



The Application of the “Three Accordance” Principles in the Translation of Foreign Publicity Texts: Taking the translation of Chinese leaders’ epidemic speech as examples

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Abstract

This paper takes the epidemic speech of Chinese leaders as the research object, analyzes the English translation of the epidemic speech of Chinese leaders in detail based on the “Three Accordance” Principles for External Publicity. The translation techniques of foreign publicity texts are discussed - comparing words with each other, turning images into meanings and adapting to local customs. These three techniques are used in order to show the strengths of China and avoid the prejudice and better publicize Chinese opinions and attitudes.

Key words: Foreign publicity text; The “Three Accordance” Principles; Epidemic speech

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1. INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, the corona virus epidemic broke out globally, China, as the first country to have a public case, attracted much attention in every move. In the face of the severe global epidemic, our country’s leaders made multiple speeches to stabilize the popular feelings, commanded calmly, and inspired the Chinese people, letting China to become the earliest and fastest country to control the spread of the epidemic.

National leaders are the reassurance of a country, and their speeches are an important channel for understanding a country’s policies, as well as a window for disseminating national concepts and culture to the world.

The “Three Accordance” Principles for External Publicity are basic principles for journalists proposed by Huang Youyi, Vice President of the China Translation Association, in 2004, aiming to fully reflect the value of news work in social services. If they are applied to translation practice, it is bound to produce good communication effects. The importance of the English translation of Chinese national leaders’ speeches in the world is self-evident. As students majoring in translation, we should pay more attention to the impact of the translated speeches of national leaders under the epidemic on the world situation and the shaping of the country’s image. By analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of the translations, we should grasp the principles and methods of translating foreign publicity texts, and better apply the “Three Accordance” Principles for External Publicity to translation practice, telling Chinese stories well and spreading the Chinese voice.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The domestic theoretical research on “Three Accordance” Principles originated from the idea of “Three Accordance” Principles for External Publicity proposed by Huang Youyi in 2004, but the number of research papers is relatively small. Chairman Xi Jinping pointed out in 2013 that an important task of contemporary external publicity is to guide people to understand contemporary China in a more comprehensive and objective way. After that, how to make good use of the principle of “Three Accordance” Principles for External Publicity to properly tell the Chinese story began to attract much attention in the domestic translation field, and became a hot spot for many scholars to study. For example, Chen Ruilin

and Li Juan wrote “Exploring the English translation of museum interpretation based on the principle of ‘Three Accordance’ Principles for External Publicity: taking Gansu Provincial Museum as an example” (2022), Liu Chaowu and Wang Jun wrote “Research on the Translation of China’s High-speed Railway under the Guidance of the Principle of “Three Accordance” Principles for External Publicity - Taking *China Speed: A Chronicle of China’s High-speed Railway Development* as an Example” (2021) and so on. These results are helpful to show China’s modern technology and traditional culture, but most of them do not consider the practical application of China’s foreign external publicity.

In this paper, we intend to analyze the translation of such foreign external publicity texts of our leaders’ speeches on the epidemic, taking the corona virus epidemic as the theme for how to do a good job of foreign external publicity in the contemporary context. Since the outbreak of the corona virus in 2019, China has been stigmatized internationally, and many news reports have even called the corona virus “China Virus”. Based on the English translations of national leaders’ speeches on the epidemic, we explore how to grasp the principle of “Three Accordance” Principles for External Publicity, so as to show the poise of a big country presenting the truth and without making excessive concessions, which will help us understand the application value of “Three Accordance” Principles for External Publicity.

3. “THREE ACCORDANCE” PRINCIPLES FOR EXTERNAL PUBLICITY

Huang Youyi pointed out that, in general, any material that introduces China to foreign countries should be accord with the actual development of China, the thinking habits of foreign audiences, and the needs of foreign audiences (2004). For the foreign external publicity texts of leaders’ speeches on the epidemic, we believe that translators should focus on “being accord with the actual development of China” and “being accord with the thinking habits of foreign audiences”. As a prerequisite for translation of foreign texts, the focus of “being accord with the needs of foreign audiences” is on the translator’s ability to convey the original message to foreign audiences. Due to the limited space of this paper, we do not discuss this point, but focus only on the official translation perspective of the Chinese side. “being accord with to the reality of China’s development” emphasizes that we need to take two steps from eliminating stereotypes and accurately grasping the wording and conveying precise intentions, so as to avoid further misunderstanding of the actual situation in China by foreign audiences and make them understand the actual development of China; The “being accord with the way of thinking of foreign audiences” focuses on localization of English translation, using “transforming images into

meanings” and other methods to fit western thinking logic and language habits, so that the translation is more easily accepted by audiences.

4. THE APPLICATION OF THE “THREE ACCORDANCE” PRINCIPLES FOR EXTERNAL PUBLICITY IN THE TRANSLATION OF EPIDEMIC FOREIGN PUBLICITY TEXTS

On the whole, the quality of translation of Chinese external publicity texts on epidemic is beyond doubt. In order to avoid the translation fallacies caused by the cultural differences between Chinese and Western cultures, and to make the translation faithful and smooth, and make the expressions easy to understand, so as to achieve the purpose of foreign external publicity, the translators make comprehensive use of various translation techniques, trying to reproduce the main points of the original text. We analyze such texts in detail, summarize and refine the following three types of translation techniques:

4.1 Being accord with the actual development of China - comparing words with each other

In the process of translation, translators usually repeatedly compare the emotional differences between close words so as to select the word that can most accurately convey the original meaning. There is a Chinese idiom of “comparing goods with three families”, which refers to the process of comparing prices in the process of purchasing or trading. Based on this, we outline the translation strategy of “comparing words with three others”, which means repeatedly comparing meanings and selecting words.

4.1.1 Eliminate stereotypes

Since ancient times, there have been many stereotypes and misunderstandings about China in Western society. This is inseparable from the usual racial discrimination in the West and the background of China’s humiliating modern history, and the Western media has contributed to the smearing of China’s image.

For example, the widespread dissemination of the “Yellow Scourge Theory” (黄祸论) and the frequent appearance of negative Chinese images such as “Fu Manchu” (傅满洲) in literature have led to a deepening misunderstanding of China’s image in the West. Even though China has made efforts over the years to build its image as a great power, actively assume its international responsibilities and convey the Chinese spirit, smear campaigns abroad are still rampant. According to *the Observer*, Jeffrey Sachs, a well-known U.S. economist, said in an interview that “the U.S. often accuses a country like China, which has not participated in any war for forty years, of being “very belligerent”, which is nonsense and is simply playing ‘word games

‘.’ Therefore, in the translation of foreign publicity texts, we should avoid deepening false stereotypes to help continue to tell the Chinese story and build up the Chinese image.

Example 1:

ST:用3个月左右的时间取得武汉保卫战的决定性成果,进而又接连打了几场局部地区聚集性疫情歼灭战(Xi Jinping, 2020).

TT: Meanwhile, a decisive victory was secured in once the hardest-hit Chinese city of Wuhan in just about three months. Besides, the country has effectively contained sporadic outbreaks (Jia Yihang,2021).

The original text compares the fight against the epidemic to a heroic battle in order to inspire people's fighting spirit and boost their morale. In order to avoid misunderstanding caused by the cultural differences between Chinese and Western cultures, the translation cleverly handles the situation by not directly translating the words "war" and "defend", which are too aggressive.

Example 2:

ST:举国同心,集中体现了中国人民万众一心、同甘共苦的团结伟力。各条战线的抗疫勇士临危不惧、视死如归(Xi Jinping, 2020).

TT: Xi lauded the Chinese people for uniting as one and commended the heroes emerging from all walks of life amid the epidemic (Jia Yihang,2021).

The original text uses the naturalization method of translation in "being unafraid of danger" and "seeing death as a return", and the translator covers the patriotism and bravery of the warriors fighting against the epidemic through a word "heroes". Due to the different perceptions of Chinese and foreign cultures on the spirit of fighting the epidemic, the translator chooses to use a comprehensive positive word to represent the original "not afraid to face danger and to die as if returning" in order to avoid aggravating China's disadvantageous position in international public on the epidemic, which more accurately conveys China's firm belief and unremitting efforts in epidemic prevention.

4.1.2 Convey the accurate meaning

In the process of translation, information asymmetry between the source text and the target text occurs from time to time, one of the reasons being the asymmetry of their pragmatic presuppositions. The difference in that is fundamentally caused by the asymmetry of the cultural environment between the two countries (Lv Minhong and Yang Lan,2020). Thus, it is also a compulsory topic to master how to grasp the subtle differences between texts and even words to accurately convey the Chinese intentions in the study of foreign publicity translation.

Example 3:

ST:四是要加强舆论引导工作。深入宣传党中央决策部署、对湖北和武汉的关心重视,宣传一方有难、八方支援的大爱精神,宣传一线医务人员、基层干部、公安民警、社区工作者、志愿者等的感人事迹,

展现全国各族人民坚定信心、同舟共济的坚强意志(Zhang Yan,2020)。

TT: Committee's decisions and plans as well as the care and importance it is giving to Hubei and Wuhan, to convey to the public that everyone is in this together, and to publicize the moving stories of front line medical workers, primary-level officials, police officers, community workers, and volunteers, so as to demonstrate the firm confidence of the Chinese people and our collective determination to get through this.

Publicizing in the original article refers to China's decision making and deployment of the outbreak in an open, transparent, and objective manner, both internally and externally. Although both publicize and propagandize have the meaning, propagandizing means "dishonestly try to persuade other people to share their views", while the translator's use of publicize means "make something widely known to the public", which appropriately expresses the concept of neutrality and objectivity. Considering the different emotional meanings of the words, the word "propagandize" is not used here, which has the negative meaning.

Example 4:

ST:他指出,在过去8个多月时间里,我们党团结带领全国各族人民,进行了一场惊心动魄的抗疫大战,经受了一场艰苦卓绝的历史大考(Xi Jinping, 2020)。

TT: Xi said that over the past eight-plus months, China has fought a fierce war against the epidemic and has passed the extraordinary test of history.

The English definition of fierce is "marked by extreme and violent energy", which emphasizes that things are dangerous and powerful, while emphasizes our firm will and high fighting spirit, but words such as thrilling and breathtaking emphasize that things are dangerous and powerful, without the ability to show the deeper meanings,

4.2 Being accord with the thinking habits of foreign audiences - localization of English translation

4.2.1.Transforming image into meaning

Chinese emphasizes parataxis, while English emphasizes hypotaxis. Such cultural differences will inevitably make the translation work more difficult. A simple Chinese sentence often has complex context and semantics, and it is important to "not reveal it directly". In the traditional Chinese way of thinking, if one expresses oneself directly, one will have a clear view of the meaning of the words, and it is easy to be superficial, lacking rich connotation and distinctive portrayal, and cannot leave a deep impression on readers. Therefore, in idioms and poems, imagery and other rhetoric are often used in order to express euphemism. In Chinese expressions, "turning meaning into imagery" means that in order to elaborate abstract semantics, real things or examples are used to symbolize, so that readers can understand more easily. On the contrary, in the process of English translation,

the author proposes “transforming image into meaning”, which emphasizes the transformation of imagery into concrete connotation through various euphemistic Chinese expressions to extract the core meaning of the original text.

Example 5:

ST: 面对突如其来的严重疫情, 中国人民风雨同舟、众志成城, 构筑起疫情防控的坚固防线 (Xi Jinping, 2020)。

TT: Through a united will, the Chinese people put up a strong defense to contain the epidemic, Xi noted.

According to the *Han Dian* (汉典), the metaphor of “riding in the same boat in a storm, fighting together against the wind and rain” euphemistically expresses the common experience of hardship. The expression “众志成城” means that when people work together, they will be as solid as a fortress, and by extension, they will have great potential when they are united and work toward the same goal. The translator removes the imagery in Chinese and directly extracts the abstract meaning of these two idioms, simplifying them into “put up a strong defense”, turning euphemism into straightforwardness and fitting the language expression habits of foreign audiences.

Example 6:

ST: 这必将激励我们在新时代新征程上披荆斩棘、奋勇前进 (Xi Jinping, 2020)。

TT: It will inspire us to keep forging ahead through all obstacles on our journey in the new era.

In the quotation, the phrase “披荆斩棘” is used in a metaphorical sense, meaning to clear obstacles and overcome difficulties on the way forward. When translating foreign news, the translator omitted the rhetorical process of Chinese culture, deleted the imagery, and translated it as “keep forging ahead through all obstacles”, which fully expressed the inner meaning of the original text.

4.2.2 Follow the local customs

Chinese Internet phrases and their local usage cannot be corresponded to in the English corpus, so a literal translation will distort the original meaning of the words and mislead foreign readers, which is not conducive to the accurate dissemination of Chinese stories and the correct establishment of China’s image. Therefore, the translation needs to be processed and transformed in order to combine the Western language habits and to express Chinese in a colloquial way.

On the one hand, the English translation of Internet terms should contribute to the dissemination and exchange of culture and language, so that readers of the translated language can understand and appreciate Chinese culture; on the other hand, the expression habits and cultural customs of readers of the translated language should be respected (Hou Weixia, 2019)

Example 7:

ST: “天使白”、“橄榄绿”、“守护蓝”、“志愿红”迅速集结。

TT: *Doctors and nurses in white coats, military personnel in green uniforms, police officers in blue gear, and volunteers in red vests* all played their parts.

The words “天使白”、“橄榄绿”、“守护蓝”、“志愿红” in the original text are all Chinese Internet terms, which refer to the medical personnel, military police and volunteers who gave themselves selflessly during the epidemic. Such Internet phrases are also cultural differences, so the translator adopts the direct translation method in the English translation process to make up for the cultural background differences, so as to provide convenience for the audience’s reading.

Example 8:

ST: 各地区成立了党政主要负责同志挂帅的领导小组。

TT: Every region has established a leading group headed by the principal Party and government leaders (Qiu Shi, 2020).

In the original text, “挂帅” is a Chinese characteristic word with obvious Chinese language and culture—the general culture dominated by the commander-in-chief. The metaphorical meaning of “挂帅” is to be in the main leadership position. Therefore, the translator uses the phrase “led by” to express the Chinese meaning of “挂帅”. The use of this phrase helps to break the barrier of cultural differences and facilitate the understanding of foreign audiences.

5. CONCLUSION

To sum up, with explosive information growth, it has become a must to learn how to grasp the tide of science and technology, how to accurately convey China’s story and how to establish the correct image of China amidst the cold war thinking, non-traditional security threats and stigmatization challenges.

Therefore, English translations of Chinese leaders’ speeches on epidemic must closely follow “Three Accordance” Principles for External Publicity and pay attention to the use of translation means such as “comparing words to three families”, transforming images into meanings and adapting to local customs, in order to accurately convey the intent of the original text and fit the cultural background of the target language, so as to better play the role of China in maintaining world peace, complying with international order and alleviating global conflicts on the historical stage.

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