



# The Embodiment of Translator's Subjectivity in Non-Literary Translation

—Taking the English Translation of New Media News Reports as an Example

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## Abstract

The demand for translation of non-literary genres most used in daily life is gradually expanding and the number of translators is increasing. In different categories of literary genres, translators play different roles and bear different responsibilities. In recent years, with the enhancement of China's cultural soft power, many new media have been added to disseminate China's news to the outside world, so how to correctly translate and accurately convey the content of the news is crucial, and it is also very demanding for the translators. Therefore, this paper takes the news report genre as the object of study, and analyses and researches the translator's subjectivity through the case study method, and then hopes to provide some reference for the translators when translating the news genre.

## Subject Areas

Journalism and Communication, Linguistics

## Keywords

Non-Literary Translation, Translator's Subjectivity, New Media News Report, Translation Methods

## 1. Introduction

According to Eugene A. Nida, only no more than 5 percent of translation activities in the world belong to literary translation, and the remaining nearly 95 percent are non-literary translation activities. [1] And no matter from the point of view of Western or Chinese translation history, non-literary translation accounts for a large proportion of translation activities. Moreover, with

the development of China, cultural and economic exchanges between countries are increasing, and most of the translation activities to promote exchanges in China are practical documents, so non-literary translation has an indelible role, and the demand for non-literary translation activities will continue to increase, and the role of translators in non-literary translation should not be underestimated.

## **2. Background of the Study**

### **2.1. Non-literary Translation**

Non-literary text broadly refers to the application text, Peter Newmark pointed out that ‘the core of non-literary text is plain language and generic or explanatory metaphors’, non-literary text has the characteristics of true content, accurate information, reliable sources, objective reality, certain degree of logic, plain and understandable language, and practicality and so on. [2]

While non-literary translation refers to the translation of works other than literary works, Li Changshuan points out that the content of non-literary translation is extremely wide, including politics, economy, law, science and technology, culture and other fields of social life. [3] Non-literary translation is characterized by 1) determining the translation strategy according to the content of the text, 2) reflecting the content of the original text accurately, and 3) using plain and understandable language. [4]

Based on Katharina Reiss’s analysis of the functional characteristics of different text types and their implications for translation methods, news text is identified as a non-literary genre focused on factual information dissemination. Serving as a medium for recording societal events and capturing the spirit of the times, news writing underscores the importance of accurately presenting facts, conveying opinions objectively, utilizing concise language, incorporating varied sentence structures, and employing rhetorical devices for added richness.

News is not only a domestic document but also an important channel for Western countries to further understand our country and different countries have different systems and social nature, in order to let other countries accurately understand the content of our news, the role of the translator’s subjectivity in news translation is extremely important.

### **2.2. Theory of Translator’s Subjectivity**

Translator’s subjectivity refers to the translator’s subjective initiative to satisfy the cultural needs of the target language in the translation activity under the influence of the marginal subject or the external environment and his own domain. The translator is the main body of translation works and an important participant in the construction of national culture, but the main body of translation has long been obscured in China’s cultural pluralism system, resulting in the marginalization of the translator’s cultural status. [5] With the “Cultural Turn” of translation research, the study of translation subject has been given due

attention and is gradually going deeper. [6] Translators should give full play to their subjective initiative, free themselves from the constraints of the original text, and select appropriate translation methods and techniques according to the translator's professional knowledge and translation purpose. The translator's subjectivity in the news is reflected in the whole process of translation, and the translation methods and techniques are selected flexibly according to the translation purpose and relevant background knowledge. [7]

### **3. Translator's Subjectivity in News Report Translation**

Translators need to have enough background cultural knowledge when translating news reports, and they should have a proper understanding of the relevant social communication environment and information, and then choose appropriate translation methods and techniques, so as to achieve accurate and effective transmission of information and promote cultural exchange.

#### **3.1. Translator's Subjectivity in the Selection of Translation Methods**

Translation methods are mainly literal translation and free translation. Literal translation is a translation method that maintains both the content and the form of the original text when the language conditions of the translation permit. Free translation is a translation method that needs to change the form of the original text or refer to the expression of the original meaning because the language itself, social and cultural differences and other reasons, the use of the original form can not express the meaning of the original text well. In short, Free translation is a translation method that only keeps the content of the original text but not the form of that. When translating, the translator needs to choose the appropriate translation method according to the content of the original text, the form of expression of the target language and the audience of the target language.

##### **3.1.1. Literal Translation**

Literal translation appeared in the period of the May Fourth Movement, which emphasizes the need to be faithful to the original text so that the translation can achieve the standards of 'expressiveness' and 'elegance'. [8] Literal translation is not a mechanical word-for-word translation. Since English and Chinese have different structures, it is impossible to translate word-for-word. Literal translation means that the meaning of the original work should be fully and accurately elucidated without any distortion or arbitrary addition or deletion of the original ideas, and the original style should be maintained at the same time. Sometimes even the original mood or emotion should not be ignored. [9] For example, in the translations of 'One Country, Two Systems' and 'The Three Representatives', the translator uses a form similar to the original to accurately express the content of the original, in addition to the translator, first of all, understands enough about our country's system and the specific content of 'one country, two sys-

tems', 'the three representatives' which are the three representatives and their main content, only enough to understand the cultural background in order to make the translation more accurate.

### 3.1.2. Free Translation

Free translation, on the other hand, starts from the meaning, and only requires that the general meaning of the original language be expressed without paying too much attention to the details, but requires that the translation be natural and fluent. Since there are many differences between the original language and the translated language in terms of order, grammar, changing forms and rhetoric, only appropriate ways can be used to convey the meaning and reproduce the effect of the original work. In the process of translation, in order to make the language clear, convincing and in accordance with linguistic conventions, the translator must try to follow the customs and correct usage of the language used, rather than sticking to the original mode of expression. [9]

ST: 记者从中科院合肥物质科学研究院等离子体物理研究所获悉，近期该所核聚变大科学团队利用有“人造太阳”之称的全超导托卡马克大科学装置(EAST)，发现并证明了一种新的高能量约束模式，对国际热核聚变实验堆和未来聚变堆运行具有重要意义。(China Daily, 2022)

TT: A new mode of improved plasma confinement was discovered and demonstrated at the Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST) in Hefei, capital of east China's Anhui province. capital of east China's Anhui province. (China Daily, 2022)

Analysis: It is difficult to highlight the main message of the original text. According to the translation, it can be seen that the translator has processed the information, extracted the effective information and translated it, and the main meaning of the original text as extracted by the translator is '在位于中国东部安徽省省会合肥的实验全超导托卡马克大科学装置(EAST)发现并展示了一种改进的等离子体约束的新模式' (China Daily, 2022), then, the official translator adopts the method of free translation to deal with this news as 'A new mode of improved plasma confinement was discovered and demonstrated at the Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST) in Hefei, capital of east China's Anhui province. capital of east China's Anhui province.' so that readers can get the information that the original text wants to convey more quickly and accurately.

## 3.2. The Translator's Subjectivity in the Selection of Translation Techniques

Translators' reasonable and appropriate use of translation techniques and skills is conducive to more authentic and accurate delivery of the original message. This requires translators to know enough about the background culture and think carefully about their roles and functions when translating. Translation techniques include omission, augmentation, non-translation (zero-translation), lexical conversion and so on.

### 3.2.1. Omitted Translations

**For example:** 据悉, 相关部门为游客准备了花环纪念品, 现场热闹非凡。他们还举着欢迎横幅, 上面写着: 中泰一家亲, 神奇泰国热情依旧, 永远欢迎中国家人们。报道称, 泰国官方给予了中国游客“英雄般的欢迎”。(China Daily, 2022) It should have been translated as ‘It is reported that the relevant officials presented the tourists with orchid garlands, souvenirs and tourism information leaflets in Chinese. They also held up a banner that read: Chinese and Thais come from the same family. Amazing Thailand will always warmly welcome Chinese people. Thai officials gave the Chinese tourists a ‘hero’s welcome’, according to reports.’ However, since the descriptions in the original text of ‘准备了花环纪念品’ and ‘举着横幅’ have already reflected Thailand’s welcome to Chinese tourists, the translator omitted ‘给予了中国游客英雄般的欢迎’. So the official translation is ‘Officials presented the tourists with orchid garlands, souvenirs and tourism information leaflets in Chinese. They also held up a banner that read: Chinese and Thais come from the same family. Amazing Thailand will always warmly welcome Chinese people.’ (China Daily, 2022)

### 3.2.2. Additional Translations

In order to make the translation faithfully express the meaning and style of the original text and make the translation conform to the habit of expression, some words must be added. For example, 记者从中科院合肥物质科学研究院等离子体物理研究所获悉, 近期该所核聚变大科学团队利用有“人造太阳”之称的全超导托卡马克大科学装置(EAST), 发现并证明了一种新的高能量约束模式, 对国际热核聚变实验堆和未来聚变堆运行具有重要意义。Hefei is not emphasized as the capital of Anhui province in this sentence, as Chinese readers are mostly aware of Hefei due to its wealth of geography information, so it does not need to be emphasized in the original text. But for the international audience, some readers don’t know Hefei just like some Chinese readers don’t know St. Petersburg, so the translator needs to play the role of an information transmitter to make foreign readers understand our culture. So a cognate was added to Hefei in the translation to complement the original text to achieve the purpose of expressing the original text faithfully: ‘A new mode of improved plasma confinement was discovered and demonstrated at the Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST) in Hefei, capital of east China’s Anhui province.’ (China Daily, 2022)

## 4. Conclusion

Eugene A. Nida has said that translation is an exchange between two cultures. No matter it is literary translation or non-literary translation, it is the communication between two or more cultures. For news text translation, the translator does not only need to translate the text, but also needs to understand the extremely rich cultural background knowledge contained in the news content. As a translator, he needs to understand the cultural background of the content, choose the appropriate translation methods and techniques according to the

characteristics of the news text, the purpose of translation and the target audience, and also to be firm in his political position, correct his attitude, not to do false translation, not to pass on fake information, so as to make the readers correctly understand the current affairs news, and to promote the exchange of cultural information and the accurate transmission of information between the domestic and international communities. The role of translator's subjectivity in non-literary translation should be viewed accurately, so as to better engage in translation activities and improve the level and quality of translation.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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