Exploration of Translation of Cultural Metaphors from the Perspective of Cognitive Linguistics

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Abstract

The metaphor theory of cognitive linguistics believes that metaphor is not only a universal linguistic phenomenon, but also a way of thinking. The translation of metaphors needs to consider the similarities and differences between the two cultures in cognition and thinking. The metaphor concept system contains rich cultural information, as a complex cognitive activity, cultural metaphor translation is extremely difficult. In order to solve the problems in cultural translation, this paper will analyze the cultural characteristics of metaphors based on the theory of conceptual metaphors in cognitive linguistics, and then propose a translation method of cultural metaphors.

Keywords

Cognitive linguistics; metaphor; translation.

1. INTRODUCTION

t also a basic mode of thinking and behavior. Metaphor permeates all aspects in language and culture, including social life, language and culture, politics and religion, science and economy, etc. Since metaphor is related to culture, when translating metaphor, we should consider the cultural similarities and differences between the two languages. Traditional metaphor theory believes that metaphor is a rhetoric method. With the development of linguistics, especially the rise of cognitive linguistics based on empirical philosophy, metaphor has been promoted from the linguistic level to the cognitive level of thinking, which has opened up new ideas for metaphor research. In 2001 Gannon introduced the concept of cultural metaphor, creatively took metaphor as a way to understand culture. As an important link of cultural exchange between China and the West, cultural metaphor translation is extremely difficult. This paper starts from the conceptual metaphor theory of cognitive linguistics, analyzes the cultural characteristics of conceptual metaphors and proposes translation methods of cultural metaphors. In our life, metaphor can be seen everywhere. Even children can use metaphor skillfully. In the past, people thought that metaphor was only used in literary works, but on the basis of a lot of research, many linguists have come to the conclusion that metaphor is not only a way of expressing ideas through language, but also a way of thinking about things. This means that metaphor is closely related to people's cognitive style, which is greatly influenced by people's history and culture.

2. RESEARCH ON COGNITIVE METAPHOR

Metaphor is a form of meaning conversion, which involves at least two words or things, one of which changes in the process of forming metaphor. However, the study of metaphor from the perspective of cognitive linguistics is only a decade. Lakoff and Johnson described cognitive metaphor in detail in the book "Metaphors We Live By", which led to a revolution in the field of

metaphor research. They think that metaphor is ubiquitous in our daily life; it not only exists in language, but also in our thinking and behavior, it exists in our conceptual system, our thinking and behaviors are metaphorical in essence.

Johnson define metaphor as cross domain mapping, or the structural projection between two conceptual domains or cognitive domains, namely the projection from the source domain to the target domain. The essence of metaphor is to understand and experience such things through other things. As the origin domain," other things "is the basis of cognitive metaphor, which is usually familiar, tangible and concrete to people, while as the target domain," such things "are often unfamiliar and abstract to people.

In this book, Johnson divides metaphor into three categories: structural metaphor, and orientation metaphor, ontological metaphor. Structural metaphor is to transform concepts in one domain into another, such as "argument: is a war". Orientation metaphor is another kind of conceptual system which uses the concepts of up and down, inside and outside, front and back, left and right to express the spatial location. Metaphors such as "I'm falling asleep", "he dropped dead" and "you are under my, control" provide an empty relation between human subject and other things in the world. Ontological metaphor uses entity words to express some non-material concepts, such as feelings, activities and ideas, so as to classify, quantify and quote them.

3. COGNITIVE METAPHOR AND TRANSLATION

From the perspective of etymology, metaphor and translation have the same etymology. Metaphor comes from Greek, which means the transfer of meaning, while translation comes from Latin; it is the transferred meaning. This means that the two words are related in many ways. Metaphor is not only a figure of speech, but also a way of thinking. Nowadays, it has become an indispensable cognitive way for people to know the world. Metaphor is a structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain. The understanding of metaphorical meaning is to reflect the things in the target domain in the source domain, so as to achieve the purpose of understanding the characteristics of things in the target domain. Therefore, metaphorical meaning is to transfer the characteristics of things themselves.

Cognitive linguists believe that changing one language into another is a metaphorical cognitive process; this process includes which features the translator chooses among the many features of the original language category, and which features in the target language category are mapped to it. Conceptual metaphor even considers translation as a metaphor, that is, TT (target text discourse) is the reproduction of ST (source text) in the target culture, and translation is a mapping of source text to target text, which is an activity or relationships between two cognitive domains. It can be seen that the translation activity is also a cognitive activity. The translation activities of the two national languages are human thinking activities, and the translation process is a process of thinking activities. We can understand and recognize the relationship between metaphor and translation from the following aspects.

First, translation mainly is the transformation of metaphor. The essence of translation is to use the target language to transfer the cognitive way in one language to another culture, and the essence of cognition is to expose the way of thinking of a nation. In addition, we know that every language is full of metaphors, and with the development of society, new metaphors continue to appear. These original and new metaphors are formed based on different cultural cognitive styles. Therefore, cultural differences constitute the biggest obstacle in metaphor translation.

Second, translation must be based on cognitive metaphors. Language, as a medium of translation, reflects people's awareness of the world. As the most important and basic cognitive method of human beings, metaphors are commonly found in linguistic thinking and other activities. Therefore, the translation of any language cannot be separated from the cognition of metaphor. Before translating, the translator needs to fully understand the cognitive meaning of

the metaphors involved. Otherwise, the translation will distort the true meaning of the original language author or imprison some hidden words, make the translation difficult to be targeted. The prosecutor understands it, and thus cannot achieve the purpose of translation.

Finally, the similarities and differences between the metaphors of the two different languages will also influence the choice of the final translation strategy. Based on the same cognitive style, people from different cultural backgrounds are roughly the same in terms of image perception and aesthetic experience. This makes metaphors in the two cultures corresponding in some cases, such as to hang by a hair, to strike while the iron is hot, as sly as a fox, and so on.

However, people of different cultural backgrounds often have different cognitive styles. Traditions, customs, and history influence the way people understand things to a large extent, which leads to the differences in metaphors of different nations. Because of this difference, translators must think in accordance with the cognitive style in the target language culture when translating, so that target language readers can easily understand the translation. In English and Chinese, there are many examples of the same ontology but different metaphors, such as like a rat in the hole, a: drowned cat, kinds of a feather, the apple of one's eye, and so on.

4. TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

The above analysis proves that the similarities and differences of metaphors in different cultures greatly affect the choice of translation strategies. This article suggests the following translation strategies.

4.1. Literal Translation

Cognitive linguists believe that metaphorical thinking is formed on the basis of human experience, and similar experiences and external environments can form similar conceptual metaphors. One of the characteristics of conceptual metaphor is that the same source concept maps the same destination concept. Based on this feature, translators can use the method of literal translation to achieve parity between the translation and the original form and meaning. In understanding things, people from different families have roughly the same cognitive styles, and metaphors that reflect people cognitive styles sometimes completely correspond in completely different cultures. In this case, metaphors in one language will have completely equivalent metaphors in the other language, whether on the ontology or the metaphor. The translator just needs to find the relatively false metaphors in the target language, such as castle in the air, walls have ears; add oil to the flames, and so on. With the development of communication methods and economic globalization, people in different countries need to communicate frequently, which inevitably leads to cultural penetration. Therefore, metaphors in one language are gradually accepted and absorbed by another language, such as armed to the teeth, Pandora's Box, Domino effect, and the paper tiger, the iron rice bowl, and so on.

4.2. Equivalent Translation

In different cultural backgrounds, if the source concept in the original text cannot be mapped to the same concept domain in the target language, the translator needs to process the source concept domain in the original text during translation, that is, it needs to add Make relevant explanations so that the target language readers can understand correctly without misunderstanding. In many cases, translators cannot find metaphors with the same ontology and metaphor in both languages. In this case, he can find an equivalent expression for the source metaphor in the target language. The metaphor in the target language may be exactly the same as the metaphor in the source language, but the ontology and the metaphor may be completely different, such as a lion in the way (blocker), birds of a feather flock together Grouping), one swallow does not make a summer, and so on.

In addition, because metaphors are often associated with the history and culture of a country, equivalent translation can confuse the profanity in some cases. For example, some people translate the English proverb "Beauty lies in the lover's eyes" into "beautiful beauty in lover's eyes." This translation seems very appropriate, but those who do not understand the culture of the middle circle may know nothing about "Xi Shi" and may not understand the meaning of it at all. Another example is the translation of "as wise as Solomon". We know Solomon is the King of Israel, known for his wisdom. He developed trade during his reign, bringing Judaism to its heyday, and prisoner Solomon became synonymous with "smart people" in the West. In China, Zhuge Liang is synonymous with wisdom. If equivalent translation is used, translating "as wise as Solomon" into "wise as Zhuge" will be misleading to the profanity: Is there also Zhuge Liang in the West?

Due to different language structures and cultural backgrounds, most metaphors cannot be translated according to the above two translation methods. In this case, the translator must resort to free translation. That is to say, they completely abandon the imagery of metaphor in the source language and retain only the meaning. In practice, which translation method to choose depends largely on the type of text, and translators can use different translation strategies to translate metaphors according to different text types.

5. CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY

Cognitive linguists believe that metaphor is not only a mere linguistic phenomenon, but also a cognitive method. Lakoff once proposed that "the essence of metaphorical thinking is the mapping process across conceptual domains in conceptual systems." Shu Dingfang also proposed that "metaphor is a systematic way of thinking and expressing people's thoughts, that is, the concept of metaphor." There are similarities between concrete things and abstract things, so in daily life, people use their similarities to understand abstract things. Cognitive linguistics is two perception domains as "source concept" and "destination concept".

There are similarities in human survival experience and external environment, so similar metaphorical expressions will be generated on the basis of them. Mapping different destination concepts from the same source concept In different cultural backgrounds, the same source concept can map out different destination concepts. For example, in China, "dog" is an insulting word, so there are words such as "dog fighting" and "pug"; "dog" is a symbol of hard work, ability, and luck in western countries, so there is "somebody is a "lucky dog". The translator must consider the cultural characteristics of metaphors when translating so that the translation will not be misunderstood by the target readers. Cultural metaphors carry the cultural traces of different countries, and we must deal with the cultural factors in translation.

6. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF METAPHOR

6.1. The Origin and Expression Mode of Metaphor

Human beings have the commonness of metaphorical thinking. Thinking is a tool for people to know and understand the world. In the process of understanding the world, metaphor, as a way of thinking, always sets the connection between two things or two concepts on the basis of known experience. Human beings constantly use the known experience to understand the unknown natural phenomena, and the explanation of the unknown is always based on the known things. Only when we find out the similarities between the unknown and the known, can we make it clear. This is the basic way for human beings to understand the world. Although English and Chinese are two different languages, the similarity of the function of human brain is reflected in the basic pattern of metaphor in English and Chinese. The similarities between English and Chinese in metaphor provide great convenience for metaphor translation. There are metaphors in both languages, and many of them have striking similarities. For example, both

the Chinese and the British use sheep for meekness, steel for hardness, elephant for greatness, and fox for cunning. The nature and process of metaphorical thinking determine that the basic patterns of metaphor in English and Chinese must have two premises. It must be a comparison between two different things; secondly, there must be similarity between two different things.

6.2. Differences in Metaphor

In the process of cognition, the similarity of human being in different things is not fixed. In the interaction between human and nature, different regions and nationalities, different social culture, politics and religion, local customs and the pace of the times will make the direct experience of human beings different, so people's association between one thing and other things is different. For example, people have different understandings of the abstract concept of "life", such as: life is a stage / life is like a dream / life is like a battlefield / life is a journey / life is a chessboard. Obviously, from different perspectives, according to different experiences, we can find that "life" is similar to many things, and the similarity between things tends to be multiple.

In 1980, cognitive linguist put forward the theory of conceptual metaphor, which holds that metaphor is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also a cognitive activity that human beings use their experience in one field to explain or understand the experience in another field. Metaphor is a systematic way for people to think, act and express their thoughts. Metaphorical expression in language comes from the process of metaphorical thinking, so metaphorical expression reflects the process of metaphorical thinking in human cognition of the objective world. In real life, people understand relatively abstract things with the help of relatively concrete things. Cognitive linguists regard this situation as a mapping between two conceptual domains, which are called "source concept" and "purpose concept" respectively. For example, life is a carnival. In this sentence, the traditional rhetorical "life" is people's cognitive object, which is relatively abstract in concept. Cognitive linguistics calls it "the concept of purpose"; in traditional rhetoric, "the vehicle" is relatively specific, so the receiver of discourse can use it as a cognitive springboard to recognize strange and abstract things, which is called "the source concept" in conceptual metaphor theory. In these two conceptual domains, it is not difficult to find the similarities between "life" and "Carnival". That is to say, in real life, people can feel the beginning and end of life and carnival, but more joy. On this basis, people can understand the relatively abstract "life" from the specific thing of "carnival", so as to understand the metaphorical thinking of the speaker.

7. THE SIMILARITY OF HUMAN COGNITION

Cognitive linguistics holds that cognition and experience determine language, while cognition and experience are determined by reality and are deeply influenced by cultural factors. Cognitive similarity reflects the commonality of human thinking. Metaphor is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also a cognitive phenomenon. Metaphor is the result and tool of human cognitive activities. A typical thinking feature of primitive people is "physical activity" or "recognition", that is, taking people as a standard to measure things around them, such as mountains with hills, mountainsides, foothills; trees with crowns, bodies, feet, and so on. TV is a necessity of life. Watching TV is an important way to get information and entertainment. But excessive indulgence in TV programs has brought negative effects on normal family life. So people's views on TV have changed fundamentally. This kind of change of understanding is reasonable and a consensus of human beings. However, "negative influence" is an abstract concept. In order to make people have an image of understanding and experience of the abstract concept, the author directly define it as "war" and "conflict". Therefore, the concept of "war" in the source domain is naturally mapped to the target domain, so there will be conflicts, wars and negotiations among family members to rob TV. Because metaphorical thinking is the common

feature of human cognition, literal translation cannot be misunderstood by the target readers, but also be faithful to the original text and vividly reproduce the meaning of the original.

Every language has a complex conceptual system, which contains a large number of conceptual metaphors. The so-called conceptual metaphor is to map the source domain of internal structure to the target domain of unclear structure in a conventional way. So, why does a conceptual system produce all the conceptual metaphors it has now? Does a conceptual system have this group of conceptual metaphors rather than another group of conceptual metaphors? The answer to these questions from empirical realism philosophy is that human cognition is contained in the body, and we have all the conceptual metaphors we have now, which are based on our body experience and things. It's decided by experience. In short, all conventional conceptual metaphors are rooted in our life experience. Many words are metaphors, such as "grasp" is the meaning of "understanding", which compares "thought" to "hand", and "understanding in thought" is to "master an abstract concept in hand". When we speak or write, using the word "grasp" to express "understand" is a conventional act, and both the listener and the reader will naturally understand it. In translation, literal translation is enough to convey the original text and the author's real intention. Therefore, when translating metaphors, you can translate them directly, or you can translate them freely.

8. CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR

Metaphor is closely related to culture and rich in cultural characteristics. Metaphors in different cultural backgrounds have similarities and differences, but more of them are characteristics. A deep understanding of the cultural characteristics of metaphor is an essential prerequisite for the translation of cultural metaphor. According to the theory of conceptual metaphor in cognitive linguistics, the author classifies the cultural characteristics of metaphor into three categories.

Human beings live in nature. Under different cultural backgrounds, people's experiences will be similar with the same external environment. These similar experiences produce similar metaphorical expressions, which form the first cultural feature of metaphors. For example, the cultural metaphors of "Pour oil on the fire" in English and "Fire on the fire" in Chinese are similar. In the real world, pouring oil into the fire, whether it is Chinese or English-speaking countries; will make the fire bigger and bigger. This conceptual domain that is well known to humans can be used to map the conceptual domain of "deterioration of things". Therefore, in different languages and cultures, the same source concept domain can map the same destination concept domain.

While objective things are being mapped by people as source conceptual domains, people's different cultural experiences can lead to the same conceptual domain mapping different destination conceptual domains. For example, in Chinese culture, dogs are lowly animals. "Dog" is usually an insulting word in Chinese, such as "dogs look at people low," "mourning dogs," "dogs fight against others," etc. In western countries, dogs are friends of human beings, and they represent loyal and hardworking representatives. For example, 1 work like a dog. This sentence uses the concept domain "dog", which is well known in English-speaking countries, to map the abstract concept domain of "industrial qualities". When translating, if the translator does not consider the cultural characteristics of the metaphors and translates it directly into Chinese, "working like a dog", it will be misunderstood by the target readers, thinking that the speaker wants to vent his dissatisfaction. Therefore, the same source concept domain also maps different target concept domains in different cultural backgrounds due to special cultural factors.

It is also possible for different source conceptual domains to point to the same destination conceptual domain. For example, Britain is a country based on the sea, so there are a lot of

metaphorical expressions related to fisheries in English. For example, "Never offer to teach fish to swim." This well-known source concept domain can be mapped to the purpose concept domain of "don't show off in front of insiders". In Chinese culture, there is also an expression of the conceptual domain directed to this purpose, but the metaphorical expression is different. For example, in Chinese culture, dancing an axe in front of the famous carpenter Lu Ban means to show off his skills in front of experts and not to do anything about it. Its purpose is the same as that of the former. Therefore, under different cultural backgrounds, the same metaphorical thinking may produce different metaphorical expressions. Cultural metaphors always carry the cultural traces of a certain country or nation. In the process of cultural metaphor translation, how translators deal with cultural factors, especially cultural differences, is worth pondering. In the following, I will use the English translation of Mo Yan's classic novel as an example to explore the specific translation method of cultural metaphor based on the cultural characteristics of conceptual metaphor.

9. CULTURAL METAPHOR TRANSLATION

When translating cultural metaphors, translators can take the cultural characteristics of conceptual metaphors as the starting point and choose the appropriate translation method.

Cognitive linguistics believes that metaphorical thinking or metaphorical expression is formed based on human experience, so the same experience can form the same or similar conceptual metaphors. According to the first cultural feature of conceptual metaphor, translators can choose literal translation methods to achieve basic parity from form to meaning. For example, in the example sentence (1), "The wind candle residual year uses the windblown candle to map the remaining years of the person, expressing that the protagonist has reached the end of his life. Based on the common experience of the objective world of human beings, the mapping between these two conceptual domains also Applicable to English-speaking countries, so the literal translation is "gave him the look of a candle guttering in the wind.

When the source concept domain in the original text cannot be mapped to the same target concept domain due to different cultural backgrounds in the target language, the translator needs to process the source concept domain accordingly, that is, add a relevant comment after the literal translation for the target language reader understanding.

The same metaphorical thinking will also produce different metaphorical expressions due to the differences of geographical and cultural environment, religious beliefs, values and other factors, so different source concept domains can also map to the same target concept domain. In this case, the translator can replace the conceptual domain in the original language with the conceptual domain in line with the target language culture to help the target language readers better understand the metaphorical meaning. For example, the "clamp the tail" in Chinese is to act with care, while the western countries cannot directly use "grip the tail" to express the same metaphorical meaning. Therefore, the translator cleverly finds "go off half-cocked" as an alternative source conceptual domain from the target language to map the "act with care" conceptual domain. It has something to do with the gun culture in western countries. It literally means that the safety trigger of the gun is fired before it is pulled, implying recklessness.

Due to the great differences in some cultural metaphors between different countries or nations, it is sometimes difficult for translators to retain metaphorical images and achieve cross-cultural communication purposes. In this case, the translator can only abandon the metaphorical image in the original text properly and choose the translation method of free translation, that is, to keep the theme of the original text, and to help the target language readers understand the original text by translating the cultural metaphorical image into meaning instead of word for word translation. For example, short mouth eating is a metaphorical

expression of Chinese culture. If we insist on literal translation, we will lose the readability of the translation, so free translation is more helpful for readers to understand.

The relationship between metaphor and culture is interactive: metaphor is a part of culture, and culture is reflected in metaphor. However, due to the regional and historical reasons, culture presents a colorful situation. Different cultures have different languages, customs, beliefs, social systems and values; the regional economic development is unbalanced, and the political system is different, which will be reflected in the cultural differences. Cultural differences have a direct impact on the understanding and translation of metaphor. Free translation can accurately convey the meaning of the original. Free translation is different from literal translation in that it does not focus on form but on meaning. Its purpose is to reproduce the implied meaning and spirit of the original text. Due to the differences in cognition and culture, metaphor translation still needs free translation.

10. CONCLUSION

Cognitive linguistics believes that metaphor is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also a way of thinking and cognitive means for human beings to recognize the objective world. Metaphor is the carrier of culture, which is rich in cultural characteristics. However, metaphors in different cultural backgrounds have both similarities and characteristics, but more of them are characteristics. The deep understanding of the cultural characteristics of metaphor is a necessary prerequisite for the translation of cultural metaphor. In the process of cultural metaphor translation, the translator can analyze the cultural factors inside the metaphor from the perspective of cognition, and uses various translation methods appropriately based on the cultural characteristics of the above metaphors, so that the translation can reflect the cultural information in the original text, and can be understood by the target readers.

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