

Comparative Study on Translation and Communication Strategies of China's External Emergency Discourse under the "Three-Dimensional Bidirectional" Framework

Jundan Deng

Nanchang Jiaotong Institute, Nanchang, Jiangxi, 330000, China

ABSTRACT

As an important participant in global cooperative governance, China's intensive release of external emergency statements through multiple channels such as white papers, press conferences, and diplomatic statements constitutes a source of information for the international community to recognize China's actions, understand China's ideology, and evaluate China's image. In this context, the aim of this study is to explore in depth: what translation strategies did China adopt for its external emergency discourse during special periods? How do these strategies address challenges from different dimensions? What factors constrain its ultimate dissemination effect? Based on this, the article conducts relevant research on the comparative translation strategies of China's external emergency discourse under the "Three-Dimensional Bidirectional" framework for reference.

KEYWORDS

"Three-Dimensional Bidirectional" framework; China's external emergency discourse; Translation strategy; Comparative study

1 Introduction

At the theoretical level, this article integrates the "Three-Dimensional" transformation theory in translation studies with the "Bidirectional" interactive concept in communication studies, constructing an integrated "Three-Dimensional Bidirectional" analytical framework to systematically examine the strategic choices of emergency discourse translation in multiple dimensions and its dynamic relationship with international communication effects. The aim is to break through the one-dimensional perspective in traditional translation or communication studies and provide a new theoretical lens for relevant academic discussions. At the practical level, by comparing and analyzing first-hand authoritative language materials, we can deeply summarize the experience and lessons of translating and introducing Chinese anti epidemic discourse to the outside world, providing valuable translation strategy templates for responding to similar international public crisis events in the future. This has a positive enlightening effect on enhancing China's international communication capabilities, strengthening its affinity for foreign language systems, and more effectively participating in global governance dialogues.

2 Theoretical interpretation of the "Three-Dimensional Bidirectional" framework

2.1 Constituent elements of "Three-Dimensional" framework

The theory of "Three-Dimensional" transformation originates from translation studies, and its essence lies in breaking through the traditional translation research's rigid static comparison at the linguistic and textual level, and viewing translation as a dynamic and regenerative behavior across languages and cultures. In this study, "Three-Dimensional" specifically refers to three interrelated and progressive strategic dimensions in the process of emergency discourse translation. Language is the fundamental level, focusing on the adaptive transformation of language forms such as vocabulary, syntax, rhetoric, etc. Its goal is to pursue semantic "equivalence" and achieve "clarity" and "readability" of information. In emergency contexts, this is reflected in the standardization of professional medical terminology, the simplification and splitting of lengthy policy sentence structures, and the logical reconstruction of Chinese specific parallelism structures, aimed at avoiding ambiguity and ensuring that the main information can be received by international audiences without loss. The cultural dimension is an intermediate level that requires translators to go beyond the literal meaning, delve into the cultural connotations, values, and ideologies behind the discourse, and make necessary interpretations, compensations, or adjustments. Emergency language often contains expressions with distinct Chinese political and cultural characteristics, such as "putting the people and their lives first" and "the whole country playing a chess game". If translated directly, it often confuses or even misunderstands overseas readers. Therefore, it is necessary to build a bridge of cultural cognition in translation, seek conceptual correspondence, or supplement background explanations to achieve deep level "meaning communication". The communicative dimension is the highest level and ultimate orientation, emphasizing that the act of translation should serve the overall communication intention.

This means that translators must fully consider the audience psychology, communication channels, and expected functions of the translated text in their strategic choices, and ultimately achieve the communicative goals of eliciting empathy, establishing trust, promoting cooperation, or guiding public opinion through precise regulation of tone, emotion, and language force.

2.2 "Bidirectional" interactive mechanism

The introduction of the "Bidirectional" interactive mechanism reveals that emergency discourse translation is not a one-way, linear process from the source language to the target language, but a cyclic system that includes two ports of "translation out" and "translation in" and influences each other. Translation "refers to the process led by the Chinese government, actively releasing emergency information to the international community and translating it. Its core is the effort to" shape "the national image, reflecting the strategic choices of the subject, that is, the specific application field of the aforementioned "Three-Dimensional" strategy. Once information enters the international public opinion arena, it immediately enters the "translation" port and becomes the object of reception, interpretation, retelling, and even reconstruction by various international actors. This process is full of the agency of 'other shaping', and the audience will filter, frame, and even distort information from China based on their own cultural assumptions, ideological positions, and interest concerns. Therefore, the final effectiveness of the carefully designed "Three-Dimensional" strategy on the "translation out" end must be tested by feedback from the "translation in" end. There is tension between the two, and misunderstandings in international public opinion will prompt China to adjust its subsequent translation methods, which in turn will affect a new round of international interpretation.

2.3 Applicability of the framework in emergency discourse

The application of the "Three-Dimensional Bidirectional" framework in the study of China's external emergency discourse in the context of special periods has a high degree of compatibility. The "Three-Dimensional Bidirectional" framework provides us with a panoramic analytical lens, allowing us to deeply analyze the opportunities, challenges, and internal adjustment logic encountered by the Chinese characteristic emergency discourse system in the process of going global, surpassing the limitations of previous single views on text or effects.

3 Corpus selection and research methods for China's external emergency discourse during special periods

3.1 Source of corpus

The corpus selection for this study strictly follows the principles of authority, diversity, and comparability, and constructs a three-dimensional corpus that includes both the "translated out" and "translated in" ends. The translated corpus focuses on the highly authoritative emergency discourse texts actively released by the Chinese government and official media to the international community, including the transcripts and official translations of speeches related to special period responses at the routine press conferences of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Council Information Office. The texts have a policy defense color; And the key reports and comments released by mainstream foreign propaganda media such as China Daily and People's Daily Overseas Edition targeting overseas audiences during special periods represent the media and mass translation form of official discourse. As a reference, the translated corpus is selected from Western mainstream media with global influence, such as Reuters, BBC, CNN, etc., focusing on collecting their reports, retellings, and comments on the issues involved in the Chinese "translated" corpus, in order to capture the actual situation of China's emergency discourse being received, interpreted, and framed in the international communication field.

3.2 Research methods

This study adopts a mixed research method of qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis, aiming to conduct multi-level comparative analysis of the corpus. The main methods are text comparative analysis and critical discourse analysis. Firstly, a detailed parallel comparison is made between the Chinese and English texts on the "translation" end, and an aligned corpus is established. Based on the "Three-Dimensional" transformation framework, translation phenomena are annotated, classified, and explained, with a focus on identifying strategic transformations and their motivations in language, culture, and communication dimensions. Furthermore, from the perspective of critical discourse analysis, the above text transformation strategies are linked to a broader socio-cultural context and ideological power structure, exploring the underlying intention of constructing the national image. The auxiliary method is content analysis, mainly used to process a large amount of international media corpus on the "translation" end. By designing a coding table, a systematic quantitative description of the feedback from international media can be provided, which can be mutually verified with the strategy analysis of the "translation" end, and more objectively reveal the correlation between the

"translation" strategy and the actual communication effect, ultimately completing the theoretical verification of the "Three-Dimensional Bidirectional" interaction mechanism.

4 Translation and communication strategies of China's external emergency discourse in special times

4.1 Comparison of language dimensions

In terms of language dimension, the translation and communication of China's external emergency discourse presents a significant feature from "exploratory confusion" to "strategic unity". In the early stage of the special period, there was a diversified exploration of terminology translation, reflecting the immediate challenges of information processing in emergency situations. But with the development of the special period, the translation strategy quickly tends towards standardization, actively maintaining comprehensive consistency with the official name "COVID-19" of the World Health Organization, reflecting the strategic intention of aligning with the international system and seeking authoritative certification to enhance the credibility of discourse. At the syntactic level, the commonly seen grand narrative parallelism and policy document style long sentences in Chinese original texts are systematically deconstructed and reorganized during the translation process. Translators tend to break down complex long sentences into short sentence chains that conform to English reading habits, and the implicit logical relationships are made explicit through connecting words, using a large amount of passive voice to create an objective and calm language style. For example, the passionate expression "We uphold the concept of putting people first and life first, and mobilize the whole country to implement unprecedented scale of life rescue" in Chinese has been transformed into a plain structure "Guided by the principle of putting people and their lives above all else, we launched an all out nationwide life rescue operation of an unprecedented scale". Through grammatical means such as participle phrases and preposition structures, we have achieved clear and logical progression of information while retaining the original meaning, effectively reducing the understanding load of international audiences.

4.2 Comparison of pragmatic dimensions

In terms of pragmatics, its translation strategy shows a dynamic evolution from "defensive refutation" to "active construction", and the realization of communicative intention has become the highest criterion for strategy selection. In the early stage of the special period, faced with international stigmatization, discourse translation carries a clear argumentative tone, with a firm or even slightly tough tone, such as frequent use of corresponding translations such as "strongly oppose" and "beyond doubt", aiming to refute false accusations in the first time and uphold national dignity. With the global spread of the special period, its pragmatic strategy has undergone profound adjustments, focusing on building a responsible and cooperative image of a great power. The focus of translation has shifted from argumentation to sharing, from explanation to advocacy. In terms of tone, absolute expressions have been reduced and the use of constructive modal verbs has been increased, such as "We stand ready to work with the international community..." and "It is advised that". In terms of discourse function, it has transformed from a simple policy statement to an action initiative that provides public goods and calls for global cooperation. The pragmatic adjustment reflects a more mature and confident communication mentality, seeking consensus through empathetic discourse, with the ultimate goal of guiding international public opinion towards cooperation rather than confrontation, successfully shifting the focus of communication from "past right and wrong" to "future solutions", and achieving strategic docking of global concerns.

4.3 Comparison of cultural dimensions

In terms of cultural dimension, many core discourses, such as "people first, life first", "dynamic zeroing", and "the whole country playing chess", are deeply rooted in China's political system and lack a direct equivalent concept in English culture. Initially, attempts were made to use literal translation (such as people/life first, dynamic zero COVID, nationwide chess games), but it was soon discovered that this translation method was prone to confusion and even misinterpretation on the "translation in" end, and was framed by Western media as a political slogan that ignored individual freedom. Therefore, the later translation strategy greatly enhanced interpretive compensation. Translators are no longer satisfied with vocabulary conversion, but are committed to conceptual conversion, injecting cultural loaded words with connotations that Western audiences may understand through adding background explanations, data support, analogical explanations, and other methods. For example, when explaining "dynamic zeroing", it is always accompanied by the explanation that its goal is to "control special periods with minimal cost and fastest speed"; When conveying the concept of a "community with a shared future for mankind", it cleverly links the consensus discourse of the international community such as "shared future" and "interconnectedness", transforming it from a political concept to a "universal value" view that concerns the common interests of humanity.

5 Translation and communication of emergency discourse from the perspective of comparative analysis between China and foreign countries

5.1 Comparison of official press conference speeches

The discourse system of the Chinese government's press conferences is highly institutionalized and formulaic, emphasizing the authority of policies and the unity of actions. Its translation strategy strictly serves this purpose, and the translation presents a high degree of consistency, such as frequent use of strong expressions reflecting collective will such as "we firmly believe" and "resolutely implement", aiming to convey an efficient and powerful government image that controls the situation to the international community. In contrast, similar Western press conferences, such as briefings from the White House or WHO, although also authoritative, have more distinct individual colors. Officials often narrate in their personal tone, interspersed with personalized expressions and even humor, in order to bring themselves closer to the public. The information release itself is in the source language and does not require secondary translation.

5.2 Comparison of media reporting discourse

The mainstream media in China adheres to the policy of "positive propaganda as the main approach" in their reporting, and their narrative style is characterized by heroic dedication, scientific achievements, and international cooperation under the leadership of the government. The grand collectivist narrative and achievement orientation are its prominent features. When translating these texts, it is strategically necessary to carry out precise "localization" processing, breaking down long sentences, transforming slogan style titles into informative titles, and carefully handling emotionally charged expressions such as "The Most Beautiful Rebel" to avoid the sense of alienation that international readers may feel due to cultural barriers. Driven by the news professionalism of "supervisory power", the reporting framework of mainstream Western media is often problem oriented, conflict oriented, and personal story oriented. Therefore, the same event often presents a completely different discourse: the Chinese translation emphasizes the effective control during the special period brought about by the "lockdown" (epidemic containment), while Western media often focuses on the freedom restrictions under the "lockdown". Deep narrative conflict means that the translation and communication work of Chinese media is far from language conversion, but a difficult cognitive framework game. Its effectiveness depends not only on the accuracy of the translation, but also on whether it can obtain equal opportunities for narrative dissemination through credible source citations in the Western dominated public opinion field.

6 Conclusion

The special period has become an unprecedentedly intense international information game field. In this competition that concerns life, trust, and discourse power, the translation and communication of China's external emergency discourse has been endowed with significant strategic significance beyond language conversion itself. It is not only an urgent need to actively shape the country's image, but also an inevitable choice to respond to international concerns and participate in global governance system communication. This study analyzes the translation strategies under the "Three-Dimensional Bidirectional" framework, aiming to reveal the internal logic of external communication during special periods, and provide a deep academic footnote for thinking about how to effectively construct narratives and promote cross-cultural understanding in crises.

Funding

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Project of Universities in Jiangxi Province for 2022 "Category analysis and translation research of Chinese anti-epidemic discourse in the post-epidemic era" (NO:YY22208)

References

- [1] Zhou Yunwei. Exploring a New Perspective on the Study of Chinese Discourse System: A Review of "Chinese Discourse 'Going Global': Translation and Communication Research" [J]. *Modern Linguistics*, 2025 (1): 583-587.
- [2] Liu Mengting. Research on Translation Strategies of Chinese Ecological Discourse to Foreign Countries Based on Corpus [J]. *Air American English*, 2025 (2): 613-615.
- [3] Li Jingping. Research on the Translation of Chinese Characteristics Discourse: Based on the Chinese Government White Paper Composite Chronological Corpus [D]. Beijing Foreign Studies University, 2023.
- [4] Liu Kai, Yu Dengbing. Research on the Strategy of Constructing the Discourse System of Chinese Foreign Literature Based on Positive Discourse Analysis Theory [J]. *Publishing and Distribution Research*, 2021 (8): 79-84.
- [5] Liu Chunxia. A Review of Research on Building a Chinese Characteristics Foreign Discourse System [J]. *Research on Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping Theory*, 2017 (5): 75-81.