



# A Review of Research on the English Translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*

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**Abstract**— After combing through the literature on the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* from 2015 to 2022, it was found that most of the relevant research focused on three aspects: translation strategies, external communication and national image construction, and research based on discourse analysis. However, the research on these three aspects is not balanced. The first two aspects have more literature and more in-depth research, while the third aspect has fewer papers and more scattered research. The analysis shows that the research on the foreign translation of important party and state documents based on discourse analysis shows the characteristics of scientific methods and novel perspectives, and has strong academic value. Research in these three aspects can be further integrated, expanded and explored under the theoretical framework of discourse analysis, which can produce more theoretically innovative research results.

**Keywords**— *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*; translation strategies; external communication; discourse analysis



## I. INTRODUCTION

Edited by the Information Office of the State Council of China together with the Documentation Research Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Foreign Languages Bureau of China (FWB), *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* has been published in more than 20 languages since its release by Foreign Languages Publishing House on September 28, 2014, and distributed to more than 160 countries and regions around the globe with more than 6 million copies, making its popularity overseas a spectacle that has not been witnessed in 40 years. The book mainly contains the important writings of General Secretary Xi Jinping during the period

from November 15, 2012 to May 10, 2022 (including Volume I to Volume IV), which cover a wide range of topics with innovative views, powerfully explaining contemporary China's concept of development, path of development, and internal and external policies, and also serving as a window for countries around the world to learn about China's new Party Central Committee's strategy of governing the country. Since the publication of this work, the research on the English translation of Xi Jinping on the Governance of the Country has only been increasing. At present, English is the main common language for international communication and work, so the research on the English translation of this book is very important for the

construction of the foreign discourse system, and it also relates to the enhancement of the overall cultural soft power. In order to further improve the quality of English translation research on current political discourse, it is necessary to systematically sort out the research results of this national translation practice in the past eight years (2015-2022), summarize the experience of the research and discov

er the shortcomings, so as to lay a solid translation foundation for the construction of a discourse system that integrates China and foreign countries.

## II. CURRENT STATUS OF RESEARCH ON THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF XI JINPING: THE GOVERNANCE OF CHINA

The truly valuable discussion must also be mainly supported by Chinese research. The English translation of Xi Jinping on Governance mainly started in 2015, and by searching journals in CNKI, inputting the keyword “Xi Jinping on Governance + English Translation” to manually exclude interview articles, a total of 77 journals were obtained. Among them, a total of 17 journals from CSSCI were obtained. By searching master’s and doctoral dissertations, 93 master’s degree dissertations and 1 doctoral dissertation (as of December 11, 2022) were obtained. The specific statistics are as follows:

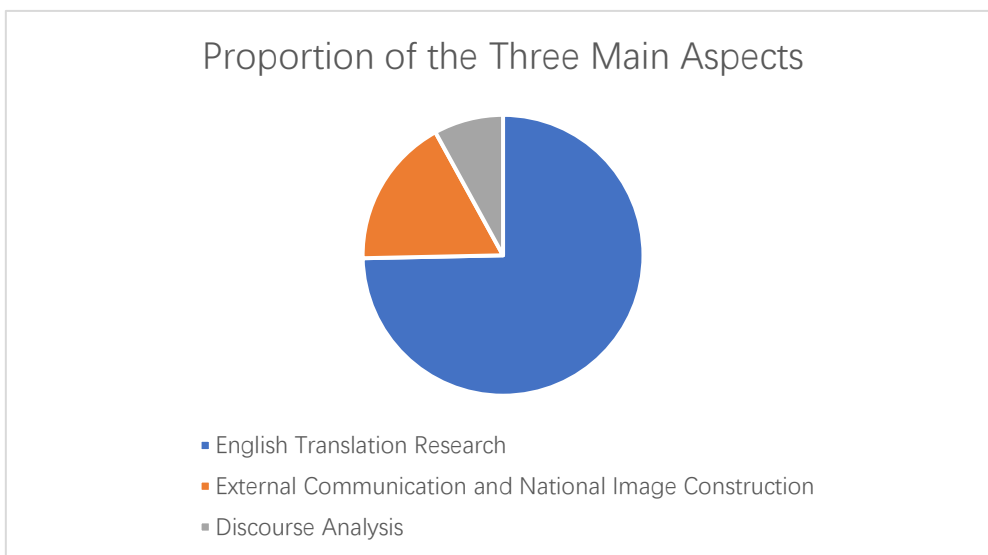


Fig.1

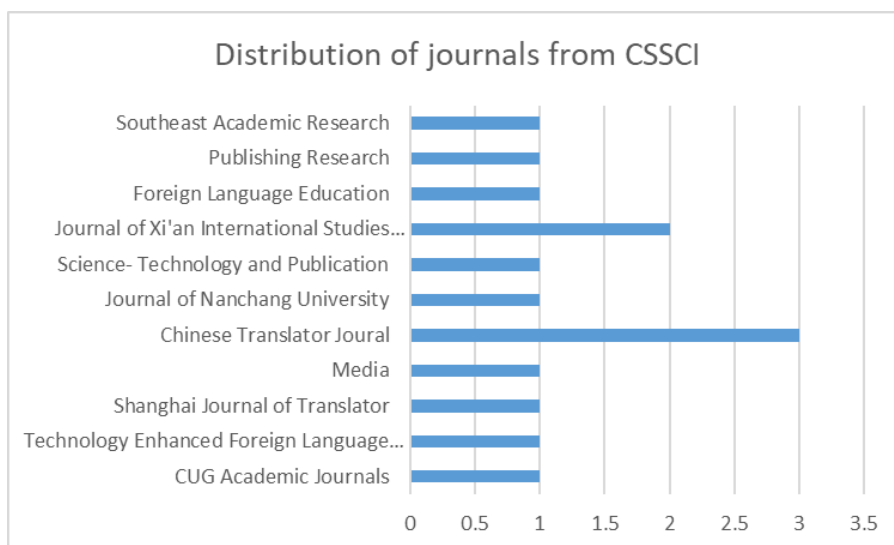


Fig.2

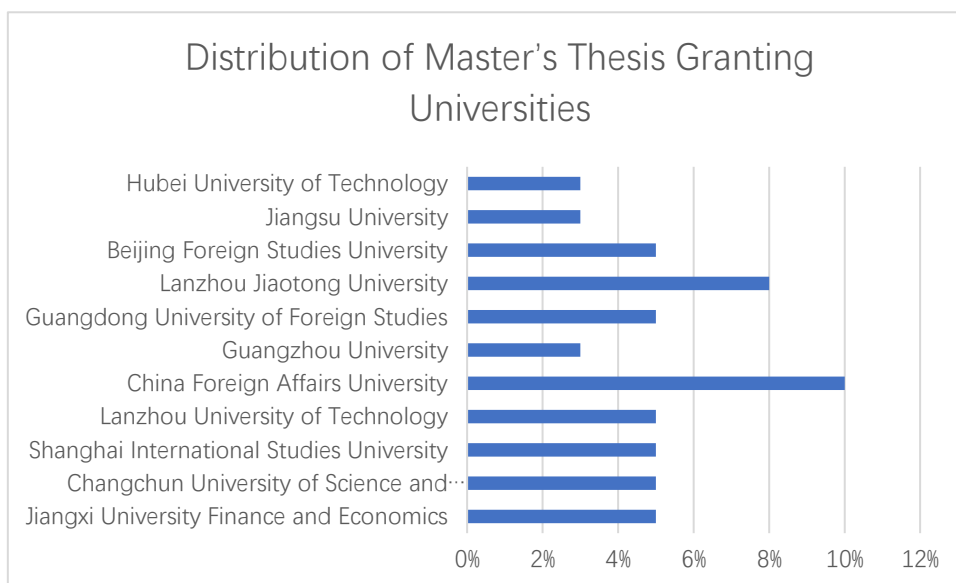


Fig.3

Judging from the distribution of the three major themes of the journal (Figure 1), most of the journal's themes are still distributed in English translation research. It can be seen that the current domestic research on English translation is relatively in-depth and comprehensive. The topics of English translation research are also relatively systematic, with a large number of studies ranging from macro-level English translation strategies to micro-level word translation. It can be seen that Chinese-English translation research has made great progress in the past eight years. The topics of external communication and national image construction are relatively rare among English translation research topics. To a certain extent, this is because external communication and national image construction involve interdisciplinary research, so the research on these two aspects is naturally less than that on English translation. Judging from the CSSCI journal distribution map (Figure 2), only 17 of the 77 journals are from CSSCI, and the overall publication level is low. Among them, the number of articles published in Chinese translation journals is greater than that of other journals. The topics of the published articles are not solely focused on English translation research. Judging from the distribution map of master's thesis awarding units (Figure 3), fifty master's theses are mainly selected for statistics. Among them, China Foreign Affairs University publishes the largest number of papers, and the papers are mainly focused on English translation research. According to the above

analysis, research on the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* is mainly focused on English translation research. Although there is concern about external communication and national image construction, it is far less than the English translation research, and the research is not in-depth enough.

### III. EVALUATION OF REPRESENTATIVE RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In order to make the research results more targeted, this study selected representative papers and also selected 7 monographs published in China or other countries. The selection criteria were the quality, influence and uniqueness of the papers. As can be seen from the previous section, a large number of papers involve research on the English translation strategies of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, and there are also considerable scale studies on external communication and national image construction. Some studies that are discourse analysis and exploration, which are small in number but have a more systematic theoretical nature, which will be discussed separately below.

#### 3.1 English Translation Strategy Research

Dou Weilin and Wen Jianping (2015) took 23 international speeches of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* as examples to examine the characteristics of General Secretary Xi Jinping's pro-people discourse and its English translation strategies, and found that pro-people discourse is embodied in storytelling, borrowing metaphors, citing

classics and using the four aspects of common sayings, the corresponding translation strategies are free translation, literal translation, and back translation. People-friendly discourse is an important feature of the text of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, and its English translation strategy is a key link in language conversion. People-friendly discourse is full of emotions, and its translation needs to adjust the vocabulary, syntax, and rhetoric of the target language to allow this kind of sentiments of being close to the people to be carried forward. The research of Dou Weilin and Wen Jianping mainly focused on conversion strategies at the formal level, touching on the fundamental aspects of translation, and has important implications for the translation of current political discourse.

Taking the concept of cultural translation as a unified guide, Lin Rong and Lin Dajin (2016) proposed that the translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* mainly adopts literal translation, paraphrasing, annotation, and a combination of the above translation strategies. When translating political documents into English, facing cultural words with Chinese characteristics, literal translation is the best strategy based on studying the common characteristics of human culture. However, the most important characteristic of world culture is diversity, so when facing cultural differences, interpretation is sometimes a necessary means of compensation. In-text interpretation is a reader-friendly translation method that greatly enhances the reading efficiency of English readers. However, if you still do not understand the translation after reading it, the translator will have to bother the reader to read the annotations and explanations at the end of the text in order to achieve political goals. The first principle of document translation is "faithfulness". The last point is that the use of the above three translation methods is a combination strategy. This is because the cultural translation concept is not equivalent to a specific translation strategy. On the contrary, the cultural translation concept emphasizes the search for appropriate translation strategies for a certain cultural element, so it naturally includes the use of multiple strategies.

Zhao Xiangyun (2017) proposed that the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* insists on making "readers move closer to the author", and also pays attention to making "the author move closer to readers",

and flexibly uses various translation strategies such as foreignization, explicitation, simplification, and information reorganization, to achieve the harmonious unity between "loyalty" and "acceptability". From the perspective of "readers move closer to the author", quoting classics is the style of General Secretary Xi Jinping's speech. It more vividly puts forward some new conclusions, new formulations, new ideas, and new measures. The Xi-style speaking style of quoting classics further demonstrates his outstanding ability. Language skills and charisma. From this perspective, the English translation of "Xi" mainly adopts the translation strategy of foreignization, so that its language form can be well reproduced in the translation. From the perspective of "bringing the author closer to the reader", the translator mainly adopts translation strategies such as explicit translation, simplified translation and information reorganization. The analysis of translation strategies is of great help in building a foreign discourse system.

Deng Zhongmin and Zeng Jianping (2020) analyzed the translation strategies of repeated sentences in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* from the perspective of repetitive rhetoric. The translation strategies of repeated rhetoric mainly include omission, substitution and repetition, among which omission is the most obvious, including omission of the same words and sentences and synonymous translation of different words and sentences. The main purpose of provincial translation is to make the language simple and clear. There is no redundancy, making it easier for readers to read. However, omitted translation will also cause the source language to repeat itself and the rhetorical effect will be greatly reduced. In English, omissions or substitute words are often used to express. Due to language differences, blindly literal translation that repeats rhetoric will definitely result in a lengthy, bloated, and monotonous translation. In the same year, Zhu Chaowei proposed that the successful translation of allusions in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* mainly benefited from the translation strategy of "changing with the situation and being new with the times". These include six translation methods: literal translation, literal translation with annotation, free translation, additional translation, omitted translation and cultural substitution. At the same time, the high-level translation team, sincere cooperation between Chinese and

foreign experts, and strict control procedures are also one of the reasons for the successful dissemination of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* abroad.

Si Xianzhu and Zeng Jianping (2021) found that the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* is highly accepted abroad because its guiding principles for implementing translation methods and strategies are appropriate. First of all, the guiding principle is to clear up doubts and eliminate reading obstacles. When faced with expressions in the target language that may cause dyslexia, the translator needs to exert his or her subjectivity and adopt methods including in-text explanations and extra-text annotations to fully explain them and provide the target language with Readers can effectively interpret China's governing philosophy and excellent culture to eliminate reading barriers. The second step is to connect the rhetoric of the target language text. In order to respect the reading rhetoric psychology and reception style of the target readers, the unique discourse methods of the original text must be rewritten, adjusted, added and deleted as necessary to reconstruct the target language context. Finally, it demonstrates cultural self-confidence. In the face of current political discourse that keeps pace with the times, there is no precedent to refer to when translating. The principle of "putting me first" must be adhered to. The translator constructs a foreign political discourse with Chinese characteristics through self-created concepts. system.

Looking at the development of the English translation strategy of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* from a historical perspective, its development has continued to be in-depth and improved over time, and the research has become more and more detailed. From a macro perspective, we analyze the reasons for the high acceptance of the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, and then analyze the translation strategies. From a micro perspective, we study the translation strategies from repetitive rhetoric. Contribute to the study of English translation of foreign current affairs political discourse.

### 3.2 External Communication and National Image Building

China's comprehensive national strength and international status continue to improve, and the international community has paid unprecedented attention to China. China's international image is still "shaped by others" rather than "self-shaped" to a large extent.

Promoting China to enhance its soft power, eliminate misunderstandings, and disseminate a true, comprehensive, and three-dimensional voice of China requires the best external propaganda work, and a key factor in the success of external propaganda lies in the external translation and dissemination of Chinese discourse. The external dissemination of Chinese discourse plays a vital role in building the country's image. First, Dou Weilin (2016) summarized the successful experience in the external interpretation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. The English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* is highly accepted abroad, not only because of the breakthrough in the expression of political discourse and the correct use of translation methods, but also because *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* is not limited to traditional distribution models, such as in Book fairs are held around the world, as well as seminars and symposiums. Such proactive actions, especially organizing seminars and symposiums, can greatly promote the overseas dissemination of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, arouse the interest of foreign readers, and effectively interpret and popularize the thoughts on state governance. Zhang Shengxiang and Zhang Miaoqun (2018) pointed out that *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* was widely disseminated in the United States mainly through three main channels: symposiums, news media, and journals and magazines, forming a benign public opinion orientation among different target groups and improving the book's influence in all walks of life in the United States. The symposium was mainly aimed at political elites, and their comments on the book mainly covered four aspects: President Xi Jinping, China's internal policy, Sino-US relations, and China's global strategy. The news media mainly targets social elites and reports on the overall objective evaluation of the book *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* by the American social elites. Journals and magazines are mainly aimed at academic elites and are mainly concerned with the politics, law and economy of contemporary China. Zhang Shengxiang and Zhang Miaoqun discussed the construction of the external discourse system from three levels: political, social and academic. It was systematic and touched on the main issues of the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. Zhu Yige (2018) emphasized in his research the

importance of translated texts in the construction of national image. The English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* is the self-expression of China's image in the Western world. It not only helps change the situation where China's image is always passively expressed by the West, but also promotes the construction of China's own imageology system. At the micro level, the rhetorical forms of words and sentences during the language conversion process allow the English translation to carry its thoughts on state governance, thereby allowing the English translation text to present a rational world in which politics, economy, military, culture, etc. The organic combination of ideas in different fields highlights the inner horizon of governance thoughts. This horizon is transcendent, that is, it goes beyond the specific Chinese context and is connected with the common theme of human existence, thus establishing a good image of it. Chen Shuangshuang (2018) studied the British Daily Telegraph's coverage of governance thoughts and found that the reported content mainly focused on the "19th National Congress", "One Belt and One Road", "Diplomatic Thoughts", "Anti-corruption and Integrity and Cultural Construction" and other aspects. The form of the report is concrete and visual, but some reports distort the facts and are biased. This is an interference strategy adopted by The Daily Telegraph due to the influence of the Cold War mentality and not wanting to see China's rapid development. , the study recommends that China's mainstream English-language media cooperate with Western mainstream English-language media to build an in-depth reporting platform for China, strengthen exchanges with foreign journalists by holding conferences, and strengthen the construction of China's foreign discourse system through foreign propaganda translation.

In terms of academic promotion, on the one hand, Chinese scholars have translated works on this idea into English and published them in the English-speaking world. On the other hand, Chinese and foreign scholars have cooperated to publish relevant works in English. The former is like *China's New Development Philosophy* co-authored by Hu Angang, Yan Yilong and Tang Xiao (2017). The English translation was published by the internationally renowned publishing house Springer in 2018. The title of the book is translated as *Xi Jinping's New Development Philosophy*, the English translation highlights the subjective

role of General Secretary Xi Jinping and introduces important concepts such as innovation, collaboration, green, sharing and safe development to the English-speaking world (Hu et al., 2018). The latter is such as *The Xi Jinping Era: His Comprehensive Strategy toward the China Dream* co-edited by New York University political science professor Hsiung (2015) and Chinese scholars. Objectively introduce the development path of the new era, let the world understand that the essence of China's rejuvenation is peace rather than aggression, and effectively refute the "China threat theory." Another example is that Ross Terrill, a researcher at the Fairbank Center for China Studies at Harvard University, and Chinese and foreign experts co-authored *Xi Jinping's China Renaissance: Historical Mission and Great Power Strategy* (2016) and *Great Power Leader Xi Jinping: International Perspectives on China's Leader* (2016), these two books are in the form of biographies that the West is willing to accept, with human interpretation, and are available in English The world tells about China's governance thoughts.

The external dissemination of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* is not only to the elite level, but also to the ordinary people. Especially in Western countries, it has become a trend to pay attention to what ordinary people are thinking. The vocabulary and grammar of the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* are very simple and concise, so that ordinary people can accept it smoothly without any obstacles. In order to be faithful to the original work, the initial foreign translation of central documents was very thorough in terms of language equivalence. The translation tended to have a strong tendency to alienate, which resulted in a certain distance between the translation and the general audience. The translation was more suitable for elite readers. However, the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* not only pays attention to being faithful to the content, but also achieves domestication in form. It can be read by experts and ordinary people, and there is almost no obstacle to reading for ordinary readers. For ordinary people to understand China, improving the country's soft power plays an important role.

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that it is necessary to "innovate the external publicity model." External communication in the new era needs to increase

initiative, cooperate with Chinese and foreign experts, and cooperate with Chinese media and publishers to give full play to their respective expertise and take the initiative to explain. Take the initiative to hold the power of interpretation of governance thoughts in your own hands, establish authority with the right to speak, create international agendas by setting relevant issues, guide international attention and interpretation, safeguard national discourse security, and contribute political wisdom to the world.

### 3.3 Research Based on Discourse Analysis

The research results of discourse analysis, especially critical discourse analysis, have had an important impact in the field of social science research. Tian Hailong (2017a) thinks about translation research based on the theory and method of critical discourse analysis, and raises translation process research issues from three aspects: how the translation is produced, how it is disseminated, and how it is accepted. He believes that translation practice is also a social practice. Due to its novel research methods and unique research perspectives, this concept has shown important academic value in the study of the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* in recent years. Relevant research is mainly reflected in the discussion of discourse theory paradigms, discourse quality evaluation and discourse corpus analysis. Tian Hailong (2017b) studies the new paradigm of the English translation of central documents from a transdisciplinary research perspective. In previous studies of the English translation of central documents, researchers could easily fall into the vicious cycle of "fidelity-flexibility" binary opposition, but discourse research can provide a new research paradigm for the study of the English translation of central documents. This new research paradigm can open a new path for the study of the English translation of central documents to play a greater role in the process of building a discourse system that integrates China and foreign countries. Yin Jia (2017) applied theories such as ideology, meaning negotiation, and discourse construction to study the active role of the translator in the process of external propaganda translation. She studied the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* from the perspective of discourse as social practice. Regarding the subjectivity of the translator, it is found that the translator plays an active role in the

interpretation of the original text's ideology, the choice of meaning in the translation process, and the construction of translation discourse.

The English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* requires "seeking truth and being pragmatic." "Seeking truth" is determined by the nature of the book, which means that the ideology of the original text must be understood correctly, while "pragmatism" means that the ideological acceptance of the readers must be taken into consideration. The discourse strategies used by the translator become external propaganda. Translate the important content of "pragmatic". At present, translation research focuses on the study of language conversion on the one hand, and the cultural turn of translation on the other hand. However, research on the translator's behavior itself is relatively rare. The study of translator behavior is a new growth point in translation research. The translator's initiative in translation is the result of the internal coordination of "seeking truth and being pragmatic."

Li Jingping and Zhang Wei (2022) emphasized in their research that quantitative research on the foreign translation of Chinese discourse should pay attention to diachronic factors. Based on domestic and foreign diachronic corpora, they conducted an in-depth analysis of the translation norms behind different translation strategies of "Lucid waters and lush mountains are gold and silver mountains". The three stages of norm evolution are summarized based on the historical context. The study found that the current translation standards for external publicity have gradually transitioned to translation strategies based on our own discourse stance. Among them, the "concept recontextualization" strategy provides new reference for "going out" to "going in" and provides a new reference for China's external discourse. Translation provides a new ideas. Li Jing (2017) studied the "re-contextualization" of the English translation of allusions in *Allusions Quoted by Xi Jinping*. "Re-contextualization" emphasizes that the re-translation process not only draws on the original meaning of the classics, but also considers the contemporary cultural context for its translation. The extension of meaning also considers the cultural reading habits of the text. The West introduced Christianity into China through science and technology, and China can also implant Chinese culture into Western countries through the "re-contextualization" of

classics and famous sayings.

The application of corpus to analyze discourse characteristics is a technical manifestation of the English translation study of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. The English translation corpus of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* is huge, and it is difficult to conduct exhaustive sampling by manual reading alone. Some scholars have resorted to language technology to conduct large-scale discourse analysis. Hu Kaibao and Tian Xujun (2017) self-constructed a corpus of Chinese diplomatic discourse and analyzed the foreign policy, cultural value and translation strategies behind the English translation of Chinese diplomatic discourse through corpus methods such as high-frequency words, keywords, modal verbs and the collocation of "we". Hu Kaibao and Chen Chaojing (2018) self-constructed an international news corpus and clarified the diplomatic terminology with Chinese characteristics by searching for changes in the English translation of "One Belt, One Road" in mainstream English media in the United Kingdom, the United States, and India, the number of articles reported, the frequency of keywords, and index lines. The spread and acceptance of English translation in Britain, the United States and India. Liang Linxin (2018: 64, 70) made statistics on the English translation of relevant discourses in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* through a self-built corpus and found that in terms of vocabulary, the use of literal translation and literal translation + annotation in English translation accounted for 89.3% of the translation skills. English translation focuses on retaining vocabulary with Chinese characteristics and presenting the wonderful Chinese culture to the outside world. In terms of sentences, reverse translation, clause translation and comprehensive translation account for 5%, 40% and 13% of the total translation skills respectively. Translation at the sentence level is no longer limited to direct interpretation of Chinese culture, but is based on the two languages. It uses syntactic features and adopts flexible translation techniques. While translating Chinese culture into foreign countries, it also pays attention to the readers' reading expectations, so that the translation has strong cross-cultural acceptability.

Applying discourse theory and discourse tools to conduct research on the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* gives full play to the sophistication and scientificity of linguistic theory, showing

the inherent characteristics of current affairs discourse translation from a more subtle and systematic level, and This research breaks through the language-level analysis of structural linguistics, and takes language conversion as a social practice to go deep into the level of social construction.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The types of research on the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* are not evenly distributed. There are many works on translation strategies, external communication and national image construction, which are the main topics for related research. If the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* only focuses on the study of translation strategies and does not consider the communication effect of the English translation and the acceptance of readers, then the study of translation strategies will lack the support of reality testing. If the research only focuses on the study of national image construction and lacks an understanding of the study of translation strategies, then the research on image construction can only be limited to the periphery. Neither of the above two aspects of research can systematize the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the significance of the study of the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* to the research and dissemination of my country's foreign discourse system. From the above, we can know that *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* should focus on strategic research at the micro level, while research on external communication and national image construction should focus on the macro level. Separate research on the two aspects will result in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* English translation cannot be systematized. The introduction of critical discourse analysis can effectively integrate the two aspects of research, develop an effective structure for the advantages of each research, and allow the extraction of translation experience to be implemented in future translation practices. However, discourse analysis research is still in the preliminary exploration stage of applying relevant discourse theories and tools to translation research, and its scalability needs to be further developed.



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