

Study on the Translation of Classical Allusions in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China IV* from the Perspective of Eco-Translatology

Xule Deng*

The School of Foreign Languages, Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University, Guangzhou, 510665, China

*Email: xule_deng@163.com

ABSTRACT

As China's international standing ascends, the significance of translating political texts, particularly those involving classical allusions, becomes increasingly prominent. This translation process necessitates a delicate balance of linguistic transformation, cultural adaptation, and communicative efficacy. Drawing upon the framework of Eco-Translatology, this study examines the translator's adaptive transformations in terms of linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions, using classical allusions in Volume IV of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* as illustrative examples. The objective of this research is to refine the analytical perspectives within political text translation studies. Through methodologies such as literature review and case studies, it explores the translator's adaptive selections and translation strategies, aiming to achieve optimal translation outcomes. The findings reveal that Eco-Translatology facilitates the translator in maintaining a harmonious equilibrium between the original text's literary value, political connotations, and the target audience's cultural backdrop, thereby enhancing China's international voice and shaping a favorable national image. This study contributes positively to the overseas dissemination of Chinese cultural ideas.

KEYWORDS

Eco-translatology; Adaptation and Selection; Xi Jinping the Governance of China IV; Allusion; Political Discourse; Three-dimensional Transformation.

1. INTRODUCTION

As China's international standing rises and international exchanges proliferate, political texts have emerged as pivotal windows for the international community to comprehend China. The translation of classical allusions in political literature embodies Chinese concepts, culture, and national conditions, with the fourth volume of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* being particularly crucial. Chairman Xi Jinping frequently employs classical allusions and imbues them with contemporary significance.[1] Consequently, the translation of ancient allusions holds paramount importance.

Eco-translatology, a translation theory proposed by Chinese scholar Hu Gengshen, integrates traditional Chinese philosophical thought with natural selection theory. Its core viewpoints encompass "translational eco-environment," "adaptation and selection," and "three-dimensional transformation." Hu contends that translation is "an activity of adaptation and selection by translators within the translational eco-environment" [2] The "translational eco-environment" refers to the interconnected and interactive holism presented by the source text, source language, and target

language, encompassing language, communication, culture, society, as well as authors, readers, and clients.[3] The translation methodology of eco-translatology can be succinctly summarized as "multidimensional transformation," specifically implemented through the "three-dimensional" transformation of linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions.[4] This study, grounded in the theoretical framework of eco-translatology and integrated with external publicity strategies, explores the translation strategies of classical allusions in the fourth volume of Xi Jinping: The Governance of China, and analyzes the translational eco-environment faced by translators as well as the mechanisms of adaptation and selection.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. A Review of the Current Research Status on the Translation of Classical Allusions in Political Texts

In the domestic arena, Li Jing endeavors to retranslate utilizing the criterion of "recontextualization," emphasizing that the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Classics* necessitates the integration of multidimensional perspectives spanning politics, history, and philosophy.[5] Zhu Chaowei categorizes allusions into three types and advocates a translation stance of "Chinese viewpoints, international expression." [6] Tong Xiaomei observes that translators' intertextual transmission of cultural imagery and reconstruction of the target language context recreate the profound meanings embedded in allusions. [7] Wang Ying discovers that translators primarily adopt a translation approach centered on "equivalence," supplemented by "simplification" and "intensification," with a focus on constructing China's image and enhancing the dissemination effect of "China's stories." [8] Liu Kongxi points out that the incorporation of "literariness" into "political" discourse enhances its appeal and affinity. [9] Yu Tingning proposes an eight-point, three-step methodology for translating allusions in political literature.[10]

Internationally, Li Hailong attempts to elucidate allusion translation strategies through the lens of intertextuality theory. [11] Aina Sun uncovers the challenges faced in maintaining the clarity of logos and styles in allusion translation, such as the loss of original imagery and disruptions in logical flow. [12] Junhan Yang and Shurui Yang delve deeply into the significance and challenges of Chinese propaganda, as well as the role and effectiveness of allusion translation within propaganda contexts.[13]

Overall, researchers have conducted thorough analyses and discussions on the translation of allusions in political texts from various perspectives, proposing diverse translation strategies and methodologies. These studies not only facilitate a deeper understanding for readers but also assist translators in more adeptly rendering allusions in political texts, thereby disseminating Chinese culture and the Chinese voice.

2.2. A Review of Current Research on the Translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*

At home, regarding translation strategies, Lin Rong and Lin Dajin conducted an in-depth exploration of the characteristics, principles, and tactics employed in the English version, discovering that methods such as literal translation and explanatory translation are instrumental in accurately conveying the original work's rich Chinese cultural connotations. [14] Xu Mingwu and Liang Linti further analyzed translation techniques from lexical and syntactic dimensions, providing corresponding methodologies for effective translation.[15] Jin Yitong emphasized the necessity for translators to exercise creative thinking in transmitting both semantic and cultural nuances of the source language. [16] Si Xianzhu and Zeng Jianping claimed that the high acceptability, widespread dissemination, and favorable outcomes of translated works stem from the implementation of effective translation techniques and strategies, as well as the formulation of accurate translation principles.[17]

In terms of national image and international communication, Zhang Shengxiang and Zhang Miaoqun proposed strategies to enhance the international reach and influence of China's discourse through linguistic translation and media tactics. [18] Feng Xiaochen and Zhu Yihua pointed out that the incorporation of literary language can significantly enhance the acceptability and dissemination effect of external publicity content.[19]

Overseas, Du Yanjun categorized and analyzed new diplomatic concepts into five distinct categories. [20] Jun Hu identified non-correspondences in terms of designative, linguistic, and pragmatic meanings.[21] Keren Wang argued that traditional Chinese culture must actively integrate into the cultural fabric of the target audience to achieve acceptance and recognition.[22] Wenjing Wang highlighted the flexibility and diversity of translation strategies employed in rendering Chinese classical poetry embodying the "people-centered" philosophy.[23]

Overall, while translation studies of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* have encompassed various aspects such as text analysis, translation strategy exploration, and international dissemination and impact of translations, there is a scarcity of research specifically focusing on the translation of classical allusions within ancient texts, whose unique significance remains largely untapped and underrepresented. Research often terminates at the linguistic level, discussing translation strategies in isolation, lacking integration with macro-level external publicity strategies. Future endeavors could delve deeper and broaden their scope into the integration of classical allusion translation with macro-level external publicity strategies and the ecological translation of ancient allusions featured in Volume IV.

3. ANALYSIS OF ADAPTATION AND SELECTION IN TRANSLATION OF WORDS WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

3.1. Adaptation and Selection in Linguistic Dimension

Given the inherent differences in linguistic forms and idiomatic expressions between English and Chinese, the translation process involves making selections at the linguistic dimension, primarily focusing on vocabulary, syntax, semantics, and modes of linguistic expression, to ensure that the translated text aligns with the linguistic characteristics and habits of English readers. The analysis of the linguistic dimension here primarily encompasses vocabulary, syntax, and discourse.

CH: wu you gan ku, chang zhi zhe shi; dao you yi xian, lv zhi zhe zhi.[24]

EN: One must taste a thing to know its flavor; one must walk a path to know its difficulties.

At the lexical level, the term "flavor" encompasses the broad meaning of "sweetness and bitterness," extending beyond mere taste to include the nature or characteristics of things. The phrase "know the flavor" conveys the wisdom that true knowledge comes from practice, aligning with the original Chinese sentence's meaning. At the syntactic level, the original text employs parallelism, creating a balanced and orderly sentence structure. The English translation adopts a compound sentence form, connecting two similar ideas with a semicolon, preserving the parallel structure of the original. At the textual level, the translation retains the theme and intent of the original, closely linking this quotation to the article's topic on the experiences and insights gained from China's fight against the pandemic. It expresses the great spirit of the Chinese nation in its anti-epidemic efforts. This positive energy contributes to enhancing China's international reputation and image, fostering greater confidence and trust in China within the international community.

3.2. Adaptation and Selection in Cultural Dimension

The adaptive selection and transformation in the cultural dimension focus on the differences in nature and content between the source language culture and the target language culture, aiming to avoid

misinterpreting the original text from the perspective of the target language culture. While engaging in the linguistic conversion of the source language, translators should also pay attention to adapting to the entire cultural system that the language belongs to.[25]

CH: tian di zhi da, li yuan wei ben.[24]

EN: In the vast universe, the people are the foundation.

The original text embodies profound Chinese cultural backgrounds and values. The phrase "the vastness of heaven and earth" expresses reverence for the universe and nature, while "the common people are fundamental" emphasizes the fundamental role of the people in the state and society, reflecting the core of the people-oriented ideology in traditional Chinese culture. In the translation, the translator appropriately converts and conveys the cultural connotations of the original text. Although the translation does not directly render "the vastness of heaven and earth," similar ideological concepts exist in Western culture, emphasizing the importance of the populace and their dominant position in political and social life. Therefore, the translator chooses to focus on "the common people are fundamental," successfully conveying the core ideas and values of the original text and adeptly handling cultural differences. This demonstrates adaptation to and selection of the target culture.

CH: yi shi wei jian, ke yi zhi xing ti.[24]

EN: By taking history as a mirror, one can discern the rise and fall of dynasties.

The original text elucidates the relationship between self-reflection (mirroring) and governing a nation, emphasizing that history serves as a mirror through which people can draw lessons and insights, comprehend the cycles of rise and fall of nations, regimes, or forces, and thereby exemplifies the profound respect that Chinese people hold for history and the emphasis they place on historical experiences. The translation generally conveys the intended meaning of the original text. The Chinese character "jian", which has multiple connotations including mirror and reference, primarily signifies drawing lessons or making reference in this context. Although there is no direct English equivalent for the character "jian", the phrase "learning from" effectively conveys the similar idea of deriving lessons from history in English. This choice exemplifies the translator's adaptation and transformation in addressing cultural differences during the translation process.

3.3. Adaptation and Selection in Communicative Dimension

Adaptive selection and transformation in the communicative dimension necessitate that translators, beyond the conversion of linguistic information and the transmission of cultural connotations, prioritize the communicative aspect in their choice of transformations, ensuring that the communicative intent of the original text is adequately reflected in the translation. [25]

CH: ai ren li wu zhi wei ren.[24]

EN: Benevolence consists in loving and benefiting others.

The original text conveys the extensive connotations of "ren" (benevolence) within Confucian culture, encompassing the care among individuals and the respect and protection for all creatures in nature. In the process of translation, the translator adopts a domestication strategy, transforming the culturally profound expression "loving others and benefiting all things" into "loving and helping others," which is more readily understood and accepted by English readers. Notably, during the pandemic, the benevolent ideology advocated by the Communist Party of China emphasizes the principles of people-orientedness and the supremacy of life, thus being interpreted more as humanistic care in this context, such as the treatment of patients, support for healthcare workers, and concern for vulnerable groups. This aligns with the original text's respect and protection for life. The choice of this strategy facilitates the preservation of the original text's basic meaning while highlighting its primary intent,

thereby promoting cultural exchange and dissemination and achieving a balanced and harmonious linguistic ecology.

CH: ren sheng tian di jian, chang lu you xian yi.[24]

EN: As one journeys through life, the road is bound to have both smooth stretches and rugged paths.

The communicative intent of the translation aligns with the original text, conveying the arduousness and challenges of the journey of life. Through the expression "As you progress through life's journey," the translation captures the dynamic process of constant advancement in life, resonating with the original text's artistic conception. The imagery of "xianyi" (a blend of smooth and perilous paths), in the context provided, is rendered as "difficulties and obstacles," highlighting the resilient spirit of the Chinese Communists in the face of formidable challenges. By employing a combination of literal and free translation strategies, the translation successfully conveys the meaning and philosophy of the original text while ensuring clarity and fluency in the target language.

4. CONCLUSION

This study, grounded in the theory of Eco-translatology, delves into the translation strategies and techniques employed in rendering classical allusions from the fourth volume of Xi Jinping: The Governance of China. Through meticulous analysis, it is revealed that the translator has made adaptive selections and transformations across linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions to ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of the translations. These selections not only underscore the translator's profound understanding of the source text but also reflect a thorough consideration of the target audience's cultural backdrop. [26] This research underscores the importance for translators, when rendering classical allusions in political texts, to comprehensively consider various translation factors in pursuit of a harmonious unity between the source and target texts. Future research endeavors may further extend to other political texts to validate the applicability of ecological translation theory in broader contexts.

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