



# The Application of Skopos Theory in News Translation

## —Taking China Daily Mobile as an Example

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### Abstract

With globalization, China has been gaining increasing international influence. In order to give the international community a better understanding of China, the News translation becomes particularly important. The scope of applied translation research has been expanded continuously, and has now become the main direction and trend of contemporary translation research. Due to the wide range of applied genres, in order to accurately select appropriate theories for the study of applied translation, the material selected for this translation study was excerpted from the newspaper, China Daily Mobile. This paper analyzed applications of the Skopos Theory in the Chinese-English news translation at the three principles: the Skopos Rule, the Coherence Rule, and the Fidelity Rule. It turns out that the Skopos Theory is widely used in news translation and has a high degree of adaptability. The application of the Skopos Theory can solve most of the problems encountered in news translation, and similarly, it can also solve most of the problems in applied translation.

### Subject Areas

Culture

### Keywords

News Translation, Skopos Theory, China Daily

## 1. Introduction

Fang (2003) believes that applied translation is a kind of practical translation which takes the transmission of information as the main purpose and also focuses on the effect of information transmission [1]. Applied translations are of the

nature of realistic, even utilitarian purposes, which are aimed at making the translated text fulfil its intended function (Fang Mengzhi, 2012) [2]. From the point of view of content, applied translation includes almost all works except literary translation, including all kinds of texts actually used by people in their daily life, involving foreign propaganda, social life, production fields, business activities and other aspects.

The requirement of applied translation for the purpose of conveying information is similar to the content of the Skopos theory [3]. The applied translation system is huge, and it has become the mainstream direction of contemporary translation compared with literary translation. Applied texts come in a variety of forms, among which, news reports cover all fields of knowledge. The news reports are timely, true and accurate, enabling people to understand the current affairs of the country and various events. China Daily is China's national English-language daily, which serves as an important window for China to learn about the world and the world to learn about China, and is the preferred Chinese English-language media for both domestic and foreign readers, which is a clear indication of its authority and influence. In order to better disseminate China's voice, promote Sino-foreign exchanges, and cultivate people's concept of globalisation and international vision, this paper analyses the bilingual translation of news in China Daily Mobile from the perspective of the Skopos theory, mainly from the three aspects of the principle of skopos, the principle of coherence and the principle of fidelity.

## **2. Applied Translation**

### **2.1. The Concept of Applied Translation**

The concept of applied translation refers to the practice of translating texts for specific purposes and contexts, focusing on achieving functional equivalence and ensuring that the translated content serves its intended purpose effectively within the target culture. It emphasizes the adaptability and practicality of translations, taking into account factors such as the audience, purpose, medium, and cultural nuances to ensure accurate and appropriate communication. In academic terms, applied translation encompasses a wide range of fields, including but not limited to technical translation, legal translation, medical translation, marketing translation, and localization, where precision, clarity, and cultural sensitivity are paramount.

### **2.2. Rationale for Choosing News Translation**

News translation serves as a pivotal bridge in facilitating cross-cultural communication and information dissemination. It not only conveys factual content but also carries cultural and ideological nuances that can significantly influence public perception and understanding. By focusing on news translation, this study aims to explore how the Skopos Theory, which emphasizes the purpose of translation, can guide practitioners in producing accurate, culturally appropriate, and impactful translations. Furthermore, news translation presents unique challenges such as the need for speed, accuracy, and cultural sensitivity, making it a fertile ground

for theoretical application and analysis.

### 2.3. Importance of Selecting China Daily as the Analytical Material

China Daily, as a leading English-language newspaper in China, plays a crucial role in shaping the international image of China and promoting cultural exchange. Its content covers a wide range of topics, including politics, economics, culture, and society, providing a rich and diverse corpus for translation analysis. By analyzing China Daily Mobile, this study gains insights into how news translation aligns with the Skopos Theory in a dynamic and globalized media environment. Moreover, China Daily's reputation for high-quality journalism and translation further validates the relevance and significance of the chosen material for this research.

## 3. Overview of Skopos Theory

Among all the studies of translation theory, the Skopos theory is of great importance in guiding applied translation [4]. This paper focuses on analysing the application of Skopos theory in news translation.

Katharina Reiss proposed the idea of functional theory, on the basis of which a German translation theorist, Hans Vermeer developed Skopos Theory of translation in the 1970s. Translation theories based on the linguistic school that focuses too much on form. The emergence of Skopos Theory addresses the weakness.

Vermeer (1987) argued that the source text is merely a source of information for the translation and is not the only or the highest criterion for the evaluation of the translation [5]. This is because translation is intended to fulfill the purpose of its translation rather than to achieve equivalence to the original. Skopos Theory advocates that translation should follow three principles, namely, the Skopos rule, the coherence rule and the fidelity rule, among which the Skopos rule is the top-ranking rule. The translator can adopt the appropriate translation strategy and has the right to decide which elements of the source text can be retained and which need to be adjusted or modified according to translation purposes. In terms of coherence rule, one of the most important factors is the recipient of the target text, who has their own cultural background and knowledge. The translation processes should be target-text-oriented. In other words, the translated expression should be understood by the target language readers. The fidelity rule implies that the target text is consistent with the source text. Nord (2001) claimed that the fidelity rule is subordinated to the coherence rule, and both are to the Skopos rule [6].

Skopos Theory highlights the translator's subjectivity and affirms the translator's interpretation of the source text information based on the original author's intention and the context of the target language, which makes translation strategies and translation evaluation criteria more flexible [7]. As external publicity text, the most important thing in News translation is to accurately convey the message and spirit of the source text. The problem of C-E translation of China Daily can just be analysed precisely by Skopos Theory.

## 4. The Application of Skopos Theory to the Translation of China Daily

This chapter analyses the Chinese-English bilingual translation of news in the China Daily Mobile from the perspective of the Skopos theory, mainly from three aspects: the Skopos rule, the coherence rule and the fidelity rule.

### 4.1. The Skopos Rule

The Skopos rule is the central principle of the Skopos theory, which means that the purpose of translation determines the course of the act of translation. Correspondingly, the requirement of news is that the content of the information must be conveyed correctly and quickly, including time, place, people, and events.

**Example 1:** 《科技日报》1月2日报道称，由中国海油投资建造的我国首个深远海浮式风电平台“海油观澜号”日前完成浮体总装。

**Version:** China's first deep-sea floating wind power platform, invested in and built by the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), has completed its floating body assembly, Tuesday's edition of Science and Technology Daily reported.

**Analysis:** The main content conveyed in the original sentence is very simple, but proper nouns are the biggest problem in the translation of this sentence. The basic requirement for the translation of proper names is to strive for accuracy. It is about science and technology news, the most important thing is to make the report true and accurate, and its translation should also reach the same standard. While accurately conveying the meaning of the original text, the translation should also serve the purpose of foreign propaganda, especially in the content related to scientific and technological development and the need to shape the image of a great nation without any mistakes.

In example 1, the original text “深远海浮式风电平台” and “海油观澜号” actually refer to the same thing, the latter is the name of the former, and it is a word with Chinese cultural characteristics, which is usually treated as a Appositive in translation. However, if the translation of the name here achieves fidelity to the original text through the translation method of direct translation, it will run counter to the purpose of simplicity and accuracy required for news translation. According to the perspective of the three principles of the Skopos theory, the Skopos rule is the most basic principle, taking precedence over the fidelity rule. Therefore, it is here used the technique of omission, translating as “deep-sea floating wind power platform”, which reflects the conciseness of the news words and conveys the main content of the original text without causing ambiguity, and also avoids the problem of possible inconsistency in the translation of the name.

### 4.2. The Coherence Rule

The coherence rule refers to the fact that on the basis of intra-linguistic coherence, the translator chooses an appropriate translation strategy to achieve coherence in

the translated text.

**Example 2:** 据四川省相关部门 29 日发布的消息，2022 年一名网络主播非法购买国家重点保护野生动物大白鲨(又名“噬人鲨”)并发布一则烹食鲨鱼的视频，有关部门依法对其处罚 12.5 万元。据四川南充市市场监督管理局，经查，涉案当事人金某某，2022 年 4 月通过淘宝网，以 7700 元人民币的价格购得鲨鱼一条。

**Version:** A live video streaming host who illegally bought a great white shark—an animal under national protection—and posted a video cooking it last year, was fined 125,000 yuan (\$18,427), authorities in Southwest China’s Sichuan province said on Sunday. An investigation found that the host, surnamed Jin, spent 7700 yuan to buy the shark via Taobao, a major online shopping site, last April, according to the market supervision bureau in Nanchong of Sichuan.

**Analysis:** The example above is a common format for Chinese news frames. The “inverted pyramid” style of writing, in which the most important news is written in the first paragraph, helps the listener to get a clear idea of the main points of the news quickly. Chinese and English news texts require different formats and have different sentence focuses. Different methods of translation are addressed with regard to the expression of numbers and proper nouns in Chinese and English.

By comparing the original text and the English version of the above example 2, the amount of the fine in the original is RMB “yuan”, while the translation retains “yuan” by using the literal translation and translating it into “US dollars” by adding a note in parentheses, which is interpreted as (\$), which can make the target language readers have a clearer idea of the actual amount of money, because the national currencies of different languages are different and the exchange rates are not the same. In the original text of example 2, “great white shark” is the scientific name of the animal, and the necessary information “man-eating shark” has been added in parentheses, in order to establish a connection with the colloquial name in people’s daily life. This localized translation is omitted in the corresponding English version, because “a great white shark” already indicates this specific thing in the English expression. In addition, “Taobao” is an online shopping platform that is a household name in China, but the transliteration method is used when translating into English. Considering the different knowledge of different readers in English-speaking countries and for the sake of the rigour of the translation, it is also necessary to add “a major online shopping site” to avoid incomplete transmission of information. To sum up, the translation in Example (2) complies with the “coherence principle” among the three principles of “Skopos Theory”, which makes the translation readable and acceptable, and can be understood by the readers and make sense in the actual communication context.

### 4.3. The Fidelity Rule

The fidelity rule is that the purpose of translation and the translator’s understanding

of the original text determine the degree of similarity between the translated text and the original text. In other words, there should be interlanguage coherence between the translated text and the original.

**Example 3:** 弗吉尼亚联邦大学梅西癌症中心主任罗伯特·韦恩博士告诉雅虎新闻：“如果在全美范围内看，(临床试验中)有色人种的数量是很少的。”研究估计，占美国总人口 13% 的非裔约占临床试验参与者的 8%，占美国总人口 16% 的西班牙裔在临床试验中占 11%。

**Version:** “If you look nationally, the number of folk of color [in clinical trials] are minuscule,” said Dr. Robert Winn, director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center, to Yahoo News. Studies estimate that Black Americans make up about 8% of participants in clinical trials but represent 13% of the U.S. population, and Hispanics account for 11% in trials, even though they are 16% of the national population.

**Analysis:** According to the content of the original text in example 3, which contains places, people, causes and results of events in the news, the translation version needs to present the content of the original text accurately and objectively, so it adopts the transliteration method. For example, the news has to be sufficiently eye-catching and attention-grabbing to consider the news stylistic style without changing the content of the original text. The translation version changes the order of the directly quoted words and puts them directly at the top of the paragraph, which not only attracts people’s attention, but also has no effect on the meaning of the original text. As for the bracketed words “临床试验中” in the original text, it is possible that they were added by the later text editor in order to make the content of the news more rigorous. After all, the interviewer may, due to the conditions and personal factors at the time of the interview, utter colloquial sentences without the necessary qualifiers. It is the responsibility of both the editor and the translator to correct the errors after the request for clarification, and the translation version retains the form of “in clinical trials” with brackets after the original text has been modified. As for the translation method of the data, there is a fixed sentence pattern, so the method of transliteration is adopted, adhering to the “principle of fidelity” among the three principles of the “Skopos Theory”, which requires that the translation be as faithful as possible to the original text to ensure that the original text is adequately expressed.

## 5. Conclusions

It is still a long way to go for future research in applied translation. News, as a part of the applied genre covering a wide range of fields, together with its authority and influence, can give some reference to general applied translation compared with other texts. This paper analyses parts of China Daily in different fields and their applications from the perspective of the three principles of Skopos Theory, and it shows that the principles of Skopos, Coherence and Fidelity of Skopos Theory are widely used in news translation with a high degree of suitability. Since the

application of Skopos Theory can solve the problems encountered in news translation, it can also solve the translation problems of other genres of texts in applied translation. It is hoped that this paper can provide ideas and make contributions to the author's future research on applied translation, as well as promote Sino-foreign exchanges and disseminate Chinese voices.

Based on the findings of this study, several potential suggestions emerge for future news translation practices. Firstly, practitioners should prioritize the purpose of the translation (Skopos) and tailor their translations to meet the needs and expectations of the target audience. Secondly, cultural sensitivity and adaptability are crucial in ensuring that translations resonate with the target culture while maintaining the integrity of the original message.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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