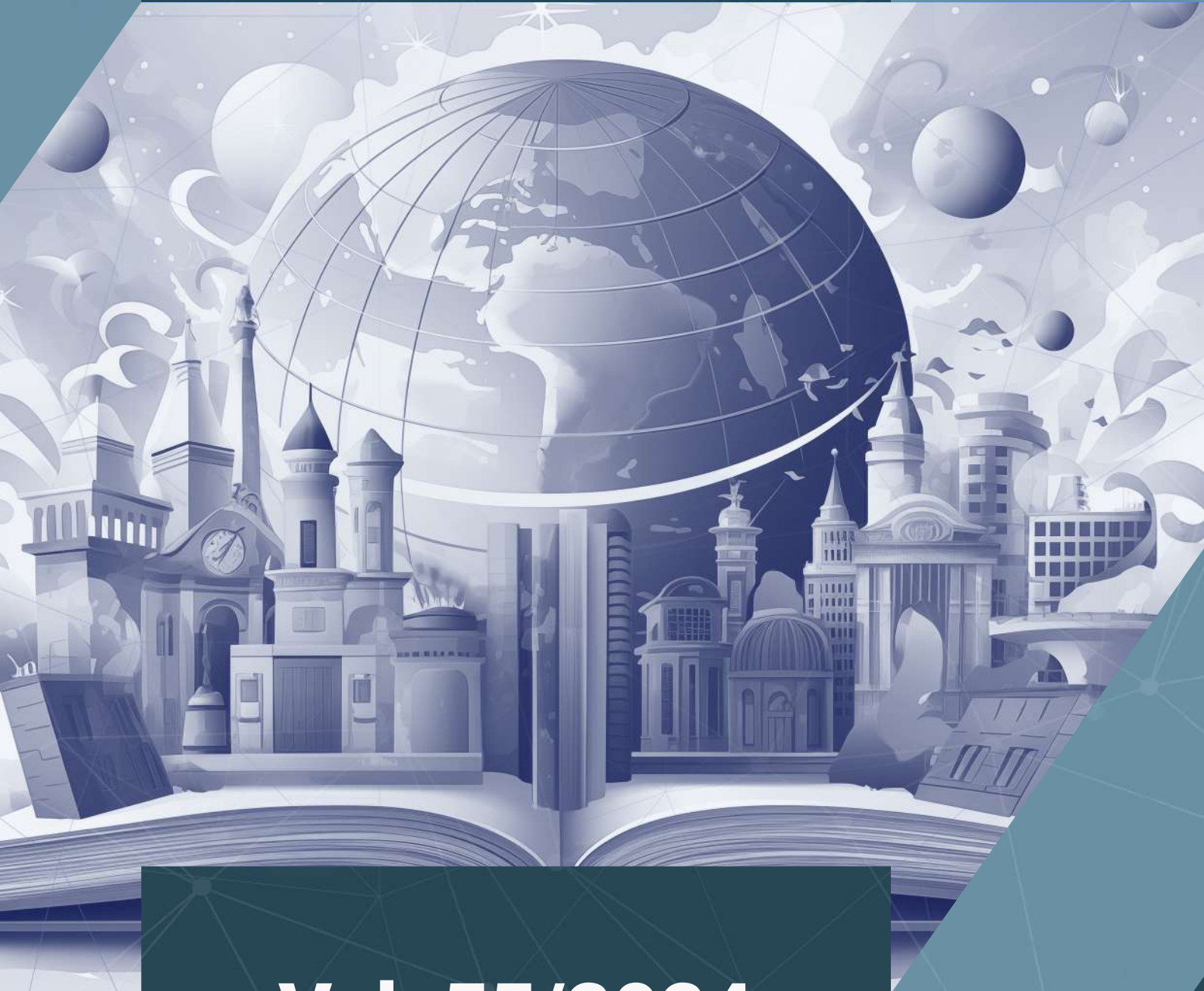




TECHNIUM
SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL



Vol. 55/2024
A New Decade for Social Changes

PLUS
COMMUNICATION P



International
Communication & PR

Semantic Choice in Translation from Morris' Modern Semiotic Theory

Fan Gao

School of Foreign Languages, Inner Mongolia University Of Technology, Hohhot
010080, Inner Mongolia, China

gflucy@qq.com

Abstract. From the perspective of the Internet, this article focuses on semantic selection in translation, and delves into the semantic selection of translation in Morris' modern semiotic theory. After exploring the relevant theoretical concepts by dimensions, it is found that the semantics of translation in Morris' modern semiotic theory can be divided into three types: denotational semantics, pragmatic semantics and intra-verbal semantics. Finally, the choice of the three types of semantics: denotational semantics, pragmatic semantics and intra-verbal semantics is explored in depth to provide guidance for related theoretical research.

Keywords. Morris Modern Semiotic Theory; Translation; Semantics

1. Background of the study

1.1 Literature review

For academia, the choice of semantics in the process of English translation has always been the focus of attention. From the perspective of translator's inquiry, He Yuanxiu deeply analyzed the translation concepts and specific semantic choices under Morris' modern semiotic theory, and used specific practical cases to explain the differences in different semantic selection processes, laying a good foundation for related research (He Yuanxiu, 2009). From the perspective of translators' translation motivation, Kou fuming and Lu Hongzhou find that translation, as the main carrier and way to connect the two languages, is prone to variation in the process of practical application, which makes scholars encounter problems such as insufficient interpretation or ambiguity, which is not conducive to the practical application of the whole translation system. In this context, the scholars took the study of linguistic semiotics as the starting point to study the combination forms and choices of linguistic signs in translation, so as to provide theoretical support for the study of translation Semiotics (Kou fuming and Lu Hongzhou, 2017). From the perspective of semiotics, Li Zhoujun explored the symbolic interpretation of the composition of modern film and television animation, and systematically analyzed the composition of translation language in animation. After that, he deeply analyzed the semantic choice and characteristics of an animation designer after decoding the language, and concluded the experience and cultural value between different languages, which plays a crucial role in semantic application in the process of translation (Li Zhoujun, 2018). Based on

the system of linguistic semiotics that combines language and semantics, Xi Yan finds that along with the progress of human society and economic development, language as the mainstream way and tool of human communication basically follows the laws of practicality and expression. Therefore, she takes the theoretical framework of linguistic semiotics as her research perspective to explore in depth the role of linguistic semiotics in the Mandarin tradition, and establishes a feasible way to propose the semantic expression of Mandarin, which is beneficial to help translators better identify the semantic choices in translation (Xi Yan, 2018).

1.2 Purpose of the study

For a long time, in the process of translation practice, the most important contradiction for scholars is the semantic expression and specific understanding is the choice of semantics in the process of translation. The existing research on linguistic semiotics is the key to auxiliary semantic expression, and it is also the focus of relevant meaning expression by scholars (Wang Xiaowei et al., 2017). Most scholars believe that descriptive symbols are a kind of modernity theory based on solid theory, which can assist researchers to conduct a lot of language research (Tang Yinan et al., 2016). Among them, Morris' modern semiotic theory is an important one, which occupies a large position in language expression and concrete research. First of all, Morris' theory of modern semiotics can help scholars understand the development of modern semiotics in the process of development, the present development law and the future development direction, and help more people understand the semantic choice in translation. Secondly, it can help scholars establish a unified point of view and master the relevant semiotics theory more comprehensively. Scholars have the cognition of Morris' modern semiotics theory, which can unify the dialectical views in the field of knowledge, realize the unity of many disciplines to a certain extent, and help themselves to find the same exchange theme and expression. Finally, by analyzing Morris' modern semiotic theory, we can find the development track and historical influence of the theory, which is conducive to the construction of modern practical semiotic theory and application, and has a great reference for the construction of domestic linguistic semiotic theory. Therefore, based on the study of relevant theories, this paper makes an in-depth analysis of the specific semantic choices in the process of translation based on Morris' modern semiotics theory from the perspective of the Internet, so as to help scholars analyze the specific semantic choices in the process of translation, which is conducive to the in-depth study of linguistic semiotics.

2. Basic theory overview

2.1 The concept of translation

From the views of various scholars, we can find that many scholars have this evaluation of translation: translation is art, skill and technology. In this way, translation is a kind of highly creative work, which can maintain certain artistic attributes for a long time. Translation is also a kind of work with rules and regulations for scientific research, so it has scientific nature. Translation is also a kind of work that requires knowledge reserve and experience, so it has strong technical nature (Zhang Li, 2011). It can be seen that translation is a kind of complicated work, and this complexity is more due to people's insufficient understanding of translation. In the Chinese Dictionary, translation is defined as the expression of one language in the form of another language by means of translation or interpretation with the help of experience and knowledge reserve of the person concerned. It can be seen from this concept that translation has more linguistic attributes, so it can belong to the category of language. From the definition of

scholars in translation circles, a comprehensive and professional definition of translation is carried out. In this context, most scholars have uniquely defined translation according to their own understanding. Some scholars believe that translation is not an independent language or method, but rather a complete information that needs to be presented in different ways. Other scholars believe that translation is a functional text that generates a specific text, and this relationship is more based on the function that the text should achieve (Wang Chuanwei, 2019). In fact, translation is a form of information transmission between different languages, and it is also a form of cultural communication between different language groups. There are many definitions of translation in various fields, and it is impossible to conduct a comprehensive analysis of all document definitions. However, from most studies, it can be found that due to the large differences in personal understanding, related scholars also have many differences in the definition of translation, and the focus is different. However, different research definitions share a common point with dictionaries, and almost all definitions refer to their relevance to language during definition translation. Language is a concept that cannot be avoided in interpretation and translation. Almost all definitions revolve around the word language. A typical translation itself is a mutual conversion between two languages. Since there is a symbolic system of form and meaning checking between different languages, and all information is contained in different language symbols, the fundamental attributes of translation can be grouped into languages. In this way, translators must consciously follow the language guidance and form specific standards for language form and meaning.

2.2 The concept of semantics

In the process of studying the concept of translation, semantics is often mentioned, which can be simply understood as the composition of the content expressed in various languages. Style is more representative of a language form (Li Xinhui, 2008). It is not difficult to further define the semantic definition from the perspective of translation definition and linguistic symbol concept. Specifically, semantics mainly refers to the language or symbol with continuous characteristics, that is, a kind of content or related meaning replaced by language symbols (Xu Jian, 2009). In other words, semantics is a kind of objective reflection of sound and image, as well as the relationship between language symbols and objective entities. This is the most simple and classic semantic view in academia. In modern language systems, semantics is defined as an intermediate between language signs and objects. Among them, in the semantic triangle structure, language signs generally represent what they refer to. However, language signs generally can only establish their basic concepts through the human brain system, so there is a greater connection between them and things. Once anything has a natural relationship with the human subject and object, it will complicate the situation, and the semantics will better conform to this law. The academic circles also have different interpretations of the precise definition of semantics. Since semantics involves many aspects, its theory also has different levels. Up to now, there has been a lot of controversies about the definition of semantic nature in the academic circles, which has caused many uncertainties in the semantic definition debate, and its meaning is relatively rich (Zeng Lisha, 2007). Therefore, in order to unify the semantic definition, many scholars have conducted a lot of research on the semantic definition. In the process of in-depth research, scholars regard semantics as a system covering a variety of language systems, including natural science, sociology and psychology. Generally speaking, semantics cannot be accurately defined and explained from a single category, which leads to great limitations in research thinking of many scholars.

The relationship between discipline and translation is summarized as shown in Figure 1. As can be seen from Figure 1, translation is a huge system, and there is a certain complexity in the relationship between translation and various source disciplines. However, most of the attributes of translation are determined by complex semantic attributes. In order to better and more accurately explain semantic concepts, clarify complex semantic relations and translation screening mechanism, it is necessary to associate them with the whole translation system. According to whether the meaning is related to the outside, linguists put forward two concepts: systematic meaning and referential meaning. The former is more to explain the meaning of the internal relations of the semantic system, while the latter is more to explain the relevance between language symbols and the external world. Systemic meaning generally refers to the knowledge about the relationship between language and the world.

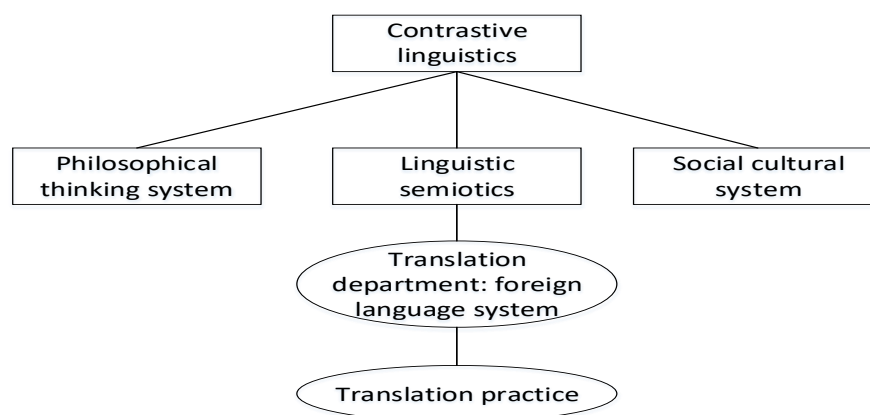


Figure 1. The Relationship between Translation and Other Disciplines

In the complex and changeable context, there are often differences between many semantics. As there are many semantic functions, there are different interpretations in different contexts. Moreover, semantic functions will produce different functions in different scenarios, but there are certain similarities among many functions. Generally speaking, semantic functions mainly include four functions: expressive function, ideological function, expressive function and original language function. In different contexts, semantics can reflect the different ideas of the expresser, facilitating various communication activities.

2.3 Morris Modern Semiotics

As a kind of written discourse, Morris' modern semiotics shows more unique dialogism. Taking Morris' modern semiotics as a result of dialogue can be expressed not only in the semiotic theory, but also in the outside. Morris' modern semiotics is more through thinking about the world, showing the content and form of each subject in accordance with the use of different symbols, forming a unique type of symbols. No matter what kind of object is delineated, the visual field of symbols always emphasizes on the eyes. In other words, there is a basic relationship in human activities. The key point is the symbolic relationship in which one substance replaces another. This complex substitution relationship constitutes the theme of semiotics. Before Morris, some "symbolic imperialists" set foot in other fields and thought that their own research was similar to that of experts. Although this practice is one-sided, it is undeniable that different disciplines can often be regarded as a series of common problems in the process of dealing with many problems. For example, when linguists analyze related

languages or rhetorical experts study rhetorical devices, they will face the same semiotic problems. Once the public thinks that the similarities between these fields lie in the intellectual activities with their own characteristics, the obstacles between various disciplines can be eliminated, and interdisciplinary research can be realized. In fact, Morris' modern semiotics is an idea based on the interdisciplinary nature of this semiotics.

3. The semantic classification in translation from the perspective of internet from morris's modern semiotic theory

Based on the research results of traditional psychology and the basic attributes of modern pragmatics, Morris made a detailed study of the relationship between semantics. Combined with the above definition of semantics, under the background of Internet and with the help of various Internet tools, it is found that Morris's modern semiotics divides semantics into three types, namely referential semantics, pragmatic semantics and intralingual semantics.

3.1 Referential semantics

Referential semantics was first proposed by language philosophers, and later mentioned in Morris' modern semiotics. Referential semantics mainly refers to the relationship between different things and language symbols after they are transformed into language symbols in human production and life. It is not difficult to see that referential semantics is more representative of some things, and also conveys some practices in the form of generalization. In the practical process, referential semantics has two main features. On the one hand, due to semantic limitations, referential semantics is endowed with many meanings. Generally speaking, one meaning can refer to many meanings, which is convenient for human beings to use related languages. On the other hand, with the rapid development and change of social economy, referential semantics has changed significantly. With the social and economic changes, it constantly updates the existing reference sentence database, which can facilitate the application of relevant semantics by the public. Moreover, due to the influence of cultural customs in different regions, referential semantics is often used to refer to the semantics of another language system.

3.2 Pragmatic semantics

Pragmatic semantics refers to the relationship between the symbol and the interpreter. In Morris's modern semiotics, emphasis on pragmatic semantics is not equal to the original meaning of things, more refers to the speaker's interpretation. The order in language refers more to the order of the speaker. Therefore, the study of pragmatic semantics is more about the user's intention and context. Pragmatic semantics covers social interaction, association and representation. Among them, social communication is the language form of human communication attitude and other related information in the process of human communication activities. Associative semantics is a semantic way to evoke human brain thoughts and express different human thoughts with the help of different language symbols. Representational semantics refers to the self characteristics, family background, identity and other related information expressed by the speaker with the help of his own way of expression. Different pragmatic semantics have their own uniqueness, which is helpful for users to better understand the meaning of the source language and convey different emotional meanings to the maximum extent.

3.3 Intralingual meaning

Intralingual semantics refers to the relationship between symbols, that is, the different thoughts and feelings conveyed by different language components in collocation and syntactic structure, as well as the internal meaning of speech. As the most fundamental and peculiar symbol of human invention, language can form different sentences through different permutations and combinations, and then express different meanings. In this way, different semantics can arouse the imagination and association of reading, which is more conducive to the emotional communication between human beings, so as to have a deeper understanding of the deep meaning between languages.

4. Semantic choice in translation from morris' modern semiotic theory

4.1 The choice of referential semantics

According to different attributes, language is divided into ordinary language, cultural language and personal language. Once there is a big difference between the referential meaning and the surface meaning of language, it is often caused by national customs, habits and cultural concepts. Therefore, in the context of the Internet, Morris's modern semiotic theory endows referential semantics with many choices. Firstly, referential semantics is polysemous. Morris's modern semiotic theory points out that the meaning of a word needs to be determined by the use of language, and it can present different meanings in different sentences. This is because the complexity of language symbols in the original creation environment, but now the brain cognitive ability has some limitations, which requires different languages need different symbols for transmission and expression. Secondly, referential semantics is variable. There are three kinds of changing meanings in referential semantics, which are expanding meaning, narrowing meaning and transferring meaning. Finally, the referential semantics has incomplete correspondence. Language generally reflects human's generalization of an objective problem. Any language will specialize and segment in its own unique way according to its own habits and the needs of reality, and then form a system of different vocabulary composition.

4.2 The choice of pragmatic semantics

According to the previous statement, pragmatic semantics is generally used to reveal the speaker's identity, class background, attitude and age, which can reflect the speaker's state or current situation. Cao Yu's writer once said that most of the speakers are poor and at the bottom of the society. They are more of a bully than a bully. In order to better reflect the representational meaning of these discourses, the pragmatic semantics can use a more concise short speech to summarize the meaning of this part. Moreover, pragmatic semantics can be more colloquial in expressing the passage, and can express some vulgar words in a different lexical structure, which has better translatability.

4.3 The choice of intralingual meaning

Generally speaking, the common phenomenon between signs is textual and quantitative, which may appear in several items. Among them, there are some differences between any item entering the collocation scope and other items, but there are also some common phenomena. The more common the collocation items are, the clearer the semantic expression is. On the contrary, intralingual meaning is difficult to express potential meaning. At this time, many scholars have found that the use of rhetorical devices can break through this semantic common phenomenon, and use more strange collocations to express the intention of

language symbols users. Therefore, intralingual semantics has more common features, which can be interpreted by different ways of language symbols.

References

- He Y.X. (2009). Semantic Choice in Translation from the perspective of Morris' Modern Semiotic Theory. *Foreign Languages*, 30 (2), 140-144
- Kou F.M., Lu H.Z. (2017). Translation from the Perspective of Semiotics. *Foreign Language Teaching*, 38(2), 91-94.
- Li Z.J. (2018). Interpretation of Animation Codes from the Perspective of semiotics—On the Morphology and Semantics of Codes in Animation Works. *Curriculum Education Research: Study on Learning Method and Teaching Method*, 27 (26), 36- 36.
- Xi Y. (2018). An Analysis of the Semantic Expression Method of Oral Communication from the Perspective of Linguistic Semiotics—Taking Mandarin as the research object. *Journal of Jilin Radio and Television University*, 31(4), 98-100.
- Wang X.W., Liu N.Y., Liang A.X., et al. (2017). Recognition of the Semantic Web Definition and Its Theoretical Framework from the Perspective of Semiotics. *Modern Information*, 38(8), 35-42.
- Tang Y.N. (2016). Reconstruction of the Aesthetic Rationale for the English translation of "Deng Gao" from the Perspective of Semiotics. *Overseas English*, 17 (19), 128-129.
- Zhang L. (2011). The Translation of Semantic Deviation in English News Headlines from the Perspective of Relevance Translation Theory. *Journal of Hainan Institute of Tropical Oceanography*, 18(1), 110-111.
- Wang C.W. (2019). Interactive Reader Response Criticism from the Perspective of Pragmatics. *Northern Literature (Late Period)*, 10(5), 254-255.
- Li X.H. (2008). Introduction to Language and Culture Translation. *Language and Translation*, 24 (1), 79-80.
- Xu J.G. (2009). The Name and Reality of Foreign Propaganda Translation: A Review of Research after the 1990s. *Journal of Ocean University of China (Social Science Edition)*, 22(2), 93-96
- Zeng L.S. (2007). The theoretical construction of pragmatic translation system from the Perspective of Categorization of foreign Propaganda Translation Principles. *Foreign Languages and Foreign Language Teaching*, 29 (7), 44-46.

The article is based on the educational reform project of “Multi-modal Case Study of Cross-cultural Communication Class” with project No. 2022237.