

The Problems and Prospect Analysis of Corpus-based Translation Studies

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Abstract—The nearly 20-year development of Corpus-based Translation Studies is a cycle process to "raise a question-- resolve the problem-- eliminate errors-- raise new questions" in terms of object of study and methodology. In terms of the study objects, mainly for language translation, text description of the overall characteristics, such as translation universals, translator style. In terms of the research methods, has gone from a single monolingual or bilingual parallel mode to the integrated mode that combined both. In recent years, changes and interaction with the translation in the language have brought a new object of study, according to the actual needs to establish multiple composite contrast modes has become a development trend of methodology. Development of Corpus-based Translation Studies illustrate: A new paradigm to be recognized and made significant progress, we must continue to deepen the study of the object, innovate research methods, and expand its research field.

Keywords- *Corpus-based Translation Studies, problems, prospects*

I. INTRODUCTION

Corpus-based Translation Studies in the 21st century developed rapidly and remarkably. It has become a coherent, complex, abundant research paradigm, involving a series of fields from theory to description then to practice. Since 2005, China's Corpus-based Translation Studies has entered a rapid development period, a growing number of Chinese scholars began to build Corpus-based Translation Studies, to a growing number of translation corpus based research project have got the support of State Fund and its potential is enormous. But building Corpus applied to translation studies is surviving technological barriers, how translation studies effectively use a large corpus statistics also makes a lot of people feel strange.

II. THE BASIC IDEA OF CORPUS-BASED TRANSLATION STUDIES

In terms of Translation Studies itself, Corpus-based Translation Studies have been supported by two aspects of the theory: First, the concept of semantic shifted to the concept of context, breaking the tradition "equivalence", which was considered to correspond to certain social and cultural context of the used language; second, the descriptive translation studies paradigm broke the dominance of the

original.. Descriptive translation studies pioneered aside the traditional practices and paid more attention to the interaction and impact between languages, cultural constraints of the target language and viewed translate research as an interdisciplinary field, from multiple perspectives to study.

Wang Fei, Huang Libo (2000) pointed out, research methods of Corpus-based Translation Studies are guided by linguistics and translation theory, probability and statistics as the means and bilingual corpus as real objects to have synchronic and diachronic study of translation. Fundamentally, the theoretical source of Corpus-based Translation Studies is R. Firth, MAK Halliday and John Sinclair as the representative of the British linguistics traditional thinking. This school thought that language studies should be based on real data, that is a true copy of the main object of study for empirical research, he text as a whole as the basic unit of study, based on the contrast of text corpus as the basic model.

III. FEATURES OF CORPUS-BASED TRANSLATION STUDIES

A. *Corpus-based Translation Studies and descriptive translation studies*

Translated text has been regarded as language a variant that is unnatural, deviation from the language convention, and therefore not included as a target corpus. In 1990s, with the rise of descriptive translation studies, the status of translated texts as a target culture had been recognized. In this historical context, the application of Corpus in Translation Studies is gradually attracting the academic attention and absorbing nutrients of descriptive translation theory, and ultimately forming Corpus-based Translation Studies. Clearly, descriptive Translation Studies is an important prerequisite to the formation of Corpus-based Translation Studies. No descriptive translation studies, there is no Corpus-based Translation Studies.

B. *Corpus Linguistics and Corpus-based Translation Studies*

Corpus linguistics refers to the use of corpus to observe and analyze linguistic facts, and based on these facts to prove or disprove existing linguistic theories, or make a new point and theory of the study. It goes without saying, in terms of research methodology, the corpus linguistics and Corpus-

based translation studies are consistent. Moreover, the Corpus-based Translation Studies and corpus linguistics also have a common theoretical foundation that is the traditional thinking of British language which is represented by R. Firth and MAK Halliday. The school considered that language study should be considered factual or true speech text as the main object of study, the text should be used as the basic unit of the overall study. Language has social attributes; language studies should focus on language behavior rather than language skills, and analyze the social function of language. Both agree on the following assumptions: 1) the corpus as a language sample is representative of the actual use of the language, so the research corpus is equivalent to the study of language; 2) use of language with probability characteristics. Through the corpus statistics and analysis, probabilistic features of language using can be described, in order to describe and explain linguistic phenomena.

IV. PROBLEMS OF CORPUS-BASED TRANSLATION STUDIES

A. *Ontological dilemma*

Corpus-based Translation Studies began in translation universals research; this camp also carries most criticism. Translation universals research has been criticized by some scholars, positivism, the pursuit of the objective, ignoring the value of intuition and interpretation, but also with researchers' sweeping orientation and prejudice. Studies attempted to be devalued with translation context (language pair, text type, translate school the translator belongs to) to study translation universals is preposterous. While overlapping, explicit can be said to be one part of simplification, Baker's so-called translation universals considered contradictory, if the "neat" is the common, then explicit, simplification, standardization and other similarities cannot be established.

B. *Methodology dilemma*

Many scholars believe that the study cannot be overemphasized "scientific" corpus, quantification methods, cannot borrow Corpus to trick. While the electronic version of the corpus is convenient, but also has the potential to limited translation research, it only reveals the text corpus and external text data, but the data itself is not the purpose of statistics, the key is how to release statistical results. Also Corpus-based Translation Studies should not only be based on vague generalizations, but should be combined with quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis to explore discourse, language and text genre and pragmatic elements of text.

C. *Technical limitations*

Corpus building is difficult, the number and kind of domestic and international corpus cannot effectively meet research needs, the context provided is inadequate, and representative of corpus is not ideal.

D. *Limitations on research methods*

Practitioners may have over-reliance on corpus. The researchers only provide a wealth of translation examples and statistics, do not provide an explanation of the nature of the phenomenon of translation, researchers can be easily drowned in large amounts of data, research results become games of number, can not reveal the significance and meaning of the data. In terms of the breadth and depth of research, the results focus on the corpus construction, translation and translators common style, several other areas of research is still in the shallow, especially in specific language translation features, interpreting corpus research and corpus teaching have urgent need for more results.

E. *Research scope is narrow, and lack of interdisciplinary research*

The studies more focus on the commonalities and the translators' the styles, the field of research is relatively narrow, mainly focused on the describing language feature of translation, failed to combine with interdisciplinary Translation Studies. It can be carried out in the future from the cultural, social theoretical aspects, in addition, the potential of the study of translating semantic prosody is huge, there is no systematic research, which should raise concern in the future.

F. *Quantitative Research is in its infancy, needs to be deepened*

Quantitative research in this area is currently mostly limited to analysis of word frequency and average sentence length and other data, the quantitative analysis is obviously insufficient, and objectivity has also been questioned. To truly reveal the regularity of translation features, sophisticated statistical analysis of quantitative methods can be used, such as the chi-square test can analyze the details of massive data and analyze inherent formation mechanisms and motivation of translations from the perspective of the interdisciplinary to improve the explanatory power and scientificity of translation studies.

G. *Corpus construction and in-depth process should be strengthened*

Interpreting Corpus building and research is lagging behind, we must first sharpen his tools, corpus-based translation studies as a substance, and its importance is self-evident. Compared with foreign countries, few translation corpora have been built in domestic area, and the scale is not ideal. If only depend on foreign translation corpus, domestic researches only just pick up the pace, unable to carry out research with originality.

V. PROSPECT ANALYSIS OF CORPUS-BASED TRANSLATION STUDIES

To shift focus from translation itself to the outside, from translation text turning to all kinds of factors that constrained generation of translation text, as well as language interaction and changes in brought from translation the translated text. In the early development of Corpus-based Translation Studies, researches focused on the investigation of

translation universals, the inspection methods are mainly average sentence length, vocabulary density and other aspects of pure formality. In recent years, the start of the study will be translated as a form of language contact, concern interaction in translation and language changes brought by translation, even describing the phenomenon of translation itself, will also focus on the external aspects of interpretation. As House's(2011) object of study is to explore the language contacts through a translator corpus to bring changes in the target language.

Shift from description to explanation, empirical, and interdisciplinary study is further enhanced. The study of translation universals are no longer limited to the description, but rather focus on the interpretation. Interpretation of translation universals can work from human cognition, translation as the nature of communication and translator's recognition of their roles in society. As a result, translation universal study will combine linguistic phenomena and the social, cultural, cognitive and other factors closely, epitomize the interdisciplinary nature of translation studies. Summary of universal research achievements noted that universal study makes the nature of Corpus-based Translation Studies from description into empirical study, and beyond the empirical study. Empirical research can improve the objectivity of translation studies, and enable them to achieve a certain share in the methodology with other disciplines.

While absorbing nutrition of corpus linguistics, descriptive translation studies and other related disciplines, Corpus-based Translation Studies constantly enrich and develop their own research and research methods, have made an outstanding development. Although Corpus-based Translation Studies at the technical layer, research methods, and the breadth of peers still face some problems and limitations, but the integrated into corpus research methods, the quantitative and qualitative research methods, we can believe that not long in the coming the historical period, Corpus-based Translation Studies will develop into a branch of translation Studies with complete disciplinary system, and rich research outcomes.

The construction of Corpus-based Translation Studies is strongly encouraged while promoting the sharing and application of the corpus resources. Given Corpus building is complex, time-consuming, and expensive to develop its reasons, on the one hand, special training or Summer School of Corpus-based Translation Studies should be organized more in order to save costs. On the other hand, we should through a variety of channels, and actively seek to raise funds, according to the "easy things first" principle and the "developing while applying" to strengthen application of Corpus. Actively seek funds to support the construction of different types of translation studies corpus, especially included law, business, economic and other news themes.

To fully use the advantages of combination of quantitative analysis and qualitative research to overcome language limitations due to limited corpus searching, Corpus-based Translation Studies need to collect the relevant statistical data, but also on the basis of statistical data, according to the theory of these data to interpret and analyze, illustrate the phenomenon these data reflected in translation and attributes and rules in translation process, make efforts to overcome the lack of cultural context brought by the corpus retrieval restrictions, and lead to the flaws and limitations of incomprehensive, unscientific interpretation of the corpus. Only fully use the advantages of research methods, its Corpus-based Translation Studies Translation Studies can play the advantages distinguished from traditional methodology, and to gain momentum for sustainable development.

VI. CONCLUSION

Although the history of Corpus-based Translation Studies is short, more than a decade it attracted widespread attention of translation scholars at home and abroad, but also continue to enrich and develop their own theoretical system and research method. In translation studies, particularly the study of translation universals, which is playing an increasingly important role, and has produced a number of influential outcomes in the field of translation research, it is an indisputable fact. It is an innovation of theory and method for traditional thinking of translation, translation method, the more important is that it is a overturn for traditional translation theory and research methods. Although Corpus-based Translation Studies has some problems of development, I believe that with the constant depth study of Corpus-based Translation Studies, these problems will be successfully resolved; this new paradigm will have a more positive impact on the enrichment and development of translation theory and practice of translation.

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