

论英汉长句的译法

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摘要: 本文结合典型实例从理论和实践的角度论述英汉长句的主要译法: 1. 顺序法; 2. 逆序法; 3. 调整顺序法; 4. 分译法; 5. 综合法。这些译法建立在英汉两种语言的共性、特性及其习惯表达法的基础上。

关键词: 翻译; 译法; 英语长句; 汉语长句; 翻译过程

翻译是把一种语言的话语转换为另一种语言的话语,或是从语义到文本在译语中用最切近最自然的对等语再现原语的信息。翻译既是科学,又是艺术。这是中外许多翻译家给翻译下的一条主要定义。翻译之难,在外语界几乎人人皆知。而英汉长句难句的翻译又是翻译中的主要难点,非煞费苦心,慎重处理不可。这里所谓的长句,主要指语法结构复杂,修饰成分颇多,内容层次在两个或两个以上的复合句,亦可指含义颇多的简单句。本文拟从英汉两种语言的共性和异性的角度,结合翻译理论技巧和典型例子,谈谈英汉长句互译的基本方法,同时强调长句翻译过程中译者必须注意的要点。

一、顺序法

在英语和汉语中,许多句子表达的行为、事情或情感通常按其发生的时间先后安排,也有不少句子按所表达的逻辑关系排列,这样大多

数句子的主要成分的顺序基本一致。英汉长句主要成分的顺序亦是如此。故英汉长句的翻译通常可采用顺序法处理。例如:

(1) We hear what they said and view what they did; we see them as if they were really alive; we sympathize with them, enjoy with them, grieve with them; their experience becomes ours, and we feel as if we were in a measure actors with them in the scenes which they describe. (转引自冯国华《英译汉别裁》,北京:外文出版社,2001年,215)我们如闻其声,如观其行,如见其人;我们赞同、支持他们,和他们悲喜与共;他们的感受成为我们自己的感受,我们觉得仿佛自己是在他们所描绘的场景中与他们同台扮演着角色。

(2) If we wish to be free—if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending—if we mean not basely to abandon the

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noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon, until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained—we must fight! (转引自张培基《英汉翻译教程》,上海外教社,1980年,第197页)如果我们希望自由——如果我们真想维护我们如此长期为之斗争不懈的珍贵权利,使之完全无损,如果我们真想不可耻地放弃我们如此长期从事的并发誓不达光荣目的决不罢休的崇高斗争,那么,我们就必须战斗!

(3)世界正在发生深刻的变化:经济与科学技术的结合与日俱增;世界经济的重组加快步伐;经济繁荣不仅仅取决于资源和资本的总量,而且直接有赖于技术知识和信息的积累及其应用。The world is undergoing profound changes; the integration of economy with science and technology is increasing, the restructuring of the world economy is speeding up, and economic prosperity depends not only on the total volume of resources and capital, but also directly on the accumulation and application of technological knowledge and information. (转引自孙万彪主编《高级翻译教程》,上海外教社,2000,第368页)

(4)只有在提高效益的前提下保持快速的经济增长,我们才能缓解企业生产经营困难,减轻就业压力,促进经济结构调整,增加财政收入,防范金融风险,保持社会稳定。(出处同例3,第182页) And, only by maintaining rapid economic growth on the basis of better performance, can we mitigate the operating problems plaguing our enterprises, lighten unemployment pressure, promote strategic restructuring of the economy, increase state revenue, prevent financial risks and maintain social stability. (ibid, P. 188)

以上四句各主要成分的排列顺序在英汉两种语言中基本一致,因此,翻译时按原句顺序处理即可。例(1)是个并列复合句,由四个并列

分句组成,其中第一、第二和第四分句本身又是复合句。此句虽然长而复杂,但各分句及其所表达的意思都是并列的,所以,其汉语译文的顺序按原句的顺序。例(2)是个包含三个条件从句的复合句,主句在句末,形成英语中的掉尾句(periodic sentence)。此句的主句和从句的排列顺序同汉语的习惯表达顺序完全一致,因此其对应的汉语译句保持了原句的顺序。例(3)属于汉语中的多重复句,因为它的最后一个分句本身又是一个递进联合复句。该句各分句的顺序及其意思的表达顺序与英语复句的习惯表达顺序完全相同,因此其英语译句各分句的顺序等同于原句的顺序。例(4)是个表特定条件的多重复句,因为正句是个包含六个并列分句的联合复句。与其对应的英语译句基本上保持了原句的顺序。该译句采用“Only by..., can we...”这个英语句式,恰到好处地传达了原句的意思。以上四句的译文在形式和内容上均与原句相同,忠于原文,可与原句媲美。

二、逆序法

所谓逆序法,主要指译语句子的主句和从句的顺序与原句的主句和从句的顺序恰恰相反。有些英语长句的主句和从句的排列顺序与汉语表达习惯不同,甚至恰恰相反,遇到这样的句子时,就必须从原句后面译起,逆着原句的顺序译(张培基,1980:152)。有些汉语长句译成英语时逆着原句顺序处理更符合英语习惯表达法。例如:

(5) This will remain true whether we are dealing with the application of psychology to advertising and political propaganda, or engineering to the mass media of communication, or of medical science to the problem of overpopulation or old age. (转引自林相周《英语理解与翻译》,上海外教社,1998:189)无论我们说的是把心理学应用于广告宣传和政治宣传,还是把工程学应用于大众传播媒体,或是把医学运用于人口过剩问题和老年问题,这种情况总

是如此。

(6) There are several reasons why he (Kissinger) no longer appears to be the magician the world press had made him out to be, an illusion which he failed to discourage because, as he would admit himself, he has a tendency toward megalomania. 全世界报界曾经把他渲染成魔术师般的人物,他也没有阻止人们制造这种错觉,因为他自己也承认有一种自大狂的倾向。现在,他看来不再像这样一个人了,这里有几个原因。(同例 5,210—211)

(7) 积极帮助发展中国家克服邮政建设中面临的困难,努力缩小发展中国家与发达国家在邮政领域的差距,应成为国际邮政合作的当务之急。(转引自梅德明编《高级口译教程》,上海外教社,2000年,第106页) It should be the pressing task in international postal cooperation to actively help developing countries overcome difficulties in their development of postal services and to energetically narrow the gap between the developing and the developed countries in this field.

(8) 其四,对利用、教唆未成年人走私、贩卖、运输、制造毒品,或者向未成年人出售毒品的,引诱、教唆、欺骗或者强迫未成年人吸食、注射毒品的,因走私、贩卖、运输、制造、非法持有毒品罪被判过刑又有毒品罪行为的,从重处罚。(《北京周报》,2000年第28期,第37页) Fourth, severe punishment shall be imposed on those who make use of or instigate minors to smuggle, traffic, transport or manufacture drugs, sell drugs to minors, or lure, instigate, deceive or force them into taking or injecting drugs, and on those who have again committed drug-related crimes after having been convicted of the crime of smuggling, trafficking, transporting, manufacturing or illegally holding drugs.

以上例(5)是个表条件的英语复合句,从句很长,主句极短。从句置于主句的后面,这是

英语复合句的正常排列顺序。而在汉语的偏正复合句中,偏句往往位于正句之前,可见,英语复合句的习惯顺序和汉语复合句的通常顺序恰恰相反。所以,例(5)的主句和从句的顺序在其相应的译文中给颠倒过来了。例(6)是个包含多个从句的复合句。在译文中,the world press had made him out to be 移在句首,接下来是 an illusion which he failed...,最后才是主句 there are several reasons. 这是因为英汉两种语言叙述事物或行为的常用方法不同。英语在很多情况下先叙述后发生的事情,而汉语一般是先发生的事情先说,后发生的事情后说,否则就得用某些时间副词来表示时间的先后这一概念(林相周,1998:211)。例(6)中的几个谓语动词主要用了三种不同时态:表示事情最先发生的过去完成时 had made 位于中间,接在其后的是一般过去时 failed,而一般现在时 there are 则位于句首。在其对应的汉语译文中,译者根据英语动词不同时态所表示的事情和行为发生的先后顺序来重新安排汉语译文的顺序,将最先发生的事情置于句首,将最后发生的放在句末,译文次序井然,意思一目了然。

以上例(7)和例(8)均是成分颇多的汉语简单句。例(7)的主语较长,由两个并列的动宾词组组成,其谓语是复合谓语。译文顺序恰恰与原文顺序相反,这是由英语的习惯表达法决定的。在英语中,如果谓语动词为系动词或情态动词加连系动词,后面接作表语的形容词或名词短语或 OF 引导的介词短语,如果主语较长或相当长,为了使句子结构平衡,应当采用:It(形式主语)+(情态动词)系动词+作表语的成分+真正的主语(英语不定式或主语从句)。像例(7)这样的句子都应逆着顺序译成英语句子。以上例(8)的宾语很长,由介词“对”引导。该句的译文顺序也同原句顺序相反,但符合英语习惯表达顺序。在约莫 70% 的英语复合句中,从句位于主句之后,以便使句子结构平衡。例(8)的第一部分极长,需要使用两个长长的定语从句方能表达清楚。为了避免译句头重脚轻,必须逆着原文顺序译。

三、调整顺序法

由于英语和汉语的习惯表达法存在许多差异,所以英汉互译时,适当调整原句顺序是非常普遍的做法。这里所谓的调整顺序法,指原句的某个成分或某些成分在译句中的位置不同于它们在原句中的位置,这样的位置调整是以目的语的表达习惯为基础的。

(9) Countless others have written on this theme, and it may be that I shall pass unnoticed among them; if so I must comfort myself with the greatness and splendor of my rivals, whose work will rob my own of recognition. 有关这个题目的其它著作数不胜数,我写的书可能淹没期间,无人垂顾;倘若如此,那是因为我的竞争对手博大精深,才华横溢,所以他们的著作才会使我的作品默默无闻,我必须借此聊以自慰。(同例(1))

(10) The problem of possible genetic damage to human population from radiation exposures, including those resulting from the fallout from testing of atomic weapons, has quite properly claimed much popular attention in recent years. (同例(5), 206) 人类基因由于受到辐射影响,包括原子武器实验产生的放射性散落物所造成的辐射影响,而可能遭到损伤,这个问题近年来已经理所当然地引起了人们的广泛关注。

(11) 上海博物馆有馆藏珍贵文物 12 万件,包括青铜器、陶瓷器、书法、绘画、雕塑、家具、玉牙器、竹木漆器、甲骨、玺印、钱币、少数民族工艺等 21 个门类,其中青铜器、陶瓷器和书画为馆藏三大特色。(同例(7), 第 179 页) With bronze ware, ceramics and paintings & works of calligraphy as its distinctive collections, Shanghai Museum boasts 120,000 pieces of rare and precious cultural relics in twenty-one categories, including bronze ware, ceramics, calligraphy, paintings, sculpture, furni-

ture, jade and ivory carvings, bamboo and wood carvings, lacquer ware, oracle bones, seals, coins, and handicrafts of ethnic art. (ibid. p. 186)

(12) 对外友协的同仁决心在以江泽民主席为核心的党中央领导下,积极进取,开拓创新,继续扩大对外交往,广交朋友,广泛建立联系,加大民间交往中经济工作的比重,为新世纪的民间外交再创辉煌。(同例 3, 第 321 页) Under the leadership of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party with President Jiang Zemin at the core, we in the CPAFFC are determined to keep forging ahead in an innovative way to add more splendor to the non-governmental diplomacy in the new century by continuing to expand our exchanges with foreign countries, developing extensive friendship with foreigners, establishing more external contacts, and further increasing the proportion of economic exchange in our non-governmental contacts.

例(9)的第二分句的前后部分在译句中做了调整。不做这种调整,译文读起来就会别扭难懂。位置调整后的译文明显地再现了原句的逻辑意义关系。例(10)是个较长的简单句,主语 problem 后面的长长的修饰语是主要难点。如果把这个长而复杂的修饰语按照原句的语法关系译成 problem 的定语,译文必然显得累赘冗长。译者在译句中把定语短语 of possible genetic damage... atomic weapons 单独作为一分句处理,然后再译主要成分,使译文既通顺易懂又忠于原文。事实上,将原文中的长而复杂的修饰语单独抽出来处理是一种切实可行的具体译法。例(11)的译者把原句的最后成分调到译句的首位,这是为了使译句结构平衡;译句中译者还把原句中的“21 个门类”这个概括性的短语调到被列举成分的前面,这完全符合英语习惯表达法,因为在英语句子或篇章中,通常先总说后分说,先概括后举例。例(12)的主要骨架为:对外友协的同仁决心积极进取,开拓创

新,为新世纪的民间外交再创辉煌。从“继续扩大”一直到“经济工作的比重”这个部分是表示“如何再创辉煌”的手段,因此可用介词 by 引导,译成一串 by + 动词 + ing 的短语。在正确理解原句的逻辑意义之后,原句成分在译文的位置排列就显而易见了。例(12)的译文恰到好处地再现了原文的信息,因为译者在译句中合乎逻辑地调整了原句一部分内容的位置。

四、分译法

把原句中较长的修饰语单独译为一句或几句,这种译法称为分译法(林相周,1998:189)。英语长句比较多,而汉语句子一般较短。为了符合汉语表达法,我们常将英语长句拆开来译(范仲英,1994:170)。有时,英语长句中主句和从句或主句与修饰语间的关系并不十分密切,翻译时可按汉语多用短语的习惯,把长句中的从句或短语化为句子,分开来叙述;为使语义连贯,有时应适当增加词语(张培基,1980:154)。在政论文中汉语长句俯拾即是,往往包含两个或多层意思。汉语句号在使用上有较大的收缩性和随意性。有些作者在使用了一长串逗号之后才划上句号,这样的句子在汉语文章里并非罕见。这种句子译成英语时往往采用断句的方法,即把一个长长的汉语句子分译成两个或两个以上的英语句子(孙万彪,2000:258)。如:

(13) For instance, the nuns who never take a bath without wearing a bathrobe all the time, when asked why, since no man can see them, they reply, "Oh, but you forget the good God." Apparently they conceive the Deity as a peeping Tom, whose omnipotence enables Him to see through bathroom walls, but he is foiled by bathrobes. This view strikes me as curious. 比如说那些修女,她们洗澡时总是穿着浴衣。有人问既然没有男人能看见她们,为什么总要穿浴衣洗澡呢?她们的回答是:“喔,但你们忘记善良的上帝了。”显然,她们把上帝想象成偷看的汤姆了。上帝是万能的,他

可以透过澡堂的墙壁看见里面的活动,但在浴衣面前就毫无办法了。这种看法令我惊讶。(转引自李鑫华《英语修辞格详论》,上海外教社,2000:180)

(14) While the present century was in its teens, and on one sunshiny morning in June, there drove up to the great iron gate of Miss Pinkerton's academy for young ladies, on Chiswick Mall, a large family coach, with two fat horses in blazing harness, driven by a fat coachman in a three-cornered hat and wig, at the rate of four miles an hour. (当时)这个世纪刚过了十几年。六月的一天早上,天气晴朗。契息克林阴道上平克顿女子学校的大铁门前开来了一辆宽敞的私人马车。拉车的两匹肥马套着雪亮的马具,一个肥胖的车夫戴着假头发和三角帽子,赶车子的速度是一小时四英里。(同例(2),第154页)

(15) 强权政治和霸权主义在国际政治、经济和安全领域中依然存在并有新的发展,地区冲突此起彼伏,南北发展差距继续扩大,环境恶化、武器扩散、国际犯罪、恐怖主义等跨国问题困扰着人类。(同例(7),第384页) Power politics and hegemony still exist in international political, economic and security realms and have further asserted themselves. Regional conflicts have erupted one after another. The gap in development between North and South countries continues to widen. Mankind is plagued by transnational problems such as environmental degradation, arms proliferation, international crimes and terrorism. (ibid. P. 398)

(16) 80年代,以西南边境及东南沿海等地区为重点,投入大量人力、物力、财力,组织公安机关、武警部队、海关和群众联防队协同作战,建立了边境一线堵、内地二线查和交通要道、机场、车站、码头三线截的“三道防线”。(同例(8),第37页) In the 1980s, the Government organized public security, armed police and

customs organs, and the civilian joint defense teams to coordinate the fight against drug trafficking, mainly in the southwestern border areas and southeastern coastal areas. It mobilized a large number of people, a great quantity of materials and a huge amount of money. Three "lines of defense" were set up to keep drugs from flowing in; the first line was the borderland, where exit and entry were subject to strict examination; the second line was composed of checkpoints in inland regions; the third line consisted of checks on vital lines of communication, airports, railway stations and harbors. (ibid. p. 24—25)

以上例(13)至例(16)都按分译法处理,每一句给翻译成两句或两个以上的句子了。例(13)包含两个复合句,给译成了五个句子,这样将原句的意义层次传达得清清楚楚。例(14)这个复句译成了四个句子,把原句复杂的意义层次梳理得一清二楚。原句的两个时间状语交代了事情发生的时间背景,分别译成了两个句子,译得合乎汉语习惯。译文的第三句是原句的主要内容,第四句是伴随情况说明。整个译文忠于原文,意义分明,非常通顺。例(15)是个含多层并列意义的汉语联合复句,被译成了四句话,虽然标点符号有些不同,但意义与原文相吻合。例(16)是个表因果关系的偏正复句,被译成了三个英语句子,其中最后一个含有四个并列的分句。整个译文忠实、通顺、易懂。可见,分译法是处理长句的切实可行的方法之一。

五、综合译法

有些英语长句结构特别复杂,内容丰富多彩。汉语语篇中也有不少长而复杂的句子,包含多层意思。面对这样多枝共干难度极大的句子,应仔细推敲,反复琢磨,分清其主干和枝叶,或按时间先后,或按逻辑顺序,有顺有逆、有主有次、颇为灵活地对全句进行综合处理(张培基,1980,156)。毫无疑问,综合译法以英汉两

种语言的习惯表达法为原则。例如:

(17) But without Adolf Hitler, who was possessed of a demoniac personality, a granite will, uncanny instincts, a cold ruthlessness, a remarkable intellect, a soaring imagination and—until toward the end, when drunk with power and success, he overreached himself—an amazing capacity to size up people and situations, there almost certainly would never have been a Third Reich. 然而,如果没有阿道夫·希特勒,那就几乎可以肯定不会有第三帝国。因为希特勒有着恶魔般的性格、不可思议的本能、无情的冷酷、杰出的智力、深远的想象力以及对人和局势惊人的判断力。最后,他由于被权利和胜利冲昏了头脑而自不量力,弄巧成拙。(同例(2),第156页)

(18) 这种发展突出地表现在:一是西藏文化的主体发生了根本变化,彻底改变了极少数封建农奴主垄断西藏文化的局面,西藏全体人民成为共同继承、发展和分享西藏文化的主体;二是西藏文化的内涵发生了深刻的变化,一些与封建农奴制相伴随的腐朽、落后的东西随着社会的进步与发展而被抛弃,藏族信教群众的宗教信仰得到充分的尊重和保护,藏族传统优秀文化得到妥善保护和继承,并被赋予反映人民群众新生活和社会发展新需要的时代内容,在内容和形式上都得到了不断弘扬和发展;三是西藏文化的发展态势发生了实质性的变化,打破了封闭、停滞和萎缩状态,形成了面向现代化,面向世界的开放和发展态势,在传统文化得到弘扬的同时,现代科技教育和新闻传播文化从无到有,获得了空前发展。(转引自《北京周报》,2000年第27期第41页) Such headway is revealed prominently in the following aspects: first, the main body of Tibetan culture, which was monopolized by a small handful of feudal serf-owners in the past, has been changed completely, and the entire Tibetan people have become the main body jointly carrying forward and developing Tibetan culture

and sharing its fruits; second, Tibetan culture has undergone deep changes—with social progress and development, decadent and backward things inherent in feudal serfdom have been abandoned, the religious beliefs of Tibetan religious followers enjoy full respect and protection, and the fine aspects of traditional Tibetan culture have been carefully preserved and carried forward, with newly injected content and form of our times reflecting the new life of the people and the new needs of social development; and third, a substantive shift has taken place in the development stance of Tibetan culture, from the self-enclosed, stagnating and shrinking situation to a new stance—the stance of opening-up and development oriented towards modernization and the outside world. While developing and promoting its traditional culture, Tibet is also developing modern scientific and technological education and news dissemination at an unprecedented rate. (ibid. P. 24-25).

例(17)由一个主句和一个错综复杂的非限制性定语从句组成。主句的表假设条件的介词短语置于句首,主句的主语和谓语置于句末,中间穿插一个长而复杂的非限制性定语从句,该从句又包含一个非限制性定语从句在破折号之间。全句表达两层主要意思:(一)如果没有希特勒,那就几乎可以肯定不会有第三帝国;(二)对希特勒性格、智力、能力等特点进行了概括性描述。译者根据全句的内容和汉语习惯表达法,采用逆序译法先译主句,接着运用分译法将定语从句译成两个独立的句子,因为整个定语从句是非限制性的,且表达两层相对独立的意思;定语从句对希特勒性格、智力、能力等的描

述部分是并列式的,因此,译者采用了顺序法处理,但定语从句最后的名词短语和其前面的位于破折号之间的成分在译文中的顺序给倒过来了,因为二者属于不同的意义层次。例(17)采用综合法翻译,逻辑意义清晰,译文通顺易懂,完全忠于原文。

例(18)是个多重复合句,虽然很长,且内容很多,但由于主要内容排成并列句,因而全句框架一目了然,内容也清楚易辨。译者鉴于全句内容及表达形式,主要采用顺译法处理,非常切合实际;同时也使用了调整法,用得恰到好处,如第一点的第二个分句给译成了非限制性定语从句,与其前面的第一个分句糅合起来译,其位置自然而然得到了调整,还有几处小小的位置调整,读者自明,不必罗嗦;译者考虑到原句最后的的分句表达相对独立的意义,所以运用分译法处理,译成独立句。原句乍一看令人畏惧,经过分析理解之后,采用适当的综合法处理,令人望而生畏的长句给驯服了。

英语句子之所以成为长句,往往是由于修饰成分多,特别是从句和短语多的缘故。因此在翻译英语长句时,常常需要考虑运用各种从句和短语的翻译方法(张培基,1980:158)。翻译英汉长句时,首先必须分析并弄清原文的句法结构,找出整个句子的主干和枝叶,明白其各层意思,并了解各层意思之间的逻辑意义关系,如时间关系、因果关系、让步关系、条件关系等。然后,按习惯表达法正确地译出原句的内容和风格特点。当然,翻译好长句,并非易事。译者不仅要能把握翻译理论并能灵活地运用翻译技巧和方法,而且还要有很高的语言修养和造诣,并具有驾驭话语篇章、灵活运用语言的能力。没有这些基本功力和基本技能,翻译好长而复杂的句子是不可能的。

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Major Methods for Translation of Long and Involved Sentences in English & Chinese

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Abstract: This paper discusses the main methods which are suitable for translation of long and involved sentences in English and Chinese. They are: (1) long and involved sentences are translated according to the original order; (2) by inverting the original order; (3) by adjusting the original order; (4) by translating parts of the original sentences into independent sentences; (5) by employing different methods. These methods are based upon the similarities, dissimilarities and idiomatic ways of expression of English and Chinese.

Key words: translation, translation methods, long and involved sentences in English and Chinese, process of translation

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