



Science and Technology News English-Chinese Translation from the Perspective of Skopos Theory

—A Case Study of China Daily Bilingual Website

Sen Yuan, Xiaoyu Ma

Xi'an Shiyou University, Xi'an, China

Email: 2586901835@qq.com

How to cite this paper: Yuan, S. and Ma, X.Y. (2020) Science and Technology News English-Chinese Translation from the Perspective of Skopos Theory. *Open Access Library Journal*, 7: e6766. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1106766>

Received: September 1, 2020

Accepted: September 20, 2020

Published: September 23, 2020

Copyright © 2020 by author(s) and Open Access Library Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

With the rapid development of science and technology in China, there are more and more science and technology news, and the translation of the news becomes more and more important. Under the guidance of the basic theory of Skopos theory and combined with the empirical analysis of science and technology news translation, this paper demonstrates the three principles which are the core of Skopos theory. They play an important role in guiding the translation of science and technology news.

Subject Areas

Linguistics

Keywords

Science and Technology News Translation, Skopos Theory, Three Laws

1. Introduction

With the development of reform and opening up, the development of science and technology are also changing with each passing day, and domestic scientific research achievements are constantly emerging. As a result, the amount of science and technology news publicizing and introducing science and technology achievements is increasing day by day. The translation of science and technology news is becoming more and more important. Therefore, the research on the translation of science and technology news is urgent and meaningful.

Skopos theory emphasizes that the most important factor in translation

process is the purpose of the whole translation behavior and pays attention to the feelings of the target text recipient. And the translation of science and technology news also pays attention to the audience's feelings and ways of acceptance, so this theory can guide this kind of translation. In this paper, the first part is the introduction and the second part introduces what science and technology news is and its language characteristics. The third part discusses the translation of science and technology news which combines with the three principles of Skopos theory and the language characteristics of science and technology news under the guidance of Skopos theory. The fourth part is the author's summary of the whole paper.

2. English-Chinese Translation of Science and Technology News

2.1. Connotation of Science and Technology News Translation

News is a kind of text that records and disseminates information in newspapers, television, Internet and other media. News contains social hot issues, people's activities, news events and so on. It has the characteristics of authenticity, conciseness and timeliness. Science and technology news is a combination of science and technology and news. Science and technology news reports achievements in science and technology. In addition to the basic characteristics of science and technology news, it also has the characteristics of scientificity and preciseness. Science and technology news translation is to translate the science and technology news into foreign languages so that foreigners can know some of China's latest situation in the field of science and technology. In order to improve the translation quality of science and technology news, translators should make use of certain theories and follow certain translation principles and strategies. Those will be discussed in this paper.

2.2. Linguistic Features of Science and Technology News Translation

2.2.1. Use a Lot of Passivity

Science and technology articles generally state concepts or facts and should avoid subjectivity. Therefore, there are lots of passive sentences in science and technology English news. Moreover, passive sentences can attract readers' attention to the object of narration, so science and technology English news tends to use passive sentences.

Example 1

Visitors to the country have to download the app and load it with money or risk not being able to pay for even small purchases.

Example 2

Some 177,000 apartments have been provided in the public rental housing neighborhoods throughout Shanghai, with nearly 627,000 individuals and families benefiting from the service by the end of May.

2.2.2. Concise Text

There are lots of science and technology news readers. Concise text can save readers' time and fast access to news content. What's more, the news text does not need gorgeous rhetoric, so it can also save the layout. The translation of science and technology news requires accurate translation format, accurate translation and accurate terminology expression. In terms of format, many news reports now use the "inverted pyramid" style of news writing format, so translators should pay attention to the accuracy of format. What is "inverted pyramid"? It is that according to the importance of the facts or the degree of the audience's concern, people puts the most important first, and then puts the facts in order according to their importance, just like an inverted pyramid or an inverted triangle. The translation should be faithful to the content of the original text and presents the true news events to the readers without subjectivity. At the same time, science and technology news must involve some professional terms. The terms should be accurate. Translators cannot rely on their own imagination to translate.

Furthermore, translators should use the translation method of omission. After the translators delete some unnecessary information, the article will be more concise and comprehensive. Omission is an excellent method for the translation of science and technology news.

2.2.3. Prominent Core

The core content of science and technology news should be prominent to facilitate readers to quickly obtain the subject content and understand the original text. When people read news, they hope to get a quick picture of what is happening around the world and they pay more attention to the general situation of events. Reading the core news in a short time can help people get more information. Therefore, it is important to highlight the core content.

In the process of translation, the method of addition can effectively help readers to obtain important information. To describe the core information of the original text and add modifiers can make the point of expression more prominent.

3. Skopos Theory

Skopos theory was put forward by Vermeer, a German scholar of the functional school, which has formed the mainstream of functional translation theory. People who believe Skopos theory hold the view that translation is a communicative act, and the purpose it aims to achieve determines the whole process of translation (Nord, 2001: p. 124) [1]. All translations point to their intended objects, and translation refers to the creation of texts in the background of the target language for the target language purpose and the target language object in the target language environment (Jia Wenbo, 2012: p. 37) [2]. The main content of Skopos theory is the three laws of Skopos theory put forward by Fermier—the law of purpose, the law of coherence and the law of fidelity. Now the author in-

troduces the three laws for you.

Law of purpose. Every text is produced for a specific purpose and serves that purpose. That is to say, the translation can make an effect on your text in the environment in which it is used. The translation can function exactly in the way they need together with the users of the text or translations (Jia Wenbo, 2012: p. 39) [2]. Every translation of science and technology news has a strong purpose, to convey the effective information of the event to readers in a concise and comprehensive way. Translation is a communicative act with a strong sense of purpose, and translation strategies must be determined according to the purpose of translation (Tan Zaixi, 2004: p. 255) [3]. This law, the most important of the three laws, is at the heart of the Skopos theory.

The law of coherence. The rule of coherence requires that the translation should be understood and accepted by the target language readers, conform to the cultural environment of the target language readers and be meaningful.

The law of fidelity. The law of fidelity is also called the law of interlingual coherence. There is a relationship between the original text and the target text, which is that the former provides information to the latter. The original text and the target text should be coherent and the target text should be faithful to the original text.

These three laws are inextricably linked. Among them, the law of purpose is the most important and the law of fidelity and the law of coherence are subordinate to the law of purpose.

3.1. Analysis of the News on the Science and Technology of China Daily Bilingual Web under the Guidance of Skopos Theory

What Skopos theory focuses on is similar to those of science and technology news, so Skopos theory plays an important guiding role in the translation of science and technology news. In the following paper, I will take the news on the science and technology of China Daily bilingual web as an example to analyze the application of Skopos theory in the translation of science and technology news.

3.1.1. Law of Purpose

As the first of the three laws, the law of purpose applies to news translation and plays an important role in it. The purpose of translation determines the act of translation. In order to achieve the purpose of translation, translators can adopt various translation methods, strategies and techniques, such as annotation, deletion and modification. However, before translation, the translator should carefully choose and carefully consider which method can best achieve the translation goal and is most suitable for the translation.

Example 3

“Astronomers have discovered thousands of new extrasolar planets recently and are developing the capacity to see surface biosignatures” in the light reflected from these planets, he told Live Science. There are already ways to detect

green life from space, he said, but scientists might need to start looking for purple, too.

Chinese version: 他告诉趣味科学网站说,“天文学家最近发现了数千颗新的太阳系外行星,并且正在开发从这些行星反射出的光线中观察表面生物特征的能力”。他说,科学家已经有办法探测太空中的绿色生命,但或许他们还需要开始寻找紫色的生命。(Ta gao su qu wei ke xue wang zhan shuo,“Tian wen xue jia zui jin fa xian le shu qian ke xin de tai yang xi wai xing xing,bing qie zheng zai kai fa cong zhe xie xing xing fan she chu de guang xian zhong guan cha biao mian sheng wu te zheng de neng li.” Ta shuo, ke xue jia yi jing you ban fa tan ce tai kong zhong de lv se sheng ming, dan huo xu ta men hai xu yao kai shi xun zhao zi se de sheng ming.)

In the translation of this piece of science and technology news, the translator adjusted the order of the original text. In the original, the first sentence (he told, he said) was placed at the end of the sentence. The second sentence is placed in the middle of the sentence. In the translation, the translator places the speaker at the beginning of the sentence. Because the expression of foreign languages is different from the expression in China. In foreign countries, it is customary to put the speaker at the end or the middle of a sentence, while in China it is customary to put the speaker at the beginning. This kind of translation with reversed order and adjusted structure can better clearly express the meaning of the original text, which is easy for Chinese readers to understand and achieve the purpose of translation. Therefore, it conforms to the law of purpose in Skopos theory and conforms to the expression habit of the target language readers.

Example 4

A Forbes report estimates that esports industry revenues could be \$1.65 billion by 2021 worldwide, and China alone is estimated to drive 18% of total esports revenues in 2018. With its investments, Hangzhou is getting ahead in the game.

Chinese version: 据《福布斯》的报道估计,到2021年,全球电子竞技产业的收入可能达到16.5亿美元(约合114亿元人民币),而据估计,2018年电子竞技产业总收入的18%就由中国贡献。凭借自身的投资,杭州正在这场比赛中处于领先地位。(Ju《fu bu si》de bao dao gu ji, dao 2021 nian, quan qiu dian zi jing ji chan ye de shou ru ke neng da dao 16.5yi mei yuan (yue he 114yi yuan ren min bi), er ju gu ji, 2018 nian dian zi jing ji chan ye zong shou ru de 18% jiu you zhong guo gong xian. Ping jie zi shen de tou zi, hang zhou zheng zai zhe chang bi sai zhong chu yu ling xian di wei.)

In the translation of science and technology news, readers may not understand some professional vocabulary or exchange rate issues, so the translator needs to annotate them to explain. This translation is annotated so that readers know exactly how much \$1.65 billion is in China. News is read by a wide range of people of all ages, so it is necessary to explain some translation or professional words which are different from those in China. In addition, the original text changes the passive sentences into active sentences, so that the readers can be

clear at a glance. In this way, the law of purpose is well completed.

3.1.2. Law of Coherence

The law of coherence requires that the target text should be coherent. It should be easy to understand by the target language readers, and conform to the communicative and cultural environment of the target language readers. This is very important in news translation. The purpose of news articles is to enable readers to obtain news information quickly and effectively. The law of coherence is very applicable.

Example 5

The Shenzhen Health and Family Planning Commission said on Monday that it had not received any ethical assessment application for the study, which is a prerequisite for such experiments.

Chinese version: 深圳卫计委本周一表示, 并未收到有关该项目的伦理审查报备, 而这是开展此类实验的先决条件。(Shen zhen wei ji wei ben zhou yi biao shi, bing wei shou dao you guan gai xiang mu de li lun shen cha bao bei, er zhe shi zhan kai ci lei shi yan de xian jue tiao jian.)

Chinese is parataxis language and English is hypotaxis language. Chinese can show its own logical relationship without connective, while English needs connective to show its logical relationship, such as “which” in the original text. The original text of the example is very long, and the translation adopts the method of segmentation to break it down, which conforms to the expression habit of the target language and makes it more coherent, concise and easy for readers to understand. Sentence coherence conforms to the requirements of the law of coherence.

3.1.3. Law of Fidelity

The law of fidelity is the third of the three laws, and it is subordinate to the law of purpose and the law of coherence. The law of fidelity requires the translation to be faithful to the original text to the maximum extent and also achieve coherence between languages. Translator can use literal translation and other methods.

Example 6

Japanese officials claim that populations of certain types of whale – such as the minke—have recovered sufficiently to allow the resumption of “sustainable” hunting.

Chinese version: 日本官员声称, 某些种类的鲸鱼(如小须鲸)的数量已经恢复到足够多, 可以允许“可持续性的”捕鲸活动。(Ri ben guan yuan sheng cheng, mou xie zhong lei de jing yu (ru xiao xu jing) de shu liang yi jing hui fu dao zu gou duo, keyi yun xu “ke chi xu de” bu jing huo dong.)

Science and technology news translation should abide by the law of fidelity, which is also in line with the characteristics of accuracy of news translation. The literal translation method is adopted in the translation of the sample sentences. The translation is closely related to the original text, and the text is concise,

which makes the translation be faithful to the original text and coherent.

4. Summary

Science and technology news has its own characteristics. Under the guidance of Skopos theory, translators will make the translation better and better. The core of skopos theory is the three laws. The “law of purpose” exists throughout the translation and it restricts the “law of coherence” and the “law of fidelity”, while the “law of coherence” is subordinate to the “Law of fidelity” (Liu Miqing, 2005: p. 73) [4]. These three laws play a guiding role in science and technology news to different degrees. Translators should analyze the specific situation and combine the language characteristics of science and technology news with the three laws of Skopos theory to make the translation more consistent with the characteristics of science and technology news. The author fully knows that there are still many shortcomings in this paper and the author’s research on science and technology news needs to be further deepened. The application of translation strategies needs to be further explored. In a word, there is still much room for progress in skopos theory’s guidance of scientific news translation.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to those who have supported and encouraged me in the process of shaping this paper. My gratitude first goes to Professor Yuan Sen, my supervisor, for his guidance and help. I also would like to show my thanks to the classmates and teachers who have encouraged me and given me advice.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- [1] Nord, C. (2001) *Translating as a Purposeful Activity, Functionalist Approaches Explained*. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, Shanghai, 124.
- [2] 贾文波. 应用翻译功能论[M]. 北京: 中国对外翻译出版, 2012: 37-39.
- [3] 谭载喜. 西方翻译简史[M]. 北京: 商务印书馆, 2004: 255.
- [4] 刘宓庆. 新编当代翻译理论[M]. 北京: 中国对外翻译出版, 2005: 73.