



Clarification of the Basic Concepts of Chinese-Spanish Translation: Differences and Classifications of Translation Strategies, Methods and Techniques

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Abstract: Translation strategies refer to the overall guiding principles adopted by the translator during the translation process, such as the choice between literal and free translation, and the strategy of equivalent processing. Translation methods are specific means to achieve these strategies, including cultural transformation, structural adjustment, and supplementary processing. Translation techniques, on the other hand, are specific operational skills, such as grammatical adjustment, rhetorical processing, and cultural adaptation techniques.

Keywords: Chinese-Spanish translation; translation strategies; translation methods; translation techniques; classification

1. Introduction

In the context of globalization, translation, as a bridge for cross-cultural communication, has become increasingly important. Chinese-Spanish translation involves not only the conversion of language and text, but also comprehensive consideration of various factors such as culture, history, and habits. By systematically sorting out and analyzing these concepts, we can better implement Chinese-Spanish translation practices. Among them, translation strategy, as a strategic choice in the translation process, involves finding the best way to express information between different languages and cultural backgrounds to ensure accurate transmission and reception of information[1]. Translation methods focus more on specific operational steps and techniques, such as how to handle grammatical structures and rhetorical devices, to ensure that the translation is natural and smooth. Translation skills are accumulated experience and abilities in specific translation practices, including how to deal with specific language difficulties and cultural obstacles, so that the translation is more suitable for the context of the target language and the reader's acceptance habits[2]. This essay aims to explore the basic concepts of translation, especially the differences and classification of translation strategies, methods, and techniques, providing valuable reference for research and teaching in related fields.

2. Overview of Basic Translation Concepts

Translatology is a discipline that explores translation phenomena and their patterns, encompassing both theoretical and practical aspects. The fundamental concepts of translation include source language (LO, Lengua Original) and target language (LM, Lengua Meta), representing the transformation from one language to another during the translation process. Additionally, key terms such as text (Texto), context (Contexto), and equivalence (Equivalencia) are involved. Translation is not merely a linguistic transformation. Actually, it is a synthesis of cultural, social, and psychological factors [3].

3. The Interrelationship Between Translation Strategies, Methods, and Techniques

These three elements actually form a hierarchical relationship, moving from macro to micro, from general to specific, and from abstract to concrete. The specific relationship between them is reflected in the following: Translation strategy serves as the overall guideline and principle, covering a broad scope such as "context" and providing the basis for translation methods. Translation methods, based on certain strategies, involve approaches, steps, and manners with a narrower scope than strategies, such as "discourse," and are manifestations of translation strategies. Translation techniques, guided by translation methods, refer to specific skills involving even smaller scopes, such as "vocabulary" and "sentence structure," and represent the ultimate outcome of translation methods.

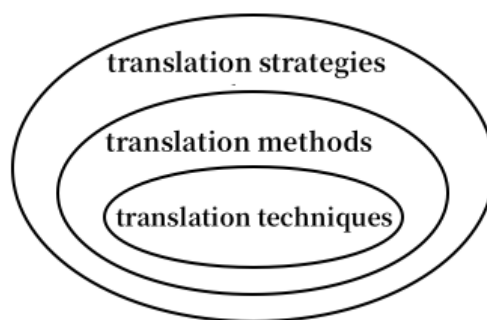


Figure 1. The interrelationship between translation strategies, translation methods, and translation techniques.

4. Basic Concepts and Analysis of Translation Strategies

4.1 Basic Concepts of Translation Strategies

Translation strategies refers to a series of methods and means adopted by the translator during the translation process to achieve a specific translation purpose, based on factors such as the linguistic characteristics of the source text, cultural background, and reading habits of the target audience. The choice of these strategies directly determines the overall direction and style of the translation, significantly impacting the accuracy and readability of the translated text[4].

4.2 Analysis of Translation Strategies

4.2.1 Literal Translation and Free Translation

Literal translation and free translation are the two most common strategies in the translation process. Literal translation emphasizes maintaining the original text's literal meaning and form, converting the source text word-for-word into the target language. This strategy is suitable when the source and target languages are relatively similar in grammar and vocabulary[5]. For example, when translating the idiom "make the finishing point," a literal translation strategy would be "pintar ojos al dragon." However, this literal translation does not convey the original meaning well. In Chinese, "make the finishing point" refers to adding eyes at the end of painting a dragon, and it is extended to mean adding wonderful embellishment or expression to the key points of words or things.

4.2.2 Domestication and Foreignization

Domestication and foreignization are another pair of important concepts in translation strategies. Domestication emphasizes adapting the text to the cultural background and reading habits of the target language audience, making the translation more aligned with their reading preferences and expression styles. This strategy helps reduce cultural barriers and makes the translation more accessible to the target audience. For instance, the Spanish translation of "spring rolls" as "rollo de primavera" adopts a foreignization strategy, respecting the literal meaning while preserving the cultural significance of "spring rolls" in Chinese culture.

5. Basic Concepts and Discrimination of Translation Methods

5.1 Classification of Translation Methods

5.1.1 Word-for-Word Translation

Word-for-word translation has certain applicability in Chinese-Spanish translation, especially when translating technical terms, proper nouns, and fixed expressions. These vocabularies have relatively fixed correspondences between the two languages, and adopting word-for-word translation can ensure the accuracy and professionalism of the translation. For example, "law of supply and demand" is directly translated as "ley de oferta y demanda" in Spanish, maintaining the direct correspondence of this economic term between Chinese and Spanish (offer equals to oferta, demand equals to demanda, and law equals to ley). However, due to significant differences in grammar rules and vocabulary meanings between Chinese and Spanish, excessive use of word-for-word translation can lead to unclear semantics or loss of the original text's cultural connotation. Example 1:

Original Chinese text: In economics, "black swan events" typically refer to unpredictable and rare events that have a significant impact on financial markets.

Word-for-word translation: El "evento cisne negro" en economía normalmente se refiere a eventos raros e impredecibles

que tienen una gran influencia en el mercado financiero.

It is important to note that here, "black swan events" are directly translated as "evento cisne negro," maintaining the proper noun characteristic of the original text. However, such a direct translation might not be clear enough for Spanish readers, as "cisne negro" does not directly correspond to the meaning of "black swan events" in Spanish culture.

A more appropriate translation would be: En economía, el término "evento del cisne negro" suele referirse a acontecimientos raros, impredecibles y de gran repercusión en los mercados financieros.

5.1.2 Contextual Translation

Contextual translation finds wide application in Chinese-Spanish translation. Due to differences in cultural backgrounds and pragmatic environments between Chinese and Spanish, many words and expressions have different meanings and usages in various contexts. Therefore, fully considering the original text's contextual and pragmatic environments during the translation process is crucial to ensure the accuracy and fluency of the translated text. Through contextual translation, translators can better understand the original text's meaning and intention and accurately convey this information in the translated text.

Contextual translation emphasizes fully considering the original text's context during the translation process to ensure the translated text's accuracy and fluency. This method helps avoid misunderstandings and ambiguities in word-for-word translations. Example:

Original Chinese Text: "He 'expressed approval' for this proposal at the meeting."

Word-for-word Translation: "Él 'expresó aprobación' a esta propuesta en la reunión."

Contextual Translation: "En la reunión, él mostró su acuerdo a esta propuesta."

In this example, although "expressed approval" can be directly translated as "expresó aprobación," considering the formal setting of the meeting and the active nature of "expressing," choosing "mostró su acuerdo" is more contextually appropriate, ensuring both accuracy and fluency.

5.1.3 Free Translation

Free translation has broad application value in Chinese-Spanish translation. Due to significant differences in grammatical rules and vocabulary meanings between Chinese and Spanish, many original expressions do not have direct equivalents in Spanish. In such cases, adopting a free translation approach allows for flexible translation based on the original text's meaning and intention, making the translated text more natural, fluent, and aligned with Spanish readers' reading habits and thinking patterns.

Free translation involves reconstructing the original text's expression while preserving its meaning. By adjusting the translated text's grammatical structure, vocabulary selection, and expression, the translated text can convey the original text's information and cultural connotations, aligning with Spanish readers' reading habits and thinking patterns. For instance, adopting a free translation approach allows for translating it as "hacer algo más de lo necesario," meaning "doing something more than necessary," which preserves the original text's meaning and is easily understood by Spanish readers.

6. Basic Concepts and Analysis of Translation Techniques

6.1 Definition of Translation Techniques

Translation techniques refer to a series of specific methods and means adopted by translators during the translation process to achieve specific translation objectives. These techniques are based on differences in grammar, semantics, pragmatics, and cultural aspects between the source and target languages. They aim to make the translated text more aligned with the target language's expression habits and cultural background while preserving the original text's information, thereby improving the translated text's quality and readability.

6.2 Classification and Analysis of Translation Techniques

6.2.1 Part-of-Speech Conversion

Part-of-speech conversion is one of the commonly used techniques in translation. Due to differences in part-of-speech usage across languages, translators need to flexibly convert part-of-speech based on the target language's expression habits during the translation process. For example:

Original Chinese Text: "This decision is very important for our company's development."

Direct Translation (without part-of-speech conversion): "Esta decisión es muy importante para el desarrollo de nuestra empresa."

Translation with Part-of-Speech Conversion: "La importancia de esta decisión para el desarrollo de nuestra empresa es enorme."

In this example, "important" is translated as the adjective "importante" in the direct translation. However, in the translation with part-of-speech conversion, it is converted into the noun "importancia," making the sentence more fluent and aligned with Spanish expression habits.

6.2.2 Amplification and Omission

Amplification and omission are other commonly used techniques in translation. Amplification refers to adding words or sentences that are not present in the original text to make the translated text more complete and smooth. Omission refers to omitting certain words or sentences in the original text to avoid redundancy or repetition in the translated text. Example:

Chinese: "Some operations may differ."

Spanish: "Algunas operaciones pueden ser ligeramente diferentes."

In this translation, the technique of amplification is used by adding the word "ligeramente" (slightly), making the overall expression more rigorous and accurate.

7. Conclusion

This essay deeply explores the critical role of translation strategies, methods, and techniques in Chinese-Spanish translation. Through analyzing and elucidating these concepts, it becomes evident that in translation practice, translation strategies provide directional guidance for translation activities, translation methods are specific means to achieve translation objectives, and translation techniques are key to improving translation quality. These three components complement each other, forming the foundation for high-quality translation practice.

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