

# A Study on the Translation Strategies of Economic Expressions with Chinese Characteristics in Report on the Work of the Government (2021)

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## Abstract

For the political texts like the Report on the Work of the Government, the translation of economic expressions with Chinese characteristics has always been the focus and difficulty. Based on Newmark's semantic translation and communicative translation theories, this paper studies the translation strategies of economic expressions with Chinese characteristics in the Report on the Work of the Government (2021) (hereinafter referred to as the "Report"), and expounds the good results obtained by the flexible application of semantic translation and communicative translation strategies in the expressions with metaphors, colloquial languages and abbreviations, providing reference for relevant text translation.

## Keywords

Translation Strategies; Report on the Work of the Government; Economic Description.

## 1. Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, with the rapid development of China's economy, many new economic expressions and formulations with distinctive Chinese characteristics have appeared every year in the economic field. This phenomenon is more reflected in the Report on the Work of the Government over the years. In the translation process of these political texts, how to accurately translate those condensed expressions with distinctive Chinese characteristics not only tests the translator's knowledge reserve, but also challenges the translator's flexible use of translation strategies and skills.

At present, most of the studies on the translation of current political texts focus on the political and diplomatic content, such as Cheng Zhenqiu's "Political Articles Translation Should focus on Politics" (2004) and Wang Nongsheng's "Reflections on the Chinese-English Translation of the Report of the 16th National Congress" (2004). Relatively speaking, there are few studies on economic content.

Based on Newmark's translation theory, this paper summarizes the economic expressions with Chinese characteristics in the "Report", classifies and studies the English translation of representative expressions, and summarizes the good translation results obtained by the combination of semantic translation and communicative translation strategies, which provides some reference for the translation of relevant texts.

## 2. Translation Strategies of Political Texts

Newmark, a famous English translator and translation theorist, in his book *Approaches to Translation* (1981), divided language into three functions: expressive, informative and vocative function (Newmark, 1981:12-13) and on the basis of these functions, texts are further divided into three types: expressive, informative and vocative type. In the same book, Newmark also

put forward two concepts: "Semantic Translation" and "Communicative Translation". He believes that "Semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original; Communicative translation, on the other hand, attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original." (1981:39).

At the same time, Newmark put forward six translation methods, including literal translation, faithful translation, semantic translation, communicative translation, idiomatic translation and free translation. Together with the word for word translation and domestication translation which he later added in the translation course, he summarized them into eight translation methods (1988:45).

According to the analysis of Newmark's translation theory, the "Report" and other current political documents are expressive texts, but they also have the characteristics of informative texts and a small amount of vocative texts. Therefore, the English translation of the "Report" should mainly adopt the semantic translation and take into account the communicative translation strategy.

### 3. Main Categories of Economic Expressions With Chinese Characteristics and Specific Application of Translation Strategies

In the "Report", there are many economic expressions with Chinese characteristics. This paper summarizes several representative categories and makes a comparative analysis through corresponding translation theories.

#### 3.1. Metaphor

Even as a serious political document, the "Report" often uses metaphor and other rhetorical devices in its writing to make some expressions vivid and easy to understand. For the same purpose, various rhetorical devices, including metaphor, are widely used in English writing, and there are many metaphors with the same meaning between Chinese and English. In this case, metaphor translation becomes simple and direct.

Although there are many similarities in the use of rhetoric, there are great differences in culture and customs between China and the West, which naturally leads to many metaphors based on different cultural backgrounds and customs that cannot find corresponding metaphors in the other language and if they are translated directly and mechanically, it is bound to make people confused.

Therefore, in the process of metaphor translation, it is necessary to fully understand the cultural information and metaphorical meaning attached to the words, consider the particularity of political texts translation, and adopt corresponding translation strategies to accurately and vividly convey the meaning of the original text.

##### Case 1

ST: "既及时果断又保持定力, 坚持不搞'大水漫灌', 科学把握规模性政策的平衡点"

TT: "We refrained from adopting a deluge of strong stimulus policies but took swift, decisive and well-considered steps, thus maintaining a desired balance between various macro policies.

"大水漫灌" refers to an extensive agricultural irrigation method that directly releases a large amount of water into the farmland. In the original article, it is a metaphor of a strong economic stimulus policy such as pouring money directly. Unfortunately, the metaphor of this image in Chinese cannot be directly expressed in English, so the strategy of combining semantic translation with communicative translation can only be adopted here and translate the Chinese text into its implied meaning "A deluge of strong stimulus policies" directly. Of course, this translation method will certainly lose part of the cultural connotation and charm carried by the

"大水漫灌" in the Chinese expression, but after all, for the translation of current political texts, the most important choice is to be faithful to the original text and avoid ambiguity.

#### Case 2

ST: “坚持过紧日子，确保基本民生支出只增不减，助力市场主体青山常在、生机盎然”

TT: “We should continue to tighten our belts, ensure continued increases in spending to meet basic living needs, and help sustain and energize market entities.”

In this translation, the Chinese expression "过紧日子" is vividly translated into "to tighten our belts". It can be said that the translator has accurately found the relevant connotation of the two things expressed by the original and the target, and established a certain similar metaphorical relationship on the metaphor concept, so that the form of the original and the target are consistent with the reference, and the translation is wonderful. At the same time, the communicative translation strategy is adopted to translate “助力市场主体青山常在、生机盎然” into “help sustain and energize market entities”. Although such translation will make the Chinese image of metaphor basically disappear, the translation is smooth and satisfying. On the contrary, if “助力市场主体青山常在、生机盎然” is directly translated into "Green Mountains are always there and full of vitality", it is difficult for English readers to associate it with helping market revitalization.

### 3.2. Colloquial Language

Colloquial language is commonly used in daily life. Due to its characteristics of being easy to understand and widely used, colloquial language can be used even in political documents. The translation of colloquial language also reflects the importance of flexible use of semantic translation and communicative translation strategies.

#### Case 1

ST: “5575万农村贫困人口实现脱贫，960多万建档立卡贫困人口通过易地扶贫搬迁摆脱了‘一方水土难养一方人’的困境”

TT: “Its entire rural poor population, 55.75 million in number, was lifted out of poverty, including more than 9.6 million registered poor people who were relocated from inhospitable areas;”

In the original text, "一方水土难养一方人" means that in some poor areas, the original harsh natural environment has been difficult to meet people's basic living needs, and the poverty problem can be fundamentally solved only through relocation. The English translation text adopts the strategy of combining communicative translation and semantic translation, omitting the literal translation of "一方水土难养一方人", and directly translating the measures (relocated from inhospitable areas) for the population to be lifted out of poverty, so that English readers can accurately understand the meaning of the original text.

#### Case 2

ST: “加强普惠性、基础性、兜底性民生建设”，

TT: “Ensure that public services are inclusive, meet essential needs, and ensure basic living standards for people in difficulty”

"兜底" is a colloquial expression commonly used in Chinese. It generally refers to ensuring that the most basic requirements are covered. For example, in the economic field, "兜底" is often said to mean that if a certain fund is insufficient, the Finance Department is ultimately responsible for making up the funds. In this sense, "兜底性民生建设" means ensuring that the people's wellbeing meets the basic standards of living set by the State. Therefore, it is very accurate to translate "兜底" into "ensure basic living standards", which is consistent with the

meaning of "ensure that people's livelihood construction meets the basic living standards set by the State" as stated in the original text.

### 3.3. Abbreviations

Some abbreviations are often used in political documents. Since most of the abbreviations are mentioned in the previous paragraph, established by convention or otherwise explained, the semantic translation strategy is basically adopted for direct translation and supplementary words are added appropriately.

#### Case 1

ST: “面对历史罕见的冲击，我们在“六稳”工作基础上，明确提出“六保”任务，特别是保就业保民生保市场主体”

TT: “Facing shocks of a severity rarely seen before, based on what we had done to ensure stability on six key fronts, we carried out the task of maintaining security in six key areas—particularly job security, basic living needs, and the operations of market entities.”

When translating, we should first make it clear that the target of in the original text refers to the “six key aspects” related to the lifeline of national economic development, including “employment” etc.; Among the, the objects to be “guaranteed” are “six key areas” related to the national economy and the people's livelihood, including “resident employment” etc. Therefore, the semantic translation strategy is adopted in the translation, and the “六稳” and “六保” are translated into “six key fronts” and “six key areas” to form a reasonable correspondence between the original and the target.

#### Case 2

ST: “深入推进‘放管服’改革，实施优化营商环境条例”

TT: “We furthered reforms to streamline administration and delegate power, improve regulation, and upgrade services”

First of all, it should be understood that the meaning of “放管服” here respectively refers to “streamline administration and delegate power, improve regulation, and upgrade services”. Therefore, on the basis of semantic translation strategy, By means of expansion and interpretation, we translate “放管服” into “streamline administration and delegate power, improve regulation, and upgrade services”, so that the meaning of “放管服” in the original text corresponds to the English translation one by one, and the meaning is clear and complete.

## 4. Conclusion

Based on Newmark's translation theory, this paper summarizes and analyzes the translation of economic expressions with Chinese characteristics in the “report” through representative examples. Through comparison, it is found that metaphorical and colloquial translations focus on communicative translation strategies, while abbreviations focus on semantic translation strategies. Of course, most of the content of the translation still adopts the combination of two translation strategies.

Based on the above analysis, we can briefly summarize the use of translation strategies for economic expressions with Chinese characteristics in political documents as follows: in the process of translation, we should respect the choice of translation strategies, but not be confined to the theoretical framework. We should treat translation as a knowledge system, keep up with the pace of the times, constantly enrich its connotation, and continuously develop and improve translation theory in the process of innovation.

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