Textual Parallelism in Parallel Texts

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Abstract

Parallelism is an example of coordination in grammar by which two or more similar units, usually of sentence length and below, are joined in grammatical structures of the same kind. The aim of this paper is to go beyond the sentence and look at what can be called ‘textual parallelism’ in an English text (source language) and its translation into Chinese (target language), i.e. parallel texts. Textual parallelism can be considered as an example of ‘textual equivalence’ (Baker, 1992). A Systemic Functional Approach (Halliday, 1994) will be used for the analysis of the texts. The three areas of investigation include Process types in the Transitivity System, Polarity and Modality in the Mood System, and Reference in the Cohesion System, belonging to the Field, Tenor, and Mode of discourse, respectively. The main research question of the paper is: What happens to textual parallelisms established by the above systems when one language is translated into another? Some implications of the findings for translators will also be discussed.