

A Study of Translation Strategies in the *Report on the Work of the Government* from the Perspective of Regimes

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Abstract—With the unprecedented advancement of China's economy, politics, culture and great improvement of national power and international status, China has been playing an increasingly significant role in the international affairs and attracting a great deal of attention from more and more foreigners who have been craving to have a better understanding of the development and the present conditions of China. And the China's annual Report on the Work of the Government also receives tremendous attention because of its concentration on China's latest conditions and future development of society, economy and culture, and the effective way that it provides the outside world to have a better understanding of China's national conditions. Therefore, the translation of the Report on the Work of the Government has a direct and profound influence on the understanding of the target language readers and the international image of China with the considerate extension of China's foreign exchanges and the increasingly important role that it has been playing in the political and economic life all over the world. In this thesis, the author applies the regimes theory into the analysis and study of C-E translation of the Report on the Work of the Government delivered in 2015. The author thinks that the translated text of the Report is on the basis of mutual benefits, i.e, the cooperation rules which can promote the development of cultures in both China and foreign countries, and the translators should not only be loyal to the two cultures, but also mediate mutual cultural cooperation and exchange with the application of translation strategies that are beneficial to the development of this two cultures, so as to enhance the compromise and cooperation in terms of mutual benefits, remove misunderstanding and discrimination that exist in the west to China's society and culture, and further promote China's great-nation image and national status. And the authority and the great influence it has made demonstrate the correctness of the selection of translation strategies with the application of regimes theory.

Keywords—*translation strategy; regimes theory; Report on the Work of the Government*

I. INTRODUCTION

In view of the rapid development in all aspects of China and the significant role that China play in the world, how to enable the foreigners to have a better understanding and

further promote the great-nation image of China in the west becomes an urgent problem. And the Report on the Work of the Government would be one of the answers to this question with the consideration of its high official sensitivity and comprehensive and persuasive aspects of society.

So, what needs to be resolved presently is the problem about how to translate the Chinese version of the Report into a target one. And in this thesis, it could be resolved from the new perspective of the application of regimes theory. And in order to ensure the authority of the translated Report, the translated text in this thesis is translated by the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau. Additionally, the previous researches and studies of the Report mainly concentrate on analyzing its style and translation of words, long and complex sentences, and seldom do they elaborate the motivation and strategies of the translated Report from the perspective of regimes theory.

This thesis will firstly make a brief introduction on the theoretical background--Pym's regimes, and then, it will discuss the source text of the Report on the Work of the Government under the regimes of Chinese and western culture. Besides, it will analyze the translation strategies in the translation of the Report on the Work of the Government from the perspective of regimes, and elaborate the acceptability of the translated text.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND — PYM'S REGIMES

This chapter will give a brief introduction to the definition, characteristics and formulation of Regimes.

A. Definition and Characteristics of Regimes

1) *Definition of regimes*: The definition of regimes was firstly introduced into the study of international politics by John Ruggie in 1975. He defined the regime as a set of mutual expectations, rules and regulations, plans, organizational and financial commitments which have been accepted by a group of states. And it means that different countries can negotiate their benefits on the basis of their shared regimes.

After that, a more collective definition describes the regimes as sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations.

According to the scope of this definition, studies of international regimes have been carried out with respect to rivers, lakes and islands, commodity trade, arms negotiations and peace settlements. As a result, the "norms, principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures" are not related to what happened within any one country (or one of such entities) but to what happened between these entities. In other words, regimes enable actors to agree to negotiate.

Besides, some scholars studies regimes from two different ways. For Puchala and Hopkins, "a regime exists in every substantive issue-area in international relations where there is discernibly patterned behaviour", that is to say, as long as there is structure, there are norms and systems. The transformation of literature could be one such pattern. And the other regimes theorist, Robert Keohane, thinks that the study carried out by Puchala and Hopkins is not distinguishable from international systems, or any standard behavior which was influenced by ruling relations. And he regards regimes as organizational principles developed from rational cooperation between sovereign states.

2) *Characteristics of regimes*: Regimes are not similar to the norms or systems in general. The specific norms of an international regimes belong to a different space, and such space are not restricted to any particular countries; regimes define the identities professionally but not represent the identities originated from cultural traditions or birthright.

According to Pym, Regimes could be applied to the study of translation for several reasons: firstly, as we all know that translation is an important part of the international relations, but theorists have not conceptualize its role within this frame. Secondly, the unequal power relations between translation and cultures has been studied by few theorists, especially those who do researches of post-colonialism, but seldom do they deliberate how can the translators use any power in their hands. And assumptions about the goal of cooperation relations established between different power have been made in the regimes theory. Thirdly, the general notion of norms covers three elements of the regimes, namely "principles, rules and decision-making procedures. Fourthly, the general size of regimes is bigger than norms, and the regimes operate in a way that is similar to that of the systems.

B. Formulation of Regimes in Translation

At the beginning of searching for regimes or norms and regulations that might make up regimes, a conflict or a disagreement is of great importance, which could be represented by a potential disagreement, or at least different opinions. And these possible conflicts will enable us to ensure the negotiation of different parties. In addition, actual negotiation is not needed because of the abstract nature of regimes. But it is common that sometimes there are few debates and people have no choice but to carry out their

work from the basic information about translators and translations.

So in formulating regimes, the first step is to search for the mutually shared principles. And the first element of regimes is the norms which can not only benefit two sides, but also bring them to negotiation. Pym introduced such norms on the basis of the explanation of twelfth-century Toledo. In the course of seeking for conflicts, he discovered that there is a general opposition exists in the translation of Qur'an from Arabic to Latin. Detailedly, the translation of Qur'an was organized by the abbot of Cluny whose aim was to advocate Muslim, which is opposed to science to some extent. As for the translators, whose goal was to propagate aerobic science, have to cooperate with the church on the basis of their common profits since they rely heavily on the payment offered by the church. Therefore, regimes begins from the mutually shared interests. And a more or less coherent hierarchy should be established from the most shared principles to those involve most tension.

The possibility of tracing usual principles to constitute regimes could be suggested as something practical, actually, there exist different translating ways that belongs to a standard intercultural regime. Pym chooses two Spanish translated poems anthologies to study the regime for early twentieth-century anthologies and he concluded that the regimes in translation changed the non-translational regime for new purposes and new participants. Moreover, translators should try to follow the step-by-step transformations of the regimes in order to relate the twelfth century to the fifteenth and the twentieth, but not focusing on any one specific culture. That is to say, the study of regimes about translation ways and histories should be placed in a continuous historical environment, so that people can be sure about how to choose the proper translation ways in different contexts.

III. TRANSLATION OF *REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE GOVERNMENT* AND THE FRAMEWORK OF REGIMES

This chapter will first discuss the source text of the *Report on the Work of the Government* under the regimes of Chinese and western culture. And then it will analyze the translation strategies in the translation of the *Report on the Work of the Government* from the perspective of regimes, and elaborate the acceptability of the translated text. In view of the rapid development in all aspects of China, the translation of the *Report on the Work of the Government* is of great importance to further promote the propaganda of China in the west, thus the translation strategies obeyed both participants of Chinese and west cultural regime.

A. Regimes and the Chinese Version of the Report on the Work of the Government

With the social development and globalization, China's comprehensive national power have been increasingly strengthened, which gives the translation of the Report an important role that play in propagating China's image in the world. On the other side, the regimes, which was defined as "a set of mutual expectations, rules and regulations, plans, organizational and financial commitments, which have been

accepted by a group of states”, was firstly introduced into the study of international politics by John Ruggie in 1975. That is to say, different countries can negotiate their benefits on the basis of their shared regimes.

So, under the context of globalization, the implementation of the translation of the Report with the application of the theory of Regimes will definitely ensure the western and Chinese culture to achieve a balance state in the process of communication and cooperation with the purposes for mutual benefits.

1) *An introduction to the Chinese version of the Report on the Work of the Government and its translations:* The Report is a kind of official document which is delivered annually by the central government and local governments. And it usually includes three parts, namely the review of the government work in last year, major measures to be taken in the work of the government and the major tasks that have been set for the year. The Report on the Work of the Government is drafted by the General Office of the State Council and delivered by the Premier at the National People’s Congress. And people have an access to learn it through internet, TV, books and newspapers.

In view of the English version of the Report, because of its high political sensitivities, great attention should be paid to the accuracy of it so as to avoid misunderstandings. So specific departments, experts or translators are responsible for the translation in order to guarantee the quality of the translated version, such as Translation department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau which we have mentioned above.

2) *Factors Affecting the Translation of the Report on the Work of the Government:* The international background exerted great effect on the translation of the Report. With the implementation of reform and opening up since 1978, China has accomplished much not only in its modernization drive in all aspects, including science and technology, education, culture and health care, but also in further promoting its great-nation image and exerting greater influence to the development of the world. As the significant role that China play in the world, how to enable the foreigners to have a better understanding of China becomes an urgent problem. And the Report would be one of the answers to this question with the consideration of its high official sensitivity and comprehensive and persuasive aspects of society.

B. Regimes and the Translation Strategies in the Translation of Report on the Work of the Government

1) *Source-language-oriented Strategy:* As a typical political text, the Report shows the following three features. First, as a report delivered by the central government which is represented by the Premier, the Report fully reflects the subject consciousness which includes the consciousness of the government, party, country and people. So in the process of translation, special attention should be paid to give

prominence to the position and angle of the subject, ensure its image and benefits and follow its ways and logic of thinking with the consideration of the avoidance of numerous unexpected problems. Second, there are a lot of words with Chinese characteristics can be found in the Report which is closely related to China’s social development and represent specific cultural connotations. Additionally, various long and complex sentences with few connectives exist in the Report, so some cohesive devices are needed in order to make the translation more logical and natural. In mediating Chinese distinctive expressions and western languages, the translation of the Report obeys the principle of being faithful to the original text, that is be loyal to the style and content of the source text. For instance,

Sample 1 “现在，我代表国务院，向大会作政府工作报告，请予审议，并请全国政协各位委员提出意见”

“On behalf of the State Council, I now present to you the report on the work of the government for your deliberation, and I welcome comments on my report from the members of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference”.

Although the author starts with the sentence that “现在，我代表国务院，向大会作政府工作报告”，the report giving is a personal action of the author and an interaction and communication between the premier and the audience rather than a draft reading. So the translated report should highlight the communicative feature between the author and audience, and the use of “welcome” makes all the sentence more lively, which shows the premier is close to civilian. If the word “welcome” is replaced with “for”, the text would be brief and declarative with the lack of communication with and affection to the people.

Sample 2 “更多释放改革红利”

“Reap more benefits from reform”.

As a proper financial term, “红利” is also called as dividend. After the year-end settlement, the board of directors in the joint-stock company would allocate part of the profits as the dividend to the shareholders according to their stocks. But the reform carried out by the government and the Party is not the company or the board of directors. And the people and other organizations have not make investment in any way. Furthermore, the allocation of the dividend should be delivered in cash or stocks, but “改革红利” obviously brings the Chinese people both physical and mental benefits. To sum up, the purpose of the expression “改革红利” is to emphasize the real benefits brought to people, so it should be translated as “benefits” but not “dividend”.

Sample 3 “当前改革已进入攻坚期和深水区，必须紧紧依靠人民群众，以壮士断腕的决心、背水一战的气概，冲破思想观念的束缚，突破利益固化的藩篱”

“China’s reform has entered a critical stage and a deep water zone. We must rely fully on the people in breaking mental shackles and vested interests with great determination”.

The concise and comprehensive expressions “壮士断腕” and “背水一战” are idioms in Chinese culture. But they can't be translated literally with the consideration of the misunderstanding of the subject of the Report. Moreover, if “壮士断腕” is translated as “A hero has his infected arm cut off so he probably lives”, the foreigners may associate it with the presence of bloodiness; and the literal translation of “背水一战” may also enable the foreign readers to connect China with the image of warlike country. So the simplified translation of “壮士断腕” and “背水一战” manifest the dynamic equivalence and skopos theory as well as other translation theories centers on free translation to give high priority to the readers of the target text.

The strategies used in the translation of the Report not only present the people's well-being of China from all aspects, but also encourage western readers to search for relative information, which brought about further researched and studies of Chinese society and culture in the west. Furthermore, such strategy is a combination of mutual benefits of those two distinct cultures.

2) *Target-language-oriented Strategy*: According to the distinctive features of the Report mentioned above, it is undeniable that the word arrangement of the source text is not accord with the westerners' reading and comprehensive habits. In addition, with the consideration of the different grammar structure of Chinese and English, the translation of Chinese Report has to be placed under western language regulations and with westernized characters so as to be well received in the west. For instance, in the process of the translation of the Report, the translation strategies should be chosen in accordance with the specific situations.

Sample 4 “也表明我们抑制通胀、保障民生的决心和信心”

“It also demonstrates our resolve and confidence to keep inflation under control and ensure people's well-being”.

In this sentence, “抑制通胀” can be translated as “control inflation” or “keep inflation under control”. But they have essential difference. The former emphasizes the process and action and is ambiguous about success or not, while the latter simply shows a state or result. But in the source text, the government is the subject of the action, so the translation of the action should give high priority to its practical effectiveness rather than guileful expressions so as to highlight its true purposes. So different expressions reflect different belief and image of the government and also exert different influence to the foreigners.

Sample 5 “把钱花在刀刃上”

“Spend our money where it counts the most”.

Sample 6 “发挥政府投资‘四两拨千斤’的作用”

“by means of well-leveraged government investment”

It is obvious that the sample 5 and sample 6 are translated liberally because the images in Chinese are omitted in English versions. If “刀刃” is literally translated as “knife edge”, foreigners may be confused with this sentence because of cultural difference; if the sentence is translated as “spend our money where it counts the most”, it is easier for readers to understand its implicit meanings. In the sample, the idiom “四两拨千斤” comes from Chinese

traditional shadowboxing and means a significant role that play skillfully with weaker forces. In a word, liberal translation is a better choice for it can not only illustrates the meaning of this idiom, but also enables the reader to better comprehensive Chinese culture without misunderstanding.

3) *The Mediate Strategy*: Under the interactive communication of China and the foreign countries, multiple translation strategies should be adopted in order to propagate Chinese cultures and spirits and exert influence on westerners' moral sense. According to Pym, regime is allowed for various ways of translation. The translation of the Report, a typical political text, reflects the desire of improving the cooperation of two countries with the usage of regimes. In the view of Pym, the results of cooperation and mutual benefits are on the basis of specific situation. In other words, the so-called “good translation” cannot be evaluated by particular standard or regulation, because the improved translation can sometimes be identified not as a real good one. Therefore, any translation be in consistent with every participant of regimes and bringing mutual benefits could be regarded as a good one. In a word, the successful translation of the Report lies in the translators' proficient in the two languages and their deeper comprehending of the Report's meaning.

According to the regimes of western and Chinese cultures and social development, the strategy of the translated Report incorporates both source-language-oriented and target-language-oriented strategies. For instance:

Sample 7 “我国是一个发展中国家，还处于社会主义初级阶段，发展是解决我国所有问题的关键”

“China is still a developing country in the primary stage of socialism, and development remains the key to solving all our country's problem”.

With regards to any country, development cannot always be the key to solving all the problems, so “发展是解决我国所有问题的关键” should not be translated as “development is the key to solving all our country's problems”. As China is a developing country, development would be crucial to solve all China's problems from the past to the present. Therefore, it should be translated as “development remains the key to solving all our country's problem”. In addition, “我国所有的问题” should not be translated as “all the problems in China” which may not only elaborates the inexistence of these problems in China's government or inside our country, but also shows the problems may exist in the foreigners in China. So more attention should be paid to the detailed questions in the process of translation.

Sample 8 “为全面建成小康社会、建成富强民主文明和谐的社会主义现代化国家、实现中华民族伟大复兴的中国梦而努力奋斗”

“Let us endeavor to break new ground and make solid progress, and strive to finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious. With all these efforts, we can

surely realize the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation”.

What is the relationship between the realization of the Chinese Dream (i.e. the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation) possessed by all the Chinese people and the two goals (finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious) mentioned above? It is obvious that the Chinese Dream covers the two goals. And the Chinese Dream can be partially realized after the achievement of these two goals. Therefore, in the translated text, integration is made to the structure of the source text so as to better reveal the logic of this sentence.

C. Regimes and the Acceptability of the Translation of Report on the Work of the Government

In order to further increase the mutual benefits of both Chinese and western cultures under the particular interactive context, the strategies used in the translated Report facilitate the cooperation of two cultures, and most of them are mediate and target-language-oriented.

Additionally, as an official and authoritative text, various strategies are used in the Report to enable the western readers to acquire the deep implication of Chinese culture with less efforts so as to prove that the mode of thinking of western cultural systems are able to be embodied in Chinese cultural system. Moreover, in consideration of Chinese culture's becoming popular in the west and the rapid development of China as well as an increasing number of events in China has received attention all around the world; the translated Report can be evaluated as a successful one under the social circumstance at present.

IV. CONCLUSION

The *Report on the Work of the Government* provides the target language readers with an effective way to better understand China's national conditions. Therefore, the translation of the Report has a direct and profound influence on the understanding of the foreigners and the international image of China. And different from the previous studies and researches of the translation strategies used in the *Report on the Work of the Government*, this thesis mainly discusses the translated Report from the new perspective of the application of regimes theory. It finds that it is because Chinese culture embodies west cultural system's thoughts and value systems, the translation of Report from Chinese to the target language can be conducted with the usage of the regimes theory. Moreover, translators should not only be loyal to the two cultures, but also mediate the cooperation and exchange between them by using proper translation strategies that are beneficial to their development, so as to promote the compromise and cooperation on the basis of mutual benefits, remove misunderstanding and discrimination that exist in the west to China's society and culture, and enable the foreign readers to have a better understanding of China.

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