

Ideology Shift in Political Translation

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Abstract : In political translation, ideology plays an important role in conveying implications accurately. Ideological collisions can occur in political translation when there exist differences of political environments embedded in the translingual political texts in both source and target languages. To reach an accurate translation requires the translator to understand the ideologies implied in (and often transcending) the texts. This paper explores the conditions, procedure, and purpose of processing ideological collision and resolution of such issues in political translation. These points will be elucidated by case studies of translating English and Chinese political texts. First, there are specific political terminologies in certain political environments. These terminological peculiarities in one language are often determined by ideological elements rather than by syntactical and semantical understanding. The translation of these ideological-loaded terminologies is a process and operation consisting of understanding the ideological context, including cultural, historical, and political situations. This will be explained with characteristic Chinese political terminologies and their renderings in English. Second, when the ideology in the source language fails to match with the ideology in the target language, the decisions to highlight or disregard these conflicts are shaped by power relations, political engagement, social context, etc. It thus is necessary to go beyond linguistic analysis of the context by deciphering ideology in political documents to provide a faithful or equivalent rendering of certain messages. Finally, one of the practical issues is about equivalence in political translation by redefining the notion of faithfulness and retainment of ideological messages in the source language in translations of political texts. To avoid distortion, the translator should be liberated from grip the literal meaning, instead diving into functional meanings of the text.

Keywords : translation, ideology, politics, society

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