

**MODERN VECTORS OF SCIENCE  
AND EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT  
IN CHINA AND UKRAINE**

中国与乌克兰科学及教育前沿研究

Harbin Engineering University

State institution "South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K. D. Ushynsky"

Educational and Cultural Center "Confucius Institute"

Odesa, Ukraine

Harbin, the People's Republic of China

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The ninth issue of the materials represented by the Ukrainian and Chinese scholars are dedicated to the relevant issues of General and Contrastive Linguistics within the Chinese, English, Ukrainian, Turkish and Korean languages; linguodidactic problems of teaching native and foreign languages within polycultural educational space; peculiarities of cross-cultural communication in geopolitical space alongside education-related aspects regarding profession-oriented training of future specialists under conditions of multicultural environment and military actions in Ukraine; post-COVID-19 pandemic challenges.

The given articles may be of use to researchers, graduates, postgraduates and practising teachers who are interested in various aspects of Sinology, Cross-cultural Communication, Linguistics, Pedagogy and Psychology.

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## **A STUDY ON ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF CATEGORY WORDS IN THE GOVERNMENT WORK REPORT FROM FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENCE THEORY**

**Abstract:** *China's Government Work Report covers the development status of politics, economy, people's livelihood, diplomacy and culture, and is also an important source of information to understand China's current situation and policies. Recently, many scholars have paid close attention to the study of its translation, and put forward a series of viewpoints and methodologies from various angles. However, whether the English version can accurately express the original meaning remains to be discussed, and related translation problems still exist. Therefore, based on the functional equivalence theory, this paper makes a preliminary study on the English translation of category words in the report, mainly from the lexical and syntactic analysis, and combines the use of some commonly used Chinese category words in government texts in recent years and typical English translation problems, so as to find out some translation problems, and the author will analyze them in the text and give solutions. In a word, solving the problem of category words is helpful to improve the translation quality of government documents, facilitate readers at home and abroad to study major events in China and promote cultural exchanges.*

**Keywords:** *Functional equivalence; Government Work Report; Category words; Translation strategy.*

## 1. Introduction

In this part, the author would like to state the purpose of the topic for the research and point out the significance of this thesis from the perspective of equivalence theory and practice with the most concise ink. Firstly, it gives some brief introduction to the background of the research. Secondly, it places an emphasis on the significance of the research. Finally, it's about the structure of the research.

## 2. Background of the thesis

China is playing an increasingly important role in the international community. And its political and economic development continues. In recent years, China has remained the top in many ways nationwide. Not only are different countries deepening their exchanges in terms of political interaction and trade, but those countries are also placing more emphasis on cultural exchanges. China also makes a great contribution to exchanges in terms of culture, politics and economy. Chinese government documents are documents released by the government, which are full of handsome and accurate information. They are authoritative documents issued by the Chinese government. Those documents from government are critical channels for domestic readers to understand national affairs and for foreign readers to know about China. In order to help different readers precisely comprehend the *Report* and build an objective impression of China, the translation of documents from government is a great of significance. As an important part of literature, category words are often used in Chinese to refer to something, especially something which expresses the scope of concepts such as behavior. In translation, adequate attention should be paid to phenomena and attributes.

However, the quality of C-E translations of government documents receives no recognition for a long time. Taking following sentence as an example, “十八大精神、十九大精神”, is translated as “the guiding ideology of the 18th National Congress” in the 19th National People’s Congress of the CPC. And “十九大精神” is translated as “the spirit of the 19th Communist Party of China” in People’s Daily Online.

“精神” in both phrases refers to the guidelines and plans communicated at the

conference. However, two completely different translated versions exist here. Which one is the correct one? Here, we translate it based on its concrete context and translate it into “guidelines” rather than “spirit”. This is because the word “spiritual” refers to something about religion, mind and soul. In addition, there are countless problems like this in government documents.

So, it is a require conducting an in-depth study on how to translate government documents from Chinese to English with fixed category words. Based on the theory of functional equivalence, this thesis focuses on the C-E translation of Chinese category terms commonly used in government documents, hoping to provide some help to solve the problems in this field.

### **3. Significance of the thesis**

Government documents are an integral part of China’s diplomacy. Category words, an important part of government documents, are not so easy to be translated. An in-depth study on the C-E translation of these terms has their values. Theoretically, this essay provides a fresh research area for the translation of government documents, especially the Chinese-English translation of category words in various contexts. Being different from the previous studies on government documents from the perspective of discourse genre analysis and discourse analysis, this paper analyzes the C-E translation problems and gives solutions of category terms based on the functional equivalence theory. The first one is that applying the functional equivalence theory to the C-E translation of government documents not only reflects the adaptability of the theory to the texts, but also further the application value of the theory and enriches its connotation. Next, this essay applies the theory to propose a specific scheme for the treatment of categorical terms, which expands the scope of the study. In practice, this paper sheds some light on solving the problems of confusing translations of government documents and irregular translations of categorical terms. By improving the quality of translation, foreign readers can correctly understand the meaning of Chinese government documents and establish an objective attitude toward China.

### **4. Structure of the thesis**

To begin with, this thesis summarizes the current research status of *Report*



translation strategy, then elaborates functional equivalence theory. What's more, through literature analysis, the examples of English translation of category words are collected. Through the analysis of the collected examples, corresponding problems and solutions are proposed. At last, the English translation strategies of Report category words are summarized.

## **5. Literature Review**

### **5.1 Current studies on *Report* translation in China**

This section provides a general literature review of translation studies of taxonomy terms and government documents in China. Since categorical terms are Chinese-specific terms and Chinese government documents are analyzed by Chinese researchers, this part makes an emphasis on studies both at home and abroad. The author finds that previous studies have mainly adopted the strategy of omitting translation category terms and not giving more translation categories based on different contexts, which disregards the value of category terms.

The habit of using category terms in Chinese comes from its own cultural roots. Concepts and categories in Chinese do not have clear definitions. They contain almost multiple aspects, so it is difficult to understand them accurately. Academics have suggested that we need to add some words or omit some words because of the different expressions in two languages.

In addition, using category terms is also a supplementary way. For example, we can't translate “民生问题” into “生计问题” rigidly, because this collocation in China implies some necessities in our daily life. So, we should translate it as “daily needs”, which can fully express its Chinese meaning and suit for abstract English expressions.

### **5.2 Current studies on *Report* translation abroad**

Owing to fact that the *Report* is a kind of Chinese political text that is unique in China, it has been relatively little studied overseas. Just as the Premier of the State Council of China presents the Report on the Work of the Government to the delegates of the National People's Congress (NPC) on behalf of the Chinese government each year, the President of the United States releases the State of the Union Address to Congress each year. The State of the Union differs from the Government Work Report

because the former not only reports to members of Congress in that country, but also allows the President to articulate his or her legislative arrangements and national programs that should be prioritized. To sum up, more attention has been paid to the study of the State of the Union address abroad. There is not much literature abroad that focuses solely on the study of the Government Work Report.

After the 15th century, natural science entered a stage of classifying, analyzing and dissecting nature, predominantly using inductive and mathematical deduction methods based on observation and experiment. The whole is decomposed into parts and classified, and complex phenomena and things are decomposed into concrete details or simple elements. That is why Westerners delve into the origin of everything, analyze the creation and structure of the universe, down to the basic elements and atoms that make up everything, and even the nature and shape of atoms, which is called “atomism”. The Chinese, on the other hand, characterized by wholeness, put forward the “Yuan Qi theory”. The former goes deeper vertically, focusing on the analysis and dissection of things and the study of individuals; the latter spreads out horizontally, focusing on the interrelationship of things and the grasp of the whole. In this way, it seems that in the definition of logical concepts, the Chinese favor the genus concept, and the Westerners favor the species concept. The paradigm word is a way of thinking that responds to the unique properties of an object. Human beings know things from their external characteristics and gradually go deeper into their internal properties to distinguish them from other things.

## **6. Theoretical Framework**

### **6.1 Introduction of equivalence theory**

To have a criterion of translation between the source languages and target languages and then to downsize disparities of them, Nida has proposed the famous translation theory of “dynamic equivalence”, namely functional equivalence, from a linguistic point of view. In this theory, he states that “translation is the reproduction of information from semantics to style in the most appropriate, natural and reciprocal language”. Nida’s definition of translation also suggests that translation is not only lexical equivalence but also semantic and stylistic equivalence, and the message

conveyed by translation has both lexical and deep cultural information. The reciprocity in dynamic reciprocity includes four aspects: (1) lexical equivalence, (2) syntactic equivalence, (3) stylistic equivalence, (4) stylistic equivalence. Of these four aspects, Nida argues that “meaning is the top priority, while form is the latter one”. Form is likely to obscure the cultural meaning of the source language and hinder cultural exchanges. Translators should regard the four aspects of dynamic equivalence as translation principles to accurately reproduce cultural connotations of the source language in the target language.

## **6.2 Key concept of equivalence theory**

As an independent discipline, the first question that should be answered is: what is translation? Traditional translation theories focus on the manifestation of language, and people tend to concentrate on special linguistic phenomena, such as poetic meter, poetic rhyme, wordplay, sentence prose and special grammatical structures.

Theories of translation modern translation theory focuses on the reader’s response to the translation and the contrast between the two responses (the original and the reader of the original, the translation and the reader of the translation).

Nida points out that “translation means reproducing the information of the original language in the most appropriate and natural equivalent in the translated language, from semantics to style”.

In his book *Translation Theory in Practice*, Nida explains that the closest natural equivalence refers to meaning and style.

In *From One Language to Another*, however, Nida goes on to interpret equivalence as referring to function. The “function” of a language is the language can be used in the same way: different languages necessarily have different forms of expression, either in terms of phonology and grammar or in terms of conventions of expression, but they can have the same or similar functions to each other.

Nida divides translations into two types: formal reciprocal translation and dynamic functional reciprocal translation. Formal equivalence in translation means that the translation is centered on the original language, reproducing as much as possible.

Formal equivalence is to focus on the original language and try to reproduce the

form and content of the original text. Functional equivalence focuses on the reader's reflection, reproducing the information in the original language in the closest and most natural equivalence.

The reader can understand and appreciate the original to the same extent as the reader of the original. Nida's formal equivalence requires a strict reproduction of the form of the original language, which is in fact a "word-for-word" or "dead translation".

## **7. Problems in Translating Category Words**

Category words are the words used to express the category, including behavior and phenomenal belongings, and are often used in Chinese to refer to specific means, such as behavior attitude, aspect, way situation, meaning situation, mood and so on. In general, they have no real meaning in a sentence, but are very useful and when used properly can make a sentence flow and be specific. However, one of the main characteristics of English is that it rarely uses verbs. This over-reliance on nouns often leads to abstraction of expression, so in translation, how can we achieve this proper transformation between "concrete" and "abstract"? In his book *Toward a Science of Translation*, Nida, a leading American translation theorist, points out that the natural counterpart closest to the source language message. In order to follow the above principles for the translation, that is to say, the translation should conform to the idiomatic expressions of the target language. And the language of the translation should be fluent, natural and easy to understand, the translator should not directly equate the category words into English in the process of C-E translation but should follow the principle of "dynamic equivalence". Above all, the translator should analyze the collocation structure of the category words to understand the meaning of the whole sentence, and then choose a suitable translation method before translating.

The author concluded many category terms from the 2021 *Report*, *Xinhua News*, and *China Daily*. After having a detailed analysis of them, we found three translation problems. The specific problems are: (1) lack of linguistic adaptation selection; (2) lack of cultural adaptation selection; (3) lack of communicative adaptation selection.

### **7.1 Failure to make linguistically adapted choices**

When translating the category words in documents from government, the

translators did not choose the correct English words to make foreign readers really understand the meaning of those documents. Because they do not fully understand, and they do not fully comprehend the meaning of those Chinese collocations, nor can they know about the meaning of the category words during the reading. Therefore, the above is easily misunderstood by other readers. Looking at the following examples:

Example 1: 企业家精神

(1) Entrepreneurial spirit (2015 *Government Work Report*, 2015)

(2) Entrepreneurial spirit (China Daily.com, 2018)

(3) Entrepreneurial spirit (People's Daily, 2018)

(4) Entrepreneurial spirit (People's Daily Ontology, 2018)

“企业家精神” refers to the innovative, risk-taking and cooperative nature of entrepreneurs, the nature of a certain quality possessed by certain people. “精神” here cannot be translated into “spirit”, as it is different from the phrase “spirit of China”. It is also different from “中国精神”, it should be translated into “Chinese spirit”. The “spirit” refers to something related to a person's mind, soul, or beliefs.

Example 2: 慈善事业

(1) Philanthropy (China Daily, 2016)

(2) Charity (Report of the 19th National Congress of the CPC, 2017)

(3) Charitable activities (China Daily, 2019)

In terms of language structure, the translation of examples (1) and (3) is not concise enough because the word “慈善” itself implies that it is a cause. “事业” in this case just indicates its category and has no substantive meaning. However, in China Daily, the translator translates “事业” as “activity and cause” respectively, resulting in semantic redundancy.

Therefore, simply translating it as “charity” can adapt it to the English translation and achieve a balance between the two languages.

Example 3: 犯罪行为

(1) Crime (Xinhua News, 2018)

(2) Crime (People's Daily Online, 2019)

The word “行为” here refers as its category. And “crime” in English means “an illegal act for which someone will be punished by the government”. The word itself already implies that it is an act.

For example, in the 2015 Government Work report, “cracking down on infringements” was translated into “cracking down on violations”, “action” is omitted. These two words represents the same pattern “verb + act”, so it is better to omit it here. and this translation is more suitable for the translation environment, which can produce similar feedbacks from foreign readers.

From analyzing the above linguistic problems in terms of translating category words in documents from government, it is obvious that those problems make foreign readers misunderstand Chinese events and its image. Problems such as the wrong choice of English words and semantic redundancy are evident in these documents. Therefore, there is an urgent need to solve the translation problems of these categorical terms.

## **7.2 Failure to make culturally adapted choices**

In addition to the above examples, which all focus on translation problems without linguistic adaptation choices, related problems are also found at the cultural sector.

That means that the translated versions of some category words cannot be adapted into the English cultural context, because the translators do not understand the context of Chinese collocation. If they do not have a correct and comprehensive grasp of these contexts, they are unable to choose appropriate English terms, which will certainly confuse foreign readers of Chinese government documents, leading to Chinese government documents, or other political or economic issues. Looking at the following examples:

### **Example 4: 精神文明**

- (1) Cultural and ideological progress (C-E Dictionary, 2002)
- (2) Spiritual civilization (China Daily, 2015)
- (3) Cultural and moral progress (Xinhua News, 2018)

Three translations of the term “精神文明” have appeared. Qin Liming (1999) studied the views of two well-educated Anglo-Americans on the term “spiritual

civilization”.

To be honest, “精神文明” in Chinese culture means something cultural and moral other than material things. It demands the government to implement various cultural activities to enrich people’s lives and their mind. And “ideology” refers to a set of beliefs, especially those held by a particular group. Thus, the use of “ideology” is also impractical. Here, by discussing the context of this Chinese phrase, it is more feasible to translate it as “cultural and moral progress” after cultural transformation.

The above examples show that there are several translation problems in terms of the category terms in the process of translating government documents, from a cultural perspective. These problems, such as misunderstanding of the meaning of terms with Chinese characteristics and lack of thorough understanding of these terms, among others, make these important documents not easily understood.

Problems like misread the meanings of terms with Chinese characteristics and not understanding those terms thoroughly enough make these important documents less understandable and accordingly damage China’s image in the international arena.

### **7.3 Failure to make adaptive choices in communication**

In addition to the problem of failure to make linguistic and cultural adaptations, there are some problems in the C-E translation of those category terms in documents from government, namely failure to precisely express the communicative purpose of the speaker. This means that the translated versions do not correctly achieve the communicative purpose of certain categories of terms in each context.

The C-E translation of category terms in government documents also serves a certain communicative purpose, i.e., to indicate the attitude of our country or to promote a certain idea. However, there are serious translation problems that prevent those communicative purposes from being achieved. Looking at the following examples:

Example 5: 工匠精神

- (1) Craftsmanship (*Report on the Work of the Government* in 2016)
- (2) Workmanship (*Report on the work of the government* in 2018)
- (3) Craftsmanship: the spirit of craftsmanship (*Report on the 19th Party Congress*)

To start with, “工匠精神” reflects the professional ethics and professional competence of artisans, and China now strongly advocates and wants to encourage people to work hard and dedicate themselves to their careers. With those actions, our country is calling on their people to hold this belief constantly.

Next, the use of a long sentence is inappropriate in this case. Besides, the translation of versions (1) and (2) choose an unsuitable category word, because the “spirit” means something related to religion, human and mind. If this term is used, foreign readers will misunderstand the communicative purpose here. Therefore, the shorter translation is “craft or craftsmanship”, which is better.

The above example shows that there are many problems with the translation of category terms. Based on functional equivalence, this thesis argues that the translator, as the center of translation, should analyze and select different terms from linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions, and realize relevant transformations to adapt the translation to the translation environment and the exact words.

## **8. Solutions to Problems in Translating Category Words**

By analyzing the above translation problems in government documents, we can conclude that those problems have the following characteristics under the guidance of functional equivalence theory: at the linguistic level, the translators do not choose English words with semantic equivalence to adapt the translation to the target language environment.

At the cultural sector, the meanings of category terms with Chinese characteristics are always mistranslated. In addition, the understanding of the deep connotations of these terms is often inadequate. On the communicative front, the communicative purpose of a speaker could not be properly expressed.

Therefore, the translator, as a core of translation process, should analyze and choose different skills and methods, and make transformations at the linguistic-cultural and communicative levels to adapt the translation to the appropriate translation context. In this chapter, the author applies functional equivalence theory to explain and classify the application of five commonly used Chinese category terms in government documents in detail. The specific C-E translation scheme is as follows.



## 8.1 Linguistic transformation

Different cultures have their own language systems, and the meanings and structures of language are always different with others. Thus, for translators, who are at the heart of translation, it is important to study the meaning of terms in depth, rather than just translating based on the literal meaning of terms and sentences. They need to take a deep thinking of the category terms by strictly following the solutions of language translation. This is applied in the following ways.

When it refers to the nature of something, it should be translated into some term with “-ship” as a suffix.

(1) 工匠精神 (The Nineteenth Congress Report )

Workmanship: craftsmanship (The Nineteenth Congress Report)

(2) 企业家精神 (The Nineteenth National Congress Report)

Entrepreneurship (The Nineteenth National Congress Report)

The suffix “-ship” has three meanings. First, it implies a situation, nature, and relationship, such as difficulty, autocracy and friendship. In the next place, it implies an identity and status, such as citizenship. At last, it refers to a craft, as in craftsmanship and craftsmanship. Those two “精神” respond to the need to embody the work ethic and professional competence of the artisan, and the innovative, risk-taking and collaborative nature of the entrepreneur. When Chinese readers see those phrases with meanings such as identity and native status, they react in the same way as foreign readers do when they see the suffix “-ship”. At the linguistic level, the word “skill” can be regarded as “-ship” in English, so when “精神” refers to the nature of things, it can be translated as a category word with the suffix “-ship” after it.

## 8.2 Cultural transformation

“Translation is the reproduction of the letter of the source language from semantics to style in the most appropriate, natural and reciprocal language”. Nida’s definition of translation specifies that translation is not only the reciprocity in the sense of vocabulary but also the reciprocity in semantics, style. And his statement conveyed by translation is both superficial lexical information and deep cultural information. The

application of this theory is listed in the following.

When indicating a specific arrangement for an event, it is translated as “program”, and “undertaking” specifically refers to the tasks and project in a project or a plan. Looking at the following examples:

(1) 文化事业 (*Government Work Report*, 2019)

Cultural undertakings (*Government Work Report*, 2019)

(2) 发展残疾人事业 (19th National Congress Report, 2017)

We will develop the cause of people with disabilities (The Nineteenth National Congress Report, 2017)

(3) 加快老龄事业和产业发展 (The Nineteenth National Congress Report, 2017)

Accelerate the development of the cause and industry of the elderly (Nineteenth National Congress Report, 2017)

### **8.3 Communicative transformation**

Different expressions engender different communicative results and influence people’s ideas of things. The English translation of government documents is a significant way for foreign readers to know about China. Therefore, translators should play their central role in translation and strictly follow the scheme of relevant conversions. Its application is as follows.

1. When it refers to a person possessing a certain state of a belief, it should be translated into “spirit”. As the word has religious overtones, it can also refer to people’s thoughts about certain things and properties. Looking at the following examples:

(1) 中国精神 (The Nineteenth National Congress Report, 2017)

Spirit of China (The Nineteenth Congress Report, 2017)

(2) 科学精神 (Nineteenth National Congress Report, 2017)

The spirit of science (Nineteenth National Congress Report, 2017)

The spirit of innovation (*Government Work Report*, 2015)

(3) 丝路精神 (China Daily, 2017)

Silk Road Spirit (China Daily, 2017)

(4) 上海精神 (People's Daily, 2019)

Shanghai spirit (People's Daily, 2019)

2. When it refers to “spatial layout, design or arrangement”, it can be translated as “layout”, for instance:

(1) 大力改善地区发展格局 (*Government Work Report*, 2019)

We will do more to improve the development layout of each region. (*Government Work Report*, 2019)

(2) 形成资源节约型和环境保护型的空间格局 (Report of the 19th National Congress, 2017)

A spatial pattern that is resource-efficient and environmentally friendly. “Layout” means “the arrangement of parts of a book page, garden or building, etc.”. In the *Oxford Advanced Learner's English Chinese Dictionary*, the Chinese meaning is “layout, arrangement, design, arrangement” and “development pattern” is an abstract spatial layout. Forming a resource-saving pattern means through rational allocation, efficient and circular use, effective protection and substitution of resources, adapting economic and social development to the carrying capacity of the resources and environment, minimizing the number of pollutants produced and making waste harmless, and building a society in which people and nature live in harmony. Therefore, when conference speakers aimed to give foreign readers a clear understanding of China's development, they should have chosen a more appropriate pairing to convey a more accurate meaning.

## 9. Conclusion

In this part, the authors will conclude the essay, and illustrate several findings and recommendations for the future research.

Based on functional equivalence theory, by conducting a deep analysis of C-E translations of category words in the corpus related to the 2015-2021 *Report on the Work of the Government*, the 19th Party Congress Report, and Xinhua News, this paper draws several conclusions as follows.

At the beginning, this thesis solves the following translation problems by using functional reciprocal translation theory.

By addressing the above-mentioned issues, it helps to improve the quality of translations of government documents and facilitates readers to study major events and cultures in China. Only when the translation reproduces the style and spirit of the source language from its linguistic form to its cultural connotation can the translation be crowned as excellent. In other words, the target readers must fully understand the meaning of the original language. Therefore, it is feasible to apply this theory to the translation of government documents.

Next, in order to make foreign readers comprehend the connotation of government documents precisely and improve its quality, this essay proposes the following C-E translation solutions based on functional equivalence: (1) language conversion by considering the meaning of terms; (2) cultural conversion by considering the context of terms; (3) communication conversion by considering their intention. Those solutions can effectively solve the translation issues of category words in documents from government.

Finally, it is suggested that future studies can cover more category terms and provide more direct translation skills and methods.

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### 功能对等理论下《政府工作报告》范畴词 英译研究

我国的《政府工作报告》内容涵盖了政治、经济、民生、外交和文化等各个方面的发展现状, 以及对未来几年的发展规划, 它同时也是了解中国当前形势与政策的重要信息来源。最近几年, 越来越多的学者关注其译本研究, 并从各种角度提出一系列观点和方法论。然而, 其英译本是否能准确表达原文含义的问题却有待商榷, 相关的翻译问题仍然存在。因此, 本文从功能对等理论出发, 对《政府工作报告》的范畴词英译进行初步研究, 主要从词汇和句法两个方面进行分析。并结合近几年政府文本中若干常用汉语范畴词的使用情况及典型英译问题, 发现范畴词的英译存在一些问题, 对于具体问题作者将会在正文中进行分析并给出解决方法。总而言之, 解决范畴词问题有助于提高政府文件的翻译质量, 便于国内外读者研究中国的重大事件和促进文化交流。

**关键词:** 功能对等; 《政府工作报告》; 范畴词; 翻译策略