

A Multi-Angle Research on Western Translation Criteria

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Abstract

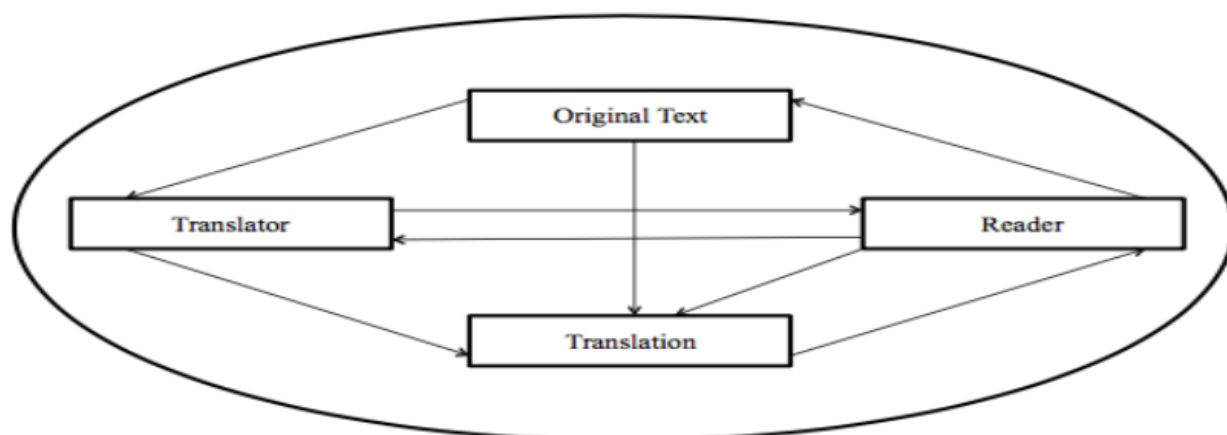
Translation criterion is the key issue of translation theory and the basis of translation practice and translation criticism. From Tytler's three principles of translation to the philosophical method of translation criteria in the west, translation theorists never stop arguing about this problem. A great many different ideas are put forward, but the issue of what is the criterion of translation is not yet settled. The research on the western translation criteria can be expanded from the aspects of its emphasis, origin and theoretical features. Seen through the development of criterion of translation, a process of from being sporadic, empirical, vague and unilateral to systematic, rational, precise and multilateral can be observed. In this article, the research starts with the different focus of translation, then makes an inductive research on translation criteria.

Key words: criterion of western translation; multi-angle research; changes

1. Criterion of Western Translation

Translation is an essential cultural exchange activity for human beings. As the development and deepening of translation practice, translators have gradually promoted the practical experience to the level of theory. The theoretical research is necessary to study the influential factors on translation such as time, society and culture, but also to discuss and compare the important issues in detail such as translation principles and translation strategies proposed by the translation masters. The theoretical research should carry out the work of linking theory with practice. Only in this way can translation studies be prosperous. On the issue of translation criteria, the people from different historical periods, different social backgrounds and different levels are bound to have different ideas on it. Regardless of whether or not people's views are consistent, criterion of translation is always a yardstick of translation activities, a measure of the quality of translations, and a goal that translators should strive to achieve.

The translation criteria are produced in the process of real practice. Its development and change are inseparable from the translation practice and the continuous understanding of the outside world by the translators. In translation practice, the subject is the translator of the translated text, while the object is the original text. However, since the point of the translation work is carried out on the original text, the object itself has some certain subjective characteristics. Different subjects have different interpretations of the same object. At the same time, the evaluation of the translation is closely related to the readers, thus different readers have different perceptions of the same translation. Therefore, formed the figure as follows:



(causality and relation between the original and the translator, the original and the translation, the translator and the translation, the translation and the reader, the reader and the translator)

Western translation has a long history. However, before the establishment of true translation standards in West, it has not been systematically discussed. Some ideas are scattered in the summation of practical experiences of translators. Different western translation schools have different translation criteria. As whole, Western translation criteria can be classified into four categories according to the different emphasis and understanding of translation: text-centered, reader-centered, translator-centered and culture-centered perspectives.

2. Text-centered Translation Criteria

Text-centered translation criteria focus on the relationship between the source text and the target text, that is, the translation should not only be faithful to the content of the source text, but also conform to the language norms of the target language. The western theories are represented by Tytler's "three principles of Translation" and the "adequate translation" put forward by Catford and Baludaro. There are several important points in the adequate translation: a. Adequate translation means the relationship between the target text and the original text; b. The equivalence also represents the same value between the target text and the original text; c. The same value is that the translation has the same effect as the original text. It can be seen from the adequate translation that the text-centered translation criteria reflect the dialectical relationship between form and content in language transformation.

Taking Tytler's "three general laws of Translation" as an example, he defines it as "a. the translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work; b. the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original; c. the translation should have all the ease of the original composition." (Tytler 1790:15) Tytler himself recognizes that the first two laws represent the two widely different opinions about translation. They can be seen as the poles of faithfulness of content and faithfulness of form, or even reformulations of the sense-for-sense and word-for-word. Thus, this faithfulness is equal with the text-centered translation.

3. Reader-centered Translation Criteria

The reader-centered translation criterion takes the reader's understanding and acceptance of the target text as the main evaluation parameter, and the equivalent principle is the typical representative. That is, what the translator pays attention to is not the one to one correspondence between the source language and the target language, but the dynamic correspondence between two languages. In other words, the relationship between the target language receiver and the target text should be basically the same as that between the source language recipient and the original text. Therefore, this criterion for judging the quality of the translation is no longer the correspondence between form and content, but whether the reader's response to the translation is equivalent. Nida is the representative of this theory.

Nida puts forward that "Equivalent Translation" in his article *To-ward a Science of Translating*, which means that "the relationship between the receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptor and the message"(Nida 1964a: 159). This equivalence is determined by the nature of translation.

Nida defines the translation as "the closest natural equivalence to the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style" (Nida and Taber 1969:178). Equivalence here means the criterion, an equivalence between the meaning and style. That is "faithfulness". At the same time, there is "natural" ahead of equivalence, which refers to fluency, custom acceptance. That is "expressiveness". Thus, Nida believes that equivalence is the goal of translation. He proposes two levels of equivalence: the highest level and the lowest level. Although the highest level of equivalence

is difficult to achieve in translation practice, the lowest level is the minimum standard required for translation. The minimal level of equivalence would be one in which receptors of translated text would be able to understand and appreciate it to the point of being able to comprehend how the original receptor must have understood and appreciate the message.

4. Translator-centered Translation Criteria

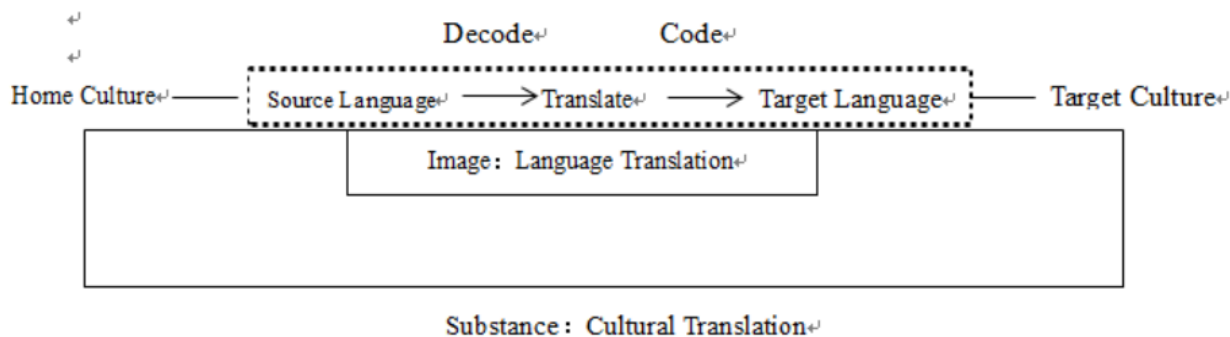
The translator-centered translation criterion is represented by Nord's "function plus loyalty" principle. Different from the text-centered and reader-centered translation criteria, it highlights the subjective initiative of the translator and gives the translator greater freedom, so that the translator can determine which elements of the original text can be retained and which need to be adjusted or rewritten according to the purpose of translation, expected function of the translation and the target of the reader.

The loyalty principle is meant to "account for the culture-specificity of translation concepts, setting an ethical limitation to the otherwise unlimited range of possible *skopoi* for the translation of one particular source text" (Nord 2007: 2-3). Loyalty is used to refer to the responsibility of translators, as mediators between two cultures, towards their partners namely, the source-text author, the client or commissioner of the translation, and the target-text receivers.

5. Culture- centered Translation Criteria

Translation is the interaction between symbols, but translation is not only intermediary or transformation. From the point of view of sociolinguistics, language can not exist without social culture, because people who use language are often in different social and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, translation must integrate the sociocultural factors of the source language and the sociocultural factors of the target language. In the surface, translation is the communication between languages, while the essence is the blending of cultures. Therefore, the translation criterion centered on cultural perspective has been formed.

As mentioned above, the process of translation combines decoding and coding, acting as a dual identity of two languages, two cultures, two communications. As a result, when cultural factors are involved, the diagram changes to:



In view of the objective existence of cultural differences, translators have to attach great importance to how to find a balance in order to achieve the desired purpose of emotional

communication. From a cultural point of view, translation criteria mainly include the following three aspects: a. Not contrary to the objectivity of knowledge; b. The rationality of understanding and the universal validity of interpretation. c. Accordance with the orientation of the original text. In short, the work of translators is to translate culture rather than translated texts, helping foreign cultural strangers to accept the new texts.

6. Conclusion

Translation is a complex communicative activity that reproduces the source language information, which objectively requires a multi-level criterion. At the same time, because of the differences between the languages, it is impossible to meet the requirements of translation standards at all levels. Therefore, when it comes to translation criteria, we must recognize its nature of multiple dimension and relativity, then interpret it from different perspectives.

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