

# *The Evaluation and Main Features of Christiane Nord's Text Analysis in Translation*

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**Abstract:** *Text Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology, and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation-Oriented Text Analysis* written by German translation theorist Christiane Nord is not only an important work of functionalist translation school, but also a significant guide for translators, having a profound and lasting influence on translation studies. Nord first elaborates on the theoretical basis of the translation text analysis mode, explaining the role and function of source text analysis in translation, then focuses on analyzing the basic elements of source language text analysis, and finally discusses the application of text analysis mode and listed case studies. This paper introduces the evaluation obtained by this book, and elaborates the writing features on its theoretical profundity, theoretical innovation, and rigorous writing logic.

## 1. Introduction

*Text Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology, and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation-Oriented Text Analysis* written by Christiane Nord may be thought of an extraordinary academic book for its insightful discussion and illustrative analysis of the functional approach to translation. Christiane Nord comes from Germany, born in 1943. She graduated from the University of Heidelberg in 1967, majoring in Spanish and English. In 1983, she obtained a doctoral degree in Romantic Literature from the University of Heidelberg. In 1993, she was awarded a qualification certificate in Applied Translation and Translation Teaching by the University of Vienna. As a translator, teacher and translation researcher, Nord has published various papers and monographs about theoretical, methodological and pedagogical aspects on translation teaching as well as research, mainly involving discourse analysis, translator training, functionalist translation theory, etc. And she taught translation theory, methods, and practices at many universities in Germany and abroad. This paper introduces the evaluation obtained by this book, and elaborates the main features on its theoretical profundity, theoretical innovation, detailed examples, and rigorous writing logic.

## 2. The Main Evaluation of Text Analysis in Translation

*Text Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology, and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation-Oriented Text Analysis* was written in Christiane Nord's course of teaching translation at the University of Heidelberg. It was first written and published in German in 1988. Later, with the help of Penelope Sparrow, Nord produced an English version for English-speaking students, teachers, and translators in 1991. Since the first edition was published, this book has been widely used by translation training institutions around the world. Some scholars need to purchase it during their research, so Nord decided to republish it in 2005.

So far, *Text Analysis in Translation* has been studied by many scholars and researchers from different perspectives. Overall, this book has been highly praised and has made profound contributions to the development of translation research. Jeremy Munday highly praised Nord's contributions to functionalist translation theory. In his opinion, Nord's *Text Analysis in Translation* is aimed primarily at providing translation students with a model of ST analysis which is applicable to all text types and translation situations. "The model is based on a functional concept, enabling understanding of the function of ST features and the selection of translation strategies appropriate to the intended purpose of the translation" [1]. Anthony Pym emphasizes that with numerous clear examples and some very complete box-and-arrow diagrams, *Text Analysis in Translation* should be of extreme interest to anyone seeking a solid basis for the training of translators [2]. In China, this book is a textbook for many translation courses and a necessary reading material for translation majors. Many scholars in China have studied this book and published multiple articles. And it is one of the theoretical foundations for graduation theses of Chinese foreign language majors.

## 3. Main Features

In order to help translators choose appropriate translation strategies and methods, Nord proposes a translation-oriented text analysis model based on the concept of functionality, through theoretical profundity, theoretical innovation, and rigorous writing logic, requiring translators to thoroughly analyze and accurately understand the source text, its functions, and translation purposes.

### 3.1. Theoretical Profundity

The profound theoretical foundation is presented in this book. A theoretical foundation is important because it can help to ensure that a book or an article is based on sound reasoning and evidence. The extensive list of references in the book, which spans ten pages, demonstrates the depth and breadth of its theoretical foundation. It draws on research from various fields, including previous translation studies, linguistics, philosophy, and semiotics, to develop a comprehensive model for analyzing and translating texts. Nord cites the viewpoints of numerous experts and scholars such as Werner Koller, Eugene A. Nida, Katharina Reiss, Hans J. Vermeer, Juliane House, M.A.K. Halliday, whose works have influenced and contributed to the development of translation studies as a discipline. Nord also cites many ideas from her own works to provide theoretical support. On the one hand, Nord draws from the rich tradition of functionalism, of which Katharina Reiss, Hans J. Vermeer, and Holz-Manttari are prominent representatives. Nord is strongly influenced by her teacher Reiss's text typology and subscribes to Vermeer's Skopos theory as well as Manttari's theory of translational action. She builds on their ideas and concepts, while also expanding and refining them to create a comprehensive model. Nord analyzes a complex and intrinsically interrelated set of linguistic and nonlinguistic factors in the source text. The communicative context in which the source text is situated is crucial to textual analysis because these contextual factors determine the communicative function of the source text. Nord calls these

factors “extratextual factors”, such as the sender of the text, the sender’s intention, audience, and the place of communication. There are some factors related to the text itself, which Nord calls “intratextual factors”, such as content, presuppositions, text composition, non-verbal elements, and lexis [3]. By referencing Reiss, Vermeer, and Manttari, Nord not only acknowledges their contributions to translation studies, provides her readers with a broader perspective on the functionalism and its key concepts, but also situate her own model of translation-oriented text analysis within the broader context of the functionalism. On the other hand, linguistics is also a significant and critical theoretical foundation for this book. Text-linguistic is a branch of linguistics that explores how language is used to convey meaning in texts, mainly emphasizing the importance of textual structure and discourse conventions, as well as the communicative functions of language in context. It plays an irreplaceable role in Nord’s translation studies, as it provides a systematic way of analyzing textual structures and functions, and how they are realized in different languages and cultures. In *Text Analysis in Translation* “1.1 Text-linguistic foundations” , for example, Nord cites various opinions from Schmidt, Wilss, Kallmeyer. She draws inspiration from various theoretical frameworks to develop a model that is applicable to a wide range of translation contexts and situations. She highlights how theories from related fields, such as linguistics, discourse analysis, and relevance theory, can inform the study of translation and help readers better understand the complexities of the translation process.

### 3.2. Theoretical Innovation

In terms of content, it is no exaggeration to say that the theories proposed by Nord in this book are innovative. The term “innovation” was first introduced by Joseph Alois Schumpeter in 1912 in his famous book *The Theory of Economic Development*, where he shrewdly defined “innovation” as “the creation of a new production function” [4]. Theoretical innovation has always been an important part of academic research. The theoretical innovation of this book is mainly reflected in two aspects. For one thing, in chapter 2 “The role and function of source-text analysis”, Nord puts forward to a crucial concept called “functionality plus loyalty”, and she maintains that “there can be no process of ‘translation’ without a source text. [3]” Although functionality is the most important decisive factor in the translation process, it is not the only one. The translator should be responsible for both the source text and the context of the translation, for both source text senders and target language readers. Nord calls this responsibility “loyalty” [3]. The “functionality plus loyalty” is a complement and refinement of functionalist translation theory. Before Nord, Katharina Reiss, Hans Vermeer and Holz-Manttari had already made achievements in functionalist translation research. Among the three principles of Skopos theory proposed by Vermeer, the skopos rule comes first, followed by the coherence rule, and then the fidelity rule. In the framework of Skopos theory, one of the most important factors determining the purpose of a translation is the addressee, who is the intended receiver or audience of the target text with their culture-specific world-knowledge, their expectations and their communicative needs. Vermeer also believes that the source text only provides information, which may be partially or entirely received by the target audience. Holz-Manttari considers the text as a mere tool for achieving the function of communication. It has no intrinsic value and is completely subordinate to its purpose, its only justification being to satisfy the requirements of the situation [3]. On the basis of previous research, Nord focuses on the significance derived from the source text as well as the source text sender. What’s more, “loyalty” refers to the interpersonal relationship between the translator, the source text sender, the target text reader, and the initiator of the translation, which limits the functional scope of a translation of a particular source text and increases the negotiation of the translation task between translators and clients. For another, when analyzing text functions, Nord points out that texts with different

functions should use different translation strategies, and she creatively proposes two translation strategies: documentary translation and instrumental translation [3]. All of them are given detailed introduction and explanation in the book. Documentary translation retains more of the linguistic and cultural features of the source text, helping to convey the language and culture of the source text to the target-text readers. Instrumental translation makes the translation more easily understood by readers and increases the readability of the translation. Both two translation strategies are based on functional concepts, enabling people to understand the unique functions of the source language and choose translation strategies that are suitable for the translation purpose.

### 3.3. Rigorous Writing Logic

Besides, the book is written in a logical manner. Logical writing refers to accurate word selection, coherent meaning between sentences, rigorous logic between paragraphs, and clear hierarchy of the text. *Text Analysis in Translation* has a clear hierarchy and well structure, involving preface, introduction, main body, conclusion, index as well as references. The introduction of this book introduces the necessity of text analysis in translation. The first section of Chapter 2 starts with basic theoretical principles, introducing translational foundations as well as text-linguistic foundations. Section 2 explores the role and function of source text analysis, and Section 3 explains factors of source text analysis. This book gradually delves into Nord's functional translation model through text analysis, and ultimately explores its application in translation training in the fourth section of Chapter 2, involving the evaluation of translation quality. It is worth noting that the logical rigor of this book's writing is also reflected in the combination of theory and practice. In Chapter 2, Section 5, Nord provides three texts and applies her translation-oriented text analysis model mentioned in the book to analyze these texts. And the index and references, at the end of the book provide readers with related research materials and guide readers to study and engage in critical thinking better. In addition, the writing logic of *Text Analysis in Translation* is highly rigorous partly due to the effective and commendable use of cohesion and coherence devices throughout the book. Cohesion and coherence are important concepts in the field of discourse analysis. In 1976, Halliday and Hasan co-authored *Cohesion in English*, which systematically studied the corpus that can be used to construct cohesive relationships in the English language system, forming a complete theoretical system. They divide the cohesive devices of English sentences into reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion [5]. Nord uses different cohesive devices, such as conjunctions, chapter summaries, and direct sentence connections, to ensure coherence and cohesion. Taking conjunctions as examples, she applies a host of conjunctions to indicate coordinative relation, adversative relation, concessions relation, conditional relation, assumption, causality, etc., such as "and", "but", "however", "in the case of", "finally", "first of all", "if", "since", "because". And the book has summaries and continuations of the previous text at the beginning of some chapters and sections, and a summary paragraph at the end, which is an effective way to help readers understand the important content.

## 4. Conclusions

*Text Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology, and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation-Oriented Text Analysis* has been an influential reference for translation studies since its first publication in German in 1988, nevertheless, despite its widespread praise, it is not without limitations. In terms of content, Nord's model of "functionality plus loyalty" sounds perfect, but in practice, it is not easy for translators to be loyal to the client, source text author, and reader at the same time. In addition, the starting point of Nord's translation criticism model is to judge whether the translation meets the functional requirements of translation. The whole process revolves around

the translation and the source text, with less attention to the translation process, the translation activity, and the impact and meaning of the translation. In terms of time, the second edition was published in 2005, almost two decades ago. Since then, the field of translation studies has rapidly evolved, with a greater focus on the role of technology, machine translation, and the impact of translation on social, cultural, and political issues, including gender, race, and power. As such, while *Text Analysis in Translation* is still relevant in many ways, it may not fully address the latest trends and concerns in the ever-evolving field of translation studies.

In conclusion, while Nord's approach may have limitations and may not account for recent developments in technology and culture, the book *Text Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology, and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation-Oriented Text Analysis* remains a valuable resource for translation studies due to its deep theoretical foundation, theoretical innovation as well as rigorous writing logic. As a matter of fact, this book presents a translation oriented text analysis model, which is still effective for current researchers, translators, and students.

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