

# Study on C-E translation strategies of subtitle in *The Starting Point of Maritime Silk Road-Quanzhou* from the perspective of Skopos theory

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**Abstract:** Under the Skopos theory, this article explores English translation strategies for the subtitles of the Quanzhou tourism promotional video *The Starting Point of Maritime Silk Road-Quanzhou* by means of case study. The aim is to present personal insights on cultural tourism translation work, promote world's understanding and appreciation of Quanzhou culture and facilitate the culture to the world. This research reveals that translation strategies should be adopted accordingly.

**Key words:** the Skopos theory; tourism promotional video; translation strategies

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## 1 Introduction

Quanzhou was listed as one of top tourist cities and was awarded as one of the most popular domestic tourism city on Weibo in 2023. With its long history and profound culture, the world heritage city has a strong tourism industry. Recently, the cultural and tourism industries have been managing to attract tourists. Quanzhou's tourism industry has thrived, ranking first in Fujian province with 8.1812 million tourists and 8.018-billion-yuan revenue during the 2024 Spring Festival.

Tourism promotional videos are crucial to attract tourists, especially foreigners. Good translation version is essential to leave positive first impressions on tourists. Therefore, research on tourism promotional video translation is significant. To maximize Quanzhou's influence as a tourist city and maintain its image, the author studied the video *The Starting Point of Maritime Silk Road-Quanzhou*. Under the Skopos theory, the author explored English translation strategies for subtitles, aiming to shape the city's image and promote its tourism effectively [1].

## 2 Theoretical basis: the Skopos theory

Hans J. Vermeers and Katherina Reiss, German translation theorists, introduced the Skopos theory in the 1970s, a key theory in functionalist translation. Vermeers believes that translation is an action with a specific purpose. Translation activities have specific values, with translators' intentions and target readers' explanatory function as values. This underscores the importance of considering translation's purpose before adopting strategies. Translation strategies serve the purpose of translation. For instance, promotional videos aim to "promote" and "attract", which leads translators to prioritize the achievement of promotional functions and goals [2].

### 2.1 The skopos rule

The skopos rule is the fundamental principle of Skopos theory. The purpose of translation provides direction for the

translation process. The translation version must resonate with the purpose of translation. The chosen translation strategies hinge on the translation's purpose, making the skopos rule an essential guidance for all translation activities.

## 2.2 The coherence rule

The coherence rule, also known as intratextual coherence, emphasizes the need that translated information should be coherent within the target language and its context. Translators must adhere to the voice and logic of target language's expression and equip with cross-cultural awareness and an understanding of the target culture and society. Adhering to the coherence principle requires a deep understanding of the style of source language to ensure smooth transitions between languages.

## 2.3 The fidelity rule

The fidelity rule is about the coherence between original and translated texts. The translation version should be faithful to the original without changing its meaning. The degree of fidelity depends on the translator's understanding of the original text and his ability to convey its meaning and style in target language during translation.

### **3 Introduction of *The Starting Point of Maritime Silk Road-Quanzhou***

The tourism promotional video *The Starting Point of Maritime Silk Road-Quanzhou* was launched at the 3rd Maritime Silk Road International Arts Festival. The 17-minute-57-second video introduced Quanzhou, a unique, diverse and inclusive city, from six aspects: world multicultural exhibition center, world religious museum, Minnan architecture grand view garden, magical and beautiful mountain and sea scenery, gourmet city of China, and rapidly changing tourism industry. Produced over three years, this video showcases Quanzhou's ancient and youthful characteristics through a unique epic technique. With its popularity, depth and bilingual subtitles, this video has won the title of "Belt and Road" influential video.

### **4 The relationship between the Skopos theory and translation strategies**

On one hand, as mentioned above, the skopos rule, the most important rule in the Skopos theory, occupies a leading position. In the book *Towards a General Theory of Translation Theory*, Vermeers and Reiss argue that the purpose of translation takes precedence over the translation process and determines whether, how, and what to do. Therefore, we can draw a conclusion safely that the purpose of translation determines the adoption of translation strategies. In fact, there is no doubt that we can view the purpose of translation as the expected function of translation, i.e., whether it is to "entertain" the target readers, to "inform" the target readers, or to "persuade" the target readers.

On the other hand, the choice of translation strategies reacts with the achievement of translation objectives. Under the guidance of the Skopos theory, in order to achieve faithful transfer between the original text and the target text, translators should use appropriate translation strategies. The same source text with different translation strategies may yield different effects. Therefore, corresponding translation strategies are adopted to make the text conform to the characteristics of target language and achieve the goal of promotion when translating tourism promotional videos like *The Starting Point of Maritime Silk Road-Quanzhou*.

### **5 Analysis of translation strategies for subtitles in *The Starting Point of Maritime Silk Road-Quanzhou* under the Skopos theory**

In this chapter, the author analyzed the translation strategies of the promotional video *The Starting Point of Maritime Silk Road-Quanzhou* from three rules under the Skopos theory: the skopos rule, the coherence rule and fidelity rule. Through the detailed analysis of several cases, the author summarized the strengths and weaknesses of English subtitle translation of this promotional video and put forward personal opinions on how to translate subtitles of this video, in order to promote internationalization of Quanzhou's cultural and tourism industry.

### 5.1 The adoption of translation strategies under the Skopos rule

The skopos rule is a very important rule in the translation of tourism promotional works. English tourism promotional videos play a valuable role in promoting China's tourism resources to foreign tourists, inspiring and attracting them to come and visit. The purpose of translation will greatly affect the quality of subtitles in promotional videos. Under the Skopos theory, translators should use translation strategies comprehensively such as literal translation and free translation to enable foreign tourists to have a correct understanding of Quanzhou.

Example 1:

ST: 面线糊, 肉粽, 元宵圆, 牛肉羹, 土笋冻, 海蛎煎, 深沪鱼丸, 洪濑鸡爪

TT: paste noodles, rice dumpling, sweet glutinous rice dumpling, thick beef soup, sandworm jelly, oyster omelet, Shenhui fish ball, Honglai chicken feet

Analysis:

Guided by the purpose of conveying specific information and promoting cuisines, the author suggests adopting transliteration plus annotation. Noodle pastes should be translated as "Mianxianhu (paste thin noodles)", considering that Mianxianhu is made into a paste and made of fine noodles. Rice dumpling, a flavor of Zongzi, should be revised into "Rouzong(pork meat Zongzi)". This version can retain its semantics and promote Chinese delicacies internationally. Similarly, it is advisable to add "sweet glutinous rice dumpling", "thick beef soup", "sandworm jelly", "oyster" and "Shenhui fish ball" with annotations. Therefore, these translation versions are "Yuanxiaoyuan (sweet glutinous rice dumpling)", "Niurougeng(thick beef soup)", "Tusundong (sandworm jelly)" and "Shenhuyuwán(Shenhui fish ball)". However, for "Honglajizhua", which stands out with the process of "braising", the author suggests translating it into "Honglajizhua (braised Honglai chicken feet)" to retain its unique characteristics. In summary, the author believes that the strategy of transliteration plus annotation is suitable because it enables target readers to go into deep insight of these cuisines and helps Quanzhou food culture go globally.

### 5.2 The adoption of translation strategies under the coherence rule

Chinese and English belong to different language families. Therefore, it is very common to experience semantic gaps. When translating promotional videos into English, we should take cultural background of the target language into consideration. Besides, in order to make sense of translation version in target language, translators should think in target language.

Example 2:

ST: 泉州的香文化可以追溯到唐五代时期。

TT: The incense culture in Quanzhou can be traced back to the Tang and Five Dynasties.

Analysis:

In English, the noun "incense culture" cannot be paired with the active form -- "trace". To ensure coherence, the translator has to consider the subject-verb collocation in target language while maintaining the context of the source language. Since there is passive meaning between "incense culture" history and "trace", passive voice is used here to align with English grammar, thinking pattern and objective stylistic characteristics of promotional videos. In a word, this kind of method adheres to the coherence rule under the Skopos theory.

### 5.3 The adoption of translation strategies under the fidelity rule

Translation is a cultural transfer activity. Fidelity goes beyond literal translation and aligns with the author's intended meaning. In English translation of tourism promotional videos, the translator must make adjustments to the original text to achieve the goal of promoting and attracting tourists. What's more, the degree of fidelity is determined by the purpose of

translation.

Example 3:

ST: 泉州惠安女, "封建头, 民主肚, 节约衫, 浪费裤", 奇特的着装, 隐藏着惠安女子辛勤劳作、善良贤惠的美好品德。

TT: "Covered head, exposed belly, saving shirt, wasting pants", the special dressing of Hui'an women sketches the hard-working and virtuous morality of them.

Analysis:

"封建头, 民主肚, 节约衫, 浪费裤" is a graphic description of the traditional clothing characteristics of women in Hui'an. The head is wrapped up with a bamboo hat and headscarf, with only the nose and eyes revealed; The waist and abdomen are exposed; the round-hemmed shirt is too short to cover the belly, and the pants ends are as wide as 40 centimeters. If this proverb is translated literally, such as "Feudal head, democratic belly, frugal shirt, wasteful pants" (translated by Baidu), it is very rigid and cannot achieve the goal of conveying distinctive and rich connotations of Hui'an women's traditional clothing to target language readers. The adoption of free translation strategy to translate this proverb helps to convey the inherent meaning of Hui'an women's clothing and guides target readers to understand Hui'an women's traditional clothing culture. The translator used "covered", "exposed", "saving", and "wasting" to modify head, bell, shirt, and pants respectively. "Covered" and "exposed", "saving" and "wasting" constitute two groups of contrast, which highlights the features of women's traditional clothing in Hui'an. All in all, this translation version helps target readers form a blueprint of Hui'an women's clothing in their minds and remove cultural barriers to some extent.

## 6 Conclusion

Quanzhou, a city renowned for its natural beauty and rich culture, has captivated tourists worldwide. The subtitle of promotional videos plays a crucial role in connecting foreign tourists with the local tourism resources. Hence, the translation quality of these subtitles significantly impacts the development of Quanzhou's tourism industry. Translators should adhere to the Skopos theory, which emphasizes the rules of skopos, coherence and fidelity, and should employ suitable strategies to enhance the quality of English subtitles in promotional videos.

### Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

### References

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