

A Comparative Study of Prepositions in English-Chinese Translation

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Abstract: Prepositions can be regarded as virtual words, which are used frequently in English and Chinese, flexible in application and changeable in meaning, which are used to express the relationship between words and sentences, affect whether the target language readers can effectively understand the original text, and play an important role in English-Chinese translation. By comparing the differences between English and Chinese prepositions, this paper discusses the classification of English and Chinese prepositions from different angles, analyzes the diversity of prepositions based on specific translation examples, and studies the five translation methods of English preposition equivalence, omission, addition, conversion and reverse translation to accurately convey information, hoping to learn and progress together with the majority of readers and translators.

Keywords: Prepositions, Preposition classification, English-Chinese comparison, Translation method.

1. Introduction

As one of the most active words in the English language, prepositions are usually placed before nouns or pronouns, indicating the relationship between the noun or pronoun and the verb that precedes it, another noun or adjective (A.J. Thomson.1986:17175). Prepositional phrases refer to prepositions followed by nouns, pronouns or phrases, subordinate clauses as its object, prepositional phrases are also widely used, and many fixed collocations, with unique meaning.

The absolute number of Chinese intermediaries is very limited, but prepositions are very important in the grammatical system of Chinese. In 1898, Ma Shi Wentong first put forward the term "preposition", which originally pointed out the characteristics of Chinese prepositions by comparing Chinese with foreign languages, and laid the basic view of preposition research in the history of Chinese grammar. The prepositions in English are not rigid, they are used frequently, the usage is very flexible, and the parts of speech are varied. Therefore, the study of English-Chinese prepositions should analyze the profound linguistic rules behind the surface of the sentence, and cannot separate the backgrounds of the two languages, relying on the differences and similarities of English-Chinese prepositions, and transform them into useful assistance to solve the practical problems of Chinese-English translation.

2. Classification of English Prepositions

(1) According to the meaning of English prepositions in sentences, it can be divided into:

Indicates time: in, on, at, after, until, from, etc.

Indicates location: in, on, under, between, near, etc.

Indicates the cause, end, means and means: by, with, for, through, of, etc.

Indicates contrast, degree: against, for, as, like, to, over, etc.

Indicates relationships: about, in, together with, among,

between, of, etc.

(2) According to the composition of prepositions, it can be divided into

Simple prepositions, consisting of a word such as: in, on, for, of, about, etc.

Compound prepositions, consisting of two or more words, such as: into, outside, inside, upon, throughout, onto, without, etc.

Participle prepositions, which are formed by the transformation of participles, such as: excepting, including, following, etc.

A phrase preposition, which consists of a phrase, such as: according to, by the end of, in the middle of, because of, in front of, etc.

(3) From the aspect of dynamic and static relationship analysis, it can be divided according to the relationship between things or states expressed by prepositions.

Static prepositions, there are static prepositions that represent abstract relationships such as causality and exclusion relations, such as according to, because of, etc.; There are static prepositions that indicate space-time positions, such as for, since, inside, below, etc.

Dynamic prepositions, there are prepositions that indicate spatial dynamics, such as into, towards, across, out of, etc.; There are prepositions that indicate temporal dynamics, such as till, until, etc.

Dynamic and static prepositions, including: in, on, by, over, etc., such as in as in as a static preposition, means "in an object or range", when used as a dynamic preposition, the meaning is "to enter... Internal"; near as a static preposition means "in... Nearby", as a dynamic preposition, is translated as "approach..., near...".

3. The Comparison of English and Chinese Prepositions

(1) Relevant research on the contrast between English and Chinese prepositions

In the starting point and foothold of the preposition

English-Chinese comparison, one is to compare the difference between English and Chinese prepositions from a macro perspective, and the other is to compare from specific words. Shen Jiakuan's "Comparison of English and Chinese Prepositions" (1984) pointed out the differences between English and Chinese prepositions in the division of parts of speech, the position in sentences, the meaning of inclusion, the relative position in sentences, and the use or non-use. This literature is very enlightening for the study of Chinese prepositions, and there is also a certain degree of innovation in research methods, but it has not yet touched on explaining why there are differences between English and Chinese prepositional prepositions. In "Comparison of English-Chinese Prepositions "by", "Being", and "By"" (2000), Nie Jianjun analyzes the different expressions of the concept expressed by the English passive sentence mediation "by" in Chinese, and the differences in the semantics and pragmatics of Chinese prepositions. Based on teaching research, this paper analyzes the reasons for students' errors, and puts forward reference suggestions for improving the teaching methods of "being " and "being by". In the article "Comparison of the Chinese Preposition "Use" and the English Preposition "with" (2006), Liu Dan compared "use" and "with" from many aspects, systematically put forward the similarities and differences between the two and made in-depth research. Huang Dongmei (2000) concluded through the comparative analysis of Chinese-English prepositional phrase grammar functions that Chinese preposition structure can also act as object and predicate complement, but not as subject and object complement. Zhang Gaoyuan and Zhong Jie (2008) sorted out the syntactic characteristics and functions of prepositions of "related meaning", and used translation methods to investigate the similarities and differences between Chinese and English prepositions of "related meaning". In general, the above comparisons are mostly from the perspective of linguistics, describing and comparing the semantic structure and syntactic functions of English and Chinese prepositions.

In terms of translation methods of English-Chinese prepositions, Zhang Lei (2013) mentioned three methods of equivalent translation, conversion translation and omitting translation of prepositions, Li Guifang (2008) mentioned translation, addition, province, reverse translation and sub-translation, and pointed out that these methods are not isolated, Zhao Bokai (2019) introduces the verbized Chinese translation of prepositions from the translation of specific prepositions such as In, on, with, etc., Yang Xicun (2000) according to the characteristics of English prepositions, Huang Shuxiang (1991) analyzes the translatability of prepositions from Chinese to verbs from the grammatical perspective of prepositions as predicatives, adverbs, determiners and complements in sentences. In general, the use of prepositions is very flexible, and the methods of Chinese translation of prepositions are also relatively diverse, and when it comes to preposition classification, the contrast between dynamic and static is also reflected in translation methods, such as converting prepositions into verbs.

(2) Chinese and English comparison of the preposition "give"

"Give" corresponds to "to"

Chinese English learners and native English speakers have obvious differences in the collocation of prepositions to, and overall, Chinese English learners and native English speakers

use more consistent collocations as "want to", "have to", "go to". However, Chinese English learners use more collocations, while native English speakers use less collocations, such as "like to", "how to", "glad to", "time to", "glad to", "right to" and "way to", which are overused collocations by Chinese learners, while native English speakers use more collocations such as "is to" and "be able to" less by Chinese English learners. It is a combination of underused English learners in China.

The English double object sentence pattern is the same as the Chinese double object sentence pattern, it is "subject plus predicate, indirect object, direct object" type, direct object usually refers to the action bearer, indirect object refers to the person or thing to which the action is directed or done (mostly refers to people), that is, to whom the action is directed. But it is not absolute, if the indirect object is preceded by the preposition "to", the indirect object can also be placed after the direct object, and the sentence pattern will also become "subject plus predicate, direct object, indirect object". The object derived by the double object "give" corresponds to the English indirect object, and when the motion indicated by "give" contains the meaning of "to whom" or "to whom", "give" corresponds to "to". Such prepositional phrases are: commit to, devote to, restore to, introduce to, market to sell, move from to somewhere.

Example sentence: His will frees Roxy and commits Chambers to the care of the Judge's family.

Translation: 他生前立下遗嘱恢复了罗西的自由, 并将钱伯斯托付给法官一家收养。

"Give" corresponds to "for"

In a double-object statement, "give" corresponds to "for" when the object elicited by "give" corresponds to an indirect object in English and the action represented by "give" can be replaced by "for whom". When the recipient's "give" corresponds to "for", most verbs or verb groups in English sentences are give classes, such as "offer for, open a space, send for" and take verbs such as buy for.

Example sentence analysis: Profits will be used to buy laptops for each of the school system's 87,000 fourth-graders.

Translation: 盈利将用来给这些学校 87,000 名四年级学生购买笔记本电脑。

4. Translation Strategies for English-Chinese Prepositions

(1) Equivalent translation

In some sentences, English and Chinese prepositions have corresponding meanings, and the method of literal translation can be used to achieve equivalent translation, so that the translation is accurate and retains the charm of the original work. This situation is often seen in the translation of static prepositions.

Example 1: She parked in front of the dining hall and waited for her son.

Translation: 她把车停在了食堂前面等她儿子。

Example 2: He draws full pay from the date of arrival.

Translation: 他从来到之日起就领全额工资。

(2) Omit translation

Non-translation or omission of translation is to make the translation concise and concise on the premise of accurately

expressing the content of the original text, and it is by no means arbitrarily omitting certain prepositions.

Example 1: I will see you again in three days.

Translation: 三天后我再来拜访您。

Example 2: She is a woman of good temper.

Translation: 她脾气很好。

Example 3: The sun has sunk below the horizon.

Translation: 夕阳西下。

(3) Supplementary translation method

The method of additional translation refers to the addition of necessary words, phrases, clauses or complete sentences on the basis of the original text in order to make the translated text conform to the translation habits in grammar and language form, and to be consistent with the original text in terms of cultural background and word association (Feng Qinghua, 2002: 58).

Example 1: It had been hard enough for her to hold onto what remained of her life with no man and a child.

Translation: 对她来说, 守着个孩子, 没有男人可以依靠, 这种日子已经够艰难了。

Example 2: The Singapore Tourism Board has created an incredibly useful website for tourists.

Translation: 新加坡旅游局开设了一个非常有用的网站, 为游客提供有效信息。

(4) Convert translation

Some prepositions have flexible positions and functions in the sentence, and they can be translated as Chinese which require different translation strategies and methods according to the context and context. When it comes to preposition classification, the contrast between dynamic and static is also reflected in the translation method, that is, the conversion of prepositions into verbs. So to some extent, there is a certain transformation relationship between English and Chinese prepositions, which can be translated into verbs, conjunctions or adjectives.

Example 1: He fled up a side alley and into the sanctuary of the old livery stable a block away from the chaos.

Translation: 他逃离了小巷, 躲进了距离嘈杂声只有一个街区的旧马车房来避难。

Example 2: I am very fond of literature, as for politics, I am indifferent.

Translation: 我对文学非常感兴趣, 至于政治, 则毫不关心。

(5) Reverse translation

Sometimes for prepositional phrases in English, it is impossible to find a suitable position in Chinese sentences when translating, but at this time, the expression can be more refined and smooth, so that the transition between words is very natural, and it will not produce abrupt and awkward feelings.

Example 1: The balloons are for free down there in the newly opened store.

Translation: 有家商店免费赠送气球。

Example 2: The meat was taken by the dog.

Translation: 狗把肉叼走了。

5. Conclusion

English-Chinese prepositions have their own uniqueness and certain commonality, and the rules of Chinese translation of prepositions are explored by comparing the classification and characteristics of English-Chinese prepositions. For the translation strategy of prepositions in English, many scholars have explored them to a certain extent, and in general, the use of prepositions is very flexible, and the methods of Chinese translation of prepositions are also relatively diverse. The author believes that the analysis of prepositions should be based on the characteristics of the original language, specifically analyze diversified parts of speech and sentence patterns, and also consider the differences in cultural backgrounds, and multi-perspective research will surely become the trend of English and Chinese preposition research in the future. Translators need to be proficient in both Chinese and English, have a solid language foundation and flexible flexibility, and strive to translate prepositions faithfully and accurately to ensure the quality of the translation. This paper only makes a rough analysis of prepositions, and the comprehensive, in-depth and detailed analysis and description of English and Chinese prepositions still need further research and efforts.

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