

**TRANSLATION, DISSEMINATION, AND  
RECEPTION OF CHINESE POLITICAL  
DOCUMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES OF  
AMERICA — A CASE STUDY OF *XI JINPING:*  
*THE GOVERNANCE OF CHINA***

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**UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA**

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AMERICA — A CASE STUDY OF *XI JINPING*:  
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by

**YUAN YETAO**

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for the degree of  
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANT	actor-network theory
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CDA	Critical discourse analysis
C-E	Chinese-English
CSI	Culture-specific item
CPC	Communist Party of China
5Ws	Who, says what, in which channel, to whom, with what effects
MAT	Multidimensional Analysis Tagger
OCLC	Online Computer Library Center
PRC	People's Republic of China
QUAL	Qualitative
Quan	Quantitative
RQ 1	Research Question 1
RQ 2	Research Question 2
RQ 3	Research Question 3
RQ 4	Research Question 4
STP	State translation program
STTR	Standardized type/token ratio
TextCNN	Text Convolutional Neural Network
TTR	Type/Token Ratio

**TERJEMAHAN, PENYEBARAN DAN PENERIMAAN DOKUMEN**  
**POLITIK CHINA DI AMERIKA SYARIKAT — KAJIAN KES XI JINPING:**  
***THE GOVERNANCE OF CHINA***

**ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini secara sistematik meneliti terjemahan, penyebaran, dan penerimaan karya *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* di Amerika Syarikat dengan mengintegrasikan rangka kerja teori etika dalam Program Terjemahan Negara (State Translation Program), teori terjemahan budaya, model sosiologi (teori medan dan teori rangkaian pelaku), serta teori penanda stilistik. Kajian ini menangani empat objektif penyelidikan yang saling berkaitan: (1) menganalisis prinsip pemilihan teks sumber di bawah etika STP; (2) meneroka terjemahan istilah khusus budaya dalam *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* melalui lensa teori terjemahan budaya; (3) mendekod dinamika sosiologi rangkaian penyebaran; dan (4) menilai penerimaan khalayak sasaran melalui analisis sentimen pembaca dan stilistik. Pendekatan kaedah campuran digunakan, menggabungkan analisis wacana kualitatif terhadap korpus dwibahasa dengan analisis kuantitatif data pendedaran perpustakaan global (melalui OCLC) serta maklum balas pembaca dari platform seperti Amazon dan Goodreads. Bagi pemilihan teks sumber, hasil kajian menunjukkan keselarasan ketat dengan kepentingan nasional, mengutamakan kesetiaan ideologi dan perwakilan budaya untuk menyampaikan falsafah tadbir urus dan keutamaan strategik. Terjemahan istilah khusus budaya menggunakan strategi hibrid, menyeimbangkan pemeliharaan hariah struktur linguistik dengan penyesuaian kontekstual untuk meningkatkan kebolehfahaman silang budaya. Rangkaian penyebaran di Amerika Syarikat

bergantung pada pelaku institusi (contohnya, Foreign Languages Press) untuk memanfaatkan sumber negara bagi visibiliti arus perdana, dan pelaku bukan institusi (seperti ahli Sinologi, platform digital) untuk memperluas capaian akar umbi. Data OCLC menunjukkan kehadiran versi Inggeris di 499 perpustakaan global, dengan tumpuan signifikan di Amerika Syarikat. Analisis penerimaan pembaca mendedahkan polarisasi: pembaca Amerika di Amazon menunjukkan sentimen majoriti negatif (60.34%), sering merangka karya melalui lensa ideologi, manakala khalayak global di Goodreads menunjukkan penilaian lebih seimbang (54--62% penarafan positif). Perbezaan ini menegaskan peranan konteks sosiopolitik dalam membentuk interpretasi. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa terjemahan dokumen politik di bawah STP adalah amalan yang sarat kuasa, dipengaruhi oleh perundingan budaya dan ideologi. Walaupun berkesan dalam menyebarkan naratif tadbir urus China, para penterjemah menghadapi cabaran untuk mengurangkan bias ideologi dalam konteks Amerika Syarikat. Cadangan termasuk meningkatkan pengantaraan budaya melalui anotasi kontekstual dan memupuk kerjasama akademik untuk mempromosikan dialog silang budaya yang bernuansa. Dengan mengintegrasikan bukti empirikal dan teori interdisiplin, penyelidikan ini memperkaya pemahaman tentang terjemahan peringkat negara sebagai alat strategik untuk unjuran kuasa lembut dan memberikan pandangan praktikal untuk mengoptimumkan penyebaran antarabangsa wacana politik.

**TRANSLATION, DISSEMINATION, AND RECEPTION OF CHINESE  
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**ABSTRACT**

This research systematically examined the translation, dissemination, and reception of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* in the United States, integrating theoretical frameworks from ethics in the State Translation Program, cultural translation theory, sociological models (field theory and actor-network theory), and the stylistic marker theory. The study addressed four interrelated research objectives: 1) analyzing source text selection principles under STP ethics; 2) exploring the translation of culture-specific items in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* through the lens of cultural translation theory; 3) decoding the sociological dynamics of dissemination networks; and 4) evaluating target audience reception through reader sentiment and stylistic analysis. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining qualitative discourse analysis of a bilingual corpus with quantitative analysis of global library distribution data (via OCLC) and reader feedback from platforms like Amazon and Goodreads. For source text selection, findings demonstrated a rigorous alignment with national interests, prioritizing ideological fidelity and cultural representation to convey governance philosophy and strategic priorities. The translation of culture-specific items employed a hybrid strategy, balancing literal retention of linguistic structure with contextual adaptation to enhance cross-cultural intelligibility. Dissemination networks in the U.S. relied on institutional actors (e.g., Foreign Languages Press) to leverage state resources for mainstream visibility and non-institutional actors (e.g., Sinologists, digital platforms)

to expand grassroots reach. OCLC data highlighted the English version's presence in 499 global libraries, with significant concentration in the U.S. Reader reception analysis revealed polarization: American readers on Amazon exhibited predominantly negative sentiment (60.34%), often framing the work through ideological lenses, while global audiences on Goodreads showed more balanced evaluations (54 – 62% positive ratings). This disparity underscored the role of sociopolitical contexts in shaping interpretation. The study concluded that political document translation under STP is a power-laden practice influenced by cultural and ideological negotiations. While effective in disseminating China's governance narrative, the translators faced challenges in mitigating ideological biases in the U.S. context. Recommendations included enhancing cultural mediation through contextual annotations and fostering academic collaborations to promote nuanced cross-cultural dialogue. By integrating empirical evidence with interdisciplinary theories, this research enriched understandings of state-level translation as a strategic tool for soft power projection and offered practical insights for optimizing international dissemination of political discourse.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Political parties, “are an essential aspect of democracy” (Angerbrandt, 2020, p. 428), play a significant role in national political life and are also an important force in promoting the progress of human civilization. Since the first ‘the Communist Party of China (CPC) in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-level Meeting’ held in November 2017 in Beijing, it has been successfully held twice. The third one was held via video link on March 15, 2023. More than 500 political parties from more than 150 countries around the world participated in the meeting.

With CPC as the leadership, which is the defining characteristic of socialism with Chinese characteristics (Ali, 2022), the CPC has led the people of the country to unite and struggle since the early days of the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The poor and weak old China has been transformed into a new China with the second largest economy in the world. The historical journey of the PRC from ‘standing up’ and ‘growing prosperous’ to ‘becoming strong’ further proves the correct leadership of the CPC (QStheory, 2021). On the other hand, a reality must also be paid attention to. Yuan (2018) pointed in her doctoral thesis *A Study on the Logical Direction of Chinese Intercultural Communication Based on the Promotion of Cultural Soft Power* that Western countries tend to have the ‘ideological’, ‘orientalism’ and ‘cultural hegemony’ framework to examine China’s cultural status as well as its

national image. Besides, there still exists a phenomenon similar to what Nye and Wang (2009) pointed out: In the eyes of the general public and social elites in the United States, China under the leadership of the Communist Party is a political symbol that is difficult to be accepted and understood.

Therefore, it is necessary to effectively translate and disseminate the concepts and thoughts of the CPC's successful governance to the outside world, thus "building a bridge of communication and dialogue between China and the world, and creating a good international environment for China's revolution and construction, socialist development, and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" (Du, 2021, pp. 4-5).

From the perspective of the international community, as described by Chinese scholar Liu (2023) that today's international changes are intensifying, and the geopolitical situation has become increasingly tense.

Focusing on global public welfare, founded in Geneva, Switzerland in 1971, the non-profit organization World Economic Forum also pointed out through the 2022-2023 Global Risks Perception Survey (*GRPS*) that all mankind is facing critical issues such as energy supply crisis, cost-of-living crisis, rising inflation, food supply crisis and cyberattacks on critical infrastructure and other crises (World Economic Forum, 2023). It is precisely under such an international situation that China still adheres to the concept of win-win cooperation and has friendly interactions with other countries in the world. China is doing its best to maintain cooperation and exchanges with the world and makes her own contributions, whether it is in poverty reduction

cooperation, joint efforts to fight epidemics, ‘the Belt and Road’ initiative, or in green development, peaceful development and other fields. As Zhou (2016, p. 20) pointed out, “China cannot develop without the world, and the world cannot develop without China.” Especially since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, the CPC has established a distinctive image as a ‘world peace builder’, ‘global development contributor’, and ‘international order maintainer’. The world is paying more attention to China’s ideas and experience, and expects China to contribute wisdom and solutions to the progress of human society (Du, 2021). As two superpowers in the world, effective communication and exchanges between China and the United States are of great significance in promoting political mutual trust, economic and trade cooperation, and cultural exchanges between the two countries. As a political book, Xi’s work profoundly answers the major theoretical and practical problems of the CPC and the development of the country in the new era, and focuses on displaying the central leadership’s concept of governance and ruling strategy. Promoting its spread in the United States will also help the American people better understand and recognize the ruling philosophy and strategy of the CPC and the Chinese government.

As stated by Mumbe, Chairman of the Socialist Party of Zambia, many countries are paying attention to China’s development and actively drawing on its successful experience (Ding et al., 2023). Mapela, General Secretary of the Communist Party of South Africa, also spoke highly of China’s achievements. He pointed out that through more than a century of struggle, the CPC has led China to develop into the world’s second largest economy and has successfully eliminated

absolute poverty. It has comprehensively promoted the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation with Chinese path to modernization, providing important experience for political organizations in Africa and around the world (Ding et al., 2023).

The inherent demand of China's 'going out' and the external expectation of the world to 'listen to China's voice' jointly promote the necessity of strengthening external publicity and exchanges. From the external publicity policy of 'let the world understand China in a true, colourful and vivid way' established in the 1970s, to the new external publicity policy of 'explaining China to the world' in the 1990s, even to the emphasis of the significance of external publicity power and nowadays' 'telling China's stories, and conveying China's voice', it can be seen that successive Chinese governments have attached great importance to external publicity work. As a result, on July 1, 2023, China for the first time legalized in *The Law on Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China* that "the State shall strengthen capacity building for international communication, enable the world to learn more about and better understand China, and promote exchanges and mutual learning between different civilizations" (Foshan Foreign Affairs Bureau, 2023).

The state translation program (STP), as an innovative theoretical discourse of translation studies in China put forward by Ren (2022a), held that "state translation has become a strategic approach to empower countries in building their foreign discourse, shaping their image, and building cultural soft power" (Ren, 2022a, p. 33). In this process of translation practice, the state, as a legal or nominal entity, carries out

export oriented state translation activities through the use of power capital, systematically produces export-oriented ‘Chinese’ knowledge, thereby better conveying the Chinese voice, sharing Chinese experience, and constructing a Chinese characteristic foreign discourse system.

“Language and power are intricately linked” (Bassnett, 1996, p. 21), and “translation is no longer a neutral, detached behavior from politics, ideological disputes, and conflicts of interest” (Liu, 1999, p. 36), but rather exhibits a strong political color, namely translation or translating is a political act (Baker, 2019; Spivak, 2021; Venuti, 2019), which is related to the explicit or implicit power relationships (Vincent, Carter, Steynor, Visman & Wågsæther, 2020) and presented in the collision and fusion of languages and cultures in translation, “the study and practice of translation” objectively explore the power relations in textual practice, reflecting the power structure in a broader cultural context (Bassnett, 1996, p. 21).

The translation of political documents, as an important component of the state translation program, also has a strong ideological nature, which suggests that translators and translation researchers should actively pay attention to this phenomenon when conducting political document translation research. As for this translation, the meaning constructed by its text “cannot be entirely determined by a prior system of signifiers” (Ren, 2022a, p. 39), but is jointly constructed by the producers, disseminators, and recipients of the translation. Because the discourse meaning preset by the producer of the translated text may be diluted, broken, or

reconstructed due to cultural, political, and ideological factors in the external publicity space. Therefore, for the translation research of political documents, we not only need to pay attention to the symbolic transformation and expression of the translated language, but need to pay attention to some other aspects, such as how to select the source language texts, how to disseminate the translated works in foreign cultures and so on. However, currently, there are not rich achievements of political document translation research from the perspective of the state translation program combined with the analyses of different translation processes into one research.

As one of the important political documents of the CPC, *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* is “related to China’s capacity to enhance its outward representation” (Zappone, 2018, p. 253), which

“showcases the governance philosophy and policies of the new central leadership of the CPC, systematically points out the direction and path of China’s development in the new era, and is one of the important channels for the international community to understand the development context of contemporary China” (Zhu & Yang, 2021, pp. 1-2).

It has a significant role in conceptualizing the governance of China (Ali, 2022) and has achieved outstanding outputs in a short period of time (Zappone, 2018). The first to fourth volumes of this work have now gone abroad and distributed a total of 37 languages in the international community, including English, French, Russian, Arabic, and other languages. They have been indexed by libraries in more than 130 countries and regions, covering more than 170 countries and regions, making them the most translated and published languages and the largest circulation with the widest

coverage in China's leaders' works publication since the reform and opening up (Hu, 2023). Ali (2022, p. 132) pointed it out that "this book is more inspiring than any vision emerging in the 21st century", which can effectively transmit 'China's voice' as well as enhance the soft power resources of China (Zappone, 2018).

Nevertheless, there are few translation studies focused on the STP with the descriptive investigation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. As a result, this thesis uses the first three Chinese and English-translated volumes of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* as samples for the analysis of Chinese-English bilingual corpus to conduct comparative research on the English translation of Chinese political documents, the dissemination of the translated works as well as the reception effect by target readers in the United States of America. Whether it is to improve the effectiveness of the overseas dissemination or to do a good job in political document translation research from the perspective of integrating theory with practice, it is of practical significance to understand the translating processes of production, dissemination and reception.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The translation of Chinese political documents, such as *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, occupies a critical yet underexplored space in the intersection of translation studies, political science, and global communication. As a cornerstone of STP, these translations serve as official narratives designed to project national ideology, governance philosophy, and cultural identity to international audiences.

However, it has been still unexplored deeply and that the empirical studies are also missing (Kang, 2020; Koskinen, 2008; Schäffner et al., 2014).

Moreover, scholarly inquiry into their lifecycle—from source-text selection to cross-cultural dissemination and reader reception — remains fragmented, rarely integrates the multi-layered dynamics of power, culture, and ideology that shape this practice. This fragmentation creates critical gaps in understanding how political document translation functions as a strategic tool of soft power projection and global discourse negotiation.

A primary void exists in the theoretical understanding of source-text selection under the STP's ethical framework. While the STP is defined by principles of 'loyalty to the country' and alignment with national interests (Ren & Zhang, 2016), existing research (Gao & Ren, 2017; Han, 2021; Hu, 2022; Lai & Pi, 2022; Liu, 2021; Ni & Jiao, 2023; Pan, 2021; Ren, 2019; 2023; Ren & Gao, 2015a; 2015b; Ren & Lang, 2016; Ren & Wang, 2021; Ren & Zhou, 2023; Zhao & Xu, 2021; Zhou & Ren, 2023) rarely interrogates the granular mechanisms through which texts are curated for overseas dissemination. For instance, the inclusion of specific speeches or cultural references in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* reflects a deliberate balance between domestic political priorities and perceived foreign informational needs. However, scholars have yet to systematically analyze how institutional actors within state-affiliated organizations like Foreign Languages Press navigate ideological fidelity and audience accessibility during text selection. This gap leaves unanswered

questions about how the ‘first filter’ of translation — such as the prioritization of themes like anti-corruption or global governance — shapes foreign perceptions of China’s political model. The absence of empirical research on these decision-making processes perpetuates a superficial understanding of STP as a monolithic practice, rather than a nuanced negotiation of political and communicative objectives.

Translation involves the coordination of meaning between the producer of the text and the receiver of the text and also has the various procedures by which the translator makes decisions (Hatim & Mason, 2013).

Through literature analysis, a noteworthy research gap can be seen based on the fact that studies on Chinese political document translation concentrate mainly on the textual analysis during the process of reproduction in translation without the analysis of the dissemination and reception (Bougon, 2018; Deng & Zeng, 2020; Jiang & Duan, 2016; Li & Pan, 2021; Malik, 2014; Peters, 2017; Swaine, 2015; Wang & Li, 2018; Wang, 2018; Xiao, 2017; Yu, 2019; Zappone, 2018; Zhang, 2019; among others). Another critical deficiency lies in the theoretical analysis of translating culture-specific items, a challenge inherent in conveying political terminology, classical allusions, and idiomatic expressions across linguistic and cultural divides. While descriptive studies have identified strategies like foreignization or domestication, they often lack grounding in cultural translation theory or postcolonial frameworks, which could illuminate the power dynamics at play. This gap limits insights into how political document translation serves as a site of contestation

between ‘foreignization’ and ‘domestication’, and how these choices influence the perceived legitimacy of China’s political narrative abroad.

Political document, as a political discourse (van Dijk, 2002), requires translation practice to cross national boundaries in order to circulate in different social contexts and ultimately achieve the external dissemination of national positions or policies (Angelelli, 2012; Baker, 2006; Inghilleri, 2009; Schäffner, 2004; Tymoczko & Gentzler, 2002). However, the dissemination of political document translations also remains undertheorized (Hu & Li, 2023; Wang & Munday, 2020), with most research relying on quantitative metrics (e.g. Chen, Zhu & Xia, 2023; Fan & Yu, 2015; Gu, 2023; Guan, 2015, 2017; Hu & Chen, 2018; Li, 2016; Liu, 2019; Wu & Zhao, 2013; Zhang & Zhang, 2018; among others), without engaging sociological theories to decode dissemination networks of the political translation but focusing on literary studies (Bogic, 2010; Buzelin, 2005; 2006; 2007a; Cai, 2015; Córdoba & María, 2010; Moghaddam, 2012; Hu, 2019; Simeoni, 1998; Gouanvic, 2005; Heilbron & Sapiro, 2007; Hekkanen, 2009; Jones, 2009; Kung, 2009; Sapiro, 2015; Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2007; Tu, 2015; Wang, 2017a; 2019; Wang & Li, 2019). OCLC data may reveal that the English version of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* is held in 499 global libraries, with significant concentration in the U.S., but this tells us little about the social mechanisms driving its circulation. Bourdieu’s field theory and Latour’s actor-network theory (ANT) offer frameworks to analyze how institutional actors (e.g., Foreign Languages Press, academic institutions) and non-institutional actors (e.g., Sinologists, digital platforms like Amazon) collaborate — or compete — to shape the

text's reach. For instance, the role of state-backed publishing houses in leveraging economic and symbolic capital to secure placements in mainstream channels, or the influence of grassroots actors in niche communities, remains underexplored. Additionally, the impact of global language hierarchies—where English translations dominate over non-Western languages—on the visibility of China's political discourse is rarely addressed, perpetuating a Eurocentric bias in scholarship.

Reader reception studies further highlight methodological and theoretical limitations, which “still seem[s] to be conspicuously absent from the entries of Translation Studies handbooks and encyclopedias” (Jääskeläinen, 2012, p. 196). Existing research (Chan, 2009; 2010; Khoshsaligheh et al., 2020; Liang & Xu, 2018; Lim & Loi, 2015; Safiullina, 2009; Wang, 2007; Xu, 2017; Zhang, 2019; Zhang & Zhang, 2018) often focuses on written ‘literary translation’, revealing the scholarly study on readers’ reception of political translation products has received insufficient attention (Brems & Ramos Pinto, 2013; Hu & Li, 2023; Wang & Munday, 2020).

This study addresses these gaps by situating *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* within an integrated theoretical framework that combines the ethics in the State Translation Program, cultural translation theory, field theory, actor-network theory, and the stylistic marker theory. By treating translation as a socio-political practice that encompasses selection, transformation, dissemination, and reception, the research seeks to uncover: (1) the ideological and strategic criteria guiding source-text selection; (2) the theoretical foundations of translating culture-specific items; (3) the

sociological mechanisms underpinning dissemination networks; and (4) the examination of the reception effects of the translated works in the U.S. literary field. In doing so, it challenges the field to move beyond siloed approaches and engage with political document translation as a constitutive element of global power relations, offering both theoretical insights into state-level translation practices and practical recommendations for enhancing the ethical and effective dissemination of political discourse in an era of heightened geopolitical contestation.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

This study is based on the state translation program analysis, comprehensively utilizing knowledge in linguistics, translation studies, and sociology, and specifically combining the C-E translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, to explore the translation, dissemination and reception effect of the translated works with the aim of deepening our understanding of political document translation practice from a wider perspective. To this end, the research objectives can be explained from the following aspects:

1. To map the socio-political and institutional constraints shaping the selection of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* for translation (e.g., policy priorities, ideological gatekeeping) under the ethics in the state translation program.

2. To explore the translation of culture-specific items in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* through the lens of cultural translation theory, emphasizing theoretical frameworks rather than mere strategies.

3. To decode the sociological dynamics of dissemination networks for the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* in the U.S., using field theory and actor-network theory.

4. To examine the reception effects of the English-translated *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* in the U.S. through reader sentiment and stylistic analysis, using audience feedback and the stylistic marker theory.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, this thesis focuses on the following four questions of the translation practice of political documents:

RQ 1: How do institutional actors in China's State Translation Program prioritize and select source texts for *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, with a focus on the ethical norms and national interest considerations that underpin this process?

RQ 2: How does cultural translation theory inform translators' strategies to balance linguistic authenticity and cross-cultural intelligibility in translating the culture-specific items in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*?

RQ 3: How has the translated *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* established its dominant dissemination position in U.S. libraries, and what role do Bourdieu's field theory and Latour's actor-network theory play in explaining this phenomenon?

RQ 4: What are the reception effects of the English-translated *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* by the target audience in the United States of America through reader sentiment and stylistic analysis?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study significantly advances the understanding of political document translation as a dynamic, multi-layered state practice through its systematic analysis of the translation studies on *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*.

This study offers translation researchers a novel interdisciplinary framework to analyze political document translation, bridging state-level ethics, cultural transmission, and sociological dynamics. By operationalizing state translation program theory through the lens of pre-translation text selection, it challenges researchers to recognize translation as a politically motivated ‘first filter’ shaped by national interests (e.g., security, economy, culture), rather than a neutral linguistic process. This reframes the scholarly agenda to prioritize the ideological and strategic dimensions of text choice, a previously underexplored area in translation studies.

For scholars of culture-specific item translation, the study’s detailed analysis of strategies provides empirical evidence for debates on balancing ‘foreignization’ and ‘domestication’. The identifications of register analysis, lexical-level style analysis, sentence-level text style analysis and textual style analysis as a tool to assess reader reception challenges traditional text-centric approaches, urging researchers to integrate corpus-based methods and sentiment analysis (e.g., TextCNN model) into

reception studies.

Moreover, the application of actor-network theory to map dissemination networks in the U.S. reveals how institutional actors (e.g., Foreign Languages Press) and non-institutional actors (e.g., Sinologists, digital platforms) co-construct translation impact. This invites researchers to adopt sociological methodologies to decode power dynamics in cross-cultural communication, moving beyond isolated case studies to systemic analyses of translation as a ‘social field’.

Finally, the study’s emphasis on mixed-methods research (quantitative library data + qualitative discourse analysis) establishes a rigorous methodological benchmark for future studies, encouraging scholars to triangulate data sources to address complex research questions in political translation.

## **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

The key terms and concepts involved in this study will be explained in this section, thereby providing conceptual support for the combined analysis of theory and practice in subsequent chapters.

### **(1) Political document**

“These are texts of any nature which derive their authority from the high status or the reliability and linguistic competence of their authors...Typical authoritative statements are political speeches, documents, etc., by ministers or party leaders” (Newmark, 2001, p. 39). In this study, it refers to the works involving speeches,

documents and reports, etc., made by Chinese leader.

## (2) Chinese political document translation

Chinese political document translation refers to the institutionalized practice of rendering authoritative texts (e.g., Party congress reports, white papers) to disseminate governance ideologies across linguistic boundaries. Its defining features include: (1) State-led coordination: Directed by authoritative institutions like the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau and the Foreign Languages Press (Ruan, 2022). (2) Ideological precision: Strict adherence to political terminology and discourse consistency (Zhang & Pan, 2019). (3) Audience-specific adaptation: Strategic adjustments to enhance reception in target contexts (Wang, 2021).

## (3) Cultural translation

In cultural studies, cultural translation “usually refers to the different forms of negotiation that people engage in when they are displaced from one cultural community into another, or it refers to the displacement itself” (Conway, 2012, p. 21).

## (4) Culture-specific items

“Those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text” (Aixelá, 1996, p. 58). In this research, it refers to the lexical or discursive unit embedded in source political texts that requires compensatory strategies during translation due to the absence in target culture and divergent intertextual associations.

(5) State translation program

“An autonomous translation practice voluntarily implemented by sovereign countries in the name of the country to achieve self-interest strategic goals” (Ren & Gao, 2015b, p. 93).

(6) Context of dissemination

The context of dissemination refers to the social, cultural, and institutional frameworks shaping the circulation of information, including audience demographics, media channels, and power dynamics. As defined by Halliday (1978), it encompasses field (topic), tenor (participant relationships), and mode (communication medium) within specific communicative settings, influencing how messages are produced, distributed, and received.

(7) *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*

As the highest leader of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the People’s Republic of China, Xi Jinping has delivered numerous speeches on state governance, putting forward a series of new ideas, perspectives, and assertions. These profoundly address major theoretical and practical questions concerning the development of the Party and the nation under new historical conditions, collectively showcasing the governance philosophy and administrative strategy of the new Central Leadership Collective of the CPC (Xi Jinping, 2014). This book is published and distributed by the Foreign Languages Press, and four volumes have been released to date.

## (8) Ethics in the state translation program

“The ethical value demands and derived ethical norms of the translation subjects (formal subjects, organizational subjects, and behavioral subjects) in their translation practice activities” (Ren & Zhang, 2016, p. 106).

## (9) Reader’s reception

Reader’s reception refers to the dynamic process through which readers actively construct meaning from a text, shaped by their historical, cultural, and personal contexts. As defined by Jauss (1997), it emphasizes the ‘horizon of expectations readers’ bring to interpretation, highlighting how texts evolve through iterative engagement with diverse audiences.

## **1.7 Organization of the Study**

This study consists of 5 chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction, which consists of 8 parts: background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, definition of key terms, together with the organization of the study and summary.

Chapter 2 first provides an introduction, followed by related studies on the translation process: production-dissemination-reader’s reception, overview of the state translation program, differentiation of translation strategy, translation method and translation technique, overview of studies on culture-specific items, overview of English translation of Chinese political documents, previous and present translation

studies on *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, related studies on Chinese political document translation under the state translation program, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of this study, and summary, totaling 12 parts.

Chapter 3 is the methodology. After the introduction, it mainly introduces the research design of the study. On this basis, the research corpus to be used in this research, and their processes of data collection, arrangement and analysis are explained in detail, the research tools and the reliability and validity of the research are also explained.

Chapter 4 illustrates the findings and analyses of the results. Based on Chapter Three's methodology, this chapter combines corpora analyses to investigate the source-text selection principles, translation practice of culture-specific items in political documents of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* and analyzes how to disseminate the translated works as well as the reception effect in the United States of America combined with quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis.

The last chapter conducts discussions related to research questions, and then illustrates the limitations, contribution, implications of this study on the basis of Chapters 4, and then puts forward recommendations on how to better conduct political document translation research in the future study.

## **1.8 Summary**

This chapter first explains from a macro perspective that China urgently needs

to ‘promote international communication capacity building’ based on its development needs. At the same time, other countries can also better understand China through the translation of political documents. Therefore, the translation of political documents that reflects the wisdom of governance and management is particularly necessary. However, through literature analysis, there are currently few systematic study on the production, dissemination and reception of political document translation from the perspective of the state translation program. On this basis, this chapter elaborates on the following sections: statement of the problem, research objectives and research questions, significance of the study, definition of key terms, and the organization of the study, thus laying the foundation for specific analysis in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter conducts a theoretical discussion on the research topic of this research, thereby providing a theoretical basis for qualitative and quantitative research in the following chapters. To this end, this chapter discusses the following topics: Related studies on the translation process: production-dissemination-reader's reception, the state translation program, differentiation of translation strategy, translation method, and translation techniques, studies on culture-specific items, previous studies on English translation of Chinese political documents, a review of translation research on *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, related studies on Chinese political document translation under the state translation program, as well as the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study.

#### 2.2 Related Studies on the Translation Process: Production-Dissemination-Reader's Reception

What is the translation process? There is currently no universally recognized definition in the academic community. Scholars mainly define the translation process from two aspects: connotation and extension. From the perspective of connotation, Wolfram Wilss, a German scholar, believed that the translation process is a process of selection and decision, a process of selecting and deciding the expression of the target language corresponding to or similar to a unit of the original text (cited in Gui, 2004).

According to the explanation of Siregar (2016), the translation process refers to accurately conveying the meaning of each word or sentence in the source language without changing the meaning of the sentence. The process of conveying this meaning can also transform the same information in the translated text into the target language. Moreover, this process can include words, sentences, paragraphs, or other longer texts (Nida & Taber, 1964, as cited in Napitupulu, 2017). *A Dictionary of Translation Studies in China* defines translation process as a three-stage translation activity, which generally includes understanding the original text, expressing in the target language, verifying and modifying the original text (Fang, 2011).

From the perspective of extension, some scholars divide the translation process into ‘big process’ and ‘small process’: The ‘big process of translation’ is the translation process in a broad sense, that is, the translation process of long texts and the whole original. The ‘small process of translation’ is the translation process in a narrow sense, that is, the translation process of a sentence, a short article, or even an expression (Gui, 2004). In this study, we tend to the opinion made by Xu (2003) and Feng (2009), who held that the translation process can be understood from broad and narrow sense, and distinguished between broad and narrow translation processes: The narrow process is generally understood as the translator’s process of transforming specific texts. The broad process not only includes narrow language conversion activities, but includes processes such as text selection, text generation, the life courses and influence of the translated texts in target-language cultures. Based on Xu’s and Feng’s definitions, the broad translation process covers the narrow process,

and the broad classification lays the foundation of this current research.

In the following part, this study introduces two different research models for translation studies, both of Tian's and Yin's models are derived from Fairclough's model. Understanding how political power permeates translation requires tools that expose hidden ideologies. Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1992a) provides exactly this by linking micro-level text choices to macro-level social control. This is why Ren (2017) and Yin (2019) explicitly adopt it as their foundation - a dependency our analysis cannot bypass without losing theoretical rigor.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) regards 'language' as a social practice (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997), from which Norman Fairclough proposed a 'social-cultural analysis' path (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1992b, 1995, 2000) and a model of 'three-dimensional conception of discourse' (Fairclough, 1992a) (see Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2) including three parts: text, discourse practice, and social practice, which together constitute the social practice of 'discourse' (Fairclough, 1989; 1992a). 'Text' is the product of 'discourse practice', covering the 'production', 'distribution' and 'consumption' of the text, and these processes are in turn influenced by specific 'social practice'.

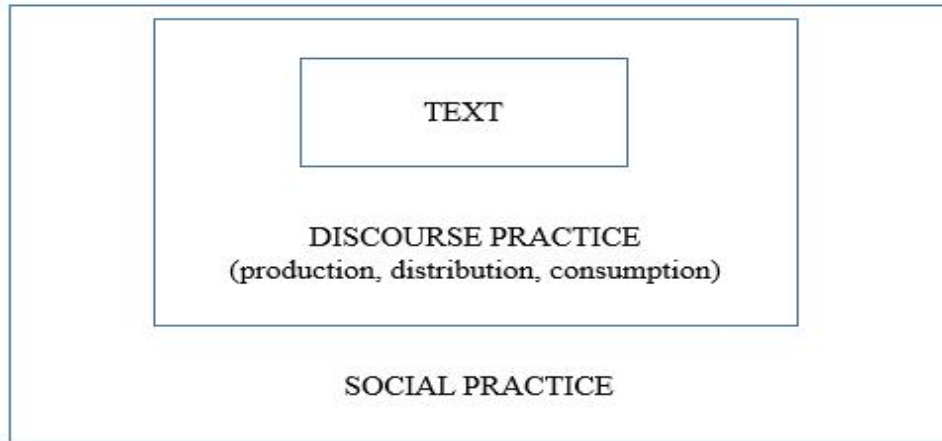


Figure 2. 1 Fairclough's 'three-dimensional conception of discourse' model (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 73)

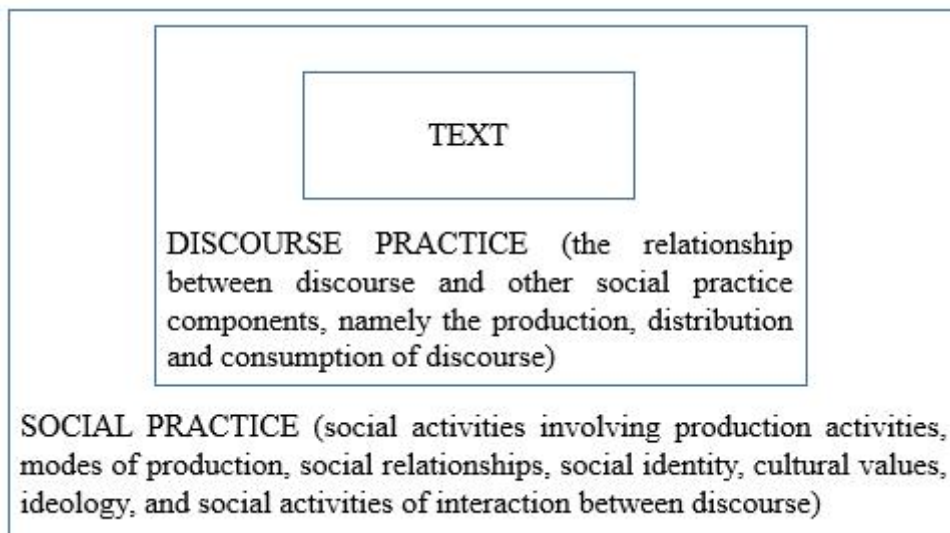


Figure 2. 2 Fairclough's 'three-dimensional conception of discourse' model (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 73) (Information added by the author of this thesis)

Translation activities achieve cross-cultural communication and dissemination of texts through the use of different languages, which is essentially a social practice phenomenon and can be “attributed to a cultural production behavior” (Huang, 2010, p.89). Therefore, as a cultural production behavior, translation, like other forms of cultural activities, should be composed of three parts: translation production, translation distribution, and translation consumption (Huang, 2010; Tian, 2017; Yin,