

Research and Analysis of Informational Texts within the Framework of Communicative Translation Theory -- A case study of 2022 Yan'an City Government Work Report

Kehua Fu, Yanying Yu

Xi'an Shiyou University, Xi'an 710043, China

Abstract: The “2022 Yan'an Government Work Report” issued by Yan'an City serves as a crucial source of information for both domestic and international audiences aiming to gain insight into the specific circumstances of the city. This paper adopts a communicative translation theory approach to analyze the translation strategies employed in the 2022 Government Work Report.

Keywords: 2022 Yan'an City Government Work Report; Informative Text; Translation Strategy

In April 2022, the mayor of Yan'an City presented the 2022 Government Work Report on behalf of the city, which encompasses a retrospective review of the past five years' work, outlines the overarching objectives for the next five years, and elaborates on the key initiatives for the current year. The English translation of the government work report holds significant relevance to both China's international image and the cultural representation of Yan'an City. As such, the translation of distinctive Chinese elements within the report necessitates thorough consideration and analysis. This paper will analyze the translation methods employed in the 2022 Yan'an Government Work Report as the chosen corpus, aiming to facilitate cultural communication for Yan'an City.

1. The characteristics of informational text

According to Peter Newmark, a renowned English translator and translation theorist, there are three types of texts to be translated: informational, expressive, and evocative. Newmark emphasized that a particular text type may simultaneously embody three linguistic functions, but it can be said that one function predominates. Therefore, different translation strategies and methods should be employed based on the specific text type. Informational text, an essential category in Newmark's text typology, is focused on the communication of factual information. With the increasing frequency of international communication and the expansion of communication domains, the demand for the translation of informational texts is also on the rise. Informational texts are primarily intended to convey information devoid of personal emotion. For this reason, when translating informational texts, the main objective is to elucidate concepts from the perspective of the target language reader, in a manner familiar to the reader. The Government Work Report is an informational text, thus the translation of such texts should be based on communicative translation.

2. Brief introduction of communicative translation theory

Communicative translation means to ensure that the effect obtained by the target language readers is as close as possible to that obtained by the source language readers, and that the impact of the target language on the target language readers is as close as possible to that of the original text on the source language readers (Newmark, 1981). Its focus is on the target language reader or audience. Therefore, when processing the original text, the purpose is to convey the language information, rather than simply copying a series of language units. Its concern was how to preserve the functionality of the original text so that it would be relevant to new readers. Communicative translation pays less attention to the form of the source language and more attention to the communicative function of the language, but it requires the translation to be smooth, reliable and fully convey the information of the source language.

Drawing from the theory of communicative translation, the author utilizes the official text of the 2022 Yan'an City Government Work Report as the corpus, analyzing the translation techniques employed within the report's informative sections alongside previously acquired translation skills. The study underscores the crucial role of accurately conveying information about China's national conditions, introducing the current development status of Yan'an City, and outlining its future development plans.

3. Translation principles of informational texts

3.1 Fidelity

One of the characteristics of informational text is to disseminate some information externally, necessitating that translations adhere as closely as possible to the original text's essential meaning. In the process of translation, it is important to avoid over-interpreting the author's underlying intentions, focusing instead on conveying the explicit meaning presented by the text.

3.2 Accuracy

The linguistic function of an informative text is to convey facts and content, and translation work must be based on fidelity to the original text to ensure the accuracy of translation. Throughout the translation process, if any content might be deemed inappropriate or offensive, adjustments should be made to ensure that translations are contextually appropriate and culturally sensitive.

3.3 Rigor

In the process of translating informational texts, it is imperative to uphold a rigorous professional attitude. Most of the informative texts are political texts, scientific and technological texts or economic and trade texts of the type of government work reports. These texts sometimes require the translation of a large amount of data and professional terms. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain a rigorous attitude in translation.

4. Translation skills of informational texts

4.1 Words with Chinese characteristics

The words with Chinese characteristics are a unique linguistic phenomenon in the Chinese language and culture, and often have distinct characteristics of The Times. It includes concepts, politics, terms, phrases, and vocabulary specific to Chinese national culture.

4.1.1 Literal Translation

Example 1:

Original text: 脱贫工程

Target text: Poverty alleviation project

Example 2:

Original text: 高质量发展

Target text: High-quality development

Example 3:

Original text: 共同富裕

Target text: Common prosperity

Example 4:

Original text: “两学一做”学习教育

Target text: “Two Studies and One Action” Education Campaign

The three terms mentioned above are all standalone vocabulary. Corresponding explanations for each can be found in English. This translation approach makes the text concise and easily comprehensible, allowing readers to grasp the meanings at a glance. This method not only preserves the original style but also helps the target language readers understand the national context of our country, while reflecting the simplicity and accuracy of the translation.

4.1.2 Interpretative translation

Sometimes, certain words may be straightforward and easy to understand in Chinese, but a direct translation into English might leave readers perplexed. In this case, the method of literal translation and interpretive translation can be adopted. This can not only preserve the

original form of the words, but also make the reader understand the connotation clearly.

Example 5:

Original Text: 反对“四风”

Target Text: Eliminating the Four Malfeasances refer to favoring form over substance, atism, hedonism, and extravagance.

The problem of “four winds” is a problem to be solved under China’s national conditions, making it a term with Chinese characteristics. When translating, we should provide an explanation of what exactly these four issues refer to. Only in this way can readers of the translated text fully comprehend the deeper meaning of the entire phrase.

4.2 Sentence-level translation skills

4.2.1 Literal translation

Example 6:

Original Text: 这五年，我们千方百计补短板、强基础、促融合，城乡面貌焕然一新。

Target Text: Over the past five years, we have made everything possible to shore up the shortcomings, strengthen the foundation, and promote integration, thus taking on a new look in urban and rural areas.

In the above example, the phrases “shore up the shortcomings”, “strengthening the foundation” and “promoting integration” are simple and easy to understand, and will not cause ambiguity. Moreover, the structure of the whole sentence is simple, and it does not need to adjust the structure of the sentence to make the sentence smooth, so the translation technique of literal translation is directly adopted, so that the information in the original text can be completely transmitted to the target reader, and the principle of fidelity is complied with.

4.2.2 Reorganization

Example 7:

Original Text: 干部作风明显改进，服务效能持续提升。

Target Text: The standards of officials has been markedly improved, and the efficiency of their services has continued to rise.

In Chinese narratives, the subject is often in the first person, which leads to a tendency to use the passive voice in English translations to emphasize objective facts. In Example 8, the significant improvements in the work style of officials and the continuous enhancement of service efficiency are all attributed to the government’s proactive regulation and guidance. Therefore, in the English translation, the subject is used to highlight the objective facts, making the sentence more in line with the reading habits of the target audience.

4.2.3 Additional translation

Example 8:

Original Text: 稳妥化解政府隐性债务，严厉打击非法金融活动，守住了不发生系统性金融风险的底线。

Target Text: The Yan’an municipal government has steadily resolved hidden government debts, cracked down on illegal financial activities, and held the bottom line of no systemic financial risks.

This sentence is no problem according to the Chinese custom, because the default main language is the government department. However, there is a lack of subjects in English. Therefore, during the translation process, it is essential to explicitly include the subject “Yan’an municipal government” to enhance the clarity of the sentence. If the subject remains ambiguous, it is necessary to add it through an additive translation approach.

5. Conclusion

Guided by Newmark’s theory of communicative translation, we should adhere to the three core principles of fidelity, accuracy, and rigor when translating informative texts, while also keeping the target audience in mind. With China’s increasing internationalization, the English translation of political texts has become particularly significant. To help the international community better understand Yan’an and the realities of China, the translation of government work reports must be accurate and rigorous, showcasing the city’s positive image and reflecting the country’s and city’s strengths to the world through translation.

References

- [1]Newmark, Peter. Approaches to translation[M]. Oxford & New York :Pergamon Press, 1981
- [2] Han Ruifen. A Study on the English translation of News culture-loaded Words under the Communicative Translation Theory -- A case study of China Daily. English on Campus,2022(41):187-189.
- [3] Ma J Y. Applied Translation Strategies: A Case Study of the translation of public signs into English [J]. Value engineering, 2012, 31 (29) : 244-245. The DOI: 10.14018 / j.carol carroll nki cn13-1085 / n. 2012.29.068.
- [4] Mao Ying. Research on the translation of information-based text under the theory of communicative translation[J]. Foreign Trade and Economics,2022,No.339(09):94-97.
- [5] Qin Liang. China's foreign ministry statement announcement from the perspective of applied translation[D]. Shaanxi Normal University,2014.
- [6] WU Huiwen, Wei Caiping, Pan Changjun, Zou Changhong. An investigation into the translation of words with Chinese characteristics from the perspective of Skopos Theory: A case study of the 2019 Government Work Report [J]. Overseas English,2021,No.453(17):214-216.

About the author:

Fu Kehua, (2000.4-), Female, Han, Xi 'an, Shaanxi Province, Xi 'an Shiyou University, Master Degree, Research direction:Translation

Yu Yanying,Female,Han,Xi 'an Shiyou University,Research direction:Translation