

On English-Chinese Translation of Past Participles and Demonstrative Pronouns in *Seeing and Knowing*

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Abstract—With the development of international cultural exchanges, art exchanges among countries are increasing, and there is a growing demand of the translation of books on art works. As a result, the author undertakes English-Chinese translation of the book, *Seeing and Knowing*. The writer of this book, Bernard Berenson, indicates his viewpoints of seeing and knowing, and states that the convention is significant to the widespread of art. The translation of this kind text will introduce the western works on art to more people and provide the reference resources for the study and research of fine arts.

In the thesis, the author introduces the source of the original text, linguistic features of the source language, the process of translation, and summarizes the translation of the past participle, demonstrative pronouns and the translation strategies such as conversion. The author hopes that this paper can provide some references for the translation of art works.

Keywords—reflective research, English-Chinese translation, *Seeing and Knowing*

I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis is in the form of reflective research based on the first three chapters of *Seeing and Knowing* that is published in 1953.

The writer of *Seeing and Knowing*, Bernard Berenson, was an American art historian. As one of the old masters, his judgements of art works were wildly respected in the art world. The book, a works about art, discusses the relationship between seeing and knowing in the aspect of art from an artist's point. The good influence of Bernard Berenson's opinions is the reason why the author chooses to translate his book, *Seeing and Knowing*. The translation of the book is helpful for target language readers to learn about Bernard Berenson ideas of art works presented in this book.

In the process of translation, the author keeps in mind that the target text should convey information of the source text objectively, correctly and concisely [1].

II. ANALYSIS OF THE SOURCE TEXT

As two different languages, English and Chinese stand for two different cultures and two different thoughts, which cause great differences on the expressions and significant differences on the lexis and syntax of these languages. Good analysis of the source text promotes the understanding of the original text. Besides, the author gets familiar to the features of writing through the analysis. Thus, before the start of translating English text into Chinese text, the author conducts analysis of the source text [2].

The author analyzes the source language text from lexical level, syntactic level and textual level after grasping the overall meaning of the source language text. In this chapter, the author will analyze the features of the source language

text in three aspects that include lexical features, syntactic features and textual features and set up examples to illustrate all the features mentioned above.

A. Lexical Features

Seeing and Knowing is a descriptive text in which appear various parts of speech such as verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Besides, morphological changes of verbs such as present participles and past participles appear in the text [3].

What the source text about is the indications and comments of art works and the discussions on seeing and knowing. In order to make the expression vivid and impressive, the writer, Bernard Berenson, uses plenty of adjectives and adverbs. In an adverbial clause of concession, "Egypt and Hellas and their daughters Italy and France have surpassed all other peoples in the advantage they have taken of the nude for every conceivable representation, no matter how monumental, how static, how grave, how playful.", there are four adjectives modifying the main clause.

Demonstrative pronouns are used repeatedly in the source text such as "this". Besides, past participle in the source text is a language phenomenon frequently appears in the text, such as "battered bread" and "broad-bottomed, deep-breasted females".

B. Syntactic Features

One of the prerequisites of fluent and correct translation is the accurate analysis of each sentence. Studying on the syntactic features while translating will help the translator to clarify the components of the long sentences and subordinate relation of complex sentences. Sorting out the main clause and the subordinate clause of long and complex sentences leads to efficient translation [4].

In the text, a large number of long compound sentences, for instance, adverbial clause of time and adverbial clause of concession, are used to enrich Bernard Berenson's description. In a complex sentence, the arrangement of the components will be in disorder to highlight the key points of the writer's description and clearly express the author's feelings towards different art works.

Inverted sentence is another syntactical phenomenon, for instance, "Until the Assyrian period Mesopotamian statues and reliefs never show people without clothes, clothes that seldom articulate the bodies they cover and scarcely distinguish between the sexes." Here, the writer of the book uses inverted sentence to stress a certain time. Parenthesis sometimes appears in compound sentences that will be confused easily with subordinate clause.

C. Textual Features

The main part of the source text is the writer's comments

of the art works through which the writer verify relation between what is seen and what is known. The contexts of each chapter are connected closely. In the source language text, words like adjectives, present participle and past participle are frequently used as modifiers to highlight feelings, which makes the text emotional. Through vivid description, readers can better understand Bernard Berenson's judgments on the art works in the book, so as to enrich the understanding of western art and western art history better [5].

III. OVERVIEW OF THE TRANSLATION PROCESS

Translation is the dialectical unity of the art and science and translation is both a science and an art [6]. Translators must follow specific procedures while translating the source language text into the target language text so as to carry out the translation in order. In this chapter, the author divides the translation process according to her own translation practice into three parts: preparation before translation, comprehension and presentation, and revision after translation. Each of them plays its own role respectively.

A. Preparation before Translation

Preparation before translation refers to the preparation of converting the meaning of the source language text into target language text, which can help the translator to finish translation task well. Preparation before translation is an important link in the process of translation practice, and it is also one of the elements that determine the quality of translation to some extent.

As for translation standards, the author chooses Tytler's Three Principles as the translation standards when preparing translation. Sun Zhili points out in his book *A New Coursebook on English-Chinese Translation* that Three Principles requires that the target text conveys the content of the original work faithfully, displays the characters of original work faithfully, and embodies the fluency of original work faithfully [7]. The author adheres to these translation standards strictly, which is useful to produce high-quality translations and make good service for target language readers.

After being familiar with the text, the translator begins to analyze and study the text sentence by sentence. Confirming the writing style and text style of the source language text, the author uses the Internet to search for parallel text and finally chooses Sir E. H. Gombrich's *The Story of Art*, a book on art history and art works, to read as a reference text. This parallel text deepens the author's understanding of art history and the linguistic features of the discourse on art works, which makes the author understand the meaning of the source language text more easily and choose translation strategies in the process of translation more flexible.

B. Comprehension and Presentation

Translating is a continuous process of comprehension and presentation. The comprehension of the original text is the precondition of the expression. The translator's comprehension determines whether the presentation of translation is faithful or not.

Analysis of detailed parts of a text promotes the comprehension of a sentence or even a word. The author

attaches great importance to the analysis of the original text. To well comprehend the source text, the author uses the language knowledge of her mother tongue to digest what can be easily understood. With the help of the dictionary and the network, the author analyzes the individual lexical meaning and the grammar of a sentence in order to clarify accurately the meaning of the original text and the emotion the writer wants express with his words.

Presentation is the process to display the source language text in target language. This process not only means that the meaning of the original text is accurately conveyed, but also means that the target language text goes fluently. In this case, the author selects adequate words to complete the translated text. While presenting the target language text, the author tries to make a balance between conveying faithful meaning and displaying fluent text to a maximum extent.

C. Revision after Translation

After the translation is finished, the revision of the translation is commenced. Revision is an indispensable process of translation that costs the author more time than translation. The author first checks the both original text and translated text to see whether there is content missed or mistranslated in the translation and then checks only the target language text to see whether there is obscure words and ambiguous sentences that will lead to readers' misunderstanding.

When the author conducts the revision, the author completes the translation of words and sentences that were left out in the translation. It's regular to make mistakes in translation and this indicates that post-translation revision is substantial to guarantee the quality of target language text.

Checking only the target language text is a good way to revise and polish the translated text and guarantee the fluency of the target language text. Through proofreading, the author reassesses the application of words, and translation strategies and methods and makes revisions of the transition. Revision should be conducted several times to make the translation perfect.

IV. REFLECTION ON DIFFICULTIES IN THE TRANSLATION

During this translation process, there are problems caused because of the carelessness and difficulties faced by the author because of her limited experience. In order to correct the mistakes and overcome difficulties, translation methods and strategies are selected properly in the process of adapting the target language text. After translation and adaptation, the author conducts a basic analysis on how to choose proper translation methods and strategies to solve specific translation problems and difficulties such as the translation of past participles and demonstrative pronouns.

A. Past Participles

The past participles have the characteristics of verbs, adjectives and adverbs, so participles and participle phrases usually serve as predicative, attributive, adverbial and complement. As there is no past participle in Chinese, the translator encounters difficulties in translating sentences containing past participles into Chinese. To deal with the translation of past participles, the author makes use of conversion and literal translation.

1) Conversion

Because of the differences of grammar and expression between English and Chinese, in order to make the translation fluent and readable, it is necessary to use conversion to change the expression of a word or a phrase and convert the passive voice into active voice in the translated language text.

Example 1: As an adult I discovered that at a certain stage of mental and manual development, similar representations of our species were found scratched on every kind of surface all over the earth-among Sioux and other American Indians of the Great Plains as late as, if not later than, a hundred years ago.

Analysis: The author first deal with the word “scratched” as a passive voice and use “Bei sentence” in Chinese to express the meaning of the original sentence. In this way, the action that the species was scratched is highlighted. In the sentence of the original text, the past participle “scratched” serves as a complement to modify “similar representations of our species”. The writer, Bernard Berenson describes the state of the “similar representations of our species”, but not the action of being scratched, which means that when the “similar representations” were found, they had been scratched on surfaces and existed on the surfaces already. Hence, it is inappropriate for the author to translate “scratched” into a passive voice. Thus, the author applies conversion to convert the past participle into active voice in the target language text, which makes the text accurate and coincident with Chinese language expression habit [8].

Example 2: Not being pursued for food, he did not interest the artist.

Analysis: In the first translation, the author mistranslates passive voice into active voice and the meaning of the original text is conveyed in the target language text wrongly. After detailed analysis the grammar, the author clearly sorts out that, if he is not being pursued for food by hunters, he does not interest the artist. “Being pursued” is a predicative to modify “he”. In this case, the act of being hunted should be presented in translated text so as to be faithful to the original text. For this reason, the author converts the past participle into an adjective as a prepositive attribute.

When past participle is used as a complement or a predicative, conversion can be used to convert past participle of passive voice into active voice and convert past participle into an adjective, so as to make the Chinese sentence smooth and coherent.

2) Literal translation

Literal translation is a translation method to convert a text from source language to target language by following the form of the source language text closely, or by representing the literal meaning of a word and a phrase. The text translated through this method can accurately convey the features of the original text, and it is easy for target language audiences to comprehend the writer’s ideas contained in the source language text.

Example 3: It is possible that objects in wood and other fragile materials, as well as painted surfaces, have perished owing to the marshy land and damp climate of Mesopotamia.

Analysis: The author makes a mistake when she translates this sentence because she overlooks the extent of the objects’ being perishable. The main part of the subordinate clause is that objects have perished. It is a sentence of present perfect tense, which explains that the objects have already perished. In the author’s translated text, whether the objects are perished is unclear. And the readers can not catch the key point even though the translator use verb-object construction to make the translated text flexible. In this case, literal translation can be used to present target language text with meaning and form close to the source text.

B. Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronoun is a common language phenomenon in both English and Chinese. In order to avoid long sentences and repetitive words, it can be used to replace various parts of speech in the text. From the level of semantics, the meaning of demonstrative pronouns in English can be found in Chinese, but it is improper to translate the demonstrative pronouns literally, because a demonstrative pronoun can be used as a subject, object and attributive to demonstrate different components in a sentence to make the text of semantic coherence. Linguistic features of both English and Chinese should be considered when the author handles the difficulty of translating demonstrative pronouns. To solve this kind of problems, omission, amplification and substitution are used to deal with demonstrative pronouns in translation [9].

1) Omission

Omission means some words in the original text can be omitted in translation. Basically, omission is a translation strategy to improve the wording of target language text [10]. In the author’s translation practice, omission is used to reduce semantic repetition and make the target language text concise.

Example 4: This receding space is studded pell-mell with rectangular white spots.

Analysis: In the process of proofreading, the author omits the meaning of “this” in the translated text. From the contract of the translation and the adaptation, the author finds out that the meanings of these two sentences are nearly close.

The demonstrative pronoun “this” is used in the source language text with a noun phrase “receding space” that writer Bernard Berenson has already described in preceding part of this paragraph. For this reason, reader can easily know “this” refers to the receding space mentioned above. Here, both “this” and “receding space” have the same meaning. So that, there is no need to add the demonstrative pronoun “this” in Chinese that cause semantic repetition [10].

Example 5: I for one, along with millions of others who may not think of these matters, am satisfied with their perspective; yet so far as I know they have not, like Paolo Uccello, kept their wives awake with their tossings over mathematical convergences.

Analysis: In this sentence, the demonstrative pronoun “one” refers to “I”. These two words represent the same object, “I”. In the translation, the author deal with “I for one” as “I myself” in Chinese to make the form of the target language text consistent with that of the source language, which leads to the repetition and dis-fluency of the translated text. The use

of omission in the adaptation solves this translation problem.

2) Amplification

Amplification means that words are added to express the concept that is not contained in the words but contained in the meaning of the words. The author uses amplification in her translation practice to convey the meaning of the target language text completely.

Example 6: These are, however, more naked than nude with their projecting hips and sagging bellies.

Analysis: In the translation, the author translates the demonstrative pronoun “these” into Chinese literally. Given that the sentence is independent and has no connection with context, this version of translation is faithful. In this example, the demonstrative pronoun “these” in the source language text demonstrates the “figurines” which is already mentioned by the writer Bernard Berenson, therefore, the word “these” has the meaning of “these figurines”.

The literal translation of “these” causes the loss of the meaning that is implied in the word “these”. The author makes use of amplification to add the implied meaning and realizes the semantic coherence of the context of the target language text.

3) Substitution

In English text, demonstrative pronouns are often used to substitute the same words or phrases. In Chinese text, same words or phrases appear repeatedly to correlate the content that the writer mentioned earlier. This difference has influence on the translation of English text into Chinese. Substitution is a good method to solve this problem.

Example 7: To keep a convention alive and growing fruitfully requires creative genius, and when that fails it either becomes mannered and academic or runs “amok”, as in the last few decades.

Analysis: Through the contrast between translation and adaptation, we can discover that when translating demonstrative pronoun “that” into Chinese literally, the whole sentence is incoherent because of the obscure meaning of the word “that” in Chinese. The demonstrative pronoun “that” of the source language text demonstrates the “convention” that appears in the preceding text. The author chooses to substitute the meaning of “that” with the meaning of “convention” in Chinese text, which makes the text comprehensible.

V. CONCLUSION

This reflective research represents the whole translation process of *Seeing and Knowing*. In the reflection of difficulties and problems of the translation, the author chooses representative sentences as examples. Through translation and revision, the author tries to select proper translation methods and strategies to solve translation problems.

The author has learnt a lot in the process of completing the translation practice. Firstly, the preparation before translation establishes a good foundation for the author to complete the translation work smoothly. Secondly, the translator’s careful choices of words and phrases contribute to concise expression and representation. Thirdly, proofreading is essential for the author to find the errors and weaknesses in the translation. Fourthly, and adaptation is not the end of the translation. It is the duty for the translators to continue to find the errors in her translation and correct them.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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