

Chinese Translation of Subtitles for International Open Classes from the Perspective of Skopos Theory

-- Take the Second Lesson of Harvard Course on Happiness as an Example

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Abstract

With the introduction of online open courses in international prestigious schools, the demand for Chinese translation of course subtitles has increased year by year. As an important basis for the study and research of domestic lecturers, subtitles of open class have become one of the significant areas of translation practice and research by translation scholars. Based on this background, this paper discusses the subtitle translation of why we should learn positive psychology, the second lesson of Harvard Course on Happiness, from the perspective of the three principles of teleology, that is the principle of purpose, the principle of coherence, and the principle of loyalty. The analysis shows that the academic subtitle translation not only realizes the goal of knowledge dissemination and enlightening the audience to adapt to the purpose of subtitle presentation, but also polishes the stylistic coherence of the translation and loyalty to the original style, hoping to provide a reliable reference for the research and practice of subtitle translation in the same type of international open courses.

Keywords

Teleology; Subtitle Translation; Harvard Course on Happiness; The international education.

1. Introduction

In recent years, more and more overseas universities set up professional open courses online to spread knowledge and school culture. Whereas, due to differences in language and culture, foreign language courses require subtitles and Chinese translation, in order to be convenient for study and learning of most learners in China, which makes the significance of research on subtitle translation of overseas open courses increasingly prominent. The Harvard Course on Happiness is taught by Dr. Tal Ben-Shahar of Harvard University, which is very popular among learners at home and abroad. It is one of the classic courses of the International open course. As an important translation theory, Skopos theory provides effective ideas and methods for translation research and practice. This article attempts to select teleology as the research theory, analyzes the subtitle translation of the second lesson of Harvard Course on Happiness, summarize its translation experience, and provides empirical reference for industry practice and academic research.

2. A Brief Introduction to Teleology

2.1. Teleology

Skopos theory is a translation theory put forward by German scientist Vermeer in the 1970s, and it is one of the basic viewpoints of functional translation theory. Skopos theory believes that translation activities should be oriented towards the purpose of translation, emphasizing that the translation should be analyzed based on the original text, aiming at the intended function of the translation, and choosing the best translation method. Under this theoretical framework, the status of the original text is no longer sacred and inviolable, and the translator can decide which content of the original text can be retained and which needs to be adjusted or rewritten according to the purpose of translation. "The original text is only one of the multiple offers of information used by the translator." [1]

2.2. The Three Principles of Teleology

Teleology contains three principles, the principle of purpose, the principle of coherence, and the principle of loyalty. Among them, the principle of skopos is its primary principle, the principle of loyalty is subordinate to the principle of coherence, and both the principle of loyalty and coherence are subordinate to the principle of skopos, which are specifically applied in translation practice according to specific translation purposes [2].

The purpose principle requires translators to conduct translation activities based on the function and purpose of the translation. There are three explanations for the purpose here, the purpose of the translator, the communicative purpose of the translation, and the purpose of using a special translation method. In most cases, a translation act will have different primary and secondary purposes, which requires the translator to determine it in practice according to the specific act itself. [3] In addition, the coherence principle of teleology requires the translation to accord with the expression habits of the target language and enable readers to understand it correctly and fully. The principle of fidelity, as a supplement to the principle of teleology, emphasizes the loyalty to the original text under the purpose.

3. View the Chinese Translation of the Subtitles of the Second Lesson of Harvard Course on Happiness from the Perspective of the Three Principles of Teleology

3.1. Purpose Principle

3.1.1. Achieve the Purpose of Knowledge Dissemination and Education Inspiration

As an open academic course, the main purpose of Chinese translation of the subtitle of Harvard Series of Courses on happiness is to spread theoretical knowledge and provide academic research resources to the target audience——Chinese students, scholars, and course lovers. Therefore, from the perspective of this principle, the subtitle translation of this course takes the knowledge dissemination and educational enlightenment function of the source language as the core point, and carries out a scientific and accurate translation.

On the macro level, the course translation conveys the academic views and teaching methods of the source course in a relatively complete way. Throughout the entire translation, the teaching content and methods of the course "Why study positive psychology" have been reproduced well.

Firstly, the overall content of the translation reproduces the learning significance of positive psychology, and scientifically translates the academic vocabulary of psychology and related subject knowledge, which is academic. The overall logic is rigorous, and the discussion is combined. The key content of the course, an important research result in the field of positive psychology —— good adaptability helping children's success is also passed on in detail: By

enumerating the outstanding performance of successful children in adaptability, such as confidence, social behavior, focusing on their own strengths, etc., to inspire students to think deeply about the research and application value of positive psychology, and guide students to become a proactive person.

Secondly, the translation also embodies the characteristics of the original language in order to make students think better, use query, rhetorical questions, repetition, parallelism and other methods for course teaching. For example, before the translation reflecting the formal lecture, the lecturer TalBen Shahar first answered a few questions about the course raised by the students in the mailbox, and then opened with a false alarm story of his own, eliciting his attention to the preparation and teaching of positive psychology courses. Then, it reproduced the the lecturer's emphasis on positive psychology research by listing other outstanding scholars around the world, guiding students to make dialectical thinking about negative psychology research and its results, combining three specific research reasons, and emphasizing the significance of focusing on positive psychology research. This kind of translation process can satisfy the different expectations of students, scholars, and interested parties on the knowledge itself or on the teaching methods, and reproduce the function of the curriculum.

On the micro level, it make the Chinese translation of subtitles in open class accurately spread academic knowledge and make the audience accept correct information and understand correctly [4]. The translator also conducts a purposefully processing at the level of academic language.

First, when it comes to the translation of professional terms, the translator accurately corresponds to Chinese terms, so that the audience can think with the existing knowledge.

e.g. Original text: Why positive psychology? Why is it? Its own field? Why is it not--well, just study happiness, well-being as part of social psychology or clinical psychology?

Translation: 为什么是积极心理学? 为什么是这个领域? 为什么不只是研究社会心理学或临床心理学的幸福?

The English terms appearing in this example are well translated into corresponding terms in Chinese academic circles, reflecting the accuracy of terminology.

Secondly, in the course of teaching, the professor will use some academic-related abbreviations and habitual expressions that Chinese students don't understand. When encountering such translations, they need to contact the context and query relevant materials for supplementary translation, so as to prevent students from being incomprehensible or producing misunderstanding.

e.g. Original text: you'll get them by 5 pm on Tuesday, starting next Tuesday. And they will be due at 5 pm on Sunday to your TF.

Translation: 从下周二开始你将在每周二下午五点收到, 然后在周日下午五点前交到你的任务组。

The "TF" in the original sentence means the task group. The subtitle translation of this lesson is take accuracy as the important guide to translate, reflecting the completeness and standardization of information transmission.

3.1.2. Realize the Purpose of Instant Presentation and Subtitle Layout

The presentation form based on the course translation text is a special form of subtitles, and the open class subtitle translation takes simplicity as the standard to meet the purpose of instant presentation of subtitles [5].

First of all, the subtitles are mainly short and medium. The course subtitle translation mostly divides the English long sentences into continuous pictures on the basis of the meaning groups,

and they appear in sequence. The corresponding Chinese translation is also presented in the form of small words and small sentences.

Secondly, according to the different characteristics of Chinese and English languages, English clauses and large paragraph modifiers are often translated into Chinese four-character phrases to reduce the number of characters.

e.g. Original text: We'll talk about study after study after study, so you'll get that element as well.

Translation: 我们将接二连三地谈到那些研究，所以你也可以得到理论方面的知识

In this case, the translation team skillfully used the idiom "one after another" to simplify the translation.

3.2. Coherence Principle

The principle of coherence requires that the subtitle translation activities of the open class have a certain degree of intralingual coherence under the principle of purpose, that is, the translation conforms to the expression habits of the target language users, so that readers can read smoothly and understand correctly. This principle is subordinate to the principle of purpose, and propose new requirements for language coherence. This is reflected in the subtitle translation of Harvard Course on Happiness. This section mainly analyzes language coherence and cultural adaptation.

3.2.1. Language Coherence

Subtitle translation of this course emphasizes the coherence of sentences in the translation. The translator uses a variety of translation methods and techniques to make sentences smooth. There are two main points.

First of all, the instructor in the original text sometimes uses noun phrases to express meaning, and the translator will add subject, predicates and other constituents when dealing with the Chinese translation of such texts, so that the text conforms to the expression habits of the target language.

e.g. Original text: Just a couple of announcements. Questions that I received via email. A few things before we jump into the material.

Translation: 首先做几个声明，我通过邮件收到的几个问题，在开始课程之前我要说的几件事情。

In this case, the translator transformed English phrases into short Chinese sentences to enrich the subject-verb relationship and achieve the effect of stylistic coherence.

Secondly, due to the influence of oral expression, the teacher will repeat the content just mentioned or use some personal habitual parentheses because of thinking in the teaching. On the condition that it doesn't affect the understanding, the translator chooses not to translate the repeated part or parentheses, so as to achieve stylistic coherence.

3.2.2. Cultural Adaptation

Subtitle translation of this course also attaches importance to the cultural connotation of the original vocabulary. When encountering a vocabulary with metaphor or cultural symbolic meaning, translators pay attention to its cultural conversion to make learners understand vocabulary correctly and rationalize the context logic.

e.g. Original text: How about here? In our local village?

Translation: 这里的情况如何？我们的象牙塔里的情况如何？

In this example, "local village" is translated as "ivory tower", which makes the sentence better fit the theme of the paragraph and helps guide learners to turn their attention to think about the situation of the ivory tower, rather than think about the specific village. .

3.3. The Principle of Loyalty

The principle of loyalty requires the translator to be faithful to the original text under the principle of purpose and coherence. The subtitle translation of the second lesson of Harvard Course on Happiness presents the characteristics of the original text as much as possible while achieving the purpose of translation and taking care of Chinese expression habits. For example, the humorous style of the lecturer has been embodied in the translation many times.

e.g. Original text: Yes.We'll talk about that later in this semester.when we get to know one another a little bit better.I'm a little bit shy at this point.

Translation: 例如，假如说我女朋友离开了我，当我还是这里的学生的時候，我主要想的是，我女朋友要离开我了——是的，那点我們以后再谈，当我们熟悉彼此之后，现在我有点害羞。

4. Conclusion

This article is based on the translation theory of Skopos theory, focusing on the analysis of the subtitle translation of the second lesson of "Harvard Course on Happiness", in order to summarize the translation experience. After research, the subtitle translation of this course exemplifies the feasibility and rationality of translation activities based on the function and purpose of the translation. It also provides a reference for the Chinese translation of the same type of international open class—scientific translation of academic texts is guided by the core purpose of knowledge dissemination and inspiring audiences to adapt to subtitle presentation. In the case of achieving the purpose of translation, pay attention to polishing the language coherence and cultural adaptability of the translated text; Selectively be faithful to the original text, such as retaining its teaching style. It is hoped that this research will provide theoretical reference for teleological translation practice, especially the Chinese translation of subtitles for international public classes, and boost industry academic research and translation practice.

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