An Analysis of Translation Studies from the Perspective of Philosophy of Language

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Abstract: Philosophy of language is a branch of philosophy and a branch of analytical philosophy. Its method is to analyze language logically, which is based on the application of modern mathematical logic. It is a philosophical school with the greatest influence and the most outstanding achievements in modern western philosophy. Philosophy of language plays a great role in promoting translation studies. Therefore, it is of great significance to strengthen the research on the basic theories and methods of philosophy of language and the relationship between philosophy of language and translation for the innovation and development of philosophy and the progress of translation field.

Keywords: Philosophy of Language; Translation Thoughts; Translation Studies

1. The Connotation of Philosophy of Language

Philosophy of language developed under the background of modern logic established by Boole and Frege. Frege is the pioneer of analytic philosophy and philosophy of language. He used modern logic to analyze language philosophically, put forward the theory of meaning, and initiated analytic philosophy and philosophy of language. Because Russell's interest was mainly in logic and logicism occupied a central position in the early philosophy of language, it has been a main line in philosophy of language since then. Wittgenstein was Russell's student, and the logical positivism rising in Vienna mainly drew inspiration from Russell and Wittgenstein. In Wittgenstein's view, language, philosophy and cognition are closely related, and the essence of philosophy is language[6]. After World War II, the School of Daily Linguistics entered its heyday. In the late 1960s, the school of everyday linguistics gradually weakened. In 1950s and 1960s, logical positivism reached its heyday in America. A prominent feature of philosophy of language formed in the second half of the 20th century is the combination of logical positivism and pragmatism, which is called "logical pragmatism"[1].

The central issue of philosophy of language is the relationship between language and the world and the meaning of language or words. Philosophical problems are always interrelated, so are the relationship between language and the world and the meaning of language or words.Philosophy of language includes three aspects: First, linguistic philosophy. It is a subject of philosophical thinking on meaning, synonyms, syntax, translation, etc., and studies the logical position and verification methods of linguistic theories. Second, philosophy of language. It includes the study of any concept based on the structure and function of natural language or artificial language. Third, the philosophy of language. It is about the philosophical nature of the nature of language and the relationship between language and reality[1].

2. Representative Theories of Philosophy of Language

2.1 Russell's Description Theory

Russell is an English philosopher, mathematician, logician, historian, writer and the main founder of analytical philosophy. In *On Reference*, descriptors are divided into special descriptors and non-special descriptors. The core content of special descriptors theory is to rewrite some sentences, rewrite sentences containing general concepts of special descriptors as subjects into propositional functions, and reveal their true logical structure. He believes that sentences containing egocentric words must completely depend on context in order to play their role, and there is no meaning without context[4]. The theory promotes the linguistic turn in modern philosophy and effectively maintains the theory of meaning reference. It applies the method of logical analysis to the study of philosophy of language for the first time, which promotes the development of logical philosophy and analytical philosophy and accelerates the linguistic turn of modern philosophy.

2.2 Wittgenstein's Theory of "Family Similarity"

Wittgenstein is one of the most influential philosophers in the 20th century. He put forward the theory of "family similarity". He

cited "games" as an example, pointing out that all kinds of games do not have a common feature, but form a family, and the members of this family have some family similarities. This theory has violently impacted the traditional concept of universals.

3. Translation Thoughts from the Perspective of Philosophy

Saussure thinks that the shape of thought and the difference between ideas are determined by language, because the whole thought is based on language, and there is no thought independent of language[3]. Translation is an activity of language and culture, and it is to talk about the world and people's thoughts with words in two languages (although the final translation product is one language). Words in two languages are linked with the existence of something and a process in the world, which is closely related to the existence of the outside world. Then, translation theory belongs to philosophical discussion.

Chinese translation thought basically originates from Chinese traditional philosophy and Chinese philosophy has been deeply influencing the development of Chinese translation thought. The development of translation theory is closely related to the study of philosophy of language. Translation is not only the transformation between two languages, but also the communication between different cultures. A good translation is a kind of interlingual semantic transformation that not only perfectly expresses the meaning of the source language, but also perfectly presents the advantages of the target language[8]. Chinese pays attention to hypotaxis while English pays attention to parataxis. Therefore, translators should fully understand the source text and accurately translate the information conveyed by the source text according to the usage habits of the target language.

"What is translation" can be regarded as either a scientific problem or a philosophical problem. Although science takes a certain field as its research object and philosophy takes the whole world as its research object, the research object of translation is the specific language practice of human beings, which is a science in itself. In fact, science and philosophy are not opposite to each other. Science provides concrete materials for philosophy, while philosophy relies on concrete science to provide various kinds of knowledge. Therefore, "what is translation" as a scientific problem and "what is translation" as a philosophical problem are interdependent and inseparable from each other[7].

If translation is defined from a philosophical perspective, German scholar Walter Benjamin is a very important figure. Influenced by German Romanticism, he inherited the historical inheritance of language and the commonness and complementarity of languages derived from cultural commonness. The linguistic turn of Western Marxist philosophy originated from Benjamin, and his linguistic philosophy originated from the formation of his translation philosophy. Benjamin's philosophy of language reveals the philosophical essence of the definition of "translation" from the perspective of language. His thinks that there is a super-historical kinship between languages, which exists in the whole meaning of each language, and no language can embody this meaning alone, but only the collection of complementary meanings of each language can embody this meaning[7]. He believes that the so-called translation is to transform one language into another through continuous transformation, and the life of the original text gets the latest and most complete display in the translated text[7]. Therefore, to study "translation", translators should pay attention to and understand the development history of human cognition of this category. Based on this, the logical starting point of the definition of translation can be derived from three philosophical questions of translation: "What is translation, why is translation, and what is translation for"[7].

4. The Similarities and Differences between Philosophy of Language and Translation Studies

Philosophy of language and translation studies have similarities and differences. They have four things in common. Both philosophy of language and translation studies pay attention to the language in use. They all pay attention to the conditions under which language works; They all pay attention to the relationship between meaning, mind and language; They all pay attention to the contextual constraints in realizing language functions.

There are also differences between them. Philosophy of language has a prominent feature that translation studies do not have, that is, philosophy of language pays great attention to the truth conditions of language. Another outstanding feature of philosophy of language, which translation does not have, is that philosophy of language emphasizes "metalanguage", "speech" and "discourse", describing space and time experience and making certain logical judgments. Compared with philosophy of language, translation studies pay more attention to the transformations between languages in bilingual environment, such as the patterns of language correspondence and equivalence, the patterns of language pair transformation and transfer, and the multiple relational networks of texts[2].

5. Conclusion

Philosophy of language plays a great role in promoting translation studies. Philosophy also emphasizes the process of understanding,

philosophy of language also studies the process of meaning generation, and the conceptualization of context in philosophy of language also promotes the parametric study of translation context. The most prominent role of philosophy of language in promoting translation studies is that it promotes the transformation of translation studies paradigm.

Philosophy of language can help people to study translation in a broader field, thus making translation theory develop and innovate continuously. It can also encourage the translator to translate the source text more carefully, thus gaining recognition and praise from the target language readers and even bilingual readers.

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