On the Fuzzy Semantic Translation in English Language and English Literature

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Abstract. With the increasing attention paid to English language and literature, how to effectively carry out fuzzy semantic translation has gradually raised consideration among researchers and relevant research institutions. This article focuses on the translation of fuzzy semantic in English language and literature, discusses the ambiguity of language, the characteristics and functions of fuzzy semantic, trying to explore and suggest a variety of practical translation methods, with the aim of contributing to the further study of language and literature.

Introduction

English is the most widely used language in the world, and plays an important role in different areas, such as political, commercial and cultural communication among different countries. In recent years, as the number of people studying English language and literature has increased and their research go into more detailed and wider scope, fuzzy semantic translation has gradually received widespread attention in related fields. In-depth study of fuzzy semantic translation and its characteristics, exploring and developing a variety of practical translation skills and strategies are of great significance to the research of English language and literature.

Study of Fuzzy Semantic Translation in English Language and Literature

English Language and Features of Fuzzy Semantic

The research conducted over English language and literature should be based on the particular standards and characteristics the language owns. Fuzzy semantic, as a special linguistic phenomenon can realize language transformation between English and other multiple language environments. Literally it refers to ambiguous expressions with no clear meanings and involves diverse levels of ambiguity, including pronunciation, meaning and cultural connotation, etc. It occurs along with the unclear references during the process of language expression, and appears while the speaker or writer adopts the ambiguous expressions intentionally or unintentionally, while reaching the aim of describing or introducing something. The characteristics of fuzzy semantic mainly include: inaccuracy, equivalence and uncertainty. The uncertainty is the most distinctive feature and is worthy of our further study. While analyzing the literary works or translating into the target language we should follow the intrinsic features of English language, such as vague additives or lexical semantic fuzziness, etc., which endow the language with extraordinary charm, including rich semantic connotations, flexible application, and personalized expressions.[¹]

The scholars have provided evidence to show that vague language is a special phenomenon with diversified functions to guarantee interpersonal communication. Language environment, contents and communicators are all influential factors affecting the realization of communicative effect. In order to better achieve communicative purposes, in the actual process of fuzzy semantic translation, we should pay attention to ensuring the accuracy of language expression and usage, and also need to reserve the ambiguity the original text embodies. Carrying out the effective research over the rational application and language transformation of fuzzy semantic has a positive impact on the English language and literature study.
Language Vagueness and Translation Principles of Fuzzy Semantic

For language, vagueness is one of its natural attributes, which is also one of the significant differences between artificial language and natural language. Language is the carrier of human thinking. The expression of language has no clear boundaries and shows ambiguous features, but it requires accurate meaning transmitting in order to realize effective communication. Vague language usually contains ambiguous words or word combinations with no explicit referential relationship. While engaging in interpersonal communication, if communicators lack a fixed thinking frame, or the information is too complex to express precisely, vagueness arises voluntarily. There are many types of ambiguous words and sentences, such as puns, fuzzy modifiers, etc., which have ambiguous definitions or meanings. In an exotic language environment, the possibility of having ambiguous expressions is higher, which shows the elastic feature of fuzzy language. Reasonable and scientific application of fuzzy semantic not only helps avoiding ambiguity, but also optimizes the overall expression and promotes the attainment of communicative effect.

In terms of English language and literature study, fuzzy semantic has made the translation activities more difficult. It is necessary for us to carry out differentiated analysis and operate translating process combined with specific situations and influencing factors. Based on the relevant knowledge and current regulations, it is concluded that fuzzy semantic translation should follow the following general principles: Firstly, it is suggested to use modern language forms as much as possible, and avoid just piecing together simple words or sentences. One of the outstanding features of fuzzy semantic is diversified expression of language that demands flexible translation. Secondly, in order to complete the translation of fuzzy language, careful analysis and examination will be beneficial to prevent translation loopholes.

Fuzzy Semantic Translation in English Literature

Types of Fuzzy Semantic in Translation

Phonetic Fuzziness

Phonetic fuzziness is common in puns, which adds sense of humor to the original sentence, and it is usually caused by homophonic words adopted in the sentence or hearing errors happening in transferring message. Take the following sentence as an example, “The bullet hit her in the chest, so she dropped her arms.” Here “arms” can be translated as a kind of weapon (武器) or as arms (手臂). The final option of the target language will be combined with the understanding of the background knowledge and the aim of the expression. In the process of interpersonal communication, it is important to ensure the flexibility and integrity of the language. Stiff language will make people uncomfortable, so appropriate use of fuzzy language based on specific context may have a positive influence on building friendly communicative atmosphere and enhancing the image of communicators. Particularly, in some subtle cases, fuzzy language can be used to avoid straightforwardness and embarrassment and achieve the purpose of communication.

Lexical Fuzziness

Relevant scholars point out that the concept of “vagueness”, to a certain extent, contains more in content compared with “clearness”. The theory also highlights the key role of lexical fuzziness in language and culture. Firstly, there is no explicit reference. Lexical fuzziness refers to making a reference in general, such as the words “friend” and “relative”, etc., which don’t mean any specific person, but refer to a group of people, uncle, aunt, or grandparents. Secondly, the reference is ambiguous. Taking “forest” and “wood” as examples, such words can have clear meanings if used separately, but “forest” can be “land that is covered with trees and shrubs” or “hunting ground”; “wood” means “the material that forms the trunks or trees” or is equivalent to “forest”. Thirdly, the same sentence can be understood and translated into a variety of different meanings. The communicative meanings are diversified and finalized based on the specific contexts. A typical case is “John is like a fish”. In a swimming-related context, it can be translated as: “John is proficient in
swimming.”; While in a party-related context, it means: “John is very capable of drinking”; If it is used to talk about interpersonal relationship, it can be interpreted as: “John is an unkind person.”

**Fuzziness Based on Cultural Differences**

There are inseparable connections between living environment, interpersonal communication and language. Due to the influence of various factors such as environment, the cultures formed in different regions are also quite different. The diversity of language and culture is expressed during intercultural communication. Translation should be based on comprehending of people living in other cultural environments, which will have a significant impact on the accuracy of expression and achievement of communicative purpose.

**The Translation Methodology of Fuzzy Semantic**

**Adopting the Standardized Translation Methodology**

In terms of fuzzy semantic translation, it is crucial for us to develop the research and application of standardized translation method. Actively exploring and innovating a variety of effective standardized translation methods, and constantly optimizing existing methods are of great importance for the study of fuzzy language in English literature. Nowadays the vague semantic involved in English language and literature usually have the characteristics of wide coverage and rich content, which are sometimes even related to the sensitive fields and topics, such as the national security or public order. While engaging in translating activities of the relevant contents, we should attach our importance to fully complying with the prescribed translation standards and completing the whole translation process based on the basic and regular translating principles, trying to avoid any mistakes or errors as much as possible, otherwise, it is liable to cause ambiguous meanings during communication or expression.

**Flexible Adjustment of the Source Language**

The development of each country is irreproducible, which is also the main reason why there are essential differences in the cultures of various countries. Culture can truly reflect the history of a region or nation, therefore the influence of cultural differences cannot be ignored during the translation between the source language and target language. Conversely, if we lack an accurate and in-depth understanding of the original text and the relevant context, the translation will be ambiguous or contrary to the original expression. When it is difficult for us to find the equivalent phrases from the target language and transfer the same meaning of the source language, we should make a flexible adjustment, and the original text needs to be effectively processed by adjusting the sentence patterns and alternative use of diverse phrases. The completion of the whole translation process is carried out through unequal words or language, and the fuzziness contained in the original text can be expressed among the target readers and make them experience similar feelings as the source language readers have. For example, as we all know “It rains cats and dogs” can be translated into “大雨滂沱”. The translator should have a comprehensive understanding of English idioms and customs, including the involved cultural connotations and realize the transference of the fuzzy language based on the analysis of specific situations and the actual context.

**The Application of Association Translation**

The grammatical rules and word formation of English language are totally different from Chinese. In order to enhance the comprehension of the translation text among the public and accurately deliver the involved cultural information, the association translation method should be effectively adopted in the translation process. For example, the sentence “All he ever does is watch TV, he’s become a real couch potato” can be translated in this way “他终日只会躺在沙发上迷恋于电视, 成为了一个真正的‘沙发土豆’”。 Similarly, Chinese proverbs are usually concise and simple, but contain rich meanings. “三人成虎” can be expressed as “A lie, if repeated often enough, will be accepted as truth”. The translator complements the missing information hidden in the English
idioms and Chinese proverbs with the help of association translation method and makes the target readers grasp the full meanings the source language intends to convey. In other words, the translation of fuzzy semantic should be completed by fully mastering the characteristics, rules, connotations of the local language in the source and target language country.

**The Use of Functional Equivalent Translation**

There exists vague language in both Chinese and English. Therefore, while translating the fuzzy information, Chinese can be replaced with the counterparts in English language and vice versa. By adopting the functional equivalent translation, the meaning of the original text can be retained and expressed in the target language, without causing any ambiguity. For example, in the oral context, we often use “Just so so” as the response to “How have you been recently?”, which means “一般” or “还可以” in Chinese. This is the equivalent part of the two languages and expresses similar fuzziness for generalizing personal life status. Although we cannot realize the complete equivalence in every situation because of the linguistic disparities, this type of translation emphasizes on the principle of equivalence, aiming to make target readers experience the source language context better and comprehend the original text more accurately.

**Conclusion**

Language ambiguity can enhance the expression effect and promote the emotional conveyance of the literary works. There are many types of fuzzy semantic in English literature, and its translation should be focused on flexibility and contextual understanding. Based on the research of this paper, standardized translation, pragmatic adjustment translation, functional equivalent translation and association translation can be adopted to achieve aesthetic reproduction of vague language. Translators can realize the spiritual resemblance and form similarity between the source and target language by raising the aesthetic consciousness and in-depth study and mastery of the context of the original works.

**Acknowledgement**

This article makes contributions to the research of fuzzy semantic in English language and literature. By analyzing the characteristics and functions of fuzzy semantic the paper suggests several effective and reasonable translation methods, which are helpful to reserve the fuzzy language and avoid understanding ambiguity during the translation process, with the aim of diminishing the cultural barriers and transferring the aesthetic experience of literary works.

**References**
