other people's comments on us because the essays may be written by writers from other countries. Second, *The Economist* has been the source of a variety of domestic large-scale English exams, such as TEM (Test for English Major) 4, TEM 8, Post-graduate Entrance Exam and College English Test and so on. Third, the translator herself wants to improve her translation and master more translation methods through translating.

1.4 Report structure

This translating report includes 4 parts. In the first part, the author gives an introduction to the project background, project objective, project significance, and report structure. In the second part, the author gives the analysis of the author and the original texts. In the third part, translation difficulties and solutions are given. The last part concludes translation experience and problems to be solved.

2. The analysis of the writer and the original texts

2.1 The writer

Essays of *the Economist* are issued anonymously in order to let people focus on what it expresses rather than who is expressing his opinion.

2.2 Main contents

The 8 pieces of essays translated in this practice are all about China. Each of them is respectively about: the second-child policy in China; President Xi taking part in the World Economic Forum; the Spring Festival that is going global; China's bullet-train network; rural boarding schools in China; the change of position of China and America in the world; the first meeting of Mr. Xi and Mr. Trump; and America and China's strategic relationship.

2.3 Text analysis

The Economist covers many subfields, including the latest scientific discoveries, world politics, economy, etc. And these essays have the following characteristics: timely, accurate, serious and humorous, and laced with terminologies. According to Katharina Reiss（1984）, there are 4 types of text: informative text, expressive text, operative text and audio-media text. The essays on *The Economist* fall into the first type— informative text, so it is of great importance to deliver the ideas of the source texts. Moreover, these essays often involve some background information in many areas, such as culture, economy and politics.

3．Translation difficulties and solutions

3.1 Translation difficulties

  In the process of translating, the translator has been faced with two kinds of difficulties. First one is that she lacks background information in many areas which is required to understand the original texts fully, such as culture, economy and politics. The second one is that she sometimes cannot understand some long and complex sentences and so did not know how to translate them into Chinese.

3.2 Preparation

After she downloaded the texts from the website of *The Economist,* the translator went to the library for books on translation practice and methods and borrowed an English-Chinese dictionary and an English grammar book.

3.3 Solutions

For the background information in many areas which is required to understand the original texts fully, such as culture, economy and politics, the translator searched on the Internet. That is how the translator deal with "the agglomeration effect", "satellite towns", "China model", "Thucydides trap" and other terminologies.

For these long or complex sentences, the translator learned an English grammar book thoroughly and looked up the word she did not know in the dictionary.

3.4 Translation methods and specific examples

When translating, the translator has put the translation methods she has learned from books into practice, mainly including conversion, combination and addition.

3.4.1 Conversion

①**China will need more than a change in the one-child policy or a spike in the birth rate to reverse that.**

In this sentence, both "change" and "spike" are nouns, but when translating, the translator found it better to converse them into verb：“为了使这种情况好转，中国需要做的不仅仅是改变独生子女政策或是刺激提高出生率。”

②**The term has gone viral. Baidu, China's most popular search engine, counts 22m usages of its Chinese rendering: Zhongguo fang'an.**

In this sentence , the translator converses the noun "usages" into a verb in the Chinese text: ”这个词条已经像病毒一般普及开来。据中国最大的搜索引擎百度统计，这个词条的中国式表达——“中国方案”，已经使用了 2200 万次。”

3.4.2 Combination

①**Neither mentioned the cruise-missile strike America had just launched against a Syrian air base. Nor was there any talk of imminently imposing tariffs.**

When translating, the translator just combined these two sentences and translated them into one Chinese sentence: “两人都没有提到美国刚刚在叙利亚空军基地发射的巡航导弹，也没有谈论即将征收的关税。”

②**It might also have made a difference that 2016 was the year of the monkey in the Chinese zodiacal calendar. This is considered a propitious year.**

Combine the two sentences and translate them as the following: “2016 年是中国黄道的猴年，也可能起到了一定作用，因为人们认为 2016 这一年是一个吉祥年。”

3.4.3 Addition

①**"With each new line, the losses will get bigger," he says.**

In this sentence, a verb "built" is added before "new line" and the sentence is translated as: “他说，‘每新建一条高条线，损失就更大。’”

②**But the task will require wisdom and a subtle balance of firmness and finesse on both sides.**

When translating this sentence, it is better to add a verb "to finish" before "the task" and translate it as following:“但是要完成这项任务，需要智慧，需要双方去平衡他们的决心和策略。”

4. Conclusion

4.1 Translation experience

This translation practice has helped the translator and will help its readers to understand China better and reading the original texts and target texts can prepare the students for some English exams.

After translating these essays, the translator has learned a lot. First, a translator should find the background information of the original texts and turn to teachers or friends for a better understanding of the original texts and a better translation. Second, one should put the translation methods he or she has learned into the translating practice.

4.2 Problems to be solved

Due to the author's limited translation level, there are still some problems to be solved. For example, the translator has tried hard but still has difficulties in translating the titles of these texts because these titles are often short and have special meanings behind the words. But at the moment, the author can just translate it word for word so here is still a long way to go to translate the text better. In the future, the translator will learn translation methods better and practice more.

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