

Research on Translation Strategies of Environmental Public Service Advertisements under the Guidance of the Three Rules of Skopos Theory

Hui LIU

School of Foreign Languages, Shandong Jianzhu University, Jinan, Shandong 250102

Abstract: In recent years, various environmental problems have intensified around the world, threatening the living environment of mankind. It has become an urgent problem to advocate the concept of environmental protection and enhance human awareness of environmental protection. As an important means of mass communication, advertising plays an extremely important role in promoting environmental protection. The translation of environmental public service advertisements, an important window to publicize environmental protection to foreigners, plays an increasingly obvious role in promoting social harmony and shaping international image. Therefore, accurate translation of environmental public service advertisements to help solve social problems and improve international environmental awareness has become a key research direction. Nowadays, advertising communication has been transformed from “commodity-centered” to “audience-centered”, but the translation of public service advertisements in China is not mature enough in this process, and there is room for further discussion and improvement in the academic research on it. Therefore, under the guidance of Skopos Theory, this paper discusses the translation strategies of environmental public service advertisements, which plays an important role in improving the translation quality.

Keywords: Skopos Theory; environmental public service advertisements; translation strategy

1. Introduction

Environmental public service advertisements are oriented to the public, which arouse public interest through advertisements, thus guiding people to actively maintain the sustainable development of society. As an advertisement with the main purpose of promoting ideas, it emphasizes the target language readers as the center and needs sincere and effective communication. Therefore, it is of great guiding significance to study the translation of environmental public service advertisements from the perspective of Skopos Theory.

With the improvement of China's international status and the deepening of opening to the outside world, the readers of environmental public service advertisements have been further expanded. When translating environmental public service advertisements, translators should not only apply translation theory to advertisements, but also pay attention to the communicative purpose of the advertisements. For a long time, the effect of applying equivalence theory to advertisement translation is not satisfactory. English and Chinese are two different languages, and their meanings are not completely equivalent. Besides, in advertising translation, if the translator blindly pursues formal equality, it will affect its communication effect. Based on Skopos Theory, this paper studies the translation strategies of environmental public service advertisements, focusing on the acceptance of environmental public service advertisements by target readers, and tries to put forward corresponding strategies for translation of environmental public service advertisements in order to improve its translation quality.

This paper is divided into three parts. The first part is an introduction of Skopos Theory, the second part is the core of this paper, which mainly puts forward some effective translation methods, such as literal translation, free translation and imitation, and the final part is a summary.

2. Skopos Theory

China's extensive research on advertising translation began in 1980s after the reform and opening-up, and the practical research results are abundant. Scholars mostly focus on the study of advertisements such as business, tourism and publicity, but most of them are commercial advertisements, and there is little research on environmental public service advertisements. Nowadays, the international environmental problems are very serious, and people begin to pay more attention to the publicity of environmental public service advertisements. Therefore, through the analysis and research of environmental public service advertisements, we can better explore the translation strategies and methods of environmental public service advertisements, so as to raise international environmental awareness, promote social harmony and progress, and make contributions to the deep integration of the international community.

Although environmental public service advertisements are playing a more and more important role in promoting international environmental awareness, there is still little research on their translation in China, and the academic research on them is still insufficient. A few scholars have paid attention to the translation of public service advertisements. Zhao Jinrui (2016), based on the communicative translation theory, made an in-depth exploration of the English translation of TV public service advertisements. By analyzing the syntactic structure and linguistic features of public service advertisements in China Daily, Liu Xiaofang (2015) analyzed the handling of public service advertisements from the perspective of Skopos Theory and put forward some translation strategies. Kou Yongli (2011) also discussed the English translation strategies of public service advertisements from the perspective of functional theory. In addition, some scholars have paid attention to the problems in translation of public service advertisements, such as Wang Yu (2016). analyzed the problems existing in the English translation of public service advertisements and studied the translation strategies, which had great practical significance.

In contrast, there are still shortcomings and deficiencies in the English translation research of environmental public service

advertisements in China. Therefore, based on Skopos Theory, this paper studies the translation strategies of environmental public service advertisements in order to improve its translation quality.

3. Research on translation strategies of environmental public service advertisements under the guidance of three rules of Skopos Theory

3.1 Literal translation

Under the guidance of the fidelity rule of Skopos Theory, literal translation can be adopted in the translation of environmental public service advertisements. Literal translation emphasizes the direct translation of the original text and cannot be created at will, which conforms to the fidelity rule of Skopos Theory. What kind of environmental advertising copy is suitable for literal translation? When the structure of the original text is relatively simple, and there are no rhetorical devices or words with special meaning, the translator can adopt literal translation to translate environmental protection advertisements, which can not only fully express the meaning of the original text, but also retain the linguistic characteristics of the source text. For example:

ST: 我的盛开需要你的关爱。

TT: Luxuriant flowers need your care.

This advertisement is simple in structure and aims to remind us to take care of flowers and plants. “我的盛开” refers to the blooming of flowers, and the translation uses “luxuriant flowers” to describe it, which retains the structure and content of the original text as a whole and can be regarded as a literal translation, in line with the fidelity rule of Skopos Theory.

It can be seen that although Chinese and English belong to two different language families, they have similarities in some aspects. Therefore, under the guidance of fidelity rule based on Skopos Theory, concise and clear advertising language is more suitable for literal translation, which is easy and concise to understand, and semantically conforms to the original context, so as to achieve the functional goal of Skopos rule.

3.2 Free translation

Under the guidance of the Skopos rule, the translator can translate environmental public service advertisements by means of free translation. Free translation is relative to literal translation. When using free translation strategy, the translator can change the structure and language characteristics of the original text, which requires the translator to take the target language readers as the center, fully consider the language habits of the target language readers, and achieve the publicity effect of environmental protection public service advertisements, so as to conform to the Skopos rule of the Skopos theory. When the meaning of the text of the environmental protection public service advertisement is clear, but the literal translation cannot convey the original advertising information, we can use the method of free translation to fully take care of the language habits of the target language readers. For example:

ST: 停止对大气污染, 就是停止自杀。

TT 1: Stop polluting the earth's atmosphere, stop committing suicide.

TT 2: Want to live longer? Cut the air pollution.

TT 3: The less air pollution, the longer your life.

The first target translation used literal translation, obviously not following the Skopos rule, but blindly seeking equivalence, thus misinterpreting the literal meaning of the original public service advertisement and leading to mistranslation of the translation. In translation 2, the method of free translation is adopted, in which suicide is translated into “live longer”, and the common English oral expression of stop air pollution is translated into “cut the air polarization”. At the same time, the sentence pattern is changed and the declarative sentence is changed into a question of asking yourself and answering yourself, which can not only attract readers' attention, but also inspire readers to think. In translation 3, the target language readers are the direct target (embodied in “your life”), and the free translation method is adopted to translate stop air pollution into “less air pollution” and suicide into “longer life”, and the daily English sentence pattern “the+comparative, the+comparative” is used, making the reading of the article friendly, natural, catchy, and powerful.

Translation 1 misunderstands the original intention and establishes a reciprocal relationship between the first half and the second half, which may cause misunderstanding among foreign friends. Both translations 2 and 3 correctly express the meaning of the original text, and rhetorical questions and inverted sentences can attract the attention of the target readers and stimulate their thinking, which will leave a deep impression on target readers, following both the Skopos rule and the coherence rule.

3.3 Imitation

Environmental public service advertisements should use the ideas conveyed to convince and educate the audience, in order to achieve the goal of cultivating their awareness of environmental protection. According to the Skopos rule, in order to effectively convey the speculative power of environmental public service advertisements to the target language readers, it is necessary to put the target language readers at the center of propaganda and give them the first consideration. The content of environmental public service advertisements should be close to the life of the target language, so that they can resonate with them. Therefore, translators can adopt imitation translation to resonate with the target language readers by imitating the language methods they are familiar with, so as to improve their acceptance of the translation. For example:

ST: 问渠哪得清如许, 唯有环保碧水来。

TT: Greener environment, cleaner water.

The source text of this advertisement imitates ancient poetry to convey the idea of protecting the ecological environment, which makes

the content more vivid. However, Chinese culture is different from western culture, and few foreigners are familiar with ancient poems. Therefore, in order to convey information correctly, we can't translate this sentence word for word. Guided by the Skopos rule in the Skopos theory, the translation strategy of imitation is used. The translation "Greener Environment, Cleaner Water" imitates the slogan "better city, better life" of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, which is easy for foreigners to understand the translation of this famous slogan.

Conclusion

To sum up, this paper makes a detailed study on the translation of environmental public service advertisements based on the Skopos Theory, and lists some strategies suitable for the translation of environmental advertisements, such as literal translation, free translation and imitation, respectively, under the guidance of the three rules of Skopos Theory. It is hoped that the translators can give full play to the advantages of the target language in the translation of environmental public service advertisements, so that the advertisement translation can fully express information and achieve the purpose of promoting environmental awareness. This paper is only a basic research on the translation strategies of environmental public service advertisements, hoping that the exploration made in this paper can arouse the translator's interest in the translation of environmental public service advertisements.

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