

On the Translation Methods of Allusions in Publicity Texts

-- A Case Study of *The Governance of China III*

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Abstract

The Governance of China III has received high attention and wide acclaim both at home and abroad after its release. Based on the self-built English-Chinese parallel corpus, this paper summarizes four major translation methods of allusions in *The Governance of China III* and then concludes four implications of allusions translation for publicity texts: possessing cultural confidence, clarifying translation purpose, caring for readers' perception and expanding communication space. As the authoritative example of publicity texts in the political field, the study of allusive translation methods in *The Governance of China III* is of great reference significance for improving publicity texts' translation in China.

Keywords

The Governance of China III, Publicity Texts, Translation Methods of Allusions.

1. Introduction

Publicity texts focus on accurately conveying the information of the original text and involve many fields such as national politics, economy, culture, diplomacy and military, in which many allusions are inevitable. Therefore, the success of translation of publicity texts is closely related to the accuracy of allusion translation. As globalization continues to advance and international interactions become more and more frequent, the translation of publicity texts has become a major hot spot in translation studies. Since the 18th National Congress, domestic scholars have been enthusiastic about the study on publicity texts translation, and the number of relevant papers has exceeded 100 annually since 2015. Although the current research results on the translation of publicity texts are fruitful, the related scholars have not paid enough attention to the study on the translation of allusions in publicity texts. The total number of the literature searched in CNKI on the topic of "publicity texts translation" is 1397, of which less than 10 are on the translation of allusions. The current research shows the following three shortcomings: there are not many research literature on the translation of allusions in publicity texts, the fields involved are not extensive, and the level of results is not high.

The Governance of China III, as publicity-oriented materials in the political field, is the most representative achievement of China's publicity texts translation theory and practice, which uses a large number of allusions, covering poems, idioms, historical stories and so on. Based on the self-built English-Chinese parallel corpus, this paper explores how the translation of allusions in *The Governance of China III* presents Chinese culture and conveys political connotations through the corpus and statistics from the perspective of translation methods, and then summarizes its revelations for publicity texts translation.

2. The Particularity and Importance of Translation of Allusions in Publicity Texts

Cihai's definition of allusions has two meanings, one refers to allusions and anecdotes; the other refers to ancient stories quoted in poems and words with provenance[1]. For standardization, this study adopts the second meaning of the definition. Allusions are the historical crystallization of national culture, rich in profound cultural heritage, and the essence of national language and national history[2]. Allusions are rooted in the ancient history and culture of the Chinese nation, so their translation should belong to literary translation. Literary translation attaches great importance to five characteristics, namely imagery, emotion, ambiguity and uncertainty, and emphasizes that translation should convey a certain artistic effect and aesthetic experience. However, the translation of allusions in *The Governance of China III* should belong to the category of publicity translation. Allusions in the context of publicity are endowed with a layer of political meaning, and it is bound to be unfeasible to use traditional literary translation theories to guide translation.

Huang Youyi once pointed out that publicity translation serves the overall interests of the party and the country. First, it must build China's own national discourse system, and second, it must provide services for the country's development [3]. Due to the huge differences in cultural background and ideology between the East and the West, the translation of allusions has become a major difficulty in translation. The translation of allusions in publicity texts should not only disseminate traditional Chinese culture but also convey political discourse. The accuracy of the translation is related to whether the publicity texts can obtain ideal publicity effects, whether they can build a good image of China, and whether they can promote the development of publicity. Improper translation not only fails to achieve the expected communication effect, but sometimes causes misunderstanding and negative impact. For example, the literal translation of “人间仙境，室外桃源” in tourism publicity text is “earthly fairyland”, but fairyland refers to the magical and wonderful fairy tale world, and the expression is not suitable, while plain and simple words such as a retreat/beatentrack away from the bustle of the city is easier to be accepted by Westerners and achieve the purpose of tourism promotion [4].

3. Translation of allusions in the English translation of *The Governance of China III*

The Governance of China III contains 92 reports, speeches, talks, speeches, instructions, instructions, and congratulatory letters from October 18, 2017 to January 13, 2020, which were divided into 19 topics in total, comprehensively and systematically reflecting Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and is a representative text for publicity. Its English version follows two principles: first, it maximizes overseas readers' understanding of the connotative meaning of the original text; second, it conveys the excellent Chinese culture as much as possible, allowing overseas audiences to appreciate the elements of Chinese ideas that are deeply alive with national vitality and rich in national values. Therefore, the study of the translation method of the allusions in its English version has important theoretical and practical significance for the study of publicity translation and the dissemination of Chinese culture.

3.1. Allusions in the English Translation of *The Governance of China III*

This article makes a statistical analysis of the allusions in *The Governance of China III*, and obtains a total of 103 allusions. *The Governance of China III* is rich in allusions, including poems, idioms and historical stories. Among the quoted allusions, from the perspective of works, there are not only famous works such as Analects, Mencius, Zhuang Tzu, Xunzi, etc., but also the lesser-known Qianfulun, Discourses on Salt and Iron and so on; from the point of view of the

authors, there are not only great thinkers such as Confucius and Mencius, but also literary scholars such as Bai Juyi, Su Shi, and Feng Menglong; from the point of view of time, it covers the Western Zhou Dynasty, the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, down to the Ming and Qing Dynasties. It can be seen that the range of allusions cited is wide and the time span is large.

The original texts are flexibly employed and given new meaning to the times in *The Governance of China III*, which shows not only firm cultural confidence but also the long-standing Chinese culture. As a political document, *The Governance of China III*, in which allusions are used, aims to implicitly express new ideas and strategies of governance to promote audience recognition and acceptance. It has aroused strong repercussions overseas, reflecting that the allusions in it have been translated into a language that the international community can understand, and can inspire the resonance and sense of identity of overseas readers. It can be seen that the correct translation of allusions in *The Governance of China III* is crucial to reader acceptance and communication effects.

3.2. The Method of Translation of Allusions in the English Translation of *The Governance of China III*

Liu Yunbo and Guo Ding classified allusions into three categories: The first category refers to those whose origins are not known but whose meanings can be understood literally; the second category refers to those whose origins are familiar to the readers of the translation; the third one refers to those whose origins are unknown to the readers and whose meaning cannot be understood literally[5]. From the above three categories, it can be seen that the translation of the first category of allusions is relatively easy and can generally be translated literally or liberally, the second category can be literally translated, and the third category needs to be translated liberally. Therefore, the translation methods adopted by different allusions are not the same, coupled with the influence of context, it is not easy to accurately translate the inner meaning and additional meaning of allusions. According to the analysis of the English version of the *The Governance of China III*, it is concluded that the translation methods of its allusions include literal translation, Liberal translation, parody translation and creative translation.

According to the statistics of the English-Chinese Parallel Corpus, 103 allusions are used in *The Governance of China III*, 48 of which are literal translation, accounting for 46.6%; 34 are Liberal translation, accounting for 33.01%; 17 are imitation, accounting for than 16.5%; 4 recreation are used, accounted for 3.88%. Judging from the above data, its translation methods generally tend to be literal translation and liberal translation.

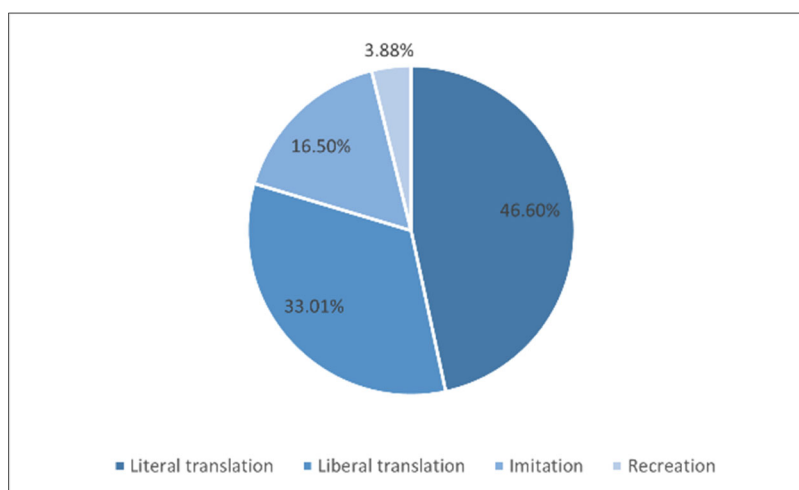


Figure 1. Proportion of translation methods

3.2.1. Literal translation

Xiong Bing pointed out that literal translation has two major characteristics: in the processing of lexical meaning and rhetoric, escapism is not used; in the processing of language form, appropriate changes or conversions are allowed to make the translation conform to the vocabulary of the target language[6]. Literal translation takes into account both the content and form of the original text, and the purpose is to accurately convey the meaning of the original text in terms of content and form. When translating the allusions in *The Governance of China III*, the literal translation was used most frequently, reaching 48 times, accounting for 46.6% of the total translation methods. Specific examples can be seen:

1) ST: "天下之势不盛则衰，天下之治不进则退。"

TT: "If a dynasty cannot continue to rise, it will fall; if a country cannot improve its governance, the state of order will deteriorate."

2) ST: "治国犹如栽树，本根不摇则枝叶荣茂。"

TT: "Governing a country is like planting a tree. If the roots are firm, the branches and leaves flourish."

The allusion used in Example 1 comes from Lu Zuqian's *The Meeting of Kuiqiu in Donglaiboyi*, which means that if the country is not strong, it will decline, and the society will not progress. will go backwards. The literal translations of "盛" and "衰" are "rise" and "fall", while "进" and "退" are translated as "improve" and "deteriorate". These two groups of words perfectly show the power of the world expressed in the original text. The meaning of ebb and flow. In Example 2, the allusion "治国犹如栽树，本根不摇则枝叶荣茂。" It comes from Wu Jing's *Zhen Guan Zheng Yao*, which means that governing a country is like planting a tree, as long as the roots are stable, the branches will flourish. The words "栽树" and "枝叶荣茂" are directly translated as "planting a tree" and "the branches and leaves flourish", which can retain the metaphorical meaning of the original text and will not cause reading difficulties.

3.2.2. Liberal translation

Liberal translation refers to the use of escaping techniques in the processing of lexical meaning and rhetoric, so as to reproduce the meaning of the original text more fluently and authentically. Generally speaking, when there is a large difference in the form between Chinese and English, the translator will adopt this translation method that sacrifices the form of the original text while retaining the meaning of the original text. In the translation of allusions in the English version of *The Governance of China III*, the frequency of Liberal translation is second only to literal translation, accounting for 33.01% of the total translation methods.

3) ST: "明镜所以照形，古事所以知今。"

TT: "One needs to clean the mirror before taking a look at oneself, and should learn the lessons of the past before making the decisions of today."

4) ST: "大道之行，天下为公。"

TT: "A just world should be pursued for the common good."

In Example 3, "明镜所以照形，古事所以知今。" It comes from *The Annals of San Guo*, which means that the mirror is used to reflect the appearance of people, and the past is used to guide the present. Here "所以" means "be used for", but the translation does not translate word-for-word according to the original text, but uses "need" and "should" to express its meaning of "所以", and "明镜" and "古事" are respectively translated as "mirror" and "lesson", which subtly expresses the meaning of the original text. Example 4 "大道之行，天下为公。" This allusion comes from *The Book of Rites*, which originally means that when the Dao is implemented, the world is shared by all. The words "天下为公" are of great significance in the history of Chinese revolution. The extended meaning here refers to China's lofty ideals in international relations

and the ideal society of Great Harmony. Therefore, the translation of "公" is the most critical, to express the three meanings of "fairness", "common", and "international", but these three meanings are relatively abstract, and the translation treats it as "just world" and "common good" perfectly interpret the meaning of the original text and realize the cross-linguistic communication intention of the original text.

3.2.3. Imitation

15 imitation are used in the English translation of allusions, accounting for 16%. Imitation translation means that the translator does not stick to the details of the meaning of the original text, let alone its lexical and syntactic structure and takes the original text as a reference, or only translate its gist by condensing content (omission), or translate more information than the original text by adding content (addition). Omission refers to deleting certain words, sentences or paragraphs in the original text to convey the meaning of the original text more clearly. Addition refers to adding certain words, sentences or paragraphs in the translation according to needs to better express the content of the original text. See examples 5 and 6 for the subtractive translation method, and examples 7 and 8 for the incremental translation method:

5) ST: "任人唯贤，选贤用能。"

TT: "Standards for the appointment of officials based on virtue and competence."

6) ST: "文章合为时而著，歌诗合为时而作。"

TT: "Prose and poetry are composed to reflect the times and reality."

There is a famous saying in *The Book of Documents*: "任官惟贤材，左右惟其人". This is where the phrase "任人唯贤" comes from. Example 5 retains the words "贤" and "能" and translates them as "virtue and competence", while the words "选贤" and "任人" are synonymous here, so the repeated information is deleted and translated as "standards for the appointment of officials". In example 6, "文章合为时而著，歌诗合为事而作" is from Bai Juyi's *The Letter to Yuan Jiu of the Tang Dynasty*. In the translation, the two clauses are translated into one sentence, keeping "文章" and "歌诗" as the subjects. In this sentence, the words "为.....而著" and "为.....而作" are synonymous, so the translation is reduced to "are composed to reflect", and then the words "时" and "事" are translated as a coordinate phrase "times and reality". It clearly shows the meaning of the original and makes the translation more readable.

7) ST: "千磨万击还坚劲，任尔东西南北风。"

TT: "We must be as tenacious as bamboo, as described by Zheng Xie, "In the fact of all blows, not bending low, it still stands fast. Whether from east, west, south or north the wind doth blast."

8) ST: "不知有汉，无论魏晋。"

TT: "We cannot blind ourselves to what is really happening out there like the people in the legendary Peach Blossom Spring who cut all ties with the outside world."

Example 7 is from Zheng Xie's *Bamboo and Stone*, a poem that praises bamboo and stone for their tenacity and resilience through countless hardships, thus expressing their own righteousness and unyielding backbone. Comparing the original with the translation, the translation adds "We must be as tenacious as bamboo, as described by Zheng Xie", which conveys the core of the verse and improves the readers' understanding of the translation of the verse, eliminating reading barriers. Example 8 is from Tao Yuanming's *The Peach Blossom Source*, which is familiar to Chinese readers but not to foreign readers, so if we translate directly from the Han and Wei Jin dynasties, foreign readers are bound to be confused. The translation omits the translation of the Han and Wei Dynasties, translates the original text as "the legendary Peach Blossom Spring", and adds two pieces of information that "We cannot blind ourselves to what is really happening out there" and "who cut all ties with the outside world", which can help readers understand its background and facilitate their understanding.

3.2.4. Recreation

Creation refers to the translation method in which the translator creatively reprocesses the original text, abandoning the meaning and form of the original text in order to achieve a specific translation purpose. Wang Xiangyuan pointed out that "creative translation" is the most creative act in translation[7]. It surpasses the contradiction of "literal translation/liberal translation" in traditional translation studies in terms of methodology, eliminates the opposition between "loyalty" and "rebellion", and gets rid of the "The wandering between "like in shape" and "like in spirit". Transcreation is not used frequently in the translation of allusions in *The Governance of China III*, accounting for only 3.88%.

9) ST: "不要人夸颜色好，只留清气满乾坤。"

TT: "Not bent on praise for its bright colors, but on leaving its fragrance to all."

10) ST: "迟日江山丽，春风花草香。"

TT: "The land bathes in the spring sunshine, and the wind sends the aromas of grass and flowers."

In example 9, "不要人夸颜色好，只留清气满乾坤。" is from Wang Mian's *Mo Mei*, in which the word "清气" means "the fragrance of plum blossoms", "满" means "pervasive", and "乾坤" means "heaven and earth". The political meaning of the poem is the pragmatic style of the new Central Leadership Group, which does not care about vanity and does not take real action. A literal translation of this poem would not convey the beauty of the poem, nor would it allow readers to appreciate its inner meaning. Moreover, "乾坤" has no equivalent in English, so the translator needs to use his subjective initiative to come up with a good translation. In Example 10, "leaving its fragrance to all" retains its metaphorical meaning, reflecting the political concept of serving the people. "迟日江山丽，春风花草香" is from Du Fu's *A Quatrain of the Tang Dynasty*, which means that the rivers and mountains are beautiful and bright in the spring light, and the warm spring breeze sends the fragrance of flowers and plants. The original poem is very poetic and picturesque, so the translation should also reflect the beauty of its mood. Example 10 uses the words "land" and "wind" as the subject, visualizing and relaxing the expression, and using words and phrases to dynamically depict a picture of beautiful mountains and rivers and the blossoming of flowers in spring.

Based on the analysis of the above translation methods, it can be concluded that the translators of *The Governance of China III* firmly adhered to the translation standpoint of "telling Chinese stories well and disseminating Chinese voices", and flexibly used literal translation, Liberal translation, imitation translation and creative translation and other translation methods show the spirit of hard work, the concept of governing the country and traditional culture contained in the allusions, and highly restore the plain and vivid narrative style of the speaker and the discourse characteristics of quoting from many sources.

4. The Enlightenment from the Translation of the Allusions in *The Governance of China III* in Publicity Translation

The Governance of China III is sold in mainstream overseas bookstores, Chinese bookstores and online platforms, covering more than 70 countries and regions in Europe, America, Africa, Asia, etc., providing important documents for the international community to understand China. Since its publication, it has received high attention and wide acclaim from the international community. It has a good overseas dissemination effect and provides a reference model for my country's foreign publicity translation. The successful practice of translation of *The Governance of China III* has the following enlightenment:

First, possessing cultural self-confidence. It is repeatedly emphasized that "cultural self-confidence is a more fundamental, deeper and more lasting force in the development of a

country or a nation." Political discourse represents the attitude and position of the Chinese government, covering China's political, economic and , society and other cultures, and its translation is an authoritative channel for the international community and foreign readers to understand Chinese culture. Therefore, political discourse translation should emphasize cultural self-confidence[8]. *The Governance of China III* is a political text reflecting thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, and its English translation should highlight cultural confidence and highlight culture with Chinese characteristics. The translators shouldered the arduous task of translation. They kept improving their translation work and used literal translation to translate the allusions in the third volume. significance. The general principle of translation of central documents is political faithfulness. The more faithful the translator is to the original text, the more cultural confidence the translator can demonstrate. The English translation of allusions faithful to the original text can make up for the "gaps" in the Chinese culture of the readers, and at the same time, it can resonate with the readers and help them understand Chinese culture better.

Second, clarify the purpose of translation. The purpose of foreign publicity-English translation is to enable the recipients of the target text to absorb information without barriers, and to understand and grasp the information conveyed by the target text clearly and unmistakably. Difficulties caused by differences in social background and logical thinking, so as to achieve external publicity [9]. The translator has a clear purpose, that is, to "tell Chinese stories well and spread Chinese voices well" to ensure that China is truly understood by other countries. Contemporary publicity translation researchers must focus on this purpose and introduce Chinese politics, economy, science and other cultures objectively and comprehensively.

Third, caring for readers' cognition. Translation is an activity of cross-cultural communication. It is necessary to consider the acceptance level of the target readers and pay attention to the language, culture and aesthetic psychology of the target readers[10]. The foreign audience of Chinese books has expanded, but their average knowledge and understanding of China has declined, so the translation needs to be more in line with their language habits[11]. The fundamental reason why *The Governance of China III* has been highly praised overseas is that the translators have a clear translation purpose, based on the principle of faithful translation, and adopt flexible translation methods to translate Chinese culture into a language that readers can understand. In the same way, external publicity translators must understand the needs and ways of thinking of target readers, and explain unique Chinese concepts in a way that readers can easily understand.

Fourth, expand the communication space. David Ferguson pointed out that because party and government documents are often in the form of books, reports, white papers and speeches, China still needs to use various tools and channels to reach target readers. This requires breaking through the political and media filters of the target country, and the target country Chinese politicians and the media will do everything they can to stop China's efforts, so other methods must be found[12]. *The Governance of China III* is sold on multiple online platforms, and the audience has increased, and the dissemination effect is good. Therefore, China's foreign publicity translation should constantly try new ideas and methods, explore the innovative way of integrating and developing new media and translation results, launch Chinese culture to go out, and expand China's international influence.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, *The Governance of China III* has more readers and has attracted wide attention from overseas media. However, in view of the lack of common Western readers' understanding of Chinese culture, the translators should have a clear translation purpose, and flexibly use translation methods such as literal translation, liberal translation, imitation, and recreation to

translate allusions that contain profound culture. Huang Youyi [12] proposed the “three principles of closeness”-“close to the reality of China's development, close to the needs of foreign audiences for Chinese information, and close to the thinking habits of foreign audiences.” *The Governance of China III* allusions Translation is quite enlightening to the translation of contemporary publicity in China. The article summarizes the following four points: possessing cultural confidence, clarifying the purpose of translation, caring for readers' cognition and expanding the communication space. It is hoped that more translators will pay attention to the translation of allusions in publicity texts, so as to better spread Chinese culture and build China's image.

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