

Research on English Translation Strategies of Chinese-specific Terms in the “2022 Government Work Report” from the Perspective of International Communication

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Abstract

With the acceleration of globalization, the connections between China and the world are becoming increasingly close. It becomes increasingly important to tell China's story well, and the government work report plays a crucial role in shaping China's international image. This paper analyzes examples of translating Chinese-specific terms from the 2022 government work report into English, discussing the application of translation strategies such as literal translation, free translation, addition, and omission in the actual translation process. It also explores how to retain the semantic information and cultural connotations of the original text to the greatest extent possible. The aim is to provide some reference and guidance for future translation work on relevant government documents.

Keywords

English Translation Strategies; Chinese-specific Terms; Government Work Report; International Communication.

1. Introduction

The accuracy and effectiveness of the external communication of the Government Work Report, as a key reflection of China's national policies and development directions, are quite important. Especially, the issue of English version of Chinese-specific terms affects the international community's accurate understanding and evaluation of Chinese policies. Therefore, discussing the English translation strategies of Chinese-specific terms in the “2022 Government Work Report” is not only a necessity for translation studies but also crucial for boosting China's international communication capabilities.

To begin with, this article focuses on the international significance of Chinese discourse in dissemination. Besides, it analyzes the linguistic characteristics and translation key points by summarizing the Chinese-specific terms in the report. Moreover, by integrating translation theory and exploring specific cases, it discusses and summarizes effective translation strategies. It evaluates the applicability and communicative effectiveness of different translation strategies with the aim of enhancing the translation quality of terms and the effectiveness of international communication, which is beneficial to provide reference for the translation of pertinent texts in the future.

Through the study of English translation strategies in the “2022 Government Work Report,” this paper hopes to provide strategic support for the international dissemination of Chinese-specific terms, strengthen the international community's understanding of Chinese policies.

2. International dissemination of Chinese discourse

The government work report serves not only as a crucial platform for domestic policy propaganda and interpretation, but also as an essential window for the international

community and other countries to understand the direction of Chinese policies, economic development, and societal culture through the Chinese discourse it encompasses. As an important summary of the Chinese government's annual work and future plans, the report contains a large number of politically, economically, and culturally significant terms with Chinese characteristics. The accurate translation of these terms into English is of great significance for enhancing China's external communication effectiveness and strengthening the international community's understanding of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Impressions of China among developing countries overseas are generally more favorable than that of developed countries, and the younger demographic shows a higher level of interest in China compared to the older demographic, with these trends becoming increasingly obvious (Sun, 2020). Therefore, the publication and dissemination of the government work report, especially the translation and dissemination of its Chinese-specific terms, are particularly significant.

The experiences in administering China and the distinctive path of socialism with Chinese characteristics are attracting increasing attention (Huang, 2022). The release of the Chinese government work report is not only a report to the domestic population, but also a crucial means to convey China's voice to the world and showcase its image. This report embodies the wisdom and efforts of the Chinese government, reflecting China's achievements and development plans in various aspects. By accurately translating and disseminating the Chinese-specific terms in the government work report to the international community, we can facilitate a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of China worldwide. This not only enhances China's international influence but also promotes international understanding and recognition of China, further advancing exchanges and cooperation between China and the world. Through precise translation and interpretation of the Chinese-specific terms in the government work report into English, we can showcase China's policy concepts, development goals, and cultural values to the world, thereby enhancing China's soft power and international influence.

3. Language Characteristics in the 2022 Government Work Report

The 2022 Chinese Government Work Report presents a comprehensive summary of the nation's policy goals, economic strategies, and social initiatives. By analyzing the language characteristics within the report, one can identify strategic patterns that reflect China's unique approach to governance and communication. These include metaphorical expressions that convey complex ideas, numerical abbreviations that concisely present key data, and expressions rich in Chinese characteristics, involving cultural values as well as governance philosophies. Such linguistic features not only enhance the clarity and persuasiveness of the report but also establish a coherent framework for communicating the government's priorities.

3.1. Metaphorical Expressions

Metaphorical expressions are often widely employed in government reports with the aim of enhancing the imagery and persuasiveness of expression, as well as guiding readers in understanding and accepting policies. To make some complex and obscure political professional terminologies easier to understand, it is necessary to use metaphors of something that people encounter in their daily lives to explain these professional concepts (Zhang, 2021). In the "2022 Government Work Report," the use of various metaphors not only paints vividness to policy statements but also reflects the government's consistent efforts in guiding public opinion and promoting policies.

Examples and Analysis of Metaphors

Example 1: 形象工程——Vanity Projects

The use of the term “vanity projects” suggests that the government may focus more on external image rather than actual needs in infrastructure construction. This metaphorical usage may highlight the government’s efforts in improving people’s livelihoods and enhancing urban appearance, thereby demonstrating the determination and strength of the government.

Example 2: 精准拆弹——Defusing Risks Through Targeted Efforts

The metaphor “defusing risks through targeted efforts” implies that the government is addressing risks in a targeted manner. This usage may emphasize the government’s determination and strength in crisis response and risk management, as well as its high regard for the safety of people’s lives and property.

Example 3: 一刀切——A One-Size-Fits-All Approach

The metaphor “a one-size-fits-all approach” suggests that a uniform approach may not be suitable for all situations. The government’s choice to use this metaphor may serve as a warning to policy makers not to oversimplify complex issues but to adopt flexible policy measures based on different regions and circumstances.

Example 4: 放水养鱼——Nurture Business Growth

The metaphor “nurture business growth” implies that the government is adopting a certain way to promote business growth. This metaphorical usage may convey the government’s positive attitude and measures towards economic policies that are conducive to business development. The use of metaphors in government work reports is not merely a linguistic embellishment but also reflects the government’s attitude and strategy towards policies. The understanding and acceptance of these metaphors can also be influenced by international communication, leading to different effects in various cultural and linguistic contexts. Therefore, in international communication, the selection and use of metaphors need to be more cautious to ensure the accurate transmission and understanding of policies.

3.2. Numerical Abbreviation Expressions

An abbreviation is a simplified form of expression that concisely captures the essence of a concept while preserving its core characteristics (Liang, 2023). In the “Government Work Report of 2022,” numerical expressions are a significant linguistic feature. This is evident not only in the specific portrayal of various economic indicators, data statistics, and fiscal figures but also in some policy terms and concepts unique to China. These numerical expressions often carry important policy implications and national development plans.

Example 1: In the phrase “扎实做好‘六稳’、‘六保’工作”, the expressions “六稳” and “六保” represent typical numerical expressions, denoting stability and security efforts in six aspects. In the English translation, this expression is rendered as “took solid steps to ensure stability on six key fronts and security in six key areas,” accurately conveying the original meaning while preserving the numerical expression.

Example 2: The “十四五规划” is an essential component of China’s economic development plan, with “十四五” being a typical numerical expression representing the fourteenth five-year plan. In English, this expression is directly translated as “the 14th Five-Year Plan,” retaining the numerical expression while clearly conveying the period and nature of the plan.

Example 3: The “九二共识” includes the numerical expression “1992”, representing the consensus reached in that year. In the English translation, “the 1992 Consensus” accurately conveys the time and nature of the consensus.

Numerical expressions play a crucial role in the “Government Work Report of 2022,” not only reflecting the accuracy and rigor of the report but also carrying important policy information and national development plans. In the translation process, preserving these numerical expressions and accurately conveying their meanings is essential. Numerical abbreviations

generalize multiple meanings, making it difficult for foreign readers to directly comprehend their specific content from text alone (Zheng, 2018). These numerical expression methods have a strong communication effect in international communication, enabling outsiders to better understand the policy priorities and development directions of the Chinese government.

3.3. Chinese Characteristics Expressions

Chinese-specific terms refer to annual characteristic expressions that have distinctive Chinese linguistic and cultural features, reflecting the national conditions and policy orientations of China (Tang, 2013). In the “Government Work Report 2022,” it can be observed that there are a series of politically distinctive Chinese terminologies and expressions. These expressions not only represent unique essence of Chinese political culture but also provide a direct reflection of the focal points and policy orientations of the Chinese government's work. Here are some typical Chinese characteristic terms and their corresponding translations in English:

Example 1: “脱贫攻坚战” is a uniquely Chinese expression for poverty alleviation policies, emphasizing the determination and efforts in poverty alleviation work, similar to a military campaign. In English, this expression is translated as “the critical battle against poverty,” preserving the imagery of “battle” from the original while highlighting the importance and urgency of poverty alleviation work.

Example 2: “放管服” refers to a significant initiative by the Chinese government to reform administration, enhance service efficiency, including streamlining administrative approval processes, delegating power, strengthening regulation, and improving services. Its English translation is “streamline administration and delegate power, improve regulation, and upgrade services,” accurately and comprehensively conveying the core content and objectives of the “放管服” policy.

Example 3: “净土保卫战” embodies China's determination and actions in environmental protection, particularly in addressing soil pollution. In English, this expression is translated as “protecting land from pollution” or succinctly as “land pollution-free,” highlighting the environmental protection theme while being easily understood and accepted by the international community.

The translation of these Chinese characteristic terms not only requires accurately conveying the original meaning but also considering the cultural background of the target language and the readers' comprehension habits to achieve effective international communication.

4. Translation Strategies for the 2022 Government Work Report

The linguistic characteristics, cultural background, and policy context of the “Government Work Report of 2022” have been thoroughly discussed, providing a solid foundation for further understanding of the text. Based on this groundwork, this chapter will move on to the specific analysis of translation strategies, particularly focusing on how to translate Chinese-specific terms into English within the context of international communication. This chapter will explore suitable translation strategies for the “Government Work Report of 2022” from various perspectives such as literal translation, free translation, amplification, and omission.

4.1. Literal Translation

Literal translation can better preserve the distinctive features and essence of the original culture, ensuring that the cultural connotations of Chinese-specific terms are not misunderstood or lost. When translating Chinese-specific terms, the purpose of literal translation is to preserve the cultural imagery and specific political meanings of the original text (Sun, 2019). In international communication, accurate conveyance of culture is crucial, and literal translation helps to achieve this goal. For those under the English context, translating the

Chinese-specific terms literally may seem unfamiliar in the first place. However, it is this sense of unfamiliarity that can arouse their curiosity, thereby promoting a deeper understanding and awareness of Chinese policies and guidelines. Literal translation can introduce new vocabulary and expressions to the English culture as well, enriching the English language lexicon and fostering linguistic diversity and communication.

Example: 宏观政策适应跨周期调节需要，保持对经济恢复必要支持力度，同时考虑为今年应对困难挑战预留政策空间。

Translation: Our macro policies facilitated cross-cyclical adjustments and sustained the level of support necessary for economic recovery. We also took into account the need to leave ample policy space for meeting difficulties and challenges this year.

“宏观政策适应跨周期调节需要” has been literally translated as “facilitated cross-cyclical adjustments,” a version commonly seen in discussions of international economic policy. This translation, particularly, effectively connects with those who are professional in this major. “保持对经济恢复必要支持力度” is rendered in English as “sustained the level of support necessary for economic recovery,” accurately conveying the continuity and stability of the policy, directly reflecting the meaning of the original text. This expression emphasizes the government’s commitment to economic recovery in international communication, fostering positive effects among international investors and economic partners in China. “同时考虑为今年应对困难挑战预留政策空间” is translated as “leave ample policy space for meeting difficulties and challenges this year.” The key to this translation lies in “ample policy space,” indicating the flexibility and foresight of the Chinese government in policy formulation. This expression contributes to shaping the image of the Chinese government as a prudent and forward-thinking major power in international communication.

4.2. Free Translation

Free translation, not confined by the literal meaning of the original text but guided by the context and cultural conventions of the target language, its flexibility allows for a more natural expression. Given the significant differences between Chinese and Western cultures, literal translation may lead to misunderstanding or ambiguity. Free translation can better adapt to the cultural background of the target language, ensuring the accurate conveyance of information. The English version of government work reports aims to convey China's policy direction and national development to the international community. Free translation is conducive to handling language conversion, ensuring that important information is accurately and efficiently delivered to foreign cultures.

Example: 要坚持政府过紧日子，严禁铺张浪费，不得违规新建楼堂馆所。

Translation: Management of fiscal receipts and outlays will be tightened up, and wasteful and excessive spending will be prohibited. We will prevent the construction of new government buildings in violation of regulations.

In international cultural communication, literal translation may lead to cultural misunderstandings or inaccurate information transmission. Translating “过紧日子” as “tightened up management” effectively avoids such misunderstandings, conveying the government’s fiscal expenditure norms, rather than potentially implying financial hardship as “living a tight life” might suggest. The translation “prevent the construction of new government buildings in violation of regulations” directly reflects the policy orientation of the original text, “不得违规新建楼堂馆所.” This expression is clearer and more direct in international communication, benefiting the international community’s understanding of the Chinese government’s appropriate management of public resources.

4.3. Amplification

Amplification is beneficial to demonstrate the detail and clarity of the original text. Chinese-specific terms often carry profound cultural connotations and specific social backgrounds. Some of these terms may lead to misunderstandings when translated literally into English. Through amplification, these misunderstandings can be clarified. Amplification presents a better version of the cultural connotations of Chinese-specific terms, facilitating the exchange and understanding between Chinese and Western cultures.

Example: 深入打好污染防治攻坚战。加强固体废物和新污染物治理，推行垃圾分类和减量化、资源化。

Translation: We will work to make solid gains in the battle against pollution. We will step up the treatment of solid waste and new pollutants and implement measures to sort refuse, reduce waste and boost recycling.

An introduction is provided on the efforts of the Chinese government in environmental protection policies in 2022. In this example, the original phrase “深入打好污染防治攻坚战” was translated as “We will work to make solid gains in the battle against pollution,” with the addition of “make solid gains” to emphasize not just “winning the battle against pollution,” but “achieving substantial progress.” This choice helps other countries better understand the intensity and depth of China’s environmental protection policies, adapting to the expression of the target language, fitting the context of international communication.

4.4. Omission

Since some Chinese-specific terms lack direct equivalents in English, adopting an omission strategy is beneficial to avoid comprehension difficulties which come from literal or rigid translations, making the translation more in line with English expression conventions. Using the method of reduction translation can simplify the translation, ensuring its fluency and readability (Chen, 2020). The Government Work Report contains a range of information, omitting redundant information helps highlight the main content and policy directions, enabling the international society to understand the key points of the report more quickly. By omitting redundant and culturally specific information, the translation becomes more natural, improving the acceptability to the international society. The omission strategy helps reduce understanding barriers caused by cultural differences, making Chinese-specific terms more easily understood and accepted in international communication. The government's policy intentions and priorities can be conveyed more clearly through omission, enhancing international understanding and support for Chinese policies.

Example: 强化稳岗扩就业政策落实，扎实做好高校毕业生等重点群体就业工作，推进大众创业万众创新。

Translation: We intensified policies to stabilize and expand employment, took solid measures to ensure employment for key groups like college graduates, and encouraged business startups and innovation.

The Chinese terms “强化” and “扎实” in the original text convey the strength and means of policy implementation, which are translated into “intensified” and “took solid measures” in English. This translation not only preserves the original meaning but also aligns the expression more closely with the directness and emphasis typical in English. Additionally, the term “落实” in the original text is often implied within “intensified” and can therefore be omitted from translation. Such explicit and direct expressions are often more acceptable under the context of international communication. This version omits certain details (such as specific policy measures and implementation methods) and instead emphasizes the goals and outcomes of the policies. This is conducive to quickly grasping the main points and helps the international

community understand the Chinese government's efforts in stabilizing and expanding employment.

5. Conclusion

This paper has focused on the Chinese-specific terms in the "2022 Government Work Report" and explored the translation strategies of these terms from the perspective of international communication. Through detailed analysis of metaphorical expressions, numerical abbreviations, and expressions with Chinese characteristics in the government work report, the profound cultural connotations behind have been revealed. This paper also explored the application of translation strategies such as literal translation, free translation, amplification, and omission in the translation of 2022 government work report. Different translation strategies have their own advantages in different contexts and cultural backgrounds. Selecting the appropriate translation strategy is crucial for accurately conveying the original meaning, maintaining the original style, and promoting communication between Chinese and the international society. This study aims at providing theoretical guidance for the translation of Chinese-specific terms from the perspective of international communication, contributing to the international dissemination of Chinese culture and the enhancement of China's international influence, as well as exploring more precise and vivid translation methods to better convey China's voice.

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