An Analysis of Translation Strategies of Corporate Annual Reports From the Perspective of Appraisal Theory

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Based on Martin’s theory of appraisal and a self-built corpus of the chairman’s speech in Huawei’s 2020 annual report, this paper explores the expressions and translation strategies of the attitudes in the speech. It is found that Huawei’s corporate image shaped by its annual report speech is characterized by progressive, people-oriented, and customer-oriented characteristics. These characteristics are not only related to the actions of Huawei itself, but also related to the application of translation strategies and methods by translators. Annual report speech is an important part of the company’s self-image publicity. Translators should try to use the same type of words to express explicit attitudes in the speech, so as to improve the social recognition of the annual report speech.

Keywords: appraisal theory, implicit attitude, annual report speech, translation strategy

Introduction

In the contemporary era of high commercialization, the overseas market of many Chinese companies is constantly expanding. At the same time, trade protectionism is rising again. In order to cope with trade protectionism, Huawei accelerates the construction of innovative enterprises and makes a lot of efforts in external communication. For every enterprise, improving the ability of external communication is becoming more and more important. The company’s annual report is not only a summary of the operating situation, but also an important part of corporate publicity. The opening part of the annual report is a speech by the chairman of the company, which is also aimed at the development of the company and the formulation of rules. It has become a hot topic in business discourse research in recent years (Wang, 2017). Moreover, most of the English versions of corporate annual reports are translated from Chinese versions. Therefore, how to better translate corporate annual reports in combination with Chinese and western contexts and further enhance the influence of Chinese companies’ external communication is a challenge faced by many translators. Therefore, this paper takes Huawei’s 2020 annual report speech as the research corpus and explores its translation strategies, aiming to provide reference for more companies in the external publicity of corporate image.

Theoretical Basis

The appraisal theory was first introduced by Martin in the 1990s. The object of the appraisal theory is all kinds of words and other language resources that reflect attitudes in language expression. These include attitude, engagement, and graduation. Attitude refers to the influence of psychology on behaviour and text, which is the most important subsystem and expresses the author’s subjective attitude. Engagement is the language of
ing attitude expression, including vocabulary, grammar, and so on. The difference is the use of different words to convey the intensity of an attitude. Attitude system is the most important part of attitude system, and appreciation is also based on attitude. As the key element of attitude—language resources, the object of appraisal system is not only the attitude of speakers, but also the influence of the use of words on readers.

**Application of Appraisal Theory in Translation Studies**

In recent years, appraisal theory has gradually extended from discourse analysis to translation studies. For example, the application of appraisal theory in business translation (Qian, 2007). Xu Jun (2011) expressed in his research that the combination of appraisal theory and business translation better demonstrated the characteristics of business language. Fu Lihua (2010) believes that the characteristics of attitude in business discourse include politeness, consideration, etc., which are relatively obvious expressions. In the way of embodiment, both dominant and recessive. At present, the introduction of appraisal theory in the translation practice of business texts is helpful to correctly grasp the original author’s point of view and complete the translation task better.

In the new era combined with China’s new development background, many enterprises still have many deficiencies in the external publicity of corporate culture. Attitude in this article tries to Martin & White appraisal theory system as the research framework, to address the President of Huawei company 2020 annual report text, for example, through to the Chinese and English translation of the original discourse resources analysed, and discusses the translation strategies in Huawei’s annual report, also looking for more Chinese companies annual reports which provide certain reference text translation from Chinese into English.

**Attitude Expressions and Translation Strategies of Annual Report Speeches**

Appreciation, judgment, and affect constitute the attitude resources of appraisal theory. Affect is the expression of the speaker’s mood, which can be positive or negative. Judgment refers to the evaluation of things according to a certain system. According to different cultures, it can include specific codes invisible and explicit. Appreciation is the classification of things based on certain aesthetic basis, which can also be divided into positive and negative. The above three can be divided into pros and cons. The speaker can also use implicit or direct techniques. Therefore, in the process of translation, we should not only consider the explicit meaning at the lexical level, but also consider various implicit factors such as metaphor and culture. Correctly grasp the meaning of the text, further correctly convey the attitude.

The first function of corporate annual report speech is to promote and establish a good corporate image, and the second function is to communicate information with the society (Wang & Guan, 2013). In the Chinese-English translation of the company’s annual report, the translator must grasp the Chinese context, grasp the use of various attitude resources, and further help enterprises to establish a good corporate image abroad, so as to promote China’s economic development. Below will be combined with the company 2020 annual report (from Huawei’s official website https://www.huawei.com/cn/annual-report); the attitude to the discourse is expressed as the main research object, to explore the annual speech discourse attitude in the significance of expression and the translation strategies. It provides certain reference for other companies’ overseas publicity.

**Use Words With Similar Attitude in Translation**

From the perspective of attitude evaluation, Chinese enterprises tend to use positive themes to describe various corporate activities, so as to present a good outlook of the company and influence the attitudes and
behaviours of the audience (Wang, 2017). This view is also reflected in Huawei’s 2020 annual report. In his speech, Mr. Hu, the rotating CEO of Huawei, mainly introduced how Huawei adjusted to accelerate the arrival of an intelligent world against the backdrop of repeated epidemics and geopolitics. Moreover, the full text is more inclined to use explicit resources. In the English translation, the translator uses a large number of explicit attitude words with similar meanings to achieve the purpose of promoting the communication between China and foreign countries. Such as:

No matter what changes come our way, our commitment to serving customers—and to realizing our vision and mission—will remain as strong as ever. We will continue in our endeavor to bring digital to every person, home and organization for a fully connected, intelligent world.

The above description of 2020’s turbulent landscape opens the speech, using words with positive connotations to set the tone. The translator used “No matter what changes come our way” to convey the phrasal verb “how the external environment has changed” and replaced another noun “our way” to present the enterprise as a moving whole. The whole enterprise is on the way forward with high joint efforts.

We have been actively using ICT technology to assist the pandemic response in local communities. As part of our commitment to multilateral international cooperation, we are working closely with local governments, community organizations, international organizations, and our customers and partners to protect the health and safety of the people we serve.

The annual report uses the verbs “assist” and “protect” to convey the appreciation of “help, protect”. While “As part of our Commitment to Multilateral International Cooperation” is used in the expression of “carry forward the spirit of international cooperation”, it basically achieves the same effect as the original text through the transformation of parts of speech. It conveys Huawei’s image of international responsibility in Chinese text.

**Grammatical Transformation Is Used in Translation to Achieve Equivalence**

Discourse attitude can be realized by lexical or grammatical means. This is also confirmed in the speech of Huawei’s 2020 annual report. In order to improve the acceptance of Chinese enterprises’ external communication, translators have made use of grammatical means in many ways to improve the readability of the translation.

Different from the first stage, Internet companies spearheaded the first wave of this transformation process. In the second wave, traditional industries—especially finance, manufacturing, education, and healthcare—are optimizing the value of their data by moving their production management systems onto the cloud and streamlining the flow of data throughout their organizations.

“Different from the first stage”, but the translation uses two sentences to express the logical relationship: “The first wave”, “In the second wave”. It shows the tide of changes in the Internet environment, but Huawei responds to all kinds of variables in an orderly manner, conveying the significance of Huawei’s attitude of
adhering to healthy and orderly operation in the face of setbacks. This kind of grammatical means, through changing word order and grammar to achieve meaning equivalence, is also a translation strategy commonly used by translators.

**Flexible Translation of Implicit Attitude, Improve the Effect of External Communication**

Zhu Yongsheng (2009) believes that when studying the presentation of evaluation, we should not only look at the words expressing attitudeal colours, such as happy and sad, but also pay attention to some implicit expressions and carefully study the meaning of some metaphors, so that English readers can further gain the same feelings as Chinese readers. In addition, a large number of metaphors are used in the annual reports of Chinese enterprises in order to present a good image of the company. For example,

"People are the heart and soul of innovation. As always, we will continue to optimize our talent management systems to attract top minds from around the world and help them unleash their full potential. In order to support our corporate strategy and address the varied demands of digital transformation, we will double down on supplementing and improving our software capabilities, strengthening our software teams, nurturing our own software architects, and bringing in external architects.

The translator uses “People are the heart and soul of innovation” to express the speaker’s meaning that “talent is the key to innovation”, which is more in line with the habits of English readers and also reflects the importance Huawei attaches to scientific and technological talents.

“To bring in architects, generate architects yourself”. The most important role for teachers is to guide our own software architects, and bring in external architects. The verb “tutoring” best conveys Huawei’s corporate culture, which emphasizes people-orientation and nurturing as a team.

**Conclusions**

Attitude reflects the author’s preferences, views, and opinions. Translators should try to convey the original author’s meaning to the target audience in an appropriate way (Chen, 2019, p. 68). In the speech section of Huawei annual report, we can find many positive expressions, both explicit and implicit, which all convey the positive and enterprising image of the company. Annual report is an important way for enterprises to establish corporate image and convey information to the society. In English translation, words with similar attitude and meaning should be used as far as possible, and accurate translation can be achieved by transforming parts of speech when necessary. More importantly, it is important for enterprises to understand the culture of the target context and find the authentic expression of the target context when communicating with other countries. Enhance the readability of the annual report of the enterprise, and further improve the strength of external communication.

**References**


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