

On Foreign Publicity Translation from the Perspective of Newmark Translation Theory -- A Case Study of China: Democracy That Works

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Abstract: Foreign publicity translation plays a bridging role in shaping China's image and promoting the country's cultural soft power. A proper foreign publicity translation is conducive to Chinese wisdom and Chinese solutions to "go global", otherwise, it will aggravate other countries' misunderstanding of China. Newmark's semantic translation and communicative translation broadens the new direction of translation studies and is highly practical. When they are applied to expressive and appealing foreign publicity translation texts, on the one hand, it can help readers have a better and deeper understanding of China, and on the other hand, it can become the most powerful window to display China's image.

1. Introduction

At the end of 2021, China issued the white paper *China: Democracy That Works*, which comprehensively introduced the connotation and essence of democracy with Chinese characteristics, and attracted worldwide attention. The release of its English translation has been widely praised and has become one of the classic documents for official outreach to showcase Chinese democracy. In view of this, the author took the English translation of *China: Democracy That Works* as the analytical text, studies and analyzed the translation strategies and methods of the text based on Newmark's translation theory, and probed into the success of the English translation of *China: Democracy That Works*, which provides a reference for the study of this type of text translation.

2. Newmark's translation theory

As one of the eminent representatives in the field of contemporary translation theory, Newmark put forward the concepts of semantic translation and communicative translation in *Approaches to Translation*. According to Newmark, "semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the origin"^[1]. Communicative translation is a translation strategy that "attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original"^[1]. At the same time, the

text typology theory was also proposed, First, it was the expressive text that reflects the author's emotional expression and writing style. Second, it was the vocative text that attracts readers, resonates with them and calls them to action. Third, it was the informative text that emphasizes the desired message to be conveyed. Newmark always advocates that translators should use translation strategies flexibly according to the actual situation and apply semantic translation and communicative translation appropriately in translation.

3. An Analysis of Foreign Publicity Translation from the Perspective of Newmark Translation Theory

3.1 Application of Semantic Translation in China: Democracy That Works

As the prime official document for China to display its image to the world, the English translation of *China: Democracy That Works* not only elaborates the practicalities of guaranteeing people's ownership, developing and improving grassroots democracy, and implementing concrete democratic practices with Chinese connotations, but also adopts lots of translation strategies and methods to achieve the effect of "consistency between words and meaning" in expressing and conveying information, reflecting the values and remarkable achievements of Chinese-style democracy. According to the semantic translation strategy in Newmark's translation theory, the English translation of *China: Democracy That Works*, as an information text, embodies the function of expressing and conveying information. The author found that the English translation reproduces the charm of the original text to the greatest extent, which made the translation truly and accurately convey China's democratic concept and contributed China's wisdom and solutions to the international community.

Example 1: "The people have gained a stronger sense of fulfillment, happiness and security. Their rights to subsistence, development and health are fully protected, and their economic, political, cultural, social, environmental, and other rights keep expanding"^[2].

"a stronger sense of..., ..., and..." and "rights to..., ...and..." both were adopted the inductive translation method, which was conform to the structure and form of the original text, making the translation considerably concise. In addition, the target readers can distinctly realize that the Chinese people's major and legitimate rights, such as the right to subsistence, have been fully guaranteed, experiencing the delight and pride of the Chinese people in benefiting from the fruits of China's development. As a result, the translation strategy here belongs to the typical semantic translation.

Example 2: "The CPC follows the mass line- it is committed to doing everything for the people and relying on them, and follows the principle of "from the people, to the people". It maintains close ties with the people and pools their wisdom and strength"^[2].

The mass line is the Party's fundamental work line, which contains profound revolutionary ideas as well as the thought of serving the people. The translator translated its principle as "from the people, to the people". In form, it is neat and symmetrical, which is consistent with the original text. "From" and "to" happen to be the words that express the coming and going in English. In terms of content, it conveys the meaning accurately and translate the core content of China's mass line faithfully, carrying forward the Chinese revolutionary culture.

3.2 The Application of Communicative Translation in China: Democracy That Works

The white paper *China: Democracy That Works* points out that remarkable achievements have been made in the development of Chinese-style democracy but still needs continuous development and improvement, and indicates China's willingness to work together with other countries in order to

enrich human political civilization. The sincere appeal and good wishes in the text fully reflect its great vocative function. Another significant form of strategy in Newmark's translation theory is communicative translation. The purpose of Newmark's communicative translation is "attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original"^[1]. Therefore, under the strategy of communicative translation, the English translation of the white paper embodies the spirit of appealing to countries to implement democracy and infects them to participate in democratic construction, which can better resonate with other countries in the world that support democracy and have the desire to develop it, giving target readers the same reading effect as Chinese readers, so that they can experience the sincerity of the original text in calling on countries to explore democracy in their own way.

Example 3: "Only democracy rooted in a country's unique social environment has proven to be reliable and effective, and can thrive and progress. External interference and "democratic transformation" bring nothing but endless trouble"^[2].

Before translating the English version of the above example, the translator adjusted the order of the Chinese sentences, which enhanced the logical structure of the translation, reflecting the order of democratic development and making the translation more fluent, catchy, and in line with the principles of communicative translation. The phrase "nothing but" was added by the translator, which served as an emphatic role in tone, emphasizing Chinese stance of adhering to its democratic path and never allowing other countries to interfere, and also calling on other countries to stick to the principle of developing their own democracy and take the path of self-exploration, so as to persuade other countries to guard against external interference and avoid deception.

Example 4: "An accurate understanding and a determination to forge ahead are preconditions and the key for realizing, developing, and enriching democracy"^[2].

In this case, instead of using literal translations to translate the original words as establish the correct concept of democracy and always adhere to democracy, but as "an accurate understanding and a determination to...", the author applied free translation in it, reflecting a deeper connotation, because it is well known that establishing the concept is only a superficial and formal practice, but people's accurate understanding of democracy is the ultimate goal, which is what China really calls for. Moreover, consistent adherence to and development of democracy requires both resolution and steadfastness, which is why the translation "determination" is appropriate here. In the original context, "passkey" and "main switch" have similar meanings, so the translator translated them together as "key". "Key" here not only meets the literal meaning of key, but also satisfies the deeper meaning of English idiomatic phrase "the key for something", which accords the style of communicative translation that takes care of the target language reader. Finally, the translator reorganized the sentence and added the meaning of development and improvement, emphasizing once again that the accurate understanding and determination of democracy, which plays a crucial part in the development, realization and improvement of democracy.

3.3 The Combined Application of Semantic Translation and Communicative Translation in China: Democracy That Works

"A semantic translation attempts to recreate the precise flavor and tone of the original: the words are "sacred", not because they are more important than the content, but because form and content are one"^[1], so sometimes there are semantically ambiguous or erroneous translations. In communicative translation, there may be suspicions of distorting the meaning and writing style of the original text. Therefore, in order to optimize the translation effect, only by combining semantic translation and communicative translation can the translated text be faithful to the original text and the author in terms of meaning and style as well as be in line with the expression habits of the target readers to a certain extent. The author found that the combination of the two is quite common in *China: Democracy That Works*, especially the political expressions and terms involved as well as terms,

allusions and four-character idioms with Chinese characteristics.

Example 5: “Just as a heavy dose of medicine will be taken to treat a serious disease, China will fight with all the means necessary to “hunt down tigers”, “swat flies”, “chase foxes” and mete out severe punishments to corrupt officials-big or small, in China or seeking refuge overseas”^[2].

This sentence contains profound Chinese cultural connotation. The four allusions in the original sentence are from *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *The Rites of Zhou* and *Records of the Three Kingdoms*. Among them, the allusion to scraping the bones to cure the poison tells people to adopt thorough treatment and the allusion to cut off the wrist to prevent the spread of venom when bitten by a snake, which persuades people to act decisively so that these allusions are quite unique and meaningful. If Chinese readers have little background knowledge of these allusions or even short of relevant cultural literacy, they will not be able to fully understand them, not to mention the target readers who already have cultural differences. Therefore, the translator adopted the sentence pattern of “just as...will be..., China will...”, that is, using a metaphor to vividly and lucidly translate that China should crack down on corrupt officials with various means as if they were treated with large doses of drugs for serious diseases, making target readers comprehend it better. Moreover, he added the parenthesis to explain that tigers, flies and foxes are corrupt officials, who will be severely punished regardless of the degree of corruption and the circumstances of the arrest, profoundly reflecting the Chinese government’s courage and determination to investigate the anti-corruption action and never tolerate it. In short, this is a typical example of the combination of semantic translation and communicative translation strategy, which is faithful to the original text and serves the target readers, so that they can distinctly comprehend the allusions and political culture with Chinese characteristics, feeling China’s serious Party conduct and resolute anti-corruption attitude.

Example 6: “Blindly copying other models of democracy is a problematic endeavor- it risks creating cultural conflict, political volatility or even social turmoil and causing great pain to its people”^[2].

Instead of translating the meaning of the original sentence into copy democracy from others indiscriminately, the translator chose the more authentic English expression “blindly copying other models of democracy” as the translation, according with target readers’ habits of mind and reducing reading barriers. The semantic meaning of the word in the original sentence refers to lots of drawbacks and problems, and the translator translated it as “problematic endeavor” is also more appropriate to the original text. The original sentence literally conveys to the reader the concept that the democratic model isn’t acclimatized in one’s country, but an in-depth analysis here combined with the original context displays that it actually refers to cultural conflict, so the translator translated it as “cultural conflict” to fully express the cultural differences and conflicts which will occur in the country after the introduction of other countries’ democratic models. To express the meaning of people’s displacement, if translated as thousands of people became homeless, it can merely explain the fact that people are homeless, but when translated as “causing great pain to its people”, it is even better, which can not only reveal the facts but also express people’s suffering and great pain after wandering around for having nowhere to settle down, so that the target readers will feel sympathy and regret for them and reflect on the wrong practice of blindly copying the democratic experience of other countries. The ingenious combination of semantic translation and communicative translation makes the translation of this sentence as persuasive as the original, emphasizing the independent exploration of a appropriate democracy, so as to avoid not “acclimatization”, culture conflict, and even the destruction of the country caused by the introduction of unsuitable democracy.

4. Conclusion

In general, *China: Democracy That Works*, as an official publicity material, is authoritative and

representative, and the requirements for its translation are relatively high. After exhaustive research and analysis of the translation, the author found that the use of Newmark's translation theory in the translation is quite prominent. However, in view of the deficiency and imperfection in semantic translation and communicative translation strategies, the translator uses the combination of the two flexibly in translation, so as to finally better convey the style and semantics of the original text, as well as the political vocabulary and culture-loaded words with Chinese characteristics were translated well. The author believes that although the application of Newmark's translation theory is evident in this translated text, a good translation is often the result of eclecticism. Only in this way can the translated text of *China: Democracy That Works* become a classic, and thus realize the original purpose of "going abroad" with Chinese wisdom and Chinese democratic solutions.

References

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