

The Construction of the Image of Contemporary China in the Translated Texts of News from the Perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

In the context of globalization, the construction and dissemination of national image has become an important part of international exchanges. As an important channel of cross-cultural communication, the translation of news has a crucial impact on shaping and disseminating the national image. Based on the theoretical framework of Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis and Halliday's systemic-functional grammar, this paper makes an in-depth analysis of the translation of news documents in the bilingual section of China Daily's official website, in order to explore whether China Daily embodies the application of transitivity system in the translation process, and how to convey China's position and achievements through transitivity system, aiming to reveal the construction mode and effect of contemporary China's image in foreign communication. This paper reveals the important role of news translation in shaping and spreading the image of contemporary China, and provides new ideas for foreign news translation.

KEYWORDS

Critical Discourse Analysis; National Image; Translated Texts of News; Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar; *China Daily*.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the construction and dissemination of national image has become the focus of attention of governments and the international community. With the deepening of globalization, China, a country with a history of five thousand years of civilization, is also facing the challenge of how to effectively show its true face to the world and convey its core values and development concepts while developing rapidly. The existing research on China's image is based on his image of China as the research object, and rarely studies the self-shaping of China's image (Hu Kaibao, Li Xin, 2017).

As an important window for China's external communication, China Daily conveys China's voice and image to the international community in the field of international communication. China Daily not only timely reports the latest developments in China, but also deeply interprets China's policy measures, social changes and cultural heritage. The quality of its news literature translation is directly related to the international audience's perception and evaluation of China, and has important theoretical value and practical significance for shaping and spreading the image of contemporary China. No translation activity can get rid of the influence of specific social ideology or translator's personal ideological factors (Hu Kaibao, Meng Lingzi, 2017). Correspondingly, the translation of news literature is not a simple language conversion, but a complex process involving cultural, social and other ideological factors. In this process, the translator not only needs to consider the accuracy

and fluency of the language, but also needs to pay attention to the context, social structure and power relations behind the text.

Based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis and Halliday's systemic-functional grammar, this paper will make an in-depth analysis of the translation of news documents in the bilingual section of China Daily's official website. By exploring the linguistic features, contextual factors, social structure and power relations of the translated text, this paper aims to reveal whether China Daily embodies the application of transitivity system in the translation process, and how to convey China's position and achievements through this system. It can also reveal the way and effect of the construction of contemporary Chinese image in foreign communication. This paper will also analyze the important role of news translation in shaping and disseminating the image of contemporary China, and explore the influencing factors, in order to provide useful reference for improving the effect of China's external communication and building a more positive national image.

Through the in-depth study of the translation of China Daily news literature, the research in this paper will also help to promote the development and innovation of translation studies and provide new perspectives and methods for translation studies.

2. ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXT THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In 1979, Fowler put forward the concept of "Critical Linguistics", which marks the deep reflection of human beings on the social function of language. In 1989, the term "Critical Discourse Analysis" was formally introduced into "Language and Power" written by Fairclough, which laid the foundation for research in this field. Compared with Critical Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis pays more attention to specific social problems and explores the role of language in them (Xin Bin, Gao Xiaoli, 2013). Since then, the theoretical system and application scope of Critical Discourse Analysis have been continuously expanded, and it has shown significant interdisciplinary value in the research of political science, sociology, literature, communication and ethnology. However, there are few translation studies from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, and it is not sufficient to see China's discourse power in the monolingual context (non-national or foreign perspective). It is also necessary to do bilingual and above context research on the situation of China's external image-building, especially official bilingual news.

Critical Discourse Analysis aims to analyze the linguistic features of discourse and the social and historical context of its generation, dissemination and acceptance, so as to reveal the ideological significance of discourse and clarify the subtle and complex relationship between language, power and ideology (Hu Kaibao, Meng Lingzi, 2017). On the basis of analyzing the characteristics of the text, the context, social structure and power relationship behind the text are analyzed.

Fairclough has proposed three levels of critical discourse analysis : "describe" the formal structure of discourse; the relationship between "interpretation" discourse and the process of discourse practice; the relationship between the process of "explain" discourse practice and its social context has not been put forward, but an effective methodology for analyzing discourse has not been put forward. In 2005, Professor Xin Bin mentioned in his book *Critical Linguistics : Theory and Application* that Systemic Functional Linguistics is the main theoretical basis and method source of Critical Discourse Analysis. This paper will use the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology derived from Halliday's systemic functional grammar metafunction : classification, modality, transformation and transitivity framework for discourse analysis.

3. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ORIGINAL TEXT AND THE TRANSLATED TEXT OF NEWS

3.1. Transitivity System

Transitivity system refers to a grammar aspect for describing the whole clause. The expression of language in the transitivity system is subdivided into six processes, mostly in the form of small sentences: material process, mental process, relational process, verbal process, behavioral process and existential process. Each process has its own distinct structural dimension to produce particular areas of experience.

3.1.1. The Material Process

The material process focuses on physical actions and phenomena in the world, involving an actor (the performer of the action) and a goal (the recipient of the action).

Example 1:

The origin text: 得益于强有力的政策刺激和市场需求的持续复苏，4月份我国主要工业企业的利润由降转增，标志着我国经济进一步企稳向好。

Version: Profits at China's major industrial companies **returned to growth** in April amid strong policy stimulus and a continued recovery in market demand, adding signs that the world's second-largest economy is on a firmer footing.

“由降转增” and “returned to growth” all belong to the material process, which describes the transformation of industrial enterprises' profits from a declining state to a growing state. The translation of “returned to growth” accurately conveys this material process and highlights the positive changes in the economy. The translator does not literally translated “由降转增” into “turn dropping into increasing” since the fundamental meaning of this sentence is that the profits increase before April although not significantly but in a sound growth. In other words, the profits increase through April is more significant. While retaining this material process, the translation emphasizes the completion of the action and the realization of the result by selecting the tense and voice of the verb (such as using the present perfect tense). In Example 1, the past tense of the verb is used to show that the economy has grown and the result is positive. The use of the word “returned” also carries a meaning of “rebound” or “recovery”, which can inspire confidence in the future of the economy for Chinese people. “Returned to growth” highlights the positive side of Chinese economic recovery and growth, and can strengthen the image of China's economy abroad.

In the process of external communication, the key to building the image of contemporary China lies in conveying a positive, open and responsible image of a great power. The use of the expression “returned to growth” can better demonstrate the resilience and resilience of China 's economy in the face of challenges, and help to build a more positive national image. Not only does it conveys the fact that China's economy has stabilized, but also implies the Chinese government's position and achievements in promoting economic recovery and development through policy stimulation and market demand recovery.

In the process of translation, the cultural background and reading habits of the target audience are fully taken into account. By adjusting the language style and expression, the translation is closer to the cognition of the target audience, thus improving the acceptance and dissemination of information. This adaptability of cross-cultural communication helps to reduce misunderstandings and prejudices and promote the international community's understanding and recognition of China.

3.1.2. The Verbal Process

The verbal process concerns the exchange of information through speech or writing, encompassing a sayer (the source of the information), a reporting verb, and a target (the recipient of the information).

Example 2:

Original text: 分析人士**指出**，尽管最新指标显示出经济企稳的迹象，但是中国各行业的经济复苏不均衡，需要政府推出更多刺激经济的财政、货币和调控政策。

Version: While the latest indicators point to the stabilization of the economy, China's economic activity was likely mixed with an uneven recovery across sectors, underscoring the need for further stimulus measures in fiscal, monetary and regulatory policies, analysts **said**.

Example 3:

Original text: 分析人士**称**，政府应该加快地方政府专项债券的发行，加速推进财政支持的重大项目，进一步降低银行存款准备金率和利率，并推出更多房地产宽松政策。

Version: They **said** it is advisable for authorities to speed up the issuance of local government special bonds, accelerate the implementation of key projects funded by fiscal spending, further cut the banks' reserve requirement ratio and interest rates, and introduce more property easing policies.

Example 4:

Original text: 中国光大银行研究员周茂华**表示**，4月工业盈利同比改善，主要体现了市场需求的复苏、宏观政策支持加大及去年低基数的影响。

Version: Zhou Maohua, a researcher at China Everbright Bank, **said** the industrial profits improved in April with the gradual recovery in market demand and macroeconomic policy measures taking effect gradually, and given the low comparison base in the previous year.

Example 5:

Original text: 熊园**预计**，接下来将会有进一步的政策措施来提振国内需求，包括加快发行地方政府专项债券，进一步降低存款准备金率和利率，以及在一线城市实施更多的房地产宽松政策。

Version: Xiong **said** he expects to see further policy measures to boost domestic demand, including speeding up the issuance of local government special bonds, further RRR and interest rate reductions, and more property easing policies in first-tier cities.

The Sayers of above examples are “分析人士”，“周茂华”，“熊园”，and there are no clear receiver or goals in all above examples, because this sentence is a statement, not an instruction or request for a specific audience. Also, this English translation retains the speech process structure of the original text, and the speaker (Analysts, Zhou Maohua, Xiong) conveys information about the state of China's economy (this signifies that China's economy is moving further towards stability and prosperity) through speech acts (said). Consistent with the original text, there is no clear addressee or goal here.

As a medium of social information transmission, news is inevitably influenced by ideology and power relations. The whole discourse conveys the government's positive attitude and confidence in economic development by reporting on the recovery of industrial enterprises' profits and the resilience of China's economy. News translation is not only a process of language transformation, but also a process of conveying positions and opinions. In order to ensure that the positions and opinions in the original text are accurately conveyed in the translation and avoid the insertion of personal subjective opinions, the translator translates the words such as “指出”、“称”、“显示”、“说” and “预测” into “said”, but not varied in “pointed out” “displayed” and “predicted”. Although “指出”、“称”、“显示”、“说” and “预测” express different speech acts, their main function in news reports is to convey information. Translation into “said” helps to maintain the function of information transmission, and simplifies the translation and makes it more fluent. Maintain the consistency of news reports and avoid introducing too many changes in the translation process, so as to ensure the clear transmission of China's position and achievements. This consistency can enhance the authority

and credibility of information, and further highlight China's achievements and positions in economy and policy.

In the process of translation, the translator tries to maintain the form of the speech process clause in the original text and ensure the clear transmission of information. At the same time, it also reflects the transmission of this ideology. By choosing appropriate vocabulary and expression, the translator strengthens the positive image and position in the original text.

3.2. Modality System

Halliday's (1999: 526) observation underscores the significant role of modality in enabling speakers to inject their perspectives into discourse. Drawing from the theory of interpersonal function, modal auxiliaries can be categorized into three distinct degrees of strength: high, median, and low. Low-intensity modal verbs adopt a more nuanced and subtle tone, often conveying suggestions and aspirations. Conversely, high-intensity modal verbs tend to exhibit a more assertive stance, reflecting the speaker's authority and dominance. Median modal verbs strike a balance between these two extremes, offering a more palatable linguistic alternative that resonates with the readers or audiences.

Example 6:

Original text: 分析人士称，政府**应该**加快地方政府专项债券的发行，加速推进财政支持的重大项目，进一步降低银行存款准备金率和利率，并推出更多房地产宽松政策。

Version: They said **it is advisable for** authorities to speed up the issuance of local government special bonds, accelerate the implementation of key projects funded by fiscal spending, further cut the banks' reserve requirement ratio and interest rates, and introduce more property easing policies.

From the perspective of target language readers, in Chinese, “应该” usually means a suggestion or advice. When translated into English, although “should” can convey the basic meaning of “应该”, it often gives a more direct and tough impression. And “it is advisable for...” is more euphemistic, more in line with the tone of advice or advice, more acceptable.

China is a socialist country. It implements the people's democratic dictatorship system led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants, and implements the people's congress system. Under such a political system, government decision-making often emphasizes democracy, science and people. From the perspective of cross-cultural communication, China focuses on showing its position and achievements in a soft and gentle way to win the understanding and support of the international community. It is committed to building a discourse system with Chinese characteristics, Chinese style and Chinese style. The use of “it is advisable...” rather than “should” can better reflect the government's prudence, scientificity and respect for public opinion in the decision-making process. It is more in line with the characteristics of China's state system and regime, and helps to establish a responsible and responsible image of a great power in the international community. It is the concrete embodiment of this communication strategy. It can make China's policy recommendations more easily accepted and understood by the international community, and help to enhance China's international influence and discourse power.

3.3. Classification System

Classification system is an important means to reflect the function of language concept, and it is also the most basic cognitive way of human beings. In the process of understanding the external world, people classify and integrate it and give order to the external world. (Li Qingming, Wu Hua, 2019) is mainly reflected in the use of vocabulary in discourse :

Example 7:

Original text: 4月份我国主要工业企业的利润由降转增，标志着我国经济进一步企稳向好。

Version: Profits at China's major industrial companies returned to growth in April amid strong policy stimulus and a continued recovery in market demand, adding signs that the world's second-largest economy is on a firmer footing.

In the process of translation, the precise selection of specific words can effectively convey China's position. The direct translation of “我国” into “China” is literally equivalent translation, but in Example 7, the translator constructs the image of contemporary China through specific and quantitative description (such as “the world's second largest economy”), which helps to enhance China's awareness and recognition in the international community. This expression is more convincing than the simple “China”, because it provides specific and measurable information, describes China's economic status more specifically, and uses the classification label of “the world's second-largest economy”. This classification helps international readers to understand China's economic scale and status more intuitively. This expression not only highlights China's economic achievements, but also implicitly expresses China's position as an important participant in the global economy. It also reflects the trend of contemporary China's emphasis on data and facts, objectivity and authority in its external communication. Through specific economic data and status description, China's economic strength and development achievements can be more effectively conveyed.

3.4. Transformation System

Transitivity system refers to a grammar aspect for describing the whole clause. The expression of language in the transitivity system is subdivided into six processes, mostly in the form of small sentences: material process, mental process, relational process, verbal process, behavioral process and existential process. Each process has its own distinct structural dimension to produce particular areas of experience.

Under the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the transformation system refers to the process of transforming the language structure and meaning expression in the original text to adapt to the new context or highlight a certain ideology when translating or analyzing the text.

3.4.1. The Change of Process and Participants' Position

When narrating the same event, how to influence the reader's understanding and attitude towards the event by changing the process of narration (such as active and passive) or the position of participants (such as subject and object).

Example 8:

The original text:周茂华说：“从行业看，高技术、装备制造业保持景气，盈利保持较快增长；食品、纺织、家具到化纤、化学原料等行业利润出现改善态势，反映国内终端市场需求回暖逐步向中上游传导等。”

Version: “A breakdown of the official data showed that the high-tech and equipment manufacturing sectors reported higher gains, while many other sectors including food, textiles, furniture and chemical materials saw improvements in their profits,” Zhou said. “That points to a gradual market demand recovery in midstream to upstream sectors.”

From the perspective of Xin Bin's translation system analysis, the choice in the translation process needs to consider the intention of the original text, the context, the expression habits of the target language and the reader's acceptance. In this example, the original expression “从行业看” is a relatively subjective statement, because it is a general analysis and interpretation of the situation of multiple industries from the observer's perspective. The translator chooses the expression “A breakdown of the official data show that”, which directly points to the detailed analysis of official data. This expression is more objective and avoids the possibility of subjective interpretation by western media. The focus of the original text is to show the profitability and market trends of different industries through industry data. The use of “A break down of the official data” can more directly

point to these data and guide readers to pay attention to these information. It specifically explains the data sources and analysis methods, so that readers can more clearly understand the content of the following, ensure the official nature of the data sources, implicit data analysis and industry classification. The rigor of the statements derived from the classification makes it easier for foreign readers to accept and understand China's industry development trends. Although “从行业看” expresses the meaning from the perspective of industry, the focus is not clear enough to fully demonstrate the authority of China's official data and the depth of analysis.

By emphasizing “official data” and “break down”, the translation highlights the Chinese government's emphasis on industry data and the professionalism of analysis, reflects the ability and achievements of data analysis and industry trend judgment, and then conveys China's positive position and remarkable achievements in promoting economic development and industrial upgrading. It is helpful to construct the image of contemporary China as a modern country that attaches importance to data, scientific analysis and decision-making, which is of great significance to enhance China's international influence and discourse power.

3.4.2. Specific Data and Concept Transformation

Example 9:

Original text: “国家统计局5月27日发布的数据显示，4月份，我国规模以上工业企业（年主营业务收入在2000万元以上的工业企业）利润由3月份同比下降3.5%转为增长4.0%”

Version: “Data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed on Monday that industrial enterprises with annual revenue of at least 20 million yuan (\$2.8 million) saw their total profits surge 4 percent year-on-year in April, after a 3.5 percent decline in March.”

First of all, the translator conducted a numerical equivalence conversion, and directly converted “2000万元” into “20 million yuan”. This conversion ensures the accuracy of the information and does not lose or change the data of the original text due to translation. Secondly, because “万元” is a unique monetary unit in Chinese, considering that the target readers may not be familiar with the specific value of Chinese monetary units “元” and “万元”, it may not be intuitive for non-Chinese readers. Therefore, the translator further converts it into the internationally accepted monetary unit “美元”, that is, “(\$2.8 million)”, making the data more readable. This conversion helps to eliminate cultural barriers, taking into account the reading habits and monetary cognition of international readers, so that international readers can more intuitively understand the size of this amount, making this data more internationally versatile, and contributing to the effective dissemination of the Chinese discourse system on the international stage. By accurately and clearly presenting the profit growth data of industrial enterprises above designated size in China, it shows the vitality and resilience of China's economy and conveys a positive signal of China's economic development. This not only helps to enhance the international community's confidence in China's economy, but also helps to shape China's image as a responsible power. Through the display of specific data, the international community can more intuitively feel the achievements and contributions of China's economic development, so as to enhance the understanding and recognition of China's economic policy and development path.

In the process of translation, the translator also considers the contextual factors. In foreign reports, the size of the amount is often of great significance, because it can reflect the scale and speed of economic activity. By converting the amount into dollars, the translator not only provides numerical information, but also emphasizes the importance of this growth in the international context. The conversion here is also reflected in the effect. Different vocabulary choices produce different effects. In this example, “增长” is translated into “surge” rather than the ordinary word “increase”. By using the word “surge” to translate “增长”, the translator not only conveys the fact of growth, but also emphasizes the magnitude and speed of growth. This translation method helps to enhance the

attractiveness and persuasiveness of the report and make international readers have a deeper impression on the profit growth of Chinese industrial enterprises.

The translators of China Daily have the professionalism and international vision of the international media. Through accurate data conversion and international expression, they play an important role in conveying China's voice and building China's image. This not only helps to enhance China's influence and discourse power in the international community, but also helps to promote economic and cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and foreign countries.

3.4.3. Voice and Active-passive Conversion

Nominalization occurs frequently in the process of active-passive conversion between Chinese and English, which is determined by the different structural forms of Chinese and English. Nominalization is the process of transforming verbs or adjectives into nouns. This transformation helps to hide the agent of the action, blur the concept of time, make the sentence structure more compact, and may enhance the objectivity and authority of the text. In news translation, nominalization helps to construct a seemingly neutral narrative, but it may actually hide a specific ideology.

Example 10:

The original text: 分析人士指出，尽管最新指标显示出经济企稳的迹象，但是中国各行业的经济复苏不均衡，需要政府推出更多刺激经济的财政、货币和调控政策。

Version: While the latest indicators point to the stabilization of the economy, China's economic activity was likely mixed with an uneven recovery across sectors, underscoring the need for further stimulus measures in fiscal, monetary and regulatory policies, analysts said.

In the original text “需要政府推出更多刺激经济的财政、货币和调控政策”，“推出政策” is a verb phrase, which emphasizes the process of the government's active action. However, in the translated version, “for measures” is a noun phrase, in which “measures” as a noun replaces the verb phrase “推出政策” in the original text. The use of words that are too direct or politically charged may lead to unnecessary controversy or misunderstanding. This nominalization makes the sentence structure more compact and hides the executor of the action (namely the government), thus enhancing the objectivity and authority of the text and avoiding the direct emphasis on the role of the government, thus reducing the potential ideological bias. When translating, the translator fully considers the deep structure and ideology of the original text. “government introduces policies” literally translates the verb phrases and subjects of the original text, but it may not fully convey the intention of the government to take active measures in the original text. The “for measures” focuses more on the need for measures, not just the introduction of policies. By using “for measures” instead of “introduce policies”, the translation avoids direct descriptions of political actions, makes sentences more objective and neutral, and helps to build a more positive and responsible government image in external communication.

4. CONCLUSION

This study makes an in-depth analysis of news reports and their English translation in China Daily by using Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis and Halliday's systemic functional grammar. The results show that while retaining the information and stance of the original text, the translation effectively conveys China's economic stance and highlights its economic resilience by flexibly using the frameworks of transitivity system, modality system, classification system and transformation system.

Through the analysis, it is found that due to the particularity of the style of the news, the material process clause and the speech process clause under the transitivity system appear most frequently. The translator will consider maintaining the consistency, authority and clarity of the news report when

choosing words in translation, while ensuring the accurate transmission of information and the objective construction of the image of contemporary China. Under the modality system, the translator has always been committed to choosing soft and mild words to show his position and achievements when translating non-objective suggestions such as expert opinions cited by the translator. The image of a big Oriental country with political clarity, economic development, cultural prosperity, social stability, people's unity and beautiful mountains and rivers has won wide understanding and support from the international community. Under the framework of classification system, the expression of some nouns in the translation of China Daily news reflects the new trend of contemporary China's external communication and accurately conveys China's economic status. In the analysis of news translation, the transformation system emphasizes the importance of changing the language structure and meaning expression of the original text to adapt to the new context or highlight a certain ideology. This conversion is not only reflected in word order, voice, active and passive, but also involves the conversion of specific data and concepts and context.

Through the critical discourse analysis of the translated texts of news literature, this paper reveals its important role and effect in the construction and dissemination of the image of contemporary China. The factors such as vocabulary, grammar selection, context and power relations in the text have jointly shaped the positive image of contemporary China. This study not only provides a useful reference for news translation practice, but also provides a new perspective and idea for the shaping of China's national image in cross-cultural communication.

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