

# **A Study on the Translation of Imitation Rhetoric in News Headlines from the Perspective of Intercultural Communication**

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**Abstract:** With the deepening of globalization, cross-cultural communication becomes more and more important. As an important means of disseminating information, the translation of news headlines plays an important role in cross-cultural communication. Mimetic rhetoric is a kind of rhetorical method, which has its research value in the use and translation of English news headlines. The use of subjective and objective factors in English news headlines achieves a special linguistic effect. In view of this special effect, special translation is needed to translate the parody in English news headlines, and this combined translation method produces a remarkable translation effect. The translation of news headlines based on cross-cultural communication requires the translator to make comprehensive consideration of the connotation and form of the news headlines, combine the different characteristics of the two languages, English and Chinese, and translate the news headlines appropriately. According to the characteristics of different news headlines, different translation methods such as direct translation and imitation translation are adopted to improve the accuracy of translating imitation news headlines and keep the original flavor of news headlines.

**Keywords:** Intercultural communication; Parody rhetoric; News headlines; Translation

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

With the accelerating process of globalization, exchanges between different cultures have become more and more frequent. Such exchanges are not only the circulation of goods and economy, but more importantly, the spread of information and culture. In this context, cross-cultural communication is particularly important (Qi, 2022). News, as the main means of information dissemination in modern society, often involves various cultural backgrounds and contexts in its delivery (Li, 2023; Shao, 2023). The headline of news, as a distillation and summary of news content, is the key to attract readers' attention. In cross-cultural communication, the translation of news headlines involves not only the conversion of language, but also the transmission and understanding of culture (Dong, 2023). A proper translation can retain the cultural flavor of the original text while allowing the target readers to quickly capture the core content of the news.

Imitation is an important rhetorical device in rhetoric, a branch of English linguistics. It is a very skillful, wise, witty and interesting rhetorical pattern (Xie & Wu, 2023). It is intentional imitation of people's familiar and conventional language materials, according to the need to express the temporary creation of old words and new meanings, resulting in new words, sentences, chapters to make the language to produce a special effect, lively, ironic and mocking, humorous, witty and interesting. In specific use, imitation is generally a familiar language material, such as proverbs, idioms, famous quotations, aphorisms. In China, the definition of parody rhetoric was firstly proposed by Mr. Chen Wangdao (Zuo, 2023). In the book *Rhetoric Fa Fan*, it has defined imitation rhetoric as follows: a form of rhetoric that deliberately imitates a special established form for the purpose of satirical mockery. Since then, scholars have begun to study imitation rhetoric. Prof. Xu Guozhen is one of the more outstanding ones, who defines parody as a rhetorical method that creates a temporary new statement by imitating a certain form of language. Imitation rhetoric has a very wide range. However, how to accurately and vividly translate this kind of parody rhetoric in cross-cultural communication is a topic worth studying (Fu, 2017). Because it involves not only language skills, but also cultural connotation and flavor. Therefore, from the perspective of cross-cultural communication, this paper studies in depth the translation strategy of parody diction in news headlines. It is hoped that through such a study, the effect of cross-cultural communication can be further improved, and in-depth communication and understanding between different cultures can be promoted.

## 2. TYPES OF PARODY RHETORIC IN NEWS HEADLINES

Parody is a rhetorical device frequently used in English news headlines. Its origin can be traced back to the Greek word "Paroidia". In the New Oxford English-Chinese Dictionary, "Parody" is defined as an exaggerated and comical imitation of various styles and genres. Scholars categorize parody from different perspectives, which can be divided into phonetic parody, format parody and so on according to the parody techniques. In the context of news headlines, we usually explore parody rhetoric from the perspective of parody words and phrases. The characteristics of English news headlines are reflected in the simplicity, conciseness and generalization of the words used, as well as the funny and humorous way of expression. Since news headlines need to summarize the content of the

news report in a high degree and the space of the article is limited, news headlines need to be written with the least number of words to express the most news information. This is usually achieved through noun phrases, foreign words, etc. At the same time, the length of the news headline should not be too long, in order to play the role of English news headline guide, translators need to write the news headline is eye-catching and concise. In order to achieve this goal, translators can make use of the parody diction in news headlines. Through cross-cultural translation, they can accurately convey the thought content of the news headlines.

## 2.1 Imitation Words

News headline is the "face" of the news article, it is not only a simple summary of the content of the news, but also to attract readers and sell the article's heavy responsibility. Therefore, the characteristics of the news headline must be concise and clear, in just a few words or words to convey the core information of the news. In order to achieve a better communication effect, authors often use various rhetorical techniques, among which parody is one of them (Wen & Zhang, 2022). The use of parody rhetoric to create news headlines can not only make the headlines more vivid and interesting, but also be able to more accurately convey the author's emotions and attitudes. In the specific application, the writer can skillfully replace individual words according to the needs of expression, so as to realize the effect of parody. For example, the use of harmonic techniques can achieve the effect of harmonic puns, and such headlines often leave a deep impression and increase the click rate of the news. In the translation of English news headlines, the advantages of harmonic imitation are especially obvious. Due to the differences between Chinese and English languages, sometimes the direct translation of news headlines may seem bland and boring, and even lead to readers' inability to understand. By using harmonic imitation, the cultural elements of the target language can be skillfully integrated into the translation process, making the headlines more attractive and communicative. In addition to harmonic parody, parody is also one of the commonly used parody techniques in news headlines (Wornyo, 2018). The meaning imitation is to use the meaning of words and phrases to imitate the form of words, using words similar to the original meaning of the imitation. For example, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a 'hand' (Buy a Siemens cell phone right away, and Roma could be built in a day)". This news headline is 'The headline "Buy a Siemens cell phone right away, and Roma could be built in a day. By linking "under" and "cell phone", it skillfully highlights the

characteristics of Siemens cell phone, and at the same time, it makes the news headline more attractive and contagious with the influence of the old saying "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step". The news headline is more attractive and infectious.

## 2.2 Imitation

In Chinese and foreign cultures, it is not difficult to find a multitude of famous quotations and maxims and aphorisms. These statements not only condense wisdom, but also become the symbols and symbols of culture. In the creation of news headlines, imitation has become a common strategy. By skillfully replacing the words in the original sentence, the parody sentence can achieve a specific expression effect and arouse the readers' resonance. For example, the famous line in Shakespeare's Hamlet: "To be or not to be, that is a question". This sentence explores the existence and meaning of life. In a news headline, the creator cleverly replaces "be" with "smoke" to create a parody effect. Such a substitution is not only to attract attention, but also to convey a thought that is similar to but different from the original text (Jiang & Zhang, 2022). The application of simulation in news headlines shows its flexible and diversified characteristics. Creators can adjust the order of words according to the specific needs and situations, so as to make it more in line with the theme and style of the news. This flexibility has made the simulation rhetoric widely used in news headlines, both national and international news, can see its figure. Generally speaking, simulation rhetoric provides more possibilities and creative space for the creation of news headlines. It is not only a rhetorical technique, but also a cultural heritage and innovation. In the context of cross-cultural communication, the skillful use of parody can better convey information, communicate culture and enhance understanding.

## 3. THE FUNCTION OF IMITATIVE RHETORIC IN NEWS HEADLINES

English news headline occupies the most prominent position in the news page, and its importance is self-evident. A good headline is actually a short piece of news that can quickly convey the core content of the news and attract readers' eyes. Therefore, the headline is imaginatively called the eye of the news. In order to do this, the headline must highly summarize the basic content of the news, and at the same time, the intention should be

novel and chic, so as to stand out in the crowd of news. In today's information age, journalists from various media outlets often seek quirks in their diction and syntax in order to write appealing headlines. Among them, the use of linguistic variation has become a distinctive feature. Variant rhetorical devices, such as parody, are often used in English news to produce a humorous and vivid expression. Through parody, English news headlines can convey the theme of the news in a unique way while impressing the readers. The use of this rhetorical device not only highlights the idiosyncrasy of the news, but also demonstrates the creativity and flexibility of language (Guan, 2016).

### 3.1 Pushing Out New Ideas

Imitation rhetoric is a unique technique in Chinese rhetoric, which adds rich colors and levels to the language through the clever use of harmonics, imitation of meaning, replacement order and other ways. In the creation of news headlines, the use of imitation rhetorical style can give the headline a novel and lively effect, so that readers feel the unique charm of the headline at the first time, reducing the unfamiliarity of the news headline. A good news title should not only be concise and clear, but also be able to attract readers' eyes. The full use of current popular phrases, proverbs and so on in the news title can not only highlight the novelty and chic of the title, but also reflect the wit and knowledge of the editor. This approach not only enhances the attractiveness of news headlines, but also adds a witty and humorous color to the news content, making readers more willing to click and read (Zhao, 2017). In the process of Chinese translation of news headlines, the application of phonetic level of imitation word pattern is particularly important. For example, the English news headline "Baby Bumps at Oscar on the Red Carpet" is translated into Chinese as "Pregnant Women Compete on the Red Carpet" by adopting the practice of homophony. The word "pregnant" here cleverly conveys the pregnant state of the superwoman, while at the same time showing the woman's still-flavorful side. This kind of translation not only accurately conveys the semantic information of the original text, but also makes the title vivid and lively, with a punning effect. To summarize, the application of simulation rhetoric in news headlines can not only enrich the language expression, but also increase the attractiveness and interest of news (Bonyadi & Samuel, 2013). For translators, it is a challenging and creative task to skillfully use parody in the translation process so that the headlines not only keep the flavor of the original language, but also meet the cultural habits of the target language.

### 3.2 Simplified Language

The use of parody rhetoric in news headlines provides news editors with an efficient and accurate way of expression. Through this rhetorical technique, editors can convey a wealth of ideas in a small amount of short language, while ensuring that readers can accurately understand the meaning and emotion of the headline and avoid misunderstanding. This is especially important for news articles, which need to convey information quickly and accurately, a need that parodic rhetoric fulfills. The application of simulation rhetoric not only meets the characteristics of news articles of condensation and accuracy, but also improves the high degree of generalization and practicality of news language. It enables news headlines to convey the core content of the article in just a few words or phrases, so that readers can quickly understand the theme of the news in a short time. This is undoubtedly a very practical reading experience for readers in a fast-paced life. In news headlines, parody rhetoric is often created using things that are more relevant to real life. The advantage of this is that readers can use their knowledge of things in life to quickly understand the meaning and connotation of the news headline. This kind of imitation closely related to life makes news headlines more grounded and easier to resonate with readers. At the vocabulary level, imitation rhetoric is realized through vocabulary analogies and associative imitation words. This way will produce novel sound-meaning imitations, which are mainly accomplished with the help of imitation translation techniques. For example, in the news headline "A Ranking of the World's Most Powerful Passports, U.S. Announces Passport Power Ranking of China 45", the word "passport power" is a parody of the Internet popularity. In the news headline "A Ranking of the World's Most Powerful Passports, U.S. Ranks China 45th", the word "passport power" is coined by imitating the Internet buzzword "XX power". Here the "passport power" refers to the passport in how many countries enjoy visa-free treatment, through the way of imitation translation, making the original bland passport capacity measurement becomes vivid and interesting, easier to catch the reader's eye.

### 3.3 Enhance the Aesthetic Effect of Language

The fusion of simulation and other rhetorical patterns can significantly enhance the aesthetic effect of language in news headlines. News headlines pursue the beauty of form, sound and meaning, and the simulation rhetoric is just through the use of harmonies, proximity, antonyms and other techniques, to realize the perfect combination of these three kinds of beauty. This rhetorical approach not only enhances

the formal beauty of the language, bringing visual and auditory enjoyment to readers, but also deeply explores the meaning of news headlines, reflecting the deep and subtle aesthetic value behind the headlines. The use of simulation rhetoric can make the bland language novel and unique, attracting readers' eyes. At the same time, this novel expression still maintains a close connection with life, giving readers a sense of intimacy and making them feel the humor, irony and criticism while understanding the title. This vivid and flexible use of language undoubtedly increases the aesthetic effect of news headlines, making news reading a pleasant spiritual enjoyment (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019). In the process of Chinese translation of news headlines, the application of syntactic imitation diction is also very important. This usually includes the case of complete imitation of the original body, retaining the structure of the original body, and changing only the local content. It is mainly realized with the help of anti-translation techniques. For example, when the English news headline "Russell Westbrook: How does this story go?" is translated into Chinese, the translator skillfully uses syntactic simulation to translate it as "Russell Westbrook: Where does the road go?". This is because Westbrook and West book are similar in pronunciation, and the translator compares the basketball career of the star to a western book. In the Chinese translation, due to the untranslatability of speech, the translator adopted the borrowing technique, borrowing the lyrics of the ending song of the TV series "Journey to the West" "Dare to Ask Where the Road Leads", which successfully establishes the optimal semantic correlation. This kind of translation not only maintains the flavor of the original text, but also skillfully integrates the cultural elements of Chinese, making the translation more aesthetic and communicative.

#### 4. ENGLISH TRANSLATION STRATEGIES OF PARODY IN NEWS HEADLINES

The use of parody makes the form of news headlines not change much, but the connotation of the news is quite different. When translating news headlines into English, it is necessary to choose different translation strategies according to the different languages and text types of the news. Imitation rhetoric is one of the more difficult types of English translation. When translating, one should choose appropriate translation methods from different perspectives.

#### 4.1 Direct Translation

Direct translation is the most common and direct translation method in translation, which directly translates the semantics of the original text into the target language. However, sometimes the direct translation will apply the expression of the original text, resulting in a big difference in connotation. Take the title of an English report "Land That Time Forgot" after the Wenchuan earthquake as an example, this title is applied to the title of a British science fiction novel, the original text is about the sinking of an American ship by the German army in the First World War, and the survivors eventually went to the path of human civilization. In this news article, the parody title is used to indicate the severity of the earthquake damage and to imply that the survivors, like those in the novel, will emerge from the disaster and move on to a better future. In the process of direct translation, it can be divided into two ways of adding and subtracting words according to practical needs. Due to the influence of cultural differences and other factors, it is sometimes more difficult for direct translation to accurately reflect the connotation of news headlines. In order to solve this problem, on the one hand, we can adopt the way of adding words appropriately, so that the readers can have a better understanding of the news headlines and better digest the content they read. For example, if the English news title "Pilot's Final Flight" is directly translated as "Pilot's Last Flight", it may confuse the readers and make them unclear about who the pilot is. If translated directly as "Pilot's Final Flight", the reader may be confused as to who the pilot is. But by adding the word "Tragna's Farewell Flight", it can emphasize the main idea of the article and make the readers understand more clearly that the news is about Tragna's last flight. At the same time, due to the large differences between the English and Chinese language characteristics, the translation process needs to be based on the characteristics of the two languages to carefully consider the translation of the title, and then use the most appropriate translation method. In addition, it can also be translated by adopting the deletion method. This way is mainly to delete the parts that affect the smooth expression of the news headlines to ensure the simplicity of the news headlines. However, care should be taken not to jeopardize the core information and meaning of the original text in the process of deletion (Scollon et al., 2012).

#### 4.2 Intentional Translation

Intentional translation is a common way in news headline translation, especially when dealing with parodies involving cultural and contextual differences. When the parodies in the original text cannot be expressed



directly through direct translation, Italian translation becomes a very effective choice. The goal of paraphrasing is to ensure that the meaning of the translated text is consistent with the original text, while taking into account the expression habits of the target language and the readers' comprehension ability. For example, the English news headline "Mexico Out But Not Down After Elimination", if translated directly, may appear to be more rigid and not in line with Chinese expression habits. The phrase "down and out" in this news headline is originally a boxing term, indicating that the knocked down party fails to get up within a specified period of time and is thus eliminated from the tournament. In this case, the phrase is used to describe the fact that although the Mexican team was knocked out of the tournament, their fighting spirit has not been broken. In order to accurately convey this meaning, the Italian translation was adopted. The translator translated it as "Mexico lost the game but not its spirit", which not only retained the connotation of the original text, but also found a suitable expression in Chinese. This translation is very vivid and accurately conveys the message that although Mexico lost the game, their spirit was not defeated. In the translation of news headlines, the large number of applied sayings and quotations increased the difficulty of the translation work. In order to ensure the accuracy of translation, translators need to fully grasp the content of the news headlines and understand the cultural, historical and social background behind them. At the same time, according to different translation methods, they should flexibly use direct translation and Italian translation to ensure the consistency of the connotation of the translated text, so that readers of the target language can accurately and quickly understand the information conveyed by the news headlines.

#### 4.3 Combination of Direct Translation and Meaningful Translation

The translation of news headlines is not simply converting one language into another, it is more of an artistic creation. In order to express the meaning more accurately, the translator can adopt such methods as switching the order of words to make the headline more fluent and natural in the target language. When the news headline adopts imitative rhetoric, there is a difference between its form and the body, which requires the translator to have profound linguistic skills and extensive cultural knowledge. In such a case, translators often need to quote quotes, sayings and other elements, combined with the core meaning of the news headline to be translated. This can not only make the translation more expressive, but also enable readers to grasp the focus of the news more quickly. At the same time, symbols, quotations and other elements in news headlines must

be reflected in the translation, because these elements often carry rich cultural and social backgrounds and are an important part of the message of news headlines. However, due to the differences between languages, techniques such as substitution and change of word order may produce new meanings in the translation process. This requires the translator to adopt a combination of Italian translation and direct translation to maintain the fidelity of the original text while taking into account the expression habits of the target language and the readers' acceptability. Only in this way can the connotation of news headlines be conveyed more accurately, so that readers can capture the important information of the news at the first time. In a word, the translation of news headlines is a complex and delicate process, which requires translators to have a high sense of responsibility and professionalism. Only through continuous practice and study can translators continuously improve their translation level and provide readers with more accurate and vivid news headline translations (Molina et al., 2021).

#### 4.4 Imitation Translation

In the translation of news headlines, parody translation proves to be a very apt way of translation. It mainly aims at translating the parody part of English news headlines. In this way, the translator can well preserve or reproduce the language and forms in the parodic rhetoric of the news headline. The advantage of parody translation is that it is not just a simple translation, but a restatement or reproduction of the connotation and meaning of the original text. It ensures a high degree of consistency between the translated text and the original text in both connotation and form. For example, "Red Star over China" by American journalist Edgar Snow was translated as "Red Star Shines on China". In an earlier news headline "Red Star over Hong Kong", the title of Edgar Snow's book was imitated. For such news headlines, parody is the best way to translate. Specifically, you can replace "China" with "Hong Kong" and then translate the whole title as "Red Star over Hong Kong". Such a translation perfectly preserves the characteristics of the original headline not only in form but also in meaning (Scollon et al., 2012). At the same time, we must realize that imitation translation is not a rigid, unchanging way of translation. It is highly flexible in practical application. When combined with direct translation, paraphrasing can make necessary adjustments to the content or form to ensure that the original intent of the headline is more accurately conveyed. This flexibility makes paraphrasing play an important role in the translation of news headlines, which can not only retain the charm and

mood of the original text, but also take into account the reading habits and comprehension ability of the target readers. Specifically, paraphrasing can make appropriate adjustments to the news headlines according to the cultural background of the target language and the reading habits of the readers. This can ensure that the translated headlines are closer to the psychological expectations of the target readers and arouse their interest and attention. At the same time, through the flexible use of imitation translation skills, translators can also add some new elements on the basis of maintaining the core meaning of the original text, making the translated headlines more creative and attractive (Dimitriu, 2010).

#### 4.5 Creative Translation

The translation of imitative diction presents diversity in news headlines, which makes it necessary for translators to make choices according to the form, meaning and connotative features of the headlines when carrying out their work. Different news headlines may require different translation methods or a combination of methods to achieve the best results. Sometimes it is still difficult for the translator to accurately convey the deeper connotations of a news headline despite the fact that he or she has utilized a variety of traditional translation methods. In this case, translators need to make a comprehensive consideration of the connotation and form of news headlines. They can make innovative translations with the help of simulation and other rhetorical devices. For example, a news headline "Japan robots chat, play--and help find lost spees" may seem bland if translated directly. However, if we use simulation rhetoric to translate it as "Japanese robots can share the worries of the elderly", such a translation is not only concise and clear, but also accurately conveys the core message of the original text, while maintaining a high degree of consistency with the original text in terms of both emotion and connotation (Van Dijk, 2011). While conveying the message, this translation also succeeds in adding flavor and emotion to the title through rhetorical means. Not only does it succinctly describe the unique functions of Japanese robots, such as the ability to converse, help people find objects, and accompany people for entertainment, but more importantly, it skillfully utilizes the phrase "sharing the worries of the elderly." This expression humanizes the robot, making it not only a machine but also a companion and assistant to the elderly. Through this translation, the news headline not only conveys factual information, but also incorporates emotional elements, making the headline more attractive and infectious. When readers see such a headline at first sight, they can not only immediately understand the theme of the

news, but also be attracted by the emotional elements and have a strong desire to read.

## 5. CONCLUSION

News headline, as the soul and eyes of the article, is the key to attract readers and convey information. When translating news headlines, it is especially important to ensure the consistency of form and connotation. However, the imitation of famous quotes, slang and allusions often involved in news headlines brings many challenges to the translation work. There is a rich cultural background and context behind these elements, and direct translation may lose their original flavor and depth. In the cross-cultural context, translators not only need to be proficient in two or more languages, but also need to have a deep understanding of the culture behind. In the face of different news headlines, translators need to be flexible and choose the most suitable translation method. Some headlines may be more suitable for direct translation, others require paraphrasing, while some need a combination of both. Such flexibility ensures that the accuracy and original flavor of the parody title is preserved. Through continuous improvement of relevant research and practice, we hope to promote the further development of intercultural communication and enhance understanding and harmonious coexistence among different cultures.

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