

On translator's initiatives from the perspective of motivation

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Abstract: translator's initiatives have been widely explored within subject-object paradigm from philosophical angle. This paper attempts to explore translator's initiatives from the angle that translator, acting as the subject of translational behavior is human being. Motivation is pivotal subjective factor regarding subject or human being. The author rests on Maslow's motivation theory and motivation theory in cognitive approach to shed light on translator's initiatives.

Key words: translator; initiatives; Maslow; cognitive; motivation

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Over years, subjectivity has been explored philosophically between subject-object relations and within such a paradigm, translator's initiatives have been convincingly illustrated from the perspective of translator's manipulation in hermeneutic process. However, it is believed that the characters of subject give rise to subjectivity in spite of the other entries regarding subjectivity. In the sense that "subject" is referred to as the person carrying out an action, the term which is used as a synonym for "human being" makes sense. Human beings are essentially materialized as physiological beings with the existence of human senses and human brain. Human brain per se varies with individuals and resides in the critical subjective factors regarding beings. Its working mechanism provides a psychological perspective to justify initiatives.

Motivation takes place in the head and they are internalized on the individual level, remaining largely in such a way of being hidden from view that we have no direct access to them. Xu Jun notes that motivation is pivotal subjective factor regarding subject or human being. In psychology, motivation is originally defined as the force that energizes behavior, gives direction to behavior and underlies the tendency to persist. In translation field, translator's motivation may be accordingly expounded as the force that activates a person to take up translational behavior and deals with how and why individuals choose the kind of translational behavior over another. Such a sense fits in with the connotation of initiative, that is, "to do something actively" and "the ability to do things in a way one has worked out for oneself to be the best".

Over the years, numerous theories in psychology have been proposed attempting to capture motivation. The author attempts to rest on Maslow's motivation theory and motivation theory in cognitive approach to shed light on translator's initiatives from the perspective of motivation.

1. Maslow's Motivation theory and translator's initiatives

Maslow's need theory, per se largely a theory of motivation, deals with instinctive needs push a person along energizing, guiding and sustaining behavior. In Maslow's theories, there are seven levels of individual needs, which exist in a hierarchy following in a sequence from lower to higher, from material levels to spiritual levels.

Translator's initiatives for satisfaction of lower needs

Translation is a complex transaction taking place in a communicative, social-cultural context. In Holz-Manttari's model, translation is defined as "a complex action designed to achieve a particular

purpose”(Nord, 13) In most cases, higher categories within Maslow’s need level push a person to translate, but lower needs do not move higher unless they are gratified. Since all are not able to engage themselves on translating, translational behavior turns out to be a business. Business is the activity of providing goods and services involving financial and commercial aspects, hence translational behaviors possibly energize persons to count on it. In troublous times before liberation, most Chinese people lived in a dog life, and there were virtually persons who had to live by translating. At present, when market economy places premium on translation activity, there upsurge so many professional translators and freelancers. Professionals make a living at translating and freelancers are all the more apparently motivated in terms of translation income.

Translator’s initiatives for satisfaction of higher needs

When compared with lower needs largely dealing with money, pursuing higher needs in a relative sense are linked to achieving spiritual pursuits. These pursuits may be political, artistic and even be self-actualization, the highest level within Maslow’s hierarchy. In other words, a person may be driven to translate for political purpose, aesthetic purpose, self-actualization and the like. In turmoil periods, persons more often rely on translational behaviors to realize their political ambitions. Yan Fu rendered his translation a strong political inclination. In his periods when China faced the dangerous fate of subjugation, such a crucial juncture gave birth to reform movements by patriots. But by the end of 19th century, the scientific theoretical support for reform movements was not found. When Yan Fu happened to find Huxley’s ideas that survival of the fittest appeal reformists’ inclination to achieve China’s revival, he took the initiative to translate Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics*. In Yan Fu’s mind, he was inclined to translate such a book, attempting to introduce new ideas to justify the coming reform.

Likewise, Lin Shu’s translational behavior is hued with political purpose. In his forewords and postscripts of fiction translation, he claimed that he hoped his translation could encourage Chinese people of their patriotic enthusiasm to defend China from the foreign invasion, and fulfill the purpose of reinvigorating China and strengthening Chinese people.

Since literature works enjoys aesthetic values, literary translation satisfies translator’s artistic need to some extent. That is, aesthetic values within literary works are likely to encourage those who appreciate them to translate the works. In 20th century, the new technique of stream of consciousness firstly appeared in *Ulysses*, which exerted echoing influences. The instant that the book was available to the literary master of Xiao Qian, such novelty fascinated him. He resolved to improve his English regardless of old age and devoted his late life to translating the masterpiece into Chinese. Similarly, when Ezra Pound who could not read Chinese received the Fenollosa manuscripts in 1913, he was so immersed in the culture of the language that he endeavored to translate the poems of Li Po a year later.

Translator’s initiatives for satisfaction of self-actualization

Self-actualization takes the highest position within Maslow’s need hierarchy. It is the goal of all the normal persons. Once self-actualization is enrooted as a need activating one to translate, full development of one’s potential will become beyond imagination. This is typical of the prominent translator of Zhu Sheng-hao who dedicated his life to translating the Shakespear. In Zhu Sheng-hao’s times, many masters’ works, including Shakespear, Tolstoy had been rendered into Japanese whereas there was none of Chinese version, which seemed to degrade China less civilized. Zhu Sheng-hao disclaimed such imputation and wrote to his girlfriend, informing her of his resolution to be a national hero by offering Shakespearian Chinese versions. In his translation career, poor health, terrible poverty, fluxion for the war calamity, exhausted him. Nevertheless, his intense zeal for Shakespear translation helped him go through all the vicissitudes and came up with more than thirty plays by Shakespear. As

is recalled by his younger brother named Zhu wen-zheng, Zhu Sheng-hao's engagement in translating the shakespeare, is not only for the sake of his passion; more importantly, his determination to win credits for the whole nation was the essential impetus.

The last but not the least, though needs in Maslow's theory are in a hierarchic arrangement, gratification of lower material need and higher spiritual need are not demarcated absolutely. As Zhu Sheng-hao's translational activity is not only for living but also for spiritual pursuit, translator's motivation may aim at an integrated gratification of both lower needs and higher needs. In other words, a translator's motivation can be multiple-purposed.

2. Motivation in cognitive approach and translator's initiatives

In psychology, motivation theories are categorized as content theories and process theories. The former mainly focuses on what activates individuals and the latter has a more in-depth explanation dealing with why and how someone does it in that way. Maslow's need theory aforementioned, which is categorized within content theories, expounds translator's motivation manifests translator's initiatives in the terms of doing translating actively. Actually, motivation is a rational cognitive process occurring within the individuals, in which self-regulation plays an importantly intermediary role of connecting and modulating the internal factors of motivation with those external ones so as to produce proper behavior. As such, the author herein draws on self-regulation theories to deal with how self-regulation works on translator's initiatives. In motivation psychology, self-regulation is a highly cognitive process in which it roughly consists of such key factors as expectancy and self-efficacy.

Expectancy

Expectancy is proposed to represent the anticipated consequence of a behavior after individuals cognitively assess the likelihood of given actions. Note that the two cognitive elements of goal and expectancy are involved herein. Expectancy does not always agree with goals. By and large, in the case that expectancy suggests that it was assessed indistinct to fulfill the desired goal, there arises a dissonance between goal and expectancy. Assumed to be unpleasant, such presence of dissonance is to motivate the individual to utilize some adaptive strategies in an attempt to eliminate the unpleasant state. In the sense, the individual's initiative is taken into a full picture.

Expectancy in translator case is more complicated. Translation is a matter of communication and translational norms which like conventions imply the expectation that all those concerned are aware of or accept, regulate the communicative matter. As such, there coexist translator's expectancy on translator's own, and normative expectations in translational field. Supposing dissonance occurs between them, translator who bears norms in mind actively takes adaptive strategies to adjust his own expectancy to normative expectations in the interest of dissolving the dissonance, translator's initiatives are visible.

However, normative expectations are not inhibitive, though they are at the most permissive acting as constraints. Non-compliance with norms does not usually result in drastic sanctions. For the reason, norms can be broken. Hermans points out which norms are broken and by whom will depend on the individual's motivation (2004:82). When the translator attempts to break the stranglehold of norms to achieve his own aims and ambitions, instead of passively conforming to norms, he is necessarily required of his initiatives.

Self-efficacy

In cognitive motivation theory, one of the most important variables that determines whether or not people will work toward a goal is the perception of their own ability, for an awareness of his intelligence can mean discovering his own strengths, and learning to structure his working field so as to

maximize those strengths. This virtually gives prominence to the role of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is referred to as one's judgment of one's ability or capacity to deal with a certain kind of task. It is either high or low, which is accordingly termed as high self-efficacy or low self-efficacy. Logically, high self-efficacy in some aspect will easily spur one's motivation, for persons always perform activities that they expect themselves capable of managing; in contrast, low self-efficacy more often keep off motivation for people always avoid activities that exceed their capabilities. As such, an accurate self-efficacy preceding behavior is considerably important.

Translation, reproducing the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language, is a kind of intelligent behavior. Different from other forms of language use, translational behaviors require translators of comprehensive competences. There are roughly five translational competences, namely, linguistic competence, textual competence, cultural competence, subject competence and transfer competence. Prior to translating, a responsible translator, in sharp contrast to machine, always takes his initiatives to make self-efficacy so as to give full play to the concept of self: whether he is competent in linguistic mastery or not, which fields are his strong points. Such a process plays a crucial role in directing his translation to the way he consider proper: whether to translate or not and what to translate. In the sense, translator's initiatives are displayed.

Besides, self-efficacy per se is a subjective process and an accurate self-efficacy is not bound up with translator all the way. It is common that an inaccurately higher self-efficacy exceeding his actual ability happens to translators. As is known, the remarkable translator of Lin Shu who did not know foreign language at all is apparently deficient in basically linguistic intelligence for translation, but higher self-efficacy help him come out numerous versions yet. Also Pound, the least understood translator by the current generation translators translated large numbers of Chinese ancient poetry for all that he knew little about them. In this case, translator's initiatives are all the more apparently manifested in terms of translator's courage and persistence.

In sum, translator's motivation arises as the answer to what activates a person to translate and plays the primary role in initiating translating activity, which for the first place manifests translator's initiatives in the terms of doing translating actively. Resting on Maslow's need theories, it is clear that translator's motivation and his initiatives are bound up in the way that translator's initiatives work for satisfaction of needs at various levels. Besides, motivation, dealing with the causation of a special action is a rational cognitive process. Translator's cognitive expectancy and self-efficacy in pre-translating stage reveal translator's initiatives.

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