On the Translation of English Euphemism from the Perspective of Skopostheorie

Shuping Zhou

School of Foreign Languages, Yancheng Teachers University, 1 Xin du Street, Yancheng 224002, China

Abstract

As a kind of figurative use of language, Euphemism is a language phenomenon as well as a cultural phenomenon. In people's daily communication, euphemism is often used. Euphemism is just like a lubricant in people's daily communication and closely connected to people's life. In people's daily life, they often encounter many unpleasant taboos. In order to make language more polite and pleasant, people use metaphors to suggest and dilute the taboos in an indirect way. For example, people call death as passing away, funeral as something happened afterwards. The translation of euphemism not only brings a huge amount of new vocabularies to the target language, but also shows different cultures so as to narrow differences and promote the further communication of different cultures. Skopostheorie is formally proposed by Hans J. Vermeer in the 1970s. The birth of German functional translation theory pioneers a new perspective for the research on the translation theories. Skopostheorie indicates that translation strategy must be based on the purpose of translation. The reference in the translator's translation process should be the desired communication function in the target language environment. The same euphemism has different translation versions in different contexts when facing various people. This thesis will summarize the translation strategy of euphemism under the guidance of skopostheorie.

1. Introduction

Language is used by people to express their feelings，it is the media of exchanging ideas and expressing feelings. However, people sometimes do not want to express their feelings or thoughts in a direct way because these things or topics may bring embarrassment, sadness, or other unpleasant feelings. In order to make the whole communication in a more pleasant, smooth and perfect way, people must talk about these embarrassment or sad topics in an indirect or roundabout way. And it will inevitably affect the political, economic, social, technological and cultural. The English word Euphemism is derived from the Greek. The prefix eu means good and the stem phemism means speech. The whole literal meaning of this word is the word of good omen. Generally speaking, Euphemism is a proper expression means of fulfilling the ideal communication task and the language that is used to inexplicitly express various strong words and something that people feel shy to speak out. As a figurative use and an indispensable part of language, euphemism is used widely and deeply in people's daily communication. Such kind of euphemism is the result of selecting languages in certain contexts by deviating deliberately from conventional form and forming miscellaneous figures of speech.

It is known to us all that communication plays an important rule in our daily life. Everyone hopes to communicate with other people in a comfortable way. Euphemisms appear under this background. This thesis intends to research the English translation of Chinese Euphemism from the perspective of Skopostheorie, which is a very famous theory. Some fundamental rules are applied in the process of euphemism translation by explaining some emblematical examples.

Functional theory of translation originated in Germany in 1970s. The theory proposes that translation is a purposeful behavior that brings results based on original texts and this behavior need to be completed through consultation. And the translation also needs to follow a set of rules. Among them, the top-ranking rule is Skopos rule: it proposes decisive strategies in translation. Additionally, translation also need to abide by the "coherence rule" and the "fidelity rule". The former rule refers to the internal coherence of the target language and it should be readable from the receiver's point of view. The later view indicates that the original text and the translation version should correspond to the rule of inter-textual coherence, which is equal to the faithfulness to the original text in other translation theories. The degree and form of faithfulness to the source text is decided by the goal of translation and how the translator understand the original text. After these three rules are proposed, "equivalence" is no longer the standard of judging translation. How the translation version of the expected goal is realized is pivotal. The concept of translation is proposed by Vermeer, which says that the translator should determine whether, how and when to fulfill the translation task. That is to say, translator should adopt relative translation strategies in accordance with different translation purpose and they have the right to decide what can be reserved and what should be changed or modified.

With the deeper development of globalization, communication is becoming increasingly important. China has a strong desire to know the rich culture of the outside world. As an indispensable part of language, euphemism has aroused many scholar's interest, and studies on euphemism is getting increasingly necessary and meaningful. Although euphemism is so indispensable and widely used in our daily life, there are not many researches related with it. Therefore, it is necessary and inevitable for us to carry out a further study on it. Translation is creative and an excellent translator should contemplate various ways to the translation of English Euphemisms. It is easy to translate an euphemism, but it is hard to produce an excellent translation version of an euphemism. As for this reason, this thesis analyzes the translation of English euphemism from the perspective of Skopostheorie. There is no doubt that this thesis will enlighten and extend the study of English euphemism.

There are six chapters in this thesis in total. Chapter 1 is the introduction part, which analyzes the significance, method and prospect of the English euphemism translation. Chapter 2 is the literature review part and some previous studies on English euphemism are introduced in this part. Chapter 3 explains the Skopostheorie. Chapter 4 mainly describes the definition and formation of English euphemism. Chapter 5 analyzes functions of English euphemism. Chapter 6 is about explaining the translation version of English euphemism by providing several examples. And the last part chapter 7 makes a conclusion of the whole thesis. The seven chapters research the English euphemism from a broader horizon.

2. Literature Review

Since euphemisms have been used so widely and deeply as is analyzed above, they have aroused the interest of many scholars. There are a great deal of papers and studies on euphemism. These papers and studies analyze euphemisms from different perspectives, which has contributed greatly to the deeper understanding of euphemisms.

The term euphemism can be traced back to the 1580s, euphemisms were defined as "a good or favorable interpretation of a bad word". An American linguist H.L.Mencken (1936) make a detailed explanation of English euphemisms in his book The English Language from the perspective of American society in the historical cultural background. And then British linguist Hugn Rawson's (1995) A Dictionary of Euphemisms and Other Doubletalk is commonly regarded as a breakthrough point in the study of euphemisms. The preface to this dictionary covers almost all aspects of the euphemism study, such as the history, definition, scope, classification, characteristics domains and so on. Undoubtedly, it is of great theoretical values and is seen as the best one among all the studies on euphemisms.

Scholars J.S.Newman and C.G.Silver (1983) from America wrote a classic on euphemisms: Kind Word---- A Treasure of Euphemisms. This book covers a great amount of topics on euphemisms, ranging from euphemisms for the body, sex, diseases, death to euphemisms for drugs, crimes and punishments. It also includes euphemisms used by politicians and governors. Additionally, authors also made a detailed description of the origin development of euphemisms. They proposed that two reasons for euphemizing are that the fear and desire to placate the mysterious forces that rule the universe and we strongly desired not to offend others. In 1985, an important book Fairs of Speech, the Use of Euphemisms was published by D.J.Enright. This book has many pieces of essays about euphemisms and introduces the specific use of euphemisms. Keith Allan and Kate Burridge (1991) wrote an influential work Euphemisms and Dysphemism: Language Used as Shield and Weapons. The authors evaluated this complex universal speech from the perspective of social and psychology. The authors made readers feel the innovative languages in mankind's mind when it encountered the plight of talking about topics about sex , fear, fatness, lust and many other embarrassing things.

In the 20th century, studies on euphemisms have become even more flourishing. Richard A.Spears made numerous research on the modern euphemisms and curses. His another work Slang and Euphemism (2001), where there are a lot of newest curses, street slang, ethnic slurs, insults, etc.

Once upon a time, people in China have used euphemisms consciously or unconsciously. However, there was not any study about euphemism until a famous scholar Jia Yi (B.C200-B.C168) wrote something about euphemisms in the Han dynasty. He described vividly about the use of euphemisms at that time, saying "they(officers) do have malfeasances, but they are not referred to by the normal names, rather they mentioned in an indirect way of saying is called the avoidance of taboos(故贵大臣定有其罪矣，尤未斥然正以呼之也，尚迁就而言之为之讳也)". And then a scholar in the Ming dynasty listed many euphemisms and taboos that are widely used at that time. But all of these studies never touch the essence of euphemisms.

In modern times, some Chinese scholars who were inspired by the euphemistic research in western countries also contributed greatly to the studies of euphemisms. In 1989, Wu Tieping studied euphemisms from the perspective of vagueness. And then Shu Dingfang made a deeper research on euphemisms and probed into many theoretical problems. A book Appreciation of English Rhetorics published by Fan Jiacai analyzed the origin, characteristics and formative devices of euphemisms. Xu Jinyuan (1996) proved the rules of euphemisms that speakers need to comply with by the theory of context.

These researches are closely connected to each other and the above scholars make a great contribution to

the study of euphemisms too. However, few books about euphemism translation can be gathered. So the studies on euphemism translation still have a long way to go.

3. The Introduction of Skopostheorie

3.1 The Development of Skopostheorie

In 1970s, the theory of functional translation originated in Germany. Kathatina Reiss introduced functional category into the translation criticism for the first time. She connected language functions, text types with translation strategies and developed the translation criticism pattern which is based on the relationship between the original text and the translation version. And then she put forward the prototype of the functional theory. Reiss indicated that the ideal translation should be the comprehensive communicative translation, which says that the conceptual content, language forms and communicative functions should correspond to the source text. However, functional characteristics of the translation version are given top priority in practice.

Hans.Vermeer put forward the skopostheorie, which made the translation study get rid of the bondage of original text centered thoughts. The theory indicates that translation is the behavior based on the original text and it has purposes and results. Moreover, the behavior must be completed by consultation. Translation must follow a set of rules and skopos rule is given top priority among these rules. That is to say, the   translation version is decided by the purpose of translation. In addition, translation also need to abide by the "coherence rule" and the "fidelity rule". Vermeer proposed the concept of translation, which says that the translator should decide when and how to finish the translation task. The translator should adopt the corresponding translation strategies in accordance with various translation purposes and they have the right to decide what can be reserved and what need to be changed or modified according to the translation purpose.

Justa-Hotz Manta co-opted communication and behavior theory and proposed translation behavior theory, which promotes the further development of functional theory. The theory indicates that translation is purpose-driven and result-oriented. This theory and the skopostheorie have much in common and then Vermeer fused them.

Nord.Christina sumed up and perfected the functional theory. She explained the internal and external factors of text analysis in English for the first time and how to adopt proper translation strategies based on the original text's functions. Nord Christina combed the function theory and proposed that the translator should comply with the guiding principle of "function plus loyalty".

3.2 The Concept of Skopostheorie

The Skopostheorie indicates that the essence of translation acticity is purposeful. And such opinion goes for almost all the translation activity. The strategies that translators adopt need to meet the requirements of readers. Only the translation version is satisfied by the reader can it be a successful one. Therefore, the top rule that all the translation activities need to follow is the skopos rule. The aim that the translation version need to achieve determines the whole process of translation, that is, the result is decided by the way. In the Skopostheorie, translation is to reappear meanings of the original text in target circumstances. The aim that the translation version need to achieve determines the whole process of translation, that is, the result is decided by the way. The skopostheorie indicates that the top rule that all the translation activities need to follow is the skopos rule, which means that the translation version should be in the context and culture of the target language. Different form the traditional "Equivalence Principle", the Functional Theory pays more attention to in choosing appropriate ways based on the expected function of the translation version. That is to say, translation strategies should be determined by the anticipated goals or functions. This theory not only carries weight on functions of the translation version, but also emphasizes the readability of the translation version in the target language.

3.3 Three Rules of Skopostheorie

In the Skopostheorie, there are four fundamental rules. And they are skopos rule, coherence rule, fidelity rule and loyalty rule respectively. However, the coherence rule, fidelity rule and loyalty rule must subordinate to the skopos rule.

3.3.1 Skopos Rule

The Skopostheorie proposes that "skopos rule" should be given the top priority. The goal that translation behavior need to achieve determines the whole process of it. That is to say, the result decides the way. These rules can be divided into three categories: (1)the fundamental goal of the translator; (2)the communicative goal of the translation version; (3)the goal that some special translation means need to achieve. However, "skopos" means the communicative goal of the translation version in general. Therefore, the specific goal of the translation version should be defined in a given context by the translator and the translation way should be decided by this goal.

3.3.2 Coherence Rule

Coherence rule indicates that the translation rule must conform to the standard of intra-textual coherence, which means that the translation version is readable and acceptable and it can make receivers understand. In accordance with the coherence rule, the translation version needs to be fully understood by the target reader. Additionally, the reader's social or cultural background is also an indispensable factor that the translator needs to think carefully. To produce a meaningful and acceptable translation version, the translator must have a good knowledge of readers' cultural background. Only in this method can the communication be achieved.

3.3.3 Fidelity rule

Fidelity rule means that the original text and the translation version should correspond to the inter-textual coherence, which is equal to being faithful to the original text in other translation theories. However, the degree and form of royalty determine the understanding of the translator.

Adequacy is the standard of judging translation version in the Skopostheorie. Under the framework of the Skopostheorie, adequacy means that the translation version should meet requirements of the translation skopos. Equivalence indicates that the translation version and the source text are from different cultural context, but both of them have realized the communicative function. Equivalence is just an expression way of adequacy and it is a static concept of describing the translation result. From the above analysis, the coherence rule and the fidelity rule are not regularly used. In the process of translation, the skopos rule and the fidelity rule should be the guiding principle. Moreover, fitness is the key standard of judging the translation version. One side of the fidelity rule is to deal with the relationship between cultural differences and participators of translation activities. Additionally, the other side of this rule is to be loyal to the author of original texts. The translator should respect the author of original texts and keep a balance between the source language and the author's intention. In a nutshell, this rule complements this theory.

Generally speaking, the above four rules consist basic principles of the Skopostheorie. However, the loyalty rule, coherent rule and fidelity rule must be obedient to the skopos rule. the skopos rule is given top priority in the Skopostheorie.

4. The Introduction and Functions of Euphemisms

With the development of globalization, communication has become increasingly important in our daily life. Everyone hopes to communicate with other people in a comfortable way and euphemisms appear under this background. The introduction part of euphemisms includes two topics, and they are the definition and formations of euphemisms respectively. In general, euphemisms are to express something in a roundabout way. The formation of English can be divided into spelling device, word-formation device, vocabulary device, grammar device and rhetoric device. Euphemisms are mainly for avoidance of taboos, politeness and disguising the truth.

4.1 The Introduction of Euphemisms

Learning the definition of euphemisms is an indispensable part to study euphemisms. Many researchers conduct a study on them. Various definitions reflect some features of euphemisms. In general, euphemisms are to express something in a roundabout way. The formation of English euphemisms is various and colorful. Generally speaking, it can be divided into the following types: spelling device, word-formation device, vocabulary device, grammar device and rhetoric device.

4.1.1 The Definition of Euphemisms

The first step for us to learn euphemisms is to figure out the definition of euphemisms. Different researchers have different definitions of euphemisms in accordance with their own understandings.

In the 1580s, the term "euphemism" was firstly used by a British writer. He defined it as "a good or favorable interpretation of a bad word". In the book Kind Words: A Treasure of Euphemism(Expanded &Revised Edition), Neaman and Silver (1983) indicated that "Euphemism is generally defined as substituting an inoffensive or pleasant term for a more explicit, offensive one, thereby veneering the truth by using kind words".

The characteristics of euphemisms are very clear from the above definitions.

We can understand that to use euphemisms is to express something in an indirect way. However, not all indirect expressions are euphemisms. When something that is so unpleasant, offensive, negative and impolite that people do not want to say it directly, they often use euphemisms. Mildred L. Larson (1984) once said: "But a euphemism is used to avoid an offensive expression or one that is socially unacceptable, or one that is unpleasant." For instance, "喜结连理" can not be regarded as a euphemism despite the fact that it is an indirect saying of "marriage".

4.1.2 Formations of Euphemisms

The formation of English euphemisms is various and colorful. Generally speaking, it can be divided into the following types: spelling device, word-formation device, vocabulary device, grammar device and rhetoric device

and so on.

Back formation, compounding, acrimony and clipping belong to the word-formation device. Compounding means a euphemistic word is the formation of two or more words. For example, gezunda is the formation of goes+under, which is the euphemistic expression of chamber pot(夜壶). Backformation indicates that a euphemistic word is formed by deleting the imaginary suffix. Because relative few euphemistic words are formed by backformation, words formed in this way are always novel and unique. And they are often used to represent the common sensitive words, which also can achieve the effect of euphemism. For example, bugle is formed from burglar, which means to steal. Acronym means that a euphemistic word is formed by the combination of the initial letter of a taboo or a sensitive word with a purpose of disguising its original meaning. For instance, BM serves as a euphemism for bowel movement(排便); the Big C for the Big Cancer. Clipping refers to a euphemistic word is formed by deleting some parts of the word. For example, gents is a euphemism for gentleman's room; lav for lavatory.

Phonetic devices include phonetic distortion and rhyming slang. Phonetic distortion means that a euphemism word is formed by the tattoo which is slightly changed so as to be unashamed. For example, gad, gosh for the word god. Rhyming slang is a euphemism word formed by replacing some words and taboos with the same rhyme. E.g. sis is the euphemism for piss.

Spelling devices are divided into backslang and respelling of initials. Backslang is to spell a taboo or sensitive word from backward to forward in order to avoid embarrassment. For instance, elly-bay is the euphemism for belly. Respelling of initials means that a euphemistic word is spelled according to the pronunciation of the initial letter of some taboos or sensitive words so as to achieve euphemistic effect. E .g. dee is the euphemism for damn.

Negation belongs to the grammar device. Negation is to describe something unpleasant in the opposite way. E.g. unwise for foolish; not very attractive for ugly.

Rhetoric devices are divided into understatement, overstatement, metaphorical transfer and periphrasis. Understatement is a kind of implicit saying to express something that is unhappy in order to make it easier for listeners to accept. E.g. smelly is the euphemism for stinking. Similarly, fighting to glory for death is the example for overstatement. Metaphorical transfer is to express a taboo by its features in a metaphorical way. E.g. blossom is the euphemism for pimple; go to sleep forever for die. And periphrasis means express something that is inconvenient to say in a roundabout way, and it will make the phrase or word shorter. E.g. adjustment downward is the euphemism for drop.

The above methods generally include two rules and they are respectively ambiguousness rule and beauty rule. Generally speaking, euphemism function mainly has three aspects: avoiding stimulation, comforting people, abandoning the stale ideas and giving the novel feel. Being good at euphemism has become the sigh of spiritual beauty and the high level of culture.

4.2 The Functions of Euphemisms

Without the decent and implicit euphemisms, our daily communication cannot go well. Although English and Chinese euphemisms are expressed in a quite different way, their functions are basically same. Euphemisms are mainly for avoidance of taboos, politeness and disguising the truth. Profane expressions indicates something that is related with Gods, death and mysterious forces.

4.2.1 The Function of Avoiding Taboo

Fromkin (1983) also proposed: "the existence of taboo words or taboo ideas stimulates the creation of euphemism. A euphemism is a word or phrase that replaces a taboo word or that is used in the attempt to avoid either fearful or unpleasant subjects". Etymologically, the word "taboo" can be dated back to "tabu" or "tapu", which means "under prohibition" or "not allowed". In general, taboos can be divided into behavioral taboos and linguistic taboos. Obscene expressions mainly mean physiological phenomenon such as sex, death and so on.

Social culture, customs and religions motivated the development of taboos mostly. And another indispensable reason is psychology. The reason why these words are "offensive" or "abusive" is not because of the word themselves. Instead, it is because that these words always bring about distasteful associations. Neaman&Sliver once analyzed it in a more detailed way："However culturally and historically based particular euphemisms may be, the psychological and linguistic patterns are the same. Psychologically, if not linguistically, meaning can be defined as the sum of our responses to a word or a subject. Words themselves may be seen as responses to stimuli. After a word has been associated for a long period of time with the stimulus that provokes it, the word itself picks up aspects of the responses elicited by the stimulus object. When unpleasant elements of responses attach themselves strongly to the word used to describe them, we tend to substitute another word free of these negative associations. In this way, psychologists tell us , euphemisms are formed".

When people encounter some tabooed things or objects, they may feel embarrassed and impolite, so they have to find some polite and gentle words or expressions to replace them. And these gentle words or expressions

are euphemisms.

4.2.2 The Function of Being Polite

In contemporary and ancient society, not to use taboos is always the common psychology. Euphemisms are not only indispensable social tools in communication, but also serve as a powerful way to avoid taboos. It can make our daily communication more smooth.

At the same time, euphemisms are also polite language. Everybody hopes that his dignity can be maintained and activities can be went on successfully. In order to make the whole communication task can be carried in a pleasant atmosphere and get the ideal communicative purpose, people get along with others in coordination and show others that you respect them. It is known to us all that keeping the face of speaker and listener is very vital in our daily communication. So people usually use euphemisms for advice, request and other things that may threaten the face. For instance, "it is so hot here, would you be kind enough to open the window is much more polite than open the window". I wonder if you can stop shouting is much better than stop shouting. We will use unattractive for ugly, the disadvantaged for the poor; if someone is very fat, we will say that he is strong or well-developed. In order to weaken the stimulation of language , people use 小月 to replace 流产, 后事 to replace 葬礼, 喜 to replace 怀孕; As Shu Dingfang (1989) proposed, in communication, people will take into consideration more their social status and identity, so they will protect themselves and their dignity, try to avoid using harsh, offensive expressions; instead, they will try to use pleasant expressions.

4. 2.3 The Function of Disguising the Truth

Euphemisms are good expression ways, their performance characteristics varied with the purpose, the object and the context. Correspondingly, functions of euphemisms that are motivated by different occasions and purposes can be divided into the positive and negative function. To avoid unpleasant taboos, people often use metaphors to indicate something. People dilute taboo words in a euphemistical way so as to make the language more polite. There is a saying goes like that truth and roses have thorns about them. The vagueness of euphemisms is often used by politicians as tools to disguise the reality. Euphemisms are often used in many governmental materials for the sake of disguising the seamy side of a country or society and easing social conflicts. The Irag war in 2003 is an excellent example, US politics use Irag freedom action to replace aggression, attempting to disguise or diminish this historical reality.

Functions of euphemisms are far more than the above four kinds. The euphemism is a double-edged sword. If it can be used appropriately, it can add luster to people's communication activities. Otherwise, it will lead to communication barriers or even mislead people's languages and behaviors. Therefore, people should choose and use euphemisms according to miscellaneous context. Only in proper context can it be used appropriately and correctly.

5. Euphemism Translation Based on Skopostheorie

Euphemisms have a strong sense of purpose and their function is very clear, which requires translators to choose proper expressions so as to achieve the original communication function and reappear their purposes in the translation versions. Functions like avoiding taboos, reducing the irritation or modifying the original text all explain that euphemisms have their own unique meanings on various occasions. It conveys that language users want to make their communications go on in order to achieve their goals. And it also coincides with the primary rule of the Skopostheorie---skopos rule. Skopos rule means that the purpose that translators want to reach determines the whole process of translation. To realize the purpose of euphemism translation effectively, translators should choose translation strategies flexibly in accordance with different expected functions of the translation. Secondly, euphemism translation is an activity that realizes the transformation from source culture to target culture. Therefore, how to deal with the relationship between the source culture and target culture is an indispensable step that translators need to consider in their process of euphemism translation. Of course, we can never ignore the great importance of fidelity rule in euphemism translation when we put emphasis on realizing functions of the translation.

5.1 Translation of Taboo Euphemisms

Franklin (1983) proposes that "The existence of taboo words or ideas stimulates the creation of euphemism. A euphemism is a word or phrase that replace a taboo word or that is used in the attempt to avoid fearful or unpleasant subjects". That is to say, the euphemism is closely connected to the production of taboos.

Example 1

ST: 忽见东府里几个人，慌慌张张跑来，说："老爷宾天了！"……家人说："老爷天天修炼，定是功德圆满，升仙去了。"

TT: "The old master's ascended to Heaven！"they announced…The servants explained: "His Lordship took

elixirs every day, now he must achieved his aim and become an immortal".

In this example, the powerful and wealthy master Jia Jing died. For showing their respect to the respectable master, the servants use "宾天(to ascend to Heaven)" to indicate the master's death. Additionally, they use Taoist terms "功德圆满 (gongdeyuanman)" and "升仙（shengxian)" to refer to the master's death. In the target culture, the translation version must be acceptable by the readers in accordance with the coherence rule. The Skopostheorie explains that a translation should function in the situation in which it is used and with the people who want to use it and precisely in the way they want it to function. And all of these phrases can be translated into "achieved his purpose and become an immortal" and the target readers can understand the meaning of them easily.

Example 2

ST: "举眼看看，是不是儿女？难道将来只有宝兄弟一人顶了您老人家上五台山不成？"

TT："Look, aren't all of us your children? Is Pao-yu the only one who'll carry you as an immortal on his head to Mount Wutai that you keep everything for him?" (Note: Mount Wutai was a holy Buddhist mountain.)

In example 2, the euphemism "上五台山(shang wutaishan)" means being an immortal after death. More importantly, Yang adds an note in the end of the paragraph so as to make it understandable. There is no doubt that the translation version should conform to the coherence rule.The translation not only expresses the original meaning of the source language, but also embodies the cultural meaning.

5.2 Translation of Dissimulating Euphemisms

People sometimes do not want to express their feelings, intentions or ideas in public, and they often use euphemisms to express their real thoughts.

Example 3

ST: 这事还真难办。要不你先拿两千块钱，给管事的意思意思。

TT: This task is really hard to handle. How about drawing 2000 Yuan and oil the person responsible?[12]

In 1984, Reiss & Vermeer proposed that the end justifies the means. In Skopos rule, the translation is decided by its purpose. As for this example, the phrase "意思意思" means giving some money or favors to the person responsible. As a matter of fact, it is a case of bribery. But the ST uses "意思意思（yisi yisi）" to cover the fact. The translator translates it into "to oil the person responsible", which reveals the intention of the source text.

Example 4

ST: "好久不见您儿子了，他人呢？"

"it has been a long time since I saw your son last time. Where is he?"

TT: "欸，他出了点事，进去了。"

"Alas, he did something wrong and lives at the government's expenses now."[12]

One kind of purposes in translation is the general purpose aimed at by the translator in accordance with the skopos rule. In this example, the phrase "进去了(jinqule)" means a ignominious fact that his or her son has been put into prison. The translation has fully illustrated the meaning of the source text. The phrase "live at the government's expenses" is an English euphemism, which means that somebody is in prison. And this translation version has functioned perfectly in the target culture.

5.3 Translation of Courteous Euphemisms

When people talk about social status, salary, appearance or many other sensitive topics, they often use euphemisms with a purpose of making others feel polite and comfortable. Therefore, courtesy is another indispensable function of euphemisms. When the translator translates such kind of euphemisms, they ought to adhere to the skopos rule, the coherence rule and the fidelity rule. For example, when people describe a not very attractive person, they will say that he or she is plain instead of ugly.

Example 5

ST: 这家伙过去手不干净，跟他在一块，你得多加小心。

TT: He used to take other people's feeling without permission. Be careful when you are with him.

The coherence rule proposes that the translation should be understandable, comprehensible and acceptable in the communicative situation and culture. That is to say, the translation version should be understood by the receivers in the given culture and context. All that translators need to do is to make his translation easy for target culture receivers to understand. In this example, the euphemism "手不干净(shou buganjing)" means that he or she is a thief. In order not to hurt other's feelings, the translator does not express it in a direct way. In addition, the translator has not translated it into "his or her hands are not clean" for the reason that target culture readers may not understand the meaning of it and they may feel puzzled.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The Functions of English Euphemisms

Euphemisms have a far-reaching influence on every aspect of social lives, and the euphemism translation takes on added significance especially under the backdrop of contemporary intercultural communications. Being a kind of figurative use of language as well as a cultural phenomenon, euphemisms are widely used in our daily life. Euphemisms are like lubricants in people's daily communications and have connected closely with people's daily life. Moreover, euphemisms can also add beauty to the language .

The euphemism translation not only brings many new vocabularies to the target language, but also shows miscellaneous cultures and promotes the deeper communications of various cultures. The skopostheorie guides the euphemism translation to some extent and it also provides the theoretical basis for flexible translation. The translation strategy should be decided by the purpose that the translation need to reach and references in translation process should be communication functions that translators expect to achieve.

When facing different readers, translators have different translation versions under various situations. Translators should fully understand the euphemism and only in this way can people deal with the translation of all euphemisms. This thesis analyzed that the skopostheorie can provide a guidance and a broader horizon for the euphemism translation.

6.2 The Prospects and Limitations of Euphemism Translation Studies

There is no doubt that this thesis still has many limitations because of the narrow horizon of the author. At first sight, this thesis only discuss the limited area of the euphemism translation and the skopostheorie covers a much greater area, such as politics, styles and so on. Secondly, this thesis only analyzed the euphemism translation between English and Chinese. Last but not least, examples cited in this thesis are mainly from translation studies. And the there is not enough examples to support the theory. Moreover, some translation versions are not the best versions and there maybe some ill-suited examples. Additionally, this thesis only concentrates on several aspects of euphemisms.

Still, more aspects should be expanded and more theories need to be used on the future studies on euphemisms. With the further studies on it, the euphemism translation is bound to go deeper. The increasing number of appropriate classification standards will be proposed. There is no doubt that the euphemism translation will attract more scholars with the greater and deeper development of culture and globalization.

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