Analysis of Linguistic Features of the Economist and Its E-C Translation Strategies

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Abstract: The Economist, founded in September 1843 by James Wilson, is one of the oldest magazines globally. Its contents are divided into three main sections: Global politics; Economic and Commercial development; Books and Art. This paper analyzes the articles published in the Economist in 2021, temperament, and find out its vocabulary characteristics (mainly four aspects: the use of digital, abbreviations, comparative word, much as the political, economic and business vocabulary, etc.), and syntactic features (nominalizied structure, passive sentences, direct speech and indirect speech, rhetoric, etc.), and illustrate them through examples. And the analysis is made of what translation strategies and methods we might apply in the above mentioned features to better conform to the writing habits of Chinese.

1. Introduction

As one of the most famous magazines in the world, *The Economist* is not only regarded as an important approach for us English learners to learn English language, which helps us to master English more proficiently, but also helps us to obtain information, to broaden our horizon, and to know well about the world and to keep up with the pace of the other countries.

Therefore, this paper analyzes the material selected from articles published in *The Economist* from 2021 to the present, analyzing the characteristics of *The Economist* articles from three aspects: words, sentences and passages through the translation practice. Then, this paper also discusses which method that the translator should adopt in accordance with the various features of the text will be more appropriate.

2. Vocabulary Characteristics

The Economist is positioning its target readers as high-income, independent thinking, critical, and highly educated people, thus the articles there contain a lot of technical terms and expressions without extra explanatory. This will cause some difficulties for us to understand the article and translate. In its translation therefore, we should pay attention to the comprehension of the original text first, the confirmation of some professional content, to avoid translation mistakes, and then can we translate it.

2.1 Numbers

Financial magazines such as *The Economist* often cite a lot of numbers to describe the facts and showing its objectivity, therefore, numbers are very common in it to make the article much more pervasive.

These quoted numbers are usually the most accurate one. If the most accurate number is unknown exactly, a vague number may be given to generalize it, usually put after the words such as "roughly", "over", "more than", "less than" etc.. For instance, when a 95-year-old professor receiving an honorary title, the news may says, a professor who is nearly 100 years old has received the honorary title, which is to be in the help of catching people's attention.

Such moderate exaggeration can greatly improve readers' interest in reading the news based on the principle of loyalty as far as possible. This is a reasonable method, and a common one. When we are translating numbers, it can be translated directly if the numbers given in the text are accurate as well, but if not, it's better for us to translate it into approximate numbers with ambiguous words.

Eg1. Aside from the ubiquitous masks, visitors to Dubai would be hard-pressed to know there was a pandemic raging. Bars and malls are busy. Hotels that were four-fifths empty last spring hit 70% occupancy in December.

2.2 Contrast Words

Since magazines like *The Economist* cover a lot of items concerning economic trends, thus, it uses a lot of comparative words to convey the economic growth or decline. Since these trends are quite objective, subjective terms should be avoided.

Therefore, many of these articles will use different words to describe the same trend, in order to express the trend most accurately, and at the same time, to avoid repetition, avoid the article becoming dull, and make the article more interesting. For example, it might use words like increase, expand, rise, soar, jump, surge, etc to mean the positive trend. If a trend of negative is to be expressed, words like decrease, fail, shrink, decline, collapse, fall, etc. might be used.

Other than the points mentioned above, the article may use words that contain totally different meaning in the sentence to be highlighted without obvious structure. When we translate these words or phrases, the contrast between them should be clearly translated and arranged in order.

Eg2. SOME YEARS loom large in history. Usually it is the end of a war or the onset of a revolution that punctuates the shift from one chapter to another.

ANALYSIS:The words "end" and "onset" in the sentence indicate two kinds of different situation in the history here. Though it is written in one sentence, when we translate it, it's better for us to make it two sentences in contrast with each other so as to be in accordance with the English text, showing the stark difference between end and start.

2.3 Abbreviation

The use of abbreviations is in line with the principle of saving effort in language to achieve the goal of convenience and fluency for communication. Originally, people may need to memorize long and complex words or phrases, but after using abbreviations, they only need to memorize simple letter combinations, which greatly liberates people's brain and improves their work efficiency. Abbreviations are even more effective in articles such as *The Economist*.

Abbreviations involve all aspects of knowledge, including politics, economy, culture, society, ecology and so on. At the same time, along with the progress of the times and the constant updating of knowledge, abbreviations are also constantly developing. The development of abbreviations also reaction to the development of the society and the users' thoughts in return. So *The Economist*

always uses the abbreviation in its articles for its target audience.

Eg3. Since the European Union's single market took effect in 1992, goods have flowed freely across Britain's border with the EU without the suite of checks normally carried out at a country's frontier.

3. Syntatic Features

The articles in *The Economist* have distinctive syntactic features, and this paper analyzes four of them: Nominalizied structure, passive sentences, direct and indirect speech, and rhetoric. Then the corresponding translation strategies are proposed, finding out how we should translate the articles according to different situations.

3.1 Nominalized Structure

The language that news articles adopted needs to be concise and neat in terms of words. However, generally, nouns are used to convey the most meaning in the least number of words. Therefore, nominalizied structure is frequently used in this kind of articles. English is static language, nouns and noun phrases are often used, while Chinese is a dynamic language, taking sentences with the verb as the core. Therefore, when translating these articles, the translators need to pay much attention to this, such as converting nouns into verbs, nouns into adjectives and so on. This can make the translation achieves the principle of loyalty, but more importantly, conforming to the target readers' reading habits.

Eg5. EU leaders were categorical when extending the brexit deadline that there would be no renegotiation of the withdrawal agreement.

ANALYSIS:In the article, what the EU leaders want to express is that they will no longer start any renegotiate over the brexit deal. But here, to be in accordance with the simple principle, it use the noun "renegotiation" instead. In this way, the English text can be more neat and quick for readers to understand. Therefore, the Chinese translation shouldn't be translated directly into the noun form of the renegotiate, but translate it as a verb .

3.2 Passive Sentence

Passive sentences are very common in English as the use of passive sentences can make the important points focused, which makes the reader read more clearly and immediately catch the main point. This is especially true in financial and political magazines like *The Economist*, in which passive sentences are used frequently. In these kinds of article, languages are required to be concise to attract the reader's attention.

Passive sentences are used for the following purposes: ① To catch people's attention on the action object rather than the actor himself, ② For not knowing who is the actor of the action, ③ The writer wants to hide the actor of the action beyond people's sights for some reason, ④ For the coherent of the context.

Although there is also passive constructions in Chinese, the scope of its usage is much more narrower. Chinese does not emphasize the logical relationship between subject and predicate. Therefore, it is very common for Chinese to have passive relations in its deep structure without using passive sentences.

As the differences of voice exist between English and Chinese, we need to deal with it properly in translation. If we translate the passive sentence in English directly into   Chinese, the translation will be obscure and rigid, and not consistent with the Chinese expression habits. So we can take a variety of approaches in the process of translation, such as changing the passive sentence into active

sentence in Chinese, retaining the passive relation in the sentence without using passive sentences, or translating it into Chinese passive sentence depending on the situation and so on.

Eg6. The deal, which was announced on Christmas Eve, covers goods, but says little about financial services. Some disruption for business is expected.

ANALYSIS: The subject " deal " was put in the head of the sentence, followed by the verb " was announced", which is a typical passive sentence to make the subject focused. While reading this sentence, people will see the deal in the first sight and the rest information is also unfolded around the deal -- subject. The translation above make the two parties who signed this deal as subject, and the deal here is taken as a objective instead, which makes the translation more conform to the Chinese language habits.

3.3 Direct and Indirect Speech

In some articles, it may not be as convincing if only the author's own words are used, so the author sometimes quotes what others say in his articles. Others here refers to those who are generally people with authority, or official institutions, as well as people or organizations that are highly accepted by the public. When quoting these words, we can choose to use either direct or indirect speech. Direct speech is where that the other person said are out in the quotation marks, and indirect speech is what the other person said are paraphrased , usually contained in a comma.

The use of direct and indirect speech can make the article more objective and authentic, avoiding the use of long sentences, and make readers believe that the author is not mixed with any personal factors.

The translator should pay attention to the following points when translating articles containing direct speech and indirect speech :

Direct speech: ① if the quoted sentence is short, it can be translated directly;

② if the sentence is too long, it might be translated into   indirect speech sentences.

Indirect speech: ① Indirect speech should not be translated into direct speech.

When quoting in Chinese, the the speaker is usually put before the words, the opposite is true in English.

Eg7. Ned Lamont, Connecticut's governor, has said "the old idea of the commuter going into New York City five days a week may be an idea that's behind us."

ANALYSIS: Here is direct speech cited from the governor of a state in US, strengthening the credibility of severe situation of America under the influence of COVID -19. The translation of this kind of direct speech just need to translate it in to Chinese as that of English if it's a short sentence.

3.4 Figure of Speech

Most articles in magazines like *The Economist* are informational texts. Although the content there involves much professional knowledge, but it will also applying various figures of speech, such as simile, metaphor, personification, parallelism and hyperbole to make the language more lively and flexible.

In translating, we might have some difficulties in dealing with these figures of speech. Here are four common figures of speech in *The Economist* : simile, metaphor, parallelism and hyperbole. The strategies adopted in these translation can be divided into three categories: preserving image, transforming image and discarding image. In the process of translation, we should judge which strategies we should use in translation according to the reality, and strive to produce the most appropriate and suitable translation.

Eg8. "We are going through a very long tunnel with no light at the end of it," he says.

ANALYSIS: The figure of speech here applied is metaphor. Speaker of this sentence is likening the process of popularizing the use of smart-phone among students during the COVID -19 period for them to have classes to a tunnel which is totally dark. By using the figure of speech, the readers can easily understand the condition that students there are going through. The translation of it is also make the sentence a metaphor one, without using any word of "like" or "as", preserving the image of the original text.

4. Conclusion

In today's world, with the rapid development of the Internet, people have more diverse and convenient access to information, which leads to a higher popularity of *The Economist* around the world, no longer confined to the European and American countries. As time changes, *The Economist*'s articles and the language it uses are constantly adapting to the real time condition as well.

With the rising position of China in the world, more and more countries are casting their sight to China. Therefore, on January 2012, *The Economist* opened a column on China, introducing China in all directions and what's happening there. However, due to the inherent prejudice of western countries against socialist countries, there are inevitably some distortions to the real situation of China in their reports. Therefore, we should pay attention to return to the facts in the translation of such articles, and discard some contents if necessary, so as to provide authentic and readable readings for our domestic readers.

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