Evaluation of Translation Competence and Thinking-aloud Protocols

Luo Fei

Xi'an Fanyi University, Shaanxi Xi´an, China 710100

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Abstract: The research on the translation process by thinking-aloud protocols mainly focuses on how translators choose the translation strategy to solve problems. This paper applies the thinking aloud method to effectively extract the use of translation strategies by different subjects in the process of Chinese - English translation, and carries out qualitative and quantitative analysis on the strategies, aiming at accurately evaluating the translation ability of the subjects, and looking for differences through comparative research, so as to improve translation competence of students.

1. Introduction

Since the 1980s, Gerloff, Kring, Lorscher, Ericson and Simon and other scholars have successively applied Thinking-aloud Protocols to the study of translation process. As one of the main methods of translation process research, the protocol requires translators to express his own thinking process in language during the translation process. At the same time, researchers record the translator's language expression and carry out text conversion and analysis to study how the translator analyzes and solves problems in the translation process and reveal the translator's thinking process. This translation research method is helpful for the cultivation of translation ability.

2. The International Research on Translation by Thinking-aloud Protocols

For a long time, thinking-aloud translation study focuses on the difference in the application of translation strategies between professional translators and non-professional translators. Gerloff(1986) thinks that thinking aloud can provide a large amount of effective data for translation studies. He thinks that the specific translation strategies that translators apply to solve problems in the translation process include: problem identification, linguistic analysis, Information is stored in storage and retrieved, general search and selection, text inferencing and reasoning, text contextualization processing, and task monitoring.

Laukkanen (1996) observed the specific strategies in the translation process through thinking aloud protocols, and believed that the translation strategies mainly include: evaluation Of ST, evaluation Of equivalents, and general evaluation/comments,evaluation of translation performance, and evaluation of reference materials. Candace Eguinot (1996) applies the thinking-aloud approach to analyze the translation process of professional translators. It is found that professional translators are good at using four translation strategies: interpersonal strategies, search strategies, analytical

reasoning strategies and monitoring strategies to solve translation problems.

Jääskeläinen (1999) proposed through thinking aloud translation research, translation strategies can be divided into global and local strategies. The former refers to strategies applied to the whole translation task (e.g. considering the style of the translation and the readership), while the latter refers to specific translation strategies (e.g. finding appropriate words, etc.), It also points out that professional translators are better at adopting strategies beyond the text, such as background knowledge, while non-professional translators pay more attention to language knowledge in the translation process, and clearly points out that thinking aloud can help us understand the translation process.

Lorscher (2005) proposed that thinking aloud is very important among many data extraction methods. The research of thinking aloud focuses on the steps that each translator takes to consciously solve translation problems. Through comparative study, the differences between professional translators and non-professional translators are found that most non-professional translators translate from the surface meaning of the language, and eventually their translations are often not only faithless to the original text, but also have some grammatical and stylistic problems. On the contrary, professional translators focus on meaning and are good at checking the quality of the translation to avoid problems such as incorrect translation and inaccurate expression of the target language. Ali Asghar Eftekhary and Shayesteh Aminizadeh (2012) studied literary text translation strategies through thinking aloud and proposed 14 translation strategies such as: Look-up, Using Imagery, Analyzing and reasoning, Paraphrasing, etc. Julia Eka Rini (2014) applied the thinking aloud method to the study of the translation process of cultural adjuncts. She believed that the source culture plays an important role in the translation of cultural adjuncts. If the source culture is equivalent to the target culture, the translator usually refers to the cultural context. If the source culture and the target culture are quite different, the translator usually adopts interpretation or word translation.

3. The Previous Research on Translation by Thinking-aloud Protocols in China

Think - aloud translation research was introduced into China by Professor Jiang Suhua in 1998. In the article " Research on Translation Process", Professor Jiang Suhua introduced the research methods and results of think-aloud translation abroad and proposed that think-aloud method can help us better understand the nature of translation, and think-aloud method can also be used in translation teaching to improve students' translation ability. In 2005, Professor Li Dechao introduced systematically the achievements of think-aloud translation research in four fields: translation strategies, translation units, translation statements and translation methods in the article " Twenty Years of TAPs Translation Process Research: Retrospect and Prospect", and pointed out the enlightenment of think-aloud translation research on translation teaching research. In 2008, Li Dechao published an article entitled " Application of Think - aloud Method in Translation Teaching". Through specific case analysis, he proposed that teachers use think-aloud method to show their translation process to students, which is helpful to improve students' translation competence. At present, more and more scholars apply thinking aloud to the study of translation process, translation teaching or the study of translation strategies for different text types. In 2012, Zhou Yali applied thinking aloud to the study of translation strategies between English and Chinese, and found that the translation process consists of four stages: preparation, incubation, illumination) and evaluation. In the preparation stage, translators seldom use translation strategies. In the two stages of preparation and comprehension, translators use more translation strategies, and there are great differences in the use of translation strategies between professional translators and non-professional translators. At the same time, the difference between professional translators and non-professional translators is especially obvious in the two stages of evaluation.

4. The Research on the Evaluation of Translation Competence from the Perspective of Thinking-aloud Protocols

In 2016, in the article " Translation Problem Solving Mechanism with Advanced Thinking Mode", critical translation thinking was regarded as the advanced thinking by which the translator can discover the nature of translation, actively questioning the translation elements, conducting purposeful reflection on the translation process, and then obtaining rational judgment to form independent understanding of translation process and strategies. Critical thinking in translation consists of the following elements: 1) evaluation consciousness 2) evidence consciousness 3) inquiry consciousness 4) inquiry consciousness 5) regulation consciousness. Critical thinking can reflect the translator's competence to analyze and judge translation problems, control and adjust translation steps, evaluate and select translation resources, and assess translation quality. Thinking-aloud protocols collect message of translators' critical thinking in translation, which presents translation competence in data, breaking through the traditional subjective evaluation mechanism and turning to the data-analysis-based evaluation mechanism of translation competence. By setting different quantitative elements, thinking-aloud protocols monitor the translation process, effectively evaluating students' competence of analyzing and appraising translation problems, controlling and adjusting translation steps, evaluating and selecting translation resources, assessing translation quality, etc. Details are shown as following.

Semantic analysis of source language - the translator analyzes the real meaning, connotative meaning and associative meaning of the original text in order to fully and accurately understand the semantic information of the original text. Source language logic analysis - the translator analyzes the source language text logic and thinking logic, which can help the translator grasp the real meaning behind the text. Source language culture analysis – the analysis of text culture information helps translators to better grasp the information conveyed by the source language, and helps translators to overcome the cultural differences between the source language and the target language and faithfully reproduce the source language information. Source language text type analysis - text type directly determines language information characteristics, such as communication characteristics, information characteristics, calling characteristics, aesthetic characteristics, etc., which helps translators to accurately grasp the source language information content and structure. Analysis of the reading effect of the source language readers - taking into account the readers of the original text, the translator can make targeted choices on the text information and translation strategies, which is helpful to improve the translation quality. Source language scene construction - through scene construction, a bridge across two languages and cultures is built to obtain information equivalence expressed in different languages. Information search - search information involves vocabulary usage, culture background, parallel texts, etc, which helps the translator to fully grasp the information related to the translated content and reproduce the source language content accurately to the greatest extent. Information evaluation - in order to obtain the most relevant information for translation activities, translators need to evaluate all the information obtained, which helps to improve translation quality and translation efficiency. Information selection - the selection criteria should be based on the principles of accuracy, matching target information with the original information to maximize the accuracy of the translation. Monitoring and adjustment of translation approach - in the process of translation, mature translators can conduct effective self – monitoring to find their own problems in the process of source language analysis and information integration and make timely adjustments to make correct judgments. Translation evaluation - a good translation judgment requires the translator to evaluate and judge the translation style, word selection, sentence pattern, text, cultural connotation, translation effect, etc. in order to control the translation quality. Readers' reading effect judgment in the target language - readers' awareness is the basis of translators' translation judgment, which can enhance the

acceptability and influence of the translation, and a strong translation judgment thinking ability cannot be separated from accurate prediction of the target language readers' effect. Translation adjustment - translation adjustment involves adjustment of translation contents, ideas, methods and effects, and accurate control of the above contents can reflect the translator's mature judgment thinking ability. Translation verification - translation requires the translator to continuously verify the translation in order to obtain the equivalence between the translation and the original text in terms of semantic information, cultural connotation, reader effect, etc., The verification method, verification platform and verification evaluation during the period greatly reflect the translator's ability of translation judgment thinking.

Table 1 Test data

Project	SUBJECT	Grade				Corpus
		1	2	3	4	
Semantic Analysis of Source Language	Real meaning					
	Connotative meaning					
	Associative Meaning Analysis					
Logical Analysis of Source Language	Source language discourse logic					
	Logic of thinking					
Cultural Analysis of Source Language	Text Cultural Information Analysis					
Analysis of Source Language Text Types	Communicative characteristics					
	Information characteristic					
	Calling characteristic					
	Aesthetic characteristics					
Analysis of Reading Effect of Source Language Readers	The original reader factor					
Source Language Scene Construction	Language construction scene					
Information search	Lexical usage					
	Cultural background					
	Parallel text, etc					
Information evaluation	Information correlation					
Information selection	Accuracy					
	Degree of matching with original information					
	Authority					
	Authenticity					
Monitoring and Adjustment of Translation Ideas	Source language analysis					
	Information integration					
Translation evaluation	Translation style					
	Choose words					
	Sentence pattern					
	Chapter					
	Cultural connotation					
	Translation effect					
Judging the Reading Effect of Target Language Readers	Reading Effect of Target Language Readers					
Translation adjustment	Translation content					
	Translation ideas					
	Translation method					
	Translation effect					
Translation verification	Semantic information					
	Cultural connotation					
	Reader effect					

5. Conclusion

Starting from the empirical research method of thinking aloud, this paper studies the cultivation of critical translation thinking, exploring the essence of translation, which can provide a solid explanation for critical translation thinking for the construction of translation competence. Through the steps of data recording, data extraction, data analysis and information classification, qualitative and quantitative analysis on the basis of thinking-aloud protocols, the elements of translation competence are put forward, which provides an operable research paradigm for further related studies.

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