

Study of the Translation Strategies of Chinese Culture-loaded Words Under Skopos Theory

A Case Study of Xi Jinping's Report at the 19th CPC National Congress

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Abstract—With the significant improvement of China's comprehensive national strength, the world is paying more and more attention to China's policies. Therefore, the state leaders' official speeches have been a window for foreigners to know about "the Socialism with Chinese Characteristics". Xi Jinping's speech at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China has aroused widespread interest from all over the world. It contains a great number of words about current Chinese politics and cultures. Whether these Chinese culture-loaded words (CLWs) can be successfully translated directly influences the accuracy and effectiveness of the whole report delivery to the global communities. Based on the case analysis of XINHUANET' translation of Xi Jinping's Report, this thesis studies the translation strategies of CLWs from the perspective of the Skopostheorie. It is found that literal translation, liberal translation, transliteration and amplification can effectively achieve the three principles of the Skopostheorie: the Skopos rule, the coherence rule and the fidelity rule, thus effectively conveying the original message and spirit of the Report to the target readers. It is intended that the study of this thesis can lend some useful insights into the translation practice and translation theories study of CLWs.

Keywords—Xi Jinping's report at the 19th CPC National Congress; CLWs; Skopostheorie; translation strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

With the booming of economy, China plays an increasingly indispensable role in the international affairs and draws the attention from all over the world. The communication and cooperation between China and other countries become very important. Xi Jinping's Report at the 19th CPC National Congress as an authoritative document makes the foreigners know about China in more details. Some Chinese CLWs in the report are full of Chinese cultural connotations, which pose difficulties for foreigners to understand. Therefore, the translation of the Chinese CLWs in Xi Jinping's Report at the 19th CPC National Congress based on Skopostheorie is essential to China's communicating with other countries.

Xi Jinping's Report at the 19th CPC National Congress look backs at the achievements and profound changes

brought about by its reform over the past five years, as well as the plans and goals for the future development in areas of education, culture, economy, politics and people's livelihood. Therefore, the aim of studying the translation methods of CLWs in Xi Jinping's Report is to summarize the general characteristics of the translation methods and strategies about similar government texts, further improving the translation quality to achieve the translation purpose. Under the guideline of the Skopostheorie, this thesis is doing a tentative study of the translation strategies of the CLWs in Xi Jinping's Report at the 19th CPC National Congress.

II. THE SKOPOSTHEORIE

Owing to the limitations of linguistic translation theory, many problems have not been dealt with in the process of translation. Some scholars found the functionalist translation theory can effectively resolve them. The Skopostheorie originated in Germany in the early 1980s. Katharina Reiss, Hans J. Vermeer, Justa Holtz Manttari and Christine Nord are the famous scholars in Skopostheorie translation. In the beginning, the German functional translation theory was mentioned by Katharina Reiss's Text Typology Theory. Furthermore, Hans Vermeer proposed the Skopostheorie, Justa Holtz Manttari interpreted the Translation Action, and then Christine Nord added Loyalty to it. Finally, these functional translation views of the four scholars are collectively called "Skopostheorie".

From Vermeer's perspective, Skopostheorie has three rules, which are respectively Skopos rule, coherence rule and fidelity rule.

A. The Skopos Rule

Skopostheorie is a significant part in the functional theory. The first rule of the Skopostheorie, Skopos rule, is the criterion of all translation actions. In other words, the translation action decides the quality of the translation behaviors. And the translation action sometimes has several purposes, which can be further classified into three types: the original aim of the translator; the communicative purpose of the target text; the purpose achieved through the employment of certain translation method.

In brief, the translator should study the purpose of the target text before translating it, and then choose the appropriate translation methods.

B. The Coherence Rule

The second rule of the Skopos translation theory is coherence rule. It means that the target text should correspond with the standard of intratextual coherence. In other words so that the target readers can easily understand the meanings in the target-language culture and the communicative environment of the target text.

C. The Fidelity Rule

The third rule is fidelity rule, also known as intertextual coherence. According to Vermeer (1989), "Translation is a process of conveying information and is closely connected with the original text [1]." In terms of Skopos rule, she stated, "The fidelity should exist between source text and target text and depends both on the translator's interpretation of the source text and on the translation Skopos [2]." In other words, the target text and source text should keep a faithful relationship. At the same time, the faithful text depends on translators' understanding of the source text.

To sum up, the fidelity rule is subjected to the coherence rule, and both of them are subordinate to the skopos rule. Before translating, the author should chew the main purpose of the translation action over in mind, and study the translation strategies to achieve the intentions of the source text. In the translation strategies of the Chinese CLWs, the author should adhere to the Skopos theory, and endeavor to make the translation loyal to the original text.

III. ENGLISH TRANSLATION STRATEGIES OF THE CHINESE CLWs IN XI JINPING'S REPORT UNDER SKOPOS THEORY

A. Difficulties in the Translation of CLWs

Culture-loaded word is a name proposed by Sun Zhili. He thinks, "The CLWs find no corresponding meanings in the target culture [3]." Baker (2000) defined CLWs in her book *In Other Words: a Coursebook on Translation* as concepts expressed in the source text but completely unknown to the target culture. Baker (1998) defined CLWs as concrete objects, entities and systems of classification and measurement, which have closest relationship with source culture, or familiar expressions, opinions, habits and customs of native people in the source culture but strange to the target readers [4]. Sun Zhili (2003) explains that "culture-loaded words" are words with rich Chinese cultural connotations [5]. However, it is difficult for translators to find equivalents with the same meaning in the target language to translate these words.

Culture is a country's soul. A country will thrive only if her culture thrives, and a nation will be strong only if her culture is strong. Different languages reflect different cultures. In fact, cultural differences mainly depend on different factors, including political factors, economic aspects, social customs and people's values. As a translator, he must know that the essence of translation is not just to

convert one language into another but also to transmit culture. As Professor Wang Jianguo (2009) said, "The translator must master two languages and grasp rich cultural knowledge [6]." Without exhaustive understanding of culture, one will not be able to really master a translation of CLWs. In other words, it refers to the interaction and the comparative study in terms of two cultures. Actually, a qualified translator in the process of translation not only pays attention to the meaning of the language but also concentrates on the cultural significance of the language. Therefore, the translation of the Chinese culture-loaded word is a difficult thing. Each culture-loaded word contains profound cultural connotations and characteristics in the process of translation.

To a great extent, the difficulty of translation lies in the conveyance and understanding of background knowledge and cultural factors. The decoding of the source text is summarized as the writing style, grammar, language use, which is determined by the topic and social background, unique expression and culture factor, discourse genre, the point of view of the original as well as the author's views about race, morality, religion, social, gender and so on [7]. It is not difficult to find that a good knowledge of cultures is essential for a successful translation of CLWs. The translator must pay more attention to the deep cultural meanings of the source text.

B. Translation Strategies Under Skopos Theory

This thesis mainly focuses on the translation strategies of Chinese CLWs in Xi Jinping's Report at the 19th CPC National Congress. The English version of Xi Jinping's Report is translated by several authoritative foreign experts, which is published by XINHUANET. It wins a great number of readers in the world, and has high popularity and great reputation for this report at home and abroad, so the author chooses it for case analysis.

With the guidance of the skopos rule, the coherence rule and the fidelity rule of the Skopos theory, the translator can choose the following translation strategies like literal translation, liberal translation, transliteration and amplification.

1) *Literal translation*: It is found that literal translation is frequently used by the translator of XINHUANET. Literal translation refers to a method to render of text from one language to another by following closely the form of the source language. It can provide fluent and accurate translation that is easily comprehended by the readers of the target language. According to Venuti (2000), literal translation is the most common method in translating two languages that share the same culture [8]. On the one hand, when the Chinese and English have the same or similar meanings about some lexical items, the translators can apply this translation method. On the other hand, the use of literal translation should not violate grammar rules in the target text, otherwise the target readers cannot understand the meaning or intention of the original text. In other words, the literal translation of Chinese CLWs is meaningful in target

readers' cognitive language environment and is helpful for cultural diffusion. Here are some examples that use the method of literal translation to interpret Chinese CLWs in Xi Jinping's Report at the 19th CPC National Congress:

Example 1: 实施共建“一带一路”倡议，发起创办亚洲基础设施投资银行，设立丝路基金，举办首届“一带一路”国际合作高峰论坛。

We have jointly pursued the Belt and Road Initiative, initiated the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, set up the Silk Road Fund, and hosted the First Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

“一带一路” was first proposed in 2015, and has drawn great attention around the world. It is no doubt that the translation of “The Belt and Road Initiative” is faithful to the original text in meaning and form. In fact, its full name is the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. “Belt” refers to the Silk Road Economic Belt, and “Road” the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Under the guideline of the Skopos theory, the purpose of translation is very clear and concise for target readers, which meets the requirements of the skopos rule and fidelity rule. Firstly, the Belt and Road is the policy of our government. The translators' purpose is conveying this expression to the world. Secondly, China and other countries achieve mutual benefits and common development through the Belt and Road, so most foreigners are familiar with this lexical item. In addition, the source language and target language have the same meaning and form, so it is easy for target readers to accept this Chinese culture-loaded word. In a word, that the source language and target language have the intimate connection in the inter-textual coherence.

Example 2: 中国特色社会主义进入新时代，我国社会主要矛盾已经转化为人民日益增长的美好生活需要和不平衡、不充分的发展之间的矛盾。

As socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, the principal contradiction facing Chinese society has evolved. What we now face is the contradiction between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life.

The concept of “socialism with Chinese characteristics” appears frequently in the government reports. The socialism with Chinese characteristics is a unique system in the world, which has never appeared in English, so it is difficult for the translator to find a same or similar word to replace it. For the sake of complying with skopos rule, the authoritative translator translates “特色” into “characteristics”. “Characteristics” means a special and easily recognized quality of someone or something, which perfectly describes Chinese conditions and system. Furthermore, socialism is a special word for the western capitalism. Therefore, the literal translation of “socialism with Chinese characteristics” meets the communicative purpose, improves reader's understanding and promotes intercultural communication.

Example 3: 着眼于实现中国梦强军梦，制定新形势下军事战略方针，全力推进国防和军队现代化。

With a view to realizing the Chinese Dream and the dream of building a powerful military, we have developed a

strategy for the military under new circumstances, and have made every effort to modernize national defense and the armed force.

The Chinese culture-loaded word of the Chinese Dream is appearing during and after the establishment of the new Chinese leadership in 2012-2013 used by the government and journalists to describe the aspiration of self-improvement in Chinese society. The author thinks that the Chinese Dream stresses national rejuvenation and people's happiness. At the same time, the country's development depends on the efforts of the Chinese people, so the national dream is the Chinese dream.

For target readers, they can set a connection between the concept of the Chinese Dream and the idea of the American dream, because it also stresses that the nation tries to achieve individual values. Only in this way does the Chinese Dream have the readability and acceptability for target readers, which can achieve equivalent expression in the target culture. Therefore, the author thinks, the first purpose of translating the word is to build language environment, which not only meets skopos rule but also reaches coherence rule.

Example 4: 加快完善社会主义市场经济体制。

Accelerating efforts to improve the socialist market economy.

The socialist market economy is the economy model employed by our country. It is based on a predominant state-owned sector within an open market economy originating in the Chinese economy reforms introduced by Deng Xiaoping. As is known, the concept of market economy has existed in the western countries, and has the same meaning and form. Comparatively speaking, the market economy is not controlled and adjusted by government, while the Chinese government controls the socialist market economy. So “socialist” is Chinese economic characteristic. The foreigners will learn the deep meaning of this lexical item, if they knew China's economic policy.

2) *Liberal translation*: Liberal translation is also called free translation. Feng Qinghua (2010) believes that liberal translation is a method that expresses the meaning and spirit of the source text without following the form and figures of speech of the original [9]. Therefore, it can be used when source text and target text have no equivalent words or syntactical structure. Sometimes, liberal translation can help target readers get a better understanding, because it can easily convey cultural connotations of the source text.

Example 1: 不忘初心，方得始终。

Never forget why you started, and you can accomplish your mission.

Here, “初心” is “why you started”. “始终” is translated into the mission. As a Chinese government's official, his original aspiration and mission are to seek happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation. Liberal translation can be more easily understood by foreigners. This method is employed to ensure the coherence of the translation discourse. In addition, the main essence of

the Xi Jinping delivered at the 19th CPC National Congress is to emphasize the importance of the mission of the Chinese government. And the author thinks that “why you started” is better than “original aspiration”, because it can help target readers to understand the meaning better.

Example 2: 以疏解北京非首都功能为“牛鼻子”推动京津冀协同发展，高起点规划、高标准建设雄安新区。

We will relieve Beijing of functions nonessential to its role as the capital and use this effort to drive the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region; and we will develop forward-looking plans and adopt high standards for building the Xiongan New Area.

As the saying goes, we must lead an ox by the halter. If you want an ox to obey you obediently, you must control its key points and irritable temper. In other words, in order to solve problems well, you should grasp the essence of the problem. A country's capital is a mirror for a country's economy, politics and cultural development. So the capital is the key to solving methods. If the translator translates “牛鼻子” into the nose of ox, the target readers will not understand the true meaning, so this translation achieves coherence and fidelity effectively.

Example 3: 决胜全面建成小康社会，开启全面建设社会主义现代化国家新征程。

Securing a decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and embarking on a journey to fully build a modern socialist China.

The phrase of “小康社会” is used by the Chinese to describe a society in which people lead a moderately well-to-do life. This phrase does not have the same expression in the target language and contains a lot of Chinese cultural connotations. If the translator uses literal translation, the target text will confuse the target readers. So the translator should take into account the communicative purpose of the target text and the target readers' cognitive environment. According to skopos rule, the translator uses liberal translation to express its communicative skopos — “a moderately prosperous society”, achieving coherence and fidelity. Therefore, the skopos rule can help the target readers reduce understanding obstacles of the Chinese CLWs, and help the target readers successfully understand the Chinese current politics.

Example 4: 覆盖城乡居民的社会保障体系基本建立，人民健康和医疗卫生水平大幅提高，保障性住房建设稳步推进。

A social security system covering both urban and rural residents has taken shape; both public health and medical services have improved markedly. Solid progress has been made in building government-subsidized housing projects to ensure basic needs are met.

This Chinese culture-loaded word “保障性住房” is a frequent expression in various government reports. It is noted that the function of government is to deliver the important information. If it is translated into “security housing project”, the target readers cannot understand what “security project” is. So it is translated liberally into “government-subsidized housing projects”, and it is the

essence and key point of Chinese CLWs. In skopos theory, the translation purpose justifies the translation process, and the translation methods depend on the skopos of the target text. In turn, the translation does not exist which is a complete functional equivalence to the original text in the meaning and form. Therefore, if the purpose in the process of translation is considered, the faithfulness of the form can be ignored and skopos rule and coherence rule can be applied.

3) *Transliteration:* Feng Qinghua (2010) believes that the purpose of transliteration is to keep the original pronunciation of the source text in the target text so as to stress the original linguistic and cultural characteristics [10]. In terms of the fidelity rule, using transliteration can meet this standard. So the translators can adopt the same pronunciation word from the target language to express the original sources.

Owing to the diversities of the two cultural elements, it is difficult to find the fully equivalent expression between the two languages. Therefore the translators adopt the transliteration to solve this problem, at the same time, not changing the meaning and form of the source language. For example, the translation of places and names are inevitable in translation.

Example 1: 以疏解北京非首都功能为“牛鼻子”推动京津冀协同发展，高起点规划、高标准建设雄安新区。

We will relieve Beijing of functions nonessential to its role as the capital and use this effort to drive the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region; and we will develop forward-looking plans and adopt high standards for building the Xiongan New Area.

In this example, “雄安” is the term that cannot be easily explained in the text. Xiongan New Area is planned by Chinese government as a second major city, after the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone and Shanghai Pudong Area. Xiongan New Area also can be named as a testing point. It aims to relieve Beijing of all kinds of pressures and promote the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. As a matter of fact, Xiongan covers three regions, particularly, Xiong county, Rong city and Anxin county. At the beginning, the target readers have difficulties of understanding this word, but transliteration just emphasizes the essence — Xiongan.

Example 2: 天宫、蛟龙、天眼、悟空、墨子、大飞机等重大科技成果相继问世。

The successful launch of Tiangong-2 space lab, the commissioning of the deep-sea manned submersible Jiaolong and of the five-hundred-meter aperture spherical telescope (FAST) Tianyan, the launch of the dark matter probe satellite Wukong and the quantum science satellite Mozi, and the test flight of the airliner C919.

The expressions of “天宫、蛟龙、天眼、悟空、墨子” are technical terms about technological innovations. These Chinese culture loaded-words are vested with a special meaning and beautiful hope. “天宫”, “蛟龙” and “悟空” are the technological innovation CLWs that can not be easily explained in the text, for these three terms deliver

background knowledge of ancient Chinese mythological stories. “墨子” is the founder of Monism in the early Warring States. Therefore, it will be made clear with transliteration and amplification, so that the Chinese ancient culture and Chinese Pinyin can also be learned by target readers, and it will be more convenient for readers to understand the relations and meanings, to realize the purpose of cultural communication. Moreover, from the skopos rule perspective, the translator conforms to the skopos rule and fidelity rule to deliver the cultural connotations, so the transliteration should be considered in the case of such culturally unique expressions.

4) *Amplification*: According to Feng Qinghua (2010), amplification is to add necessary words, phrases, clauses, or sentences on the basis of the original text to make the target text consistent with the original in grammar and language [11]. Due to the differences between English and Chinese languages and the different ways of expression, the non-equivalence between the two languages still exists. Sometimes, literal translation of CLWs cannot make much sense in the target text nor can they be understood by the target readers.

Therefore, the translators should supply some underlying meanings and connotations about the words. Amplification can help target readers have more accurate and in-depth understanding of the original culture.

Example 1: 建设一支听党指挥、能打胜仗、作风优良的人民军队，是实现“两个一百年”奋斗目标、实现中华民族伟大复兴的战略支撑。

Building people's forces that obey the Party's command, can fight and win, and maintain excellent conduct is strategically important to achieving the two centenary goals (the two centenary goals are to finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects by the time the CPC celebrates its centenary in 2021; and to turn China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, and harmonious by the time the People's Republic of China celebrates its centenary in 2049) and national rejuvenation.

When dealing with numeral phrase in a culture-loaded word, it is suggested that the amplification should be adopted. Then a further analysis of “两个一百年” in details is conducted. If the fidelity rule is followed rigidly, there is no doubt that it should be translated into “the two centenary goals are to finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects by the time the CPC celebrates its centenary in 2021; and to turn China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, and harmonious by the time the People's Republic of China celebrates its centenary in 2049”. Its translation is faithful to the meaning of the original text, achieving skopos rule and coherence rule. For the sake of making foreign people understand the meaning of “两个一百年”, it is essential to use amplification to translate the exact content.

Example 2: 我们党深刻认识到，实现中华民族伟大复兴，必须推翻压在中国人民头上的三座大山，实现民族独立、人民解放、国家统一、社会稳定。

Our Party was deeply aware that, to achieve national rejuvenation, it was critical to topple the three mountains of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat-capitalism that were oppressing the Chinese people, and realize China's independence, the people's liberation, national reunification, and social stability.

“三座大山” is a Chinese political culture-loaded word. The three mountains are imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat-capitalism. If the translator translates “三座大山” into three mountains with literal translation, the target readers may be confused about what the true meaning is. Therefore, it is necessary for foreigners to give detailed explanations of this Chinese culture-loaded word. According to the skopos rule, the aim of this culture-loaded word is to transmit the cultural connotation. In addition, for the sake of reaching the purpose, the translator should conform to the coherence rule to convey the information in a smooth communication function, so that the amplification should be utilized if further explanation is needed.

IV. CONCLUSION

This thesis mainly studies the translation strategies of Chinese CLWs in the Xi Jinping's Report at the 19th CPC National Congress from the perspective of Skopos theory. Through a careful and serious analysis, the author has several findings. Firstly, the translator intends to make Chinese political, economic and technological information known to the target readers, so literal translation is mainly used. At the same time, taking the acceptability of the readers and the readability of the translated version into consideration, the translator also applies other translation methods when necessary, which are liberal translation, transliteration, amplification. Secondly, Skopos theory gives us an important guidance for translating CLWs though it is not the sole means to deal with the difficulties in the translation of CLWs.

Though this study has studied the translation of the CLWs comprehensively and systematically, it still has some limitations due to the restrictions of the study conditions, the time and the research ability of the author. One of the big limitations is that it only studies a small number of Xi Jinping's Report, which may affect the accuracy and validity of the study results.

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