



# Applied Translation Theory and Practice: A Case Study of Report Text Translation

Xin Yang, Yanying Yu

Foreign Language School, Xi'an Shiyou University, Xi'an, China

Email: 1994877971@qq.com

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## Abstract

With the changes of China's market and the increasing number of industries involved in translation, the theory of translation has become more and more complicated, and the diversity of practice has also become more and more obvious. At the same time, the process of Chinese culture "going out" strategy is accelerating, translation has been related to the development of the country. Therefore, how to translate and how to translate correctly have become the focus. One of the core issues is to clarify the relationship between theory and practice. In this paper, we start from applied translation theory and applied translation practice, and take the translation of report text as an example to study the combination of applied translation theory and applied translation practice.

## Subject Areas

Linguistics

## Keywords

Applied Translation Theory, Applied Translation Practice, Report Text

## 1. Introduction

As a bridge connecting cultures, translation plays an important role in promoting Chinese culture to the world. Translation is not a subsidiary discipline, it is an important way of cultural export. The government work report from the central government to local governments, all levels of government report the government work to the people every term and every year. It is a very good system, which is welcomed and paid attention to by the people. The government work report is, by its nature, the embodiment of democratic politics [1]. Government reports often contain important information that the public needs, and translation can ensure

that policies, regulations, and decisions are understood by citizens of different languages, thus promoting government transparency and credibility. Translation enables citizens of different language backgrounds to participate in public affairs and provide opinions and feedback. This is essential for democratic governance and social stability. Many government documents may involve legal provisions, and accurate translation ensures the consistency of legal texts in different languages, reducing the risk of misunderstandings and legal disputes. With the development of globalization, the cooperation between countries is becoming more and more frequent. Translation of government reports helps to promote international communication and cooperation and promote the smooth development of foreign relations. Rapid and high-quality translation can ensure that information is conveyed to relevant groups in a timely manner and avoid the impact of information delay. In short, the translation of government reports is not only related to the dissemination and exchange of information, but also related to social fairness and justice, which is an indispensable part of modern governance. In this paper, we will analyze the translation of report texts under the guidance of the theory of functional equivalence.

## 2. Application of Translation Theory

From the early translations of Buddhist scriptures to the present translations, the question of what translation has been pursued. There are many definitions of translation. In essence, translation refers to the equivalent conversion of information between two languages. Generally speaking, the exploration of translation begins with translation activities. However, with the increasing study of translation by scholars, translation can not only stay at the language level, but also the cultural and social factors involved should be taken into account. Looking back at the history of translation, the source of translation studies is the practice of translation, and some theories are derived from the application. When considering the current situation and problems of translation theory, Mu Lei and Zou Bing divided translation theory into basic research and applied research, arguing that basic research modified the results of applied research and made it take root in translation practice, while applied research mainly came from the accumulation of practical experience in translation [2].

Now, translation activities have more and more connections with social practice, so the object of translation is not only the translation of literary texts, but also the translation begins to expand to more practical texts. However, due to the wide range of text-related genres, many scholars have different ideas and opinions on applied translation. In 1972, Holmes first created a framework for translation studies, but after this, he did not further study and discuss applied translation studies.

Applied translation is not only a practical application in translation practice, but also a “practical translation with the main purpose of conveying information and focusing on the effect of information transmission [3]”, which is different

from literary translation with strong emotions [4]. Han believes that as long as the text focuses on information transmission, it should be regarded as the category of applied translation [5]. Therefore, in the study of applied translation, the emphasis should be placed on the determination of text type and the information conveyed.

### 3. Applied Translation Practice

#### 3.1. Characteristics of Report Texts

From the point of view of content, government documents carry the solemnity and seriousness of the country, and their text content is closely linked with the national image, playing multiple core functions such as persuasion, demonstration and commitment. The report usually contains a large number of data and facts to objectively reflect the country's political, economic, social and other aspects of development and achievements. From the linguistic level, the government work report is an important document for the state administrative organs to report their work to the National People's Congress or the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, so its language style should be solemn and formal, strict and accurate, and avoid the use of colloquial and slangy expressions [6].

Here, take the report of the Twentieth National Congress as an example, the report of the Twentieth National Congress summarizes the practical and theoretical innovations of the work on Taiwan region in the new era, and points out the direction of the work on Taiwan region in the future. The report also presents four distinctive features: it has the latest theory on Taiwan region's work, the goal is more clear, the position is more firm, and the attitude is more clear. All these require translators to have a clear political stance in order to do a good job of translating the Twentieth National Congress Report.

#### 3.2. Choice of Theory

Since the 20th Report is a report issued by the government, translators must accurately convey the meaning of the text when translating, and the translated text is also facing the public. In order to reduce the difference between the source language and the target language, it is necessary to choose the functional theory. According to Nida's definition of translation, the translation process of functional equivalence theory should follow three steps: First, transform the translation with the same meaning and style as the original text, and display the style of the original text as much as possible to reflect the meaning of the original text. Secondly, when the meaning and style cannot be fully considered, the meaning of the translation should be given priority. That is, the content and purpose of the original expression should be paid attention to, followed by the expression style and form. Finally, when changing the form according to the meaning of the original text cannot achieve the purpose of translation, the form can be recreated in a way as close as possible to the content expressed in the original text while expressing the meaning reasonably.

### 3.3. Translation of the Twentieth Congress Report under the Theory of Functional Equivalence

The bilingual version of the report of the 20th National Congress, the original text is from the report of President Xi Jinping at the 20th National Congress, and the English version is also the official translation, so the style of the translation can be basically guaranteed to be the same as that of the original text. Therefore, this paper does not analyze these, but only explores the guidance of functional equivalence translation on the text from the vocabulary and sentence level.

#### 3.3.1. Lexical Translation

The report of the 20th Party Congress contains a large number of Chinese characters with Chinese characteristics, some of which are well known, such as: 中国特色社会主义 (Socialism with Chinese Characteristics), 中央委员会 (Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC)), 中国共产党全国代表大会 (National Congress of the Communist Party of China) and so on. These terms can be understood by readers of the translated text without much explanation. There are also some terms that do not have any comprehension bias, such as “food security” and “food safety”.

But there are also some terms that carry cultural loads in themselves, which are easy to understand by readers of the original language because they are put forward by their own countries, and some slogans are very popular in the streets and alleys. For example, “四个意识” refers to political consciousness, global consciousness, core consciousness and a sense of alignment in the view of the readers of the original language. The understanding of this aspect is only limited to the readers of the original text, and the readers of the translated text want to understand this first of all, they should have certain relevant background, so they can not just use the method of literal translation to translate into “Four consciousnesses”, which will make the foreign readers unaware of what they are doing and confused, therefore, the translation given here is to translate out the specific connotations of the Four Consciousnesses, and the final translation is rendered as follows: maintain political integrity, think in big-picture terms, follow the leadership core, and keep in alignment with the central Party leadership. This conveys the message directly from the original text.

There is also the translation of the “四风”, which is the same as the translation of the “四个意识”, that is, to translate the cultural connotations expressed in the vocabulary, and to carry out an interpretive translation, which will be translated as: the task of rectifying pointless formalities, bureaucratism, hedonism, and extravagance. There are many other words with such cultural load. For example, translating “红色血脉” into “red blood” will make the target readers not understand what they are talking about, while the readers of our original text clearly know that red refers to revolution. Therefore, it was translated into “revolutionary traditions and heritage”, and the whole word was freely translated by information technology to express the meaning of the vocabulary. There is also “绿水青山就是金山银山” translated into lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable

assets, here the golden silver mountains translated into invaluable assets, is also the choice of the method of Italian translation, so that the translation will not let the readers of the translated text produce ambiguity. These are some Chinese words with distinctive characteristics, and there are a large number of such words in the original text. Free translation or interpretative translation are used to make the target readers better understand the report.

In fact, in many reports, it is customary to use four-letter words or idioms, or even some words that are repeated to enhance the momentum of the sentence, but in the English usage, this will make the sentence very cumbersome, for example: “幼有所育, 学有所教, 劳有所得, 病有所医, 老有所养, 住有所居, 弱有所扶” in the case of this series of four-letter words the translator presents the subject, and all that follows is translated according to the parallelism of the constituents, rendering a translation of: people’s access to childcare, education, employment, medical services, elderly care, housing, and social assistance, so as to make it more in line with the usage habits of the translated readers. And the word “self” appears a lot in this sentence “第二个答案, 自我净化, 自我完善, 自我革新, 自我提高能力显著增强” in translation, multiple “self” in the sentence is deleted, only one occurrence, other verbs are in parallel, translated to: The answer is self-reform. We have significantly boosted the Party’s ability to purify, improve, renew, and excel itself. There are also translations of some idioms and four-character words such as: “天下为公, 民为邦本, 为政以德, 革故鼎新, 任人唯贤, 天人合一, 自强不息, 厚德载物, 讲信修睦, 亲仁善邻” most of the translations of these idioms have adopted the literal translation method, because the meaning of these idioms is easy to understand, although we have unequal information in politics, but in some cultures, we can understand each other and blend with each other, so translated into: Pursuing common good for all; Regarding the people as the foundation of the state; Governing by virtue; discarding the outdated in favor of the new; Selecting officials on the basis of merit; promoting harmony between humanity and nature; Ceaselessly pursuing self-improvement; Embracing the world with virtue; Acting in good faith and being friendly to others; And fostering neighborliness.

### 3.3.2. Sentence Translation

In this kind of text, the subject is often missing, which is very common in Chinese, but it is necessary to add the subject in translation to ensure the integrity of the sentence. For example, “在充分肯定党和国家事业取得举世瞩目成就的同时...” Translated as As we fully affirm the remarkable achievements we have made in the cause of the Party and the country... There are also very long sentences that are most likely to appear in this type of report, and the translator should pay attention to splitting them up when translating, for example: “走过百年奋斗历程的中国共产党在革命性锻造中更加坚强有力……在坚持和发展中国特色社会主义的历史进程中始终成为坚强领导核心。” Such a long paragraph in the middle are all separated by commas, and English rarely appears such a long sentence. How to split the most appropriate is the most important problem here, the

translator divided this paragraph into four parts, translated as: Over the course of a century of endeavor, the Communist Party of China has tempered itself through revolution and grown stronger. It has grown better at providing political leadership, giving theoretical guidance, organizing the people, and inspiring society, all while maintaining a close bond with the people. Throughout the Party's history, as the world has undergone profound changes, it has always remained at the forefront of the times. As we have responded to risks and tests at home and abroad, the Party has always remained the backbone of the nation. And as we have upheld and developed socialism with Chinese characteristics, the Party has always remained a strong leadership core.

#### 4. Conclusions

The theory of functional equivalence provides some important guiding principles for the translation of report texts, in which the accurate transmission of information is crucial. Functional equivalence theory emphasizes that translation is not only about literal conversion, but also about the actual meaning and function of information. Reporting texts often involve specific cultural backgrounds and professional terms, while functional equivalence requires translators to fully consider the cultural background of target readers and appropriately adjust the cultural features in the text to ensure the comprehensibility and acceptability of information. At the same time, translators should adjust their translation strategies according to the needs of target readers. The theory of functional equivalence allows for flexibility in form. While it is important to preserve the structure and form of the source text, in some cases, it may be necessary to reorganize or restructure the text in order to achieve functional equivalence to ensure that the content of the report can be smoothly understood by the target audience. In order to achieve functional equivalence, translators should use natural and smooth expressions in the target language and avoid rigid literal translation. The report text should conform to the expression habits of the target language to ensure the clear communication of information.

The translation of report text is not only the conversion of language, but also the transmission and transformation of information, knowledge and culture. By applying appropriate translation theories and practical strategies, the quality of report translation can be improved to ensure that its performance in the target language is equivalent to that in the source language.

Different from the translation theories learned in daily life, the purpose of applied translation is based on the premise of applied practice, and applied translation should be applied to specific practice, which is different for different types of texts. Applied translation is also the main content of current translation work, and appropriate translation theories should be selected to guide different text types. The gradual systematization of applied translation also enables translators to think more quickly about the core issues of different types of translated texts, and promotes the perfection of the disciplinary system of applied translation. This

study aims to provide guidance for the English translation of government documents, hoping to build a more solid bridge for the communication between China and the West, and promote the positive development of bilateral relations.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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