

The Operational Norms of Prefabricated Chunks in Chinese-English Consecutive Interpreting: A Corpus-based Approach

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation offers a descriptive investigation of the operational norms of recurring 4-gram prefabricated chunks (PCs), or lexical bundles of high frequency, produced by institutional interpreters in China. PCs, as part of continuous multi-word units, are claimed to be stored and retrieved as a whole without grammatical analysis, and processed faster than other units of low frequency. Admittedly, interpreters resort to highly recurring PCs labelled as ‘stock phrases’ or ‘formula’. Translational relationships, including equivalence and explicitation, are described between the English interpreted PCs and corresponding translation units in the Chinese source texts. To better understand the operational norms of PCs in interpreting, I illustrate that both equivalent and additive uses of PCs are attributable to improving coherence and cohesion in the interpreter-mediated communication. Also, they help enhance accuracy and homogeneity across the interpreters in that PCs retrieved from a specific corpus represent the normative use rather than the idiosyncratic or stylistic preferences.

The first chapter reviews the theoretical significance of PCs in previous interpreting studies, practice and training. However, few quantitative and qualitative studies have focused on describing PCs in real on-site interpreting. So far, no reduplicated methods have made any systematic classifications of PCs. In chapter 2, the related literature in second language acquisition, psycholinguistics and corpus linguistics underscore that PCs contribute to improving the quality of oral production, i.e. fluency and accuracy. This therefore sheds light on interpreting as an analytical framework. Chapter 3 introduces the taxonomy (Biber et al. 2004) for four discourse functions performed by PCs or lexical bundles. Following that, 224 4-gram PCs of 2726 tokens were retrieved from a parallel, self-compiled 1998-2014 Chinese-English Interpreting Corpus of Premier Press Conferences. Chapter 4 finds that the most used techniques for PCs are literal translation and addition, based on the statistics of the translational mappings, and presents an exemplified analysis on the functional characteristics of PCs in interpreting. Functioning as obligation, prediction and ability, stance PCs mainly filled with modal verbs help interpreters mediate interpersonal relations between the Premier and the audience. Similarly, functioning as greetings, introduction, thanks and announcement, special conversational PCs are usually the pre-sequences in textual make-up to begin the question-and-answer session. Moreover, PCs of

discourse organizers partially consisting of subject and predicate serve as cohesive and coherent devices to facilitate receivers' understanding of the rendition. In relation to such properties as quantity, shape, time or place, referential PCs tend to make the rendition accurate and homogeneous. Finally, chapter 5 discusses the major motivations behind the operational norms for PCs. To overcome memory- and time-related constraints in interpreting, interpreters tend to literally render PCs as effortless, even automatic, production, substituting PCs for lexical units to lengthen coherent and cohesive devices (i.e. and → as well as the), and repetitively adding PCs to a co-text, e.g. to cut a Chinese sentence with one subject and many predicates into independent target sentences. The two norms aim at buying more time to reduce cognitive load in interpreting.

KEYWORDS: 4-gram prefabricated chunks; high frequency; interpreting corpus; operational norms

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汉英交替传译中预制块的操作规范研究

——基于语料库的实证考察

摘要

本论文采用描写研究考察了中国政府机构译员使用高频预制语块（prefabricated chunks, PCs）的操作规范。预制语块也是高频率的词簇。预制语块作为一种连续的多词单位，被认为是整体存储和提取的，不需要语法分析即可使用，并且与低频率的词汇结构相比，加工速度更快。实际上，译员重复使用的预制语块也被称为“习惯用语”或“程式语”。本研究描写了英语译语的预制语块和对应的汉语源语翻译单位之间的翻译关系，主要包括对等和显化。为了更好地了解预制语块在口译中的操作规范，本研究通过例证法，论证预制语块的对等和增添能有助于译员在协调口译交际时保持译语的连贯与衔接。同时，由于预制语块是从专门语料库中获得，能体现规范化的使用方法，而非译员个人偏好或口译风格，所以预制语块能提高不同译员之间译语的准确性和同质性。

第一章回顾了已有口译研究、口译实践和口译训练，明确了预制语块的理论重要性。但是，鲜有量化和质性研究描写现场口译中预制语块的具体使用情况。目前，仍缺乏可重复验证的方法对口译预制语块进行系统分类。第二章综述了二语习得、心理语言学和语料库语言学的相关文献，发现预制语块能提高口语产出的质量，如流利性和准确性。因此，这可作为口译预制语块研究的分析框架。第三章介绍了预制语块（或词簇）四种话语功能的分类体系（Biber et al. 2004）。之后，本研究自建了“1998-2014 总理记者招待会汉英平行口译语料库”，从中提取了224个4词预制语块，总形符为2726。第四章基于翻译关系的统计，发现预制语块最常使用的翻译技巧是直译和增译。另一方面，第四章通过举例分析了口译中预制语块的话语功能特点。具体而言，站位情态类预制语块主要填充了情态动词，具有表达义务、预测和能力的功能，帮助译员协调总理和听众之间的人际关系。相似地，用于专门对话的预制语块能表达问候、介绍、致谢和宣布，通常是语篇组织中的前序列结构，能开启总理和记者之间的问答交际。此外，语篇组织类预制语块部分包括了主语和谓语结构，能作为连贯和衔接手段组织语篇信息，使接收者易于理解译语。指示参照类预制语块与物体的属性有关，说明了数量、形状、时间或地点等信息。它们保证了不同译员之间译语的准确性和同质性。最后，第五章讨论了预制语块操作规范的主要动因。为了克服口译过程中记忆和时间的限制因素，译员倾向使用预制语块进行直译，作为一种节省精力，甚至是自动化的口译产出。译员还倾向用预制语块代替词级单位以拉长连贯与衔接手段（如 *and* 被替换为 *as well as the*）。同时，译员倾向在上下文中重复使用预制语块进行增译，如将一个含有主语和多个谓语的汉语句子切分为多个独立的译语句子。这两种操作规范能为译员赢取更多的时间，以降低口译的认知压力。

关键词：4词预制语块，高频率，口译语料库，操作规范