

Researching the Translation of Chinese Political Discourse

Wei Wang and Liang Xia
The University of Sydney

This article examines the translation of Chinese political discourse in China in light of the influence of the “Cultural Turn” in Translation Studies (TS). After illustrating the key features of cultural oriented and power-focused transformations in the development of TS, this article proposes an integrated approach, drawing upon both linguistic analysis and cultural studies to explore the complexity and manipulated nature of the translation of Chinese political discourse. Then, it discusses the main rhetorical and discursive characteristics of Chinese political discourse. Finally, this integrated approach is illustrated with a sample study analysing the translation of the 2008 Chinese Government Report by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao.

Keywords: linguistics-based, culture-based, translation studies, Chinese political discourse

1. Two orientations in translation studies

Often considered as irreconcilable and opposing, the two research orientations in translation studies, i.e. linguistics-based and culture-based, have long been discussed and examined at different levels of abstraction. While the former strives to construct an empirical science, the latter tends to “emphasize the cultural and political values in forming translation practice and research” (Venuti 1998: 8).

The linguistic model of translation has had a long history and is regarded as the traditional approach, which, as Neubert and Shreve (1992: 19) summarised, “makes statements about the linguistic mechanisms involved in

the transfer or replacement of source language signs by target language signs.” The main restriction of this approach is that “it does not consider external or extralinguistic factors such as critical norms or the constraints of practice” (Neubert and Shreve 1992: 19). The linguistic model of translation focuses on the systemic aspect of language, i.e. on the comparison of the source language’s and the target language’s peculiarities. The systemic linguistic level of translation equivalences becomes the exclusive focus in this tradition of translation studies. Scholars working with the linguistic tradition are usually criticised as lacking scientific interest in the description and characterisation of the contextual, extralinguistic factors involved in translation.

In the recent two decades translation studies have witnessed great transformations from a linguistic focused orientation to more culturally orientated and power-focused perspectives. Among others, Susan Bassnett, André Lefevere, Edwin Gentzler, Maria Tymoczko and Lawrence Venuti have played key roles as advocates in the so-called “Cultural Turn” (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990) or “Power Turn” (Álvarez and Vidal 1996; Venuti 1995) in translation studies. Since this “Cultural Turn,” which has been inspired to a great extent by cultural studies, anthropology, poststructuralist, postmodern, and postcolonial theories (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990), modern translation research becomes less concerned with only examining whether a translation is a “faithful” reproduction of the source text. Instead, the focus shifts to social, cultural, and communicative practices of translation behaviour. This implies that translation is recognised as not only to do with language, but with languages and texts in culture, and that difference is not situated solely in the linguistic code, but in culture as well.

Another important development in translation studies in the same period has been to focus on the function and process of translating, rather than only on the end product of translation. This means not only the final text of translation, but the translating processes and behaviours have become research foci in this era. In the same vein, current topics in translation studies include the cultural and ideological significance of translating and of translations, and the interaction between translation behaviours and socio-cultural factors.

Culture-based translation studies include a number of different trends or approaches, such as Descriptive Translation Studies (also polysystem theory and manipulationism), skopos theory and translational action, hermeneutics, deconstructionist-poststructuralist approaches, and postcolonial studies. These trends or approaches do not necessarily correspond to clearly differentiated and

delimited tendencies in translation studies, but rather to a cluster of common features shared by representatives of each approach. These approaches are more concerned with social, political, or ideological issues than the linguistic equivalence-based relationship between a source language text (SLT) and a target language text (TLT). In other words, they are more function-oriented than product-oriented in translation.

In translation studies Lefevere is not only the “father” of the concept “rewriting,” but he is closely associated with the concepts “manipulation” and “power.” In 1990 he co-edited with Susan Bassnett *Translation, History and Culture*, arguably the first book that can be considered to take into account the full consequences of the cultural turn. When studying translated texts, they underline the importance of being aware of the fact that texts can be translated in different ways and the reason why a text is translated in one particular way can probably be found in how it is manipulated to achieve desired effects. As Lefevere argues in his 1992 book, concerning the interaction between poetics, ideology and translation, “on every level of the translation process, it can be shown that, if linguistic considerations enter into conflicts with considerations of an ideological and/or poetological nature, the latter tend to win out” (Lefevere 1992: 39).

In Bassnett and Lefevere’s (1998) book *Constructing Cultures*, Bassnett further illustrated the process of translation in light of the main concepts in the “Cultural Turn”:

... a study of the processes of translation combined with the praxis of translating could offer a way of understanding how complex manipulative textual processes take place: how a text is selected for translation, for example, what role the translators plays in the selection, what role an editor, publisher or patron plays, what criteria determine the strategies that will be employed by the translator, how a text might be received in the target system. For a translation always takes place in a continuum, never in a void, and there are all kinds of textual and extratextual constraints upon the translator. These constraints, or manipulative processes involved in the transfer of texts have become the primary focus of work in translation studies, and in order to study those processes translation studies has changed its course and has become both broader and deeper (Bassnett 1998: 123).

From this perspective, translation is seen also as a process of selecting, decision-making, manipulating, rather than as only a rendering practice. Therefore, “the problem of decoding a text for a translator involves so much more than language, despite the fact that the basis of any written text is its language” (Bassnett 1998: 137).

Along with the increasing importance of culture and power issues in translation studies, we can see a gradual transformation from a purely descriptive approach to more and more critical approaches in translation studies. While Lefevere and Bassnett’s work is still occupying a pivotal position, Lawrence Venuti has drawn much attention in the translation field. His 1992 edited book *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology* is considered as an important contribution to the development of TS. He testifies in his book that translation studies are closely linked to the areas of critical literary theory and that of cultural studies in general. He argues that the “Cultural Turn brings a renewed functionalism to translation theory, a concern with the social effects of translation and their ethical and political consequences” (Venuti 2000: 333).

In criticising linguistics-based translation research, Venuti claimed that “translation research and translator training have been impeded by the prevalence of linguistic-oriented approaches that offer a truncated view of the empirical data they collect” (Venuti 1998: 1). Unfortunately, Venuti didn’t elaborate what he means by a “truncated view of the empirical data they collect.” However, scholars who work with empirical-oriented approaches and do not take into account “the social values that enter into translating as well as the study of it” (Venuti 1998: 1) might argue that they have deliberately delimited their research scope. In Holmes’ (1988) terminology, they are product-oriented, not function-oriented studies. It could be argued that there is room in translation studies for independent product-, process-, and function-oriented approaches, which focus on different dimensions of translation and translating practice. Here Venuti fails to recognise this point of view and dismisses product-oriented approaches for not dealing simultaneously with “social values.” Furthermore, Venuti believes that the “description of textual features and strategies” entails the claim of objective, value free results and the negation of “the creative reproduction of values” (Venuti 1998: 1). This can, but need not, be so. The results of the analysis of textual features can, or should, be used as evidence of the expression of some specific social values in the translated text.

What we would like to advocate here is that linguistics-based and culture-based translation studies do not need to be regarded as opposing or irreconcilable, but can be complementary to each other. An integrated approach could be proposed drawing on the strengths of each orientation to provide a thicker picture of translation and translating practice in question, especially in the case of political discourse, due to its renowned complexity and manipulative nature.

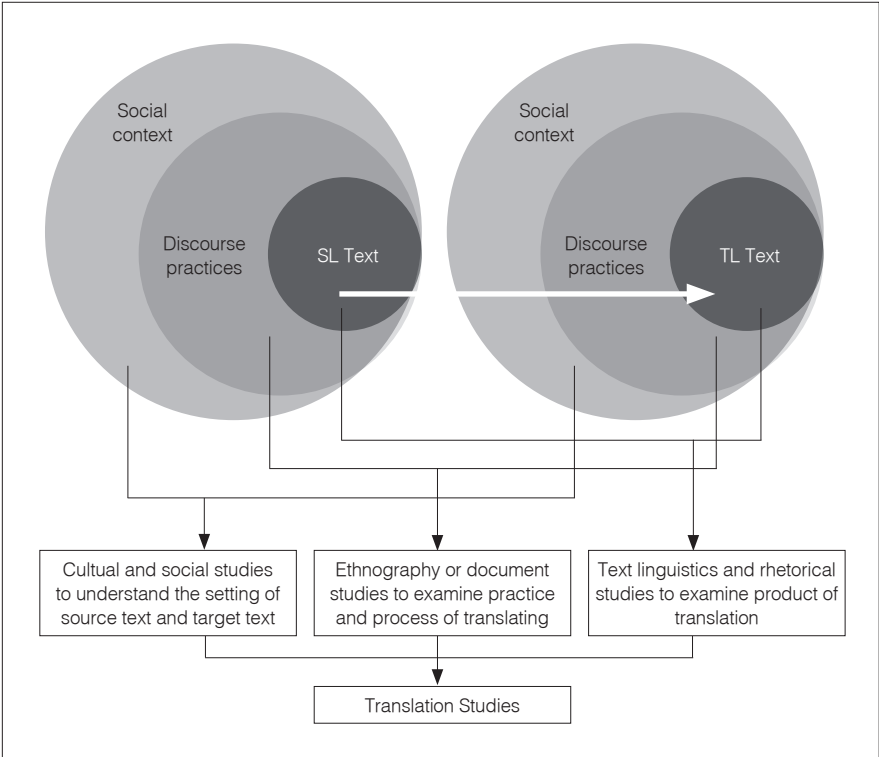
2. Researching the translation of ideology and power

In translating political discourse containing representations of ideological stance, translators are unable to stay neutral. As Hatim and Mason (1997: 143) point out, there is an ideology of translating as well as a translation of ideology. The way that the translator thinks can be revealed in the translated text. In Hatim and Mason's words, translators "intervene...feeding their own knowledge and beliefs into their processing of the text" (Hatim and Mason 1997: 147). It could be maintained that when translating texts, all the choices made are unconscious. But in translating texts which are overtly representative of political stance, conscious choice of ideological stance could be inevitable. When exploring translation and translation practice, this suggests an important research direction, namely, analysing translators' ideology in translating. In other words, to what extent translators adopt the ideology of the source text, or adapt it and modify it for the interest of audience, and how they achieve that could be of interest to both researchers and translation practitioners.

To examine translated text and the translating practice of political discourse, this article proposes an integrated research framework while incorporating perspectives from critical discourse analysis and both linguistics and culture-based translation studies. The following figure summarises the framework.

As a point of departure, this framework draws on Fairclough's (1995, 2003) three layers model in critical discourse analysis (CDA), which covers text, discourse practices and social context. This framework regards "language as social practice" and considers the context of language use to be crucial (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). It aims to explore the contextual factors which contribute to the production of the translation by drawing on cultural and social studies. This framework represents a context-concerned approach to translation and translating practice, which attempts to describe the way in

Figure 1. An integrated approach to translation studies



which practices of translating produce the subject and the social world that the translators and readers inhabit. In other words, this view not only aims to describe the linguistic characteristics of the source language texts (SLT) and target language texts (TLT), but also attempts to reveal how the translation has been produced and consumed in relation to its socio-cultural context.

In this framework, text linguistics and rhetorical studies are employed to examine the SL text and the TL text. At this level, the SL text and the TL text are compared and contrasted with a view to identifying problematic areas for further exploration by drawing on theories such as systemic functional linguistics (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004; Martin 1992, 2000) and contrastive rhetoric studies (e.g. Connor 1996; Scollon 1999, 2000; Scollon and Scollon 1997; Kirkpatrick 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997). At the second level of analysis, i.e., discourse practice, the translation production and consumption

process will be examined; document analysis of existing literature and ethnographic research techniques such as interview, survey, observation might be utilised. At the third level of analysis, i.e., contextual level, social and cultural studies will be drawn on in an attempt to uncover the connections between the translation and the socio-cultural and socio-political contexts in which the translation occurs.

This framework will be illustrated by a sample study, which examines the textual and contextual features of the translation of the 2008 Chinese Government Report by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao (see Section 4).

3. The official political discourse in China

Prior to the presentation of the sample study, we will discuss briefly the general discursual and rhetorical features of official political discourse in China. In this article, official political discourse in China refers to the language used by China's ruling elite to disseminate its formulation and execution of political action. This could cover a wide spectrum of texts such as reports of the Party and people's congresses, major speeches made by the leadership and newspaper leading articles, which are used to inform the public and instil the ideology that guides the public how to "think" and "speak." This broad spectrum of texts usually includes language which overtly or covertly represents the nation's ideals, goals, attitudes and pre-occupations, which may often not be shared by outsiders. These features raise challenges in translating the documents in such a way that the original image and impact remain as the national bodies require. This section examines the key rhetorical and linguistic features in official political discourse in China.

It is widely believed that traditional Chinese political thought and rhetorical practices in historical and literary texts have exerted great impact on contemporary Chinese political discourse (Oliver 1971, 1989; Pye 1985, 1992; Townsend and Womack 1986). In studying *Shang Shu* (尚书), a collection of public speeches by rulers and military commanders in the middle or late Zhou Dynasty (771BC – 256BC), Lu (1998) identifies five characteristics of these speeches. They are: (1) the use of *tian ming* (Mandate of Heaven) as the universal principle to legitimate the overthrow of an old regime; (2) the use of historical examples to justify the current action; (3) the use of psychological appeals of rewards and punishment as a source of motivation; (4) moral

appeals; and (5) the use of metaphors and analogies. Lu (1998) further argues that as one of the early ancient Chinese texts on political communication, these characteristics set up the standard for many speeches to follow in similar speech contexts and by rulers in subsequent dynasties.

Lucian Pye also pointed out in his 1992 book, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*, that Chinese imperial and Communist politics share a lot in common in that they are both hierarchical in structure, both show heavy dependence upon formal ideologies, and moral righteousness. In his view (Pye 1992: ix), “the centrality of hierarchy, elaborate concerns involved in managing superior-subordinate relations, and a pervasive use of moralistic rhetoric have combined to produce in China a form of Confucianist Leninism...”

China has experienced ideological shifts since 1949 when Communists took power and especially after Deng Xiaoping’s pragmatism prevailed in Chinese politics in 1978. However, some key rhetorical features in Chinese political discourse mentioned by Lu and Pye remain still valid. In the following, we identify five rhetorical and discursal features in contemporary Chinese political discourse, some of which might be traced back to the ancient root and the spirit of Chinese politics: the top-down approach in rhetorical practice; the positive representation of the regime; the use of ideological-loaded terminologies; the use of non-subject sentences and moral/ethical appeals.

The following sample study will draw on the integrated approach discussed above and the five discursal and rhetorical features of Chinese political discourse to examine the translation of a Chinese government report delivered by Premier Wen Jiabao in 2008.

4. A sample study

The study analyses the translation of the Report on the Work of the Government delivered in the first Plenary Session of the 11th National People’s Congress (NPC) which held its annual meeting from March 5 to March 18, 2008 in Beijing.

At the plenary meeting of the NPC, Premier Wen Jiabao, on behalf of the State Council, delivered the government report, reviewing the work of the past five years and setting up major tasks for 2008. This report is, in a sense, both a speech and a formal report delivered by the Premier orally at the meeting of the National People’s Congress. This comprehensive 24,098 word report

covers a broad range of subjects, including the nation's politics, economy, social development, education, foreign policy, environmental protection etc. Both the original text and its translated version are retrieved from the Chinese government official website (<http://www.gov.cn/index.htm>).

This study draws on the integrated approach discussed above, especially, to examine the socio-political setting in which the translation occurs and how the discursal and rhetorical features of political discourse in China are translated in its socio-political contexts.

4.1. A contextual analysis of translation of the Chinese government report

As efforts of reform and opening-up are being strengthened constantly, China's fast economic development and increasing involvement in international affairs have boosted China's international status. With the development of frequent exchanges and cooperation with other countries, Chinese society and various Chinese policies are attracting more and more attention from the international world. Meanwhile, China is anxious to inform the outside world of its internal harmony, prosperity and cultural values in its reforms, opening-up and modernization. China's policy of public diplomacy indicates that "We should use persuasive ways to communicate with the international community to ensure that our message is effectively put across. We should work to enable the international community to develop an objective and balanced view on China's development and international role, so as to foster an environment of friendly public opinion for China" (Wen 2007).

In government reports, the leadership of the Chinese nation uses specific language to address its own people and the international world gets the information from the translation. When translated into globally acceptable and understandable versions, the top-down messages, local cultural and ideological references are required to be transferred to the intended readers.

In China, government reports published in Chinese and in translated versions are usually available at the official website of the Chinese central government. These domestic messages are not only intended for internal consumption in the source language, but also are intended for a globally oriented readership through translation. Translation of Chinese government documents is conducted by the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau (CCTB), a standing translation institute for the external propaganda service.

It was founded by the Central Committee of Communist Party of China (CCCPC) in 1961 with two major aims, one being compiling and translating works by the leaders of the Party and the State, the other being translating Party literature of the CCCPC. Its intended readership is international news reporters, diplomatic community, foreigners in China and Chinese learners of English as well.

The government employees or approved professional translators are, taking the Chinese-English translation team for example, bilingual experts mainly from the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China International Publishing Group, International Department, Beijing Foreign Studies University and Xinhua News Agency, working together with two to three foreign sub-editors who correct the translated English. Those state-qualified translators appointed by the Chinese authority need to ensure that the message will be unadulterated in translation. Not only do they have strong proficiency in translation, but also have a firm political orientation (Ying 2009). Each time translating government documents to other languages is a “serious political task” (Wang 2008: 45). In this situation, freelance workers will not be assigned to translate the texts which represent the state. As indicated by a senior translator who was involved in the translation of the 2008 government report, “the translation of a government report is arduous work and always involves more than ten professionals to work together” (Wang 2008: 45). In order to provide a quality translation, the elaborate working procedure includes several rounds of discussion, polishing and revision.

What follows is to explore specifically how the discursal and rhetorical features of political discourse in China are translated by the approved translators in its socio-political context.

4.2. Top-down approach in rhetorical approach

As observed in Joseph (2010: 129-130), “the existence and enforcement of an official ideology ... is one of the defining characteristics of a communist party-state like the PRC: the ruling party bases its claim to power largely on its role as the only rightful interpreter of the values and the beliefs that will guide the nation to its ideologically determined goals.”

The party’s role as the sole interpreter of values and beliefs in China tends to legitimate its patriarchal approach, which is evident in their rhetorical practices.

Political texts produced under such a mindset are usually indicative of an unequal relationship and a power over common citizens. Translating this tone and style into the target language might involve modification and mediation to make the target text accessible to its target audience.

The top-down approach in the rhetorical practice of Chinese political discourse is characterised by modal operators with different values asserting an unequal relationship between the author/speaker and the reader/listener. Chinese modals are a hyponym of auxiliary verbs (Li 2003). Since there is no consensus of the criteria of Chinese auxiliary verbs, we are going to check the ones most listed by Chinese linguists and their translations in the government report. This table shows a comparison of translations of the modal auxiliary verbs of this report from Chinese to English. It is found that shifts of modality rarely occur from specific expressions in the target text, which means modal verbs which are contained in Chinese clauses in the government report are mostly kept in the translation.

Table 1. Translating modal verbs from the source text to the target text

Source text	Numbers of occurrences	Target text	Numbers of occurrences
要 (<i>yao</i>)	94	will	43
		must	26
		need	17
		should	2
		“interpersonal metaphor”	2
		have to	1
必须 (<i>bi xu</i>)	14	must	14
能 (<i>neng</i>)	8	can	5
需要 (<i>xu yao</i>)	4	need	2
		must	2
能够 (<i>neng gou</i>)	3	be able to	1
		will	1
		can	1
可能 (<i>ke neng</i>)	1	could	1

The most frequently used modal auxiliary verb in the source text is 要 (yao). Although 要 (yao) could be treated as a main verb or a temporality marker, in this government work report 要 (yao) has been translated as an auxiliary verb that indicates epistemic necessity, a matter of probability. It is the speaker's willingness and carries a shade of subjectivity that the translator(s) dealt with 要 (yao) as a modal auxiliary verb. Some examples are given below:

(1) ST: 今年 要 着重抓好以下九个方面工作;
 This year need concentrate on nine tasks this year
 TT: We **need to** concentrate on the following nine tasks this year.

(2) ST: ……是今年 宏观调控 的 重大任务…… 一要……
 ……is this year macroeconomic regulation's major task... First need ...
 二要…… 三要…… 四要…… 也要…… 五要……
 Second need ... Third need ... Fourth need ... also need ... Fifth need ...
 六要…… 七要…… 特别要…… 八要…… 九要……
 Sixth need ... Seventh need ... In particular need ... Eighth need ... Ninth need ...

TT: One major task for macroeconomic regulation this year is..., we **must**Second, we **must**... Third, we **need**... ... and ... **should** also... Fifth, we **need**... Sixth, we **must**... Seventh, we **need**... In particular, we **need**... Eighth, we **must**... Ninth, we **will**...

From the examples above, even though one translation of 要 (yao) is “will,” it realises inclination of proposal, but does not indicate primary future tense.

This table shows that the translator in this government report treats 要 (yao) as a modal verb not a main verb or a tense marker. To translate the modal verb 要 (yao), the translator adopts six different expressions to construct the author's intention in English translation:

(3) ST: 同时, 又 要 考虑到……
 At the same time also need Consider...
 TT: At the same time, we **have to** take into consideration ...

(4) ST: 我们 一定 要 让 人民群众……
 We must need let the people...
 TT: **It is imperative that** the people...

In this government report, all the structures of 要 (yao) sentences are fairly

similar, expressing the subject's willingness which is the basic meaning of *yao* to perform an action (Alleton 1994). Repetition makes a function of emphasis in the speech and the speaker's commitment as well. It also indicates that the author/speaker holds power over the reader/listener. From these examples (1), (2), (3) and (4), we can see that modality is expressed in the translation in various ways in "yao" sentences. They are "will," "must," "need," "should," "have to" and a metaphor of modality "it is imperative." Of all the 94 要 (*yao*) in the ST, 45 要 (*yao*) were translated as "will" and "should" which in one way causes variation of translating the same word from Chinese to English, and in another, more importantly, makes the tone not as extreme as "must," "need" and "have to." It indicates that the translators have mediated and modified the translation in accordance with their interpretation of the text and perhaps in consideration of the acceptance of the target audience and the norm of the target language.

This study also found that in the English translation of the government report, the translator adopts modal finites to represent various degrees of obligation and inclination. The following table shows all the finite verbal operators in the target text based on a summary of the distribution of modal operators with different values (see Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 116). The number of modal operators in the target language (479) is far greater than those in the source text (124).

Table 2. Modality in target text

	Low		Median				High		
Positive	can	could	would	should	is to	will	need	must	have to
	6	2	4	14	7	336	36	69	1
Negative			should not				can not		
			1				3		

(5) ST: ……针对 ……等 经济 发展中 不稳定、 不协调、
 …aim at …etc economic development unstable unbalanced
 不可持续的 问题……
 unsustainable problems...

TT: ...to address problems such as... which *could* cause economic development to become unstable, unbalanced and unsustainable.

(6) ST: 今年 国民经济 和 社会发展的 预期 目标
 This year national economy and social development predicable target
 是……国内生产总值 增长 8%左右; 居民消费价格 总水平
 is GDP increase around 8% CPI generally
 涨幅 控制在 4.8%左右; 城镇 新增 就业
 rise controlled around 4.8% urban newly increased employment
 1000万人, 城镇 登记 失业率 控制在 4.5%左右;
 ten million urban register unemployment controlled around 4.5%.
 国际 收支状况 有所 改善。
 international Balance of payment somewhat improve.

TT: We have set the following targets for economic and social development in 2008... the GDP *should* grow by about 8%, and the rise in the CPI *should* be held at around 4.8%. Ten million jobs *should* be created in urban areas, and the rate of registered urban unemployment *should* be kept at around 4.5%. Some improvement *should* be made in the balance of payments.

(7) ST: 改革 政府 投资 管理方式……
 reform government investment management...

TT: We *need* to reform the management of government investment...

(8) ST: 从^严 控制 新增 建设用地……
 tighten control new development land...

TT: We *must* tighten control over the amount of land used for development projects...

In these examples (5), (6), (7) and (8), the original texts are statements in which no modality is negotiated. However, in the translated version, a kind of modality is added or negotiated through a finite modal operator such as “could,” “should,” “need” and “must” which expresses obligation in a different value. “Could” and “should” make the opinion negotiable which is not too extreme or absolute. “Must” and “need” explicitly embody the author’s firm standpoint which intensifies the government’s determination without any compromise. Such negotiation of modality might be very much associated with the translator’s ideology and interpretation of the meanings intended in the original text.

There are some places where no modality is negotiated, and other places where no different levels of modality in the source text are implied such as

要 (yao) sentences in example (1), (2), (3) and (4), where the translator adds modality with a different value. In other words, we cannot see the semantic differences of obligation or inclination in the source text; however, there are very obvious shifts of modalities in the target text. It indicates that the mediation and modification of the translation might be due to the consideration of the acceptance of the target audience and the norm of the target language.

The author/speaker's personal stance as well as the particular social relationship and social attitude evident in the source text strongly reflect the top-down approach in rhetorical practice. In the source text, the relationship between the author/speaker and the reader/listener, which are Premier of the State Council and members of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference respectively, is characterised by orders and instructions. The formal level and the top-down approach in rhetorical practice also clearly feed into the interpersonal functional components by enhancing the text's unassailable authority. In the target text, the relationship becomes between translators and the international community. The author's stance is changed so that the translation loses the original's order and absoluteness. Instead a new note of description and negotiation is introduced onto the text through elaboration of the author/speaker's attitude. Most of the original's absolute judgments are transferred into less extreme and less authoritarian ones.

4.3. The representation of the regime

As observed by Pellatt and Liu (2010), no matter whether it is in the leaders' speech or other political texts, the official Chinese political discourse aims at showing the regime in the best possible light and emphasises the highlights to the internal public. When there are achievements they will be glorified and laid claim to. When there are defeats and disasters, they are explained and justified. The leadership always make positive pledges about the future. This would be an overt feature across all political discourse in China.

This message will be also heard in translation by different language communities throughout the world. As government official texts could be very politically sensitive, the Chinese authorities responsible for commissioning translation need the message to be transmitted unadulterated to the international world. Official domestic translation is only carried out by state-approved translators in order to preserve the original intention in the source

text. It will not be commissioned to foreign organisations, researchers or journalists.

With regards to the official translation into English of the propaganda of China, Pellatt and Liu (2010: 113) claimed that “it is punctiliously correct in terms of grammar” and the style is “formal, perhaps over-elegant, and long, with a tendency to what British readers might regard as flowery.” They also suggested that it would be instructive to compare the style and strategies of official translators with the more natural English choices a native speaker free-lancer might make (2010: 114).

4.4. The use of ideological-loaded terminologies

As another unique discursual feature in Chinese political discourse, the heavy use of ideologically loaded terminologies presents challenges to its translators. Along with the waves of ideological innovation, each generation of leadership has generated its own ideological terminologies to legitimate its authority of leadership. For instance, under Deng Xiaoping’s regime, such terminologies include *gaige kaifang* (改革开放, reform and open-up policy) and *sixiang jiben guanzhe* (四项基本原则, the Four Cardinal Principles), and *quanmian jianshe xiaokang shehui* (全面建设小康社会, build a well-off society in an all-round way); under Jiang Zemin’s time, typical terms were *sange daibiao* (三个代表, three represents), *sanjiang* (三讲, three talks) and *jushijujing* (与时俱进, keep pace with the times); Hu Jintao created his own terminologies including *hexie shehui* (和谐社会, harmonious society), *barong bachi* (八荣八耻, Socialist concept of honour and disgrace—Eight Dos and Don’ts) and *kexue fazhan guan* (科学发展观, Scientific theories of development).

Being the key approach to crystallise the ideology of the Party, Chinese political discourse is full of ideological-loaded terms with meanings not easily shared by outsiders. In translating these terminologies, challenges exist in finding equivalence and keeping a balance between maintenance of the original image and impact of the words and over-explanations of the terms that might confuse and bore the readers. For instance, *xiaokan shehui* (小康社会) was translated in this report as “a moderately prosperous society,” while it was also translated as “a well-off society,” “a relatively comfortable society,” “a comparatively well-off society” and “comfortably well-off” in previous

government reports. It could be argued that a consensus of translating this ideological-loaded term is not easily achieved. However, the surge of new words deriving from a rapidly changing society challenges translators, and requires that the information is not sabotaged when translated into the world. The Translators Association of China (TAC), as the only national association in the field of translation in China, organised The International Communications Translation Committee to establish a translation consultancy mechanism for translating Chinese into other languages. The Committee holds regular seminars twice a year, to discuss the translation of newly emerged expressions and concepts in the political, cultural and economic life in China, and duly publishes them in its journal (*Chinese Translators Journal*) and website (www.tac-online.org.cn) for the public to refer to.

4.5. The use of non-subject sentences

The existence of non-subject sentences is a common phenomenon in Chinese political texts. It is not the equivalence of the imperative sentence or the subject-omitted sentence in English which indicates conciseness, but a unique sentence structure in Chinese in which the contextual and intertextual clues in understanding the text are highly valued. Examples of a non-subject sentence could be widely found in Chinese political discourse, where usually the subject can be easily figured out or does not need to be mentioned in the context.

Determining what strategies to take in translating these sentences into English involves not only a meticulous examination of the tone and style of the source text, but consideration of how to strike a balance between reproduction of the original text and acceptance of the target text in the target culture. It is found that translating omission of subject clauses is solved in two separate ways.

1. Subjects supplemented by adding the logical subject inferred from the context

- (9) ST: 成功 举办 一系列 重大 多边 外交 活动。
 successfully hold a series of major multilateral diplomatic activities.
TT: *We carried out a series of major multilateral diplomatic activities.*

In this example, it can be seen that the translator supplements this sentence with a subject by adding the logical subject “we” as the responsible actor of the event inferred from the context.

2. *Subjects supplemented by deploying some nominal group of the sentence as a subject*

(10) ST : 努力 增加 城乡 居民…… 收入。
 vigorously increase urban and rural residents... income.

TT : Vigorous efforts were made to increase the incomes of urban and rural residents.

In example (10), the translator adds a subject which is a nominal group in the clause.

For these two methods of translating subject omission clauses in the source text, we made a comparison of the translator’s choices in Table 3.

Table 3. Translating non-subject sentences

Source text	Target text	Number of instances	Percentage (%)
Non-subject sentence	Solution 1	677	92.4
	Solution 2	56	7.6
Total		733	100

From Table 3, we can see that, of all the 733 subject omission clauses in this government work report, 92.4% of them added the logical subject inferred from the context, which in all cases was “we.” This method is far more frequently adopted than solution two which means some nominal group of the sentence is deployed as a subject.

The subject carries the semantic burden by being “responsible for the functioning of the clause as an interactive event” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 117). Even though “a translator has the freedom to select any construction in the target language to provide an appropriate rendition of the meaning of the sentence in the source language” (Li and Thompson 1981: 89), translated versions using the two solutions are slightly different. Compared with solution two, solution one as the dominant expression goes with a personal style in which the author’s/speaker’s perspective is more involved and personalised.

In those translations, the translator mainly complements the sentence with “we” as the subject. It gives the readers/listeners the impression that “we” are responsible for all the activities that have been done and will be done.

4.6. Moral/ethical appeals

In classical Chinese rhetoric, moral appeals were employed as universal appeals for the purpose of public and private persuasion (Lu 2002). Different generations of leadership will generate their moralistic language in an attempt to make a contribution to the ideological system in the Party-State. This moralistic language will be framed as the criterion of political righteousness in that specific period of regime. Even after the economic boom of these last 30 years, government officials are frequently required to read Deng Xiaoping’s and Jiang Zemin’s work, more importantly in recent years Hu Jintao’s work, as they provide moral guidance and ethical standards for action. These works by leaders have been regarded as providing moralistic language and are widely employed by the subordinates as criteria to make judgements between right and wrong, good and bad, advanced and non-advanced. Although in private settings, people can openly express their different views on issues, in public situations especially for the government official, it is important to identify themselves with the authority in their political views.

The employment of moral appeals can be found in many places in the sample text. For instance, in this report when Wen Jiabao summarised the experience over the past five years, he stated,

必须坚持解放思想。解放思想，实事求是是我们党的思想路线。只有坚持一切从实际出发，破除迷信，敢于冲破不合时宜的观念束缚，尊重群众首创精神，大胆探索、实践和创造，与时俱进，才能使社会主义现代化事业充满生机和活力。 [We must continue to liberate our thinking. Liberating our thinking and following a realistic and pragmatic approach is the Party's ideological line. We must proceed from reality in everything we do, eliminate superstition, break the shackles of outdated ideas, respect the people's pioneering spirit, boldly explore new ways, take concrete action, be creative, and keep up with the times to ensure that the cause of socialist modernization retains its great vitality.]

Here in this short paragraph, “liberating thought” [解放思想] becomes the moral appeal that the writer is drawing on to persuade the audience.

In translating official Chinese political discourse, Huang (2004: 27) advocates the principle of three concerns of translation for global communication: “concern with the development situation in China, concern with the demand of international audience for information in China and concern with the thinking pattern of international audience.” Even though certain moral appeal is rarely provided to guide the audience in English language, translating it from China’s government report employs a discourse of apparent encouragement, inspiration and patriotism. Official English translations of this type of discourse tend to be long and literal, but may not always sound very persuasive for outsiders.

5. Conclusion

The sample study illustrated how the discoursal/rhetorical features in Chinese political discourse have been translated and explored the ideological and cultural factors that mediated and manipulated the translation and translating practice. It might be concluded from the study that the ideology of the translators in this translation commission is very much in line with that of the Party’s and the goal of maintaining the tone and style in rendering the government report is well achieved. The translators’ ideology plays an indispensable role in the translation both as process and as product. Reproducing the message of the original text accurately and objectively is crucial during the translation process. Thus, the translator’s subjectivity is severely constrained.

On the other hand, the translator must also fully and explicitly state the information implicit in the source text in accordance with the principle and usage of the target language. In order to be communicatively effective, it can be found that, in this government report, translators modify the text at the level of intention so that the recipients of translated messages can be addressed as primary readers wherever appropriate. One of the senior translators who participated in translating this piece of government report also mentioned that they studied some American official reports as a reference and analysed their rhetorical expression, however, due to significant writing and speaking differences between East and West, it is fairly limited to be used for reference. He also believes that various “values of modality” in the translated text result from different interpretation due to the translator’s personal understanding (P. Wang, personal communication, September 27, 2008).

However, the “manipulated” nature of the translation of the SL text is clearly found in the analysis of the TL text. The example of translating the “要” (yao) in Chinese into over six different versions of English and the far more model operators in the TL text demonstrated the translators’ attempt to cater for the target language, audience and culture. To fit into an English context, the original author’s stance is changed so that the translation loses the original’s order and absoluteness. Instead a new note of description and negotiation is introduced onto the text through syntactic amplification and elaboration of the author/speaker’s attitude. Most of the original’s absolute judgments are transferred into less extreme and less authoritarian ones. The study demonstrates that when translating texts, all the choices made might be unconscious. But in translating political texts such as this, conscious choice of ideological stance is inevitable.

The theoretical and analytical framework employed in this study provides perspectives that may contribute to the development of translation studies. This perspective highlights discourse practices from the translators’ point of view. It includes an effort to understand how translators use different strategies and devices to “manipulate” translation and address their target audience. In addition, possible socio-cultural and socio-political factors are explored for further understanding the underlying factors for translating behaviour and process production in specific contexts.

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Author's address

Wei Wang, Ph.D.

School of Languages and Cultures,
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006, Australia
wei.wang@sydney.edu.au

Liang Xia, Mr.

School of Languages and Cultures,
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006, Australia
lxia7238@uni.sydney.edu.au

About the author

Wei Wang is Lecturer in Translation Studies at the University of Sydney. His primary research interest is in the area of comparative discourse studies, especially from a genre-based view. His Ph.D. is from the University of Sydney on a contrastive genre study of newspaper commentaries on 9/11 in China and Australia. He is the author of *Genre across Languages and Cultures* (VDM, 2007). He also publishes in *Discourse Studies*, *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* and *University of Sydney Papers in TESOL*. His research also includes translation studies, Chinese linguistics and second language acquisition.

Liang Xia is a Ph.D. student in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Sydney, Australia. His research interests include translation studies, discourse analysis, systemic theory and functional grammar.

Appendix

政府工作报告（节选）

2008年3月5日在第十一届全国人民代表大会第一次会议上
国务院总理 温家宝

Excerpts from

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE GOVERNMENT

Delivered at the First Session of the 11th National People's Congress on March 5, 2008
Wen Jiabao Premier of the State Council

No. Examples

.....

1. 今年要着重抓好以下九个方面工作:

We need to concentrate on the following nine tasks this year:

.....

2. 防止价格总水平过快上涨，是今年宏观调控的重大任务。必须从增加有效供给和抑制不合理需求两方面采取有力措施。一要大力发展生产，特别要加强粮食、食用植物油、肉类等基本生活必需品和其他紧缺商品生产，认真落实支持发展生产的政策措施，搞好产运销衔接。二要严格控制工业用粮和粮食出口。坚决制止玉米深加工能力盲目扩张，违规在建项目必须停建。三要加快健全储备体系，改进和完善储备调节和进出口调节方式，适当增加国内紧缺重要消费品进口。四要把握好政府调价的时机和力度，必须调整的资源性产品价格和公共服务收费也要从严控制，防止出现轮番涨价。五要健全大宗农产品、初级产品供求和价格变动的监测预警制度，做好市场供应和价格应急预案。六要加强市场和价格监管，抓好教育收费、医药价格、农资价格及涉农收费的监督检查。依法打击串通涨价、囤积居奇、哄抬物价等违法违规行为。七要及时完善和落实对低收入群众的补助办法，特别要增加对生活困难群众和家庭经济困难学生的补贴，确保他们基本生活水平不因物价上涨而下降。八要遏制生产资料尤其是农业生产资料价格过快上涨。九要坚持实行“米袋子”省长负责制和“菜篮子”市长负责制。

One major task for macroeconomic regulation this year is to prevent the overall price level from rising rapidly. To fulfill this task, we must take powerful measures to increase effective supply while curbing excessive demand. First, we must expand production, especially the production of the basic necessities of life such as grain, vegetable oil and meat as well as

other commodities in short supply.

We must also earnestly implement policies and measures designed to support production and ensure coordination in the production, transport and sale of products. Second, we must strictly control industrial use of grain and grain exports. The reckless expansion of the capacity for intensive corn processing and construction work on such projects that violate regulations must be stopped. Third, we need to speed up improvement of the reserve system, improve methods for adjusting reserves and import and export volumes, and appropriately increase imports of major consumer goods that are in short supply on the domestic market. Fourth, we need to ensure that the timing and the size of government adjustments to prices are appropriate, and necessary adjustment of prices of resource products and public services should also be strictly controlled to prevent waves of price increases. Fifth, we need to improve the early-warning system to monitor supply and demand and price changes of principal agricultural products and primary products, and put in place a plan for responding to drastic changes in market supply and demand and prices. Sixth, we must strengthen market and price oversight and pay close attention to the oversight and inspection of prices and charges related to education, medical care, drugs, agricultural supplies, agriculture, rural areas and farmers. Illegal activities such as colluding or hoarding to drive up prices will be punished in accordance with the law. Seventh, we need to promptly improve and implement measures to aid the low-income sector of the population. In particular, we need to increase subsidies to poor people and students from poor families to ensure that their basic living standards do not drop because of price increases. Eighth, we must work to make sure that the prices of the means of production, particularly agricultural supplies, do not rise rapidly. Ninth, we will continue to implement the system of provincial governors assuming responsibility for the “rice bag” (grain supply) program and city mayors for the “vegetable basket” (non-staple food supply) program.

.....

- 3 提出居民消费价格总水平涨幅控制在4.8%左右，主要是由于去年价格上涨对今年价格的翘尾影响较大，推动价格上涨的因素较多，控制物价上涨的难度加大；同时，又要考虑到居民、企业和社会各方面承受能力，努力避免物价涨幅过大。

The major considerations in setting the target for keeping the CPI this year at around 4.8% are as follows: last year's price increases are still exerting a fairly strong influence and quite a few factors are creating inflationary pressure, making it difficult to bring price increases under control. At the same time, we have to take into consideration the ability of individuals, enterprises and all sectors of society to tolerate price increases and try our best to avoid sharp price increases.

.....

- 4 我们一定要让人民群众吃得放心、用得安心，让出口产品享有良好信誉。
It is imperative that the people feel confident about the safety of food and other consumer

goods and that our exports have a good reputation.

.....

- 5 几年来，针对固定资产投资增长过快、货币信贷投放过多、外贸顺差过大，以及农业基础薄弱等经济发展中不稳定、不协调、不可持续的问题，严把土地、信贷两个闸门，提高市场准入门槛，适时调整财政政策、货币政策，完善产业政策和土地政策，调整经济结构，加强薄弱环节，搞好经济运行调节。

Over the past few years, we tightened controls on the supplies of land and credit, raised market access requirements, adjusted financial and monetary policies as needed, improved industrial policies and the land policy, adjusted the economic structure, shored up weak links and effectively regulated economic operation to address problems such as overheated growth in fixed asset investment, excessive supplies of money and credit, excessively large trade surplus, and weakness in agriculture, the foundation of the economy, which could cause economic development to become unstable, unbalanced and unsustainable.

.....

- 6 今年国民经济和社会发展的预期目标是：在优化结构、提高效益、降低消耗、保护环境的基础上，国内生产总值增长8%左右；居民消费价格总水平涨幅控制在4.8%左右；城镇新增就业1000万人，城镇登记失业率控制在4.5%左右；国际收支状况有所改善。

We have set the following targets for economic and social development in 2008: on the basis of improving the economic structure, productivity, energy efficiency and environmental protection, the GDP should grow by about 8%, and the rise in the CPI should be held at around 4.8%.

.....

- 7 要抓好增收节支，依法加强税收征管，规范非税收入管理，控制一般性支出。改革政府投资管理方式，提高投资使用效益。

We will work hard to increase revenue and reduce expenditures, tighten tax collection and management in accordance with the law, improve management of non-tax revenue, and control regular expenditures. We need to reform the management of government investment to improve the performance of investments.

.....

- 8 加大对经济社会发展薄弱环节、重点领域和中西部地区的支持力度。从严控制新增建设用地特别是工业用地，今年土地利用计划总规模控制在去年水平。

We will increase support for weak links and key areas in economic and social development and give more support to the central and western regions. We must tighten control over the amount of land used for development projects, especially for industrial purposes, and hold the total amount of land used this year to last year's level.

-
- 9 成功举办一系列重大多边外交活动。妥善应对国际上各种新挑战，积极负责地参与解决全球性问题，在解决国际和地区热点问题上发挥着重要的建设性作用。
We successfully carried out a series of major multilateral diplomatic activities. We appropriately responded to new challenges in the international arena, actively and responsibly participated in efforts to resolve global issues, and played an important and constructive role in the resolution of issues concerning international and regional hotspots.
-
- 10 努力增加城乡居民特别是低收入居民收入。调高最低工资标准；基本解决拖欠农民工工资问题；四次提高重点优抚对象的抚恤补助标准，统筹解决退役军人实际困难。
Vigorous efforts were made to increase the incomes of urban and rural residents, especially low-income persons. The minimum wage was increased. The problem of arrears in the wages of rural migrant workers in urban areas was basically resolved. The standards for financial aid to key entitled groups were increased four times, and plans were implemented to resolve the practical problems of demobilized military personnel.