

A Study of the English Translation of Chinese University Mottoes from the Perspective of Nominalization

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Abstract. A motto shows the spirit and culture of the university and publicizes its educational tenet. Nominalization makes language concise and refined, and easily impress readers. By analyzing 30 pieces of western university mottoes, it explores that nominalization is very common in the mottoes of western universities. And the comparison between western university mottoes and Chinese university mottoes gives a solution to the English translation of Chinese university mottoes and many problems may be avoided such as chinglish and being lengthy.

Introduction

In a university motto, its spirit and culture can be learned. A university motto can also realize the function of publicity. And its English translation can help to introduce university culture and spirit to the world. Because global communication and cooperation becomes frequent, the educational exchange around the world becomes more frequent. Therefore, many foreigners maintain coming to China to further their study in universities. For these students the university motto is a way to know the college. However, some translations' meaning or styles are not equivalent with their original way. There are a number of problems existing in it: that some translations cannot convey the spirit of a school makes translations cannot realize the function of publicity. Some are translated word by word and the translation becomes very strange. These kinds of translation may make readers feel confused. Therefore, it is significant to study the English translation of Chinese motto.

Nominalization and Previous Studies on the English Translation of Chinese Mottoes

Any researchers have already studied the phenomenon of nominalization. As for nominalization, researchers from different linguistic fields think differently. Therefore, there are several different definitions of it in linguistics.

Chomsky (1968) believes that nominalization is a process by which a stem, verb phrase, or sentence is transformed into a nominal." Randolph Quirk (1985) mentioned that if a noun phrase and a clause have systematic corresponding relationship, it can be called nominalization. Zhu Yongsheng (2006) argues that from the perspective of semantic features, nominalization regards a certain characteristic or process as a thing, and the transformation is just a means to realize this phenomenon. Since these studies stress different points, scholars hold different ideas towards the phenomenon of nominalization. But the definition of it still has its own value and has something in common, that is, nominalization is the grammatical process which enables things to emerge as nouns.

Since the 1990s, a lot of scholars began to study school mottoes and the researching scope have been expanding. Various studies about the translation of Chinese motto into English have been made and almost every aspect achieves a lot. The following will list some of their achievements.

The features of the motto of Chinese university have been studied from two aspects: one is the features of the source and the other is the features of language. "Zhou Jie and Chen Nini mentioned that the motto of Chinese university derives from the educational philosophy, traditional classics, patriotism and the spirit of the times" (Zhou and Chen, 2014). Take the motto of Tsinghua University

for example, it is from the Book of Changes; and the motto of Shanghai Jiao Tong University is to remind students to have a grateful heart and not forget their own country and school; Zhejiang University's motto is from the spirit of the time. "Zhou Yongmo discussed the language features and said that the motto of Chinese university uses concise and refined words, "4-character" structure and as for rhetorical aesthetics, the motto uses antithesis" (Zhou, 2008). For example, Wuhan University's motto belongs to "4-character" structure; Beijing Normal University's motto uses antithesis.

As for motto translation, many scholars proposed some translation steps and translation method. "Zhou Yongmo studied the English translation of Chinese motto from the source characteristics of the university motto, language features (including morphology, syntax) and proposed his translation principles: Intertextuality principles, communication principles and the principle of simplicity" (Zhou, 2008). "Yue Zhongsheng used the method of comparative analysis to study the similarities and differences of Chinese and foreign university mottoes. He summed up the five commonly used structures in English translation of Chinese motto: noun structure, verb-object structure, "adjective +preposition+ noun"structure, "verb+adverb" structure and "be+adj"structure" (Yue, 2009). Fan wuqiu and Fan toujiao expressed the steps of translating the Chinese motto: firstly, understand the content, then, deliberate the words, and try to stay the beauty of language" (Fan and Fan, 2007).

Some scholars studied the differences between the Chinese motto and English motto. "Du Zhengming studied the translation from the aspect of the differences of sino-British thinking. Specifically speaking, he explained the difference between the Chinese motto and English motto of Suzhou University from three aspects: context-dependence, dynamic and static language, monistic structure and dualistic structure" (Du, 2007).

Analysis of University Mottoes

The Analysis of English Mottoes. The study involves 30 pieces of mottoes of foreign universities, which are collected from the universities' official websites. The involved colleges are British or American universities.

The Feature of English Mottoes. According to the structural features, these mottoes could be divided into four groups: noun phrase, prepositional phrase, verb phrase and simple sentence. The following diagram shows the statistical results.

From the statistical results, it shows that the noun phrase takes up 50%, simple sentence takes up 26.6%, prepositional phrase takes up 16.7% and verb phrase only take s up 6.7%. Obviously, the first group takes up the most parts and verb phrase take up the least parts. Such result explains that noun phrase is the main characteristic of English motto. Xu Yucheng(2009) mentioned that nominalized structure can be a noun or a structure consisting of a group of words. In another word, nominalization is the main characteristic of English motto. For example, the motto of Massachusetts Institute of Technology is "Mind and Hand"; the motto of University of Michigan is "Arts, Science, Truth"; and United States Military Academy at West Point is "Duty, Honor, Country". All these mottoes are made of noun phrases whose structures are short and brief. And they usually can directly convey the educational philosophy to the reader and impress the readers.

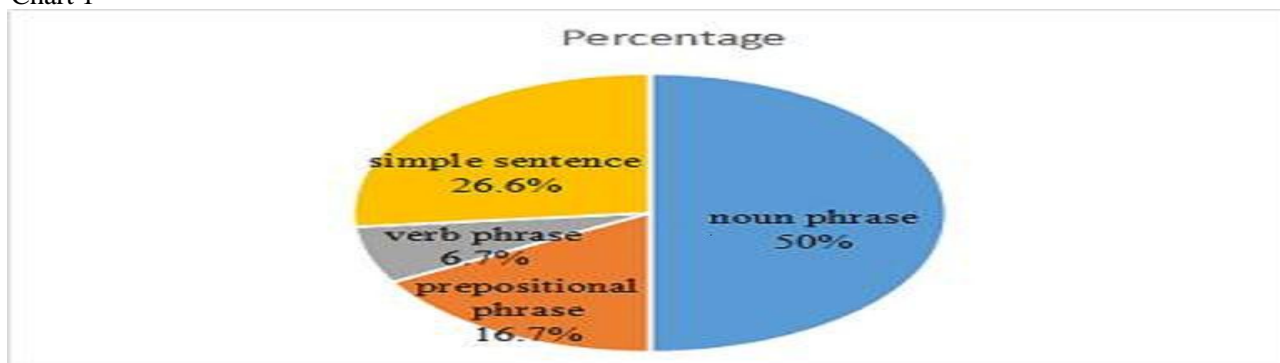
The Analysis of Chinese Mottoes

The study involves 25 pieces of Chinese mottoes and their English translation which are collected from the official websites of those universities. Firstly, the language features of Chinese motto and the problems existing in English translation of Chinese motto will be analyzed, then a strategy of the English translation of Chinese motto will be proposed.

Table 1 The Statistical Results of the Structural Features of English University Mottoes

Type	Western university mottoes and universities	Total	Percentage
Noun phrase	Mind and Hand (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) Light and truth (Yale University) Arts, Science, Truth. (University of Michigan) Progress and Service (Georgia Institute of Technology) Knowledge and Faith (Duke University) Man, the servant and interpreter of nature. (Lehigh University) Intelligence, the Basis of Civilization. (Imperial College London) Opportunityaa. (Pace University) The way, the Truth, and the Life. (University of Glasgow) Perseverance ,Excellence, Commitment and Knowledge. Here light and sacred draughts. (University of Cambridge) Peace and Light. (Tufts University) Duty, Honor, Country. (The United States Military Academy at West Point) Good Hope. (University of Cape Town) Science with Practice (Iowa State University)	15	50%
Prepositional phrase	Science with Practice (Iowa State University) With Holiness and Wisdom. (King's College London) Through Faith to the Fullness of Truth. (Fairfield University) As a tree through the ages. (University of Toronto) Strength through Truth (Washington University)	5	16.7%
Verb phrase	To Persist and Excel (New York University) To Know the Causes of Things (University of Sheffield)	2	6.7%
Simple sentence	The truth shall make you free. (Johns Hopkins University) The Lord Is My Illuminating. (University of Oxford) the wind of freedom blows. (Stanford University) My heart is in the work. (Carnegie Mellon University) This is yours. (University of British Columbia) We shall grow in the esteem of future generations. (University of Melbourne) Let all come who by merit deserve the most reward. (University College London) Let Plato be your friend, and Aristotle, but more let your friend be truth. (Harvard University)	8	26.6%

Chart 1



Problems in English Translation of Chinese Mottoes

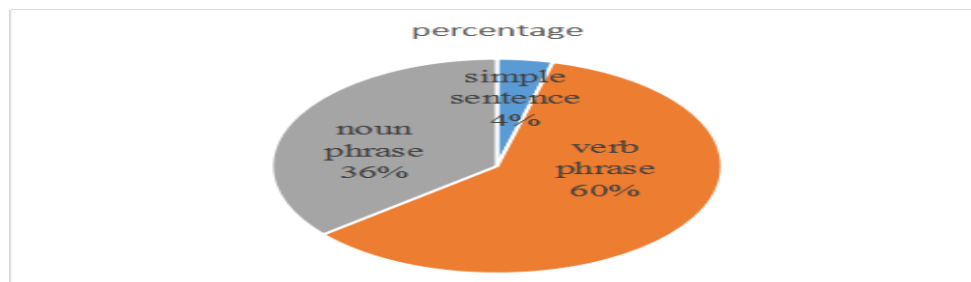
Because Chinese culture is broad and profound and the simple words of Chinese mottoes are often rich in meaning, it is very difficult to translate these mottoes well. Some mottoes can be translated word by word, such as Peking University's motto "Patriotism, Advancement, Democracy and Science". But this way cannot be used in most motto translation. At present, the English translation does exist some problems and this paper will cover the following aspects of the problems:

Table 2 The Statistical Results of the Structural Features of University Mottoes

Type	English translations of Chinese mottoes in Chinese universities	Total	Percentage
Noun phrase	1 Patriotism, Advancement, Democracy and Science (Peking University) 2 Self-discipline and Social Commitment (Tsinghua University) 3 Rich in Knowledge and Tenacious of Purpose; Inquiring with Earnestness and Reflecting with practice (Fudan University) 4 Dedication and Practicality (National University of Defense Technology) 5 Dedication to Public Interests, Acquisition of All-round Capability, and Aspiration for Progress with Each Day Discipline (Nankai University) 6 Discipline, Practicality, Unity and Creativity (Tongji University) 7 Strict Standard and Sufficient Effort (Harbin Institute of Technology) 8 Solidarity, Diligence, Practicality and Creativity (Beijing Institute of Technology) 9 Loyalty, Integrity, Courage and Perseverance (Northwestern Polytechnical University)	9	36%
Verb phrase	10 Improve Yourself, Carry Forward Stamina, Seek Truth and Develop Innovations (Wuhan University) 11 Seek Truth from Facts (Renmin University of China & Tianjin University) 12 Seek Truth and Be Creative, Be Honest and Intelligent, Study Hard and Act Sincerely (Nanjing University) 13 Seek truth, be innovative and endeavor to work for the best. (Jilin University) 14 Learn to be an Excellent Teacher; Act as an Exemplary Person (Beijing Normal University) 15 Study Extensively, Enquire Accurately, Reflect Carefully, Discriminate Clearly, Practise earnestly (Sun Yat-sen University) 16 Study diligently and skillfully; Promote self-inspiration; Determine strength; Handling with loyalty and forgiveness. (Xi'an Jiaotong University) 17 Pursue Excellence, Strive for Perfection (Xiamen University) 18 Strive for Perfection (Southeast University) 19 Seek truth; make innovations; enhance morality; foster talents. (huazhong normal university) 20 Seek truth from facts, dare be a person first. (Hunan University) 21 Tackle Problems the People Face, Cultivate Talents the World Needs. (China Agricultural University) 22 seek the truth, be creative, and live up to the name of teacher. (East China Normal University) 23 Learn extensively, inquire thoroughly, ponder prudently, distinguish clearly and practice methodically. (South China University of Technology)	15	60%
Simple sentence	When you drink water, never shall you forget its source; love your motherland 24 and add credit to your alma mater. (Shanghai Jiaotong University)	1	4%

From the statistical results, it shows that the noun phrase of English translation of Chinese mottoes takes up 32%, simple sentence only takes up 4% and verb phrase takes up 6.7%. Obviously, the last group takes up the most parts. Such result explains that verb phrase is a main characteristic of it. In another word, the English translation of it is dominant by verb phrases. It indicates that most translators still think in Chinese when they translate the motto. The English translation of Chinese motto will help these mottoes perform the function of publicizing. However, most target audience of English translation are English-speaking people, they have their own background knowledge and expectations to the translation.

Chart 2



The Translation Strategy of Chinese University Mottoes

In order to achieve the goal of publicity, the background knowledge and expectation of the target audience should be considered. Studying English mottoes' features and using it as a reference can help to achieve the publicity purpose of Chinese motto. From the language perspective, nominalization in English motto was widely used, so nominalization should be used in translating Chinese university's motto without departing from the original meaning. Chinese language is verb-centered, but English is noun-centered.

It can be concluded that when translating the Chinese university motto, the translator should first understand the meaning of the motto, then the translator should choose the proper words and finally the translator should consider the feature of English motto--nominalization.

Conclusions

The present study aims to find a better way to translate the Chinese mottoes into English from the perspective of nominalization. The major findings are summed up as follows:

Firstly, according to statistical data and analysis, it can be found that there are several types of phrases in the English mottoes. The noun phrase takes up the most parts. Such result proves that it is the main types of phrases in English mottoes.

Secondly, Chinese university mottoes prefer to use verb phrases. This phenomenon is related to Chinese thinking ways. It will lead to some problems, such as chinglish and being lengthy.

Thirdly, the target readers can easily understand and impress readers.

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