

# An exploration on the E-C translation of *Mind Food: Plant-Based Recipes for Positive Mental Health* under the guidance of Skopos theory

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**Abstract:** The text of this translation practice is excerpted from *Mind Food: Plant-Based Recipes for Positive Mental Health*. Part I of this book discusses and analyzes the influence and function of food on mental health based on the author's personal experience, emphasizing that spiritual food is not only a way of life, but also an activity that can connect us with our surroundings. The author of the book himself suffered from eating disorder due to a major setback in his life, but by adjusting his diet, he was able to get his life back on track. The translator selected the spring part of the first chapter, which mainly introduced the recipes composed of vegetables in the spring season. The translation practice report was guided by Skopos theory and analyzed the practical problems encountered in all aspects of translation practice in detail. The report is divided into four parts: the first part is the selection of translation theories; the second part is the main part of the report: case study. In the last part, the author summarizes the experience and inspiration gained in the translation practice, hoping to help the translation work in the future.

**Key words:** mind food; gourmet recipes; translation

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## 1 The selection of translation strategies

The translation practice was completed under the guidance of the Skopos theory, as the main characteristics of the source text is to inform and communicate with the readers. Skopos theory holds that translation is a purposeful cross-cultural communication activity based on the source text and the influence of the translator, and the purpose of translation is to enable people with different language and cultural backgrounds to successfully complete the communication activities [1]. "Different translation purposes require different translation strategies" [4]. There are three principles in the Skopos theory: the first is the principle of Skopos which decides the strategies and the skills applied to the translation practice. The second is the principle of coherence, which means the existence of a purposive relationship between target text and source text. The last one is fidelity which refers to the content consistency between the translated text and the original content [3]. Translation is a creative language activity. The degree and form of loyalty depend largely on the requirements of translation purpose, and the faithfulness principle is subject to the translation purpose principle [5]. Different languages have their own characteristics and forms, while at the same time, they share some similarities in vocabulary, grammar, idiomatic usage, expression and other aspects. The final purpose of translation is to convey the ideological content and features of the source text faithfully. Therefore, the translator must process the target language according to the purpose of

the translation and adopt the correct translation method. The purpose of this translation is to provide a better understanding of mind food to target language readers who interested in it. The book is multidisciplinary and will appeal to researchers in the fields of gastronomy, hospitality, tourism and media studies. Any translation practice must follow certain translation standards or principles, and the quality of a translation cannot be measured without certain translation standards [2]. Therefore, the establishment of translation standards is of great significance in guiding translation practice. Under the guidance of Skopos theory, the translator adopted different translation strategies such as literal translation, free translation, transliteration and annotation during the translation process.

## **2 Theoretical basis**

### **2.1 The Skopos rule**

The most important of the three rules of the Skopos theory is the Skopos rule, which means that translation activities are determined by the purpose. Vermeer believes that every text has its own specific purpose, and both the original content and the translation text should serve this purpose. The Skopos rule can be explained as "translate / interpret / speak / write in a way that enables your text / translation work to function with the people who want to use it and precisely in the way they want it to". The status of the three principles of Skopos theory can be condensed as "the prime principle determining any translation process is the purpose of the overall translation action". The Skopos theory emphasizes the communicative function of the target text and the communicative function that the target cultural audience needs to achieve in their social and cultural environment [6]. Translation can have multiple purposes, but there is always a primary purpose, and the primary purpose determines the mode and strategy of translation. In a given translation situation, the translator must choose the main purpose of a target text and explain it rationally and adequately.

This is because, no matter which translation strategy is used for a particular translation, the strategy itself is only a means to an end. For example, if a poem mainly conveys the mood in form, then the form of the text must be considered to be preserved in translation, but if it is a translation of an advertisement, then publicizing the message and spirit of the product becomes the main purpose, and then the translator should give less consideration of the form and focus on conveying the spirit.

### **2.2 The coherence rule**

The coherence rule, also known as intratextual coherence rule, requires the translated text to be intratextually coherent, which is to say the translated text is readable and acceptable, and can be understood by the receiver and make sense in the culture of the target language as well as in the communicative context in which the translated text is used [7]. Any text is a provider of information and function, but information and function are not always obvious from the linguistic point of view. The translator selects the aspects and components that serve the purpose according to the principle of Skopos rule, and translates them into the target language through linguistic processing, so as to make the translated text become a new provider of information. And in this part of language processing, the translator must pay attention to the fact that the translation is readable and comprehensible in the target language. Only when it makes sense in the communicative context of the target language readers, the culture and information of the source text can be effectively transmitted to the target language readers.

To summarize, Vermeer believes that any text is "an offer of information from which each receiver selects the items they find interesting and important", and the target text is "an offer of information formulated by someone else in the source culture and language". Since the cultural backgrounds and discourse habits of readers of different languages are not the same, the coherence rule states that "a translation should be acceptable in a sense that it is coherent with the receivers' situation" [9].

### 2.3 The fidelity rule

Another rule governing the Skopos theory is the fidelity rule. In his book *Translating as a Purposeful Activity* published in 1997, Nord summarized various academic thoughts of functionalism, explained various criticisms of functionalism translation theory since its formation, and gave answers to these criticisms. Aiming at solving deficiency of functionalism translation theory, he put forward the principle of "function plus loyalty" as a supplement to the Skopos theory. The fidelity rule emphasizes the significance of intertextual coherence. According to this rule, the target text needs to be coherent with the source text. The fidelity rule is established on the prerequisite of the translation purpose and the translator's understanding of the source text. It requires the translated text to be faithful to the source text. The degree of loyalty is usually determined by the purpose of the translated text and the translator. Such fidelity doesn't refer to word-for-word rendering. Instead, the translator can decide his/her translation strategies to enable the translator's intentions to match with target readers' requirements, and satisfy reader's expectations [8].

In all, intertextual coherence is secondary to intratextual coherence, and the rule of Skopos overweighs the other two rules. The three rules are intertwined with each other. It is concluded that the rule of Skopos is a fundamental principle which is universally applicable, and the coherence rule and the fidelity rule are specific rules suited to specific conditions. If the Skopos requires the change of function of the target text, fidelity to the source text will no longer serve as the criterion. And if the Skopos requires the target text to be intratextually incoherent, the coherence rule is no longer valid.

## 3 Case analysis

This chapter mainly analyzes some cases in translation practice and proposes some translation problems encountered by the translator in the process of translation from three aspects. Based on the problems encountered in the process of proofreading and revision, the translator analyzes and summarizes the translation strategies used in translation practice, including amplification, omission, variation, clause, sentence order adjustment and cultural background.

### 3.1 Translation at lexical level

Lexical translation is the basis of translation. The primary task of translation activities is to understand the meaning of the original English vocabulary and its deep cultural significance accurately. In the process of translation, it is necessary to understand the content and its logical relationship correctly. In order to make the expression of the translation more fluent, it is necessary to adopt some vocabulary translation methods. This section will analyze the selection of lexical meanings in different contexts, the standardization of personal names, and different translation strategies for proper nouns.

The selection of lexical meanings in different context polysemy is a common phenomenon in English, which is also one of the causes of comprehension difficulties. It is not difficult to find that the simplest words are often the easiest to misinterpret. In the original translation, there are several mistranslations caused by improper understanding of the word meaning. In this part, conversion and literal translation were adopted.

Example 1:

SL: Cover the base plate with an upside down plate to keep the atmosphere humid.

TL 1: yòng dào kòu pán kòu zhù dǐ pán, bǎo chí zhōu wéi kōng qì shī rùn.

TL 2: bǎ pán zi dào kòu guò lái, gài zhù dǐ pán, bǎo chí zhōu wéi kōng qì shī rùn.

The meaning of the words "upside down plate" is "dào kòu guò lái de pán zi", so in the first translation, the translator literally translated the word into "dào kòu pán". But after searched on Bing, the translator learned that there was no a particular kind of plate called "dào kòu pán". From the picture showed on Bing, the "upside down plate" is just a normal plate but upside down. The translation version “倒扣盘” is unrelated to a proper version. Therefore the translator adopted

the translation method of "verbalization" to translate the word, and the sentence was translated into "bǎ pán zi dào kòu guò lái, gài zhù dǐ pán, bǎo chí zhōu wéi kōng qì shī rùn".

Example 2:

SL: OMEGA SEEDS AND ANCIENT OAT BIRCHER

TL 1: ōu mǐ gā zǐ hé gǔ lǎo de yān mài.

TL 2: niú nǎi gé yè yān mài pào qí yà zǐ, yà má zǐ .

In this example, the problem is how to translate the word "OMEGA". The meaning of the word "OMEGA" refers to "the last letter of the Greek alphabet or Swiss watch brands". So in the first translation, the translator translated the word "omega" into "ōu mǐ gā" without hesitation. It is a kind of mistranslations caused by improper understanding of word meanings. However, after searching online, the translator found that the phrase "OMEGA SEEDS" did not refer to "ōu mǐ gā zǐ". It referred to "seeds like linseeds and chia seeds contain Omega-3 fatty acids which are essential for good health". The words "linseeds and chia" were literally translated into "yà má zǐ hé qí yà zǐ" and the sentence was translated into "niú nǎi gé yè yān mài pào qí yà zǐ, yà má zǐ", which expresses the main ingredients of this dish.

### 3.2 The translation of other proper nouns

Since the theme of the translated text is food, a number of proper nouns related to food will appear in original text, such as food names, brand names, proverbs, etc. This part mainly analyzes the processing of these words with examples in the translation process. Literal translation, free translation annotation and transliteration will be adopted for different kinds of proper nouns in this part.

Example 3:

SL: For the tumbet

TL1: tōng bèi tè

TL2: sù shí shā guō

The word "tumbet" is a traditional Spanish vegetarian dish rather than a place name. It's usually made of fried potatoes, eggplant and bell peppers baked in the oven with tomato sauce, which is very similar to Chinese "shā guō" cooking, so it is translated into "sù shí shā guō".

Example 4:

SL: You can also add a tablespoon of bee pollen for extra sweetness and a little buzz.

TL1: kě yǐ jiā yī sháo huā fěn fēng mì lái zēng jiā tián wèi hé wēng wēng shēng.

TL2: kě yǐ jiā yī sháo huā fěn fēng mì lái zēng jiā tián wèi hé kǒu gǎn.

In this example, the translation difficulty is how to translate the word "buzz" properly. The Chinese meaning of "buzz" means "wēng wēng shēng". At first, the translator adopts free translation and the word was translated into "wēng wēng shēng", but after searching on the Internet, the translator found that the translation version can't truly express the real meaning of the source text. The "buzz" here is actually a kind of flavor. Therefore the translator translated the word, that is, "kǒu gǎn". This translation version not only conveys the meaning, but also retains the features of the original text.

### 3.3 Translation at textual level

Text is a linguistic piece that is relatively complete and independent in its communicative function. In order to carry out effective communication activities, the text should be cohesive and coherent. Cohesion and coherence are the most important and obvious features of a text. Holism is especially important in textual translation. Therefore, the translation

should consider it in the entire text or in the whole paragraph. In this text, free translation was adopted under the guidance of Skopos theory.

Example 5:

SL: Like all practices in Mind Food, there is not a one-size-fits-all approach.

TL1: xiàng suǒ yǒu de jīng shén shí wù shí jiàn yí yàng, méi yǒu nǐ gè shì yī dāo qiē de.

TL2: suǒ yǒu de jīng shén shí wù cài pǔ dōu yí yàng, méi yǒu nǐ gè shì shì hé suǒ yǒu rén de .

In this example, the sentence composition of the original text is complete and clear, and the logical order is strict. The text can be translated correctly according to literal translation method. However, in order to make the meaning of the translation version more logical, the translator changes the phrase "one-size-fits-all" to "shì hé suǒ yǒu rén". The first version here is not correct and can not truly express the real meaning of the source text. Therefore, the translator translated it into "shì hé suǒ yǒu rén", which is much better than the first version.

Example 6:

SL: Ashwagandha most commonly comes in powdered form and is a nootropic, which means that it can improve cognitive function and provide a lot of neurological nourishment. Plus, its unique make up is said to help serotonin production for an improved mood and resilience to stress.

TL1: nán fēi zuì jiā zuì cháng jiàn de xíng shì shì fěn mò zhuàng, shì yī zhǒng yì zhì yào, zhè yì wèi zhe tā kě yǐ gǎi shàn rèn zhī gōng néng, tí gōng dà liàng de shén jīng yíng yǎng. cǐ wài , jù shuō tā dú tè de chéng fèn yǒu zhù yú xuè qīng sù de chǎn shēng, cóng ér gǎi shàn qíng xù hé kàng yā lì néng lì.

TL2: nán fēi zuì jiā (huò yìn dù rén shēn) cháng jiàn yú fěn mò zhuàng , shì yī zhǒng yì zhì yào , kě yǐ tí gāo rèn zhī, wèi shén jīng tí gōng yíng yǎng. cǐ wài, jù shuō hái yǒu néng chǎn shēng xuè qīng sù de dú tè chéng fèn, kě yǐ gǎi shàn qíng xù hé tí gāo kàng yā néng lì.

Due to the huge discrepancies and differences between English and Chinese in terms of morphology and syntax, although its scientific name is South African Nightshade, it is actually native to India. By translating the alias, the reader can better correspond to the later Indian medical system "Ayurveda" without creating ambiguity. And the translator also changed the word order in English so that the sentences would be more fluent and readable.

#### 4 Conclusion

The translator has gained valuable experience and a deeper understanding after completing the translation of the first two chapters of the book *Mind Food: Plant-Based Recipes for Positive Mental Health*. The following is a summary by the translator from two aspects, including the experience gained in translation practice, relevant thinking and the prospects of future study and work.

##### 4.1 Reflection and summary of the translation task

First of all, we should make full preparations before translation. If the translator does not have a profound understanding, experience and feelings of the source text, it is impossible for the readers to understand, appreciate and feel the content of the original text. Therefore, in the translator's opinion, it is essential to read the original text to get the general idea of the original text before translation. It is of vital importance to grasp the genre and stylistic characteristics of the original text and its influence on the whole translation work. In this translation practice, the translator first consulted the author's introduction, writing background and social evaluation of the original text in order to have an overall grasp of source text. Therefore, a full understanding of the source text is also an essential procedure in translation process. In this translation practice, the sentence pattern of the original text is complex, abstract and obscure, which causes great

difficulties in understanding. Therefore, it is necessary to read the original text repeatedly and search for information, try to understand the meaning of the original text completely, and ensure an accurate understanding of the original text. The second is that we should pay attention to the significant differences between Chinese and English expressions. In the translation process, the Chinese language is easily influenced by English habits, which can lead to translation errors and problems. In this translation practice, the translator read and checked the translation text in order to reduce reliance on the original text and avoid excessive translation. In addition, in the process of repeated revisions, the translator has gradually realized that there is no absolute correct standard expression, that is, there is no perfect translation. However, the translation version should be as close as possible to the source text to ensure that it is not only faithful to the original meaning, but also conforms to the style and features of source text. Proofreading is an indispensable part in translation process. After the first translation is completed, the translation must be modified and revised carefully and repeatedly. Because the translator can neither grasp the translation as a whole nor consider it in details at once. What the translator learned in this translation practice was the importance of reading. Translation is a work that needs repeated revision and supplement, which requires the translator to devote a lot of time and patience to accomplish. Therefore, in order to serve the target readers in the future translation better, it is necessary to strengthen the study and mastery of translation theories.

### **Conflicts of interest**

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

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