

Analysis on C-E Translation Methods of Chinese University Motto

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Abstract: University motto is the "representative business card" of a university with the reflection of school spirit, campus culture, value and tradition. This paper is aimed to analyze Chinese-English translation methods of the mottos of famous Chinese "985" and "211" universities from the perspective of Skopos by collecting their Chinese school mottos and English translation respectively issued on their official websites. It has been found that such translation methods as literal translation, free translation, omission and conversion are adopted based on different features of these university mottoes and different translation principles. English translations of Chinese university motto are internationally oriented and serve as a great boost of Chinese culture to outside world. At the same time, English translations of Chinese university motto can help foreigners gain a better understanding of Chinese university and promote culture exchange from a different perspective.

1. Introduction

University motto, the soul of a school, reflects its tradition and represents its campus culture and educational philosophy with the essence of humanistic spirit, and the accumulation of school history and culture. With the rapid development of globalization, China's cooperation and exchanges with other countries have become more and more frequent, and the number of international students from foreign countries to Chinese universities has been increasing. Most foreign students do not know much about Chinese culture, and their choices of university may be mainly based on the university motto, from which the university academic style, university spirit and university discipline can be available. At the same time, university motto is also a yardstick that motivates and encourages teachers and students, even those who have been away from school for many years, still remember their university motto. University motto is a culture, a spiritual symbol of society, which can play a certain role in promoting the university. Some mottos also reflect the history or culture in which university was founded and even contain more and more. In the past century, the number of scholars engaged in researches on the translation of university motto has also increased, which shows the importance of the translation of university motto. Moreover, an appropriate translation of university motto can make an important contribution to promoting the history and culture of country.

2. Review of the Literature

For the translation of university motto, many scholars from various countries have carried out different discussions and researches and put forward many concepts related to the topic and also enlarge the translation study perspective to a large extent. Domestic scholars discussed the translation of university motto from different disciplines and perspectives. As Guo Jianzhong^[1] pointed out that translation of university motto has a limit. Zheng Houyao and Liu Hongquan^[2] mentioned that translators must fully understand the connotations of Chinese university motto. Zhang Xinjun and Yang Hui^[3] put forward the school motto translation problems and corresponding solutions. Han Yanming^[4] and Li Zhongwei^[5] are focused on the significance and function of university motto translation from the perspective of campus culture construction. Wu Weixiong^[6] explained how the motto of Ocean University of China is translated in detail. Lu Chunxia^[7] believed that university motto can reflect the cultural characteristics of the country. Zhou Yongmo^[8] analyzes the translation of the Chinese university motto from the source language characteristics of the university motto and culture connotations must be reshaped in translation. Yue Zhongsheng^[9] summarizes the five most commonly-used patterns for translating Chinese university mottos. Fan Wuqiu and Fan Touyu^[10] describe the steps of translating the mottos of Chinese universities. Mai Xinzhan, Yufen^[11] believe that focusing on the characteristics and cultural connotations of the source language can achieve the functional equivalence of the target language. Fan Wuqiu^[12] listed and analyzed the existing difficulties and problems of university motto translation from four levels, and proposed solutions respectively. Lin Minmin^[13] conducts an applied research on the principles of English translation of school mottos. An Jingtao^[13] believes that English translation of university motto mainly serve foreigners, but does not consider the actual meaning, purpose and audience of the translation. Zhang Xingquan^[14] takes intertextual translation as the research perspective, and uses the methods of case analysis and comparative analysis to propose feasible translation strategies.

Since the last century, relevant scholars abroad have begun to study the translation of school mottos: Reiss^[15] proposed the theoretical category of text function theory, and three types of texts are differentiated as information-typed text, express-typed text, and imperative-typed text. Holz-Manttari^[16] proposed the theoretical category of translation behavior and emphasizes the process of translation behavior. Reiss & Vermeer^[17] proposed Skopos theory and make up for the ambiguity of the inherent logical connection of textual functionalism. Nord^[18] distinguishes between documentarian and instrumental translations. Vermeer^[19] discusses basic concepts such as purpose, goal, intent, function, principal/client, negotiation, coherence rules, and loyalty rules, and develops Skopos theory into a systematic theory that effectively guides translation practice.

3. Skopos theory

Skopos theory is a core one of the German functionalist school. Skopos theory is put forward and developed into a translation model by German translation theorist Vermeer. The key idea of this theory is as follows: the most important factor in the translation process is the purpose of the overall translation act. There is a hierarchical relationship between the three principles of Skopos. The principle of purpose is the first principle of translation, and the principle of fidelity is subject to the principle of coherence, but both the principle of coherence and the principle of fidelity are subordinate to the principle of purpose. In the event of a conflict between the three principles, the principle of purpose shall prevail. According to Skopos theory, it can be learned that one of the most important factors that determine the purpose of translation is the audience (i.e. the recipient). Therefore, the translator must choose the appropriate translation methods and translation strategies according to the needs of the recipient's language environment, cultural background,

living customs and religious beliefs. This paper will take Skopos theory as the theoretical framework to discuss English translations of Chinese university mottos.

4. Features of Chinese university motto

The social attribute of university motto refers to the basic code of conduct and ethics observed by teachers and students, which embodies the campus culture and spirit of a university. Chinese university spirits inherit the cultural essence of the Chinese as a nation for thousands of years, and is a vivid portrayal of the changes in China for more than a century in modern times. Moreover, each university has its own unique history and culture, which has produced different schooling philosophy and governing spirit, so it has a variety of school mottos. The characteristics of university motto which exerts influences on C-E translation are mainly manifested in two aspects: source and language:

4.1 Source

4.1.1 Confucian culture

The 5,000-year history of Chinese civilization has laid the foundation of traditional Chinese culture with the core of Confucian culture. Confucian classics mainly include the thirteen Confucian classics, and the most-cited words as Chinese university mottos some from the *Four Books* and *Five Classics*. For example, *Yungongyunneng, Rixinyueyi* of Nankai University motto is translated into *Dedication to Public Interests, Acquisition of All-round Capability, and Aspiration for Progress with Each Day*, which was also proposed by the two founders Zhang Boling and Yan Xiu in 1919, and originated from the *Shi Jing - Lu Song* and *Li Ji - University*, which condenses the values and spiritual quality of Nankai people. According to Zhang Bo-ling's intention, the school motto is to cultivate students "civic virtue of loving the country and the community, and the ability to serve the society". The spirit of Nankai is embodied in their schooling practice of loving the country and the people and serving the public. Another example, *Ziqiangbuxi, Houdezaiwu* of Tsinghua University motto is translated into *Self-discipline and Social Commitment* comes, which comes from *Zhou Yi*. In the winter of 1914, Liang Qichao came to give a speech at the school and quoted two ancient sayings, "Heaven is healthy, a gentleman is strong and virtuous" and "The earth is strong and virtuous", which were quoted to encourage young students to build a complete personality. His speech had a profound impact on the development of the excellent academic and school culture of Tsinghua. Later, Tsinghua University adopted the words of *Self-improvement and Virtue* as its motto.

4.1.2 Famous words of Chinese ancient sages

There are a great number of famous persons with great achievements in Chinese history, and their great words as part of Chinese culture have been passed down to this day, some of which are often quoted as university mottos. For example, *Zhixingheyi, Jingshizhiyong* of Central South University motto, put forward by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, is translated into *Integration of Knowledge and Practice and Utilization of Practice*, which emphasizes the unity of knowledge and practice, explores, governs and used the world as its mission As university motto, it is conducive to guiding students to combine ambitious aspirations and perseverance, and to be able to set high aspirations and dare to be the first in the world while being able to be practical and start from the dots.

4.1.3 Spirits of the times

Some university mottos can be traced back to the spirit of the time, and their meanings reflect the main ideas and ambitions of the era. For example, “求是 创新” of Zhejiang University motto is translated into *Seek Truth and Be Creative*, which gradually established during the process of westward relocation during the war period. President Zhu Kezhen led all the students and teachers to insist on running the university during the westward relocation and proposed "seeking truth" as the school motto, and invited Ma Yifu, a master of Chinese studies, to write the school song, which elaborated the essence of the motto: The motto means that it is not only the attitude and method of doing academic studies, but also the ideals, responsibilities, and the essence of being in the world. Another example, *Hongzhuangbingjin, Lishijiaorong* of University of Science and Technology of China motto is translated into *Socialist-minded and Professionally Proficient, Associating Truth with Fact*, which was proposed by President Guo Moruo when the university was founded in 1958 with much of the spirit of the times. *Hong* with certain China's ideological and political consciousness must be specialized with professional skills. At that time, it is not possible to separate *Hong* from profession, theory from reality, and the two pairs are closely integrated. Only in this way can talents be developed with both ability and integrity to serve China's socialism construction.

4.2 Concise expression

The mottos of fifty famous "985" and "211" universities in China have been collected and analyzed thoroughly. It has been found that the motto language have four common points: first, the language is very concise, and the number of words in the original text is strictly limited to 15 words, and the translated text is also very brief and clear. For example, *Zhiyuzhishan* of Southeast University Motto is translated into *Strive for Perfection*; *Fengxian Qiush* of National University of Defense Technology motto into *Dedication and Practicality*; *Shishiqiushi* of Renmin University of China motto into *Seek Truth From Facts*. Secondly, the structure is neat with uniformed and symmetrical patterns. Another examples, *Qiushichuanxin, Lideshuren* of Huazhong Normal University motto is translated into *Seek Truth, Make Innovations, Enhance Morality, Foster Talents*; *Nailaoku, Shangjianpu, Qinxueye, Aiguojia* of Chongqing University motto is *Endurance, Thrifty, Diligence, Patriotism*. Thirdly, quote the classics. The motto expressions quoted from the ancient classics helps to pass on the ancient spirit of learning. For example, “海纳百川，有容乃大” of Sichuan University motto is translated into *The Sea Encompasses Hundred of River, Willingness to Accept All is Virtuous*; *Xueerbuyan, Hui renbujuan* of Qufu Normal University motto into *Learn Insatiably, and Instruct Others Indefatigably*; *Yangtiandizhengqi, Fagujinwanren* of Soochow University of Taiwan motto is *Nourish the Spirit of Universal Truth, Emulate the Perfect Men of the Ages*. Fourthly, use the counterpoint and rhyme. Some of university mottoes are coined in counterpoint and some in rhyme. The former keeps the wording consistent, and the later makes the wording concise and infectious. For example, *Zhongxindujing* of Jinan University Motto is translated into *Loyalty, Credibility, Sincerity and Piety*; *Yanjinqiushi, Tuanjiechuanxin* of Tongji University motto into *Discipline, Practicality, Unity and Creativity*. These school mottoes are easy to read and understand with a rhyme. Each university motto language has its own characteristics and has its own implications, but the ultimate purpose is to convey the university spirit based on Chinese culture when in the English translations.

5. Methods of translating Chinese university motto from the perspective of Skopos

Literal translation and free translation are most widely-used in translating university mottoes

because of Chinese unique culture while translation methods of omission and conversion are often-applied due to Chinese particular language features.

5.1 Literal translation

Literal translation emphasizes the need to be faithful to the original text so as to achieve "expressiveness" and "elegance" in translation. Literal translation is not a mechanical word-for-word translation. Since English and Chinese have different structures, it is impossible for both to translate word for word. American translation theorist Nida argues that translation should not be only fully and accurately clarify the meaning of the original work, but also include the author's ideological attitude and language form. A translator should not add or delete any ideas that are not in the original text while maintaining the original style. The linguistic features of university mottoes can be obviously translated in a literal translation. For example, *Aiguo, Jinbu, Minzhu, Kexue* of Peking University motto is translated into *Patriotism, Advancement, Democracy and Science*; *Ziqiang, Hongyi, Qiushi, Tuoxin* of Wuhan University motto into *Improve Yourself, Carry Forward Stamina, Seek Truth and Develop Innovations*; *Ziqiangbuxi* of Shanghai University motto into *Strengthen Persistently*. These translations show that literal translation is more applicable to some texts which should be met two following requirements: first, the motto wording is concise which is generally composed of fixed collocation of words or idioms and the translation is relatively easy to understand and accept. Second, the original text is generally more nominal wording and the translation is often used in a unified and neat form. In the end, these translations stay true to the original text, the author and the original style.

5.2 free translation

Free translation refers to one that is applied to convey the general meaning of the original text without word-for-word translation mainly when the original language and the target language contain big cultural differences. A large number of Chinese university motto translations show that the use of free translation can express the differences among different languages and peoples in many aspects such as ecological culture, language culture, religious culture, material culture and social culture, which are embodied in translating university mottoes from Confucian culture, famous words of Chinese ancient sages and spirits of the times. For example, *Boxueerduxing, Qiewenerjinsi* of Fudan University motto is translated into *Rich in Knowledge and Tenacious of Purpose, Inquiring with Earnestness and Reflecting with Self-practice*. Fudan University motto comes from *The Analects of Confucius: Zi Zhang*. The original text says, "Be knowledgeable and tenacious of purpose; ask questions earnestly and think deeply; be benevolent in it." It means that only with abundant knowledge reserves can one establish a firm will. Only by asking earnestly can one learn how to think far and near. If one makes these things, he will find out the truth. The original expression comes from classical Chinese and not easy to understand. Literal translation can not express the meaning of the original text, the thoughts and feelings of the author, so the classical expression should be first converted into modern Chinese, and then into English, which are easy to understand and accept. Another example, *Chengpuxiongwei, Lixuedunxing* of Nanjing University motto into *Be Honest and Intelligent, Study Hard and Act Sincerely*. This motto is intended to convey that one must be honest and have the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, then study hard and have certain active power. *Study Hard and Act Sincerely* is quoted from the saying of ancient sages. These two phrases together reflect the fine tradition of Chinese culture and characteristics of Nanjing University.

Through the translation of Chinese university mottoes above, it is not difficult to find that Chinese culture has a rich history, and quotations from the classics as university motto are not easy to

understand, so C-E translation will be also difficult. Since the translator's target audience is a foreigner who has no understanding of traditional Chinese culture, it may be necessary to popularize the history before translation, so that the translation will be easier to accept.

5.3 Omission

Omission is a translation method opposite to the addition one, which deletes words that do not conform to the thinking habits, language habits and expressions of the target language so as to avoid the cumbersome translation but not change, add or delete any ideas in the original text. *Nailaoku, Shangjianpu, Qinxueye, Aiguojia* of Chongqing University motto is translated into *Endurance, Thrifty, Diligence, Patriotism*. The original text means withstanding the hardship, upholding thrift and simplicity, love study, and love the country. Its translation omits the preceding verb and keeps the noun only without any change, addition or deletion of ideas of the original text. Another example, *Bowenmingli, Houdejishi* of Zhongnan University of Economics and Law motto into *Learned, Rational, Virtuous and Devoted*. *Bowen* refers to the ability to learn more and to understand a wider range of knowledge; *Mingli* refers to the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood and to seek truth from falsehood; *Houde* refers to a person of high moral character. *Jishi* means to serve the country, the people, and serve the society. According to literal translation, the translated text should be four short phrases, but the actual translation is really a combination of four simple words with appropriate meaning. *Mingdegewu* of University of Hong Kong motto into *Wisdom and Virtue*, the meaning of which is similar to one of the phrase of *A great deal of virtue carries a great deal of material* from Tsinghua University motto. Both are quoted from *The Book of Rites • University*, which is intended to encourage students to advance their virtue and cultivate their work. This translator omits the words of *Ge* and *Wu* in the original text and directly translated it into *Wisdom* and *Virtue*, but the translation does not affect the audience's understanding of the original text. The translation of omission translation of university mottos can avoid the problem of long and misunderstanding translation and make it more readable.

5.4 Conversion

Due to various differences in grammar and expressions between English and Chinese, a certain word class in the original language is converted into another word when translated into the target language during C-E translation. Generally speaking, English is more static and Chinese is more dynamic. Therefore, when translating from Chinese to English, it is common to convert verbs into nouns. For example, *Boxue, Chengxin, Qiusuo, Duxing* of University of International Business and Economics motto is translated into *Be learned, Truthful, Probing and Persevering*. *Qiushichuanxin, Lideshuren* of Huazhong Normal University motto into *Loyalty, Innovation, Morality, Cultivation*. *Houde, Jixue, Lizhi, Dunxing* of Shaanxi Normal University Motto is *Morality, Learning, Aspiration and Action*. In general, Chinese has more verbs and English has more nouns. Therefore, when translating school mottoes from Chinese to English, verbs and adjectives are often transformed into nouns which conforms to English language expression principles and also meet the thinking mode of English speakers.

6. Conclusion

This paper discusses Chinese-English translation methods of Chinese university motto from the perspective of Skopos. Based on 28 Chinese university mottos as the main corpus and research objects, this paper analyzes and studies the origin and linguistic characteristics of Chinese university mottos, and find that: mottos from famous words of Chinese ancient sages and with

spirits of the times can be translated in free translation to clarify the meaning of the original text with easy, and that Chinese university mottos, the language expression of which conforms to the characteristics of the target language can be translated in literal translation, omission and conversion. It has also found that each university motto has its own unique historical, cultural and linguistic characteristics so that it is necessary to understand the original meaning of university mottos and the deep denotation that they convey when choosing proper translation methods. In the sake of different audiences, it is also necessary to understand their reading needs so that the translation can be well understood and accepted.

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