

# Study on C-E Translation of Chinese Buzzwords from the Perspective of Skopostheorie

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## Abstract

**With the development and changes of society and the Internet, Internet buzzwords have emerged and become popular among the public. The translation of Internet buzzwords plays a crucial role in the spread of national culture, and the quality of translation also directly affects the target readers who receive the information as well as the spread of Chinese culture. Therefore, the translation of Internet buzzwords is not only a simple communicative issue, but also a cultural issue. Researchers have conducted a lot of studies on the translation of Internet buzzwords, from content expression, translation strategies, translation techniques, etc., trying to solve various problems arising in the process of translating Internet buzzwords. This study takes the skopostheorie as the theoretical guide, and summarizes the translation methods of internet buzzwords in specific cultures by analyzing their definitions, sources, characteristics and cultural connotations.**

## Keywords

**Translation Strategies; Chinese Buzzwords; Neologism; Skopostheorie.**

## 1. Introduction

The Skopostheorie belongs to the functional translation theory, which was put forward in Germany in the 1970s. The word "skopos" is derived from the Greek word "skopos", which means goal and purpose. According to this theory, the purpose of translation determines the method and strategy of translation. Katharina Reiss, as a pioneer of Skopostheorie, was the first to propose the concept of function, and she researched from the perspective of the function of the translation, finding that the purpose of the translation is sometimes different from the purpose of the source text, in which case the function of the translation is more important than that of the source text. Rice believes that different translation strategies should be applied to different types of texts, which helps translators to choose their translation methods and strategies. the Skopostheorie is the dominant theory of functional translation theory and the most suitable theory to guide translation action and it breaks the traditional concept of translation and makes translation standards become more flexible and diversified. Translating Chinese buzzwords into English should follow the basic translation principles with the application of widely used translation strategies, such as literal translation and free translation, domestication and foreignization, transliteration and imitation. Skopostheorie provides a unique perspective and direction for the translation of Chinese buzzwords.

## 2. The Linguistic and Cultural Characteristics of Internet Buzzwords

Internet buzzwords emerge with the network and language and are widely used due to their popularity. It is different from jargon, acronyms, neologisms or technical terms. Internet buzzwords are a special form of spoken language commonly used in online communication, with unique, vivid and fresh characteristics. Internet buzzwords are oral embodiment of social

policies, economy, culture, environment and people's psychological activities in a certain period of time, usually consisting of words, symbols and pictures. Internet buzzwords originate from real life and are used in real life, which is similar to ordinary language but different. Internet buzzwords have the characteristics of simplicity and intuitiveness, which make them easy to understand and spread. The innovative and irregular nature of Internet buzzwords makes them very innovative, and often many Internet buzzwords can emerge in a year. In addition, Internet buzzwords are humorous and entertaining, and it is because of these two characteristics that people tend to use Internet buzzwords and promote the spread of Internet buzzwords. These linguistic features make Internet buzzwords increasingly popular. In both China and Western countries, new Internet buzzwords emerge every year with the development and changes of society and the Internet, and they all have such linguistic characteristics. Internet buzzwords are a linguistic phenomenon arising from a multicultural background and are a reflection of modern social culture. In the era of increasing globalization, the integration of national cultures is inevitably a trend, and Internet buzzwords are also the product of multiculturalism. The emergence of Internet buzzwords has made it possible to improve understanding between countries. Translation is a kind of cultural and ideological exchange among different peoples and countries. The purpose of translating Internet buzzwords is, first of all, to better convey the linguistic meaning of the source language by considering the habits of the target readers, so that the target readers can accept it. Secondly, to maintain the characteristics of Chinese language as much as possible and make the target readers understand Chinese culture better, which requires the translators to use specific translation methods flexibly to translate.

### 3. Translation Methods of Chinese Internet Buzzwords

#### 3.1. Literal Translation

Literal translation, in other words, refers to the translation method that not only maintains the original content, but also keeps the original form of source texts. That is to say, when transmitting the meaning of source texts, the forms and syntactic structures of source texts should be maintained in target texts as far as possible. Translators should try their best to make the target language be completely equal to the source language, if not, they at least should be roughly equal. There are a typical example of literal translation about internet buzzwords in recent years:

Example 1: 直播带货

Reference version: live streaming commerce

The term “直播带货” is a internet buzzword in Chinese, which means Selling goods in the form of live streaming. The China Daily adopted “live streaming commerce” as the official translation of “直播带货”. By adopting the literal translation method, the word “live streaming commerce” make it easy for target language speakers to understand. According to the skopos rule and fidelity rule of Skopostheorie, by using the corresponding word in English, it accurately expresses the meaning and emotion of “直播带货”, revealing the linguistic feature of conciseness of the source language, so the literal translation method is the best choice to achieve its purpose of communication.

#### 3.2. Annotation

Under some circumstances, some sentences contain too much information in the source text. In this regard the translator has to add the cultural information of the source language to the target reader with a clear explanation information for the target audience. The annotation method means to add up the annotation on the basis of other translation methods, so that translated versions can better convey cultural connotations. The annotation, which is one of important methods of compensatory translation, includes the literal translation with

annotation and the transliteration with annotation. Because of the particularity of the cultural background and great differences between Chinese and Western culture, some internet buzzwords have distinctive cultural characteristics and can not be translated accurately just by using common translation methods, which could result in understanding difficulties to target readers, and the translation method of annotation can solve this problem.

Example 1: 后浪

Reference version: behind wave(referring to today's younger generation)

On the eve of May 4 Youth Day in 2020, the short video "Behind Wave" went viral. In the video, actor He Bing makes a passionate speech, calling the new generation of young people by the term "behind wave", expressing his recognition and praise for them, which has aroused heated discussions from all walks of life and made the term "behind wave" extremely popular. The term "behind wave" originally meant the younger generation, roughly referring to the post-90s and post-00s. Later, in some online forums, it was also extended to refer to a group of young people in wealthy families who have a superior quality of life compared to hundreds of millions of ordinary young people in China, and have a lot of freedom of choice that everyone envies. In order to give target readers a precise implication of Chinese“后浪” under the Skopostherie, upon the basis of literal translation, it is best to add an explanation.If directly translate it into “behind wave”, the English-speaker can not understand it's meaning. By applying annotation, under the Skopostheorie, target readers can not only understand its literal meaning, but also comprehend the cultural connotation of it.

### 3.3. Free Translations

Free translation, also known as the liberal translation, refers to the accurate expression of source texts on the basis of understanding the source language from the readers' point of view.Because of cultural differences and changes in national conditions, some internet buzzwords produced in recent years can not be translated by any of the two translation methods above. In this case, adopting the free translation strategy is the optimal way. The free translation pays more attention to maintain the meaning of source language instead of just sticking to their forms' equivalence.

Example 1: 醉了

Reference version: Are you kidding me?

The Chinese character “醉” originally means “drunk” in Chinese. In the internet buzzword “醉了”, it refers to speechless. It usually indicates to a person or thing that is incomprehensible and uncommunicative. In addition,“也是醉了” also means that people do not believe what speakers said and not want to listen to them any more and the meaning of it is quite closer to “Are you kidding me?” in English. Under the Skopostheorie, by free translation, from the translated English version of “Are you kidding me?”, target readers can easily understand the implied meaning of it, reflecting the skopos rule and fidelity rule of Skopostheorie.

## 4. Conclusion

With the fast development of our society, Chinese Internet buzzwords contain rich linguistic features and cultural connotations, vividly reflecting the social and modern language. This paper analyzes the translation methods of Chinese internet buzzwords from the perspective of the Skopostheorie, and summarizes three translation methods on the basis of previous researches. A translator should use translation methods flexibly in translation,and should not be limited to one method, but should spare no efforts to choose the optimal translation strategy, so as to better achieve the purpose of international cultural exchange.

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