

Analysis of the English Translation of *Report on the Work of the Government* Based on the Three Principles of Skopos Theory-A Case Study on the Report in 2019 by the Premier of the State Council

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Abstract: The annual report on the work of the government is not only the official document of Chinese government, but also the summary of achievements every year. This thesis is a case study on the report delivered at the Second Session of the 13th National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China on March 5, 2019 by the premier of the state council. The report mainly consists of three parts, 2018 in review, economic and social development in 2019 and overall requirements and policies directions.

This thesis aims to explore the application of skopos theory in the translation of government work report. Through the analysis of the current situation of report's translation, this thesis attempts to find out the feasibility that apply the skopos theory in the report's translation. Therefore, an expected outcome is that the target readers will have a proper understanding about relevant policies and China's attitudes towards the national affairs.

Keywords: Report on the work of government; Skopos theory; Translation method

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1. Introduction

Every year, *Report on the work of the government* has played a very important role in the international relations. To fulfill the work of government, and share our viewpoints on national affairs is helpful for us to carry on the work, and to know the other countries' attitude and response. Therefore, the state image of China is determined by the quality of the report's translation. However, more and more new concepts with Chinese Characteristics emerging, it is difficult to find

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English equivalence, the differences between Chinese and English also further complicated the translation. Based on skopos theory, the function of the target text has been strengthened and the skopos theory also emphasize more on the purposes of translation. The English version of the report will concentrate on foreigners' understanding of China's policies. So the translation of the report under the guidance of the skopos theory is of great significance

2. Literature Review

(1) The Brief Introduction to the Government Work Report's Translation

A GWR is drafted by a team composed of personnel from different government organs. The drafting of a national GWR is organized by the Research Office of the State Council, supported by other related departments. A GWR is the essential document of government concerned. It reviews the last year work of the government, and at the same time, make an orientation of the next -year plan.

(2) The Current Situation of Study in Report's Translation

On the whole, the study of domestic scholars in the report's translation passes essentially four stages. First is the empiricism to the report's translation, the second is the linguistic study of report's translation, then is the cultural studies of report's translation, at last, is the ethics in the report's translation. At first stage, many scholars in the foreign publicity, especially the leading figures in the translation of report, through their own translation practice or the analysis of the translation, have made a summary of the translation strategies and skills which has advanced the development of the study, but because the lack of theoretical foundation, and the far more emphasis on the translator's subjectivity, there are many limitations. The study based on the linguistics provide a new way, by making the contrast of the two languages and semantic analysis, but the negative part of that is the extratextual factors are ignored, from the macroscopic point of view, politics, economy, culture and ideology , they are not taken into consideration by the translators. Moreover, The third one promotes the further development of study. At last, The ethics in the report's translation, though it has an application, but is not very thorough and systematic.

(3) The Significance of Report's Translation

With china's increasing strength and international status, the influence of the annual work report also expands year by year, which makes it important way to learn about China's national condition. As for foreign countries, citizens will also search the report on the work of the government, so the translation of that is of great significance. Based on skopos theory, the function of the target text has been strengthened and also emphasis the purposes of translation. The English version of the report contributes to foreigners' understanding of China's policies. But a variety

words and sentences with Chinese characteristics has stepped up the difficulty of translation. So the translation of the report under the guidance of the skopos theory is of great significance.

3. The Skopos Theory

(1) Brief Introduction of Hans Vermeer

Hans Vermeer, graduated in the Heidelberg University, had ever taught by Katharine Reiss, a famous translation theorist and pioneer of the functional translation theory. During his lifetime, he was the professor of translation and have a long-term study in linguistics. From 1976 to 1977, he had proposed a general theoretical framework for translation, later on, his book, *Framework for a General Translation Theory* become the basis of the skopos theory.

(2) Hans Vermeer's Skopos Theory

Skopos theory, a functionalist translation theory, was put forward by Hans J. Vermeer, a scholar of the German functionalist school of translation studies in 1978, he think the core of the skopos theory is: the translation purpose justifies the translation process and the end justifies the means. Except skopos, Vermeer used aim, purpose, intention and function to describe the theory. The most important factor in his theory is the degree of the readers' acceptance. As for the translation standard, the skopos theory use the adequacy instead of equivalence. That's to say, translation strategies of skopos theory lay emphasis on the expectation function or the purpose.

Vermeer proposes three rules to be applied in translation, which are Skopos rule, coherence rule and fidelity rule.

(3) The Necessitates of the Application of Skopos Theory in Report's Translation

According to the skopos rule, when translating, the target text is of great significance, and the critical purpose in the translation process will have a function in which strategies and methods translator use. As for GWR, its purpose is to make the target readers have an accurate understanding of the China's development, and let China into the world. With the guidance of the coherence rule, the translation readability can be guaranteed. According to the skopos theory, the information of the report is able to convey and accepted by the target readers, the fidelity rule also express the target text clearly, at the same time, accord with the expression of English habit.

4. Analysis and Discussion

(1) Structure and Content of the Report in Chinese

Report on the work of the government is official document of the government of the people's republic of China. Governments of all levels must deliver the report at the local national people's congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, also referred as the two sessions, held every year to the deputies and members.

The report consists of three parts. First, 2018 in review, second, economic and social development in 2019: overall requirements and policies directions. At last, tasks for 2019.

(2) Application of the Skopos Rule in the Report's Translation

The skopos rule occupies the most important role in the skopos theory. Under the skopos rule, translators should take the acceptability of the foreign readers into account, meanwhile, to know about the difference of language and culture in order to deal with it.

1) Linguistic Acceptability of the Target Readers

a. Active VS. Passive

E.g.1: 深化增值税改革

VAT reform will be deepened

There are many passive voice in English, but the passive voice in Chinese always become verbs, prepositions and auxiliary word.

b. Dynamic VS. Static

Chinese use verbs to show the dynamic forms while English prefers nouns, adjectives and prepositions

E.g. 2: 经济保持平稳运行

A general stable economy performance

We can see many verbs in Chinese will be translated as nouns in English. Chinese is dynamic, and the forms of words are unchanged, but English have more forms, to some extent, it also have to obey the grammar. The skopos theory requires that the way of translating relies on the purpose of translation, which means that the translation should match the target language's form and the sequence. So, such

adjustments, on the one hand, can satisfy the form of target language and make the readers can accept, on the other hand, get rid of the limitation of the form when translating.

c. Reiterative VS. Substitution

E.g. 3: 表示诚挚感谢 表示诚挚感谢 表示诚挚感谢

To express our sincere gratitude to express our heartfelt appreciation to express true gratitude to

As for Chinese, the structure of sentence is more balanced, but English always not use the same words in one sentence, so translators always use the reiteration and substitution to make the contents more clearly. According to the skopos theory, we know, if the original text is full of emotional intense, we can use the similar words to translate.

d. Parataxis VS. Hypotaxis

E.g. 4: 我们隆重庆祝改革开放 40 周年，深刻总结改革开放的伟大成就和宝贵经验，郑重宣示在新时代将改革开放进行到底的坚定决心，激励全国各族人民接续奋斗，再创新的历史伟业。

We solemnly commemorated the 40th anniversary of reform and opening up, thoroughly reviewed its great achievements and the valuable experience gained in its pursuit, and pledged our resolve to see reform and opening up through in the new era, thus galvanizing the Chinese people of all ethnic groups to continue their hard work to make new historic achievements.

There are some cohesive device in English, such as conjunctions and the subordinate clause, this means that the structure of the sentences is very important. According to the skopos theory, we should get the internal structure from the Chinese and to find the exact meaning, then the target audience can know what the author want to express.

2) Cultural Acceptability of the Target Readers

Because of the difference between Chinese and English, the target readers will have different understanding about the translation. Though the report is highly political, but the translation about that is also a challenge, so translators should convey the right meaning.

E.g. 5: 四风

Formalities, bureaucratism, hedonism and extravagance

Above all, the culture-loaded words can reflect the background information. As for quantifiers, we should change it into the usage in English, As for the metaphor, we should translate the internal meaning .

(3) Application of the Coherence Rule in the Report's Translation

1) Choice of Modal Auxiliary

As all know,there are thirteen auxiliaries in English.Different auxiliaries can express different meaning and emotions.

E.g. 6: 政府要带头讲诚信守契约

The government must set an example in acting in good faith and honoring contracts

E.g. 7: 我们必须……

We must be

E.g. 8: 二要平衡好……

Second, we need to

The modal auxiliary used to express the subject view of the government, we must, has express the emotion of mandatory, but nee to express the suggest or advice, so at the guidance of The coherence rule, we should focus on the points in order that the translation are more accord with the communicative purpose.

2) Non-subject Sentence

The character of Chinese sentence, especially the sentence in official document, is usually began with verbs.

E.g. 9: 持续深化农村改革，广袤乡村必将焕发新的生机活力。

rural reforms will be deepened, and all these efforts will without doubt inject new vitality in China's vast countryside

E.g. 10: 巩固扩大蓝天保卫战成果

Grains made in the fight to keep our skies blue will be consolidated and expanded.

E.g. 11: 坚持创新引领发展

We will continue to pursue innovation-driven development

E.g. 12: 勇于自我革命

We should have the courage to conduct the self-reform

The usage of non-subject sentences is very general. As for our Chinese, catch the main topic is not a difficult thing, but the readers is not the same. According to the coherence rule, first, we should find the most important part in the original text and then translate.

3) Cohesion

English often use more conjunctions than Chinese, no matter words, phrases or sentences, but in the report, find the conjunctions is not easy, we should pay more attention to the usage of that.

E.g. 13: 加快国资国企改革。加强和完善国有资产监管，推进国有资本投资、运营公司改革试点，促进国有资产保值增值

We will strengthen and improve the regulation of state assets, and continue to conduct trial reforms to establish state capital investment and management companies, so as to maintain and increase the value of state assets.

E.g.14: 我国财政金融体系总体稳健，可运用的政策工具多，我们有能力守住不发生系统性风险的底线。

China's fiscal and financial systems are on the whole stable, and we have many policy tools available, so we are fully capable of ensuring that no systemic risks will emerge.

E.g. 15: 凝聚起共创辉煌的澎湃力量

Forge a mighty force, as we endeavor to create more remarkable achievements

The conjunctions are very important in cohesion, it also used with high frequency in English, but in Chinese, the frequency of use is not as much as English. These conjunctions also carry on the emotions of the government, and often means the confidence to solve the problems and face the future. All in all, the Chinese sentences consist of many short sentences, therefore, when translating, we should add the linking words.

(4) Application of Fidelity Rule in the Report's Translation

Though the fidelity rule is not the dominant one in Chinese, but as for the official document, the translation should keep the same with the original text in the content, form and style.

1) Addition

E.g. 16: “三公”经费

Spending on official overseas, official vehicles, and official hospitality

E.g. 17: 要深化放管服改革

We must put forward with reforms that delegate power, improve regulation, and upgrade services

E.g. 18: 准入不准营

Letting firms in but not letting them do business

The fidelity rule requires that the translation version would be loyal to the original text, which means we need to be loyal to the original inner meaning instead of staying on the surface.

2) Omission

E.g. 19: 建立河长制，湖长制

The system of river chiefs and lake chiefs

E.g. 20: 是以习近平同志为核心的党中央坚强领导的结果

To the strong leadership of the party Central Committee Xi Jinping at its core

E.g. 21: 前瞻性，针对性，有效性

Forward-looking, targeted, and effective

Omission aims to omit the words that are abstract or repeated in original text. Omission occurs frequently in the prime minister's report.

We need omit the words with the same meaning, the literature and the category word under the guidance of fidelity.

3) Variation

E.g. 22: 居民消费价格涨幅 3% 左右

CPI increase of around 3 percent

E.g. 23: 综合分析国内外形势

A full analysis of developments in and outside China

In this way, the relation between source text and target text are established by the inner meaning and is accurate loyal to the original one.

4) Diction

E.g.24: 比去年预算高 0.2 个百分点

A 0.2-percentage-point increase over that of last year

5) Parallelism

E.g.25: 是 的结果, 是 的结果

The outcome is

6) Four-character Words

a. parallel four-character words

E.g. 26: 民生之本, 财富之源

The cornerstone of well being, and the wellspring of wealth

We can conclude that for the parallel for character word, it is best to translate it literally, which not only can express the meaning, but also be loyal to the form of the original one.

b. four character words with semantic overlap

E.g. 27: 攻坚克难

Surmount difficulties

In Chinese, the word with semantic overlap is just a writing habit and it is not to emphasis.

c. partial positive structure phrase

E.g. 28: 全面贯彻

Fully implement

5. Conclusion

The study analyzes the Report based on the three principles of skopos theory, aiming at finding the methods to solve the problems—How to deal with the cultural and linguistic acceptability of the skopos rule?; How to deal with the translation of sentences and passages presented by coherence rule?; How to deal with the translation of vocabulary and rhetoric in line with the fidelity rule? The skopos theory can guide the translation of the Report. The skopos theory is an important translation theory while the Report is a political document with international influence. The importance of its English version therefore goes without saying. Through the deep analysis of the development progress and connotation of the skopos theory as well as the structure content and text type of the Report, the author concludes that the two sides fit with each other in terms of translation purpose. The skopos theory prioritizes the purpose of translation. After analyzing, the Report has the following purposes; first, to convey the stance of the Chinese government on a series of domestic and foreign issues as well as review its work progress; second, to guide and inspire domestic and foreign people to understand, participate and support the work of the government. Therefore, the translation process of the report can refer to three principles of the skopos theory.

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