ANALYSIS ON THE SUBJECTIVITY OF TRANSLATORS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

The subjectivity of translators has a great impact on the mapping from the source text to the target text. Their activities and behaviors are ultimately controlled by brain activities. This paper explores deep into the subjectivity of translators from the perspective of cognitive psychology. First, the relevant theories on cultural status and subjectivity of translators were reviewed in details. Then, ⁸⁴, Charing Cross Road was taken as an example to discuss the subjectivity of translators based on cognitive psychology. During the analysis, the translation process was examined in four steps: trust, intrusion, absorption and compensation. The results show that the subjectivity of translators exist objectively, running through the translation process; the mapping from the source text to the target text is a qualitative transformation, which maximizes the subjective initiative of translators. The research results shed light on the importance of subjectivity of translators and provide the direction for improving translation theories.

Key words: Translation, Culture, Cognitive Psychology, Subjectivity.

INTRODUCTION

Translators are key players in translation and important force of national culture. However, at present, the vagueness of dominant position of translators¹ in China’s multicultural system has led to the marginalization of their cultural status. Translation is a kind of text coding formed in different cultural background and social environment. It is a creative cognitive process. Translation is an act by which the translator, as a free person, treats the objects and activities of translation. In the process of translation, translators should not only transform the original works, but also use translation skills by understanding, experiencing and grasping the context and style of the original works. In the cultural context of the original works, this information is successfully copied into the communication tools of target language. Translators play a decisive role in the whole translation process from the selection of translation objects, the understanding and interpretation of works, the selection of translation strategies and the artistic representation of language and culture (Repovš & Baddeley, 2006; Liu, 2011; Zhu, 2010; Yu & Han, 2009).

Cognitive psychology originated in the mid-1950s in the west was widely studied and analyzed in the 1990s. Cognition can be interpreted as a process of sensory inputs transforming, interpreting, recovering and using. Cognitive psychology mainly studies people’s higher psychological processes, such as attention, perception, imagery, memory, thinking and language. Unlike behaviorist psychologists, cognitive psychologists focus on internal mechanisms that cannot be observed. Language is a cognitive activity. Starting from cognition, the study of forms, meanings, laws and characteristics of language is based on

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people's conceptualization of world experience and perception. Cognition comes from practice, language is the result of experience and cognition, so is translation. Translation process, based on the experience and cognition of the original text, is to understand the meaning of the original text and mapping of the target language. Besides, translation process is not only recreation of translator's understanding of various meanings of the original text, but also a rather complex cross-language and cross-cultural creative activity (Wolfe, Horowitz, & Kenner, 2005; Howard, Culley, & Dekoninck, 2008; Hong, Chen, Wang et al., 2015; King & Delfabbro, 2014).

**CULTURAL STATUS AND CAUSES OF TRANSLATOR'S SUBJECTIVITY**

**Cultural status of translators**

Around the 1960s, in the west class contradictions emerged a large number of new ideological trends, the introduction of cultural factors and the value orientation towards the target language culture aroused people's attention from the cultural level towards translators who are the subject of translation. Therefore, translators' subjectivity and cultural status become important research topics.

Taking culture as a system, different cultural subjects have different cultural status and play different roles in the multicultural system. If translation is understood as a cross-cultural communication behavior, translators are members of the cultural system and have the nature and status of the cultural subject. Although translators have subjectivity, it does not mean that translators are not subject to any restrictions. On the contrary, translators' subjectivity is restricted by various factors. Translators are restricted by edge subjects or external environment and their own horizon. In order to meet the cultural needs of the target language, the basic characteristics of subjective initiative in translation activities include translators' self-conscious cultural awareness, humanistic character and cultural and aesthetic creativity. However, translators' subjectivity also includes passivity. In the creative activity of translation, translators are restricted by breaking away from the original text. The translated text may be inaccurate and even misunderstanding to readers.

At present, the research and analysis of the topic mainly focus on translators' subjective consciousness in the process of translation; translation is born in this psychological process. While other factors cannot directly affect translation, they must act indirectly through translators in different links. However, ironically, people seem to turn a blind eye to the important role that translators play in cross-cultural communication, and translators are not highly respected by the society. After a brief review of the living state of translators, it is not difficult to find that marginalization is the best description of translators' status. The traditional view is that translation is just a copy of the original works, and the original text naturally outperforms the translation, so it is natural for the translator to earn less than the author. Behrman, a French translator, pointed out that translation has long been in a state of repression and resistance.

**The causes of limited cultural status of translators**

*Individual factors*

Translator, as a bridge between the original works and readers, is of great significance. On the basis of respecting the target of translation, translators should exert their subjectivity and translate the original text in a way acceptable to the public. To give full play to translators' subjectivity largely depends on their personal translation style and language ability. For example, in the book *The Translator’s Invisibility*, Venuti introduces in detail the transparent and smooth translation strategies in the west and the consequences of such translation strategies on translators, namely the invisibility of translators. Fluent translation requires that it should be as smooth as the original text, without any translation traces. This translation strategy eliminates translators' individuality and limits their creativity and subjectivity. Another cause is that traditional translation theories hold that due to the lack of creativity, translators only copy and imitate the original text, so the translated text is doomed to be inferior to the original works. This kind of restriction and requirement make translators fall into a dilemma, which is the sadness of the translator (See figure 1) (Pym, 2011; Hou, 2009).

*Social factors*

As an individual, a translator is bound to be influenced by the times and reflected in the translation. Therefore, the times is also an important factor affecting a translator's
subjectivity, which has a strong historical and cultural status to some extent, and his/her

Figure 1. The Translator’s Invisibility

Figure 2. Pride and Prejudice

has been accompanied by an improvement in financial terms, with experienced translators receiving an advance against royalties, usually a percentage of the list price or the net proceeds, as well as a portion of subsidiary rights sales. The 1990 PEN survey indicated that translators' royalties were “in the area of 2 to 5 percent for hardcover and 1.5 to 2.5 percent for paperback” (Handbook 1991:5). But these are clearly small increments. While they signal a growing awareness of the translator's authorship, they do not constitute a significant change in the economics of translation, and it remains difficult for a freelance translator to make a living solely from translating. A typical first printing for a literary translation published by a trade press is approximately 5000 copies (less for a university press), so that even with the trend toward contracts offering royalties, the translator is unlikely to see any income beyond the advances. Very few translations become bestsellers; very few are likely to be reprinted, whether in hardcover or paperback.

And, perhaps most importantly, very few translations are published in English.

As Figures 1 and 2 indicate, British and American book production increased fourfold since the 1950s, and the number of translations...
COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN THE TRANSLATION PROCESS OF TRANSLATORS

Historical status of translation process

Bartcheduv, a translation theoretician of the former Soviet Union said: “Translation is a mental process, is a form of brain cortical activity”. Translation consists of two stages: understanding of the source language and output in the target language. The initial language understanding refers to the mental process that translators construct with the help of visual source language materials. Translator’s subjectivity is reflected in the translation process. Translation is not only a process of language conversion and cultural communication, but also aims to bring the translator’s inner emotion, will, imagination and aesthetic ability into full play to make the work more lively. In this process, the translator’s subjectivity is very intuitive. The emotional tone and literary atmosphere of translation are determined by the translator.

Translation has always been a branch of linguistics, Therefore, it is not surprising that many scholars including Diller, Kornelius, Nida, Kade and Honig view translation from the perspective of language transformation. The models proposed by Kussmaul are all based on language theory. For example, NIDA divides the translation process into four stages: analyze, transform, reorganize, and review. However, in these four stages, the first three stages are all around the language of source text and the language of the target text, and the last stage is when readers reading the target text as a third party. In the whole process, translator is always in the dominant position of translation. Thus it can be seen that the real translation process is necessarily dynamic, complex and changeable, and constantly innovates and develops in the process of constant change.

Modern cognitive psychology is based on information theory. The translation consists of a series of complex processes, from receiving information to analyzing, transforming language symbols, organizing, adjusting and finally outputting information in target language. In information theory, the studies on translation process model are beneficial to the development of machine translation. However, the implementation of machine translation also has some limitations, since the translator’s creative thinking and flexibility have more subjective consciousness and thinking consciousness than

artificial intelligence.

Cognitive psychological process research

In the process of translation, it involves not only the conversion of language units such as words and sentences, but also the conversion of cognitive psychological units between cognitive models. The translator’s cognitive activities in translation are based on their actual experience, trying to understand various meanings of the original text, translate it into the target language, and depict the real world and cognitive world of the author. Previous studies have regarded the mental process of translators as a linear process in the translation process, and authors, works, translators and readers are all important elements in the translation process, which can even be divided into many overlapping processes. In the process of translation, translators carry out bilingual transformation, generally speaking, it is a process of repeated understanding and expression.

Bilingual transformation is a complex cognitive psychological process. Both the understanding of original language and the output in target language are limited by mental representation, which can be said to be cognitive representation. Cognitive psychological context is the extraction of information and the obstacles in the process of long-term memory, expecting that translators react differently to different linguistic information. This difference is mainly reflected in the retrieval, extraction and matching of common information from the individual translators analyze cognitive context. The common translator or reader both has this experience. After reading an article, working memory will affect some information more deeply than other information, because he has retrieved a perfectly matched schema in the cognitive psychological context, called a perfect mapping. At this time, translators will consciously use their own psychological context to reason and look for the filling of the dislocation, which is sometimes the source of mistranslation. Generally speaking, most translators seek their own balance and stability between realism and idealism.

Cognitive value and cognitive strategy in translation

In reality, each person is both the cognitive subject and object, with the dual nature of
subject and object. The interaction among cognitive subjects is harmonious and consistent, emphasizing mutual understanding and communication in order to realize identification and reach consensus. Due to the difference of external environment and cognitive ability among cognitive subjects, the mental representation or cognitive image established by them has certain differences. Therefore, the cognitive context of each cognitive subject is different. In fact, there is a qualitative difference between the cognitive context of the translator and the author. A complete tacit understanding between the translator and the author is impossible. However, the translator and the author take the source text as a dialogue opportunity and use the parts of cognitive context that reflect each other. When the facts or assumptions reflected in their cognitive context are the same, it will produce the cognitive context overlaps. At this time, the cognitive horizon between the translator and the author will merge, and the cognitive interaction between the two subjects can reach a consensus. The best way is the fusion of the cognitive horizon of the author and the translator as a reader, and the fusion of the cognitive horizon of the translator as the author and the target language reader.

In translation, the cognitive image of translator can be seen as a small knowledge model in the mind, namely the mental model, which is determined by the visual experience, imagination and decoding of the source text. The translator's mental model is his/her mental representation or cognitive image of the reality or source language. As the cognitive subject, it is the manifestation of his/her knowledge structure, or the basic organization of knowledge in the mental. This abstract knowledge structure is composed of large and small types of knowledge or abstract thinking mode. It is also the translator's knowledge, experience and beliefs that are stored in the short-term and long-term memory and are abstracted and integrated. Generally speaking, translators decode the source language text one by one on the basis of the cognitive image reflected by the semantic representation of the source language text, until all the source language text is encoded into the target language text. However, when the translator is unable to construct the cognitive image subjectively due to some obscure words in the source language, he/she will consciously or unconsciously give up the cognition of the source language temporarily. This means that without cognitive analysis of the preceding sentence or information, the translator makes a leap to recognize and translate the following discourse content, and then go back and translate what's left behind, which is the leap and backtracking of the translator's cognitive strategy. Since the external world and the relevant factors of the discourse world can only participate in the communication process and have an impact on the communication activities when they are absorbed into the psychological world of the communicative participants, the cognitive image constructed by the translator can only be a subjective reflection selected, which is exactly the subjective initiative of the translator's cognitive strategy.

**A STUDY ON TRANSLATOR'S SUBJECTIVITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF COGNITIVE SCIENCE**

**Related concepts and content**

Cognitive psychology, originated in the western society in the mid-1950s, has provided new impetus for translation studies. Later, Donald and Rod Bent, among others, made efforts to improve them and developed a theory centered on the internal psychological processes of input and output. Translators are the bridge of national culture and play an important role in cultural communication. To reproduce the translated object without ignoring the translator’s identity requires us to correctly understand the main features of the translator in the translation process. Since cognitive psychology mainly studies people's appearance, thinking, memory and other cognitive processes, such changes can not be directly observed. Translators can only infer the internal changes by studying the input and output. Therefore, the study on the subjectivity of translators from cognitive psychology provides a new perspective for translation studies. In fact, the study on the translation subject is also the study on the translator's subjectivity. The subject actively transforms, influences, controls and makes the object the characteristic of the subject, that is, the subjectivity. To interpret the translator’s subjectivity from the perspective of cognitive psychology, that is, in the process of translation storage, extraction, coding and output, translators will use different translation
strategies and methods in the process of source language and target language to solve problems in actual translation process. The actual process can be summarized as: cognition is the whole process of mental representation and the process of transforming mental representation into other representations and processing information.

Translation view and translator subjectivity
Translation theory emphasizes the cognitive activities of translators in translation. Translator, as an intermediary between the source text and the target text, is one of the most important factors in translation. According to the view of cognitive linguistics, translation is a cognitive activity based on experience. Since human cognition has certain subjectivity, it is necessary to realize that the experience structure of different students is always different. The differences in style fundamentally lead to the differences in understanding and expression. The basis of translation lies in the overlap of different cognitive experiences, which determines the translator's choice of translation materials.

With the continuous update and development of the times, the focus of translation begins to shift from the author to readers. The purpose of translation is the most important factor in translation activities. Translation is not only the conversion of language, but aims to meet the needs of readers. Without readers, translation activities are meaningless. From the perspective of economics, a translated work is a commodity that has value only after consumers buy it. Without readers, translation has no value, which is the main motivation of translators. In the era of big data, it is of great significance for translators to identify potential customers, understand the needs of modern readers and realize the two-way communication between translators and readers. Translators can collect information via big data technology, including readers' favorite, interest, pursuit, age structure, etc., to determine and better meet their needs. At present, more and more people choose to use translation software in translation. In order to survive, many translators have set up translation resources to dilute their own translation style and turn to cooperate with some enterprises to collect various translations. Translation resource database is text without language style. Although it is impossible to translate long literary works by using translation software, some sentences and paragraphs can still be relatively accurately translated.

From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, translation experience and creativity are contradictory. On the one hand, there are differences between the experience and cognitive mechanisms of translation in different languages; on the other hand, creative translation is also contradictory with translation practice. In addition, the perspective of cognitive linguistics on translation also points out that translators, as a cognitive subject, should participate in other activities. The interaction between cognitive subjects of translation should be moderate. In the process of translation teaching, it is not the truth that there must be subjectivity in the cognitive style of different students, because there are certain differences in translation standards and strategies of translators.

THE CONCRETE EMBODIMENT OF TRANSLATOR'S SUBJECTIVITY - TAKING 84, CHARING CROSS ROAD FOR EXAMPLE

Four steps of translation
According to the hermeneutics, the translator is not only the reader of the original, but also the interpreter of the culture of the source language. George Steiner, a translator of the UK, applied hermeneutics in translation studies, whose works are After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation. In this book, Steiner believes that "understanding is translation", language has timeliness and changes constantly, and the generation and understanding of language are actually translation.

Based on the hermeneutic theory, Steiner divides the translation process into four steps: trust, intrusion, absorption, and compensation. Trust means that the translator should have a thorough understanding of the value of the original text, and choose the translated text through his own aesthetic judgment, believing that the original text is meaningful. The second step is intrusion, in interlingual translation, the translator knows, understands and interprets the original, which is an inevitable human invasion activity. In the process of understanding, translators exert their subjective initiative, break the shell of the original text, let the essence of the original text show, and carry
out interpretation and translation that is close to "violence". The third step is absorption, which is not only a process of integration of external factors and native culture, but also a stage of conflicts between the translator and original works.

84, Charing Cross Road

According to Steiner's translation processes, trust is the first step, which refers to the trust of translator. The book 84, Charing Cross Road. 84, CharingCross Road is known as "the bible of scholars", which is the spiritual belief and pillar of many people, the translator Chen Jianming is one of them. He wrote in the preface, "repeatedly re-read, let Hanff's witty remarks and the warm-hearted from time to time to warm their own heart which is covered by cold hard reality". He feels that there are many similarities between his life and Hanff's, e.g. they both complain and dislike the city they live in without temperament, and lament the helplessness of finding good books. Mao Dun, a literary translator, thinks that to translate a work, one must first understand the author's ideas; that's not enough, one must really appreciate the beauty of the original art. It is necessary to enter into the original text, influenced by the ups and downs of the characters emotional line fluctuations. Only in this way, can it be regarded as a thorough understanding of the original.

Figure 3. 84, Charing Cross Road

The specific meaning of invasion is that the translator should read and feel the original work with the same heart as readers, so as to achieve the effect of empathy with the author. 84, Charing Cross Road Based, in a certain social and cultural background, mainly presents contents in the form of epistolary symbols. In the process of translation, the translator's task is to give full play to their subjective initiative, but he inevitably relies on one's own life experience, knowledge, personality, aesthetic ideal, etc. The third step is absorption, which is to impart the form and meaning of the original text in the target language. However, facing cultures in different languages, the translator needs to consider different translation strategies according to the contents, either directly or implicitly appropriate.

Figure 3. Part of the plot at 84, Charing Cross Road

Finally, due to the difference in languages and cultures, the selection of translation strategies and the use of translation skills, the lack of some information in the original works is inevitable. In order to maintain the original balance, compensation is essential. In order to make up cultural information, Chen Jianming consciously uses the method of annotation. 85 annotations are a feature of 84, Charing Cross Road. In the process of literary translation, translators should not only give full play to their subjective initiative, but also recognize the limits of subjectivity. In the translation of the preface of this translation, the translator tries his best to make minor adjustments in keeping the idea of the original. However, in the process of translation, there are still some shortcomings due to the excessive use of subjective consciousness.

CONCLUSIONS

Translators should conform to the translation norms and should not only pay attention to the
characteristics of the source and target languages, but also give full play to their subjectivity, so as to produce high-quality translation. As a cognitive subject, the translator combines the cognitive interaction of the author with the cognitive horizon of target language readers on the basis of practical experience. Constantly seeking to activate the concept of source language text network cognitive image can be accordingly projected into the cognitive process of the target language text. In the process of translation, when the cognitive function of the translator's subjectivity is activated, it means that the translator will implement the cognitive strategy.

Translators use their own thinking to integrate the information of the external world, form their own understanding, and establish their own cognitive world and view. As a bridge between the source language culture and target language culture, between the author and the reader of the original text, they are the most active and indispensable factor in the translation process. The conscious cognitive ability reflected in the translation process transforms the author's original text into the translator's original text, which is the expression process of the translator translating the original text into reading. This transformation is a qualitative leap and a process of maximizing the translator's subjective initiative. The translator's subjectivity exists objectively and runs through the translation process. Therefore, it is necessary for us to attach importance to and improve the subjectivity of translators and further improve translation theory.

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