

Nation Branding as Reframing: From the Perspective of Translation Studies

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Abstract : Soft power has replaced hard power and become one of the most attractive ways nations pursue to expand their international influence. One of the ways to improve a nation's soft power is to commercialise the country and brand or rebrand it to the international audience, and thus attract interests or foreign investments. In this process, translation has often been regarded as merely a tool, and researches in it are either in translating literature as culture export or in how (in)accuracy of translation influences the branding campaign. This paper proposes to analyse nation branding campaign with framing theory, and thus gives an entry for translation studies to come to a central stage in today's soft power research. To frame information or elements of a text, an event, or, as in this paper, a nation is to put them in a mental structure. This structure can be built by outsiders or by those who create the text, the event, or by citizens of the nation. To frame information like this can be regarded as a process of translation, as what translation does in its traditional meaning of 'translating a text' is to put a framework on the text to, deliberately or not, highlight some of the elements while hiding the others. In the discourse of nations, then, people unavoidably simplify a national image and put the nation into their imaginary framework. In this way, problems like stereotype and prejudice come into being. Meanwhile, if nations seek ways to frame or reframe themselves, they make efforts to have in control what and who they are in the eyes of international audiences, and thus make profits, economically or politically, from it. The paper takes African nations, which are usually perceived as a whole, and the United Kingdom as examples to justify passive and active framing process, and assesses both positive and negative influence framing has on nations. In conclusion, translation as framing causes problems like prejudice, and the image of a nation is not always in the hands of nation branders, but reframing the nation in a positive way has the potential to turn the tide.

Keywords : framing, nation branding, stereotype, translation

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