

English-Chinese Translation Practice Report Based on the “Understanding, Expression, and Adaptation” Framework

-- Taking the “European Policy Center Research Report” (excerpt) as an Example

Yinping Yao^{1, a}

¹School of Foreign Languages, Sichuan Normal University, Chengdu 610000, China

^aphoebe1997@foxmail.com

Abstract: The European Policy Centre is an independent, not-for-profit think tank dedicated to fostering European integration through analysis and debate. Taking into account the context of the current era deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, this article excerpts an article *Addressing the Challenges of the Healthcare Workforce: Ensuring the Future of Health in Europe* recently published by the agency. The article combines actual conditions and data in Europe and puts forward thoughts on how to improve healthcare systems after the pandemic. Using this as the corpus, this paper uses the “understanding, expression and adaptation” framework as theoretical support. The text is sorted, studied, and translated practices from these three aspects separately, with a view to further familiarizing themselves with the characteristics of political essays in practice, using classroom knowledge and mastering the translation techniques of political essays.

Keywords: European Policy Center; “understanding, expression and adaptation” framework; translation of political papers.

1. Introduction

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic at the end of 2019 has had a significant impact globally, severely affecting the world’s economy and culture, as well as endangering human life. It has also posed a major challenge to the healthcare systems of various countries. Although the global pandemic is gradually becoming normalized, it has presented new challenges to healthcare systems worldwide, prompting countries to reflect on and improve their current healthcare systems, including Europe. In this context, the European Policy Centre (EPC) published an article titled *Addressing the Challenges of the Healthcare Workforce: Ensuring the Future of Health in Europe* on its official website on January 23, 2023.

This translation practice selects excerpts from the third, fourth, and fifth paragraphs of the article, which briefly introduce the background of the article. Translating this material can help Chinese scholars and the public understand the thoughts of European scholars in responding to public health safety crises and provide certain reference significance for China’s development from the perspective of healthcare.

The main body of this paper is divided into three parts. The first part is the introduction. The introduction mainly states the background and research significance of the paper topic, and demonstrates the structure of the paper, allowing readers to understand the author’s purpose in selecting this article for translation and the overall framework of the paper. The second part is the demonstration of the translation process, mainly discussing from three angles of the “understanding, expression and adaptation” framework. The understanding aspect is mainly based on the correct interpretation of the Source text text’s words and sentences, including understanding through context and information retrieval. The expression aspect mainly analyzes the fluency of the translated text and whether it conforms to Chinese expression

habits when interpreting clauses. The flexibility aspect mainly involves the translator’s subjective initiative to consciously make flexible adjustments to the Source text text within the premise of not violating the fidelity principle, including adding, deleting, and flexibly translating information. The third part is the conclusion, which includes an evaluation summary and reflection on this translation task, mainly focusing on how to improve professional knowledge and the ability to investigate and search for textual materials, as well as the qualities that a translator should possess.

2. Translation Process Demonstration

This translation practice report will adopt Professor Li Changshuan’s “understanding, expression and adaptation” framework to guide the translation process and the writing of the translation practice report. Professor Li Changshuan first proposed this framework in the *UN Document Translation Tutorial* [1]. The book analyzes common understanding, expression, and flexibility issues in initial and revised translations through a comparison of initial and revised translations.

2.1. Understanding

Firstly, what is “understanding”? “Understanding” refers to the correct understanding of the Source text text. Accuracy is widely recognized as one of the primary principles of translation, and the premise of accurate translation is the correct understanding of the Source text text. Understanding the Source text text is essential for accurate expression. Regarding understanding, Li Changshuan [2] believes that most translation errors or inadequacies in translation examples involve understanding issues. To address this problem, it is necessary to carefully read the context, conduct comprehensive and detailed background knowledge research, and only in this way can one reach the level of understanding

intended by the author. Therefore, the following discussion will focus on the understanding of background knowledge and the specific content of the text.

2.1.1. Background Understanding

The Skopos theory suggests that the purpose of the translation determines the translation strategies that the translator should adopt [3]. Therefore, in the pre-translation preparation stage before formal translation begins, it is necessary to have a certain understanding of the issuing institution of the text, the article's author, and the general idea of the article to expand the background knowledge of the text, helping the translator further grasp the purpose and understand the Source text text. Therefore, the following will briefly introduce the aforementioned background. The headquarters of the EPC is located in Brussels, the capital of Belgium, established in 1997. In 2003, it became an international nonprofit organization (AISBL) established under Belgian law. It is an independent, nonprofit scientific research institution and think tank aimed at promoting the process of European integration through analysis and discussion. The first author of this text, Danielle Brady, is a policy analyst for the European Social and Welfare Program, with research areas including EU health and social policies. The second author, Elizabeth Kuiper, is the Deputy Director and Head of the European Policy Center's European Social and Welfare Program. *Addressing the Challenges of the Healthcare Workforce: Ensuring the Future of Health in Europe* was published on the EPC's official website on January 23, 2023. This article mainly discusses the core issues exposed by the European healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic, namely the shortage of healthcare workforce. Therefore, in the future long-term development plan, the author proposes specific ideas and measures to address the decline in the capacity of the European healthcare workforce. After conducting some investigation into the background of the text, we can proceed to study the specific content of the text.

2.1.2. Text Understanding

In terms of understanding, the main difficulties encountered are some terms whose meanings are difficult to determine. Some can be consulted using search tools to find relevant content, but some can only be determined based on the context, which requires a full understanding of the Source text text and the ability to correctly grasp its connotations. Another part involves polysemy, which also requires interpretation based on context. The following analysis will focus on two aspects: information retrieval and relying on context, using relevant examples from the material.

2.1.2.1 Information Retrieval

Example 1

Source text: However, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic revealed pre-existing challenges across Europe.

Target Text: 新型冠状病毒病毒

Analysis: According to the information retrieved, on February 11, 2020, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced at the Global Research and Innovation Forum press conference that the novel coronavirus was named "COVID-19," where "Co" stands for "Corona," "Vi" for "Virus," "D" for "Disease," and "COVID-19" is an abbreviation of several words and the outbreak year of the virus. China has also given an official translation, namely "新型冠状病毒," while the term "COVID-19 pandemic" in the text is translated as "新冠疫情" based on the context.

Example 2

Source text: HCPs

Target Text: HCPs = health care providers = 医务工作者、提供医护服务的医院职工等

Analysis: The term "HCPs" is the abbreviation for "healthcare professionals," as found in the query. It can also be expressed as "health care providers," and the official translation of this phrase is "医务工作者、提供医护服务的医院职工等."

Example 3

Source text: chronic diseases

Target Text: 慢性疾病

Analysis: "Chronic diseases" is a clinical medical term. According to the Oxford Dictionary, its official translation is "慢性疾病." A broad definition of chronic diseases is those that last for a year or more and require ongoing medical care or restrict daily activities or both.

Example 4

Source text: healthcare workforce

Target Text: 医疗保健劳动力

Analysis: "Healthcare workforce" is a core term throughout the text, so its translation is crucial. According to the data collected online, the translation "医疗保健劳动力" has the highest usage rate, so this translation is used here.

Example 5

Source text: average life expectancy

Target Text: 人均预期寿命

Analysis: Average life expectancy refers to the average number of years a newborn baby in a certain year and region is expected to live. It is a comprehensive indicator of the current economic and social development level and the level of medical and health services in a country or region. According to the official translation of China Daily, "average life expectancy" is translated as "人均预期寿命."

2.1.2.2 Relying on Context

Example 6

Source text: While highlighting the importance of the healthcare workforce, the pandemic also brought these challenges to the forefront.

Target Text: 人们所关注的焦点

Analysis: "Forefront," as per the Collins Dictionary, means the leading edge of a movement or activity; the focus of thought or attention. Considering the context, the latter interpretation is more appropriate here, so it is translated as "人们所关注的焦点."

Example 7

Source text: Those working on the frontline were exposed to threats to their physical and mental well-being as well as violence, leading to increased levels of anxiety among healthcare professionals (HCPs).

Target Text: 一线医护人员

Analysis: "Frontline" in the dictionary means "front line" or "front." Here, it refers to "医护人员" who work at the forefront.

2.2. Expression

Expression is the concretization and deepening of understanding. The requirement for expression is to ensure the fluency of the translation. Ji Xianlin [4] pointed out three requirements for fluent translation: universality, coherence, and idiomaticity. "Universality" refers to using language that is commonly used by the entire nation, which means using

Chinese in this context, focusing on the choice of words in the translation. “Coherence” means that the translation should be coherent with the context, conforming to the logic of the context, emphasizing the collocation of vocabulary. “Idiomatcity” means conforming to the expression habits of the target language, in this case, conforming to the expression habits of Chinese. It is the organic combination of the first two. In other words, when expressing the translation, the translator needs to ensure that the translation conforms to the expression habits of Chinese, fits the logic of the context, and the collocation of vocabulary, etc., in order to make the translation have a good expression. The following mainly uses long sentences in the material as examples to clarify the details that need attention in expressing the meaning of the sentences.

Example 8

Source text: Those working on the frontline were exposed to threats to their physical and mental well-being as well as violence, leading to increased levels of anxiety among healthcare professionals (HCPs).

Target Text: 一线医护人员的身心健康面临各种威胁以及暴力的危害,从而导致医疗保健专业人员(HCPs)的焦虑水平升高。

Analysis: The main clause of this sentence is “Those working on the frontline...as well as violence.” The following clause is a result adverbial clause introduced by “leading to.” The logical relationship between the sentences is causal. Therefore, to ensure coherence between sentences and make the meaning clearer, “从而” is added to express the logical relationship between the sentences.

Example 9

Source text: While this signalled an increase of 16% and 14% over ten years, the demand for care has grown at a faster rate due to an ageing population and the increasing burden of chronic diseases.

Target Text: 虽然这一数据表明在过去十年中,医护人员的数量分别增长了 16%和 14%,但由于人口老龄化和慢性病负担日益加重,医疗护理相关的需求增长速度更快。

Analysis: This sentence needs to be combined with the previous content. Through additional translation, it supplements and clarifies some unclear parts of the sentence. First, the pronoun “this” needs to be specified to make the meaning clear. According to the previous content, “this” refers to “the increased data,” so it is translated as “这一数据.” As for “an increase of 16% and 14%,” it needs to be clarified what specifically has increased. According to the previous content, it is the number of healthcare workers, so it is translated as “医护人员的数量分别增长了 16%和 14%.”

2.3. Adaptation

“Adaptation” refers to making choices, and Li Changshuan [5] pointed out that “appropriateness” is a translation standard, meaning that the translation should meet the translation purpose. The purpose of “adapting” is to make the translation serve the translation purpose appropriately. The concept of “adapting” comes from the Skopos theory. The Skopos theory primarily focuses on the purpose of translation, which determines the translation methods and strategies that translators need to adopt. Therefore, to achieve the purpose of translation, translators sometimes need to use appropriate methods and strategies for adaptation. The following examples illustrate how adaptation works.

Example 10

Source text: Without targeted action to address retention levels and the appeal of occupations within health services, the supply of healthcare workers will be unable to meet the demand.

Target Text: 如果没有针对性的措施来提升卫生服务部门的保留水平和职业吸引力,医护人员的供应将无法满足需求。

Analysis: The word “address” appears in the sentence, and here it is taken as a verb meaning “to deal with.” Typically, in Chinese expression habits, the word that collocates with “解决” (solve) is “问题” (problem), indicating “解决问题” (addressing the issue). Therefore, it is necessary to add “...的问题” (“the issue of...”) in the following context to make the expression smoother. However, adding “...的问题” (“the issue of...”) here, such as “如果没有针对性的措施来解决卫生服务部门的保留水平和职业吸引力所存在的问题” (“Without targeted action to solve the issue of retention levels and the appeal of occupations within health services”), would make the sentence redundant and convoluted, and the meaning would be less smooth. Therefore, it is necessary to change the approach and start with the phrase “retention levels and the appeal of occupations,” which can be appropriately paired with the verb “提升” (enhance). This does not distort the Source text meaning of the sentence. Thus, here it is acceptable to abandon the Source text meaning of “address” and translate it flexibly as “提升” (enhance).

3. Conclusion

This practice report is based on the translation of the third, fourth, and fifth paragraphs of *Addressing the Challenges of the Healthcare Workforce: Ensuring the Future of Health in Europe*. While translating the text, the author gained a deeper understanding of the form and content characteristics of policy papers. Through case analysis, guidance on translation was provided from three aspects: understanding, expression and adaptation, addressing the difficulties encountered during the translation process. Translation techniques and insights applied were elucidated, aiming to provide reference for the translation of similar texts.

During the translation practice, the author deeply realized that to become a qualified translator, both professional competence and work attitude are indispensable, and they complement each other. Firstly, in terms of professional competence, in addition to proficiency in both English and Chinese, it is necessary to expand a rich knowledge base. As the well-known saying in the translation field goes, “a translator is a polymath.” Accumulating and expanding encyclopedic knowledge not only enhances translation skills but also enriches life. Furthermore, in addition to broadening the breadth of knowledge, it is also necessary to devote oneself to the depth of professional knowledge. As the saying goes, “practice makes perfect,” consciously exploring one’s most interested areas during the translation process can accumulate experience and skills in a certain translation field, laying the foundation for long-term career planning in the future. As for work attitude, the author believes that rigorous and meticulous work attitude is indispensable to become a qualified translator because translation itself is a discipline that requires attention to detail and extreme patience. Translators not only need to verify and correct the Source text but also need to refine the translation repeatedly. For the

verification process, it is necessary to enhance personal investigative research capabilities, be proficient in using tools, such as various search engines to grasp the frequency of term usage; trace the origin, and search for the source of the Source text text through authoritative platforms; utilize professional dictionaries to query the professional meanings of relevant terms, etc., continuously improving one's investigative research capabilities during exploration.

References

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