

An analysis of the strategies of foreign media in translating words with Chinese characteristics—Take the mainstream British and American newspapers and periodicals as an example

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Abstract: with the continuous improvement of China's international influence, foreign media's interest in China is increasing day by day. In recent years, we can often see many Chinese word translations with Chinese characteristics in foreign media's reports. By summing up the previous research results, it can be seen that foreign media's translation of words with Chinese characteristics is mainly based on foreignization strategy. On this basis, this paper selects some characteristic words for further analysis and research, hoping to summarize the main methods adopted by foreign media in translating Chinese words under the guidance of foreignization translation strategy, and provide some enlightenment for domestic and foreign publicity translation.

Key words: vocabulary with Chinese characteristics; Translation strategies; Translation methods

1. Introduction

With the enhancement of economic strength and comprehensive national strength, China's international status has been greatly improved, and foreign media pay more and more attention to China. In the process of receiving Chinese information, the foreign media will inevitably encounter some statements with Chinese characteristics, such as fresh expressions in the process of scientific and economic development, unique expressions related to politics, Internet vocabulary created by netizens in time, and proprietary vocabulary related to Chinese culture. (chengmengting and Zhouyan, 2015) compared with ordinary words, these words with Chinese characteristics are produced in a specific cultural environment and context, often carrying more abundant political and cultural information. It is difficult to find corresponding words with similar meaning in the target language, thus showing obvious "particularity". (kongxiangli, 2008) it is precisely because of their linguistic uniqueness, complexity and contextual relevance that they pose great challenges to translation.

According to a large number of Chinese English publicity practice in China, translators mostly follow the domestication translation strategy, trying to make readers understand the meaning of the original text, and then realize the purpose of information dissemination. There are also many scholars who find a new way to analyze their translation of words with Chinese characteristics from the perspective of foreign media, hoping to gain some enlightenment on the translation of Chinese news publicity. At present, a number of relevant domestic studies have also been published, such as wangxiangbing (2002), zhutianwen (2003), Gu Jing (2005), Huang Haijun and Ma Keyun (2007), Jia Hui (2008) and fan Yong (2010). They analyzed the Chinese related reports published in the mainstream media of the United States, such as the time and the New York Times, and concluded that the mainstream media in the United States mostly focused on foreignization translation of words with Chinese characteristics. On this basis, the article expands the media wide area, and further confirms the foreignization tendency of foreign media in the translation of words with Chinese characteristics by giving examples of the translation of some words with Chinese characteristics in the foreign reports of two major English speaking countries, Britain and the United States, and analyzes the main translation methods and skills involved.

2. A brief analysis of translation strategies

The concept of foreignization was first proposed by Schleiermacher, a German linguist and translation theorist. In his on the methods of translation, he pointed out that foreignization is to "keep the author as stable as possible and guide the reader to approach the author" (1813). This translation strategy has been further supplemented and explained by Lawrence Venuti, a famous American translation theorist, and has become one of the translation strategies with high acceptance in the field of translation.

According to the research mentioned above, in recent years, in order to more truly introduce special phenomena or events in China to their own people in foreign media's China related reports, foreign media often translate words with Chinese characteristics under the guidance of foreignization strategy, and these translation methods are gradually understood and accepted by more and more English speaking countries, and are entered into English dictionaries to expand their language thesaurus. In addition to the above research, the mainstream media in the United States mostly adopt alienation strategies for words with Chinese characteristics, so does the British media. When the economist, a famous British publication, reported on the increasingly prominent phenomenon of more men and less women in China, it directly transliterated the "Bachelor" of single men into "guanggun"; In addition, on November 24th, 2011, when describing the status of China's economy in the world, the BBC also deliberately used the expression "leading dragon", which is not very common in English. These are all examples of English mainstream media translating words with Chinese characteristics under the guidance of foreignization strategy. It can be seen that the forefathers' conclusion that foreignization strategy is often used in foreign media's translation of words with Chinese characteristics is of referential significance and value.

3. Translation methods

From the perspective of foreign media's translation practice of words with Chinese characteristics under the guidance of foreignization strategy, this paper analyzes the translation methods involved.

3.1 Transliteration

Transliteration, obviously, is a translation method of translating sounds into meanings. For example, the translation of some place names, people's names, brand trademarks, institutions, roads, newspapers and magazines can adopt transliteration method because they belong to the category of national proper nouns. Or some expressions lack corresponding images in the target language, so it is difficult to use the existing expressions in the target language to translate directly. At this time, transliteration can also be used. In 2013, the event of "Chinese aunt emptying the gold store" occurred in the United States. Subsequently, the Wall Street Journal of the United States specifically used transliteration to translate "aunt" into "Dama" to report the relevant events. Thus, "Chinese aunt" also opened up international fame. In addition, the British guardian and other media have also used the word "guanxi" to describe the "relationship" that has maintained Chinese society since ancient times in some foreign-related reports.

Using transliteration method to translate some words with Chinese characteristics can enable English audiences to appreciate the authentic characteristics of Chinese language style. In addition, a large number of foreign words are also one of the characteristics of journalistic English words, especially when it involves foreign or emerging things. This is of great benefit to arouse readers' interest and attention, or more appropriately convey the connotation of a word. (Zhang Jian, 1994)

3.2 Transliteration plus explanation

Due to the differences in cultural background and language expression between Chinese and English, the translation method of direct expression by transliteration may be too simple, which will also lead to some English readers only know the pronunciation, but they can not understand the meaning of words due to the lack of relevant background knowledge. At this time, transliteration plus interpretation becomes a substitute scheme. This means of translation can make up for the cultural knowledge gap of some English audiences, so that they can better understand the meaning of words. For example, microblog, an online communication platform that has emerged in China in recent years, has become increasingly popular in China due to its novel form of expressing opinions and opinions, high degree of freedom, wide audience and no age limit. When the British and American media reported relevant news, they translated "microblog" into "Weibo (China's Twitter like micro blog service)". This translation is based on transliteration and supplemented with "Twitter like communication software". The following notes selected "Twitter" which is very familiar to the British and American audiences for analogy interpretation, which is straightforward and simple, It can also make readers easily remember its Pinyin and meaning, which is a very successful translation.

3.3 Literal translation

Literal translation requires the translator to be faithful to the original content and try to maintain the original form, but it is not completely mechanical word for word translation. It regards the sentence as the most basic unit, and also includes the whole article in the scope of reference (Munday, 2001). It is generally applicable when it is difficult to find similar corresponding words in the target language in the case of cultural vacancy and lexical vacancy. That is, the literal translation should not affect the maintenance of the original style, convey the meaning of the original text comprehensively and accurately, and should not be too distorted to add or delete the ideological content of the original text at will. For example, "the families of Pingyao know all too well this old saying, 'wealth does not last for more than three generations.'" and "it's like fishing a need out of the sea..." appeared in the New York Times in 2009. One of them involves the translation of the Chinese proverb "no more than three generations rich" and "looking for a needle in a haystack". In addition, the increasingly popular online shopping festival "double eleven day" in China has also been directly translated by some foreign media as "double eleven day". The literal translation method like this word for word translation also had great recognition in foreign media, and was soon used by other well-known media in the reporting of relevant Chinese news.

The reason why foreign media can use literal translation to translate these words with Chinese characteristics is that these words do not hinder the transmission of the meaning of the original words when translated literally in Chinese, and they are easy to read, or there are basically corresponding words in form and meaning in English, or literal translation helps to preserve the cultural image of the source language. In the above translations, the images and metaphorical meanings in Chinese have been completely retained in the translation, which is full of exotic flavor. At the same time, under the background of the context at that time, English readers can quickly understand the meaning, and enrich the English vocabulary to a certain extent.

3.4 Literal translation with notes

Due to the differences between Chinese and Western thinking modes, history and culture, sometimes literal translation is used, and English readers cannot understand the meaning of these loanwords, so the translator will give a clearer explanation after the literal translation to help readers understand. After that, as time went on, everyone gradually accepted the expression, and the explanation after the word was unnecessary even if the mission was completed. This also reflects the great inclusiveness of English as an international language. For example, the British Guardian translated the expression "straight male cancer" of the masculinity of the Chinese people's Congress word for word into "straight male cancer", and then gave an explanation of "male chauvinist pig" to supplement the meaning of the translation. This translation method of literal translation and interpretation can not only maintain the cultural factors and language habits of the source language, but also not make the reader difficult to understand the meaning of the word. Compared with direct translation, it also has higher application value.

3.5 Free translation

Free translation refers to a translation method that keeps the content of the original text, gets rid of the shackles of the original form, and makes the translation conform to the target language. Due to the influence of human history and other factors, different languages will have differences in form, collocation, expression habits and so on. Therefore, in the process of translation, the translator tends to use free translation to help the audience understand. For example, in addition to the translation of “double eleven day” above, some media also choose the translation of “single day sales”, which means “buying by single people”. Different from simple literal translation, this translation method is more free translation based on the understanding of the deep meaning of words, and it is also more clear in meaning transmission.

4. Conclusion

With the continuous enhancement of China’s comprehensive national strength, China’s international influence is increasing day by day, including cultural influence. In order to effectively publicize Chinese events and win the favor of Asian audiences, foreign media, mainly British and American media, can also spread Chinese cultural knowledge to the Chinese people, and adopt the translation strategy of Foreignization in the translation of news publicity, so as to achieve the purpose of cultural communication. But we have to admit that this process will inevitably produce many problems. For example, some media simply deal with words with Chinese characteristics, or make non objective interpretation or even modification in the process of adding interpretation to convey to the people, or deliberately distort words under the influence of mainstream ideology in Britain and America. At this time, the domestic media and translators need to strictly control and maintain the national image in the international arena. As for China’s foreign news translation, in addition to the pursuit of faithfulness and smoothness of the translation, the translator also bears the important task of disseminating Chinese excellent culture and helping it “go out”. As far as the research results are concerned, Chinese translators should have enough confidence to adopt foreignization translation strategies in foreign translation to promote Chinese culture; On the basis of not affecting readers’ understanding, it will highlight its national identity, cultural traditions and characteristics, so as to enhance the recognition of Chinese culture in other countries in news publicity activities.

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