The Relationship between Source and Target Language's Register in Interpreting

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Abstract—In recent years, interpreting has becoming increasingly important due to the expanded cooperation and globalization between different countries. Interpretation applies register and varies with it. Thus, the author intends to explore the relationship between source and target language's register in interpreting and compares different interpretations into the target language according to the changes of register. The author reclassifies three categories of interpreting cases and analyzes them case by case, which show different relationships between source and target language's register. Thus, the relationship between register in the source and target language should be analyzed from the overall style of the interpretation case and the three parameters: field, tenor and mode.

Index Terms—Interpreting, register, field, tenor, mode.

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of globalization has greatly contributed to worldwide communication and cooperation. To deepen the political, economic and cultural integration among different countries, the importance of interpretation as a link of various exchanges has become increasingly prominent. Interpretation is carried out verbally and greatly influenced by many factors in its practice, such as different types, different themes, or the speakers from different backgrounds talking in different tones and styles as well as their choice of words and organization of language structure. In view of this phenomenon, many scholars are mainly engaged in the study from the perspective of interpretation theory, and there are few studies from the perspective of register theory. Interpretation, as a special activity, subtly and accurately applies register and whether the source and target language match in the register is also worthy of exploration. Based on this, the author intends to discuss the relationship between source and target language's register in interpreting cases using M.A.K. Halliday's register theory considering three parameters: field, mode and tenor. Due to the abundance of interpretation cases, Martin Joos' register classification is also applied in this paper, which can contribute to the choice based on different levels of formality.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Qin (2013) points out that the study of context has been going on for a long time. Scholars have studied this topic from different perspectives [1]. Malinowski (1923) first proposes the notion of "context of situation" in his

contribution to Ogden and Richard's book *The Meaning of Meaning* [2]. J.R. Firth moves further into the exploration of meaning as he gives a detailed illustration of context and puts up the theory and method in studying utterance in the linguistic environment. It is believed that Malinowski and Firth have made great contributions to the discovery and development of context theory (Zhu, 2016:244) [3]. But it remains to be studied since the definition is not complete. Later, further studies on the context have been done by many famous scholars. Among all the context theories, register theory proposed by M.A.K. Halliday is the most effective one in language analysis (Qin, 2013:78) [1].

A. M. A. K. Halliday's Register Theory

In sociolinguistics, the term register refers to specific lexical and grammatical choices as made by speakers depending on the situational context, the participants of a conversation and the function of the language in the discourse (Halliday 1989, p. 44) [4]. Halliday and Hasan (1989) define register as a configuration of meanings that are typically associated with a particular situational configuration of field, mode, and tenor [5]. The linguistic features typically associated with a configuration of situational features with particular values of the field, mode and tenor constitute a register (Halliday & Hasan 1976, p. 22) [6]. These three parameters can be used to specify the context of the situation in which language is used.

Field of discourse is defined as "the total event, in which the text is functioning, together with the purposive activity of the speaker or writer; it thus includes the subject-matter as one element in it" (Halliday & Hasan 1976, p. 22) [6]. The field describes activities and processes that are happening at the time of speech. The analysis of the field focuses on the entire situation, for instance, the principal is giving a speech at the graduation ceremony.

Mode of discourse refers to "the function of the text in the event, including therefore both the channel taken by the language - spoken or written, extempore or prepared - and its genre, or rhetorical mode, as narrative, didactic, persuasive, 'phatic communion' and so on" (Halliday & Hasan 1976, p. 22) [6]. This variable determines the role and function of language in a particular situation. The analysis of mode lies in the purpose achieved by the use of language in this context.

Tenor of discourse describes the people that take part in an event together with their relationships and statuses. Halliday and Hasan (1976, p. 22) think "the tenor refers to the type of role interaction, the set of relevant social relations, permanent and temporary, among the participants involved" [6]. There might be a specific hierarchy between the interlocutors as the occasion when the company's head talks about the details of a contract with his cooperation partner.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) propose that all three variables

taken together enable people to characterize the situational context specifically, and thus, to recreate part of the language that is being used [6]. Lukin *et al.* (2008) maintain that the concept of register is central to Halliday's model of language [7]. Since interpreting is a kind of cross-cultural communication, the understanding and grasp of the field, tenor and mode will undoubtedly play a decisive role in the interpreting decision-making and interpreting activities of the interpreter. The three variables can be applied to the analysis of the relationship between source and target language's register in interpreting as if all of the parameters match, the register is the same but if one parameter differs, the register in the target language differs from the source one as well.

B. Martin Joos' Register Classification

The degree of formality is an important criterion of register and linguists usually describe the range of register change from different aspects. Martin Joos (1962) proposed the most widely accepted theoretical classification of register in *The Five Clocks*, in which he divides language into five styles based on its level of formality, namely frozen style, formal style, consultative style, casual style, and intimate style [4].

As noted by Joos (1962), the frozen style is used for written legal documents or highly solemn speech which consists of memorized sentences that must be repeated verbatim, probably including quotations from proverbs or ritual expressions which are part of a formal ceremony [4]. The formal style is devoted to public addresses such as lectures or speeches where the audience is not known to the speaker personally. This style requires well-planned thematic structures with phonological, lexical and syntactical coherence and allows little or no interaction. The consultative level is used at less formal gatherings such as committee meetings where status is still fairly clearly designated and participants often interact. In contrast, the casual level is used among friends or peers who are familiar with each other. Participants pay very little attention to form and concentrate more on content and relationship. The final level identified by Joos is the intimate language used between people who see each other daily and share the majority of their daily life experiences.

In the following part, the author will discuss the relationship between the register of the source and target language using Halliday's register theory and Martin Joos' register classification.

III. CHOICE OF INTERPRETATION CASES WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF FORMALITY

The interpretation language is not completely related to the five register styles set by Martin Joos. For example, the intimate style rarely appears in the interpretation situation. Sometimes it is hard to classify the five styles as human interactions are complex and his model doesn't account for intra-textual register variation within a discourse event. Therefore, the author summarizes three categories based on Joos' model according to the degree of formality and then further discusses the relationship of register in the source and target language in the classified interpretation cases.

The first category is particularly formal, containing some features of the frozen style in Martin Joos' register classification but not that fixed and standardized. This type of interpreting language has more formal expressions, longer and more complex grammatical structures, and more sloganeering languages or professional terms. Interpretation situation can be the United Nations Security Council speech or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

The second type is similar to the formal style, which is slightly more approachable than the frozen style, but there is also little feedback or communication during the speech, and the speaker may not even be speaking personally. In this style, the speaker's pronunciation must be very clear, the grammar adopted must be complete, and usually, sufficient background information is given. The interpretation situation can be a speech given by the principal at a graduation ceremony or a presentation at a conference.

The third one is more easygoing than the second type, similar to the consultative style. The interpretation situation can be liaison interpreting or escort interpreting. In this style, the speaker and the audience may interact, not necessarily with the same ideas or information, but with a continuous flow of communication and the interpreters need to convey the message timely.

Other styles like casual or intimate style purposed by Joos seldom occurs in interpreting, so this paper only discusses the above three styles. In the following chapters, the author will combine Halliday's theory to analyze the source and target language's register in a more comprehensive way.

IV. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOURCE AND TARGET LANGUAGE'S REGISTER IN INTERPRETING

A. Interpretation Case of the First Style

In the re-classification, the first style's language is always highly solemn, which will usually be memorized by people. In the interpretation of this style, the register in the source and target language may vary.

Take Premier Li Keqiang's meeting with the press as an example. The Fourth Session of the 13th National People's Congress held a press conference at the Great Hall of the People on the afternoon of March 11, 2021. Premier Li Keqiang met with Chinese and foreign reporters and answered their questions. The meeting was broadcasted and reported as well as the interpretation between the press and Premier was carried consecutively. The interpreter sat next to the Premier and did the bilingual interpretation for the Premier and attended journalists. Under this situation, the field of the source language was to raise and answer questions about Chinese policies and hot-spot issues, the mode was spoken to give answers to the questions journalists raised to make things clear, and the tenor was the premier and the journalists who attend the meeting. Due to the nature of consecutive and live interpretation, the register in the target language was the same as that of the source language so the interpreter needed to memorize the professional terms and dealt flexibly with the formal expressions and complex sentence structures to keep in accordance with the source language, seen as follows.

TABLE I: EXAMPLE A OF THE FIRST STYLE

Source Language	Back Interpretation	Target Language
因为就业是民生之本，是发展之基，也是财富创造的源头活水。	"民生之本" means the foundation of people's well-being and "发展之基" means the basis of people's development.	Employment is the foundation of people's well-being and development. It is also a source of wealth.
中方本着实事求是、公开透明、开放合作的原则和态度，同世卫组织保持沟通，也支持世卫组织专家在华开展溯源研究工作。	Following the principle of seeking truth from facts, openness, transparency and cooperation, China maintains communication with the WHO and supports WHO experts in carrying out its research work in China.	The Chinese side has acted in a fact-based manner and with an open, transparent and cooperative approach. China has maintained communication with the WHO and provided support to the WHO mission during its research work in China.

In the above interpretation, for the first sentence, the interpreter followed the principle of literal translation but combined the two phrases to make it concise as the source language, from which the features of the register in the source language can remain in the target one. As the second sentence is relatively long, the interpreter cleverly adopts two subjects and tears it into two sentences while still following the principle of literal translation, contributing to the audience's understanding.

On the other hand, when the meeting was broadcasted live, the author of this paper also tried interpreting Premier Li's answers to her classmates. However, the register of the target language changed. As the field lied in the interpretation practice with others, the mode was spoken to make up for the deficiency and gain for progress, the tenor also switched to people who wanted to practice their interpretation skills. The interpretation also changed with the change of register, see the following interpretation of the same sentence.

TABLE II: EXAMPLE B OF THE FIRST STYLE

Source Language	Back Interpretation	Target Language
因为就业是民生之本，是发展之基，也是财富创造的源头活水。	" 民 生 之 本 " means the foundation of people's well-being and "发展之基" means the basis of people's development.	Employment is the foundation of people's well-being and the basis of people's development, which is also a source of wealth.
中方本着实事求是、公开透明、开放合作的原则和态度，同世	Following the principle of seeking truth from facts, openness, transparency and	China follows the principle of seeking truth from facts, openness, transparency and

组织保持沟通，也支持世卫组织专家在华开展溯源研究工作。	cooperation, China maintains communication with the WHO and supports WHO experts in carrying out its research work in China.	cooperation, maintains communication with the WHO and supports WHO experts in carrying out its research work in China.

In the author's interpretation practice, the target language cannot remain as concise as the source language as the register in the target language now was different.

B. Interpretation Case of the Second Style

In the re-classification, the speaker of this style is usually considered to be an authority and therefore, has a higher status than the hearers for that particular event.

In 2014, Michelle LaVaughn Obama delivered a speech at Beijing University. The field of the source language was the words she wanted to convey to Chinese students and the mode was spoken to build lasting bonds between students in China and America and uncover the true value of studying abroad. Meanwhile, the tenor was the students who attended the speech. If the interpretation of her speech was simultaneous, it is clear that the field, tenor and mode of the target language remained unchanged as the target language should be kept in the same purpose and tone, thus the interpreter ought to convey the message to the largest extent as the original one to reach the coherence between the register.

However, if the speech of Michelle is not interpreted simultaneously as students who attended the speech have the basic knowledge of English, rather than that, the speech is broadcasted lively with an interpreter giving messages to other people. At this time, the register of the target language greatly varies from the original one because the audience is different. Thus, the interpreter needs to adjust his or her interpretation language as well. To be more specific, if the audience now switches to officials working in the foreign ministry who want to adjust the study-abroad policy with America, not only does the tenor of the target language change, but also the field varies greatly with the source language, which brings changes in the interpretation seen as follows.

TABLE III: COMPARISON OF EXAMPLE OF THE SECOND STYLE

Source Language	Back Interpretation	Target Language
And I'm here today because I know that our future depends on connections like these among young people like you across the globe.	And I'm here today because I know that our future depends on connections like these among your people like you across the globe.	我今天来到这里，是因为我知道，我们的未来，取决于全世界像你们这样的年轻人之间的联系。
And I'm here today because I know that **our** future depends	And I'm here today because I know that	我今天来到这里，是因为我

on connections like these among young people like **you** across the globe.	**the human's** future depends on connections like these among young people like **students in Peking University across the globe**.	知道，**人类**的未来，取决于全世界**你们北大高材生**这样的年轻人之间的联系。

In the first interpretation, to maintain coherence with the source and target language, few adjustments are made by the interpreter. However, in the second interpretation, the field and tenor change and to make the interpretation clear, the addressee of "our" and "you" should be specified.

C. Interpretation Case of the Third Style

Quite different from the previous styles' languages, the language of the third style involves the interaction from the participants who may not be familiar with each other. Liaison and business interpreting usually belong to this type. The source and target language usually match in the register.

There are international exhibitions where the companies from all over the world can know more about the products and develop cooperation. The interpreters for this kind of event should usually know the products and technical trade terms to help both parties carry out their conversation. For instance, at China Import and Export Fair, the manager from the purchasing department of a foreign company has a great interest in the swimming goggles produced in a domestic enterprise, so he wants to know more about the materials and check the samples. If he finds the product suitable, he would like to discuss the prices and talk about the shipping methods. Therefore, the field of the source language is the on-site import and export fair, the mode is spoken to persuade and successfully carry out the cooperation, and the tenor is the two parties who intend to cooperate. As liaison interpreting lays great emphasis on continuous and timely communication, the target language's register does not differ from that of the source language, and thus the interpreter needs to adhere to neutrality, switch between two languages and make sure he or she makes correct expressions especially when it comes to the numbers like prices or purchasing quantities, seen as follows.

TABLE IV: EXAMPLES OF THE THIRD STYLE

Source Language	Back Interpretation	Target Language
A: Yes, but your price still seems a little high. B: 既然这样，我想我也无能为力了，这是我能提供的最终报价。	A: (Party A is trying to get a lower price.) B: (Part B cannot lower the price anymore.)	A: 是的，但你方提供的报价还是有点高。 B: In that case, I can do nothing more. That's my final offer.
A: Your prices seem to be on the high side and out of line with the prevailing market level. To accept the prices you quote would leave us with only a small profit on our sales. We hope to get your lowest prices of the relevant goods. B: 您知道我们的产品在市场上很有竞争力，如果你方大量订货，价格是可以商讨的，能否谈谈你方所需的数量？	A: (Party A is trying to negotiate the price again by comparing with the current market price.) B: (Part B makes a concession that price can be lowered with quantity purchase.)	A: 你方报价似乎偏离与现行的市场水平不符。接受你方报价我方只能获取很少的利润，我们希望获悉有关商品的最低价。 B: You know that our products are very competitive in the market. If you place a large order, the prices are negotiable. Could you tell me the quantity of your order?
A: We are planning to order 5,000 pairs of swimming goggles. B: 这真是一笔很大的交易，我方可以考虑给您5%的折扣,希望能让你方满意。	A: (Party A is talking about the quantity of the order.) B: (Part B decides to give a discount.)	A: 我们计划订购5000副泳镜。 B: Well, that's a large order. We can think about offer you 5% discount of the price, which I hope will be satisfactory to you.

From the above interpretation, the two parties are discussing the offer price. The buyer party hopes to lower the price while the seller party has already given their lowest offer. Party A hopes the price could be lowered as it is relatively higher than the market price. Thus, party B agrees to lower it if party A places a large order and finally decides to offer a 5% discount for party A. During the process, both parties try to stay polite and euphemistic in the expression. As the register remains the same in the target language, the interpreter should interpret in a mild and roundabout way as under this circumstance, any flinty or inappropriate delivery by the interpreter may lead to misunderstandings or the cease of cooperation.

V. CONCLUSION

Due to the complexity of interpreting, the author only focuses on and re-defines three categories and the relevant interpretation cases in this paper based on M.A.K. Halliday's register theory and Martin Joos' register classification. In conclusion, it is hard to find a definite answer to the

relationship between the source and target language's register in interpreting. Many factors exert influences on this relationship, such as whether the interpreting is simultaneous or not, whether the purpose of the interpretation changes, whether the audience is different, and so on. Sometimes the source and target language match in the register in interpreting, but sometimes they differ from each other, which can also be found from the changes in the interpretation. Thus, the relationship between register in the source and target language should be analyzed from the overall style of the interpretation case and the three parameters: field, tenor and mode.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Xinyi Gao conducted the research, made the analysis and wrote the paper.

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Meanwhile, she works as a part-time translator at a translation company and has accumulated great experience. She intends to pursue further study in the future in the relevant field and aims to focus on the register theory.