

TRANSLATOR'S SUBJECTIVITY IN E-C TRANSLATION OF MEDICAL TEXT: INTERTEXTUALITY

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ABSTRACT

Translation activities, in some sense, involve the shift of two languages. More importantly, these activities promote communication between the two cultures. From the perspective of intertextuality, any text of the source language exists in the culture system created by elements of literature, history, religion, which also is affected and connected by other cultures. The translated text is connected with the source text, and the translation process is to find and interpret the connection and intertextuality by the translator's ability and efforts.

This paper, focusing on intertextuality in translation process of the popular medical text called *Disease-Proof: Slash Your Risk of Heart Disease, Cancer, Diabetes, and More--by 80 Percent*, aims at achieving successful comprehending, interpretation and adaptation of the source text and then promoting communication between two cultures. After careful analysis of the source text, this paper discovers that the translator is confined by some elements like the author and text of source language, a culture of two languages and target readers, and the translator should show its subjectivity in the translation process.

KEYWORDS: Popular Medical Text; Intertextuality; Translator's Subjectivity; E-C Translation

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of the worsening environment and frequent economic and cultural communication, health has become a major issue and been appreciated by Chinese people, whose health awareness is being strengthened with the advancement of science and medicine that promote medical communication between China and the U.S., and drive the demand for medical knowledge, especially disease prevention, in which the U.S. has abundant advanced experience compared to China as a late beginner. Therefore, it is of great vital for the translator to spread advanced medical knowledge, concepts, and practice from western countries and make relevant studies on the translation of popular medical texts as the reference for future researches.

Translation involves the author, the translator and target readers, which is confined by the source text. Intertextuality thinks that any text is created based on the previous text. That is to say, intertextuality exists in translated text and the source text, in which the translator play an active role. Therefore, it is of great value to apply the theory of intertextuality to guide the E-C translation of the popular medical text.

Currently, most studies on intertextuality concentrate on literary works and its translation, and few papers discuss about its guidance on popular medical texts. Moreover, fewer papers analyze translator's subjectivity in E-C Translation of Medical Text from the perspective of intertextuality. From the perspective of intertextuality theory intertextuality, Wang Xingke and Zhang Bin (2015), taking *HuangdiNeijing*(a famous book of traditional Chinese medicine) as an example, discuss the application of the theory on the translation of traditional Chinese medicine. In the same year, they (2015) interpret the influence of the translator on translation and evaluate the translator's subjectivity to improve translation version of *HuangdiNeijing*. Li Hongli and Yao Xin(2016), from the perspective of intertextuality, interpret the translator's subjectivity in the translation process and come to a conclusion that the translator should play its subjectivity in a proper manner to preserve features of traditional Chinese medicine and manage to break cultural barriers. Li Zhengya,(2017) based on intertextuality tries to find effective translation techniques guiding medical translation through careful analysis of the origin and morphologic change of words.

THE THEORY OF INTERTEXTUALITY

Based on Saussure's Sign System, intertextuality, first coined by Julia Kristeva, refers to the interconnection between similar or related works of literature that reflect and influence an audience's interpretation of the text. And the theory holds that meaning is not transferred directly from writer to reader but instead is mediated through, or filtered by, "codes" imparted to the writer and reader by other texts. Intertextual figures include allusion, quotation, calque, plagiarism, translation, pastiche and parody.(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intertextuality>)According to Kristeva, the existence of other texts is the precondition of the act of signifying and a text is meaningless in isolation with other texts for "every text is constructed as a mosaic of citations and every text is the absorption and transformation of other texts"(Hatim & Mason 2001: 125). In other words, any text belongs to a kind of intertext, based on absorption and adaption of other texts. And intertextuality turns its focus on the form of the texts to creators of texts. As for texts, they represent language and culture of a nation, which are the cultural sign and form. And they are affected and connected by history, culture, religion of a nation and other nations. Therefore, translation activities are affected by intertextuality for the translator needs to comprehend the connotation and meaning of the source text, and interpret and make an adaption of the text to make the target readers understand and accept information (Cao, 2012). In the translation process, the translator should discover the intertextuality in the source text, and construct intertextuality in the target text. (He, 2018)In other words, there exists intertextuality in translation process including E-C translation of the medical translation.

THE TRANSLATOR'S SUBJECTIVITY

Traditional translation holds the view that translation just involves the shift of interlanguage, and it just refers to translating meanings by a set of fixed rules and mechanisms, in which the translator obeys rules to finish translation just like a machine. The view ignores the role of the translator in translation activities and tries to minimize the effect of the translator to seek faithfulness to the source text. Nida(2004) said that the translator must exert every effort to reduce to a minimum any intrusion of him which is not in harmony with the intent of the original author and message. With the emergence of cultural turn in translation study, more and more studies focus on the role and effect of the translator. And cultural characteristics and role of the translator are being appreciated and valued. But who is the subject of translation activities? The question varies from different scholars and people who conduct studies on the issue. But generally speaking, the subject of translation involves three objects: the author of the source text, the translator and readers. From the perspective of Eco-translatology, the translator is the center of the translation process. But from the perspective of

intertextuality, the translator acts three roles –reader, interpreter, and adapter of the source text, who also is the creator of the translated text. In this translation process, the translator needs to exert efforts and acquired knowledge to find signs of intertextuality and break cultural obstacles. (Chen, Lu,2018)

According to the definition of the translator's subjectivity, the translator's subjectivity mainly refers to the independent choice of the source text and the subjectivity represented in translation activities, which exists in the whole process of translation. In other words, the subjectivity is illustrated in the comprehension, interpretation, and adaption of the meaning of the source text. Moreover, the translator's subjectivity is embodied in the selection of the source text to be translated, the choices of translation methods and purposes. In the translation process, the translator will play the role of subjectivity in dealing with the relationships of the source text, the author and readers. In the intertextuality, the translator will also be affected and confined by some factors, and he / she needs to make shifts and transformation to achieve translation purposes and success.

TRANSLATOR'S SUBJECTIVITY IN E-C TRANSLATION OF MEDICAL TEXTS BASED ON INTERTEXTUALITY

The theory of intertextuality views that any text is connected to its previous texts, texts of the same period and texts of other kinds of texts. Translation refers to the shift of two languages. And after translation, the source text has become a new text of target language, and the two kinds of texts are interconnected, which become a kind of intertext. In the construction of intertextuality, the translator's subjectivity plays an important role. On one hand, the translator is responsible for comprehension and interpretation of the source text as the reader of the source text, on the other hand, the translator is responsible for adaption of the source text and creation of the target text. And the translator's subjectivity is represented in three parts: pre-translation, translation, and post-translation. In this paper, pre-translation and translation will be introduced and analyzed in detail. The pre-translation part refers to the independent choice of the source text according to the translator's capacity and abilities. And translation part includes choices of translation strategies and purposes, a shift of culture elements, and comprehension, interpretation, and translation of the source text.

The Choice of Source Text

Translation involves translating the meaning of the source text on the premise of understanding of the source text, which requires the translator to have a good master of two languages and cultures. Therefore, a proper choice of the source text is very vital and necessary for the translator, according to the translator's abilities including language ability, expression ability, and cognitive ability. Generally speaking, medical text belongs to science texts. That is to say, general features of science texts also exist in the medical text, regardless of the language of the text. And as a kind of medical text, popular medical text aims to spread information to the public who lack professional medical knowledge. And its language is concise and accurate, and a few difficult terms and information occur in the text. Moreover, cultural elements appearing in the text are to arouse interests and emotion. In the text, the author tries to use simple methods and ways to express professional information. Based on these conditions, the authors choose a popular medical book called *Disease-Proof: Slash Your Risk of Heart Disease, Cancer, Diabetes, and More--by 80 Percent* as the source text.

The book is written by David Katz and Stacey Colin. David Katz is the founding director of Yale University's Prevention Research Center, director of the Integrative Medicine Center at Griffin Hospital, and president of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine. Editor in chief of the journal *Childhood Obesity*, he has authored nearly two hundred

scientific papers and chapters and fifteen books. Dr. Katz is the recipient of numerous awards and recognition, including an honorary doctoral degree, and is recognized globally for his expertise in nutrition, weight management, and the prevention of chronic disease. And the chosen source text takes the author years of efforts and originates from his medical practices. Moreover, the work has gotten much praises from his colleagues, peers, the government officials, and the public. And the other author named Stacey Colin is the award-winning writer behind *Eat! Move! Play!* and co-author of *Taking Back the Month*. Her work has been seen in the Washington Post, Newsweek, Real Simple, Redbook, Harpers Bazaar, and many other publications. Two authors of the book both have rich experience in health management and disease prevention. In this book, they convey a corny but significant message to the public: exercise, better lifestyle and good dietary habits can slash the risk of many diseases to a large extent.

Translation of the Source Text

Translation of the source text involves comprehension, interpretation, and adaption of the text, in which the translator needs to make choices of translation methods, strategies and purposes based on acquired information and features of language and culture. In the translation process, the translator exerts its subjectivity to discover signs of intertextuality and construct intertextuality with the source text and texts of the target language. This paper discusses the translator's subjectivity from the levels of linguistic, including lexicon and sentence, and culture.

Linguistic Level

From the lexical level, medical English vocabulary is formed by the borrowing of roots, affixes or foreign vocabulary. Each medical English vocabulary is composed of the absorption and transformation of another vocabulary. And from the perspective of etymology, a small part of medical vocabulary comes from English, most of which are borrowed from foreign languages such as Latin, French, Greek, German, so it can be concluded that medical English text has strong intertextuality with texts of other languages. At the same time, after translation of English words into China in early days, the translation formed by translators have been widely accepted by the public. The new version of translation will cause difficulties in understanding and accepting medical information and knowledge. Therefore, the translator should also take this into consideration in the translation process, and use appropriate translation methods to achieve translation goals.

E.g. 1: Meanwhile, hospitalization rates for ischemic stroke are already rising among five- to fourteen-year-olds, according to a recent CDC study, largely because of the prevalence of childhood obesity and hypertension that often comes with it.

Translation: 与此同时，根据该中心的近期研究显示，五到十四岁的人群患缺血性脑卒中（ischemic stroke，俗称脑中风，是一种因大脑供血减少而导致的最常见疾病。）的住院率正在逐渐上升，这很大程度上是由于儿童肥胖症的流行，以及与肥胖症相伴而来的高血压引起的。

In the example, the term of “stroke” conveys the meaning that a blood vessel in patients’ brain bursts or becomes blocked, which may kill them or make them unable to move one side of their body. (<http://dict.youdao.com/w/stroke/#keyfrom=dict2.top>). And in English texts, there are many words collaborating with “stroke”, like heart stroke, brain stroke. In these collaborations, the word of stroke has the same meaning concerning disease. And how to translate the term into Chinese with an equivalent term is a big challenge for the translator. Then the translator exerts its background information and look at previous materials and texts up to find a proper translation. In

traditional Chinese medicine, a disease is suitable for the term “stroke”, called “中风” in a famous Chinese medical book *Febrile Disease*. From the perspective of traditional Chinese medicine, “stroke” is caused by wind pathogen externally and internally. Now, “stroke” is caused by internal reason. So in the translation process, the translator plays its role of subjectivity in seeking the intertextuality and proper translation technique to make the target readers get a good reading experience, and offer intertextuality for future texts.

E.g. 2: docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)

Translation: DHA

In the example, the term of docosahexaenoic acid seems to be difficult for readers. But speaking of its abbreviation--DHA, many people will be familiar with it. In the medical text, an abbreviation is a common form of words. The meaning of the abbreviation is equal to the original word, and the abbreviation can make readers remind of the original word easily. So the abbreviation and the original word form a relationship of intertextuality. As is known above, the source text and target text construct intertextuality and do target text and other texts of the target language. So the key is to find the intertextuality by translator's subjectivity. The term in the example is a foreign term, unfamiliar for the target readers. But Chinese people are familiar with the term of DHA, which appears often in commercials and food packages. And DHA is accepted widely by the Chinese readers and become a cultural element in Chinese. So the translator takes these factors into consideration to adopt translation technique of zero translation, in order to achieve the communicative purpose. In the translation process, the translator keeps the form of the term, achieving the intertextuality of the source text and the target text.

E.g. 3: Genes that may cause you to make more or less insulin, cholesterol, or white blood cells are also all influenced by your lifestyle.

Translation: 促使人体生成或多或少的胰岛素、胆固醇或者白细胞的基因也同样受到生活方式的影响。

In the example, passive voice occurs in the sentence. In the medical text, a passive sentence is characterized by its strict sentence structure and logic. And in English, the important information is placed first and ahead. The passive sentence achieves the purpose. But different from English, key information is placed behind. And the Chinese sentence tends to adopt an active voice. But there is also a passive voice in Chinese sentences. And many words in Chinese can convey the passive meaning. For example, “受到”, “遭到”, “为...所” and “被”. In some sense, the word “被” conveys the meaning of unfortunate news and unexpected information. And due to the translation of science texts, English language affects greatly the Chinese language and this phenomenon is called Europeanization of Chinese. During the process of Europeanization of Chinese, passive voice affects the Chinese sentences. The word “被” is applied in Chinese sentences, and a long sentences are often seen in Chinese characterized by short and simple sentences. As a result, it can be seen that the source text is connected to the target text. In the target text “促使人体生成或多或少的胰岛素、胆固醇或者白细胞的基因也同样受到生活方式的影响。”, long attribute of gene suits the feature of the source text, reflecting the intertextuality of the source text. (Wang, 2014) And the translator use “受到” to express the passive meaning. Due to the frequent use of active use in Chinese texts, the shift of passive sentence is a better choice in order to achieve the purpose of preserving Chinese culture and language form. The translation technique makes the target text easy to accept and comprehend.

Cultural Level

In a popular medical text, the author of the source text exerts knowledge of all fields—history, culture, economy, food, and applies different expression forms like allusion, quotation to achieve informative and communicative functions and purposes. From this point, the popular medical book is characterized by intertextuality. In the translation process of the popular medical book, the translator should seek the intertextuality and play its role of subjectivity to apply different and proper methods. Thus the cultural barriers and obstacles can be broken and communicative purpose achieved. In the following paragraphs, the subjectivity will be explained and discussed in the following an example.

E.g. 4: To supplement or not to supplement, that is a question.

Translation: 进补还是弃补，这是一个问题。

In the example, the expression “To supplement or not to supplement, that is a question.” Comes from the expression “To be or not to be, that is a question.” in English literary work called *Hamlet*. The source text is adapted based on previous texts and just change two words to achieve a better expression and communicative effect. The intertextuality can be found easily in the source text. And as a classical and famous book, *Hamlet* has been translated several times by Chinese translators. The expression “To be or not to be, that is a question” is well-known and acknowledged by the world. The acknowledge translation of the expression is “生存还是毁灭，这是一个问题”. The translation in Chinese is equivalent to the source text in meaning and form. The translator fully takes these into consideration. As for the example, the translator applies the previous translation and makes adaption and transformation based on intertextuality. So the target text is generated as “进补还是弃补，这是一个问题”, which is suitable for the source text and previous translation in Chinese texts. And taking Chinese expression habits into consideration, “supplement” refers to a pill for improving health. But in this sentence, the word refers to providing more nutrition human, acting as a verb. So in the target text, the translator chooses “进补” to convey the message of adding nutrition, which is suitable for Chinese culture and language.

E.g.5: As you'll see in subsequent chapters, other skills are needed to help you create, locate, and navigate your own yellow brick road to better health and well-being.

Translation:

在后续章节中你们将了解到，建立、寻找以及走上通往提升健康和幸福的康庄大道需要依赖其他技能的帮助。

In the example, “yellow brick road” is quoted from the novel *The Wonderful Wizard Of Oz*. In the novel, the heroine named Dorothy lost her way home due to a strong and powerful wind, and she went along the yellow brick road and then returned home with the help of the wizard. Therefore, a yellow brick road is not just the road itself, which also stands for hope and success. In other words, yellow brick road refers to the road of hope and success. If the translator adopts the literal translation of “黄砖路”, it expresses the meaning of the vocabulary literally, which loses the connotation of the expression and will make target readers fail to associate the road with hope and success. And in eyes of target readers, they will just think it as a road with yellow color. Therefore, it is necessary for the translator to make a transformation and choose proper translation method instead of literal translation. In Chinese, “康庄大道” is often used to express the bright and promising future. And the expression originates from the Chinese famous book called *Shih Chi* (or *The Historical Records*), in which the original expression is “康庄之衢”. In a word, the free translation expresses both the meaning and connotation, equivalent to the source text and suitable for the expression of the target text. In the translation

process, the translator tries to find intertextuality and then achieve the real communicative purpose.

CONCLUSIONS

Nowadays, with the further implement of internationalization and the improvement of people's living standards, health traditional Chinese the awareness is being strengthened by increasingly frequent medical exchange and deepening communication between Chinese and English culture. Therefore, it is necessary to value and appreciate medical English translation activities. The popular medical text, as a scientific and technological text, is interrelated and interconnected with previous texts, surrounding texts and texts of other fields, and cannot be analyzed and studied separately. And as the implementer and operator of translation activity, the translator plays an active role in comprehending, interpreting and adapting the source text. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the translator's subjectivity in the process of medical English translation from the perspective of intertextuality, thus to adopt appropriate translation strategies and techniques, to obtain a good response from readers and achieve a better communicative purpose.

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