Translation Choices of Logical Meaning from Chinese into English: A Systemic Functional Linguistics Perspective

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Abstract : Different from English, it is common to observe Chinese clauses logically related in an implicit way without any conjunctions. This typological difference has posed a great challenge for Chinese-English translators, as 1) translators may interpret logical meaning in different ways when there are no conjunctions in Chinese Source Text (ST); 2) translators may have questions whether to make Chinese implicit logical meaning explicit or to remain implicit in Target Text (TT), and whether other dimensions of logical meaning (e.g., type of logical meaning) should be shifted or not. Against this background, this study examines a comprehensive arrange of Chinese-English translation choices of logical meaning to deal with this challenge in a systematic way. It compiles several ST-TT passages from a set of translation textbooks in a corpus, namely Ying Yu Bi Yi Shi Wu (Er Ji)) [Translation Practice between Chinese and English: Intermediate Level] and its supportive training book, analyzes how logical meaning in ST are translated in TT in texts across different text types with Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as the theoretical framework, and finally draws a system network of translation choices of logical meaning from Chinese into English. Since translators may probably think about semantic meaning rather than lexico-grammatical resources in translation, this study goes away from traditional lexico-grammatical choices, but rather describing translation choices from the semantic level. The findings in this study can provide some help and support for translation practitioners so that they can understand that besides explicitation, there are a variety of possible linguistic choices available for making informed decisions when translating Chinese logical meaning into English.

Keywords : Chinese-English translation, logical meaning, systemic functional linguistics, translation choices
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