

The C-E Translation Strategies Research of Cross-Border Ecommerce Products Under the Belt and Road Initiative

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Abstract

Since 2020, offline sales entities have been restricted due to the epidemic situation and the influence of national policies, and cross-border e-commerce, a new industrial model, has gradually developed. However, there are still some shortcomings in the field of translation, and cross-border e-commerce English encounters problems, which will affect the development of cross-border e-commerce trade to a certain extent. To improve the English translation skills of cross-border e-commerce products, this paper analyzes and summarizes the English translation problems of cross-border e-commerce products by Skopos theory. Based on the Skopos theory with background knowledge, culture, and other factors, this paper discusses appropriate translation methods and puts forward appropriate translation strategies from the Skopos principle, faithfulness principle, and coherence principle, to promote the steady development of cross-border e-commerce.

Keywords: The Belt and Road Initiative, Skopos theory, cross-border ecommerce, translation

1. Research Background

1.1 The Development Status of the Belt and Road Initiative and Cross-Border E-Commerce

"The Belt and Road Initiative" is referred to as "OBOR", which refers to the abbreviation of "Silk Road Economic Belt" and "21st Century Maritime Silk Road". The route covers 65 countries. In recent years, the total import and export trade between China and the countries and regions along the "Belt and Road Initiative" has shown a continuous growth state, especially the cross-border e-commerce transaction volume has increased greatly and the growth rate has also been increasing. The World Trade

Organization predicts that trade transactions will increase by 8.0% in 2021 compared with 2020. (WTO, 2021) In the next few years, some scholars predict that the growth rate of cross-border electronic commerce will exceed that of domestic e-commerce, and the global sales of cross-border e-commerce will reach 627 billion US dollars by 2022.

Cross-border e-commerce refers to the realization of trade between countries through e-commerce platforms. It is mainly divided into two categories: Export and import. The 52nd *Statistical Report on Internet Development in China* on August 2023 released by China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), import

and export volume of cross-border e-commerce reached 1.1 trillion yuan in China by the half of 2023, up 16% year-on-year. Among them, the proportion of cross-border e-commerce goods imported and exported in foreign trade increased from less than 1% five years ago to about 5%. In addition, the national rural online retail sales reached 1.12 trillion yuan, an increase of 12.5% year-on-year. Different languages, cultures, economic levels, and openness in different regions lead to market segmentation. Affected by the epidemic situation and policies, the global e-commerce pattern is more dispersed than that in China, leaving more opportunities for new entrants to differentiate. With the rapid development of cross-border electronic commerce and the dominant position of export, English translation of products is particularly important.

1.2 Research Objects and Research Problems

In recent years, the complexity and diversity of e-commerce at home and abroad are both opportunities and challenges for cross-border electronic commerce. China's cross-border e-commerce sector must expand internationally against the backdrop of "the Belt and Road Initiative" if it is to experience new development. It is far from enough to have excellent Chinese commodity details, and excellent English commodity translation is also essential. As an international language, English is irreplaceable, so improving product translation quality into English is also a new challenge for the development of China's export trade. (Shao Yizhen, 2016) In today's global business exchanges, where translation is crucial, cross-border e-commerce is a crucial bridge. Translation is not only the transformation between two languages, but also the exchange of different information. Cross-border e-commerce items have definite commercial goals; customers and merchants both want for their purchases. According to Shao Yizhen (2016), "In today's increasingly fierce cross-border e-commerce competition, better mastering language, culture, foreign trade habits, and other elements, reducing errors in translation and communication, grasping the cultural differences of customer groups in different countries, and providing smoother and more effective communication in a targeted manner are conducive to improving the order conversion rate and establishing a long-term and stable trade cooperation relationship. (Lin

Yuan, 2017)" For this purpose, people need to translate texts creatively, take Skopos theory as the theoretical basis, and adopt appropriate translation methods and strategies such as literal translation, free translation, and additional translation.

Ma Yali, Wang Yarong (2021), Liu Qiong (2014), Qiu Xiaofen (2014), Qi Fen (2013), Liu Xiaofang (2013), Zhu Yanhong (2012), Pan Dongting (2010), Yuan Hongyan (2009) and Liu Xiaomei (2007) have discussed the application of Skopos theory in business text translation from different directions. Many scholars mainly focus on theoretical analysis when studying the translation of cross-border e-commerce products. However, this paper will use Skopos theory to analyze the problems in commodity translation and put forward solutions.

2. Skopos Theory

2.1 Development of Skopos Theory

Skopos theory has three principles: Skopos theory rule, coherence rule, and faithfulness rule. Its core is that "purpose determines means". The most important reason for the process of translation is the purpose of the whole translation behavior. Skopos's theory was first proposed by Katharina Reiss in the Possibilities and Limitations of Translation Criticism. Later, Hans J-Vermeer, a student of Reiss, advocated that translation should take the purpose of text as the first principle, which is the foundation theory of functionalism. (Nord, Christiane, 2001) Justa Holz-Manttari developed Vermeer's theory and put forward in his book *Translatorisches Handeln: theorie and Methode* published in 1984 that "translation is driven by purpose and oriented by results." In the fourth stage, Professor Christiane Nord of Applied Linguistics and Translation at Magdeburg University of Technology in Germany introduced the concept of loyalty into the academic viewpoint of functionalism on the premise of combining Vermeer's Skopos theory and put forward the theory of "function and loyalty" (Liu Qiong, 2014).

2.2 Rules of Skopos Theory

The Skopos Theory has three rules: the Skopos rule, the coherence rule, and the fidelity rule. Skopos rule is the most basic and important principle in Skopos theory, and there is a clear purpose in business translation, that is, the translation should be translated in the way expected by the target language readers to

achieve the sales purpose of merchants and the purchase purpose of consumers. (Liu Xiaomei, 2007) The coherence rule means that the target text must achieve the requirements of coherence within the text, and pay attention to the fluency and readability of the language. The rule of fidelity refers to being faithful to the original text, the author of the original text or the reader of the target text, and its main point lies in grasping the main information of commodities. Among them, the rule of skopos is the first principle among the three, and the latter two need to obey the skopos rule. The coherence rule emphasizes the readability and coherence of the content of the translated text and meets the requirements of the intra-textual coherence principle and inter-textual coherence principle. The fidelity principle means that the translated text should be loyal to the original text and close to the source text as much as possible.

3. Translation Strategies of Cross-Border E-Commerce Commodity Translation

Combined with cultural and other factors, this paper will use three rules of Skopos Theory (Skopos rule, coherence rule and fidelity rule) to analyze the problems in cross-border e-commerce product translation and propose solutions.

3.1 Analysis of the Skopos Rule

This paper analyzes the translation of cross-border e-commerce goods from the skopos rule, mainly from two aspects: free translation and omission.

3.1.1 Free Translation

Free translation is the process of reinterpreting the original text without adhering to its original expression to accomplish sublimation after the original text and the translated text are coherent. As in the slogan from a quick-acting heart-saving pill commercial, "Carry it with you and be prepared; Carry it with you, and you are more scared than hurt." It can be translated as "A friend in need is a friend indeed." (Liu Xiaomei, 2007) This translation employs proverbs that are well-known to Westerners, as well as uses anthropomorphic and repeated rhetorical devices to describe good friends as quick-acting heart-saving pills, which is both an accurate translation and one that retains cultural meanings.

3.1.2 Omission

The translation of product descriptions should

be accurate and precise, refrain from utilizing extraneous rhetorical elements, and accomplish the goal of being clear and attractive. The phrase "please connect flat devices, like printers, to flat connectors" is in the printer handbook. It is translated as "Connect a parallel device, such as a printer, to the parallel connector." No rhetorical methods are included in this sentence, and the redundant word "please" is omitted, which makes the translation easier to read through without losing its original meaning.

3.2 Analysis of the Coherence Rule

In the coherence rule, the fluency and readability of language are stressed. Four-character idioms are often frequently employed in Chinese commodity introductions. Consumers will inevitably be confused if translated word by word into English translation. Therefore, it is necessary to combine literal translation with free translation and properly use modified translation in translating some commodities. For example, the aim of a company is "quick response, immediate action, quality first, reputation first". This translation is translated as "We will offer you our products and services to your every satisfaction with promptness, quality and credit." This translation is concise and clear, conforms to English expression habits, and is also accepted by target readers. Therefore, we cannot translate literally according to the original language when we come across obscure words, sentences, and texts. The article seems to follow the "faithfulness principle", but we violate the "coherence rule". Combining different translation strategies is the best approach.

3.3 Analysis of the Fidelity Rule

Faithfulness rule refers to being faithful to the original text, the author of the original text or the reader of the target text. The main point is to grasp the essential information of commodities. Literal translation is a more appropriate method. Literal translation refers to the simple adjustment of the translated text on the condition of preserving the original expression and sentence structure correctly. This method is generally used for product title keywords, promotion copywriting slogans, and so on. For example, "Men's Military Watches" is translated as "Men's Military Watches". The slogan of Nike sports shoes is "Just do it!" which is translated as "Do it if you want and persevere". Another example is that a TV station promotes the copy

“Not hurting the eyes is the new standard of a good screen”. These translations are not only intuitive, but also contain the original expression, and consider the receptivity of the target readers.

4. Conclusion

With the gradual development of trade among countries, cross-border e-commerce transactions are also growing in the context of “the Belt and Road Initiative”, so English translation of cross-border e-commerce products needs to go hand in hand. Skopos theory plays a critical role in the translation of cross-border e-commerce goods. If the product is translated appropriately, it will be easily accepted by the target language consumers to promote the steady development of cross-border e-commerce. Based on Skopos theory, this paper analyzes the English translation of cross-border e-commerce products, combines theory with practice, and expounds on different translation strategies. English translation of cross-border e-commerce products is becoming increasingly important with the development of cross-border e-commerce. Therefore, the English translation of cross-border e-commerce products needs to be optimized under the guidance of theory, and practice will also affect the theory. In the future, English translation of cross-border e-commerce products will also grow and develop.

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