TOWARD A RHETORICAL-SEMIOTIC THEORY OF TRANSLATION

翻译的修辞符号视角研究

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《翻译的修辞符号视角研究》的著者曹磊博士曾是我的学生,除了具有其他英文女博士同样的特质外,她还能说上一口几近极致的英文,这倒是不多见的。

在她的这部论著付梓前,我很高兴能为这一研究课题的主题发展和评价发表一些识见。

曹磊博士的研究领域是西方修辞学理论及其应用,由于教学和工作需要又对翻译研究产生了兴趣,兴许这就是她做这一研究课题的缘由。

其实,做这一课题的难度是很大的,因为,在翻译学领域里,国内外许多学者已经做了不少很有意义的研究,他们的研究成果已对这一学科的理论构建和发展做出了重要的贡献。

然而,在如何突破翻译局限性这一问题上,现有的各种翻译理论似乎还没有取得突破性的进展。西方修辞学理论又能对解决翻译局限性有什么贡献? 这对以西方修辞学理论为主攻方向的曹磊博士提出了挑战。

修辞和翻译,究其实质,都包含着两个非常相似的活动过程。修辞,就是利用任何具有表意功能的符号,来有效地传递信息;而翻译,就是把一种语言中具有表意功能的符号有效传递的信息,尽可能地用另一种语言传递出来。

经过几年苦苦的钻研,凭借学术的敏感性,曹磊博士创新地提出:正是这两个活动之间的相似过程,才使得修辞学理论有可能为翻译研究提供一种新视角。

基于对这两个活动过程的准确和科学的把握,曹磊博士从跨学

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科角度成功地将符号学与修辞学交融在一起,创造性地构建了一种以修辞符号理论为视角的翻译研究法,有效地解决了翻译的符号意义问题,提出了基于修辞符号理论的翻译逻辑范式,阐释了两种语言系统和文化之间符号翻译中的意义缺失。

曹磊博士所构建的修辞符号理论,不仅对修辞学和符号学的跨学科发展有着裨益作用,也拓宽了翻译研究的视角,丰富了翻译学的理论,对翻译实践的指导作用也是显而易见的。

曹磊博士将两个学科的相关理论交融起来,构建了一种非常有意义的理论框架,这样的开拓性研究也是不多见的!

胡曙中
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摘　要

　　人文科学的历史和社会科学的历史总是伴随着历史原始资料的融合:同样的观点贡献于不同的视角。另一方面,新视角又以历史为依据,汲取其最初的原动力赖以萌芽并茁壮成长,由此而催生跨学科领域的变革。正是在此感召下,笔者撰写了关于翻译的修辞符号视角研究的博士论文,并在此基础上修订而成这部作品。

　　翻译就是把一种语言承载的信息用另一种语言表达出来。现代语言学为翻译和翻译活动提供了比较科学的理论基础。但是,目前大量的翻译研究都将翻译纳入语言学的范畴内,聚焦于语音学、形态学和句法学的层面。基于此,本书构建了翻译的修辞符号学视角研究,以打破翻译研究的这一局限性,并论证了其作为一个崭新的突破性的方法在解释长期以来关于翻译等效、直译与意译、归化与异化的争论中的优越性,阐明了修辞符号意义在翻译中的传递。

　　本书提出了修辞符号学的概念,并在此基础上构建修辞符号学理论。修辞符号学是基于符号学原理及方法的修辞研究,旨在运用符号学原理和方法来研究语言修辞,即研究语言符号的意义功能及特性;语言符号在交际修辞中的编码和解码定律;语言修辞的符号美学特性及规则;以及各种修辞手段的功能及编码技巧。

　　本书之所以尝试从修辞符号学视角探讨翻译研究,主要有以下理论依据。

　　首先,是翻译的修辞性。译者的修辞处境是显而易见的。翻译绝非单纯的科学程序,而是如同介于话题与听众之间的演说者的一种个人创作。译者的角色是需要在每一个转角做出抉择,在作者与读者之间,在源语文化和目的语文化之间进行协商。关于翻译的等

效原则、直译与意译、归化与异化等的争论由来已久,版本各异,要想解决这些问题,绝非一蹴而就。笔者认为关键不在于无休止地争论什么才是正确的翻译,而在于意识到译者在作者与读者之间进行协商以寻求并极力达成满足情形的修辞。同时,翻译与其他类型的口头表达和书面表达一样,是一种中介。交际是修辞的,因而翻译也具有修辞性。本书将探讨演说者与译者这两类中介之间的共通点以揭示译者的修辞情形。

其次,是翻译的交际性。翻译究其根本是交际。信息交流的基本要求是接收者对信息的理解。当然,信息发送者和接收者共享某些知识是理解信息的前提。不可否认语言差异是交际中需要克服的首要障碍。然而某些背景知识的共享才能在交际中让信息得以充分的理解。修辞研究是对语言交际效用的研究。在过去,修辞研究主要注重语言的使用技巧研究,目的是为语言使用者提供语言表达的具体方法和技巧以增强交际效果。然而,这在一定程度上缺乏哲学深度,导致难以得出修辞的内在规律。自皮尔斯和索绪尔奠定了现代符号学的基础,经过不断地深化,符号学已然成为社会交际的基本理论。其原理和方法应用于各类学科领域,诸如逻辑学、语言学、艺术和自然科学,将它们提升到新的哲学高度,并为这些学科的本质和主导规则带来启示。符号学开启了深入研究这些学科的新方法,具有重要的方法学意义。因此,将符号学原理及方法运用于修辞分析及研究将会为修辞研究提供革命性的全新视角。

最后,修辞在本质上是对语言符号进行编码。从这个角度而言,修辞的符号研究属于语用学范畴。修辞并不苑囿于语言符号编号的抽象的理论研究,而是采用实实在在的语言信息传递的视角。笔者认为运用符号学的一般准则能更好地解释翻译中的文化缺失。语言学模式的翻译研究往往忽略了文化层面,而修辞符号学视角有其不可替代的优势,在文化习俗、逻辑、恰当性及语用目的宗旨的指

导下,能够清晰地定位人类内在语言能力的内在联系,并将之与文化紧密挂钩。

以上观点与事实为此项研究奠定了坚实的基础。据此,本书在构建修辞符号学理论的基础上,在现有的翻译理论框架下探讨修辞符号学视角的翻译研究,旨在解决翻译的符号意义问题,演示修辞符号学如何为符号的翻译建立逻辑范式,由此阐释两种语言系统和文化之间符号翻译中的意义缺失。同时,在以上主张和相关翻译理论和方法的探讨的基础上,详细罗列并阐释翻译中,尤其是文学翻译中出现的言内意义、指称意义及语用意义缺失现象,分析导致翻译中意义缺失的主要原因并探讨将意义缺失最小化的可行方法。

鉴于本研究沿用修辞符号学和语用学框架,本书采用以下修辞学、符号学和语用学参数:

修辞学参数主要包括语篇和意识形态。对语篇的理解不应局限于对世界的描绘,语篇作为具有特定目的,给事物带来特定结果的参数同时还是一种社会行为。语篇不仅是作者身份的体现,同时也体现了身份和关系的形成、维护及嬗变。语篇修辞性分析不仅对语言进行表层描写,还进行功能描写和认知描写,使语篇研究在更大的空间范围展开,使修辞学研究不只停留在文体风格上,更走向人文传统,真正做到利用语言符号手段来促成符合使用者之间的合作。意识形态将权力关系内的交际过程融入背景。

使用的主要符号学参数为互文性。它包括文本使用者掌握的所有与特定文本元素相关的先前文本的知识。源语文本包含的一些信息,例如成语、比喻以及上下文的连贯等,其理解有赖于对其他文本的了解。这一点决定了互文性参数的适用性,有助于对译文和意义传递的分析。

语用学参数指在交际过程中所涉及的言外因素,包括信息发送者、信息接收者、文化系统、语境以及译者。这些都是本书研究对象

的变量。译者在语篇翻译时,应将翻译视点从语言形式上转移到语篇的交际意义上,充分考虑语篇的情景语境和文化语境,恰当地表达出原语的语域特征,充分发挥译者的主体意识,力求源语和目的语在形式、意义及功能上的对等。

关键词:修辞符号学　修辞编码和解码　符号意义

Abstract

The history of humanities and social sciences has always been accompanied by the fusion of historical sources: the same ideas have contributed to very different approaches. On the other hand, new approaches look to history for support, or even receive their initial impulses for development. Changes in the interdisciplinary field are accompanied by new historical relations. Answering this call, this book attempts to construct a rhetorical-semiotic theory of translation.

Translation can be defined as the act of expressing messages conveyed in one language in a different one. Modern linguistics offers relatively scientific theoretical foundations for translation theories and activities. However, most of the recent studies have dealt with translation within the broader framework of linguistics, focusing on phonetic, morphological, or syntactic levels. In view of this, this study approaches translation studies from rhetorical-semiotic perspective in the hope of breaking through this limit in translation studies by showing how rhetorical-semiotic approach is a new and more specific way of dealing with the long lasting debate about the issue of equivalence, literalism and adaptation, foreignization and domestication; and how the rhetorical semiotic meanings are transferred in translation.

In this study, we propose that the study of rhetoric from pragmatic semiotic perspective be called rhetorical semiotics. Rhetorical semiotics is the study of linguistic rhetoric on the basis

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of utilizing semiotic principles and methods. In other words, it aims to study the meaning function and attributes of linguistic signs; the encoding and decoding laws of linguistic signs in communication rhetoric; and the semiotic aesthetic attributes and rules of linguistic rhetoric; and the functions of all kinds of rhetorical devices as well as encoding techniques.

This research of translation studies from rhetorical-semiotic perspective is based on the following major theories and facts.

First of all, translation is rhetorical. The translator is in a rhetorical situation. Translation, particularly literary translation, is not a scientific procedure but a personal initiative, akin to that of the orator situated between a subject and a public. A choice of tactics, a choice of language, is inevitable. So it is with the translator, faced with choices at every turn, negotiating between author and readers, between source culture and target culture. The debate about equivalence, literalism and adaptation, foreignization and domestication, has accompanied translation for centuries in one version or another and is not going to be resolved in a hurry. Different periods and different cultures have different priorities. What matters is not to prolong the pointless debate about the "correct" method of translating, but to become aware of the way in which the translator, like the orator, negotiates between a subject and an audience, seeking out a rhetoric adequate to the situation. Translating, like many other genres of speech and writing, is a mediation. Communication is inescapably rhetorical. So it is with translation. In this research we want to explore the parallels between those two mediators, the orator and the translator, and to reflect on the rhetorical situation of the translator.

Secondly, translation is, above all, communication. The basic

requirement for a message to be communicated is that it has to be understood by the receptor. In order for a message to be understood, it needs to be interpreted on the basis of certain knowledge, shared by sender and receptor. Undeniably, linguistic difference is the first barrier to be overcome so that communication may take place. However, some other kind of background knowledge must be shared by communicants in order for the message to be fully understood. It is at this point that rhetorical semiotics comes into play. The study of rhetoric is a study of the effect of linguistic communication. It concerns such factors as communicator (including the addresser and addressee of the linguistic message), the signifier and signified, linguistic context and so on, some of which belong to pragmatic domain. Therefore, pragmatics is a major part of semiotics. Rhetorical studies in the past somehow laid emphasis on the studies of technical skills of language use, and helped in enabling language users with concrete methods and techniques of linguistic expressions to improve communication effects. However, it lacks to some extent philosophical theoretic depth resulting in the difficulty in drawing inherent laws for rhetoric. Since C. S. Peirce and De Saussure laid foundations for modern semiotics, after continuous deepening and systemizing, semiotics has become a basic theory for social communication. The applications of semiotic principles and methods to various subjects and fields of social sciences, such as logic, linguistics, arts and natural sciences, are bringing them to a new philosophical height and enlightening understanding of their nature and governing laws. Semiotics has opened a new way to the in-depth studies of these subjects, thus gaining an important methodological meaning. Therefore, to apply semiotic principles and methods to rhetorical

analysis and studies can provide a new revolutionary perspective for rhetorical studies.

Last but not least, rhetoric, in its essence, is the encoding of linguistic signs. But rhetoric is not confined to the study of general theories of linguistic sign encoding in the abstract sense, but sees from the perspective of concrete transmitting of linguistic messages. In this regard, semiotic study of rhetoric belongs to the domain of pragmatics. We maintain that losses of meaning in translation are sometimes better accounted for using the framework of rhetorical semiotics. Unlike linguistic models of translation, which overlook the cultural aspects, the rhetorical-semiotic perspective, with its guidelines of conventions, logic, appropriateness and pragmatic purposes, can clearly state the interrelation between our innate linguistic competence, using that competence, and connecting it to our culture.

All the above mentioned viewpoints and facts lay solid grounds for this study. The present study is mainly concerned with approaching translation studies from rhetorical-semiotic perspective based on the construction of a new theory of rhetorical semiotics and under the framework of existing translation theories with a view to contributing to the issue of semiotic meanings in translation, in particular, to show how the rhetorical-semiotic process builds a logical paradigm for the translation of signs, hence efficiently accounting for the losses occurring in the translation of signs between two different linguistic systems and cultures. On the basis of these claims and facts, we illustrate an inventory of losses of linguistic, referential and pragmatic meanings that occur in the translation, in particular, of literary texts. The translation is analyzed to investigate the main causes of the losses in the hope of finding a suitable approach that

minimizes such losses in translation.

Since this study adopts the rhetorical-semiotic and pragmatic framework, the following rhetorical, semiotic and pragmatic parameters are used:

The rhetorical parameters adopted mainly include discourse and ideology. Discourse is understood not simply in terms of description of the world, but in terms of social action in the sense that discourse is of particular purpose and brings about consequences on people or state of affairs. It is not just an utterance of self-identity, but to be understood as a way of forging, maintaining and transforming both identity and relationship. Ideology provides a way of contextualizing the communication process within power relations.

The major semiotic parameter used is intertextuality. It includes all those factors that enable text users to identify a given text element or sequence of elements in terms of their knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts or elements. This is a relevant criterion because the examples used in the source text contain information that depends, for their understanding, on the knowledge of other texts, e. g. , idiomatic and metaphoric expressions; hence the effect of intertextuality on textual coherence. In short, this parameter would enable us to assess translation, and to determine the transfer of meaning.

The pragmatic parameters adopted include the extralinguistic elements, those involved in the communication process in this study. These pragmatic parameters include the message sender (the original author), the receptor (the target text reader), the system (the cultures where the message is produced and transferred), the context of situation (field, mode and tenor of discourse and

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others), and the translator. These parameters are variables with relevance in communication process, which in this study is translation.

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