

The Application of Fuzzy Theory and Fuzzy Language in Sports Interpreting*

Jun Xu

South China Business College
Guangdong University of Foreign Studies
Guangzhou, China

Abstract—With the further development of the Belt and Road Initiative, China's communication with foreign countries has become more frequent, and interpretation has been applied to foreign exchanges in various industries. As one of the major sports countries, China has put forward higher demands for sports interpreting talents in foreign exchanges. Many domestic scholars have also paid more and more attention to interpretation and translation studies of sports events. According to the development of interpreting research and the language characteristics of sports events, fuzzy theory and fuzzy language are thought to be applied to sports events interpretation research. Based on three aspects of speech ambiguity, syntactic ambiguity and cross-cultural ambiguity, this paper briefly discusses the application of fuzzy language in sports event interpretation, and finally shares some interpreting techniques and application strategies.

Keywords—fuzzy theory; fuzzy language; sports interpreting

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Fuzzy Theory

In 1965, Professor Zadeh of the University of California, USA, first proposed the concept of "fuzzy" in his paper "Fuzzy Sets", which was later extended to fuzzy theory.

Fuzzy concept means that the extension of the concept is uncertain, or its extension is unclear and fuzzy. (HU, 2010, pp. 73-74) If "perfect" is a vague concept, there is no definite boundary between "perfect" and "imperfect". Fuzzy theory is based on fuzzy set, and its basic spirit is to accept the fact that fuzzy phenomenon exists, to deal with the concept of fuzzy uncertain things as its research goal and active measure the uncertain things into information that can be processed by computer but not advocate complex mathematical analysis as the model to solve the problem. (LIAO, 2003)

*This study is sponsored by the Provincial Key Discipline of Guangdong Province (2016): English Language and Literature (SCBC), and is part of the research of the school-level scientific research innovation team "The Innovation Team of the Comparative Study of English and Chinese Language in the New Era" (Grant No. 2018TD01) and the Guangdong Program of Strengthening Universities through Innovation "The Reform and Practice of CATTI Participatory Translation Teaching" (Grant No. 2016GXJK223).

B. Fuzzy Language

After decades of development and improvement, fuzzy theory has played an important role in various sectors of society. Especially in large-scale sports events, sports interpretation has the characteristics of randomness, vividness and professionalism. The nature of the language itself determines the universal existence of vague language. (Keefe, 2000, pp. 71-80)

Vague language does not mean vague, ambiguous language that can only be misunderstood. On the contrary, it accurately reflects the vague concept of life by using semantic fuzziness. Vagueness is the basic attribute of natural language. (YU, 2006) The fuzziness of language is the uncertainty about the boundary and nature of object. For example, in "He is a good man", the definition of "good" is uncertain.

II. FUZZY LANGUAGE IN SPORTS INTERPRETATION

The accuracy of language is only a variable in the process of language development. Some variables are immutable if they are restricted by context, while others are fuzziness if they are not. (Mei L., 2007) The use of fuzzy language in sports interpretation is quite extensive, and these variables are obviously not restricted by context, because sports events themselves are full of variability, especially some large and important sports events. The application of fuzzy language gives the narrator and reporter the space to give full play to the language ability, different styles, humor, passion, satire and other elements, and give the audience space to imagine, and sometimes can be memorable.

A. Fuzziness in the Part of Speech

According to the classification of fuzzy language, the fuzziness of words can be divided into three types: (1) Referential vagueness. The meaning of the word itself is clear, but it is difficult to determine whether it can be used for certain objects. Such as sea and river, child and young, their boundaries are not very obvious. (2) Indeterminacy of meaning. Word itself has multiple meaning, including denotative and connotative meanings, and even some of them cannot be found in the dictionary but implied between lines. (3) Lack of specification. The meaning of the word itself is clear, but it belongs to general meaning. The word

workmate, for example, is clear in its own sense, but it can refer to colleagues of different genders and ages, and therefore it can refer to many people. (Williamson, 1994)

We may combine verb, noun, adjective and so on to carry on the analysis to the above three kinds of fuzziness. In a sports event, the use of verbs, nouns, adjectives and other words is necessary and frequent. Their purpose is to present as much as possible the true situation of the event and give the audience a sense of truth and enjoyment. Otherwise, it is like a mime, just saying that someone is doing something, such as a goal, a foul by an athlete, with which no resonance exists among the audience, and the explanation or report also fail to achieve its purpose.

1) Fuzziness in verb: Since it is a sports event, in most circumstances, verbs of action are used as an explanation or description, and the use of verbs seems to be very elaborate. Many verbs in sports events are euphemistic and vague. See example 1:

ST: "Can you hear me, Maggie! Your boys took one hell of a beating! Your boys took one hell of a beating!"

Interpretation: "Maggie, do you hear me? Your kids got beat up! They were beaten up!"

(ZHU, 2005, p. 211)

That was Norwegian commentator comments on TV when Norway beat England 2-1 in the 1981 World Cup qualifier. "Take one hell of a beating" can mean "beat up", "give a lesson", etc. But in this case, quoted by the narrator as the winner or loser of a football match, the interpreter translated it as "Norway beat England hard." We seemed to feel that before the match Norwegian fans suffocated into a burst of anger, vividly demonstrated the passion of the Norwegian fans at that time and the excitement of victory over the enemy.

"Top Asia, challenge the world" can be interpreted as "out of Asia and out of the world". The two words "top" and "challenge" are vague concepts, which are not clear about where to stand on the top of Asia and what to challenge the world. While stimulated the imagination, different audiences have different understanding of this slogan. In these two examples, the former is polymorphic and the latter is referential ambiguity.

2) Fuzziness in noun: In sports events, the vague usage of nouns is mainly embodied in the fictitious meaning and anaphora of nouns. In the interpretation and report, the vague use of nouns will play a more vivid role in modifying the subject. See example 2:

ST: It's a game of two halves.

Interpretation: "The first and the second half of the game are two extremes."

(ZHU, 2005, p. 212)

Halves is the plural of half, which interprets the vague usage of the noun, and embodies the two sides of the competition, leaving more imagination for the audience. We often hear the word "bench" in basketball, and "make the

bench" means a substitute. This is another example of the virtualization of nouns. The image shows the state of a substitute player. In "From nobodies to world beaters", the terms "nobody" and "world beaters" are undefined, but they vividly show the process of athletes changing from weak to strong.

3) Fuzziness in adjective: The purpose of explanation and report is to provide the audience with the information of sports events and refine the appeal of the audience. Some vague adjectives are usually used to attract the audience's attention, arouse the audience's enthusiasm, and activate the audience's brain cells.

In "tough game", the word "tough" itself has multiple meanings, meaning "stubborn", "(meat) old", "rude", "strong", etc. The match with "game" can make the audience associate and guess the degree of antagonism of the event, and the intensity of the event is self-evident in the description of the sports event in this particular environment. As an audience, although not necessarily watching the entire game, but from vague language, the audience would be lost in reverie, which is great silence over sound.

In "There are no easy game in football", "easy" is a vague adjective, and it is easy to get the message in explanation. "No easy games" means that winning is not easy. Another example is that the term "dark horse", in which "dark" means "unclear", and which is used in events to mean "very little knowledge" about an athlete or a team.

B. Fuzziness in Syntax

Syntactically, the language features of event interpretation are simple sentence structure, more use of imperative sentence and ellipsis sentence, which are easy to understand and save space. The use of ellipses is syntactically vague, sometimes to the point where there is only one word, subject, predicate, or other component, or even the verb. (WANG, 2005) Grammatical fuzziness is widely used in large and intense competitions. See example 3:

ST: "Oh, there was a chance."

Interpretation: "Oh, a chance was wasted."

(ZHU, 2005, p. 215)

Here, "chance" does not specify what the opportunity is, which in football can be a shot, basketball be a back-to-back shot, in track and field be understood as an opportunity created by an opponent's mistakes. When the narrator said this, we could feel his regret. More examples:

ST: "He shoots from there?"

Interpretation: "His far shot is unreliable."

ST: "Oh, what a shame! Just demand the finish."

Interpretation: "Oh, just need a goal shot."

ST: "Back pass, some worries' come."

Interpretation: "Pass it back. It could be in trouble."

ST: "Fierce, tense, fantasy competition."

Interpretation: "Intense, fascinating, unforgettable competition."

(ZHU, 2005, pp. 215-217)

These four examples are common narratives in football matches, including rhetorical, imperative and elliptical sentences. These syntactic ambiguities are just "fuzziness" in sentence patterns, and in a given environment, they not only become "unambiguous", but can also achieve better results than "precise" syntax, such as allowing the audience to enjoy the game both physically and mentally, and drive the enthusiasm of the audience.

C. Fuzziness in Culture

The difference of nation makes people have different understanding of the attribute of things and different psychological reaction. There must be some differences in the meaning association and image of words and images, so cross-cultural fuzziness is produced as a result. Cross-cultural fuzziness is especially widely used in interpretation. In the process of language exchange, the ability of people of different nationalities to communicate with each other depends not only on their understanding of the language itself, but also on their understanding of the cultural implications of language. Only by deeply understanding the cultural differences between the two languages can we bridge the language gap.

If "Americans are so strong, nobody could be too foolish this day" would be interpreted as "The Americans are so strong that no one will be too stupid today", then we will feel that the upper and lower semantics are not cohesive and seem awkward, because the double negative structure in English is a way of thinking in reverse. If it is interpreted as "The Americans are so strong that no matter how you make a fool of yourself today, you cannot go too far", this reflects the differences in logical thinking between English and Chinese. What's more, if "Be yourself, you are Ronaldo" is interpreted as "Be yourself. You're Ronaldo", it will confuse the audience. However, it is much easier to understand if it is interpreted as "Give play to your potential, you will be a good footballer as Ronaldo". What about Ronaldo? Different audiences will have different feelings. The fuzzy usage of these examples not only adds beauty to the original text, but also leaves the audience with room for thinking.

Commentators often use "as strong as horse" to describe athletes as strong and bullish, and "a flash in a pan" to describe athletes as ephemeral (brief splendor). Clearly is a horse, but translated as a cow; clearly is a flash, but translated as an epiphyllum. Among them, metaphor and idiomatic expression are both linguistic elements with strong national cultural color, and they are also one of the reasons for the difficulty of understanding in the process of interpretation. As a result of the cultural differences, different nations can have different perspectives on the same world, so there will be differences in metaphors and cross-cultural fuzziness in language.

III. STRATEGIES OF APPLYING INTERPRETING SKILLS IN SPORTS EVENTS

From the above analysis, it can be seen that the application of fuzzy theory to sports event interpretation will be more accurate, vivid and close to reality. The following is a brief introduction to interpretation techniques and applications in sports events.

A. The Skillful Use of "Redundancy" in Interpreting

Sometimes, clause is used in interpretation to extend the sentence in order to gain the reaction time. For example: there is a sentence in the presentation report of the 2009 Harbin Winter Universiade "We reaffirm our commitment to make Harbin Winter Universiade the best Winter Universiade in history". In on-site interpretation, it can be interpreted as "We will reiterate our promise that to make Harbin Winter Universiade a most splendid one", in which "that" clause can save the interpreter a few seconds.

B. The Application of Synonymous Expression in Interpreting

The application of multiple synonymous expressions in interpreting can make the expression not monotonous and repetitive and can be easily carried out. In expressing "thanks," we can express it in a variety of ways, "to appreciate sb. for doing sth.", "to thank sb. for doing sth.", "my gratitude goes to", "to express my appreciation", "to express my thanks to". It is of great help if interpreters can use these synonyms flexibly.

C. Deletion of Synonyms in Phrases

Some formal terms are often involved in the interpretation of events and related sports conferences. Most of them are words with Chinese characteristics, such as "care and support", which can be interpreted as "support" in brief rather than "care and support"; "improve and enrich people's lives" can be interpreted as "enrich people's life" rather than "change and enrich people's life". That is why interpretation is quite different from translation.

D. Specific Use of Words and Phrases

In combination with English translation of sports events, the premise is to recite certain professional vocabulary, such as "the Lay-out of the Athletes' Village of HW" (Schematic Map of Athlete's Village of the 24th Winter Universiade), "the CIT-FISU International Technical Commission Meeting" (the International University Sports Federation), "Artificial Refrigeration Rink" (manual refrigeration), "Competition Data Processing Network System and the Information Service Network System (contest data processing system and information service network system), etc. In the normal English learning stage, it is impossible to involve these words. Therefore, the most important link for interpreters to adapt to sports games is to learn and memorize these technical terms.

IV. CONCLUSION

The application of fuzzy language in sports events is an interesting and profound art. It can express implicature and euphemism with succinct words, and make the explanation and report of sports events vivid without losing humor. At the same time, the use of fuzzy language must pay attention to the control of quantity, because the overflowing use of fuzzy language will only be counterproductive. The appropriate control of vague language can leave a deep impression on the audience, activate the audience's thinking and arouse the audience's enthusiasm. Practice has proved that the correct understanding and use of vague language can not only help us improve our language skills, but also enhance the tension and charm of expression. While watching sports events, we may as well pay more attention to and study the vague usage of explanation or description, which is helpful to improve our communicative competence.

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