

The Study of Translation Strategy in Political Text from the Perspective of Translational Rhetoric

--A Case of The Governance of China IV

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Abstract

The new era requires our country to build a stronger communication capability system, in order to spread China's voice well and tell China's stories well. A translation of *The Governance of China* is released for overseas audiences so that overseas audiences can have a more comprehensive understanding of China. This paper takes the English translation of *The Governance of China IV* as the research object, explores the rhetorical strategies in the translation process of current political text from the aspects of word selection, logical expression, and use of rhetorical figures, and analyzes the cultural comprehensibility and acceptability achieved by translators through the rhetoric of translation, and suggest the affinity and communication power of the translation.

Keywords

The Governance of China; external publicity; translational rhetoric; political text.

1. Introduction

Since its official release in 2014, *The Governance of China* (including Volume One to Four) has been translated into 37 languages, and its editions have covered more than 170 countries and regions. *The Governance of China* is welcomed by political party leaders and people of insight in many countries, who believe that through reading this work, they can learn about a lot of valuable views and methods, and it is a very important first-hand information for the study of contemporary China (Jinping Xi, 2022). This, to some extent, reflects that the translation of *The Governance of China* has "made foreign audiences understand, listen to, and understand clearly" (Jinping Xi, 2019), and has achieved good results in communication and overseas acceptance.

In the new era, it is necessary to speed up the construction of China's communication ability to foreigners, and promote the global, regional and diversified expression of Chinese stories and Chinese voices with appropriate communication methods that are close to audiences in different regions, countries and groups, so as to enhance the affinity and effectiveness of international communication (Jinping Xi, 2021). Therefore, this study takes *The Governance of China IV* as an example to explore the rhetorical strategies in the translation of political texts in the process of external publicity, as well as the translators' realization of cultural comprehensibility and acceptability through the use of translated rhetoric, and further analyzes the affinity and communication power of the translation.

2. Translational Rhetoric and Political Publicity

Rhetoric is an inherent property of language, where there is language, there is rhetoric. Rhetoric originated from the art of court speeches in ancient Greece, where the public who had violated the law needed to defend themselves in court and persuade judges to exempt them from

charges. Therefore, the ability to speak was a very important skill at the time, which greatly promoted the rise of rhetoric in ancient Greece. Aristotle defined rhetoric as a function of finding possible means of persuasion on any issue (Aristotle, 2005:23). American rhetorician Kenneth Burke also pointed out that rhetoric is a process of inducing other subjects to form attitudes or to induce other subjects to take actions (Burke, 1969:41). It can be seen that one of the main purposes of rhetoric is to achieve persuasion, making the audience in a certain identification attitude or taking certain action. The origin of rhetoric also determines the object of rhetoric, which is the audience. Aristotle regarded the audience as one of the three essentials of rhetoric, and the success of rhetoric's persuasive nature depends on whether the rhetorician can establish a connection with the audience through symbolic means such as language (or written language) and establish identification with them, the purpose of which is to obtain the audience's recognition of the rhetorician's views and promote the change of their views or behaviors. Belgian philosopher and rhetorician Chaim Perelman also pointed out that any kind of discourse must be oriented towards the audience. (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969:25). American rhetorician Kenneth Burke even believes that the success or failure of rhetoric depends on the audience's identification with the rhetorician.

Translation is an act of conversion between the source language and the target language (Jing Fang & Jingrong Guo, 2020:94). Translation, as a kind of symbol conversion between languages, is inseparable from rhetoric. Cicero, a great rhetorician in ancient Rome, was the first to discuss the stylistic transformation in translation from the perspective of rhetoric, opening up the dispute between "literal translation" and "free translation" (Zhuoxi Yuan, 2022:112). From the perspective of the purpose of translation, no matter literal translation or free translation, the ultimate purpose of translation is to convert the source language into the target language, pass the information of the original text to the target language audience, let the target language audience receive the information, and make the text information have emotional correlation or resonance with the audience. From this point of view, translation and rhetoric are two kinds of behaviors under the same perspective.

Peter France, a British scholar, deeply explored the relationship between translation and rhetoric from the perspective of rhetoric. He published an article entitled *The Rhetoric of Translation* in 2005, in which he pointed out that translators, like speakers, coordinate between subjects and audiences. ("translator, like the orator, negotiates between a subject and an audience, Translator, like the orator, negotiates between a subject and an audience, seeking out a rhetoric adequate to the situation") (France, 2005:268). This shows that, like rhetorical behavior, translation bears a kind of "intermediary" function, and the translator's translation is just like the speaker's speech.

As a communicative act, translation itself is also a kind of rhetoric, so is external publicity translation. External publicity translation is not only a simple language conversion between the source language and the target language, but also "international communication across borders, cultures and languages" (Jian Zhang, 2016:110). The distinctive feature of current political texts is their political nature. In the process of translation across languages and cultures, to successfully persuade overseas audiences, it is necessary to "strengthen the awareness of publicity and dilute the traces of publicity" (Xianzhu Si & Jing Wang, 2019:94), which is not only faithful to the original text, but also in line with the reading habits of the target language audience, and improve the text affinity. In addition, the process of external publicity of current political texts is not only "translation", but also "publicity", "translation" as a means, "publicity" as the goal (Zhuoxi Yuan, 2022:04), in this process, the translator is the rhetorician, the purpose of rhetoric is to persuade foreign audiences to understand China, enhance Western audiences' understanding of China, and eliminate the cognitive bias and misunderstanding of China in the West, so as to create a good international public environment conducive to China's development, enhance China's international image and build cultural soft power.

3. Analysis of the Translation Strategies of Political Texts from the Perspective of Translational Rhetoric

President Xi pointed out that we have to strengthen the building of discourse system to tell the China's stories well and disperse the Chinese voice right (Jinping Xi, 2018). To spread China's voice and tell China's story well, we must do a good job in external publicity. The substantive work of external publicity is translation, and it is a translation between Chinese and foreign languages, and all translations must abide by the principles of "faithfulness, faithfulness and elegance", and then do other additions on this base. In the translation of political publicity, translators need to have a sense of rhetoric. They should not only clear the reading obstacles for the audience and meet their reading needs, but also pay attention to the meets of the audience's expectations and the realization of publicity effects, thus improve the effective publicity and enhance the persuasive effect. Therefore, the translator must carry out the necessary rhetorical adjustment in a way that is pleasing to the readers, and "turn" eyes to the audience when dealing with the translation, highlighting the importance of the audience, so that the translation can meet the audience's expectations, meet the reading needs of the readers, make the translation popular, and "introduce" the ideas and concepts into the minds of the audience, rather than let them turn us down.

3.1. Choosing Appropriate words to Achieve Understanding of the Audience

Choosing the appropriate words to convey the original meaning is the basic meaning of translation work, especially for publicity translation. Correct and appropriate words help to convey the original meaning, and are more conducive to the reception and understanding of the audience. As follows:

Example 1正在**意气风发**向着全面建成社会主义现代化强国的第二个百年奋斗目标迈进。(Jinping Xi <CV: Chinese Version>, 2022: 3)

English version: and we are now marching in confident strides towards the Second Centenary Goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects. (Jinping Xi, 2022: 3)

This is the president Xi's speech at the conference celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China. This sentence shows the great achievements made by the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party of China in the past 100 years. It affirms the achievements and puts forward a vision for the future. "意气风发" means: describing the spirit of excitement, heroic spirit. This idiom mainly focuses on the spiritual level of momentum, full of energy, but if this meaning is completely translated in the way of literal translation, then for the Western readers who are not familiar with Chinese idiom culture will misunderstand this sentence as an empty slogan, the meaning of action behind the words. The translation translates it as "marching in confident strides towards" and modifies "strides" with the word "confident", which shows that we are marching forward and walking with "confident strides". Without elevating the meaning of the sentence, the meaning is faithfully conveyed to the audience.

Example 2 坚持发挥我国社会主义制度能够**集中力量办大事**的政治优势，形成脱贫攻坚的共同意志、共同行动。(Jinping Xi <CV>, 2022: 134)

English version: We have leveraged the strengths of China's socialist system in pooling resources behind major undertakings and are united in will and action to fight poverty. (Jinping Xi, 2022: 156)

This sentence is intended to convey the superiority of our socialist system, that is, "gather the strength to do great things", but when translating to foreign countries, how "力量" should be translated is worth considering and studying. If it is directly translated as "power", it is easy to

cause Western audiences to question this system, because the word "power" is often understood as a representation of "dominating authority". Here, it is translated into "pooling resources", "power" is interpreted as "resource", and "pool" is used as a verb, meaning "pooling (resources, money, etc.) for use", and "pooling resources to do a big job" is interpreted as pooling resources for use. In this way, appropriate words can be used to accurately present the meaning of the sentence, avoid the deviation of the meaning of the sentence, and allow the original language to be understood to the greatest extent.

3.2. Using of Rhetoric Figures to Conform the Audience's Rhetorical Tradition

In the process of translation, in order to get closer to the style of the original text, the rhetorical device should be retained as much as possible when corresponding or similar metaphors can be found. However, if translated literally, it will not only make jokes, but even distort the original meaning. The use of figurative figures of speech will make the language more vivid, which will be easier to understand and more memorable for Western audiences who have always paid attention to the use of rhetoric. As follows:

Example 3 江山就是人民、人民就是江山，打江山、守江山，守的是人民的心。中国共产党根基在人民、血脉在人民、力量在人民。(Jinping Xi <CV>, 2022: 9)

English version: The country is the people and the people are the country. As we have fought to establish and consolidate our leadership over the country, we have in fact been fighting to earn and keep the people's support. In the people, the Party has its roots, its lifeblood, and its source of strength. (Jinping Xi, 2022: 10)

The Chinese rhetoric of this sentence is metaphorical, comparing "人民" (meaning people) to "江山" (meaning the country), "people" is the noumenon, and "country" is the metaphor. The translation chooses literal translation, but also chooses to continue to use this metaphor. However, "守的是人民的心" (meaning guarding the heart of the people) here is not only "heart" in the literal sense, but also means "the support, love and support of the people." If it is simply translated as "人心" (meaning heart of the people), it will not only be faithless, but also give the Western audience the illusion that they have to put their hearts out, which runs counter to the expected effect of our publicity work. The translation chooses the word "support", which is faithful, concise and simple. Chinese rhetoric is used to use repetition as a cohesive device, while English generally avoids repetition. The translation extracts "in the people" and takes "foundation", "blood" and "strength" as juxtaposed objects, avoiding repetition and conforming to the reading habits of Western audiences.

Example 4 中华文化是主干，各民族文化是枝叶，根深干壮才能枝繁叶茂。(Jinping Xi <CV>, 2022: 246)

English version: Chinese culture is like the trunk of a tree, while individual ethnic cultures are branches and leaves; only when the roots are deep and the trunk is strong can the branches and leaves grow well. (Jinping Xi, 2022:281)

This sentence is a metaphor, and an analogy at that. Analogical metaphor has Chinese characteristics in the use of metaphors, which is based on "类" and "比" as the basic form, so it can be inferred that one side knows the other side by the common reasoning behind the two sides (Shenghuan Xu, 2018:16). Analogical metaphor transfers the minor premise believed by the audience (the truth reflected by metaphorical analogy) to the conclusion (the viewpoint and position that the discourse tries to persuade the audience to accept), so as to strengthen the persuasive power of the discourse (Stone, 1988). Here, "文化" (culture) is compared to "树" (tree), a tree has a trunk and branches and leaves, and only when the roots are deeply buried in the ground, the trunk is strong, and the branches and leaves can flourish, this is the truth recognized by society, but also the truth of nature. In the same way, Chinese culture is the total

dependence and backbone of all Chinese cultures, and the culture of all ethnic groups is the extension and development of the backbone. When Chinese culture is strong, it can naturally feed the branches and leaves of various ethnic cultures. The translation continues to follow this kind of comparative intention, converting metaphors into similes with "like", and building the basic truth that the trunk of nature is strong and the branches and leaves can be thick with "tree", "trunk" and "leaves", while reasoning the fact that culture also applies this truth. It can be seen that the use of figures of speech not only helps to express views, but also takes into account western rhetorical habits, which helps to improve the intelligibility of the translation and enhance the persuasive effect of external publicity.

3.3. Guiding Correct Interpretation through Translating Culturally

Bassnett proposed that translation is not only about the conversion of language and text, but also an in-depth exploration of the connotation of text based on culture (Bassnett, 1990). Different cultures have different language expressions, and translation is to transcode the original language in a way that is close to and in line with the expression habits of the target language, so as to make the target audience understand the text. China's unique cultural system will inevitably form a unique political discourse system, and China's specific political genetic code must also be interpreted in the context of Chinese political culture (Xianzhu Si & Jianping Zeng, 202:20). As follows:

Example 5构建起中国共产党人的精神谱系，锤炼出鲜明的政治品格。历史川流不息，精神代代相传。我们要继续弘扬光荣传统、赓续红色血脉.....(Jinping Xi <CV>, 2022: 7)

English version:it has developed a long line of inspiring principles for China's Communists and tempered a distinct political character. As time moves steadily forward, the spirit of the Party has been passed on from generation to generation. We will continue to promote our glorious traditions and sustain our revolutionary legacy,(Jinping Xi, 2022: 7-8)

The translation has cleverly translated "精神谱系", a unique Chinese cultural structure word, into "inspiring principles", which fully presents the meaning to the readers without losing the core connotation. The word "川流不息" in the translation also belongs to the category of Chinese cultural structure. When used alone, this word has nothing to do with time, but combined with the context here, it is used to express the continuous progress of time, translating it as "As time moves steadily forward" with Chinese characteristics. It reduces the difficulty for the audience to obtain information. China and the West have different connotation interpretations of colors. The translation of "红色血脉" as "revolutionary legacy" is accurate and faithful, which avoids the risk of misunderstanding of the audience due to different interpretations of colors, and prevents the Western audience from subconsciously thinking of bloody violence when they see "red" and "blood". The color factor of cultural symbols is diluted, the substance and plain content are highlighted, and the affinity of the translation to the western audience is enhanced.

Example 6 好的方针政策和发展规划都应该顺应人民意愿、符合人民所思所盼，从群众中来、到群众中去。(Jinping Xi <CV>, 2022: 58)

English version: Sound guidelines, policies and development plans must accord with the will, aspirations and expectations of the people. They should come **from the people and serve their interests**. (Jinping Xi, 2022: 67)

"从群众中来、到群众中去" is the Mass Line principle of the Mao Zedong Thought, and this phrase means that this principle and policy must conform to the masses and conform to the interests of the masses. Therefore, the translation of "到群众中去" into "serve their interests" is very faithful, and also avoids the Western audience from being unable to understand the true

meaning of "到群众中去", improves the influence of the translation on the audience, and facilitates the spread of Chinese ideas.

3.4. Adjusting the Chinese Characteristic Phrases to Ensure the Effect of Information Transmission

China has a profound cultural heritage of 5,000 years, and specific intentions will have specific cultural connotations. Therefore, when translating to foreign countries, we should pay attention to whether the culture represented by the intentions can be understood and accepted by the targeted audience. If it contains a large number of culture-loaded words without effective interpretation, it may make the audience unable to accurately grasp the cultural connotation to be conveyed (Xianzhu Si & Jing Wang, 2019:97). Therefore, when translating, it is necessary to consider whether the content presented in the translation can be accepted by the audience, as follows:

Example 7 领导干部.....多打大算盘、算大账，少打小算盘、算小账，善于把地区和工作融入党和国家事业大棋局，做到既为一域争光、更为全局添彩。(Jinping Xi <CV>, 2022: 40)

English version: Build a strategic vision and think about the overall situation, rather than being short-sighted and focusing only on local interests.(Jinping Xi, 2022: 45)

"算盘"(Abacus) belongs to the traditional calculation tool which is unique to China, and "算盘" has a unique Chinese connotation, which is almost incomprehensible and unacceptable to Western audiences who do not understand Chinese culture. Taking this into account, the culturally loaded word has to be adjusted in the translation process. The translation as "strategic vision and think about the overall situation" shows the connotation of "planning" and "considering the overall situation" and delivers the meaning to the audience faithfully. For most Western audiences who do not understand the basic knowledge of "abacus" and its implied meaning, on the one hand, this translation directly shows making more plans for the original text, and meets the needs to convey the core meaning of planning and strategic vision, which makes the content of cultural acceptable and enables the information connotation to be faithfully conveyed, on the other hand, such translation also increases the comprehensibility of the text, so that the western audience will not give up reading the text because of the difficulty, so that the translation has a positive effect on the audience.

Example 8 中国人民不惹事也不怕事，在任何困难和风险面前，腿肚子不会抖，腰杆子不会弯，中华民族是吓不倒、压不垮的！(Jinping Xi <CV>, 2022: 75)

English version: We the Chinese people do not provoke others, nor do we shy away from trouble. We do not give in to fear or yield in the face of difficulties and dangers. The Chinese nation will never cower before threats, or be subdued by oppressors. (Jinping Xi, 2022: 85)

"腿肚子不会抖"(meaning the leg will not shake) and "腰杆子不会弯"(meaning the waist will not bend) are folk sayings, indicating that they will not be afraid of difficulties and dangers, but because they are too rich in Chinese characteristics, Western audiences cannot understand the relationship between the images of "the leg" and "the waist" and fear. Therefore, in order to ensure the transmission effect of the original message, the translation chooses to omit these words with Chinese characteristics, and conveys the essential meaning of "腰杆子", meaning "backbone and ambition", replacing it with the straightforward and concise "not give in to fear or yield", which conforms to the Western audience. In addition, such translation directly and intuitively conveys the indomitable, strong and resolute characteristics of the Chinese people to the Western audience, so that the Western audience can better understand the characteristics of China and the Chinese people. The translation of external publicity involves with Chinese characteristics, which requires the translator to consider in many ways and make

adjustments when necessary, so as to ensure a good transmission of information, avoid obstructing the acceptance and popularity of the text due to cultural incomprehension, and further improve the communication of the text.

4. Conclusion

This paper analyzes the important concepts in *on the Governance of China IV* from the perspective of translational rhetoric, explores the rhetorical strategies in the process of translating political texts' external publicity, and finds that the translator has a high level of rhetorical awareness. From words to language logic habits, to the use of figures of speech and cultural translation, the translator has fully taken into account these factors affecting translation. In addition, the corresponding rhetorical translation strategies were adjusted, which greatly improved the comprehensibility, readability and acceptability of the translation, and made the translation more approachable to Western audiences, thus enhancing the persuasive effect of the translation on overseas audiences, winning the love of foreign audiences, and improving the dissemination and popularity of the translation.

In the external publicity translation of *The Governance of China IV*, the obvious feature is "self-oriented and inclusive" (Yue Xue & Gang Xiu, 2022-54), which not only highlights Chinese characteristics, but also draws close to the audience as much as possible. In the process of international communication content production, if the information needs and information preferences of international audiences can be obtained, the relationship between orators and audiences would be better constructed, the "market" of foreign audiences will be opened, and better communication effects would be achieved to improve the persuasive effect of external publicity, create a good international public environment for our national development, and win more like-minded fellow travelers. In today's highly concentrated discourse power in a few countries, countries have to learn to "use the spear to attack the shield of one's own", based on their national conditions, change the way of speaking, strive for all the power that can be won, and open up a place in the world discourse stage.

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