Research article

The Translator's Cognitive Construction in the Perspective of Cognitive Narratology

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Abstract
Current research on combining cognitive narratology and translation studies focuses on defining the role of translation within cognitive narratology, challenging the assumption that original and target texts are undifferentiated in narratological studies. However, this research rarely refers to the translator's cognitive mechanism in the narrative process. Drawing on the Psycho-spatial theory, the space network of the whole translation activity includes the author's cognitive space of original narrative text, the translator's cognitive spaces of narrative construction and re-narrative reconstruction, and the reader's cognitive space of re-narrative acceptance, meaning that the translator should participate in the cognitive process of narrative construction and re-narrative reconstruction by moving in these different spaces. In addition, this research looks into the translator's specific identity information and cognitive operations to detect its cognitive basis and explain the cognitive activity.

Keywords: cognitive narratology; psycho-spatial theory; translator research.

1. The Genesis and Development of Cognitive Narratology

The origin of "narration" can be traced back to "diegesis" in Plato's dichotomy of narrative modes in the Republic. In the mid-to-late 1960s, "Narrative turn" began to gain widespread attention in academia as the development of French structuralist narrative theory, led by Saussure's structural linguistics gathered momentum. In 1969, Tzvetan Todorov created the term "narratologi" in Grammaire du Décaméron, indicating the genesis of the "science of narrative". In a Dictionary of Narratology compiled by Gerald J. Prince, two opposing concepts are extracted from the definition of the term "narratology". One of them, represented by Todorov, points out that the object of study of narratology is the universal character of narratives, which focuses on the study of "story" without limiting the medium of narrative, while the other, represented by Gérard Genette, addresses that the object of study of narratology is the narrative act mediated by language, and emphasizes the study of "discourse," frames the scope of study as narrative literature. According to Luo Gang (1994), the research material of narratology includes "story" as well as "discourse" in the field of narrative literature.

As a result of the innovative development of research methods and the expansion of varied study aims, classical narratology gave birth to Postclassical Narratology in the 1990s. In the realm of academia, there is no lack of negative voices against the former, such as Palmer (Mäkelä, 2011,p. 227) who criticized the limitations of classical narratology on the study of speech, but more experts believe that the two are now in a mutually beneficial balance of inheritance and development (Shen Dan, 2005; Tan Junqiang, 2007; Tang Weisheng, 2008). Concerning the main differences between the two, David Herman (1999) has long made a distinction in Scripts, Sequences, and Stories: Elements of a Postclassical Narratology, in which he argues that, in contrast to classical narratology, postclassical narratology has achieved a shift from a text-centered formal model to one that is both formal and functional, focusing on both text and story context. Subsequently, Ansgar Nünning (2003) seeks to provide a full comparison between the paradigms, particular contents, and significant aspects of the two and then points out that postclassical narratology is inherently "interdisciplinary" in nature.

Thanks to the development of inferential semantics and pragmatics (Sperber and Wilson, 1986), Wolfgang Iser proposed the concept of "implied reader", Paul Grice introduced the "Cooperative Principle", Roland Barthes presented the notion of "reader-text interaction", giving birth to the "cognitive turn" in the post-classical narrative study. Meanwhile, cognitive science has also begun to recognize the " narrative " nature of cognitive construction and identity formation, thereby an increasing number of neuroscientists, cognitive psychologists, and philosophers have pointed out that the human brain is not so much a computer as a storyteller (Herman, 2010). Therefore, the idea that the human brain operates as a "narrator" (William H. Calvin) or a "narrative center of gravity" (Daniel C. Dennett) has emerged, and research exploring the mechanisms of brain functioning and the underlying logical explanations of the narrative process is now available (Mark Turner, 2010). Research focusing on the principles of brain functioning and underlying logical explanations of narrative processes is underway (Mark Turner, Raymond Gibbs). Narratology and cognitive science are interconnected and permeate each other, establishing the groundwork for the establishment of cognitive narratology.

In 1997, Manfred Jahn formally proposed the notion of "cognitive narratology". Compared with the other two influential branches of the post-classical narrative research model, i.e. feminist narratology based on "contextualist narratology" and rhetorical narratology based on "Chicago School", cognitive narratology breaks the framework of textual research and attempts to probe into the production and understanding of narratives. In brief, It seeks to study the "black box" of creation and comprehension of narration, explain the link between symbolic structure and cognitive resources in narratives, and give a cognitive foundation for ideas associated with narrative structure and interpretation. In the emerging field of cognitive narratology, Western academics have put up various emergent research paradigms, such as the "story logic" of Herman (2004, 2011), the "natural narratology" of Fludernik (1996, 2003), the "Garden Route" tales of Jahn (1999), the "cognitive maps" of Raul Ryan (1991, 2001), and the "psychological narratology" of Marisa Bortolussi and Peter Dixon (2003), while Chinese scholars have been combing through the contents and cases of Western cognitive narratology (Shen Dan, 2005, 2010; Zhang Wanmin, 2012; Tang Weisheng, 2013; Shang Biwu, 2013, 2019). All these academic achievements have strongly encouraged the study advancement of cognitive narratology.

2. The Compilation of Translation Research Results in the View of Cognitive Narratology

At the beginning of the twentieth century, cognitive narratology realized interdisciplinary collaboration with neuroscience and computer science and became an emergent interdisciplinary subject that brings together the capabilities of multiple disciplines. However, as Bosseaux (2007) points out, narratology seldom distinguishes between original text and translation, so cognitive narratology also makes less distinction between source text and target text, which may overlook the unique characteristics of cross-cultural cooperation between cognitive narratology and translation. At present, the findings of academic research on translation under the perspective of cognitive narratology can be summarized into the following three categories:

(1) Through purely theoretical research, delineate the development history of cognitive narratology, elucidate the reader's cognitive mechanisms and rules in narrative interpretation, and simultaneously explore the cognitive basis of translation as re-narration, thereby optimizing the theoretical construct of cognitive narratology (Yang Zhiting, 2015, 2021; Haidee Kruger & Jan Louis Kruger, 2017; Wei-lun Lu, 2019).

(2) Through applied research, analyze the similarities and differences between the source text and the translated text in terms of narrative perspectives and modes. Summarize the translator's strategies in narrative regulation and the reader's cognitive strategies in reconstructing their understanding, validating the cognitive narratology research paradigm applied to translation criticism (Boase-Beier, 2014; Shao Lu, 2016, 2020; Zhou Min, 2019, 2021, 2023; Ren Dongsheng and Zhu Hongyu, 2021; Martinez, Maria-Angeles, 2021; Isabela Braga Lee, 2024; Tan Yesheng, 2024).

(3) In extensive research on cognitive narratology or translation, a portion of the content includes a case study from the viewpoint of the other discipline, proposing potential links between the two and highlighting the innovative value of interdisciplinary collaboration (Haidee Kruger, 2011; Lisa Zunshine, 2017; Sebastian Balmes, 2020).

All these academic findings indicate that conducting translation research based on cognitive narratology aligns with the trend of interdisciplinarity, encouraging the development of novel research paradigms in the field of cognitive narrative and translation studies. However, the research on the translator's identity and cognitive processes in narrative translation activities deserves further study. This paper aims to integrate the viewpoint of subjective embodied cognition into narratology by drawing on current research in cognitive narratology and translation. It will clarify the translator's mental space when engaging in narrative activities, examine the identity and cognitive mechanisms that make up the translator, and explore the cognitive foundations and principles that guide the translator's constructions of narrative and re-narrative.

3. Cognitive Construction of Translators in the Perspective of Cognitive Narratology

According to Yang Zhiting (2011:106), translation can be recognized as a dual narrative cognitive activity. This includes the translator's dual narrative activities of narrating the source text and re-narrating the target text, as well as their dual cognitive activities of constructing narrative cognition during reading and reconstructing re-narrative cognition during translating.

Psychospatial theory, which is frequently used to explain the cognitive manipulation of multiple focused perspectives and time frames during narrative (Fauconnier, 1985), views narrative as an interconnected spatial network based on verbal signals, with the speaker and addressee moving through different spaces guided by the verbal signals (Sweetser and Fauconnier, 1996). As the translation context is shared by the source language author, the translator, and the translated readers, the entire translation space can be divided into three subspaces: the "source language author space," the "translator space," and the "translated readers space". The "translator's space" can be separated into two sub-spaces, "narrativized cognitive space" and "re-narrativized cognitive space," because the translator engages in dual narrative cognitive activities as a "reader" confronting the author and as a "translator" facing the reader. Based on the aforementioned principles, we can create the diagram shown below:
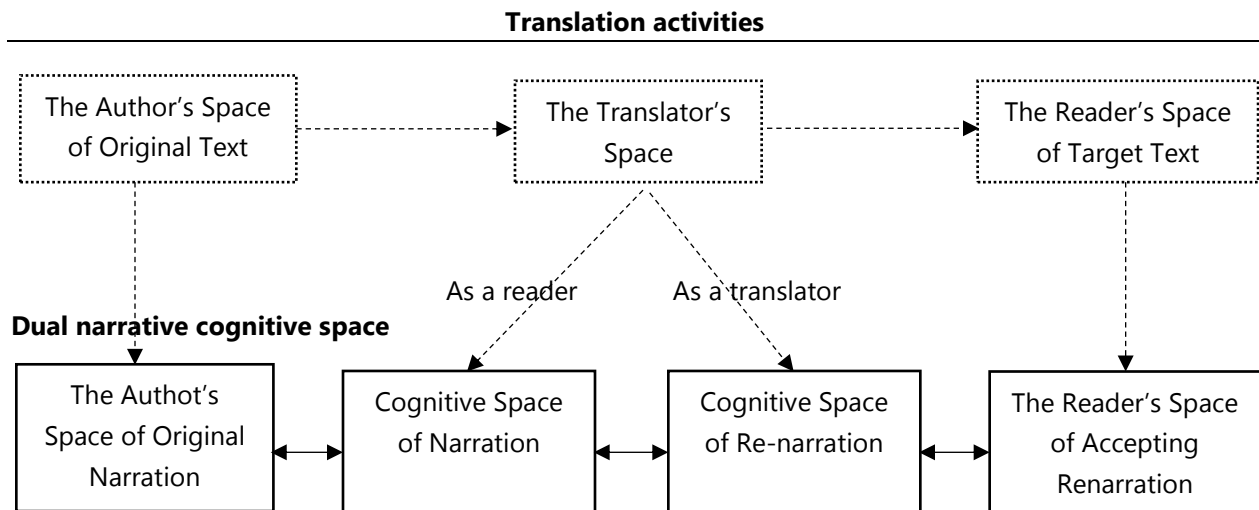
Translation activities

Figure 1. Cognitive Mechanisms in The Cognitive Activity of The Translator's Dual Narrative

From the figure, we can reproduce the cognitive process of the translator in the narrative activity according to the basic path of the common translation process, and at the same time construct the cognitive mechanism of the translator's participation in dual-narrative cognitive activities accordingly, to facilitate us to analyze the translator's identity construction and cognitive behaviors in the "narrativized cognitive space" and "re-narrativized cognitive space" in-depth based on the connecting relationship between these different spaces in the following section. Narrativized Cognitive Space" and "Re-narrative Cognitive Space".

3.1 Narrativized Constructed Cognitive Activities

In the field of narrative studies, early narratologists generally concentrated on the disciplinary definition of "narrator" and successively constructed models to present the interaction between the narrator and other participating subjects, with Chatman's (1978) "The Diagram of Narrative Communication" serving as an exemplar model. To distinguish the original text from the translated text in narratological research, and to broaden the research object in the translation discipline, Schiavi (1996) customized the diagram to become a new model of narrative in translation, which O'Sullivan (2003) improved and updated to become "A Model of Narrative Communication in Translation".

These findings provide a clear framework for the theoretical construction of narratology, but it is this specific layout that has sparked debate about the construction of the narrator's image. Fludernik (1993, 1996, 2003) criticizes the narrator's anthropomorphism based on the cognitivist narrative paradigm; Walsh (1997) questions the idea of the narrator as a fundamental narrative subject with a distinct personality; Ryan (2001) argues that the narrator's existence is so diverse that it should be considered a speculative fabrication; Kruger proposes the concepts of "Impostulation" and "the Narrative Origo", arguing that the narrative process does not require a subject to impersonate an obvious narrator, since the narrative world is a projection of the narrative imagination in which the reader does not construct the narrator as a distinct and personified being (Kruger, 2009, 2012). This means that "narrativity" is not an inherent property of the text, but of the reader who interprets the text as a narrative and constructs the text as a narrative. Therefore, contrary to previous academic opinions, "narrativization" is increasingly regarded as the reader's construction in narratology.

In the field of cognitive narratology, the way readers construct narratives gradually becomes one of the focal points of research. However, due to the interdisciplinary nature of cognitive science, cognitive narratology is generally less concerned with the reader's narrative interpretation than with the cognitive processes that lead to the reader's narrative interpretation. Fludernik (1996: 4) uses "narrativization" to conceptualize the cognitive contribution activated by the reader in an immersive state of mind, pointing out that the central goal of the narrative is to characterize 'anthropocentric experience', a view shared by Herman (2009), Caracciolo (2014), and Zhou Min (2019: 163). Accordingly, narrativization is based on the activation and connection of the anthropocentric experience, and it establishes a connection between the "space of the original narrative text" and the "space of narrativized cognition," meaning that the reader's movement in the two spaces can be explained as follows: as a cognitive subject, the reader transmits the original

text's linguistic symbols to the brain via neurons, then analyzes, judges, and reasons the acquired information, selectively integrates, transforms, and stores the cognitively processed content in the mind, and finally complete the cognitive experience involving narrativized construction.

According to experiential philosophy and cognitive linguistics, Wang Yin (2005) coined the classic term "cognitive world" to describe the cognitive mode of cognitive processing and internalized storage of various types of knowledge by way of experience, and pointed out that such knowledge can be either shared knowledge that people have already acquired or knowledge that has been built up in current linguistic communication. It is commonly known that readers regularly highlight the application of learned common information in the process of narrativized production. As is shown in the memory processing research, Gerrig (2003) proposes that the process by which readers acquire narrative coherence is automated, similar to the phenomenon of "a process of resonance," which states that by relying solely on empirical memory and emotional responses in the brain, the depth and breadth of information processing can be developed, thereby deepening cognitive understanding of the reading text and improving the efficiency of narrative construction. However, it is the author who constructs the textual space and fixes the textual features of the original narrative, so the reader will inevitably make up for the omissions of the original knowledge through reasoning and judgment during the cognitive process and needs to build brand-new knowledge in the current linguistic communication so that it can expand the socio-cultural cognitive framework, update the original cognitive schema, and obtain the cognitive change. At this point, Palmer (2004) thinks that readers will adhere to the "Principle of Minimal Departure" while getting involved in the narration, that is, readers prefer to read with little cognitive effort to obtain the finest narrative creation.

In literary narratives, many literary texts are addressed to a wide range of readers, and different readers will experience completely distinct narrative constructions when reading the same text; even among the many types of readers, some may disagree with one another due to fundamental social differences (Richardson, 2007: 261). As one of the true readers of the original material, the distinctiveness of the "translator-type reader" cannot be overlooked. In fact, in the narrative construction, the author of the original language masters the textual features of the source text, and the translator cognitively constructs the narrative world after recognizing these features. Therefore, as other readers' mental space construction, the translator-type reader's "space of the original narrative text" and the "cognitive space of narrative construction" are linked to each other, and the translator frequently moves between the two cognitive spaces. However, unlike other readers, the translator-type reader's conduct of comparing the source text and the translated text to be finished represents the translator's "critical reader" trait, simultaneously revealing the translator's true reading demand - "reading for translation". This demonstrates that the translator's cognitive process of narration is more sophisticated than that of the average reader.

3.2 Re-Narrative Reconstructed Cognitive Activity

Herman (1996) suggests that the translator's voice can be heard and recognized. The reader of the translated text hears not only the voice of the author but also the voice of the translator when reading a translated text, meaning that the presence of the translator's discourse can be viewed as the implied translator of the translated text and that the voice of the translator is hidden in the

internal narrative of the translated text on the abstract level. Thus, whether the translator's voice exists intuitively in the paratextual narrative, where the reader of the translated text can immediately hear the translator's deliberate vocalization, or implicitly in the internal narrative of the translated text, where the reader temporarily ignores the translator's voice, the translator plays a significantly mediating role in the narrative activity that occurs at the time of the language shift.

The translation is essentially a re-narrative, constructing events and people in a different language (Mona Baker, 2014: 159). This type of re-narrative, also known as retelling, differs from imitation or replication in that it involves more than the model modification (Herman, 2005: 460). When viewed within a macro context, re-narrative not only refers to the translator's reconstruction of the narrative in the target context, but it also implies that the translator, consciously or unconsciously, participates in the construction, negotiation, and questioning of social reality during the translation process (Baker, 2006: 105). Therefore, the translator, as the primary participant in the narrative activity, decodes the source language narrative in the "narrativized cognitive space" and then recodes the target language narrative in the "re-narrativized cognitive space" while taking the 're-narrative receptive space of the translated readers' into consideration, to complete the cognitive experience of the whole re-narrativized reconstruction.

Language generation is dependent on its usability (Barlow and Kemmer, 2000) and influenced by diverse settings, therefore translators should consider the existence of "context," i.e. the social environment in which language and psychology are employed (Stockwell, 2002:60). In this regard, Shen Dan (2004:1) proposes the concept of "internal and external contexts," which include "narrative contexts" and "socio-historical contexts," with the former referring to the textual convention that constitute and distinguish narratives, whilst the latter pointing to the ideological relations tied to the composition and interpretation of narratives. When the source and translated readers' cognitive ways are the same, the translator is simply required to consider the "narrative context" as an "honest speaker," that is, to rephrase the speaker's ideas and expressions as accurately as possible, without regarding significant omissions or blending the speaker's ideas and expressions with the translator's own (Harris, 1990: 118). In such a circumstance, the translator's primary goal is to guarantee that the translation contains material of equal quality to the original. However, in most circumstances, the cognitive ways of readers of the source language and readers of the translated language are not identical, so the translator has to account for both the "narrative context" and the "socio-historical context".

Considering internal and external settings, the translator will adjust expressive marker signs like narrative aspects, to control the translation readers' experience of re-narrative reception when reading the translated text. For example, the translator may change the narrative viewpoint, modify the narrative mode, and adjust the narrative voice, to trigger a narrative focus that is different from the original narrative, ultimately creating entirely new narrative threads. Readers of translated texts process narrative discourse by building, embedding, and synthesizing various mental regions using language signals while traversing in the space network (Tan Yesheng, 2024). According to Sternberg (1993), narrative thinking compares the implicit potential of hypothetically realized actions with that of hypothetical event discourse, so mature narratives may offer less (gaps and insecurities) while creating more (tension between the assumed action and the assumptions that bridge the gap) (Vandaele, 2012: 88). Therefore, compared with the reader of the original narrative, the reader of translated texts face cognitive barriers as a result of cognitive

deficits, so the translator's primary task is to compensate for these deficiencies so that the reader of the translated language can complete a coherent reading of the narrative in the "re-narrative receptive space".

Translation is essentially an act of interpretation (Boase-Beier, 2014:215), with objective interpretations within the translated text representing the translator's obvious subjective discourse, and subjective interpretations symbolizing the translator's implicit subjective discourse, which can project the core intent of the narrative and the translator's cognitive preferences, and are most clearly visible when the translator employs translational strategies. According to Herman (1996), translation provides a further narrative layer to the story. The newly embedded narrative layer, which is hidden in the translated text produced by the re-narrative reconstruction, signifies a cognitive decision made by the translator after taking into account both the narrative and socio-historical contexts, to compensate for the loss of complexity in the linguistic and cultural shift and thus minimizing cognitive barriers for translated language readers. With the narrative-driven effect, the translated text has an enhanced level of narrativity, and it is easier for the translated readers to enter the narrative space reconstructed by the translator, spontaneously shortening the distance between the source language readers and source language authors, and even stimulating the three-dimensional psychological state, i.e., narrative suspense, narrative curiosity, and narrative surprise (Sternberg, 1993), to obtain a better narrative experience. However, according to the theory of normative poetics, readers like to be "suggested into" a narrative state (Kafalenos, 2006), and some intentional details shaped by the source language author do not always need to be explicitly translated, so the newly built narrative layers may also possess a counterproductive effect on the narrative experience of the translated readers, i.e. the original narrative's suspense, curiosity, and surprise is destroyed by the translator's visible compensation. In the worst case, the translator's explicit transformation of the narrative may cause the translated readers to hear the two-track voice of the author and the translator when they read naturally, mainly because the translator ignores that the translator's readers will continually acquire cognitive change through cognitive effort. As a result, translators must overcome cognitive prejudice and action bias in re-narrative cognitive processes, as well as accurately estimate the translated readers' automatic repair capacity during narrative receipt.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper clarifies the academic status and research gaps of the interdisciplinary collaboration between cognitive narratology and translation studies, probing the innovative value and research significance of cognitive narratology explorations from the translator's perspective.

As shown in the study, we need to update the cognitive framework, clarify the definition of translation in the field of cognitive narratology, understand the conceptual scope of translation in cognitive narrative activities, convert the cognitive mechanism of translators in translation activities into the cognitive mechanism in dual cognitive narrative activities, to determine the cognitive construction of translators in the entire narrative cognitive space network, and offer a plausible explanation for the applicability of the interdisciplinary collaborative research paradigm. Since most narrative research does not distinguish between the original text and the translated text, the identity information and cognitive construction of the translator in dual cognitive

narrative activities are ambiguous, so the combination of cognitive narrative and translation research is still in the early stage, and many complex issues need to be studied in depth to improve the granularity of analysis. For example, the research method of the cognitive process of translation can be introduced, combining the think-aloud protocol method, retrospective report method, or situational survey method to directly collect translators' cognitive narrative thoughts, utilizing the textual comparative description method and corpus analysis method to indirectly analyze translators' cognitive narrative preferences, or launching questionnaire interviews and Internet-mediated surveys to explore the common rule of translators' cognitive narratives. Meanwhile, given the contextual characteristics of textual, linguistic, and socio-cultural conventions, researchers can conduct empirical investigations on many sorts of texts to confirm the rationality and validity of the theoretical conceptions.

Finally, researchers should take an open-minded approach to deepening their understanding of the new paradigm of cognitive narratology combined with translation, which is not only conducive to expanding the dimensions of depicting and interpreting the cognitive construction of translators' narratives but also of great importance in promoting interdisciplinary cooperation among different disciplines.

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