Research on CE Translation of Political Texts from the Perspective of Eco-translatology

-- A Case Study of the 20th CPC National Congress Report

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Abstract. Cultural Confidence is the cornerstone of China's Rise. It is crucial to build a pluralistic and dialogical external discourse system on how to disseminate Chinese values to the world. Based on Eco-translatology, this study takes the CE translation of the 20th CPC National Congress Report as an example to explore how to fully tap into Cultural Confidence and achieve communicative purposes in the international publicity translation represented by political texts. It is found that translators often choose translation strategies such as literal translation, liberal translation, amplification and omission, domestication and foreignization, synthesization, annotations and so on to achieve the adaptation and selection of translation in three dimensions: language, culture and communication. It would promote full communication between source and target cultures in order to enhance the international influence and communication power of Chinese discourse.

Keywords: The 20th CPC National Congress Report; Eco-translatology; Three-dimensional transformation; Translation strategy.

1. Introduction

In recent years, China's development has attracted worldwide attention and its international influence has been increasing. At present, publicity work has been placed in a prominent position. How to tell Chinese stories to the world and enhance the international influence and communications capabilities of Chinese discourse has become a key point to further realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The Chinese-English (CE, henceforth) translation of political texts is an important way of external publicity, and it is also the most authoritative source for other countries to understand China's national conditions, principles, political system and stance (Wang, 2006). Appropriate translation of political texts will help the international community understand China's political views and concepts of governing, and also contribute to the construction of the country's external discourse system. In this context, theoretical guidance and translation strategies related to the international publicity translation of China's political texts have gradually become a new focus of research.

At present, most of the translation studies of political texts in China are based on corpus construction, or on the perspectives of Skopos theory, domestication and foreignization, but there are few studies from the perspective of Eco-translatology. Eco-translatology was first proposed by Professor Hu, aiming to find the translation that best fits the translational eco-environment through the translator's continuous "adaptation" and "selection" of the translation. The 20th CPC National Congress Report comprehensively summarizes the great achievements of China in the past decade. Its CE translation is an important window for the international community to understand China's principles and policies for governing the country. Therefore, this paper analyses the CE translation strategies of the 20th CPC National Congress Report from the perspective of Eco-translatology and takes the three-dimensional transformation as the starting point. Through analysing typical translation examples, it provides a feasible direction for the CE translation study of political texts from the perspective of Eco-translatology, aiming to promote the development of political texts translation research.

2. Political Texts and Its C-E Translation

2.1 Features of political texts

Political texts, mainly refer to speeches and articles of a party or state leaders, party or government documents and work reports, newspaper editorials, etc. (Li, 2013). As publicity materials issued and disseminated by the government, political texts are highly political, rigorous and policy-oriented. The language of political texts is formal, and the style of writing is simple and close to the people (Liao, 2022). It covers all aspects of China's socialist politics, economy and culture. Its language characteristics are as follows.

In terms of lexicon, political texts prefer using category words and modifiers concreted by abstract words. They take advantage of repetition of phrases to strengthen the tone and enhance the connection within articles. Besides, there are many culture-loaded words rich in Chinese culture, including poems, four-character idioms, allusions, proverbs, etc. In addition, a large number of abbreviations of political ideas with Chinese characteristics are creatively put forward in such texts. Syntactically, political texts often use subjectless sentences to emphasise the formality and objectivity of their language. They also prefer long sentences, therefore, paragraphs are often punctuated by commas throughout the text, with full stops marking the end. With respect to discourse, to maintain the conciseness of the language, political texts often omit conjunctions and rely on the internal logical relationship between sentences to connect with each other, highlighting the paratactic characteristics of Chinese.

2.2 The importance and practical significance of the C-E translation of the 20th CPC National Congress Report

On October 16, 2022, the General Secretary Xi Jinping delivered a report to the Congress entitled Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive in Unity to Build a Modern Socialist Country in All Respects (the 20th CPC National Congress Report). As the highest leading organ of the Party, the National Congress of the Communist Party of China plays an crucial role in promoting the Party's theoretical construction. The report of the Congress serves as a summary of the whole session, which provides a guideline for the future development of China. Therefore, the CE translation of the report is self-evident in its authority and representativeness as an important way for the international community to understand China's concept of governing the country. The final translation was formed after discussion between the two sides, which is considered as the most optimal translation after weighing all opinions (Chen, 2019).

3. Theoretical Framework of Eco-translatology

Eco-translatology, as a Chinese translation theory, is first proposed in Hu (2008). It breaks through the boundary between natural science and humanities, integrates Darwin's theory of adaptive selection into translation studies, and emphasizes the integrity of translational eco-environment based on the metaphorical isomorphism between translation ecology and natural ecology, which reinterprets the process, essence, principles, methods and evaluation criteria of translation. The core ideas of this theory mainly include the translation as adaptation and selection, translator-centered principle, three-dimensional transformation and so on.

The three-dimensional transformation emphasizes that the translator should simultaneously take into account the influence of different dimensions on the choice of translation in the process, and make adaptation and selection from multiple perspectives such as language, culture and communication, so as to make the translation achieve a harmonious effect in the translational eco-environment. The linguistic dimension requires the translator to master the stylistic differences of two languages and preserve the language style of the source language as far as possible in the translation process. The cultural dimension focuses on the differences between two cultures and uses a variety of translation strategies to make readers of the target language fully understand the cultural

connotation of the source language. The communicative dimension emphasizes the intention of bilingual communication, striving to arouse the resonance and cognition of the target language readers, so as to achieve the communicative purpose (Gao, 2022).

In recent years, eco-translatology has also been widely used in translation studies of different literary genres. In terms of literary translation studies, Li & Yang (2022) take catalogues of A Dream of Red Mansions translated by Hawkes and Yang Xianyi respectively as examples, and introduce the theory of eco-translatology to interpret and compare the translation of culture-loaded words from the perspective of three-dimensional transformation. Besides, based on the eco-translatology, Chen (2022) interprets Yu Guangzhong's literary retranslation and explains the adaptive selection of translational eco-environment which also benefits to the society. Considering the international publicity translation, Huang (2021) discusses the existing problems in the CE translation of public signs in Guilin's red tourist attractions from the perspective of eco-translatology. It criticizes some problems such as non-standard format, cultural omission, discordant tone and violation of communicative intention, and puts forward improvement strategies to better promote the development of Guilin's red tourism and the dissemination of red culture.

To sum up, although relevant applied research of eco-translatology are widely carried out, the translation of political texts is rarely involved. Therefore, this paper analyses the CE translation strategies of the 20th CPC National Congress Report from the perspective of eco-translatology, applying the three-dimensional transformation theory of language, culture and communication, which aims to enrich the study of CE translation of political texts and helps build China's external discourse system.

4. An Analysis of C-E Translation of the 20th CPC National Congress Report from the Perspective of Eco-translatology

4.1 Translator's adaptation and selection in linguistic dimension

The adaptation and selection in linguistic dimension refers to "the adaptation and selection shifted by the translator in the translation process", which is carried out in different aspects and levels (Hu, 2011, p.8). The translator should first be familiar with the expression habits of both English and Chinese, and then make selective adaptation and adaptive selection according to the specific translational eco-environment. This paper mainly discusses the adaptive selection and transformation of the 20th CPC National Congress Report in linguistic dimension at the lexical and syntactic levels, respectively.

4.1.1 Lexical level

1)Conversion of part of speech

Example 1: …系统完善党的领导制度体系,…

Translation: We have made systematic improvements to the Party's leadership systems.

In part of speech, English prefers nouns and Chinese prefers verbs (Lian, 2010). In the CE translation of the 20th CPC National Congress Report, many words are verbs in Chinese expression. However, in order to better adapt to the translational eco-environment of the target language, the translator chooses English counterparts of nouns for translation. The word "完善" is a verb in Chinese, which aims to emphasize that the state should systematically improve the Party's leadership system and make it more complete. If the CE translation is limited to the source text and not changed from the original to the verb "perfect", the translation will be a bit rigid, the translation will be rigid. To maintain the balance between the source text and the target text, the translator flexibly changes the verb of the source text into the noun of the target text "improvements" and adjusts it before the modifier. Not only does it conform better to the English preference for nouns, but also emphasizes the main purpose of the "systematically improve the system" of the source text, achieving the faithfulness to the source text while adapting to the target text.

2)Omission of category words

Example 2: …弘扬诚信文化，健全诚信建设长效机制。

Translation: We will promote integrity and credibility in society and work to perfect relevant long-term mechanisms.

Influenced by the holistic thinking in Chinese culture, Chinese often uses category words to emphasize the whole or achieve the symmetry and rhyme of language; Western culture advocates speculative logic, thus creativing a plain, concise and rigorous language (Lian, 2010). In this example, it is clear from the context that "诚信" refers to the culture of honesty and trustworthiness in society. The word "文化" does not convey the practical meaning, but it keeps the sentence symmetrical and complete, which is indispensable from the perspective of Chinese grammar. In the process of CE translation, considering the conciseness of English language from the perspective of linguistic dimension, the translator chooses the omission method in translation and omits the redundant parts that hinder the meaning transmission of the source text, making the translation more natural and smooth, and improving the readability of the translation.

4.1.2 Syntactic level

1)Subject less sentences

Example 3: …改革开放和社会主义现代化建设取得巨大成就，党的建设新的伟大工程取得显著成效,…

Translation: Great achievements had been secured in reform, opening up, and socialist modernization, and notable advances had been made in the great new project of Party building.

Chinese is loosely structured and focuses more on semantic communication (Liu, 2020). As a typical political text, the language of the 20th CPC National Congress Report should be formal, rigorous, and objective. It uses a large number of subjectless sentences to maintain the simplicity of the sentence pattern, making the language powerfully expressed. In contrast, English attaches great importance to the integrity of sentence structure. Except for imperative sentences, subjectless sentences do not conform to grammatical norms and are even considered to be grammatically wrong sentence (Liu, 2020). In the CE translation of the report of the 20th CPC National Congress Report, the translator usually chooses to convert subjectless sentences into passive sentences or add logical subjects to achieve the adaptation and selection of the translational eco-environment.

In this example, the translator translates the two subjectless sentences into passive sentences, placing two Chinese objects at the beginning of the sentence as the English subjects. This kind of translation strategy not only ensures the integrity of the sentence structure and adapts to the language habit of using passive sentences in the target language, but also retains the formal and objective characteristics of the source language. At the same time, the translator also takes into account the backward focus in Chinese and the forward focus in English, highlighting the key messages and achieving the skillful transition of linguistic dimension.

2)Parallel structures

Example 4: …为我们继续前进奠定了坚实基础、创造了良好条件、提供了重要保障,…

Translation: All this had created solid foundations, favorable conditions, and key underpinnings for our continued progress.

In Chinese, parallel structures are mainly found in political, publicity and other texts, where parallel structures and similar phrases are used to make sentences catchy, so as to create emotional resonance with the masses and achieve the appealing purpose. In English, due to the emphasis on conciseness of language, there are no similar components in sentences even if they are expressed in parallel. The words "奠定了", "创造了" and "提供了" in the source text are three leading words in front of a set of parallel sentences, which actually convey the same meaning, that is, "to create, to provide security". Therefore, in the CE translation, the translator adopts the translation method of combination to translate these three words with the same practical meaning into "created", and then connects three parallel phrases to adapt to the parallel structure of the source text. This method conforms to the concise style of the target language and ultimately helps the target language achieve a new ecological balance at the lexical level.

4.2 Translator's adaptation and selection in cultural dimension

The adaptation and selection in cultural dimension refers to "the translator's concern for the transmission and interpretation of bilingual cultural connotations in the translation process" (Hu, 2011, p.8). It requires the translator to find the common ground between the two languages on the basis of in-depth understanding of the historical and cultural essence contained in the two languages, and take into account the differences between two cultures. In the process of translation, the translator constantly combines the specific translational eco-environment to make adaptation and selection between the source and the target text, so as to carry out effective cultural transmission and realize the exchange and mutual appreciation of different cultures.

In the 20th CPC National Congress Report, there are a large number of words with Chinese characteristics. They are not only deeply rooted in traditional Chinese cultures, but also contain the core thinking of the Party's central leadership in governing the country, which are the crystallization of traditional Chinese civilization and the wisdom of contemporary socialism with Chinese characteristics and have extremely special connotations. It is a major challenge for the translator to accurately translate such words into English on the basis of in-depth understanding of their actual meaning. Wang (2020) divides Chinese characteristic words into five categories: proper nouns, allusions, abbreviations, idioms and figurative words, and analyzes the corresponding translation strategies respectively. Drawing on Wang (2020), this paper mainly discusses the adaptation and selection of the 20th CPC National Congress Report in cultural dimension from the perspectives of proper nouns, allusions, abbreviations and idioms.

4.2.1 Proper nouns

The proper nouns in the words with Chinese characteristics refer to the nouns that have a special reference role in denoting specific policies, systems, activities, institutions, etc. (Wang, 2020). When translating such words into English, the translator should take into account both Chinese and Western cultures. On the basis of the Chinese cultural connotation contained in proper nouns and the way of thinking of Western readers, the translator should make proper adaptation and selection, so that foreign readers can precisely and naturally understand the characteristics of Chinese cultural and governing concepts conveyed by proper nouns. In the 20th CPC National Congress Report, proper nouns are widely used, and some representative bilingual translations are listed in table 1.

Table 1. Proper nouns in the 20th CPC National Congress Report and their CE translations

Source text	Target text
十四五规划	the 14th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development
义务教育	compulsory education
小康	moderate prosperity
美丽中国	the Beautiful China Initiative
脱贫攻坚战	the critical battle against poverty
乡村振兴	rural revitalization
信访	public complaints
扫黑除恶	combat and root out organized crime
全过程人民民主	the whole-process people's democracy

The phrase "十四五规划" refers to the 14th five-year plan of the Party and the country in the field of national economic and social development, which aims to improve the per capita income and the living standard of the people. In the CE translation of the 20th CPC National Congress Report, the phrase "十四五规划" is first translated literally, and then the prepositional phrase "for Economic and Social Development" is added to further explain that it is a policy plan in the field of economic and social development. It not only respects the source text in form and content, but also makes up for the cultural default, which is conducive to the comprehension of the source text by readers from the target text.

4.2.2 Allusions

Example 5: …着力造就拔尖创新人才，聚天下英才而用之。

Translation: All this will see us producing first-class innovators and attracting the brightest minds from all over.

Allusions refer to the words that quote ancient poems, historical stories and so on (Wang, 2020). Such words and phrases, which are rooted in traditional Chinese culture or closely related to a specific period of Chinese history, often cause confusion to foreign readers when they appear in the text. The phrase "聚天下英才而用" is from Mencius - Jinxin I, which is an adaptation of Mencius' "得天下英才而教育之", meaning to gather talents within and outside the Party, at home and abroad to the great endeavors of the Party and the people. Since ancient times, China has focused on the recruitment and cultivation of talents. The source text gives a new connotation to the ancient phrase, making the past serve the present, fully tapping into Cultural Confidence of the country. However, considering the difficulty of foreign readers in understanding ancient Chinese prose and the simplicity of the report language, the translator makes an adaptive selection between the source and target text from the cultural dimension. The CE translation does not explain the source and original meaning of the allusion in detail, but adopts the foreignization strategy, which directly emphasizes the core idea that China attaches importance to talents, and conveys the cultural connotation of the source text and avoids cultural barriers.

4.2.3 Abbreviations

Example 6: …加强能源产供储销体系建设，确保能源安全。

Translation: We will strengthen our systems for energy production, supply, storage, and marketing to ensure energy security.

Abbreviations refer to the language units that can express the meaning of the words after omission or contraction (Wang, 2020). In order to simplify the length and facilitate the dissemination and memorization of the report, many political abbreviations with Chinese characteristics are created in the 20th CPC National Congress Report. The word "产供储销" is the abbreviation of "production, supply, storage and marketing"; "能源产供储销体系" is the refinement of the specific policy guidelines for the development of China's energy sector in the new era by the Party and the country's leading group. Although the translation method of directly transliterating the abbreviation could retain the Chinese cultural characteristics in abbreviations, the CE translation is difficult to understand. Therefore, the translator chooses to supplement and restore the abbreviations appropriately. The specific practices of each aspect are not explained, but the nouns that follow the preposition "for" to connect the generalization point out in which aspects the construction of the energy system are carried out, facilitating the understanding of China's governance in English-speaking countries and the communication between the two cultures.

4.2.4 Idioms

Example 7: …坚持长期共存、互相监督、肝胆相照、荣辱与共,…

Translation: Following the principles of long-term coexistence, mutual oversight, sincerity, and sharing the rough times and the smooth.

Idioms refer to the four-character phrases used in Chinese for a long time. They are generally derived from Chinese classics, historical allusions or myths and legends, which are an important expression of traditional Chinese culture in language (Wang, 2020). In the context of the example 9, the phrase "肝胆相照、荣辱与共" is actually used in the 20th CPC National Congress Report to emphasise that the CPC and democratic parties should be honest, support each other, and go through thick and thin together when cooperating to build the country. The word "肝胆相照" comes from Han Xin,Marquis of Huaiyin, which describes the sincere and honest treatment between each other. If the word is translated literally as "the liver and the gallbladder take care of each other", the translation does not convey the actual meaning, in other words, the translation does not achieve the stable balance in the eco-environment of bilingual translation. In view of this, the translator abandons

the literal meaning of the word in CE translation and directly uses "sincerity" to express the extended meaning of treating each other sincerely, making the translation concise and easy to understand. The word "荣辱与共" refers to people who do not abandon each other and face both successes and hardships together. In the CE translation process, the translator uses "smooth" and "through" to translate "荣辱" liberally, so that the CE translation retains the literal structure of the source text while adding the corresponding cultural content in English.

4.3 Translator's adaptation and selection in communicative dimension

The adaptation and selection in communicative dimension refers to "the translator's concern for the adaptation and selection of bilingual of bilingual communicative intentions in the translation process" (Hu, 2011, p.8). It requires the translator to pay attention to the communicative intention of the sentence in the translation process, that is, whether the information between two languages is accurately conveyed, and to make multi-dimensional revisions to the translation to achieve the communicative purpose of the source language in the context of translational eco-environment. In the 20th CPC National Congress Report, there are a large number of abbreviations with the structure of "number + keyword", which has become a major language feature of such political texts.

Example 8: …全党增强"四个意识",…

Translation: All Party members have become more conscious of the need to maintain political integrity, think in big-picture terms, follow the leadership core, and keep in alignment with the central Party leadership.

Numeral abbreviations can avoid the complexity and length of the text. At the same time, the numeral abbreviations in political texts are often a high summary of national policy guidelines and full of Chinese political characteristics. When translating such words, a simple word-for-word literal translation will lead to the lack of content of the text, so that the target language readers can not understand the appearance of the word, and are unable to realize the communicative intent of the source text. Therefore, in Example 10, the translator chooses the translation strategy of amplification. Instead of translating "四个意识" into "Four Consciousnesses", the translator supplements the "四个意识", namely, "political consciousness, overall consciousness, core consciousness and alignment consciousness". Although there is no "four" in the translation, the meaning of the abbreviation is more intuitive, which subtly achieves the adaptation and selection between source and target text from the perspective of communicative dimension.

Example 9: 中国坚持在和平共处五项原则基础上同各国发展友好合作,…

Translation: China adheres to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence1 in pursuing friendship and cooperation with other countries.

[1] The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence are mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

The CE translation of numeral abbreviation in example 11 adopts the combination of literal translation and annotation. The term "和平共处五项原则" are the principles to deal with international relations initiated by China, which have distinct Chinese political characteristics. The literal translation of the term follows the source text in both content and form, fully tapping into China's Cultural Confidence. Meanwhile, as the abbreviation is not explained in detail in the text, the translation is concise and clear, facilitating the dissemination of the CE translation of the 20th CPC National Congress Report. The addition of a footnote gives a detailed introduction to "the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence", which makes it easier for readers of the target language to understand this kind of Chinese characteristic words. It is faithful to the original meaning, highlights China's diplomatic stance, and helps China build a positive cultural identity on the international stage.

5. Conclusion

This paper analyses the CE translation strategies of the 20th CPC National Congress Report from the perspective of Eco-translatology and takes the three-dimensional transformation as the starting point. It is found that translators often choose translation strategies such as liberal translation, amplification, omission, synthesization and annotations to achieve achieve a balance between source and target text in the translational eco-environment, promoting full communication between the two cultures. Based on this, this paper summarizes the requirements for translators in the CE translation of political texts. Firstly, translators should be aware of the differences between Chinese and English from the perspectives of language and culture. They are supposed to deeply understand and master the differences between Chinese and Western language styles, cultures and thinking modes, and make adequate preparations before translation, so as to accurately capture the differences between the source and target language in the translation practice of political texts. Secondly, translators should clarify the core concept of translator-centered principle, giving full play to their own subjectivity. In the process of translation, translators should take into account the influence of different thinking dimensions on the adaptation and selection of the translation from the perspective of three-dimensional transformation, and achieve the balance between the translational eco-environment of the source target text to achieve the optimal translation effect. Thirdly, translators should remain firm in their political stance. The translation of political texts is an important bridge for the international community to understand China's policy on governance, which is vital to shape China's international image. Translators should always take the dissemination of Chinese values and development concepts as their core task, tell Chinese stories and convey Chinese wisdom to the world.

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