

On the Translation of Publicity Texts Under Semantic Translation and Communicative Translation Theory

LI Mengting^{[a],*}; LI Lijun^[b]

^[a]Postgraduate, Foreign Languages, North China Electric Power University, Beijing, China.

^[b]Assistant Professor, Foreign Languages, North China Electric Power University, Beijing, China.

*Corresponding author.

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Abstract

The publicity texts involve various aspects in external publicity and plays an increasingly important role. This paper takes Xi Jinping's report at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China as an example to discuss the practical application of Newmark's semantic translation and communicative translation theory in the translation of publicity texts. It is summarized that how semantic translation and communicative translation are used in the English translation of publicity texts in this paper so as to provide some practicable suggestions for the English translation of publicity texts.

Key words: Semantic translation; Communicative translation; Translation of publicity texts

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1. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of China's economy and the improvement of its overall national strength, China and other countries in the world have increasingly close exchanges in politics, economy, culture, science and technology, and external publicity is becoming more and

more essential. If people who work on translation want to do a good job in publicity, we can't make it without the translation of the publicity texts. The quality of the translation of the publicity texts will affect the economic and cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and other countries and affect the maintenance of the national image. On the basis of reading a lot of English translations of publicity texts, it is found that Newmark's semantic translation and communicative translation theories have been applied in the English translation of many texts, and the effect of application is satisfying. This paper selects English version of Xi Jinping's report at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China as an example and analyzes the translation of publicity texts by means of semantic translation and communicative translation theory. Publicity text belongs to informative text, but it also needs to have certain appeal. Therefore, the translation of publicity text has its unique characteristics. Translation of publicity texts not only is faithful to the original text and accurately conveys the information of the original texts, but also is accepted by the target language readers. What's more, readers of target language can feel the appeal of the translation and achieve better communication. By analyzing the English version of Xi Jinping's report at the nineteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, this paper explains that it is very important to use Newmark's theory of semantic translation and communicative translation to guide the translation of publicity texts.

2. THE THEORY OF SEMANTIC AND COMMUNICATIVE TRANSLATION

In his book *Approaches to Translation*, Britain translation theorist Newmark first proposed two types of translation: semantic translation and communicative translation. Newmark claimed that communicative translation attempts to make the translation as close as possible to the

original reader. Semantic translation tries to be as closely as possible to the semantic and syntactic structure of the second language, presenting the exact contextual meaning of the original texts.

Semantic translation takes the original text as the starting point and end point. In the process of translation, semantic translation tries its best to show the language characteristics, writing style and the original author's writing intention of the original text rather than blindly catering to the target language expression and readers' acceptance, so it has the trend of foreignization, literal translation and faithful translation. In other words, semantic translation requires the translation to be as close to the original as possible in terms of morphology, syntax and mood so as to achieve the equivalence or relevance of semantic structure. Some parts of a translation can only be interpreted when the connotation of the original texts constitutes the biggest obstacle to the target language readers. Therefore, semantic translation is a relatively objective and accurate translation theory.

Communicative translation centers on the target language readers and focuses on not causing difficulties of target language readers in understanding target texts so as to flexibly choose various translation techniques to eliminate obstacles in understanding target texts. Following the culture and pragmatic expressions of the target language, the translator should convey the information of the original text smoothly and effectively, which is the focus of communicative translation. Therefore, communicative translation has the tendency of domestication and free translation. In this regard, Newmark also believes that the translator has the right to correct or improve the logic of the original texts, improve the syntactic structure, eliminate redundancy, eliminate semantic ambiguity, etc. Therefore, communicative translation has a lot to do with the translator. Communicative translation is relatively subjective and gives the translator a lot of space to understand and play freely.

To sum up, in order to express the thinking process of the original texts, semantic translation tries to maintain the language characteristics and unique expressions of the original texts and exert the expressive function of language. While the key to communicative translation is to convey information, let readers think, feel, and act, and exert the function of language to convey information and produce effects.

3. THE DEFINITION OF THE TRANSLATION OF PUBLICITY TEXTS

The literal meaning of translation of publicity texts is to translate Chinese publicity texts into the languages of other countries and introduce and publicize China to other countries in the world. Huang Youyi (2004) defined the

translation of publicity texts more comprehensively and profoundly than the above-mentioned understanding: "with the comprehensive development and progress of China's society and economy and the deepening of foreign exchange, a great deal of information about China needs to be translated from Chinese into foreign languages, and published and transmitted to the world through various channels such as books, periodicals, newspapers, radio, television, internet and international conferences, which is the translation of publicity texts. From this definition, we can see that in the context of globalization, the world needs to understand China and China needs to go to the world. So translation as a bridge of communication and transmission is necessary. We need to translate a lot of information about China into foreign language, that is to say, we need to introduce materials that reflect the current social and cultural life, political and economic conditions, national policies, natural scenery, urban customs, spiritual outlook, ideology, values and so on of China to foreign readers. Communication channels mainly include books, periodicals, newspapers, radio, television, internet and other media, as well as international conferences. It must also be clear that the translation of publicity texts is publication and dissemination, so it is different from internal publicity.

4. THE ANALYSIS OF APPLICATION OF SEMANTIC AND COMMUNICATIVE TRANSLATION IN PUBLICITY TEXTS

4.1 The application of Semantic Translation

In the publicity texts, there are usually some words with Chinese characteristics, i.e. Chinese unique words. At this time, semantic translation is usually used to maintain the cultural connotation of the words with Chinese characteristics to show the original culture with Chinese characteristics to the target language readers so that they can fully understand the unique cultural connotation of China and improve the position of Chinese in international communication. The following are selected from the English version of Xi Jinping's report at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China to explore the specific use of semantic translation.

Example 1

Source text: 全面准确贯彻“一国两制”方针，牢牢掌握宪法和基本法赋予的中央对香港、澳门全面管治权，深化内地和港澳地区交流合作，保持香港、澳门繁荣稳定。坚持一个中国原则和“九二共识”，推动两岸关系和平发展，加强两岸经济文化交流合作，实现两岸领导人历史性会晤。

Target text: We have fully and faithfully implemented the principle of "one country, two systems" and ensured that the central government exercises its overall jurisdiction over Hong Kong and Macao as mandated

by China's Constitution and the basic laws of the two special administrative regions. We have thus boosted exchanges and cooperation between the mainland and the two regions and maintained prosperity and stability in Hong Kong and Macao. We have upheld the one-China principle and the 1992 Consensus, promoted the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations, strengthened cross-Straits relations, strengthened cross-Straits economic and cultural exchanges and cooperation, and held a historic meeting between the leaders of the two sides.

“一国两制”和“九二共识”are words about China's system and history, which have strong Chinese characteristics. There are no similar words in foreign countries. In order to retain the characteristics of the original text, semantic translation is used to translate “一国两制” directly into “one country, two systems” and “九二共识” have been translated into “1992 consensus”, which retains the historical and cultural characteristics of the original text and is conducive to the external publicity of China's characteristic system.

Example 2

Source text: 坚定不移“打虎”、“拍蝇”、“猎狐”。

Target text: We have taken firm action to “take out tigers,” “swat flies,” and “hunt down foxes.”

“打虎”、“拍蝇”、“猎狐” are the distinctive means of anti-corruption in China, and they are symbolic expressions of anti-corruption actions. Using semantic translation and word-to-word translation, “打虎”、“拍蝇”、“猎狐” is translated into “take out tigers,” “swat flies,” and “hunt down foxes.” The symbolic expressions of original language is also expressed in the target language, which conveys the unique anti-corruption system and actions of China and is conducive to the target language readers to understand the Chinese unique and effective anti-corruption system.

Example 3

Source text: 坚持照镜子、正衣冠、洗洗澡、治治病的要求，开展党的群众路线教育实践活动和“三严三实”专题教育。

Target text: We have committed to “examining ourselves in the mirror, tidying our attire, taking a bath, and treating our ailments,” launched activities to see members command and act on the Party's mass line, and initiated a campaign for the observance of the Three Stricts and Three Earnests.

“照镜子、正衣冠、洗洗澡、治治病” is similar to the Chinese saying, so we should try our best to follow the original text when translating. “Examining ourselves in the mirror, tidying our attire, taking a bath, and treating our ailments” is the general requirement of the whole process of activities to see members command and act on the Party's mass line. This general requirement has a strong pertinence and guidance because it is based on the current situation, views things with a long-term perspective, and is in line with the reality. The general requirement consists of sufficient contents, but connotative meaning doesn't

need to be translated. By using semantic translation, translation version can keep the characteristics of the original text.

4.2 The Application of Communicative Translation

In some cases, if we follow the semantic translation theory to translate some words or sentences in the publicity texts, it will bring difficulties for the target language readers to understand. We should abandon the semantic translation, adopt the communicative translation, focus on the target language, and make the content and form of the translation more acceptable to the target language readers. The following examples are selected from the English version of Xi Jinping's report at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China to explore the specific use of communicative translation theory.

Example 4

Source text: 全党同志一定要登高望远、居安思危，勇于变革、勇于创新，永不僵化、永不停滞。

Target text: All comrades must aim high and look far, be alert to dangers even in times of calm, have the courage to pursue reform and break new ground, and never become hardened to change or inactive.

Here, “登高望远” and “居安思危” are idioms that have been transmitting in China for a long time and have profound cultural connotation. Therefore, instead of following the theory of semantic translation, “登高望远” is translated into “aim high and look far” and “居安思危” is translated into “be alert to danger even in times of calm”. In English version, “登高” is not translated into the surface meaning but the translator uses communicative translation theory. In order to make the target language readers better understand its meaning, “登高” is translated into “aim high”. Here, following the theory of communicative translation can be better accepted by the target readers.

Example 5

Source text: 改革全面发力、多点突破、纵深推进，着力增强改革系统性、整体性、协同性，压茬拓展改革广度和深度，推出一千五百多项改革举措，重要领域和关键环节改革取得突破性进展，主要领域改革主体框架基本确立。

Target text: We have taken moves across the board, achieved breakthroughs in many areas, and made deeper progress in reform. We have pursued reform in a more systematic, holistic, and coordinated way, increasing its coverage and depth. Thanks to the launch of over 1,500 reform measures, breakthroughs have been made in key areas, and general frameworks for reform have been established in major fields.

The denotative meaning of “压茬” is grasping the planting time of crops and the deep meaning means that the work should be carried out step by step and every stage should be solid and effective. “压茬” has not been translated in the translation and has been omitted. The

translation above follows Newmark's communicative translation theory, focuses on the target language readers, focuses on not causing difficulties in understanding translation texts, and flexibly selects various translation techniques to eliminate obstacles in readers' understanding. Therefore, "压茬" is omitted here because the literal translation of "压茬" will bring difficulties to the target language readers.

Example 6

Source text: 实现中华民族伟大复兴是近代以来中华民族最伟大的梦想，中国共产党一经成立，就把实现共产主义作为党的最高理想和最终目标，义无反顾肩负起实现中华民族伟大复兴的历史使命，团结带领人民进行了艰苦卓绝的斗争，谱写了气吞山河的壮丽史诗。

Target text: National rejuvenation has been the greatest dream of the Chinese people since modern times began. At its founding, the Communist Party of China made realizing Communism its highest ideal and its ultimate goal, and shouldered the historic mission of national rejuvenation. In pursuing this goal, the Party has united the Chinese people and let them through arduous struggles to epic accomplishments.

By following the theory of communicative translation, the above translation focuses on the target readers, pays attention to the translation effect and takes communication as the goal. For example, "义无反顾" in "义无反顾肩负起实现中华民族伟大复兴的历史使命" is deleted in the translation. With deleting "气吞山河的", "气吞山河的壮丽史诗" is translated into "epic accomplishments". The focus of communicative translation is on the target language readers. Translators try to eliminate the difficulties and obstacles in reading or communication for these readers so as to make the communication go smoothly. The deletion of "义无反顾" and "气吞山河的" in the translation does not affect the meaning of the original but is more easily accepted by the target readers.

CONCLUSION

Guided by Newmark's theory of semantic translation and communicative translation, through the analysis of the English translation of Xi Jinping's report at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the following conclusions are drawn: In the translation of publicity texts, in order to reflect the characteristics of Chinese culture and history in an original way, some unique Chinese discourses should follow the semantic translation theory. When translating these unique Chinese discourses, translators should apply the strategy of foreignization and literal translation method is preferred.

In addition to some unique Chinese discourses, most of the translation of publicity texts will generally follow Newmark's communicative translation theory, be faithful to the target language readers, and avoid difficulties for the target language readers to understand, achieving better communicative goals. Communicative translation theory will pay more attention to the fluency and readability of the translation texts and making it easier for readers to understand. Therefore, in most cases, it's advisable that translators use the strategy of domestication and free translation method is better.

However, in translation practice, sometimes no single translation theory can faithfully and completely reproduce the original style and cultural connotation. As a translator, he or she should not only make the translation faithful and close to the original in style and language, but also take into account the cultural background and language expression habits of the target readers. Therefore, a combination of different translation theories or methods is more popular. Semantic translation and communicative translation are two complementary parts of translation, so translators should alternate and combine the two parts of Newmark's theory to maintain the content of the original text and pay attention to the effect of the translation to maximize translation effects in translation of the external publicity texts.

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