

George Steiner's Hermeneutic Translation Theory

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Abstract: George Steiner is one of the most important translation theorists in the hermeneutic school. He believes that the essence of translation is understanding, which is an interpretive act. Whether it is intra-lingual translation or interlingual translation, translation needs to be understood before interpretation. His translation book *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* explains in detail the relationship between hermeneutics and translation, which is an important book in translation school. Hermeneutics theory has its unique advantages, which embodies the translator's subjectivity, but it also has its limitations, for example, its exposition of the translated text is too broad, which leads to the loss of translation accuracy and "misreading". This paper discusses Steiner's Elaborative Translation Theory from five aspects: "Translation is comprehension", "Translation is more important than creation", "Translatability is conditional", "Four steps of translation" and "Limitation of translation".

1. Introduction

George Steiner is a famous American translation theorist and writer who is good at German, French and English[1]. He has made a lot of contributions to translation theory. His book *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* is of great significance in the field of translation, allowing translation scholars to have a further understanding of translation methods and has considerable theoretical value. Steiner emphasizes the subjectivity and creativity of translators from a new perspective. He believes that translating the source language text means understanding the source language text and even surpassing the creation of the original text[2]. His ideas have been recognized by many translation scholars, but some translation scholars still think that his views are too idealistic and unrealistic, so there are many problems in translation theory, and they criticize him. Steiner's translation theory is mainly divided into four steps, one is trust, the other is aggression, the third is incorporation, and the fourth is restitution[3]. The proposal of Steiner's translation theory has shaken the translation field at home and abroad and has unique significance. At the same time, there are also some problems that need more consideration. But it is undeniable that Steiner's translation theory enriches the meaning of translation[4].

2. Translation is Understanding

Eugene, the famous American translation theorist. Eugene A. Nida defines translation as the search for natural equivalent words in the target language that are infinitely close to the source language information in meaning and style. J.c. Catford believes that translation is the replacement of the source text with the equivalent text material of the target language[6]. They are all translation theorists, and they all advocate that translation is a kind of "equivalence" behavior, and the source text and the target text must be faithful to the source language in the conversion. Steiner believes that translation is not necessarily the conversion of two languages in the traditional sense, but also the communication and conversion between the same language. He proposes that translation is understanding, and only by fully understanding the speaker's intention, purpose, emotional color and regional culture can we fully understand the meaning of the original text and translate it better[7]. Therefore, when translators do translation, they must fully mobilize their own subjective initiative and fully understand the source text, so as to ensure that the translation process is sufficient and the translated text can be more vivid[8].

3. Translation is More Important Than Creation

Creation refers to the original author's use of a series of writing techniques, story plots and theoretical background in order to fully express his thoughts and opinions, so as to better let readers receive his own views, feel his own emotions, understand the theme of the article, and reflect a certain social reality. In the process of translation, the translator occupies a very important position. In the same language system, readers can easily understand the plot changes of works and articles, because their languages are similar, and some culture-loaded words and hidden meanings can be well understood. However, in the reading and communication of different languages, it seems difficult for readers to accurately understand the real meanings of these literary works. Therefore, there is a very important bridge between readers and authors, that is, translators. Steiner believes that translation is a kind of creative activity, translators should fully understand the original text when translating, and then re-create it according to their own cultural literacy, knowledge ability and creative ability. And the process of creation may change a lot, for example, the original relatively unpopular literary works in foreign countries may be widely welcomed by readers in another country after the translator's re-creation and processing, similarly, after being valued by foreign readers, it can still set off a reading trend in China. Therefore, creation and translation are two different processes, but in the sense that they complement each other and are equally important.

4. The Translatability of Translation is Conditional

Steiner believes that in the process of translation, the feasibility and infeasibility of translation are conditional. It makes no sense to talk out of context. For example, Steiner believes that translation means understanding, which can be understood within the same language or through dialogue in different languages. However, communication is ongoing all the time, regardless of language, so understanding happens all the time. People communicate and exchange information through translation and understanding, so translation also happens accordingly. In this sense, translation is feasible. On the contrary, the translation within the same language is simple, while the translation between different languages will have various difficulties, for example, the network buzzwords and other culture-loaded words in different countries will have different meanings in different times, which are different from the surface. In addition, due to the different history and culture, the way of creation of poetry at home and abroad is also different, so whether translation is translatable at this time? It's doubtful. But anyway, both affirm the translator's subjectivity and the

translator's important role.

5. Four Steps of Translation

Steiner made an in-depth study of translation, and his translation theory has some enlightenment on the translation process and the translator's understanding of the original text, revealing the interdependence between understanding and interpretation. Steiner divides the translation process into four steps, namely trust, aggression, incorporation and restitution[5].

Table1. Four steps of translation

Trust	Translate according to his own wishes, and trust his translated text.
	The source language text is translatable
Aggression	Makes in-depth exploration of difficult words and sentences, and breaks them down and reconstructs them.
Incorporation	Decide whether this part should be retained or subsumed into expressions of the target language.
Restitution	Balance the original text and the translated text with the missing images and features in the translated text.

5.1. Trust

The first step of translation is for the translator to choose the translated text. Therefore, trust here refers to the translator's trust in selecting the source language text according to his/her own interests, creative ability, knowledge reserve, etc. If the translator is forced to translate a text in a field that he is not familiar with and is not good at, then the quality of the translation will be worrying, and the translation process will be meaningless. If the translator can translate according to his own wishes, trust his translated text, and believe that his translated text is valuable, then the translation process must be positive and relaxed. Of course, choosing a trusted translation text should also pay attention to the fact that the source language text is translatable. In today's market, articles are mixed, many texts are to meet the market, conform to people's preferences, always read catchy, very happy, but not really have literary significance, therefore, translators should pay attention to the translatability of articles when choosing translated texts.

5.2. Aggression

Steiner believes that the second step of translation is aggression. Translators need to invade the source language text and fully analyze the connotation, obscure culture-loaded words and complex sentence patterns of the source language text in order to fully understand the surface meaning and deep meaning of the original text, so as to carry out the next two steps of translation. The meaning of invasion is similar to the process in which the translator divides the original text, makes preparations, makes in-depth exploration of difficult words and sentences, and breaks them down and reconstructs them. It is the second step of translation, able to gain insight into the general reader can not gain insight, one step ahead of the reader. Insight is more comprehensive and thorough. Readers and interpreters with subjective initiative need to invade the original text for interpretation and translation. It is equivalent to the process of breaking down the original text and rebuilding it.

5.3. Incorporation

After the second non-intrusion, the translator will get the relevant words and sentences in

different fields, and after a full understanding, it is necessary to translate them into the target language. In the process of translation, some things will be close to the expression and usage of the target language and will be retained, while some things cannot be communicated due to the lack of cultural history and vocabulary habits between countries, so they need to be dealt with. Certain translation strategies, such as foreignizing translation and domesticating translation, can be adopted for selection. Decide whether this part should be retained or subsumed into expressions of the target language[9]. In any case, in the process of incorporation, foreign words always influence the culture of the target language. Foreignizing translation requires readers to properly select the language of the source text, ensure the integrity of foreign culture as much as possible, and enable readers to feel the charm of foreign words and experience different language customs, while domesticating translation requires translators to convert obscure words into words and expressions that can be understood by the target language readers and have similar meanings to the original text. No matter which translation strategy is applied in the process of absorption, it requires the translator's ability and the translator's inner mastery of the source language and the target language. Therefore, it is necessary to constantly balance the source language and the target language and take care of both to make the translation more colorful.

5.4. Restitution

After selecting the translated text in the first step, invading the original text for understanding in the second step, and translating with appropriate translation strategies in the third step, the fourth step comes to the stage of compensation. Compensation is the further improvement of the translation after Incorporating the third step. Because there are differences in meaning, vocabulary, grammar, syntax and so on between the source language and the target language, it is very important to Restitution and improve the translation after completing the whole translation. To Restitution, we need to make use of our knowledge reserve to balance the original text and the translated text with the missing images and features in the translated text.

6. Limitations of Steiner's Translation Theory

Steiner affirmed the subjectivity of the translator and the important role of the translator in translation, but he only introduced the steps of translation in detail, and proposed that translation means understanding, which is too broad, and each translator's understanding ability and cognitive range are quite different. Therefore, when the original author and translator have conflicts, what translation means should be adopted? There is no corresponding regulation on how much the translator should grasp when creating. In addition, Steiner does not have a systematic translation theory and an exploration of the basic problems of translation. Finally, among the four steps of translation proposed by Steiner, the difference between the second step and the third step is not very big, but can be carried out at the same time under certain circumstances. He did not put forward the specific method of translation, and he could not guide the translator to carry out practical operation[10].

7. Conclusion

Steiner enriches the connotation of translation, affirms the translator's subjectivity in translation, and highlights the translator's central position in translation. The translator is both a reader and a secondary creator, and innovatively puts forward the four steps of translation, namely trust, aggression, incorporation and restitution, providing a new perspective for translation studies. Although he did not propose a systematic translation method, he applied hermeneutic theory to

translation, which broke the traditional translation and broadened the relevant fields of translation research.

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Conflict of Interest

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