The Application of Parallel Texts in the Process of Proofreading: A Case Study about the Proofreading Practice in Transn

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Abstract: *Parallel texts refer to the texts that originate from different languages and cultural environments but share similar or identical communicative functions. As a vital resource for bilingual research, parallel texts provide normative references for translation practice. In the proofreading practice commissioned by Transn Company (a famous translation company in China), in order to ensure consistency in translating terminologies, the author makes use of parallel texts to accumulate terminologies in source language and target language. Before proofreading, the author guides students to search for official translations of high-frequency terminologies on authoritative websites. During the proofreading process, the author instructs students to compare different types of parallel texts to determine the appropriate translation of Chinese culture-loaded words. After proofreading, students are divided into groups to evaluate their classmates' work and find the inconsistent expressions of terminologies. Then, the author will revise these inconsistencies and ensure the uniform translation of terminologies. Through this practice, the author explores how to use parallel texts to help students produce authentic translation that aligns with the reading habits of target language audience, thereby enhancing the quality of proofreading.*

Keywords: Parallel texts, Proofreading, Translation of terminologies.

1. Introduction

According to statistics from Professor Chan Sin-wai in Chinese University of Hong Kong, only four percent of translators in Hong Kong are engaged in translating literature works; by contrast, the vast majority of translators are involved in non-literary translation work (Fang, Mao, 2008). Similarly, in mainland China, translations of non-literary texts dominates the translation market, with numerous translation companies focusing primarily on business, legal, scientific, and technological translations. When translating these non-literary texts, the primary task for translators is not to read the books or articles that discuss translation strategies or techniques for such texts. Instead, they should read a large number of related parallel texts and acquire background knowledge about the texts. Only in this way can they achieve greater efficiency in the translation process.

In November 2022, the author and students were commissioned by Transn Company, a renowned translation company in China, to proofread the English translations of 15,000 terminologies. These terms encompassed a wide range of topics, including communities, neighborhoods, shopping malls, stores, companies, supermarkets, and roads. The initial translations were generated by translation machine and required careful proofreading by translators to correct errors and ensure consistent expressions of terminologies. This project presented a significant challenge due to the sheer volume of terms and the need for precise and uniform translations.

As it was the first time students from the author's school had undertaken such a comprehensive proofreading task, they were initially uncertain about how to approach it. To assist them, the author employed related parallel texts throughout the proofreading process. These parallel texts served as valuable references, helping students navigate and correct translation errors. By utilizing these resources, the author guided the students in overcoming various obstacles, ensuring

that they could produce accurate and consistent translations despite their initial inexperience. This hands-on experience provided the students with practical skills and confidence in handling the proofreading tasks.

2. An Overview of Parallel Texts

The term "parallel texts" originates from the field of contrastive linguistic studies and refers to texts that come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds but share similar or identical communicative functions. The concept gained prominence in the 1950s when Vinay and Darbelnet conducted a study on French road signs in Canada that had been translated from English. They discovered that these translations significantly differed from those used in France. Based on their findings, they suggested that the authentic French road signs in France should serve as the standard for translating English road signs into French. This approach would ensure that the translations were not only accurate but also culturally and contextually appropriate. In this context, the authentic French road signs in France served as parallel texts to the English ones in Canada. Vinay and Darbelnet recommended that translators examine the French expressions of roads in France and apply them to the English road signs in Canada. By doing so, the translations would be more authentic and better aligned with the linguistic and cultural expectations of French speakers. This methodology highlights the importance of using parallel texts to achieve high-quality translations that maintain the original message's intent and function across different languages and cultures. (Snell-Hornby, 2001)

Hartmann classified parallel texts into three distinct types, each with its unique characteristics. Firstly, parallel texts of Type A consist of texts in the source language and the target language that are highly similar in structure, semantically equivalent, and share many common features in forms. These texts are often used when a high degree of linguistic and structural correspondence is required between the two

languages. Secondly, parallel texts of Type B, are texts in different languages that, while not entirely identical in forms, but they convey equivalent communicative functions. This type of parallel texts allows for more flexibility in translation, adapting the form as necessary to fit the linguistic norms and expectations of the target language. Lastly, parallel texts of Type Care independently produced texts in two different languages that arise from the same communicative context. These texts do not directly mirror each other in structure or form but are contextually related and serve similar communicative purposes. This type is valuable for understanding how different languages handle similar situations or topics independently, providing insights into cultural and contextual translation practices. (Hartmann, 1980)

Hartmann's classification underscores the importance of choosing the appropriate type of parallel text based on the specific needs of the translation task, whether the purpose is structural similarity, functional equivalence, or contextual relevance. This approach helps translators achieve more accurate and contextually appropriate translations, catering to the diverse demands of various translation scenarios.

3. The Application of Parallel Texts in the Process of Proofreading Practice in Transn

The translation task commissioned by Transn Company involves proofreading terms related to a wide range of topics, including communities, neighborhoods, shopping malls, stores, companies, supermarkets, and roads. Given the specialized nature of this proofreading task, the author took a methodical approach to ensure high-quality translations. One of the key strategies was to search for parallel texts in the target language that closely matched the source language texts in form, known as parallel texts of Type A. These included official translations of Chinese specialty dishes and snacks, which provided accurate and culturally appropriate references for the proofreading task.

In addition to parallel texts of Type A, the author also sought out texts in the target language that serve similar expressive functions as the source language text, referred to as parallel texts of Type C. These texts, although not exact matches, covered topics similar to those in the proofreading task. By incorporating these parallel texts, the author aimed to ensure consistency in the students' translations. This comprehensive approach not only helped in maintaining the accuracy and coherence of the translations but also provided students with a broader understanding of the target language's nuances and stylistic elements, which are crucial for effective translation.

3.1 Before Proofreading

According to the types of terminologies, the author divided students into different groups and utilized various online sources, such as the "Language Tips" section of China Daily, English videos created by native speakers, and official websites of some corporations. These resources were instrumental in searching for parallel texts of Type A in English.

During this stage, the author and students established a terminology database to ensure consistency in terminology translation and proofreading. This database served as a crucial reference point, allowing the groups to maintain uniformity in their translations. Examples of entries in the terminology database included specific terms and their corresponding translations, which were carefully vetted and standardized through collaborative effort.

Table 1: The examples of terminology database are as follows

original language	target language
社区	community
小区	residential compound
购物广场	plaza
百货公司	department store
商场	shopping mall
分店	branch
路	road
街	street
胡同	alley
大润发	RT-MART
万科	Vanke
华润	China Resources
大信	Dasin
楼栋	Building
A/B/C 座	Tower A/B/C

3.2 In the Process of Proofreading

During the process of students' proofreading, they mainly searched for parallel texts of Type A and Type C to determine the accuracy of the initial translations of terms made by machines and whether they need to be corrected.

1) Parallel Texts of Type A

Type A parallel texts are target language texts that correspond directly to the source language. In this proofreading practice, students encountered tasks involving the translation of Chinese food, such as "大盘鸡" and "重庆小面". The initial translations generated by translation machines were often inaccurate, leading to potential misunderstandings among target language readers. For example, "大盘鸡" was translated into "large plate chicken", and "重庆小面" was translated into "Chongqing small noodles". These translations failed to convey the correct cultural and culinary significance of the dishes, necessitating careful corrections during the proofreading process.

Given their limited background knowledge, students needed additional support to accurately translate culture-specific terms like Chinese food. To address this problem, both the author and students relied on Type A parallel texts to ensure precise translations. The author suggested that students use online resources like the "Language Tips" section of China Daily to find official translations of food items. This approach helped students correct translation errors and produce more accurate and culturally appropriate translations. Examples of terminology related to Chinese food items were systematically gathered to aid in this process, ensuring consistency and accuracy in the final translations.

Table 2: The examples of terminologies about Chinese food are as follows:

original language	target language
大盘鸡	braised chicken
重庆小面	Chongqing spicy noodles
肉夹馍	meat burger
馒头	steamed bun
包子	steamed stuffed bun
油条	fried bread stick
刀削面	sliced noodles

2) Parallel Texts of Type C

Type C parallel texts are independently produced texts that arise from the same communicative context. In this proofreading practice, many translations of street names were involved. Machine translations of roads or streets often use methods of transliteration or literal translation, which made students confused regarding the appropriate translation methods for roads or streets. For instance, machine translations might not accurately convey the common or official names used in English contexts, leading to inconsistencies and errors in the final translations.

To solve this problem, the author guided students to search for images or pictures of road signs in major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, as well as relevant articles discussing methods for translating road names. By doing so, students were able to accumulate a repertoire of commonly used expressions for streets and roads in English. This practical approach enabled students to refer to these parallel texts when proofreading translations of street and road names, ensuring greater accuracy and consistency in their work. Through this method, students learned to navigate the complexities of translating such terms, ultimately improving the quality of their translations.

Table 3: The examples of terminologies about roads are as follows:

original language	target language
北京路	Beijing Road
北京东路	Beijing East Road
北京一路	Beijing No.1 Road
北京路 4 号	No.4, Beijing Road
交叉路口	intersection of A and B

Based on the parallel texts about translation of roads, students can proofread the translation related to roads. Here are two examples of proofreading:

Example 1:
Source Language: 大名路与台东六路交叉口
Target Language: Intersection of Daming Road and Taitung No.6 Road

Example 2:
Source Language: 大明山路与月亮山路交叉口
Target Language: Intersection of Damingshan Road and Moon Mountain Road

3.3 After Proofreading

Due to the fact that this proofreading practice was conducted by students in different groups, the author implemented a strategy to ensure the quality of the proofreading. After each group completed their tasks, the author had the groups exchange their works for peer assessment. This peer review process was designed to check whether the terminologies used by each group were consistent after proofreading. By exchanging their works, students could identify and address any discrepancies in English expressions of terminology.

Any inconsistencies in terms were collected by the students and submitted to the author for final review. The author would then modify these inconsistencies to maintain uniformity. During the proofreading process, it was observed that there were several translation versions for the term "分店" (branch). Some students translated it into "branch" while others used "branch store." Although both translations are acceptable, the author standardized the term as "branch" to ensure consistency. This approach helped streamline the translation process and reinforced the importance of uniform terminology across different groups.

4. Conclusion

With the development of artificial intelligence, the employment prospects for English majors face some challenges. Many English majors tend to rely heavily on machine translation in their practice. This reliance can obscure the understanding of the nuances and complexities of human's translation. However, by introducing parallel texts into translation and proofreading practice, students can gain a clearer understanding of the limitations and shortcomings of machine translation results. This approach helps students recognize the importance of human intervention in ensuring accuracy and cultural relevance in translations.

Despite the advancements in artificial intelligence, English majors, particularly those in private colleges, still possess a certain level of competitiveness in the translation market. Artificial intelligence has not yet achieved the ability to fully replace the professionalism and creativity inherent in human translation. By engaging in this practice, students not only enhance their confidence but also develop critical thinking skills. These skills enable them to critically evaluate and optimize translation results, ensuring high-quality outcomes. Furthermore, constructing a corpus of professional terminologies based on parallel texts provides valuable guidance for both teachers and students, enhancing the overall translation teaching experience for English majors and preparing them for the demands of the translation industry.

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