A Review of Chinese Political Literature Translation Studies since the New Era

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Abstract— In this paper, we analyze the core journals of the past ten years with the subject terms "political literature" plus "translation","political literature" ,"English translation" on China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). "I have analyzed the characteristics on translation of political literature during 2012-2022 from the aspects of practical experience, multi-perspective research and national image construction, and look forward to the development of English translation of political literature, hoping to provide various types of reference information for it.

Keywords— 2012-2022; literature review; translation of political literature.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the 18th National People's Congress (NPC), the Communist Party of China (CPC) have continued to lead the people to achieve world-renowned achievements. China's comprehensive national power and influence have been increasing, and the world is eager to know more about China. China's political literature, especially the works or conferences of party and government leaders, has become a window for the world to understand China, as they provide a comprehensive overview of China's real development and important policies in the moment. In order to make international community understand China more comprehensively and objectively, it is imperative to do a good job of translating political literature. In addition, from the current research situation, there are few studies summarized about the translation of Chinese political literature. Based on this, the current situation of political literature translation will be discussed and analyzed in this article.

II. OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT RESEARCH STATUS AT HOME AND ABROAD

Under the pavement of the predecessors, Chinese political literature translation has made a big breakthrough and progress. Zhang Ying (2019) put forward specific suggestions in "A few thoughts on the translation of important political literature", emphasizing that the translation of such literature in the new era must transcend traditional thinking, promote conceptual innovation, and highlight the consciousness of translators' communication to bridge the differences between China and the West in terms of values and language and culture as well as their role effects. Huang Youyi, the executive vice president of the China Translation Association, gave a lot of thoughts to the

construction of China's international discourse system through the translation of the English version of Xi Jinping on Governance. Li Qiong (2015) emphasized the selection of appropriate foreign translation strategies to promote the construction of foreign discourse system in "Foreign Translation Strategies in the Construction of Foreign Discourse System". On the whole, many scholars in the translation field have put forward new requirements to the translation of political literature in the new historical period. That is, they no longer stick to the principle of being highly faithful to the original text, but are more inclined to give equal importance to translation and dissemination. Besides, they pay attention to the authenticity and acceptability of the translation, and devote themselves to making the world read and understand China.

Compared with domestic studies, there are few translation studies abroad. However, some foreign scholars have launched studies on related topics, i.e., analyses of political discourse, For example, Patricia L. Dunmire (2012: 746) who used systemic functional linguistics, critical discourse analysis and narrative theory to study the linguistic structure and rhetorical function of political discourse, focusing on American foreign policy and national security discourse in the post-Cold War period. She also examined how modernist notions of the future are projected through political and policy discourse and how these projections play out ideologically. Massoud Sharififar, Elahe Rahimi (2015: 343) used Hanley's systemic functional linguistics as a theoretical basis to examine the political discourse between Obama and Rouhani's art of linguistic coverage in their political speeches of September 2013 in the United Nations, analyzing how the two presidents combine ideology and power in their political speeches through verb and object and mood. That is, they demonstrate their power, competence, and policies through language. Mehdi Mahdiyan (2013: 35) and others have done this by employing CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) with special emphasis on Fairclough's (1989) framework and by using Holliday's (1985) SFL (Systematic Functional Linguistics) concept in an attempt to elucidate the relationship between language and ideology involved in translation. The results of the study proved that the use of critical discourse analysis on English and Chinese

helps translators to understand the genre conventions, social contexts and situational contexts of English and Chinese, and to outline the formation of power relations and ideological relations at the level of discourse language.

These studies show that in order to strengthen the construction of political discourse system and help the communication of national image, it is imperative to strengthen the strength of one's own foreign propaganda. In addition, since foreign studies do not cover the translation of Chinese political literature, this article will focus on the analysis of domestic political literature translation studies.

III.   CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF POLITICAL LITERATURE

Throughout the domestic research, the translation research of political literature mainly presents the following three characteristics.

3.1 Studies based on the summary of practical experience

This kind of research mainly comes from experts and scholars who have been engaged in the translation of political literature for a long time. They have accumulated lots of experience or insights in the process of long-term translation practice. For example, Li Qiong (2015: 155), based on the feature that publicity materials and the construction of foreign discourse system are intertwined and closely related in various aspects in the context of globalization, pointed out that the appropriate translation strategy will directly affect the translation of publicity materials. and further affect the success of the construction of foreign discourse system. Therefore, it is proposed that in the process of constructing the foreign discourse system, different translation strategies such as literal translation and liberal translation should be flexibly chosen according to the text types of different contents on a macro level. Based on Piaget's epistemology of occurrence, supplemented by social constructivism's learning theory and acceptance theory, and supported by empirical research on 10 "Chinese keywords", Dou Weilin (2016:106) proposed the strategy characterized by focusing on ourselves, paying attention to differences, continuously strengthening our translation ability, and gradually improving the effectiveness of foreign translation

and communication of political discourse. Zhang Youming (2017: 30) took the English translation of the Policy Address of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for example and compared it with the Work Report of the Chinese Government, and conducted a preliminary discussion on the authenticity of the wording of each. The paper provides a detailed analysis of the possibility, necessity, and feasibility of the translation, and points out that it is not advisable to overemphasize the linguistic heterogeneity between Chinese and English in the translation of political documents. In order to enhance the "authenticity" and "readability" of the translation, we should minimize the differences between the target language and the original language in terms of wording and phrasing, overcome "Chinglish",thus achieving "successful persuasion" and "effective communication".Shiwen, Liu Runze, and Wei Xiangqing (2019: 79) found that the translation and dissemination of the core terms of the "Belt and Road" political discourse in the English-language media through a self-made thematic corpus reflected the "terminology filter" effect with a cognitive rhetorical nature. On this basis, the authors tried to further reflect on the cross-linguistic application constraint mechanism of core political terms, expecting to provide reference for terminology and the practice and research of cross-cultural communication of political discourse with Chinese characteristics in the new era. Sun Ning (2020: 21) took "On Persevering in Promoting the Construction of a Community of Human Destiny" as an example, analyzed and summarized the distinctive personal style and characteristics of Xi Jinping's diplomatic discourse : being close to the audience, making good use of rhetoric, being plain and simple, and discussing the past and the present, and proposed five kinds of targeted English translation strategies: literal translation, literal translation with annotation, free translation, amplification and deletion, hoping to enhance the international communication power and influence of Xi Jinping's diplomatic discourse by combining the translation purpose theory. Liu Liang (2020) took the foreign language version of On Promoting a Shared Community for Humanity as an example, which put forward some proposals and initiatives to the international community, elaborated China's propositions and expressed China's views. All these translated expressions of China's solutions to global problems need to adapt to the growing trend of world multipolarity and cultural diversity, and adapt and integrate into the discourse environment of the international community. Liu Kuijuan (2021: 139) took the English translations of Xi Jinping on Governance, Volumes I-III, as an example to explore the basic considerations and translation principles in the process of Chinese to English translation.

From a macro perspective, these studies are substantial results, which are important guides for employees who are involved in the translation of political literature. However, from the microcosmic aspect, such studies come from different translators' subjects. Due to translators' individual styles vary greatly, we need to be sensible when studying them. Therefore, we shouldn't copy them all, but to actively screen them and form our own thinking.

3.2 Multi-perspective study of political literature translation

Since the 18th National Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping's important remarks on strengthening publicity and promoting the prosperity of Chinese philosophy and social sciences have brought the importance of foreign translation of political literature to the forefront. As a result, the translation of political literature has made great development and new breakthroughs, and more and more scholars have carried out research on the translation of political literature. Many scholars have conducted multi-perspective studies on the translation of political literature based on corpus, relevance theory, evaluation theory, discourse cohesion theory, rhetoric and so on. For example, Hu Fengsheng, Jing Bo, and Li Xin (2012: 89) analyzed the practicality and effectiveness of discourse cohesion theory in the translation of political literature, taking the 2010 Government Work Report as an example, and emphasized the importance of cultivating cohesion awareness in translation practice. Taking the translation of the report of the 18th National Congress as an example, Sun Libing and Zhao Jing (2014: 47) discussed how to choose the subject carefully to achieve a clear and direct translation. In addition, a corpus analysis was conducted and corresponding translation strategies were proposed by using the corpus retrieval tool AntConc3.2. Li Xin and Li Tao (2020) took the Chinese-English parallel

corpus of the documents of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee as a carrier, and compared the translation styles of official English translations of political documents and English translations by overseas translators in terms of linguistic form parameters and translation shift, and found that the official versions were closer to English expression habits and audience thinking than overseas translations, and also more accurately conveyed Chinese national conditions and the image of the Chinese government; in addition, they emphasized the need to strengthen the timeliness of foreign translations of political literature, so as to help the overseas dissemination of Chinese political discourse. Zhu Chaowei (2020: 4), on the basis of sorting out the changes in the connotation of translation, pointed out the shortcomings of current translation theory and practice, and proposed that the issue of translation standards should be rethought from the perspective of foreign communication needs and innovative foreign communication discourse system, and the discourse equivalence standard of translation should be established. Deng Zhongmin and Zeng Jianping (2020:136) took Xi Jinping on Governance as an example to explore the translation of repetitive rhetoric in political discourse. Yu Li (2021:67) took the evaluation theory of systemic functional linguistics as the analytical framework, making the subjectivity of translators in the translation of political literature as the research object, and conducted a study based on the corpus of Chinese and English corresponding political literature. By comparing the similarities and differences between the translations and the original texts in terms of attitude, interventions and choices within the graduation system in the Chinese-English translation, the study reveals the subjectivity of translators are mainly reflected by the differences in the selection of categories such as reliability, valuation, assertion, quantity, quality, process and focus between the original text and the translated text; in the English-to-Chinese translation, the translator's subjectivity is mainly realized by the different selection of resources such as opposition, acceptance, quantity, volume, quality, process and focus between the original text and the translated text. That's to say, under the perspective of evaluation,the translator's subjectivity is reflected differently in two-way translation. Li Tao and Hu

Kaibao (2021) drew on the "evaluation system" (Martin and White 2005) , the "ideological square" (van Dijk 1998) (van Dijk 1998) and a corpus-based discourse analysis approach to explore how China's attitudes and positions toward itself and other countries in Chinese political discourse are reflected in English translations through the translator's mediation. Fu Jianan (2022: 74) took the translation of allusions in political literature as the object of study, disintegrated the translation process of allusions into two "fusion of horizon", and analyzed in depth how the translator accurately understands and interprets the inter-subjective "perspective difference" in each "fusion of horizon" process.

This kind of research perspective is relatively new, indicating that the translation of political literature has moved from the initial summary of experience or techniques to a multi-perspective research scope, which is conducive to the development of political literature translation.

3.3 Research from the level of national image construction

Foreign translation is an important part of cultural diplomacy and an important bridge between China and the international community. The quality of translation is not only about the success or failure of translation, but also about the image of the country. As an important part of foreign translation, political literature translation should be a good example. Taking the 21st century as a boundary, Wu Yun and Jiang Mengying (2018: 16) discussed the transformation of foreign translation planning from being dominated by state institutions to other available departments, and the transition from the construction of national image in the self-view to the other's view, and considered how China's foreign translation planning can be combined with the changes in the field of Chinese literature translation under the concept of cultural diplomacy. In the light of the changes in the field of Chinese literary translation under the concept of cultural diplomacy, we considered how China's foreign translation planning can mobilize all parties to expand its social network, enrich its practice in line with the market demand, adapt to the communication methods of different times, and better understand the expectations of the receiving countries and improve the output effect, thus providing some reference for China's foreign translation planning. Taking political discourse translation as the research object, Xie Li and Wang

Yinquan (2018: 7) pointed out that enhancing China's international discourse is a decisive factor for China's international image self-shaping through an in-depth analysis of the current situation of China's international image and the characteristics of China's political discourse. Although such research accounts for a small proportion of the current direction of political literature translation, it is bound to attract widespread attention as China's soft power is further enhanced and the demand for national image construction is strengthened.

To sum up, the research on translation of political documents in China presents rich and diversified characteristics, including not only micro (e.g., summary of experience in political document translation techniques) and macro (e.g., national image construction) studies, but also multi-perspective studies on translation of political documents using various theories. On the whole, these studies not only enrich the connotation of political literature translation, but also expand the scope of political literature translation research, which is conducive to providing enlightenment for political literature translation in China, thereby promoting greater progress of foreign propaganda work.

IV. ACHIEVEMENTS AND SHORTCOMINGS OF POLITICAL LITERATURE TRANSLATION

4.1 Achievements in the translation of political literature

Looking at the current research results, we can find that China's political literature translation research has made significant achievements since the new era, which are mainly reflected in the following aspects:

(1) As a branch of foreign translation, translation of political documents has gradually become an important research branch in the translation field in China. According to the author's incomplete statistics, the development of political literature translation has been very rapid since the new era, with more than 250 relevant publications. Especially, the research results on translation of political documents in the past five years show a trend of year-on-year growth. In addition, the "Forum on Translation and Research of Central Documents" has been held for many years, and

more and more scholars and senior translators have devoted themselves to the research work of translation of political documents, trying to promote China to the world better.

(2) The scope of translation studies of political documents has gradually expanded. From the literature published by many scholars, the translation of political literature has broken through the traditional level of translation strategies and skills summary, and expanded the scope of research to various aspects based on corpus, translator's subjectivity, foreign discourse, and national image construction. In addition, the groups of political literature translation research have been expanded, including government officials, experts, translators, researchers from research institutions, university teachers and students, etc.

(3) The level of translation studies of political literature is higher. Given the pavement of experts such as Huang Youyi, Cheng Zhenqiu and Wang Longsheng in previous years, the quality of publications on translation of political literature has been on an upward trend. In the past ten years, there were twenty research papers have been published in foreign language or Chinese core journals, including China Translation, China Scientific and Technical Translation, and Shanghai Translation. In addition, the relevant research has been supported by many provincial and ministerial level or above projects, and two of them have been funded by the National Social Science Foundation of China in the past two years, namely, "A Comparative Study on Translation Styles of Political Literature Based on Corpus: An Example of English Translation of the Documents of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee" by Li Xin and Li Tao and "The Inter-subjectivity of Allusions in Political Literature and "Fusion of Horizon" by Fu Jianan.

(4) The study of translation of political documents has realized multi-perspective and cross-disciplinary research. It not only absorbs many theories in the field of translation, but also unites with the fields of rhetoric, corpus, and the construction of foreign discourse system, so that the perspective of translation of political literature is further extended.

4.2 Deficiencies of political literature translation

Since the new era, although the research on translation of political literature in China has made great progress, there

are still some shortcomings, which are mainly manifested in the following points:

(1) The research results of political literature translation are relatively few. Although there are more than 200 publications related to the translation of political literature since the new era, there are only a few monographs of related research.

(2) The talents engaged in the research of political literature translation are not enough in the future. On the one hand, with the emergence of computer-aided translation technology, translation work has become convenient and fast, but also poses a challenge to the employment prospect of the translation industry. On the other hand, the number of translators specializing in the translation of political literature is a bit weak compared to the fields of science and technology and media. In order to better communicate the voice of China, many forces need to work together.

(3) There is a lack of in-depth research on translation of political literature. It can be seen from the translation literature of political literature. Although the translation of political literature presents the characteristics of multiple perspectives, most of the research papers stay in the summary of skills. These can be verified from the titles of related literature. For example, the terms "translation strategies" and "translation techniques" are used more frequently.

(4) The research system of political literature translation needs to be improved. At present, the research on translation of political literature is combined with many theories and has a wide range of research perspectives, but due to the lack of systematic sorting and professional system construction, it seems to be loose on the whole.

V.   PROSPECTS OF POLITICAL LITERATURE TRANSLATION

After more than ten years of development, the research on translation of political literature in China has made great achievements, but there are also some shortcomings. By sorting out and summarizing the above-mentioned researches, the author believes that the future development of political literature translation research will show the following trends:

(1) The multi-perspective research on translation of political literature will continue to develop and highlight innovation. In addition to combining with related translation theories at home and abroad, political literature will be more extensively combined with other fields, such as the construction of political discourse system. In addition, the research content will develop in a more detailed and in-depth direction.

(2) The importance of translation of political literature will be further highlighted. In order to open up a new dimension of great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the new era and help construct the foreign discourse system of China in the new era, more scholars and experts will be involved in the research. In addition, political literature translation research will set up special research topics at various levels and hold seminars to encourage relevant personnel to carry out targeted and practical research.

(3) The translation of political literature will develop rapidly by means of corpus and computer-aided translation tools. For example, the linguistic characteristics of translated texts can be examined through the intervention of corpus, so as to better guide the translation of documents.

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