

A Study on C-E Translation of 2019 China's Government Work Report from the Perspective of Eco-translatology

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Abstract: Environment-related topics have been heated with the society transformation. Eco-translatology reflects this shift in translation studies. China's 2019 government work report (GWR) has been a highlight in and out of China this year. This paper aims to analyze C-E translation examples extracted from the report from three most crucial dimensions in Eco-translatology.

1. Introduction

Last several decades have witnessed the ecological transformation of human civilization. As a result, environment protection gradually becomes a priority. Eco-translatology is a reflection of this shift in translation studies [1]. The year of 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of New China, thus the summary of the government work in the previous year and a blueprint for 2019's overall economic development plan and policies have drawn great attention. This paper, on the basis of eco-translatology, analyzes translation examples extracted from 2019 government work report in details from three most crucial dimensions in the theory-language, culture and communication.

2. The Theory of Eco-Translatology

Domestically, a systematic research in Eco-translatology started in 2004 when Hu Gengshen published his book *An Approach to Translation as Adaptation and Selection*, taking an important step in the field. In his book, Hu introduced the "adaptation/selection" doctrine of Darwin's biological evolution theory into translation studies, and he defined translation as a "multi-dimensional eco-environment", a "world" presented by the source text, source language and target language", "an interconnected integration" of language, communication, culture, society and authors, readers, and clients [2]. He pointed that translation process could be understood as adaptation/selection led by the translator in the translational eco-environment [3]. In adaptation/selection, the interpreter plays a subjective role in language conversion and follows the mechanism of "survival of the fittest". The translator's main responsibility is to maintain the ecological beauty of the "balance" and "harmony" between the source and target text in language, culture and communication.

3. The Introduction of 2019 GWR

The 2019 GWR was delivered at Second Session of the 13th National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China on March 5, 2019 by China's Premier of the State Council, Li Keqiang. It firstly reviewed government work in 2018 and then illustrated overall requirements and policy directions of economic and social development in 2019 and finally discussed tasks for 2019.

4. Translation Analysis from Three Dimensions

In Eco-translatology, translation can only be accomplished by the translator's multi-dimensional adaptation/selection, among which language, culture and communication are the most crucial. A logical interconnectivity can be found between them, that is, "translation is the transformation of

language, language is the carrier of culture, and culture is the accumulation of communication.” [2]. They interrelate and interweave with each other in translating. Following examples in this paper are extracted from 219 RWG released by Xinhua News Agency [4].

4.1 Language Dimension

Hu Gengshen mentioned in his book *Eco-Translatology Construction & Interpretation* that “the adaptations or selections in linguistic dimension refer to the translator’s emphasis on language in the translation process, including diction, structure and form of language.” [5] The translator should deeply understand expression habits and formulas of the original language to adapt to its ecological environment in the source text.

4.1.1 Abbreviation with numbers.

Abbreviation with numbers are commonly seen in the government work report in that they summarize complicated meanings in compact phrases, such as “三大攻坚战” “两项补贴” “两个维护” “双随机,一公开” “五位一体” “三去一降一补” and so on. In order to adapt to the ecological environment of the original language, the translator can translate abbreviation with numbers into “number + meaning”. For complicated information or that is unfamiliar with foreigners, numbers can be omitted while the related content is expressed to bridge the gap of understanding.

Example: 重点解决实现“两不愁三保障”面临的突出问题,加大“三区三州”等深度贫困地区脱贫攻坚力度,加强基础设施建设,落实对特殊贫困人口的保障措施。

Translation: We will give priority to our work of seeing that the basic living needs of rural poor populations are met and that such people have access to compulsory education, basic medical services, and housing. We will intensify poverty alleviation in areas of extreme poverty like the “three regions and three prefectures, (The “three regions” refers to Tibet, four prefectures of southern Xinjiang-Hotan, Aksu, Kashi, and the Kirgiz Autonomous Prefecture of Kizilsu, and the areas of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, and Qinghai provinces with large Tibetan populations; the “three prefectures” are Liangshan in Sichuan, Nujiang in Yunnan, and Linxia in Gansu.)” strengthen infrastructure development in such areas, and ensure social safeguards for the most vulnerable groups.

Literally, the expression “两不愁三保障” means “two sufficiencies and three guarantees” (sufficiencies for food and cloth, and guarantees for compulsory education, basic medical care and housing). In 2011, the outline of poverty alleviation and development in China’s rural areas (2011-2020) was published in which it discussed overall objectives of poverty alleviation, “by 2020, the goal of poverty alleviation should be realized, and the compulsory education, basic medical care and housing should be guaranteed.” [6] The translator reorganizes the information of “两不愁” into meeting the basic living needs of rural poor populations and eliminate numbers to emphasize the priorities of poverty alleviation. However, the phrase “三区三州” is literally translated with annotation in brackets, in which numbers remain. As an important concept of areas in poverty alleviation, “三区三州” contains large geographical information in details, the “number + meaning” translation impresses the readers first and later explains what the “three regions” and “three prefectures” represent. This makes it easier for readers to remember, and next time when “三区三州” is mentioned in the GWR, the annotation may be omitted.

4.1.2 Parallelism.

In grammar, parallelism is a balance of two or more similar words, phrases or clauses. It is “one of the most basic and valuable stylistic devices in English.” [7]

Example: 用公正监管管出公平,管出效率,管出活力。

Translation: We will use impartial regulation to ensure a fair, efficient, and dynamic market.

In parallelism, ideas are listed in a neat and consistent form, and the momentum created by this balanced arrangement between the components is quite forceful and strengthens the subject, making policies the government emphasized more appealing. Parallelism also helps to express ideas clearly

and briefly. In the source text, “管出” repeated for three times, but in the target language, the “verb + noun” structure in Chinese is transformed into “verb + adjective + noun” structure in English. The verb “管” is rendered into “ensure” and the three nouns “公平” “效率” “活力” are parallelized as three adjectives “fair”, “efficient”, and “dynamic”, achieving a bight rhythm of music. Meanwhile, although the grammatical forms of the components of the parallel structure must be the same or similar, their importance may vary. A “dynamic market” is the ultimate goal, only when the market is fair and efficient, the goal can be achieved.

4.1.3 Rhetoric

In the website of literary devices, it defines rhetoric as “a technique of using language effectively and persuasively in spoken or written form. It is an art of discourse, which studies and employs various methods to convince, influence, or please an audience.” [8]

Example: 这次减税,着眼“放水养鱼”,增强发展后劲并考虑财政可持续,是减轻企业负担,激发市场活力的重大举措,是完善税制,优化收入分配格局的重要改革,是宏观政策支持稳增长,保就业,调结构的重大抉择。

Translation: Our moves to cut tax on this occasion aim at an accommodative effect to strengthen the basis for sustained growth while also considering the need to ensure fiscal sustainability; are a major measure to lighten the burden on businesses and boost market dynamism; are an important reform to improve the tax system and achieve better income distribution; and are the result of a major decision taken at the macro policy level in support of the efforts to ensure stable economic growth, employment, and structural adjustments.

The Chinese idiom “放水养鱼” means to get fish, it is necessary to raise it first and create a favorable environment for its growth and reproduction, as a result, people reap long-term benefits. It is the opposite of an idiom in China “fishing out by pumping off the water”. It warns people to think in big picture and in long-term, avoid seeking quick success and instant benefits. In the 2019 GWR, tax deduction policies can lighten burden on business to secure a dynamic market. The “fish” here metaphors the market and “water” the development climate. The interpreter eliminates the two images of “water” and “fish” but uses the adjective “accommodative” referring to create a relaxed environment in cutting tax for target readers to understand.

4.2 Culture Dimension

“Translation, in fact, is the communication between two cultures.” It is true that “words can make sense when they are placed in a specific cultural background” [9]. Because of cultural differences between the source and target language, the translator has to pay attention to cultural conversion of the source text to adapt to the entire culture to which the language belongs [10]. Zhou Li holds that translation is a cross-language and cross-cultural communication activity, therefore, translators must maintain a clear cultural awareness, overcome obstacles caused by cultural differences, and maximize the protection of the ecological balance between the source and target language for communication [11].

4.2.1 Culture-loaded expression

Particularly, the political differences between China and the West often lead to translation difficulties. It is necessary to translate the source language into the target language accurately and objectively, while avoiding cultural, religious and political misunderstandings or even disputes between countries [11]. 2019 GWR is based on current China’s national realities and policies, including many political and culture-loaded words with Chinese characteristics, such as “亲清新型政商关系” “携号转网” “控辍保学” “摘帽县” “政简易从” “好差评”制度”定点医院” “煤改气” “煤改电” “河长制” “证照分离” “平安中国” “三档并两档” and so on.

Example: 政府要带头讲诚信守契约,决不能“新官不理旧账”,对拖欠企业的款项年底前要清偿一半以上,决不允许增加新的拖欠。

Translation: The government must set an example in acting in good faith and honoring contracts;

new officials must not be allowed to get away with ignoring obligations undertaken by predecessors. Over 50 percent of overdue payments to enterprises must be made by the end of the year, and new arrears are impermissible.

In this Chinese saying, the phrase “旧账” in this sentence is a pun as it refers to both debts the government owes to companies and troubles or old policies the previous counterpart at the post face or make. The translator truly understands it. To adapt the ecological environment and introduce this policy, the interpreter does not translate “旧账” into “old debts”. Instead, the word “obligations” is used. The word “Obligations” in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English means “a moral or legal duty to do something” [12], indicating that the law requires that new officials should maintain the continuity and stability of policies made by predecessor. Consequently, it echoes “acting in good faith and honoring contracts” at the beginning of this sentence, making the whole sentence coherent and clarified.

4.2.2 Historic allusions

Over the years, the government work reports have quoted sayings, poems and historic stories from classics, reflecting China’s profound cultural connotations and rich cultural heritage. When translating, translators should thoroughly understand the cultural background hidden behind allusions, make adaptive choices, and maintain the cultural and ecological balance of the target language in a natural and fluent way.

Example: 中国改革发展的巨大成就,是广大干部群众筚路蓝缕,千辛万苦干出来的。

Translation: The tremendous achievements of China’s reform and development to date have been made by our officials and people through perseverance and hard work.

The expression “筚路蓝缕” is quoted from the chapter of the Twelfth Year of Xuangong in a commentary book called *The Tso Chuan: The Spring and Autumn Annals* by Zuo Qiuming. It means wearing ragged clothes and driving a firewood carriage to break a new path, describing hardships pioneers face [13]. Thanks to arduous efforts of industrious Chinese officials and people, China’s reform and development has made great achievements. The translator removed the unnecessary image of “ragged clothes” and “firewood carriage” in case readers might be misled.

4.3 Communicative dimension

Communicative dimension is another focus apart from language and culture in translating. The translator should ensure communicative intention in the original system is fully embodied in the target system. Besides, the communicative intention of linguistic/cultural form and linguistic/cultural connotations are passed on to the readers [2]. Globalization makes political information exchange quite critical.

Example: 当今世界面临百年未有之大变局.我们将坚定不移走和平发展道路,奉行互利共赢的开放战略,坚定维护多边主义和以联合国为核心的国际体系.积极参与全球治理体系的改革完善,坚定维护开放型世界经济,推动构建人类命运共同体.加强与主要大国沟通对话与协调合作,深化同周边国家关系,拓展与发展中国家互利合作.积极为妥善应对全球性挑战和解决地区热点问题提供更多中国建设性方案.中国愿与各国携手合作,同舟共济,为促进世界持久和平与共同发展作出新的贡献.

Translation: The world today faces profound changes of a kind unseen in a century. China will remain on the path of peaceful development, pursue mutually beneficial opening up, and resolutely uphold multilateralism and the international system built around the United Nations. We will participate actively in reforming and improving the global governance system and firmly uphold an open world economy to build a human community with a shared future. We will strengthen communication, dialogue, coordination, and cooperation with other major countries. We will deepen relations with our neighbors and expand mutually beneficial cooperation with other developing countries. We will actively offer constructive Chinese approaches for responding appropriately to global challenges and addressing flashpoints in some regions. China stands ready to work together with all other countries to make new contributions in promoting enduring world peace and shared

prosperity.

GWR, as an important part of political text for international communication, should tell Chinese stories and spread the Chinese voice on the international stage. China's president Xi Jinping once emphasized that "China's forty-year reform and opening up tells us that China's development cannot be achieved without the world, and the world also needs China for its development" [14]. This paragraph pictures China's image of a responsible country in the climate of profound changes, including its attitude to world development, relationship with other countries, future goals and determination as well as China's role on the world stage. All of these respond to foreign concerns. The first occurrence of "we" in this paragraph is rendered as "China", which highlights the image of China. Personal pronoun "we" is amplified later to bring China closer to other countries in the world for their understanding and acceptance. Also many forceful phrases or adverbs and verbs are used in the source text to indicate China's attitudes, such as "坚定不移", "坚定维护", "积极参与", "推动构建", "加强", "深化" and "愿" "为...作出" and so on. These words are translated into "remain on the path of" "resolutely uphold" "participate actively in" "firmly uphold" "strengthen" "deepen" "actively offer...for" "stand ready to" "make contributions in..." respectively. These expressions prove China's peaceful rise, counterattack against the rumors of the "China threat theory."

5. Conclusion

With analysis of examples from three most crucial dimensions in Eco-translatology, the paper reassures that the translator should understand source and target text in these three dimensions to adapt to eco-environment of the source text and select the fittest "translation" for survival. Meanwhile, although the translator is the subjective role in translation process in Eco-translatology, translator should also respect interests of other participants in the "interconnected integration" to co-exist.

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