Business English Translation Guided by Skopos Theory

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Abstract. As a means and medium of communication, business translation plays a vital role in international business activities. The introduction of skopos theory solves the problem that traditional translation theories restrict the practice of business translation. The establishment of "objective principle", "coherence principle" and "faithfulness principle" has played a guiding role in the practice of business translation, thus ensuring the effective realization of the objective of business translation.

Introduction

With the increasingly obvious trend of economic globalization and the increasingly frequent international trade, the leading position of business English in the field of international business and trade has been strengthened. According to statistics, more than 1.6 billion people around the world speak English as their first or second language, and nearly 80% of them regularly use business English. As a social functional variant of English, business English is a branch of English for Special Purposes (ESP), involving marketing, trade, finance, management, investment, logistics and many other aspects. Business translation plays an important role in the process of international business communication as a necessary and indispensable tool.

The Connotation and Basic Principle of Skopos Theory

Business English translation is much more complicated than literary English translation, because translators must master a lot of business knowledge in addition to mastering two languages and translation skills. As a result, the standards and principles in traditional translation theories cannot be fully applied to business English translation. It is under this background that the functional translation theory represented by skopos theory comes into being.

Skopos theory of translation was put forward by German functionalist scholars H. J. Vermeer, K. Reiss and C. Nord from 1970s to 1980s. The core principle of skopos theory consists of three parts: the principle of purpose, the principle of coherence and the principle of fidelity. The theory holds that the highest criterion for any translation is the "principle of purpose", which means the end justifies the means. The aim of translation determines the whole process of translation, that is, the aim of translation determines the method of translation. The coherence principle is mainly aimed at the relationship between the translated text and the culture of the target language. Fidelity principle is similar to the general idea that a translation should be faithful to the original. But the difference is that the "fidelity principle" in skopos theory emphasizes the fidelity of the translation to the original text in terms of communicative effect and information connotation, rather than the complete equivalence of diction, grammar and sentence pattern. In a word, skopos theory advocates that translation methods and strategies should be determined according to the expected purpose or function of the target text based on the needs of the target text readers.
The Guiding Role of Three Principles in Business Translation

Functional translation theory holds that both the original text and the translated text are mutually independent and have their own value. In the process of translation, the translator, based on the information provided by the original text, combined with his own cultural background and professional knowledge structure, and after full understanding and correct judgment, transmits the language, culture, specialty and other information of the original text to the target readers conditionally, selectively and strategically. The three principles of skopos theory play an important leading role in this process.

The Principle of Purpose Determines the Direction of Business Translation

According to skopos theory, the quality of a translation depends on its practicability, skopos and functionality. In other words, satisfaction with a specific purpose is the decisive factor in evaluating the translation effect. The so-called "specific purpose" includes not only the purpose of the translator in the translation process, but also the purpose of the target text in the target context, as well as the purpose to be achieved by using specific translation strategies. The principle of purpose breaks through the serious restriction of equivalence or equivalence theory on business translation. Translation is no longer an equivalent relationship between texts, and the translation's word conversion, sentence pattern adjustment and even stylistic selection are determined by the purpose of translation activities.

This strategy, which takes the goal of translation as the fundamental direction, exists in the practice of business translation. Whether the advertising translation is characterized by novelty, dissemination and creativity, or the contract translation is characterized by rigor, standardization and accuracy, the inner core of the original text and the translation is to achieve its commercial purpose. Advertising translation aims to pursue publicity effect and attract consumers. The translation highlights its creativity and selling points, so it has relatively low requirements on the accuracy of words and the standardization of sentence patterns. Contract translation emphasizes the completion and smooth implementation of the transaction, while the translation highlights its rigor and operability. Therefore, it has high requirements on the accuracy of words and the standardization of sentence patterns. It can be seen that the quality of business translation depends on the realization of business purposes, rather than strictly on words, sentences and texts.

The Principle of Coherence Determines the Acceptability of Business Translation

H. J. Vermeer first proposed the concept of interlingual coherence. He believes that in order to realize the effective communication of the translated text in the target language culture, the translator should achieve the internal coherence of the translated text, that is, the translation can be accepted and understood by the target readers, or the translation is "coherent" in the communicative context of the recipient. To carry out the coherence principle of skopos theory in business translation is, to a large extent, conducive to the translator to achieve fluency and coherence of the translation and facilitate the reading and understanding of the translation readers.

The translator first determines the function and effect of the translated text according to the principle of purpose, and then it judges whether the form and function of the source text conform to the fundamental requirements of the target culture, that is, the relationship between the target text and the source text. Due to the different cultural backgrounds between China and the west, in addition to accurately conveying the content, the translator should pay attention to the appropriateness of the form and expression, the psychological and cultural feelings of the target audience, as well as the linguistic characteristics of the relevant styles. Taking the translation of business contract as an example, the contract text belongs to the contract style with the highest degree of formality, so the format and language used in the translation of business contract should conform to the characteristics of the contract style. English contracts usually use a large number of long and complex sentences to ensure their rigor, tightness and standardization. English business contracts also use a large number of rare words, ancient words, and synonyms to highlight its formal and thorough. Chinese contracts, however, are quite different. Chinese contracts are mostly...
single sentences, short sentences and common verbs. Therefore, the translation of business contracts especially pays attention to the sentence translation and sentence meaning transformation consistency, to ensure accurate, complete, smooth business contract, facilitate reading and understanding of the parties to the contract, avoid deviation in the cultural and language differences, avoid contracting parties caused by omissions and errors in the expression of the trouble.

**The Principle of Fidelity Is the Guarantee of Business Translation**

The "fidelity principle" in skopos refers to the faithfulness between the translated text and the source text. This principle requires the translator to accurately express the information of the original language in the target language, to achieve the equivalence of information connotation, and to require the translation and the original language to have the same communicative function. This equality only requires the true, complete and effective communication of information, and does not mechanically require the complete equivalence or consistency of words, grammar and sentence structure. The principle of faithfulness requires the translator to maintain an objective and fair attitude in the process of business translation and not to tamper, add or delete the original text intentionally. It also requires the high accuracy of key information, and the processing of professional terms is a typical aspect, which requires the translator to have profound professional background and rich professional knowledge.

**The Interrelation of Three Principles**

The principle of purpose, the principle of coherence and the principle of fidelity constitute the basic principles and main contents of teleology, which complement and support each other. Skopos theory breaks away from the shackles of "equivalence theory" in traditional translation theories, emphasizes the ultimate goal and expected effect of translation as a cross-cultural information transmission behavior, and highlights the leading role of translators in this process.

The principle of purpose sets up a clear target for practical translation activities and points out the direction for translators’ work. The principle of coherence ensures the effective realization of the communicative function and the full transmission of the original text. The core of applying skopos theory to business translation practice is to realize the communicative effect and market benefit of translation in business environment. The principle of fidelity, therefore, is subordinate to the principle of coherence, but they must be subordinated to the principle of purpose.

**Conclusion**

In the practice of business translation, skopos theory provides effective guidance for the selection of translation strategies. The process of translation, from a certain point of view, is a creative process. Like other behaviors, it is a purpose-oriented activity that requires translators to give full play to their subjective initiative. In today's increasingly frequent international and commercial exchanges, business translation, which combines language skills, professional knowledge and cross-cultural communication skills, plays an important role. The effective introduction of skopos theory provides effective theoretical support and practical guidance for business translation activities.

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