

# Study on Translation Strategies of Publicity Documents of B&R

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**Abstract:** In recent years, China has contacted with the international community more and more frequently, and its international influence has been greatly enhanced. Therefore, developing international publicity translation has become increasingly important. It plays an important role in conveying Chinese voice and letting the world know about China. Vision and Action on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21<sup>st</sup>- Century Maritime Silk Road (Vision and Action) is an important initiative issued by China on "the Belt and Road Initiative", which plays a significant guiding role in the research of translation of international publicity documents of "the Belt and Road Initiative". In this paper, literature analysis, case analysis and other research methods are adopted. This paper makes a brief analysis of the present situation and development of international publicity translation of "the Belt and Road Initiative" in China and abroad. This paper briefly introduces Newmark's communicative translation theory, expounds the definition and characteristics of publicity translation in detail. Taking the Vision and Action as an example, this paper analyzes the translation strategies and skills of international publicity under the guidance of communicative translation theory, and finally it makes a summary, and puts forward some suggestions and prospects for the development of international publicity translation, hoping to provide some reference and help for the future development of international publicity translation of "the Belt and Road Initiative".

**Keywords:** Translation Strategies; International Publicity Documents; the Belt and Road Initiative; Communicative Translation

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The world is undergoing a great change that has never been seen in a century. International publicity translation has received increasing attention in response to General Secretary's call of "telling Chinese stories well and making Chinese voices heard". However, the international community still has insufficient understanding of China at present, and there is a certain degree of misunderstanding of Chinese culture. Therefore, it has become a strategic task for China to strengthen external publicity and spread Chinese culture.

### 1.2 Significance

At present, scholars in China have conducted relevant researches on the translation of international publicity and the Belt and Road Initiative publicity documents in China, achieving some results. However, there are still many problems in the study of international publicity translation in China, such as the lack of depth of scholars' research on various translation theories, the poor fit between the selected theory and the practical translation content, and the superficial research on the content involved in each field of publicity, so there are few authoritative research results in this field. Similarly, there are not many authoritative achievements in the translation of "the Belt and Road Initiative" in China, and the related research representatives include Xu Linyan, Liu Yang and so on. Xu discussed the translation strategies adopted in the subtitle translation practice of *Crossing the Maritime Silk Road* from the perspective of reception aesthetics, combined with the differences between English and Chinese languages and cultures and the characteristics of subtitles; Liu studied the translation compensation of place names along the Belt and Road Initiative. He compensated related knowledge of geography, history, culture and social status, and standardized them as terms. *Vision and Action* is an important political document to promote the publicity, construction and development of "the Belt and Road Initiative", and its English translation is related to China's national image and international publicity. At present, no relevant literature on the

English version of the document has been retrieved on CNKI. Among many translation theories, the translation under the communicative translation theory conforms to a specific register category, with more common words. So, it is relatively fluent and easy to understand to benefit public acceptance. The translation of *Vision and Action* is aimed at overseas people, which should be accurate and easy to understand, so its English version has a high degree of agreement with the theory. Therefore, this project takes the English version of *Vision and Action* as an example and studies the translation skills of the Belt and Road Initiative's publicity documents from the perspective of communicative translation, which is of great value of research and has some reference significance for future research on international publicity translation[1-2].

## 2. Theoretical Basis and Related Concepts

### 2.1 Overview of Newmark's Translation Theory

#### 2.1.1 Definition of Semantic Translation and Communicative Translation

In his book *Approaches to Translation*, Newmark puts forward two important concepts of translation theory: Semantic Translation and Communicative Translation.

##### (1) Semantic Translation

According to the definition in the book, semantic translation refers to reproducing the contextual meaning of the original text as accurately as possible under the condition of conforming to the semantic and syntactic structure of the target language. It means trying to restore the original text based on the correct semantic and syntactic structure of the original text, and it pays more attention to the form and meaning of the original text. The focus of semantic translation is the thinking process of the author, and the target text must respect the cultural background of the target language and respect the author to the greatest extent, and only explain when it is difficult for the target language to express the original text. That is to say, the linguistic features and expression habits of the source text should be preserved first in semantic translation.

##### (2) Communicative Translation

Communicative translation refers to the effect of the target text on the target readers should be as good as the effect of the original text on the original readers. It means that the target text is completely reader-oriented, and the effect produced by the target text is required to be as close to the original as possible. Newmark believes that communicative translation aims to make the impact of the target text on the target readers as close as possible to the impact of the original text on the original readers. Communicative translation focuses on conveying text information, and it attaches great importance to the readers' acceptance of the target text. Communicative translation pays more attention to effect than content, so it should first pay attention to the target language and target readers, and make the target text as close to the target culture as possible in translation, so that readers can understand it without obscure sentence patterns.

#### 2.1.2 Differences between Semantic Translation and Communicative Translation

Semantic translation and communicative translation are of great importance, which have a strong guiding significance in translation practice. Therefore, it is necessary to make a comparison between semantic translation and communicative translation, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The Comparison between Semantic Translation and Communicative Translation

	Semantic Translation	Communicative Translation
Similarities	1. Word-for-word translation shall be adopted when satisfying the equivalent effect of translation; 2. Both are as close to the source text translation as possible; 3. If the information in the original text is universal information without cultural characteristics, and the content and expression are both very important, and the target readers have the same level as the original readers, semantic translation and communicative translation can be adopted at the same time.	
Differences	1. Trying to express the thinking process of the author and keep the original language features and expressions.	1. Paying more attention to conveying information, so that readers can think and strive to make language communication

	<p>2. Relatively objective; Pursuing faithfulness to the original text and requiring high accuracy of the translation.</p> <p>3. Sometimes it tends to over-translation, which is slightly obscure and complicated in comparison;</p> <p>4. Favoring the original author and the original text, emphasizing the original content.</p> <p>5. More suitable for literary translation.</p> <p>6. Absolute significance.</p>	<p>produce the greatest effect.</p> <p>2. Relatively subjective; Focusing more on readers' experience than the original text, and trying to make readers understand it.</p> <p>3. Sometimes it tends to under-translation, which is slightly concise and smooth in comparison.</p> <p>4. Favoring the target readers and the target text, emphasizing the effect of the target text.</p> <p>5. More suitable for business negotiation and other documents.</p> <p>6. Relative significance.</p>
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## 2.2 Definition of Publicity Translation

Like "external publicity", "international publicity translation" is also a term with Chinese characteristics, which was put forward in China. At present, the western translation circles have not found any references and special topics on the translation of international publicity. Huang Youyi first explained "the translation of international publicity". He put forward the definition of it from the formal level based on the perspective of communication studies. In his opinion, international publicity translation is basically Chinese-foreign translation, that is, translating all kinds of information related to China into foreign languages, and spreading Chinese views through media or conferences. The audience of international publicity translation is foreign people, and its content is various documents and information reflecting China's development and characteristics. Its purpose is to explain China to the world by translating Chinese publicity materials into foreign languages and using expressions easily accepted by foreign audiences, thus constructing an international image conducive to China's development.

As mentioned, there are many differences between "internal publicity" and "external publicity" in audience, media and channels, communication objectives and contents, etc. Therefore, translators of international publicity should not be limited by the source text, but should make appropriate screening and adjustment of publicity materials, select materials suitable for international publicity for translation, and adjust and translate international publicity materials according to English. Huang Youyi believes that the translation of international publicity should follow the principle of "three close to international publicity" in addition to following the general principles: First, close to the reality of China's development; Second, close to the needs of foreign audiences for Chinese information; Third, close to the thinking habits of foreign audiences. This principle emphasizes the difference between inside and outside China, and points out the special requirements of international publicity translation from the perspective of foreign audiences. The purpose of international publicity translation is to influence the international community by publicizing China, so as to spread the language and culture of China. Therefore, the choice of materials, strategies and expressions in the process of translation should be carried out around the foreigners. In translation, we should pay attention to three characteristics of publicity translation: the seriousness of sensitive discourse, the accuracy of communication language and the flexibility of language conversion[3-4].

## 3. Case Analysis

### 3.1 Introduction of the Text

The *Vision and Action* is a document jointly issued by the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce in 2015, aiming at promoting the implementation of the "the Belt and Road Initiative", revitalizing the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, and bringing Asia, Europe and Africa closer together in a new form to advance mutually beneficial cooperation to a new historical height.

### 3.2 Translation Strategies of International Publicity under the Guidance of Communicative Translation Theory

The greatest function of international publicity translation is to make the world learn about China and

hear the voice of China. As a kind of international publicity translation, the translation of publicity documents is an important channel for the world to know China in more details. Focusing on conveying text information, communicative translation theory favors the communication function and helps readers understand as much as possible for reducing readers' reading barriers. As a kind of international publicity, the translation of government publicity documents needs to keep the communicative function of the source text as much as possible, so the translation should adopt more flexible translation strategies. That is, the translation should be faithful to the source text under the guidance of communicative translation theory. It should pay the greatest attention to the effect of the target text on the target readers, focus on the communicative function, and enhance the readability of the translated text to finally achieve the purpose of spreading Chinese culture[5-6].

### **3.2.1 Foreignization**

Foreignization favors the source language and the author, and conveys the content of the source text by the expression used by the author in the source language. Foreignization strategy should be close to the author as much as possible and keep the cultural and linguistic features of the source language as much as possible to make the target readers feel the foreign culture and values in the source language.

#### **Example 1**

Target Text (TT): When Chinese President visited Central Asia and Southeast Asia in September and October of 2013, he raised the initiative of jointly building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Maritime Silk Road (hereinafter referred to as the Belt and Road), which have attracted close attention from all over the world.

The " Silk Road Economic Belt ", "21st-Century Maritime Silk Road " and " Belt and Road " in the text are all global initiatives put forward by China, so there are no relating entries in English. In the English translation of publicity, the translator chooses the strategy of foreignization, which is directly translated into "Silk Road Economic Belt", "21st-Century Maritime Silk Road" and "the Belt and Road", so that the target readers can understand the new initiatives put forward by China with new reading experiences while reaching the goal of communication, so as to help them get closer to China.

#### **Example 2**

TT: .....speed up the opening-up and development of the Beibu Gulf Economic Zone and the Pearl River-Xijiang Economic Zone, build an international corridor opening to the ASEAN region, create new strategic anchors for the opening-up and development of the southwest and mid-south regions of China.

Example 2 also chooses the strategy of foreignization. "Beibuwan" and "Xijiang" in the sentence have no relating words in English, and they are directly spell in Chinese, which not only makes the target readers feel exotic culture, but also publicizes China. "Zhanlue Zhidian" is a common term in government documents. Here, the translator translates as "strategic anchors", which is refreshing and can make the target readers better understand Chinese culture with great impression.

### **3.2.2 Domestication**

Domestication favors the target language and the target readers, and adopts the expressions commonly used by the target readers to convey the original content. Domestication strategy should be as close to the target readers as possible and reduce the obscure sentences in the target text as possible to enhance the intimacy of the target readers and improve the reading experience and reduce cultural conflicts.

#### **Example 3**

TT: People-to-people bond provides the public support for implementing the Initiative.

The "Shehui Genji" in sentences is a common saying in Chinese, but the target readers may not understand it very well. Therefore, the translator adopts the strategy of domestication, and "Genji" means "providing support". Therefore, the translator translates it vividly as "public support", which is closer to the target readers and improves the readability of the translated text.

#### **Example 4**

TT: .....and become the pace-setter and main force in the Belt and Road Initiative, particularly the building of the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Maritime Silk Road.

The "Paitoubin" and "Zhulijun" in sentences cannot be translated directly into English. The translator adopts the strategy of domestication. The "Paitoubin" is the "leader" and the "Zhulijun" is the "main force". Therefore, the translator translates them as "pace-setter" and "main force", which avoids the

reading obstacles of the target readers, making the target text natural and fluent, and improving the reading experience.

### ***3.3 Translation Skills of Publicity under the Guidance of Communicative Translation Theory***

This section briefly describes the translation skills that translators can adopt under the guidance of communicative translation theory, including interpretation, annotation, conversion of words and omission.

#### ***3.3.1 Interpretation***

Interpretation, also known as hermeneutics, is usually used to properly interpret the original text when considering the readability of the target text. The object is the government publicity documents, which contain many expressions with Chinese characteristics, such as four-character words. If these expressions are translated literally, English readers may find it difficult to understand the original meaning, and may even have misunderstandings. Therefore, when translating such kind of documents into English, interpretation should be adopted based on the premise of following the communicative translation theory, which takes care of the feelings of English readers, so that English readers can try their best to understand the information that the original author wants to convey, closing the feelings of the original readers as much as possible.

##### **Example 5**

TT: .....focus on such key regions as the city clusters along the middle reaches of the Yangtze River, around Chengdu and Chongqing, in central Henan Province, around Hohhot, Baotou, Erdos and Yulin, and around Harbin and Changchun to propel regional industrial concentration.

If "Zhongyuan Chengshiqun" in the sentence is directly translated as "Zhongyuan city clusters", it may be difficult for the target readers to understand, thinking that it is a city in China, but it is actually the central part of Henan Province. Therefore, the translator adopts the interpretation and translates it as "in central Henan Province" to explain the referential meaning of the original text, which is easy for the target readers to understand and achieve the purpose of communication.

#### ***3.3.2 Annotation***

There are cultural differences between different countries, so not all words have equivalents in the translation of international publicity. Therefore, annotation should be used to supplement the explanation of background information on the premise of following the communicative translation theory, so as to reduce the obstacles to the understanding of the target readers, and understand the source culture as much as possible.

##### **Example 6**

TT: We should give full scope to the economic and cultural strengths of Shaanxi and Gansu provinces and the ethnic and cultural advantages of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and Qinghai Province.

TT: We should give full play to the unique advantage of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region as a neighbor of ASEAN countries.

"Ningxia" and "Guangxi" in these two sentences are both autonomous regions of China. If they are directly expressed in spell like other provinces, they cannot reflect the differences of autonomous regions. Therefore, the translator adopted the annotation and made supplementary explanations in translation to translate it beyond the literal meaning. Therefore, the translation reduces doubts for the target readers, following the communicative translation theory.

#### ***3.3.3 Conversion of Words***

There are differences between Chinese and English. According to the research, Chinese sentences contain a large number of verbs, belonging to dynamic language; However, English sentences often have only one verb in a sentence, and abstract nouns and prepositions are often used to express the meaning of verbs, which belongs to static language. Therefore, the use of conversion of words in the process of publicity translation is to make the translation closer to the expression of the target language and enhance the readability of the translation under the premise of following the communicative translation theory.

##### **Example 7**

TT: In 21<sup>st</sup> century, a new era marked by the theme of peace, development, cooperation and mutual

benefit, it is all the more important for us to carry on the Silk Road Spirit in face of the weak recovery of the global economy, and complex international and regional situations.

"Miandui" in sentences belongs to verbs. In the translation of international publicity, the translator adopts the method of part of conversion of words and uses the prepositional phrase "in face of" to express the meaning of "face". Because verbs are often used in Chinese, while nouns are often used in English, which is more in line with English expression habits to make it easier for the target readers to accept, thus achieving the purpose of communication.

### 3.3.4 Omission

The differences between English and Chinese are not only the dynamic and static mentioned above, but also the simplification. Chinese is cumbersome and redundant, contains more category words, or likes to repeat to emphasis, which has no practical meaning, but is just a customary expression in Chinese; English is more concise and leaner. Therefore, under the premise of following the communicative translation theory, the omission is adopted in the translation of international publicity, to make the translation more conform to English habits and avoid translationese.

#### Example 8

TT: For thousands of years, the Silk Road Spirit- "peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit"-has been passed from generation to generation.

In sentences, "Huxue Hjian" means "Huxue", and "Huli Gongying" means "Huli", all of which belong to four-character words, but their meanings are repeated. Therefore, the translator chooses omission to omit the meaning of repetition, which is more in accordance with English expression habits and makes the target readers read more smoothly, enhances the readability of the target, following the communicative translation theory.[5-6]

## 4. Summary

### 4.1 Summary of Translation Strategies and Skills

Taking *Vision and Action* as an example, the paper adopts two translation strategies, domestication and foreignization under the guidance of communicative translation theory, and also adopts four translation techniques, namely, interpretation, annotation, conversion of words and omission, to make a concrete analysis of the translation of international publicity documents, hoping to provide some reference for future publicity translators of "the Belt and Road Initiative".

### 4.2 Suggestions and Prospects

In the context of turbulence, it is more urgent for the world to hear China's voice than ever before. At present, the development of "the Belt and Road Initiative" international publicity translation is still at a relatively backward level, and the translation market is uneven. Therefore, in the future, translators should discuss and study from a wider perspective, improve the translation quality and make China's voice better heard by the world, to promote the smooth development of "the Belt and Road Initiative", and enhance China's international influence.

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