

Research on C-E Publicity-Oriented Translation for CNPC's Portal Website from the Perspective of Communication

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Abstract: Under the “Belt and Road” strategy of all-round opening up to the outside world, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), as an important state-owned backbone enterprise and an integrated oil company with multinational operations, is striving to strengthen the external publicity of its technology and services and enhance its international influence and corporate image, so as to further build itself into a more internationally competitive multinational enterprise, in which external publicity serves as an essential link. From the perspective of communication, whether the publicity can achieve the expected purpose depends not only on the quality of English translation, but also on its communication effect. Therefore, based on communication theory, this paper adopts the method of literature search and the exemplification to study the English translation of the publicity materials on CNPC's portal website and explore the translation strategies adapted to those publicity materials. It is expected to be helpful to the translation practice in the future.

Keywords: Communication; CNPC's portal website; C-E publicity-oriented translation; Translation strategy

1. The Role and Research Status of Publicity-Oriented Translation for CNPC

With the globalization of the economy and the growing difficulty of developing major oil fields in China, the development of China's oil industry has been further integrated into the world oil industry, and many international oil companies and technical service companies have entered China for the exploration and development of China's oil and gas resources. Under such an international situation, China National Petroleum Corporation, as an important state-owned backbone enterprise, must further implement the strategy of “bringing in and going global” in order to further enhance its international visibility and influence and improve its role in the international division of labour.

In the context of the “Belt and Road” strategy of all-round opening up to the outside world, one key element for Chinese oil companies to achieve success in “bringing in and going global” and to maximize their benefits, is external publicity, or the so-called publicity-oriented translation. “Why is this important?”, that is because the key to succeed in gaining a voice and being recognized internationally is to make foreign readers with differences in language, culture, way of thinking and reading habits understand and be willing to read your propaganda, and if foreign readers are not willing to read it or cannot understand it, then all your efforts and the economic and technical strength you equipped with are in vain. Accordingly, publicity-oriented translation has to play a key role and act as an indispensable medium in the implementation of the strategy of “bringing in and going global” of CNPC.

The content of the C-E publicity-oriented translation of CNPC's portal website is complex and varied, and it is subject to constant change in accordance with the technology and scale of oil and gas exploration and development. However, due to relatively limited research on the translation of oil companies' propaganda, insufficient attention paid to it, as well as the lack of proper understanding of the translation content with reasonable integration of the background and professional knowledge of oil and gas exploration and development, many problems arise in the translation of the enterprises' propaganda. The effect of communication needs to be improved.

The author believes that the task of translation is the dissemination of information, and communication, as the study of social

information systems and the exploration of the nature and laws of human communication, can provide more methods, ways and perspectives for foreign translation, so as to improve the effect of communication. In this regard, this paper studies the C-E publicity-oriented translation of CNPC' portal website based on communication theory, and makes an analysis and explanation of the translation from the perspective of communication.

2. Publicity-Oriented Translation in the Perspective of Communication

2.1 Anatomy of Communication Theory

Harold D. Lasswell, one of the four founders of communication theory, outlined the basic process of communication in 1948, and proposed the “5W” communication model (Who→Says What→In Which Channel→To whom→With what effects) in his article “The Structure and Function of Communication in Society” . As the purpose and circumstances of communication are also important elements of communication theory, in 1958 the American scholar Braddock added the purpose and circumstances of communication to the 5W model, forming the “7W” communication model, as shown in the following figure .

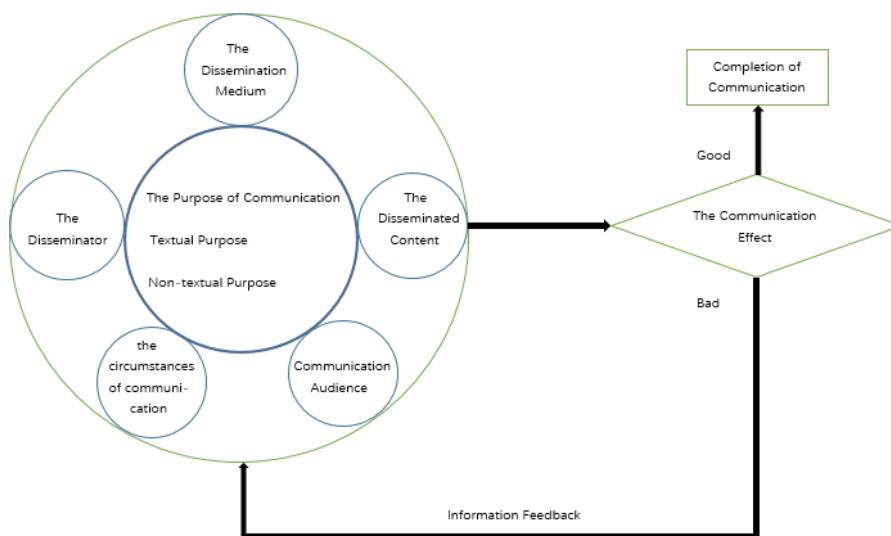


Figure 1- Relationships between elements of translation communication / The 7W Model

Braddock’s 7W model transforms the traditional 5W model into a dynamic and mutually constraining reticulated neuro-controlled communication model, which can minimize translation loss from communication noise through information feedback, thus optimizing communication theory and improving communication quality and effectiveness to a large extent.

2.2 The Relationship between Communication Theory and Publicity-Oriented Translation

Translation is a cross-cultural activity of information exchange and interchange. All the tasks to be fulfilled by translation, from interpretation to translation, literary translation to scientific translation, can be concluded as the dissemination of information. In addition, compared to communication activities, translation activities are more purpose-driven and, in particular, foreign translation is more purposeful. For example, the main purpose of foreign translation on the portal websites of Chinese government units, institutions (mainly referring to higher education institutions) and enterprises (mainly referring to large state-owned enterprise units such as Chinese oil companies) is to enhance their international visibility, influence and development space, etc. Sun Li and Lin Zonghao argued that translation is a process of information dissemination in its essence. To be concrete, the disseminator refers to the translator, the disseminated content refers to the translated text, the recipient refers to the reader of the translated text, the dissemination channel refers to the dissemination medium, and the dissemination environment of translation refers to the social, political, humanistic and economic environment, etc., which will lead to the formation of so-called communication noise. In this regard, translation is by nature a communication activity, and the study of communication and translation are compatible with each other, so that the success of foreign propaganda depends not only on the quality of English translation, but also on its communication effect.

According to the analysis of communication theory, it is concluded that the key elements of translation communication are the

subject, content, audience and purpose of communication. And the key elements of publicity-oriented translation of CNPC will be further analyzed in the following section.

3. Analysis of the Key Elements in the Publicity-Oriented Translation of CNPC

3.1 The Communication Subjects of Publicity-Oriented Translation of CNPC

The main body of publicity-oriented translation refers to the translator, who has the dual identity of both a translator and a communicator and should give full consideration to the purpose of publicity and the receptivity of the target language readers, which means that the translator should give full play to his or her subjectivity. The purpose of publicity-oriented translation of CNPC (mainly Chinese-English translation) is to make foreign readers accurately understand, grasp and recognize the message conveyed by the translation, successfully obtain the right of speech, and achieve good publicity effect. In the context of current cultural globalization, Liu Yafeng believes that the essence of publicity-oriented translation is a process of “adaptation” and “selection” with “translator as the center”, and “translation as a purposeful activity”. That is to say, for the purpose of publicity-oriented translation, translators should translate actively according to the different cultures, political systems, economic systems and thinking habits of the target country, and make necessary rewriting of the original text, such as addition, deletion, replacement, supplement and reorganization to achieve the maximum degree of adaptation in language dimension, cultural dimension and communicative dimension.

3.2 The Audience of Publicity-Oriented Translation of CNPC

Based on the audience classification of Peter Newmark, it can be seen that the communication audiences of publicity-oriented translation mainly include technical experts in related fields and non-professionals with a certain level of education. The Chinese-English publicity-oriented translation of CNPC is mainly targeted at professional and technical personnel in oil, pipeline and engineering construction in Central Asia, the Middle East, the Asia-Pacific, the Americas and other regions. Their cultural tradition is that the enterprise operates independently and assumes its own profit and loss. Therefore, they mainly focus on the quality, positioning, life cycle, pricing, business model and economic strength of CNPC’s products, and hardly care about the attention paid to the enterprise by the Party and state leaders, etc.; whereas the Chinese enterprise profile attaches great importance to political content. Therefore, in the process of publicity-oriented translation, translators need to adjust this cultural background difference to adapt to the background culture and needs of the audience.

3.3 The Communication Content of Publicity-Oriented Translation of CNPC

The publicity content for different nationalities, countries, cultures, ideologies and political systems has its own characteristics and positions. In the case of an enterprise, the content mainly includes the enterprise’s profile, news and trends, environment and society, products and services, international conditions and exchange centers, etc. For Chinese enterprises, the introductory information is more detailed and lengthy, with some information being more political and featuring strong ideological overtones. In contrast, the profiles of foreign enterprises are relatively brief. Take CNPC for example, it has a special column for internal publicity, which mainly includes instructions and spirits of the Party Central Committee, important speeches of state leaders, etc. In the external English translation, however, this column is removed because the foreign enterprises do not value such content and are more sensitive to these political topics. Therefore, translators should pay attention to delete and filter the contents sensitive or unknown to the target language readers during translation, so as to enhance the readability and acceptability of the English translation.

3.4 The Communication Purpose of Publicity-Oriented Translation of CNPC

The main purpose of external publicity-oriented translation is to meet the needs of target readers for specific information and to achieve the expected goals of the communicator through the dissemination of specific information, which tends to gain the approval of target readers and thus change their attitudes or behaviors. Therefore, the translator should comprehensively consider the purpose, content, medium and audience of the external translation to minimize the noise that affects the communication effect, expand the flow of information, ensure the accuracy of the translation, and accurately promote Chinese culture and values, so as to determine the translation strategy and method that can achieve the best communication effect. CNPC is committed to developing

into a highly competitive international energy company, becoming one of the world's major producers and marketers of petroleum and petrochemical products, and focusing on building a highly competitive international energy company. The purpose of its external translation is to speed up the implementation of the strategy of "bringing in and going global" by promoting international cooperation, strengthening overseas oil and gas exploration and development, and expanding the scale of international oil and gas trade, so as to maximize the company's economic and technological strength and establish a good international image, thereby developing into an internationally competitive energy company. In turn, the target readers expect to obtain information about the products and services they want.

4. The C-E Publicity-Oriented Translation Methods for CNPC's Portal Website

The purpose of the C-E publicity-oriented translation for CNPC's portal website is to introduce and promote the enterprises' products and services, showcase the good image of the enterprise, attract potential overseas customers, expand the international exchange and cooperation between enterprises, and actively promote the overseas market. To achieve the desired effect, the translator must consider the above-mentioned elements in the English translation of the portal website and try to reduce the cultural and ideological noise of the target language audience, so as to realize the purpose of the external promotion of oil enterprises. To this end, based on the analysis of the key elements in the translation process of CNPC and their own specific conditions, the author has recommended three constructive English translation strategies: reconstruction, differentiation between inside and outside, and annotation., and has used comparative analysis and exemplification to demonstrate the applicability of each strategy in the publicity-oriented translation of CNPC.

4.1 Reconstruction Strategy

Due to differences in language, culture and thinking, there are also significant differences between the content of external promotional materials of Chinese and foreign enterprises. CNPC's internal profile is described in more detail and with more ornate language to heighten the tone and focus of its publicity, while the external publicity-oriented translation is brief and concise with simple vocabulary. Therefore, in response to the cultural background and needs of foreign audiences, translators should draw on the information in parallel foreign texts and restructure and introduce the information on party politics, brilliant awards and honors in a simplified manner. For example, in the "About Us" column of the internal publicity, there are three categories: Qualifications and Honors, Company Performance and Company Qualifications, listing the various honors and awards won by CNPC in China from 1963 to 2013, such as: On 26 January 2013, CNPC was awarded the title of "Advanced Unit for Poverty Alleviation and Development of Central Enterprises" by the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council, and also the certificates obtained by the company, such as engineering survey certificate, engineering design certificate, engineering supervision qualification certificate, quality management system certification, etc. However, in the external English translation of publicity, the qualification honor and enterprise qualification, which are not known or concerned by foreign audiences, are deleted, and the enterprise performance is placed into the enterprise profile, so that the content of the English translation is concise and clear at a glance.

4.2 The Strategy of Differentiating Between the Inside and the Outside

Much of the external translation content on CNPC's portals is drawn from internal publicity, some of which is only slightly altered or simply copied. In fact, much of the internal publicity is not suitable for external use. For example, it is common for major domestic oilfield companies to highlight and overstate the 'iron man spirit' of oil worker Wang Jinxi, as well as the patriotic spirit of 'sharing the country's worries and fighting for the nation', which is acceptable domestically but would be considered unrealistic and exaggerated for foreign companies. However, an over-emphasis on patriotism, nationalism and heroism will not only be counterproductive, but also mislead foreign readers into thinking that the propagandists are nationalists or workaholics. For example, a press release from CNPC: "The company will further strengthen the strict judgment of the situation, seize the opportunity of the national supply-side structural reform and the implementation of major strategies such as the 'Belt and Road', base on the main business of oil and gas, focus on improving quality and efficiency, promote reform and innovation, and take advantage of the integration of the whole business chain. The company

has been able to take advantage of the integration of the entire business chain, especially in promoting the ‘oil spirit’ of ‘hard work and practical work’ and ‘three honests and four stricts’... It has been translated as “The Company endeavors to keep a foothold on the gas and oil business, focus on improving quality and efficiency, promote reformation and innovation, as well as take advantage of its integrated business model covering all businesses along the industry chain. Meanwhile, the Company will proactively promote the ‘Ethos of Hard Work’ and ‘Three Truths and Four Cardinals’ of the ‘Daqing Spirit’ ...”. A comparative analysis shows that although the oil spirit is mentioned in the text, it does not deliberately give an excessive explanation, etc., and instead serves as a positive propaganda. Therefore, in view of the above, in the process of external translation, translators should be close to the actual development of China and the needs of foreign audiences for Chinese information, and pay attention to the distinction between internal and external publicity, and can adopt the trade-off method and the simplification method to do the translation.

4.3 Annotation Strategy

Due to the significant cultural differences between the English and Chinese languages, foreign readers have a different cognitive structure and living environment from those of the original text, and lack knowledge of Chinese language and cultural characteristics. If the translator directly transfers part of the original text to the translated text, it will inevitably go against the thinking habits of the foreign readers and interfere with the readability of the translated text. Therefore, the translator should consider the cognitive structure of the foreign reader and refer to the cultural background of the target language in the translation process, employing an annotated translation to achieve the anticipated function and purpose of the translation. The annotation strategy in the publicity-oriented translation of CNPC means providing additional background information with cultural and petroleum characteristics (such as the names of oil fields, oil and gas wells, historical events, Xinjiang Daqing, the spirit of oil, etc.) that are difficult for foreign readers to understand.

For example, for the sentence “The annual production of crude oil exceeded 10 million tonnes, which represents the realization of the first step in the “three-step” goal of CNPC Xinjiang Oilfield Branch. The second step targets annual production of 12 million tonnes of crude oil and 3 billion cubic metres of natural gas in 2005, and the third step targets annual production of 15 million tonnes of crude oil and 5 billion cubic metres of natural gas in 2010”, the English translation on the portal website is “Xinjiang Oil field exceeded its annual output of over 10 million tons, which is the first phase of the “trilogy” of the oil field. The second phase is to produce 12 million tons of crude oil and 3 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually by 2005, while producing 15 million tons of crude oil and 5 billion cubic meters of natural gas by 2010 for the third phase.” According to the comparison between the translation and the original text, it can be seen that the meaning of the “trilogy” is clearly explained through the method of annotation and addition in the target text, which increases its readability. In addition, the names of the oilfields, such as ‘Xinjiang Oil field’, are regional-based and can be translated directly with appropriate annotation, i.e. ‘Xinjiang Oil field’, while other similar oilfield names and oil and gas well names can be treated in this way. In short, for information with cultural and petroleum characteristics, we should adhere to the principle that “foreigners are different from Chinese”, and flexibly adopt the annotation strategy to process the foreign translation, taking into account the historical background of Chinese petroleum.

5. Conclusion

To promote and enhance CNPC’s technical and economic strength, international influence and image, this paper has conducted a study on the English translation for CNPC’s portal website from a communication perspective. Based on the communication models of “Lasswell’s 5W” and “Braddock’s 7W”, this paper explains the interrelationship between communication theories and publicity-oriented translation, with a focus on the key elements of communication subjects, audiences, contents and purposes of external translation of CNPC, and identifies three important strategies for the external translation of CNPC’ portals, namely, reconstruction, internal and external differentiation and annotation strategies. The results of the study show that the research on the translation of Chinese oil companies should be organically combined with the cultural background of the audience and the professional information of the oil industry in order to achieve the purpose of CNPC’ publicity.

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