Translating Political Terms in China's Political Discourse: A Critical Review

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Abstract
There is a persistent tendency of using political terms to explain the political system and ideas in China's political discourse. In this study, political terms refer to the professional words with specific meanings and in specific forms developed by the Communist Party of China (henceforth, CPC) and the government in a series of activities for dealing with domestic and foreign affairs. Focusing on the translation of political terms in China context, this study aims at: 1) introducing political terms in China's political discourse, particularly the proper nouns and abbreviations, 2) critically reviewing the major studies on translating these political terms and 3) identifying some existing gaps in the current literature which need to be filled by future research. The significance of this study lies in that it contributes to a better understanding of such political terms and the status quo of their translation. Specifically, the study identifies three gaps in the current literature: a knowledge gap, or insufficiency of research on the existing defects in translating these political terms, a methodological gap, or the lack of explorations from a macroscopic translational perspective, and a theoretical gap, the scarcity of rhetorical persuasion theories as theoretical frameworks for researching the translation of such political terms. These research findings are meaningful to future scholars that would focus on the better convey of political intention expressed through political terms and the enhanced translation of China's political discourse in international communication.
Keywords: Political Term, China's Political Discourse, Translation of Political Terms, Political Intention, Target Text

Introduction
There is a number of political terms used by the speaker to refer to the political system and ideas in China's political discourse (Wang, 2020; Liang, 2019; Qiu, 2018a; Jiang, 2018; Ji, 2017). Political system is different in every country. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China's political system refers to the laws, regulations, and customs that have been enacted on the Chinese mainland (Wang, 2021); to be more specific, it

encompasses the system of primary level democracy, the system of political consultation and multi-party cooperation, the system of military, the judiciary system, the administrative system, the state president system, the people's congress system, the electoral system, and the state structure (Yin, 2010). With respect to China's political ideas, it is deemed that they comprise the state theory, governance plan and political propositions of all classes, political parties and representatives of the country (Baidu Baike, 2022). In this sense, political terms play an essential role in explicating China's national polity, policies, and prepositions (Qiu & Liu, 2021; Chen, 2021; Wang, 2020; Liang, 2019;Yin, 2017). with this background, this study has the following research objectives:

● To make an introduction to political terms in China's political discourse, in particular, proper nouns and abbreviations;
● To retrospect on the major studies of translating such political terms;
● To identify the gaps in the current literature.

Through the critical review of major studies on translating such political terms and the identification of research gaps in the literature, the study is expected to elicit more forthcoming studies that center on the re-expression of political intention embedded in these terms and better translation of China's political discourse in global exchange.

Introduction to Political Terms in China's Political Discourse
Besides a time period, "term" also refers to "a word or expression used in relation to a particular subject, often to describe something official or technical" (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). In *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries*, it is described as "a word or phrase used as the name of something, especially one connected with a particular type of language" (Oxford University Press, n.d.). Terms are also considered the symbolic representation of concepts generalizing the characteristics of cognitive objects; they are the result of human thinking and the most basic knowledge unit (Liu & Wei, 2015, P. 100). As such, in the current study, political terms in China's political discourse can be interpreted as the agreed symbols of the CPC party and the state to convey abstract concepts such as political thought and position. They can be phrases and other expressions that appear in political documents (Lan, 2017).

In regard of content, political terms involve not just political concerns, but national defense, science and technology, education, people's livelihood and other national affairs. What is more, they feature high conciseness and political sensitivity in addition to other shared linguistic characteristics of political discourse, and the translation of them could best reflect the normative characteristics of political translation (Zhao, 2018).

Unfortunately, the critic does not offer an agreed classification of the political terms in China's political discourse. Some practitioners categorize political terms into culture-specific terms, numbered lists, four-word structures and metaphorical expressions (Chen, 2021; He & Geng, 2020; Chen, 2010). Many add Chinese political neologisms or new political words to the above (Chen, 2018; Yang & Yao, 2017; Liu & Wei, 2015; Zheng, 2014), or propose other ways of taxonomy, such as the "'number+subject' expression, political neologism and four-character structure" by Li (2021, P. 35), and "proper noun, culture-specific words and slogan" (Song, 2019, P. 14). Despite the discord in classification, it shows that proper nouns and abbreviations are the two most agreed constituents of political terms in China's political

discourse (Chen, 2021; Qiu, 2021; Wang, 2020; Wu & Tian, 2020; Liang, 2019; Zhao, 2018; Huang, 2017; Zhang, 2016).

There are also discussions on translating political neologisms, but it is difficult to set the boundary of being a new political word or being "politically new"; some so-called neologisms, such as "不折腾(Bú Zhéténg)" (no more tossing), still remain controversial since they are neither professional nor unique, nor are they special terms or concepts, nor are they defined and exclusive in meaning politically (Wang, 2016, pp. 91-92). To not to get involved in any possible academic dispute upon the categorization of political terms and identification of political neologisms, the researcher of the current study only focuses on proper nouns and abbreviations that most Chinese political terms can be grouped into.

Proper Noun
A proper noun is used to describe a place, a person, a thing, an institution, an organization, a system, a policy, etc.
(https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/proper-noun?q=proper+noun). For example, Tom, London Bridge, Rome, State council, National People's Congress, Family Planning Policy, etc.. In Chinese political terms, proper nouns are agreed symbols to express political concepts. Taking a large proportion, they have distinct originality and high sensitivity, conveying the development path, major principles and initiatives of contemporary China (Cai & Yang, 2017). Therefore, proper nouns are a carrier of China's political positions, viewpoints and responses.

To help the target audience (henceforth, TA) understand the political intention in such proper nouns, the translators should put accuracy in the first place while translating. This is because the English audiences are influenced by Western rhetoric tradition and tend to attach great importance to the credibility of discourse. Therefore, ensuring the authenticity of the target text (henceforth, TT) is fundamental to effective persuasion of the TA. A case in point is a typical proper noun "台湾问题 (*táiwān wèntí*)" (www.gov.cn, 2021).

In this term, the two Chinese characters"问题"(wèntí) can be translated literally into "problem", "issue", or "question" in English. Referring to the online Cambridge Dictionary, one would find that "problem" and "issue" are explained respectively as "a situation, person, or thing that needs attention and needs to be dealt with or solved" and "a disputed event or an event worthy talking about" respectively (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). It is a hardened, unquestionable fact, however, that Taiwan has been an inalienable part of China's territory, and such a fact is neither a dispute nor in need of any solution, but just to be known or recognized, which is also the core political meaning to be delivered through the proper noun. In view of this, the word "question" could best express the connotative and communicative meaning of the ST because it refers to "a sentence or phrase used to find out information" (Cambridge University Press, n.d.), a hook to an existing answer. Based on that, "the Taiwan question" or "the question of Taiwan" is an appropriate translation for conveying the political stand in the proper noun of "台湾问题 (táiwān wèntí)" (www.gov.cn, 2021).

For another example. "科学发展观 (kēxué fāzhǎn guān)" from the 2018 government work report is translated into "scientific outlook on development" (CHINADAILY.com.cn., 2018) . However, this translation brings about some controversy at home. It probably misleads foreigners into believing that the term is talking about China's scientific and technological development plan (Zhang, 2019) since in English the word "scientific" is interpreted as "involved science; connected with science; (of a way of doing something or thinking) careful and logical" (Oxford University Press, n.d.). To secure proper understanding and acceptance of the entailed political meaning, the translator is suggested adding certain more specific modifiers to make the TT more explicit, such as "balanced" and "sustainable". And the above proper noun can then be translated into " the outlook on balanced and sustainable development".

In fact, there are a great many proper nouns concerning China political system and ideas in the annual work report, such as "湖北发展一揽子政策(húběi fāzhǎn yīlǎnzǐ zhèngcè)" (a set of policies to encourage the growth of Hubei), "抗疫特别国债 (kàngyì tèbié guózhài)" (bonds of government for COVID-19 control) and "市场化社会化就业(shìchǎng huà shèhuì huà jiùyè)" (market-based employment) (Wang, 2020, p. 35). When translating these proper nouns, the translator should read through the relevant documents so as to comprehend properly the embedded political intention before transferring them to the TT (Zhang, 2019). At the same time, the principle of naming proper nouns in terminology should be observed as well in translation, which contributes to the standardization and unification of political terms for the international communication of China's political discourse (Wang, 2020; Diao, 2017; Shi, 2014; Feng, 2014).

Abbreviation
Oxford Learner's Dictionaries defines "abbreviation" as "a short form of a word; the process of abbreviating something" (Oxford University Press, n.d.). In other words, it refers to a language unit that can be freely used after abridging or omitting the original words in it. Therefore, abbreviations in the Chinese political terms play a role of simplifying and refining the term components. What is more, they can effectively reduce the length of the text and facilitate the readers' memory. From this sense, abbreviations are very conducive to the wide dissemination political discourse for international communication (Wang, 2020).

There is a very popular, representative group of abbreviations in Chinese political terms, and they take a "numeral+ keyword(s)" structure (Chen, 2021; Wang, 2020; Zhao, 2019; Jiang, 2018; Lan, 2017; Zheng, 2014). For example, "四早(sìzǎo)" ("early detection, early reporting, early quarantine, and early treatment of cases") in the 2020 work report (CHINADAILY.com.cn., 2020) . In this abbreviation, "四(sì)" and "早(zǎo)" mean respectively "four" and "early" in English. Such political terms of "numeral + keyword(s)" are often a high generalization of the China's national governance program and a concentrated embodiment of the political will. As a landmark political symbol of the times, they are easy to remember and transmit.

"一带一路 (yīdài yīlù)" is another typical example. It is the abbreviation of two Chinese political proper nouns, "丝绸之路经济带 (sīchóu zhīlù jīngjì dài)" (Silk Road Economic Belt) and "21世纪海上丝绸之路 (21 shìjì hǎishàng sīchóu zhīlù)" (21st century Maritime Silk Road). The researcher of this study holds that the two existing translations, "the belt and road initiative" and "one belt one road", fail to transmit the political intention to be expressed through the abbreviated term, that is, resuming and promoting the economic exchange and other friendly interactions between China and people of all neighbouring countries alongside the Silk Road. Without further information in the current English translations, the TA cannot associate "belt" and "road" with the "Economic Belt" and the "Silk Road" in China's history; without a correct understanding and resonance from the recipients, the political initiatives by Chinese leaders would suffer low acceptance. In this condition, another TT is then proposed: Land and Maritime Silk Road. Compared with the former two, it reproduces the core element of this initiative in the target language and reserves its international glamour for persuasion (Zhang, 2019).

Another instance is "五位一体总体布局 (wǔwèi yītǐ zǒngtǐ bùjú)" (five-sphere integrated plan), one abbreviation in the 2016 work report (CHINADAILY.com.cn, 2016). In the English version of the report, it is translated into "five-sphere integrated plan" in the body part, and at the same time annotated at the end of the text by "this refers to a plan to promote coordinated economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological advancement" (CHINADAILY.com.cn, 2016). This annotation helps make the political willingness in the abbreviation more explicit to the receptor.

This kind of "numeral + keyword(s)" abbreviations as political terms are very commonly used in Chinese political documents, but rare to see in English (Cai & Yang, 2017). Due to the language phenomenon of polysemy in Chinese and to avoid any possible misunderstanding, translators should consult the original documents about the full names of abbreviations. What is more, because of strong generality, these abbreviations tend to be quite abstract and require thorough, proper comprehension before getting translated.

Retrospection on the Major Studies of Translating Political Terms
There is a prominent problem in the translation of China's political discourse, that is, the TT can not fully or accurately reflect the political intention embedded in the ST, or it is obscure and hard to accept, leading to the poor communication effect; it has even been deliberately misinterpreted due to different ideologies, resulting in the extrusion of China's voice and distortion of its image (State Language Work Committee, 2019). In this context, scholars have been exploring the translation of political terms for the convey of political willingness, with different theoretical frameworks, perspectives and methodologies.

With eco-translatology as the theoretical framework, Lan (2017) analyzes 328 political terms translated and issued by China Central Compilation & Translation Bureau from the linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions; she proposes some strategies for translating different kinds of political terms, but unfortunately the categorizations of these terms, such as "the political terms characterized by parallel structure and rich connotation", "political

terms rich in Chinese culture", and "the new and sensitive political terms" (Ⅲ) are to some extent overlapped with each other, which reduces the reliability of the research results.

Following the same approach of eco-translatology, Chen (2021) discusses the translation method for "numeral+keyword(s)" abbreviations in Chinese political terms used by the 2020 work report from the same three dimensions; and suggests that an eco-translation environment should be rebuilt in the TL for the "survival" of the TT.

From the perspective of Memetics Theory, Ji (2017) considers the Chinese political terms as memes, and puts forward certain strategies for them, such as finding English equivalents, introducing Chinese memes, and turning these political terms into idiomatic expressions in English. In a similar vein, Jiang (2018), with China's 19th National Congress Report as an example, aims to "design a model of predicting a political term's possibility in becoming a strong meme after translation" (P. 201).

Upon the translation of political terms in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Voulme 2)*(Xi, 2017) , Qiu & Liu (2021) provide the methods of translating political terms with Chinese characteristics based on the Theory of Reception. They recommend the method of literal translation and annotation.

Besides the four theoretical approaches, researchers also probe into the translation of political terms from many other perspectives, such as recreation (Feng, 2014), conceptual history (Liu & Wei, 2015), linguistic features (Huang, 2017), evolution of translation norm (Zhao, 2018), national image communication (Liang, 2019), and the translator's subjectivity (He & Geng, 2020).

The thrust of Feng's (2014) argument lies in the necessity to rename or recreate the Chinese political terms in English due to the lack of correspondents in the target language and the problem is caused by their cultural uniqueness and political sensitivity. It is proposed that the three dimensions of linguistics, terminology and cross-cultural communication be considered in Chinese-English translation of political terms.

Liu & Wei (2015) take the issue with the English translation of Zhōngguó Mèng 中国梦(China Dream) from the perspective of conceptual history and its implication for the translation of other political terms. With the conceptual history of German provenance as the theoretical framework, his analysis covers both "the diachronic thrust and the geography-based contrast" (P. 106), and the conceptual complexity of Zhōngguó Mèng which is essential to the translation and transmission of the embedded political intention in this term. This theoretical and methodological approach contributes to the study of translating other political terms in China's political discourse.

Huang (2017) contributes to the linguistic features of Chinese political terms and their translation by putting forward the translation strategies (semantic and communicative translation) and methods (annotation and interpretation, provincial translation, and creative translation) of political terms to convert the intended meaning with Chinese characteristics.

Zhao (2018) presents another attempt to a comparative study of the norms of translating Chinese leaders' selected works. The study chooses five types of texts from the Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping and *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Volume I)* as samples, during which the political terms, *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ* are analyzed to identify the shared features of the TT, the norm evolution of the English translation of the state leaders' selected works, and its social and cultural causes. The findings show that different social-cultural contexts contribute to the evolution of translation norm.

Liang (2019) gives particular insights from the perspective of national image communication. Through a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative research and with 198 political terms as samples from the English version of Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Volume I) (Xi, 2014), she discusses the role of translation subject, translation strategies and communicative effect of translated political terms; and finds that the applied translation strategies for these terms tend to be "self-centered" or "foreignization-prior" (p. 40), where literal translation method is the most favoured for conveying China's voice and identity.

Focusing on the unity of translator's subjectivity and the property of political document, He & Geng (2020) argues that the translation version and the original text should be identical in political values and stands; and suggests the translation strategy of fraternization for political terms so as to introduce the Chinese political culture to the outside world.

In addition to the aforementioned work, some scholars also discuss about political neologisms and their translation methods (Chen, 2018; Yang & Yao, 2017; Mo et al., 2016; Zheng, 2014). However, considering the existing discord on defining or identifying a political neologism, they are not taken as an object for further review in this section and then for data collection and analysis procedures of the current study.

Identification of the Gaps
After reviewing the major studies on translating political terms in China's political discourse, the researcher identifies three gaps in the current body of literature. Firstly, there is a knowledge gap. Most previous studies focus on the way of translating different types of political terms or the different ways of translating one same political term. However, few researchers have probed into the salient defects or obstacles in the translation of these terms, particularly, the incomplete convey of political intention embedded in the discourse. Secondly, the researcher identifies a methodological gap in the current literature. A number of relevant studies discuss the tactics or concrete methods for translating certain type of political words and structure, but pay less attention to the macro-level exploration of translation strategies. In addition, the researcher also identifies a theoretical gap. The range of theoretical frameworks applied to the existing studies has overwhelmingly fallen into linguistics, pragmatics and translatology, but rarely covered the theories in rhetorical persuasion approach, the first cross-disciplinary approach adopted by Western translation studies.

Conclusion

This study focuses on the translation of political terms in China context. As a key component of political discourse, political terms play an essential role in explicating the country's national strategies, stance and responses in domestic and international affairs. The translation of political terms then is of great importance to conveying the speaker's political intention and the national image of the country in the discourse.The study endeavors to introduce political terms in China's political discourse, review critically the main studies on translating these terms and identify the salient gaps in the current scholarship. The study concludes with three gaps in the existing literature: a knowledge gap, or insufficiency of research on the existing defects in translating these political terms, a methodological gap, or the lack of explorations from a macroscopic translational perspective, and a theoretical gap, the scarcity of rhetorical persuasion theories as theoretical frameworks for studies of translating such political terms. These research findings are supposed to serve the translation of political terms in China's political discourse in terms of better transferring the embedded political intention. Based on that, the potential researchers are suggested to conduct more research and explorations so as to fill the identified gaps in this study.

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