

# Translation of Governmental Publicity— Enlightened from the Translation of “Five-dimensional Chongqing Construction”

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**Abstract**—With the rapid development of Chongqing Municipality directly under the People’s Republic of China Central Government, Chongqing Municipality is more and more focused and well-known all over the country. And the construction aim of “wu ge Chongqing” arouses the interest of more people and is widely discussed. However, to internationalize Chongqing Municipality and to attract more foreign people’s eyes, the publicity is crucial and first and foremost. To attract more foreigners, the translation of materials of publicity is decisive and pivotal. Consequently, in this article it is to analyze English translation of “wu ge Chongqing”, and discover the principles and approaches in translating materials of governmental publicity, so as to advance the translation practice of governmental publicity translation and to improve foreigners’ awareness and understanding of governmental publicity.

**Index Terms**—“wu ge Chongqing”, governmental publicity, principle, approach

## I. INTRODUCTION

The translation of “wu ge Chongqing”, which means literally “five” (wu ge) and “Chongqing” (a municipality directly under the People’s Republic of China Central Government), therefore it is combined literally as “Five Chongqing”, which can be found from the publicity or news from the paper or websites related to Chongqing. In addition, the detailed “Five Chongqing” are “yi ju Chongqing”, “chang tong Chongqing”, “sen lin Chongqing”, “ping an Chongqing” and “jian kang Chongqing”. They are translated as livable Chongqing, smooth Chongqing, green Chongqing, safe Chongqing, and healthy Chongqing respectively according to the publication (Picture 1). “Livable Chongqing” is also translated as “liveable Chongqing”, and “green Chongqing” sometimes is also translated as “forest Chongqing”.<sup>①</sup> How about these translations? And what can it enlighten the following translation of governmental publicity?



Picture 1 Publicity outside of the Chongqing Airport Square: wu ge Chongqing and their English translation

<sup>①</sup> All the translations are easily found from public sign in Chongqing. The readers can also find relative information from such websites as: [http://cq.cqnews.net/dt/swjb/200911/t20091105\\_3747387.htm](http://cq.cqnews.net/dt/swjb/200911/t20091105_3747387.htm); [http://concreteaccessories.blog.hexun.com/39813789\\_d.html](http://concreteaccessories.blog.hexun.com/39813789_d.html); <http://www.sourcejuice.com/1275802/2009/11/16/Xilai-met-anti-heroes-cherish-every-moment-life-not/>; [http://www.cisco.com/web/KR/scc/pdf/Session1/Panel\\_Session\\_Wang\\_Jiguang.pdf](http://www.cisco.com/web/KR/scc/pdf/Session1/Panel_Session_Wang_Jiguang.pdf).

## II. ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSLATION OF “FIVE-DIMENSIONAL CHONGQING”

### A. Translation of Title of “Wu Ge Chongqing”

Originally, “Five Chongqing” is a developmental aim of construction of Chongqing Municipality, however the translation “Five Chongqing” is just from the literal meaning of “wu ge Chongqing”, while in fact it means five aspects of constructing Chongqing Municipality, that is, it is to build Chongqing as a city suitable to live, a city of convenient transportation, a city with a large area of forestry, a city of low-level of crime and a city with healthy living environment. In the five aspects, there are overlapping, while each one lays particular emphasis on certain prominent problems. Grammatically, the translation “five Chongqing” of “wu ge Chongqing” will make foreigners confused, as the readers do not understand the semantic or grammatical structure of “five Chongqing”. According to traditional grammar, a plural form of a noun is followed after the number “five”, so the translation “five Chongqing” is not grammatical, which is easy to be thought as a wrong expression of “Five Chongqings”. As a result, from the aspect of literal translation, it is not a proper translation. On the other hand, the translation does not tell the readers especially foreigners the five aspects of constructing Chongqing. From this aspect, the translation is not a good translation. According to the five aspects of “wu ge Chongqing”, its English version should at least contain the information of “five-aspect”; therefore it is better to be translated as “five-aspect Chongqing construction” or “five-dimensional Chongqing construction”, which can facilitate readers to understand its essence easily. Compared with each other, the former is clearer, while the latter is more literary, therefore it is better to choose the latter as its English translation of “wu ge Chongqing”.

### B. Translation of Five Aspects of “Wu Ge Chongqing”

As the “five-aspect Chongqing construction” or “five-dimensional Chongqing construction” just gives the readers general information, but what are the five aspects or dimensions? The translators in some cases should add some details on it. The first one “yi-ju Chongqing” is to make the city more convenient and more comfortable to live in, with good living surroundings, self-contained public facilities, and perfect urban functions, which can satisfy those living in the city and those visiting this city. It is translated as “livable” or “liveable” Chongqing. How about this translation? According to an online dictionary, livable (also liveable) means “suitable to live in; habitable”<sup>②</sup>. From its Chinese original meaning, “yi ju” means livable, suitable to live, or a best place to settle down, and “yi ju Chongqing” is an adjective-noun phrase which refers to that Chongqing is a desirable place to live. Therefore, livable contains the semantic meaning and connotative meaning “a desirable place to live” of “yi ju Chongqing”, while the word “livable” also contains a pragmatic meaning that the Chongqing government encourages anybody to come to visit and settle down in Chongqing. Therefore from the aspects of semantic translation and functional translation, the translation is a perfect transformation of the original expression.

The aim of second aspect “chang tong Chongqing” is to build a higher-speed city transportation system and to open more passageways outward, such as roads, highways and airlines. “Chang tong” in Chinese means no blocking, and no traffic congestion, therefore it is translated as “smooth Chongqing”. Smooth refers to “free from or proceeding without abrupt curves, bends, etc”, or “allowing or having an even, uninterrupted movement or flow”, and its collocation can be as “a smooth ride or driving” and a sentence of its collocation can be “That road is smooth”. Based on this analysis, the translation implies that Chongqing government focuses on good infrastructure construction especially in traffic, which shows the semantic meaning and the aim of constructing “chang tong Chongqing”. According to Skopos Theory [1], the shape of TT should above all be determined by the function or “skopos” that it is intended to fulfill in the target context. From the translation of “chang tong Chongqing”, the function or skopos of constructing a high-speed city transportation system is occurred to target readers. While the foreigners can easily understand the content and aim of this aspect of Chongqing construction, and the translation is tested among foreigners with good responses. From aspects of semantic translation, Skopos Theory and readers’ reception, the translation fulfills its function.

Originally the Chinese version of “sen lin” is a noun phrase referring to forest, while in this case of “sen lin Chongqing” it is used as an adjective phrase meaning “with forest”. According to Chongqing governmental publicity, the aim of “sen lin Chongqing” is to plant as many trees as possible so as to build Chongqing as a “city of forest” and to make the city as a “oxygen bar” of forest with a high forest coverage. Therefore it is not only related to planting trees, but also concerned with greening and afforestation. It is generally translated as “green Chongqing” or “forest Chongqing”. Forest is a noun with meaning of “a large tract of land covered with trees and underbrush”. “Green” refers to “covered with herbage or foliage; verdant” or “characterized by the presence of verdure”. Whereas by comparison with the two expressions, “green” covers more information than “forest” does, as it is related to environmental concerns but not only forestation, consequently green Chongqing is more suitable to its Chinese version from perspectives of semantics, function translation and readers’ reception.

“Ping an” in Chinese is a common adjective to refer to safe, and the aim of “ping an Chongqing” is to crack down on illegal speculation and profiteering, illegal lawbreakers, so as to build a safe city. It is to attract more foreign investors to invest in Chongqing securely. Thus it is translated as “safe Chongqing”. Safe is “free from hurt, injury, danger, or risk”, or “involving little or no risk of mishap”, which is equivalent to its Chinese counterpart semantically, in addition

<sup>②</sup> All the definitions of words “livable or liveable, smooth, forest, green, safe and healthy” are from the website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/>.

it represents the aim of the Chinese version, and will make it understandable and acceptable for foreigners. From aspects of semantic translation, Skopos Theory and readers' reception, the translation fulfills its function.

"Jian kang" refers to healthy in Chinese, and the aim of "jian kang Chongqing" is to establish more public exercise facilities, to build more average sports ground for the public and to increase the rate of the national physical conditions. In this situation it is more related to the construction of public physical and mental health. "Jian kang" is an adjective with the meaning of "healthy", so it is translated as "healthy Chongqing". "Healthy" refers to "possessing or enjoying good health or a sound and vigorous mentality", or "pertaining to or characteristic of good health, or a sound and vigorous mind". From its collocation, it is easy to find that it is generally used with somebody, and when it is used as "Healthy City", it is a set expression related to the WHO Healthy City Project among some developing countries. As the project mainly focuses on environmental improvements, the translation is interpreted by foreigners in a survey as good fresh air and water supply, enough doctors, hospitals and medicine etc. From this analysis, the translation does not make foreign readers clear understand the aim of "jian kang Chongqing", though its literal meaning is the same, in addition, it embodies the essence and function of construction of "jian kang Chongqing": to build a city with healthy living environment for those dwellers.

From these analysis, "wu ge Chongqing" is better to be translated as "five-dimensional Chongqing construction: liveable/livable Chongqing, smooth Chongqing, green Chongqing, safe Chongqing and healthy Chongqing". The semantic meaning and function or aim of the original is achieved in this translation from the perspectives of equivalent theory, Skopos Theory and readers' reception, and this translation also can make foreign readers understand its essence.

### III. PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENTAL PUBLICITY TRANSLATION

It is not possible to discuss or evaluate the translation of publicity translation without considering its translation principles. Therefore in this part it is mainly to discuss the principles in the translation of publicity, especially governmental publicity. Firstly it is necessary to make clear what governmental publicity translation is. In modern international communication, for more famous and more attractive to foreigners, a government has to provide some persuasive information about the city to others. In this process, the original texts have to be translated to foreign texts to make foreigners easily get to know them and understand them clear. As this activity is sponsored by the government, and it is to give the government and relative activities publicity to other people, the translation process is called governmental publicity translation. Consequently, governmental publicity refers to the governmental publication of information related to governmental activities, announcements, developmental directions and steps or others relating to the publicity of relative city or government. For the discussion of principles of governmental publicity translation, it is essential to consider the elements and considerations of governmental publicity translation.

The first element is the information itself. Any governmental publicity text contains its contents, idea and semantic meaning. From this view, the translation of governmental publicity should take the semantic meaning of the original text into consideration. The second element is the aim of text. Governmental publicity text is to enlarge its international recognition and influence, to make more people get to know it and attract more people come to visit or invest, and to win the city an international fame. Therefore, this kind of text is function-oriented, and in translation it is necessary to pay much attention to its function. The third consideration is the acceptance of target readers. As the government publicity will realize its value and influence only when it is widely accepted by readers. Since the governmental publicity translation is to attract foreigners' attention, its translation should pay main attention to foreign readers, as a result the valuation of governmental publicity translation should focus on the response of foreign readers.

As the translation activity is sponsored by government, and its aim is also restricted by the aim of publicity, the translation has to abide by some principles. Enlightened from the English translation of "wu ge Chongqing", in translation of governmental publicity, it is necessary to consider the semantic meaning of original text, its function or aim and its acceptance of target readers. This is the first principle. Secondly, texts of governmental publicity are "appeal-focused" texts, which should achieve the non-linguistic purpose of its message and provoke a particular reaction on the part of the hearers or readers, inciting them to engage in specific actions. [2] Therefore, translation of governmental publicity is "goal-oriented", that is, to appeal others' attention, so in translating these kinds of texts its aim is of priority. This is the second principle. The third one is that all the translation should be tested and verified by target readers, as the purpose, skopos or aims of the governmental publicity is to attract foreigners attention, the foreigners' response and acceptance is of course of paramount importance. From this aspect, the translation principle is accordant to Venuti's "domesticating" [3] to target readers, or as Schleiermacher's choice that "he (the translator) leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him". [4] In other words, it is to translate according to its functions, meanings and target readers' reception, and among of them, the function is of priority.

### IV. APPROACHES TO FOREIGN-ORIENTED GOVERNMENTAL PUBLICITY TRANSLATION

From these principles, the translation of governmental publicity is foreigners-oriented, which is to arouse foreigners' attraction and interest, to realize the functions of the materials of governmental publicity, and to attract more and more foreign readers understand and get to know it. Therefore, for the purpose of preserving the semantic meaning, in translating materials of governmental publicity the translators should try to express the content and ideas of the

materials, which is often called literal translation. For the majority of translating materials of governmental publicity, literal translation is the basic approach in practice, for instance the translation of “yi ju Chongqing, chang tong Chongqing, ping an Chongqing and jian kang Chongqing” as “livable Chongqing, smooth Chongqing, safe Chongqing and healthy Chongqing”. In practice, the government institutions or organizations are generally literally translated such as Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Ministry of State Security of the People's Republic of China, Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and so on.

Considering the aim of governmental publicity, the translators should pay more attention to the purpose of materials in translating, as a result the translation should be functionally equivalent to its original. From this point of view, sometimes for those materials in which the literal meaning is not so important as its functions, the approach of translation can be free translation, that is, the translation is greatly different from its semantic equivalent of the original. The translation of “sen lin Chongqing” not as “forest Chongqing” but as “green Chongqing” is a good example, which is usual translation approach for those “appeal-focused” texts [5]. To satisfy foreign target readers, in translating texts of governmental publicity it is to adopt the strategy of domesticating—conforming to target discourse types and adopting a fluent, natural-sounding target language style.[6] For the translation of “wu ge Chongqing”, as the original in Chinese is grammatical and understandable for Chinese ordinary readers, while its literal translation as “Five Chongqing” is ungrammatical and incomprehensible to foreign readers, in translating it is changed as “five-dimensional Chongqing Construction”, which can facilitate the foreign to clear grasp the essence of “wu ge Chongqing”, and accordingly to grasp the details of the aim of Chongqing construction.

#### V. CONCLUSION

According to the analysis of translation of “wu ge Chongqing” and its details of five aspects, it is to conclude that the translation of “wu ge Chongqing” is not grammatical and incomprehensible, therefore it is not a good translation. From the requirements of translation of governmental publicity, in translating it is necessary to pay much attention to the semantic meaning and functions or aims of original texts, at the same time the translation should take target readers' reception into account. Based on these requirements, it is easy to get the principle and approaches in translating materials of governmental publicity. Enlightened from the analysis on translation of “wu ge Chongqing”, the translation of materials of governmental publicity is to focus more on function of original “appeal-focused” texts, on the acceptance of target readers, and in the basis of original semantic meaning and essence of original texts. Enlightened from this article, in the translation of foreigner-oriented text, such as governmental materials, governmental websites, and governmental press conference materials and so on, the translation principles and approaches are good examples for them.

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