

Study on the Translation Strategies of Chinese Political Documents in the New Era under the Skopos Theory

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Abstract

The C-E Translation of publicity materials aims to better show the image of China, convey the voice of China, and tell the story of China. Based on Skopos theory, this paper discusses the translation strategies of Chinese political documents in the new era. It also includes relevant examples of the latest English version of the 2023 government work report, so as to help people better engage in the practice of translating Chinese political documents to the outside world.

Keywords

Skopos Theory; Chinese Political Documents; C-E Translation of Publicity Materials.

1. Introduction of the C-E translation of Publicity Materials

The C-E translation of publicity materials in China is a special translation task for the purpose of external publicity. In China, the translation of publicity materials mainly translates different political texts from Chinese into English and other foreign languages, so that people around the world can understand China through it. The target texts of external publicity translation can be Chinese traditional culture, science, and technology, the Party's and the country's policies, political work reports, press conferences, and other political documents. There are also various ways to translate external publicity. It can be presented by traditional media such as books and newspapers, or by new communication methods such as the Internet and television broadcasting. The translation of political documents plays an important role in promoting the development of China. Since entering the new era, China has put forward a series of initiatives such as strengthening the Belt and Road Initiative and building a community with a shared future for all humankind, actively contributing Chinese wisdom to the whole world. Winning the battle against poverty at home and implementing rural revitalization strategies have also benefited people across the country. At present, the value of external publicity plays an increasingly important role. As the most crucial channel of external publicity, the translation of external publicity naturally receives unprecedented attention and begins to play its unique and significant value. It is no exaggeration to say that without translation, there is no external publicity; Then, without effective external publicity, China could not truly go out to the world, and it would be difficult to achieve its real purpose and expected height of opening-up. The external publicity translation of these current political documents, which introduce China's governance principles and policies, can help the world understand China better and help China to establish a positive image as a major country, thus further promoting China's development and progress.

2. Introduction of Skopos Theory

Skopos theory, an important part of functionalist translation theory, was proposed by a German researcher called Hans Vermeer in 1978. This theory holds that translation is a purposeful and fruitful behavior based on the original text, and it emphasizes the target-orientation of translation and focuses on the translation situation. According to this theory, different purposes

require translators to adopt different translation methods and strategies so as to produce a functionally adequate result. This theory also explains the long-standing debate between "foreignization" and "domestication" in the translation circle, because the strategies of domestication or foreignization in translation mainly depend on the purpose of translation.

Skopos theory mainly includes three major translation rules, namely, Skopos Rule, Coherence Rule and Fidelity Rule. The Skopos Rule emphasizes the adoption of translation strategies should be based on the purposes of translation. Coherence Rule pays attention to the semantic smoothness of the text before and after the translation, so that the translated article has strong readability for the target audience. The Fidelity Rule means that the translated text should be faithful to the original text, and the translator should not change the content of the original text at will, which will lead to a great difference between the translated text and the original text. Vermeer says translation is a purposeful action. From another point of view, translation is actually a kind of conversion, which is the conversion of communicative language signs or non-verbal signs from one language to another. Vermeer emphasizes that the act of translation is a communicative act transforming between two different cultures, rather than a pure conversion of words between languages. The characteristics of external publicity translation determine that translators should not only grasp the values exported from external publicity translation materials, but also understand the cultural gap between the target language country and China, so as to build a bridge of cross-cultural communication through good translation. Under the guidance of Skopos theory, translators should ensure their creativity in translation and use good translation strategies to make readers get clear information.

3. Strategies for Translating Chinese Political Documents under Skopos Theory

The C-E translation of publicity materials, especially the translation of political documents, has been developing rapidly in recent years. The main purpose of this special translation activity is to introduce China's current affairs, political situations, and government policies to the world, as well as spread the voice of China and establish a positive image of this big country. Based on these essential purposes and combined with Skopos theory, the following translation strategies can be flexibly adopted in the process of translating Chinese political documents in the new era.

3.1. Domestication--- Emphasizing Target Readers

Domestication is one translation strategy which emphasizes making a text closely in accordance with the culture of the language being translated to, and this may involve the loss of information from the source text so as to focus on the target audience. The biggest feature of naturalized translation is the use of fluent and idiomatic English for translation. In this kind of translation, the efforts of the translator are covered by the fluent translation, the translator is invisible, the differences between different cultures are also covered, the mainstream cultural values of the target language replace the cultural values of the target language, the strangeness of the original text has been diluted, and the translation becomes transparent. If the publicity translation of Chinese political documents wants to achieve the expected effect, it must pay attention to foreign readers' acceptance and understanding of the English version. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt the domestication strategy in the translation process, using the language expressions in line with the habits of English readers so as to better transmit the meaning of Chinese political documents.

3.2. Foreignization--- Retaining Chinese Characteristics

Foreignization is a translation method that aims at preserving the original features of source languages – such as sentence structure, vocabulary, rhetoric, and certain grammatical features – in the target language. Chinese political documents contain many special terms and sentences

which have strong Chinese characteristics, reflecting Chinese culture, life, and many other aspects. In order to convey Chinese sounds to the world, it is natural to retain some Chinese characteristics. The ultimate purpose of external publicity is to publicize China and its culture abroad and enhance the participation of Chinese culture in world culture, so that we can play a greater role on the international stage. To play a more important role, foreignization strategy should be adopted as much as possible in the translation of external publicity, because it is more conducive to the transmission of the original Chinese culture to foreign countries, so that more foreigners will pay attention to and understand China. Of course, it's worth thinking about the degree of alienation. Therefore, the translation strategy of foreignization should also be flexibly adopted in the translation process.

Some people believe that domestication and foreignization must be stuck to the end if one strategy is used, and the two should not be confused. However, in actual translation practice, we cannot do so. This is because translation requires us to faithfully reproduce the ideas and styles of the original texts, so it is inevitable to adopt the method of foreignization. But at the same time, the translation should also take into consideration the readers' understanding and the fluency of the original text, so it is inevitable to adopt the method of domestication. It is neither desirable nor practical to choose one strategy and completely exclude another.

In the process of translating Chinese political documents, we are always confronted with the choice of foreignization and domestication. Through the choice, the translation can find a "meeting point" between the approach to the foreign reader and the approach to the original texts. This "meeting point" is not an invariable "middle point". Sometimes it is closer to the original texts and sometimes closer to the readers. However, no matter which side is approached, one should follow one principle: when approaching the original texts, one should not be too far away from the readers; When approaching the readers, do not get too far away from the original texts. That is to say, foreignization does not hinder the smoothness of the translation, and domestication does not lose the taste of the original text. Meanwhile, we should adhere to the strategy of domestication of language forms, and foreignize its cultural factors. In this way, the translated works can avoid the disadvantages of the two strategies, so that we can better do the translation work of Chinese political documents.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, based on Skopos theory, the translation of political documents with Chinese characteristics can flexibly adopt a variety of translation strategies according to the ultimate purposes of translation, so as to achieve the effect of telling Chinese stories to the world and transmitting Chinese voices.

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