

A rhetorical approach to translation

The Chinese “Report on the Work of the Government” as a case study

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Over the past three decades, the Chinese government has repeatedly called for the effective transmission of its policies to the West through translation. Yet the effectiveness of translation and its evaluation has remained a ticklish issue, particularly for texts with a political agenda. Fidelity to literal denotative meaning at the grain of words and phrases is generally insufficient for the translation of such texts. Texts in these sensitive domains of the Chinese context call for exacting fidelity in tone, register, genre, stance, connotation, and, overall, rhetoric. The Chinese government, wishing to avoid misinterpretation, is concerned with sharing their policies with foreigners as closely as possible to the way the many authors of these policies understood them from the inside. In this paper, we think of a “rhetoric” of translation holistically as capturing the “inside contours” of words and phrases as understood by a native speaker. For this purpose, we present a rhetorical approach to translation that can help explain the translation standards of Chinese government documents marked for wide-scale distribution abroad. The approach and method can be applicable in the assessment of other translations when rhetoric or the overall effect is the major concern.

Keywords: corpus-based, rhetorical, approach, translation, assessment

1. Introduction

In 1978 China began to implement its full-scale “Reform and Opening-up,” which the West called Deng’s “Open Door” policy. Since that time, China’s growth as a political and economic power has been exponential and it is destined to become the world’s largest economy in the coming years. It has been routine for the Premier to deliver his annual *Report on the Work of the Government* (*Report* hereafter) to the National People’s Congress (NPC) in order to inform that body

of the policies taken up during the past year and of the policies for the coming year(s). In recognition of the role the *Report* now plays on the world stage, the Chinese government, immediately on approval of the *Report* by the NPC, releases it in several languages (e.g., Arabic, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Mongolian, Portuguese, and Russian). To ensure that its transmissions are accurate, the government has made repeated calls for accurate translations of all government documents. It has backed up this priority with the installation of many new government departments and bureaus, culminating most recently in July 2014 with the inauguration of the Chinese Translation Academy. Our inquiry for this paper began by asking what it means to preserve translation “accuracy” in highly sensitive political documents that are intended to be read in a global context.

As an interdisciplinary field of research, translation studies (TS) has benefited from input from a variety of related disciplines. Linguistic approaches have basically focused on translation accuracy at the word, clause, and sentence levels. Cultural approaches have shown how translation is filtered through tiers of explicit and implicit cultural assumptions that can influence both the quality and slant of a translation. Functional approaches emphasize the different functions or purposes (*skopos*) of the translation project and place a premium on how the target audience is meant to make use of the translation (Reiss 1971/2000; House 1977, 1997; Vermeer 1996; Nord 1997). When Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics and discourse analysis are adopted as the theoretical frameworks, they help to provide well-articulated accounts of the relationships between speaker and listener/writer and reader, and both have been used in TS in both qualitative and quantitative analyses (Schäffner 2004, 2009). These approaches have also witnessed new developments in research methodologies, as demonstrated in corpus-based translation studies. Corpus approaches frame translation as a serious linguistic genre in its own right, deserving of “big data” computational techniques to understand what makes translation different from original composition in the source language (Baker 1995; Laviosa 1998a, 1998b; Olohan 2004). For example, with the help of the TEC (Translational English Corpus), scholars are able to sub-classify different types of translations and offer the translator practical aids for the different types. For example, Laviosa (1997, 1998b) relied on corpora of translations to identify several universals of translated texts, such as simplification and core patterns of lexical use.

It is true that rhetorical devices in translation have been researched through critical discourse analysis. However, apart from the above mentioned, not many of the dominant approaches specifically and systematically tap into what might be thought of as a rhetorical approach to language and translation, that is, the “insider understandings” that bind writer and reader (regarding overall persuasive effect) in the native language and the translator and reader in the target language.

This may be attributed to what Connor (1996, 117–125) has called “mutual ignorance” between rhetoricians and translation scholars, even though both share similar goals and research methods. In addition, not many approaches have devised quantitative tests in the computational context for tracking the extent to which these understandings survive translation into the target language. Still fewer studies have used computerized data to explore the rhetorical effect of a translation on its target readers as compared to that of the original on its source text readers, i.e. in terms of the overall effect of the text in calling for actions. The closest approximation to rhetorical approaches in the literature has been the “stylistic” approach (Boase-Beier 2006, 2011) that examines whether a translation has achieved its intended conventional effects on readers. With her focus on literary translation, Boase-Beier (2011) argues that, for a translator, understanding the style of the source text and being able to recreate similar stylistic effects in the target text are essential. In her words (2006, 1–2), style has a lot to do with issues such as “voice, otherness, foreignization, contextualization, and culturally-bound and universal ways of conceptualizing and expressing meaning”; furthermore, “it is the style that enables [...] to express attitude and implied meanings, to fulfill particular functions, and to have effects on its readers.” (2006, 4)

The rhetorical approach has many affinities with the stylistic approach. At the same time, they are different from each other. One salient difference is that the rhetorical approach investigates the *interaction* of multiple rhetorical features by seeking to establish a basic theory of reader impressions that normatively bind the source text and the translation. Studying these interactions and their cross-over or loss from one language system to another requires language technologies that go beyond the computation of sentence length, type-token ratio, frequency, keyword lists, and other standard statistics (e.g., Baker 2000). It must include but also expand beyond the common study of literary texts (e.g., Baker 2000; Boase-Beier 2006; Huang 2012), where linguistic features of translations tend to be noted qualitatively but not quantitatively.

Over the past two decades, technologies in translation studies have steadily emerged in the form of systematic corpus development (e.g., Translational English Corpus, see Baker 2000; Olohan 2004), computer-aided translation (translation tools like SDL Trados where the core component is translation memory, a database of bilingual or multilingual parallel corpus), and corpus-based lexicography (e.g., Collins Cobuild Dictionary). Technologies have been developed over the same period for corpus-based rhetorical analysis. For example, using the DICTION program built for rhetorical analysis, Hart et al. (2013) have shown how American politicians deploy different styles of speaking and writing and how these styles can change over time. Using his Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) program built to gauge psychology as well as rhetoric, Pennebaker (2013) has demonstrated

the different rhetorical styles that underlie gender, power, status, group identification, and other sociocultural variables.

To be maximally useful for translation studies, technologies for comparing the “rhetoric” of a source text and a translation must provide linguistic analyses that are highly concentrated and capture “native reader experience”¹ at many levels of granularity, from single words to multi-clause phrases, even idioms. It must be able to discern myriad rhetorical features that coalesce into classifications of the reader experience² at a macro-level.

Here “rhetoric” refers to the persuasive effect of a speech or text that is realized through three major appeals identified by Aristotle and further developed by other classical rhetoricians, i.e., ethos, pathos, and logos. Along this line, “rhetorical technologies” refer to computer tools that are used to assess the overall effect intended by a persuasive speech or text.

2. The DocuScope text analysis environment and translation

A rhetorical technology with that depth of linguistic capture is the DocuScope platform (Kaufer, Ishizaki, Collins and Vlachos 2004), which is used to analyze the overall persuasive effect of a transcribed English speech and/or text. The tool has two main functions: MTV (Multiple Text Viewer) and STV (Single Text Viewer). We include a screen shot of the Single Text Viewer below.

Respectively, they allow researchers to examine multiple texts or a single text for rhetorical features, and then to identify their most frequently used words or the most frequently appearing two-four word combinations. The strings are classified by rhetorical effect. Each category of effect is further divided into specific functional features, i.e., a “Language Action Type” (LAT). Each LAT is placed into a “Dimension”, which is further subsumed under a larger, superordinate cluster. In the “Viewer”, every LAT is underlined and color-coded for analysis. In this way, researchers can investigate the rhetorical effect of one single piece of text or compare the rhetorical effects of different groups of texts. This tool has been used to track rhetorical effects in translated international news (Al-Malki, Kaufer, Ishizaki

1. In translating the *Report* under discussion, translators who are native speakers of Chinese and highly proficient in English work with native speakers of English who are well-trained editors or writers. Study of the translation process would be of value to research and training.

2. Even though “native reader experience” is always a subjective matter, it can be assessed and justified if the context is available. In the present study, the two authors can provide such feedback because one is a native speaker of Chinese and the other of American English.

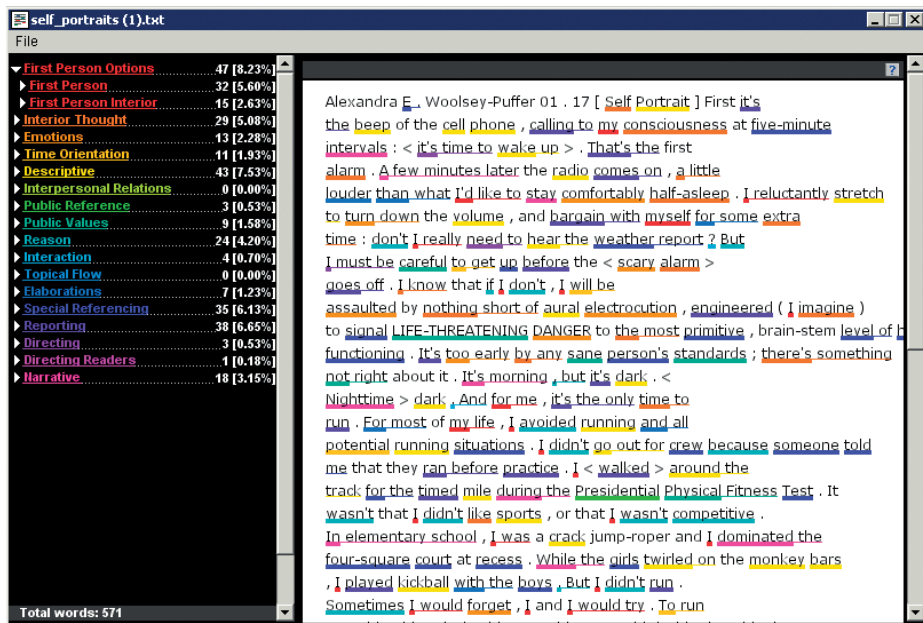


Figure 1. Screenshot of the Single-Text Viewer (STV). Texts are read-in directly or accessed from the Multiple-Text Viewer (MTV). Hierarchical rhetorical categories (Clusters/Dimensions/LATs) are listed in the left panel and color-coded for similarity. When categories are selected on the left panel, the text passages associated with the category on the right panel are underlined in the corresponding color.

and Dreher 2012).³ Its text analysis/visualization environment has been described in previous publications (Ishizaki and Kaufer 2011; Kaufer, Ishizaki, Butler and Collins 2004) and applied in others (Al-Malki, Kaufer, Ishizaki and Dreher 2012; Collins, Kaufer, Vlachos, Butler and Ishizaki 2004; Kaufer and Hariman 2007; Kaufer and Ishizaki 2006; Kaufer, Ishizaki, Collins and Vlachos 2004).

The system enables the capture of phrase and clause-level word sequences and thus makes it possible for researchers to account for a rich repository of serendipitous semantic content that proves to be important for preserving meaning across translation. It allows, for example, to classify “swear at” as a negative relationship and “swear by” as a positive one. It can also record that if circumstances “left one high,” the expression signaled is a private mental state, but with the transition into “and dry” (viz., “left one high and dry”), a new semantic space opens of negative desperation. It also records that there is positive value in “holding one’s own”

3. DocuScope is a text analysis platform with a suite of interactive visualization tools for corpus-based rhetorical analysis. It was designed and developed by David Kaufer and Suguru Ishizaki at Carnegie Mellon University (Kaufer, Ishizaki, Butler and Collins 2004).

but “holding one’s own counsel” transitions into private experience. With it, we have come to learn that in the post-verb slot, an “oversight” (e.g., “is an oversight,” “due to an oversight,” “was guilty of oversight,” “committed an oversight”) signals insufficient attention, but in a subject NP position (e.g., “committee oversight belonged”), a direct object with certain verbs (e.g., “took oversight for”) or an object of certain prepositions (e.g., “under the watchful oversight of”), the attention signaled is supervisory and authoritative.

In this way, DocuScope’s suite of interactive visualizations provides dictionary-building teams a “jeweler’s loupe” into troves of these hard-to-detect and hard-to-systematize semantic-transitions and make it possible for teams to notice, extract, classify, and systematically archive them on a massive scale.

The platform is supported by a dictionary consisting of over 40 million linguistic patterns of English classified into over 150 categories of rhetorical features. DocuScope’s language measures cover a range of English-based categories of rhetorical experience recognized by native speakers of English.

A major goal of this paper is to show how the DocuScope technology can be used to help the translator test the rhetorical “match” of an English translation and its original Chinese source. It will be demonstrated that the rhetorical experiences in Chinese are not different from those in English (see Table 1). There are 25 major categories, but for expediency we review the seven (A to G) that are most relevant to this paper:

- A. *Personal* register consists of 12 subcategories, which non-exhaustively include: self-disclosure (I feel); self-reluctance (I had to); personal autobiography (I used to); subjective time (readily, unexpectedly); immediacy (now); subjective perception (seems); subjective thought (believe, faith); disclosure (confess); confidence (sure to); and uncertainty (maybe). Texts high in personal register sound subjective, personal, and confessional. They filter reality through the eyes of a character.
- B. *Assertive* consists of language judged impatient and forceful through the use of markers of immediacy (right now); insistence (must, need, ought); and intensity (very, extremely).
- C. *Emotion* consists of positive (wonderful) and negative (awful) emotion with negative further subcategorized into anger (too stupid); fear (frightened); and sadness (melancholy). Texts high in emotion bring an emotive filter to reality.
- D. *Public* register consists of language rooted in public authority and title (appellation, judiciary); responsibility (obligation, in charge of); positive values (justice); and negative values (unjust). Texts high in public register suggest the language of deliberative bodies and the courts.

- E. *Academic* register consists of abstract nouns (employment) and adjectives (developmental); language references (poetry, sonnet); metadiscourse (the point is); and citation (according to, described by). Texts high in academic register are rich in abstract language and the citing of others, indicative of specialized learning communities.
- F. *Elaboration* consists of language signaling large levels of subordination, coordination, prepositional phrases and other signifiers of clausal and phrasal complexity. Texts high in elaboration tend to be high in conceptual and syntactic complexity.
- G. *Narrative* consists of ed-verbs (ran, conquered); shifts in time (next week); duration (for three years); biographical time (born, died, married, retired); and time-date information (June 11, 2013). Texts high in narrative have the shape of stories and contrast with texts high in elaboration. They are typically more informal and less institutional. Studies conducted with randomized English corpora within the DocuScope environment (e.g., Collins, Kaufer, Vlachos, Butler and Ishizaki 2004) have shown that these and other rhetorical classifications of the English language hold up robustly across English and can accurately differentiate genres and registers of English as well as native speakers do. In order to test the feasibility of a rhetorical approach to Chinese-to-English translation on the *Reports*, we first had to verify that Chinese characters could be credibly classified into the same range of experiences into which the developers of the DocuScope had categorized English.

3. Segmenting Chinese characters into rhetorical classifications

An important claim of this paper is that the Chinese character system can be segmented by rhetorical features in the manner in which the DocuScope coding system tags English words and phrases. As in English, there are mainly three ways of segmenting Chinese into its smallest lexical unit. First, there are single characters that can be used only as bound morphemes (suffixes in most cases), such as 化 (*hua*,⁴ meaning “transform, -isation”) in 简化 (*jian hua*, meaning “simplify, simplification”) and 观 (*guan*, meaning “view”) in 世界观 (*shi jie guan*, meaning “world view”) Second, there are single characters that can be used as free morphemes, such as 要 (*yao*, meaning “will, should”), 好 (*hao*, meaning “good, well”), and 我 (*wo*, meaning “I, me”). Finally, there are compound characters that can be used as free morphemes. A huge number of Chinese expressions belong to this type, such

4. All Chinese characters are followed by full pinyin, literal translations into English, and their meanings.

as 科学 (*ke xue*, literally translated into English as “subject” and “study”, meaning “science”), 社会 (*she hui*, literally translated into English as “society” and “association”, meaning “society, social, sophisticated”), 加强 (*jia qiang*, literally translated into English as “add” and “strength”, meaning “strengthen”), 教育 (*jiao yu*, literally translated into English as “educate” and “foster”, meaning “educate, education”), and 科学发展观 (*ke xue fa zhan guan*, literally translated into English as “science”, “development” and “view”, meaning “scientific outlook on development”).

To see how these units in the Chinese character system can be classified by rhetorical tags using DocuScope’s tagging system for English, let us now turn to one segment retrieved from the corpus and classified rhetorically. This is to show that Chinese rhetoric works similarly and fits into the existing categories for English-language rhetorical classification. The passages and their English glosses appear below. We started with sample Passage (1) in the 2011 *Report*.

Passage 1. (glossed)

要 更 好 地 满 足 人 民 群 众 多 层 次 多 样 化 文 化 需 求,
will better -ly satisfy people mass multi layer multi type cultural need
发 挥 文 化 引 导 社 会 、 教 育 人 民 、 推 动 发 展 的 功 能,
Play culture lead society educate people push development of role
增 强 民 族 凝 聚 力 和 创 造 力。
Strengthen national cohesive power and innovative power

Take the first part of this Chinese sentence as an example. Since in Chinese there is no need to have a subject to make a sentence grammatical, we analyzed the rhetorical strategy by breaking each constituent down into the smallest lexical units. The results of our rhetorical coding of the Chinese are displayed in Table 1.

In this sentence, we could identify the rhetorical effect of each constituent and confirm that the identification process is similar to that in English as demonstrated by DocuScope. This sentence is on the whole very public and future oriented. Let us now turn to Passage (2) in the 2012 *Report*.

Passage 2. (glossed)

从 国 际 看,
From international look
世 界 经 济 复 苏 进 程 艰 难 曲 折,
World economy recover process difficult tortuous
国 际 金 融 危 机 还 在 发 展,
International financial crisis still -ing develop
一 些 国 家 主 权 债 务 危 机 短 期 内 难 以 缓 解。
Some country sovereignty debt crisis short-term within difficult alleviate

Table 1. Chinese expressions broken down and rhetorical strategy explained

Chinese expression (pin-yin annotated)	English literal translation of each constituent	Rhetorical strategy using DocuScope coding scheme
要 yao	will	future
更 geng	more	elaboration
好 hao	well	elaboration
地 de	-ly	elaboration
满足 man zu	satisfy	public
人民 ren min	people	public
群众 qun Zhong	mass	public
多 duo	multi	elaboration
层次 ceng ci	layer	elaboration
多 duo	multi	elaboration
样 yang	type	elaboration
化 hua	-isation	elaboration
文化 wen hua	culture	elaboration
需求 xu qiu	need	assertive

Again, taking the first part of the Chinese sentence as an example, we analyzed the rhetorical strategy by breaking each constituent down into the smallest lexical unit. The results are listed in Table 2.

From the strategies identified in this example, we could confirm that this part is very emotionally charged.

Table 2. Chinese expressions broken down and rhetorical strategy explained

Chinese expression (pin-yin annotated)	English literal translation of each constituent	Rhetorical strategy using DocuScope coding category
从 cong	from	elaboration
国际 guo ji	inter-national	relation
看 kan	look	reporting
世界 shi jie	world	elaboration
经济 jing ji	economy	elaboration
复苏 fu su	recover	emotion
进程 jin cheng	process	elaboration
艰难 jian nan	difficult	emotion
曲折 qu zhe	tortuous	emotion

3.1 Corpus construction

As a corpus, we chose the English translation of the Chinese Premiers' four *Reports* over a four year period (2011–2014).⁵ While this corpus seems very small, our grain size of interest was 500-word textual segments. The four translated *Reports* consisted of 53,534 words, which created 103 segments for analysis. Our strategy was to isolate the English segments with the most statistically salient rhetorical features and then to compare these segments against the original Chinese. The four original texts consisted of 67,523 Chinese characters.

3.2 Methods

Using DocuScope, the above 103 translated segments were tagged for rhetorical features drawn from the measures above and exported to a statistical package. Factor analysis was employed to extract “rhetorical strategies” as linear combinations of the rhetorical features. After extracting these strategies, we relied on a close reading of the translation to interpret them. We then compared our interpretation against the Chinese source passages.

4. Factors extracted

Factor analyzing the 103 segments yielded five factors. Variables fronted by a “+” sign have a high positive loading on the factor and variables fronted by a “-” sign have a high negative loading. Variables that share the same sign are positively correlated, while variables that have different signs are negatively correlated.

Factor 1: +*Future*, +*Relations*, +*Directive*, +*Public*, -*Narrative*, -*Past*

Factor 2: +*Elaborative*, +*Descriptive*, -*Assertive*, -*Privy*, -*Interactive*, -*Public*

Factor 3: +*Directive*, +*Descriptive*, +*Reporting*, -*Persons*, -*Public*

Factor 4: +*Elaborative*, +*Academic*, -*Emotional*, -*Reporting*

Factor 5: +*Persons*, -*Emotional*, -*Strategic*

Further analysis⁶ of the variance and weights of the factors revealed that factors 1 and 2 were the most important strategies to explain and so we limited our focus

5. Since each *Report* is different from the others, translators usually start their work from scratch, although they may have translations of some terms available to them from previous *Reports*.

6. This analysis consisted of calculating the relative strengths of the factors by taking a total sum of the squares of the coefficient weights loaded on each factor. This analysis found that the total

there. Both factors 1 and 2 had positive and negative signs, meaning they accommodated two rhetorical strategies at either pole.

4.1 Interpreting factors 1 and 2

4.1.1 Factor 1: future policy vs. past strategies

We established that the high end of factor 1 captured a rhetorical strategy focused on China's future economic policy. At the low end, it identified passages that focused on China's already established policy strategies. Passage (3) from the 2011 *Report* scores the highest on this factor:

Passage 3. [Future Policy Strategy]

We will improve oversight systems and mechanisms for food safety; improve relevant laws and regulations; strictly enforce standards; improve monitoring, evaluation, inspection and testing systems; make local governments assume more oversight responsibility; strengthen oversight and law enforcement; and comprehensively raise our capacity to ensure food safety.

Words contributing to the *public* aspect of this passage are "improve", "safety", "relevant", "laws", "regulations", "strictly", "standards", "local", "governments", "responsibility", "law", "comprehensively", and "safety". These words uniformly invoke a world of public standards and institutions that exist outside the idiosyncratic cognition of the writer. Words contributing to the *future* aspect of factor 1 (high) are "will" and "for" (e.g., mechanisms for). Words contributing to the *relations* aspect of factor 1 (high) suggest nationalistic inclusion in the form of "we" and "our".

Alternatively, we found that passages scoring low on factor 1 (–Narrative, –Past) exhibit the basic ingredients of story-telling prose, that is, *narrative* chains of past events embedded in temporal expressions that depicts China's past policies. Passage (4) is a sample from the 2013 *Report*:

Passage 4. [Past Stories Strategy]

In 2012, when other major economies in the world were experiencing a slowdown in growth and constantly encountered new risks, we maintained a proper intensity in policy implementation, kept budgetary spending unchanged, improved the spending mix, and reversed the decline in economic growth.

sums of the squares of the first two factors were 2.89 and 2.17. Yet the sums of the squares of the remaining three factors were only 1.29, 1.14 and 0.73 respectively. Moreover, the negative and positive scores on the last three factors are not significantly distinctive from each other.

Verbs such as “encountered”, “maintained”, “kept”, “improved”, and “reversed” create a chain of *narrative* verbs that tell a story of what China was able to do economically against the rest of the world.

4.1.2 Factor 2 interpreted: detailed initiatives vs. assertive agendas

Following similar steps, we interpreted factor 2 to be a contrast between the rhetorical strategies of what we came to call *detailed initiatives* and *assertive agendas*. Passages that scored high on factor 2 were highly syntactically elaborated (+*Elaborative*), meaning they used copious amounts of coordination, subordination, or prepositions. They were also highly *descriptive*, employing terms that have touchstones in the five senses (e.g., “land”, “water”, “irrigation”, and “rural”). The combined effect is to create a register for enumerating many initiatives spread out across an extended list of clauses. Passage (5) from the 2011 *Report* is a representative passage that exemplifies the rhetorical strategy of the detailed initiative:

Passage 5. [Detailed Initiative Strategy]

Our budgetary fixed asset investment will be used mainly to develop agricultural and rural infrastructure, and we will ensure that both the proportion and the total amount of investment further increase. Proceeds from the transfer of land-use rights will be spent primarily on developing agricultural land, irrigation and water conservancy, and constructing rural infrastructure, and we will ensure that an adequate amount of funds is drawn from these proceeds and used for those purposes.

Note that the word “and” appears twice in separate clauses (“and we will ensure” appears twice) along with two more minor uses of “and.” Notice also that the word “will” appears to indicate *future* just as it does in the “future policy” strategy at the top of factor 1. But in the *detailed initiative* strategy, the focus is more on the elaboration of the future policy actions across separate clauses than on the future tense per se. The effect is to indicate that China has a long list of things to do and will do them. But in the future policy strategy (see Passage (1) above) future actions are compressed into two dominant chunked verbs: “improve” and “strengthen”. Future policy discourse creates a more centralized vision of what will be, whereas detailed initiative discourse creates a more decentralized list.

In contrast to the detailed initiative on the high end of factor 2 stands the strategy we called *assertive agendas*. Like the *future policy* strategy, this strategy is known for its use of public language. But what makes this strategy distinct from the others is its high use of assertive language, which for our purposes most relevantly includes the language of insistence and intensity. Examine Passage (6) in the 2013 *Report*:

Passage 6. [Assertive Agenda Strategy]

We should extensively carry out public fitness activities and promote comprehensive development of both recreational and competitive sports. We should greatly increase education in public morality, professional ethics, family virtues, and personal integrity. We should promote a creditability system, use political integrity to improve business and public integrity, and foster healthy social conduct.

Notice the use of “should” three times to indicate insistence and the use of “extensively” and “greatly” to indicate intensity. The writer of this passage is not predicting China’s future through a future “will” but rather *asserting* China’s future as a matter of willfulness and national pride.

4.2 Testing the rhetorical overlapping of the translation against the originals

Having interpreted factors 1 (positive) and 2 (negative) as important rhetorical strategies underlying the translations, we now turn to the main purpose of this paper: to apply these findings to test their rhetorical overlapping with the original Chinese texts. We illustrate this procedure by locating passages from the English translation that scored the highest on each strategy and then comparing them to the Chinese passages. Passage (7) in the 2012 *Report* scored the highest on the future policy strategy.

Passage 7. [English] [Highest in Future Policy Strategy]

We will strengthen and make innovations in social administration. We will work hard to resolve social conflicts, make innovations in social administration, and enforce the law impartially and with integrity. We will strengthen government functions for conducting social administration and providing public services.

To examine the original Chinese, a literal translation is provided below the characters.

Passage 7. [Chinese, glossed]

加强 和 创新 社会 管理。

Strengthen and innovate social administration

加强 社会 矛盾 化解、

Strengthen social conflict resolution

社会 管理 创新、 公正 廉洁 执法。

Social administration innovation impartial clean enforcement

强化 政府 社会 管理 和 公共 服务 职能。

Strengthen government social administration and public service capability

Table 3 provides a systematic summarization of all the rhetorical features that make up the first strategy. We can see that the Chinese and English overlap extensively in the use of *public* words relating to state affairs. But there is no overlap in the other features of factor 1, i.e. *future*, *relations*, *directive*, *narrative*, and *past*.

Table 3. Comparison of rhetorical strategies in the English version with those in the Chinese source text (Passage (7))

Overlapping (Matching)	English	Chinese
Rhetorical strategies (positive)	+Public: make, social, administration, resolve, social, innovation, social, administration, the law, integrity, government, social, administration, providing, public, service	+Public: innovate, social, administration, social, resolution, social, administration, innovation, clean, government, social, administration, public, service
Non-overlapping (Non-matching) rhetorical strategies (positive)	+Future: will, will, work hard, will +Relations: we, we, we	+Future +Relations
Rhetorical strategies absent in both texts (positive)	+Directive	+Directive
Rhetorical strategies absent in both texts (negative)	–Narrative –Past	–Narrative –Past

The overlap indicates consistency in the *public* dimension. Does the lack of overlap, especially in the *future* category, indicate distortion? The answer is no. Chinese does not require a modal verb to refer to future action, and does not carry tense markers at all. However, for any Chinese native speaker, the future is readily inferred. And while the rhetorical features of *directive*, *narrative*, and *past* are part of overall strategy 1, these features were absent both in the original Chinese and English translation. So, we may conclude that the rhetoric of the original Chinese passage is preserved about as well as it can be.

Passage (8) from the 2011 *Report* scored the highest in the *past-success-stories* strategy.

Passage 8. [English] [Highest in Past Success Story Strategy]

We steadfastly implemented a multi-point plan, greatly increased government spending and made structural tax reductions, carried out the plan for restructuring and reinvigorating key industries on a large scale, vigorously promoted innovation and increased support for work in science and technology, and substantially increased social security benefits.

We again annotated the original Chinese characters in Passage (8).

Passage 8. [Chinese, glossed]
坚持 实施 一揽子 计划,
steadfastly implement a multi-point plan
大规模 增加 政府 支出 和 实行 结构性 减
Greatly increase government spending and carry out structural reducing
税,
tax
大范围 实施 重点 产业 调整 振兴
On a large scale implement key industry restructuring reinvigorating
规划,
plan
大力 推进 自主创新 和 加强 科技
Vigorously promote self innovation and strengthen science and technology
支撑,
support
大幅度 提高 社会 保障 水平。
Substantially increase social security level

Table 4 shows the overlaps, non-overlaps, and absences between the original Chinese and the English version.

Table 4. Comparison of rhetorical strategies in the English version with those in the Chinese source text (Passage (8))

Overlapping (Matching) rhetorical strate- gies (positive)	English +Elaborative: and, structural, tax, the, and, on a large scale, and, science, and, technol- ogy, and	Chinese +Elaborative: and, structural, tax, on a large scale, science, and, technology
Overlapping (Matching) rhetorical strate- gies (negative)	–Assertive: greatly, substan- tially –Public: steadfastly, gov- ernment, reinvigorating, vigorously, innovation, social security, benefits	–Assertive: greatly, substan- tially –Public: steadfastly, govern- ment, reinvigorating, vigorous- ly, innovation, social security
Non-overlapping (Non- matching) rhetorical strategies		
Rhetorical strategies absent in both texts (positive)	+Descriptive	+Descriptive
Rhetorical strategies absent in both texts (negative)	–Interactive –Privy	–Interactive –Privy

The observation based on this comparison again demonstrates overlapping in almost all dimensions.

DocuScope's analysis of the English translation also shows the lack of rhetorical *interactivity*. The tone is quite formal. A comparison with its Chinese source text finds that this rhetorical feature clearly and completely corresponds to that of the original, where no interactive features can be identified. Considering there is no article in Chinese, again we may confirm that the translation is faithful in this respect. Comparison in other aspects also confirms that all the segments of the English translation are almost impeccably faithful to the original in retaining the rhetorical features.

5. Discussion

We have seen there is a high degree of faithfulness in the translations of the government document into English, particularly in the *public* and *assertive* dimensions, which are presumably the dominant concerns of a political discourse on past achievements and future national policy. In retrospect, this high cross-language rhetorical consistency makes perfect sense in light of how the translations are prepared. The *Report* is a document prepared by the State Council of the People's Republic of China. The General Office of the State Council is in charge of accumulating data, drafting, proofreading and translating the *Report*. The *Report* is the result of several rounds of checking by different levels of leadership within the Communist system and therefore is a concerted voice both on data and on the national situation. The English version of the *Report* is collectively done by a group of translation experts (highly proficient native speakers of both languages) who strictly follow the original as instructed⁷ and use the same terminology database. Then the *Report* is delivered by the Premier during the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and the National People's Congress (NPC). The bilingual texts are then shared online and published as documents.

Secondly, what follows the delivery of the speech is worth noting. The *Report* needs the immediate approval of the National People's Congress. After the delivery, members of the NPC and the CPPCC will have group discussions and then provide suggestions for revising the *Report*. It is at this time that members from all walks of life can express their ideas about past achievements, future policy, and other matters related to state-building. Some of the feedback is then integrated into the *Report* for its final release. This, again, is quite formal in tone, since it is

7. For example, the literal translation of new political terms, such as the New Normal for 新 (new) 常态 (normal).

not for communication with the audience, which helps to explain the lack of interactivity in the *Reports*.

Thirdly, there are considerations about how the *Reports* will be received by the general public. The *Reports* are usually filled with all kinds of economic data and basic facts related to people's life in China. New keywords and phrases appear in every year's *Report* and are very important points for heated discussion all year long. With China's growing global influence, other countries also try to keep track of China's development through the *Report* at the start of every year because this is the official source of information about China's past achievements and future trends. By way of these *Reports*, domestic and foreign audiences can easily get to know the official account of the current economic situation in China and people's livelihood. In this sense, the *Reports* serve as an underlying rationale for the international community and their policy-making goals with regard to China. This partly explains why the *Reports* are not very specialized in their language (academic-neutral), but very complicated in sentence structure and explicit in content (elaborative-positive).

6. Conclusion

For more than three decades after the implementation of "Reform and Opening up" in 1978, the Chinese government has repeatedly called for improvements in China's national image through translation. The most recent effort was the establishment of the China Academy of Translation in July 2014.⁸ Its missions include: translation policy-making at the national level; sponsorship of major translation projects for the government; establishment of authoritative mechanisms to release major decisions on translation (involving English, French, German, Japanese, and other major languages); intercultural communication related to state politics and social and economic issues; and the construction of a Chinese-English translators' database and translational corpora on discourses with Chinese characteristics, which serve to build the infrastructure of China's translation service. It also proposes to establish mechanisms for evaluating major translation projects and translator proficiency and to create translation awards at the national level. However, the means by which to reach these goals largely remains an unanswered question, and there is much research to do. Nonetheless, we do believe that the study outlined here makes a meaningful case for a rhetorical approach to translation,

8. <<http://www.chinanews.com/cul/2014/07-29/6438048.shtml>>, reported by YING Ni on 29 July 2014, visited 28 July 2017.

the contexts that favor such approaches, and the feasibility of adapting it to the Chinese language.

This study, however, comes with limitations. The sample size is extremely small and does not yet make a case for scalability to large samples. The same statistical methods that have made the rhetorical approach scalable for English in prior studies using larger corpora (Collins, 2003; Ishizaki and Kaufer, 2011) could be applied to Chinese corpora in order to test its scalability for Chinese. Future research will also need to investigate building a Chinese version of the DocuScope coding scheme, one that would allow researchers to conduct rhetorical assessments of translations where Chinese is the target language. Other potentially productive avenues of inquiry include applying rhetorical approaches to investigate the diachronic changes in translated texts from Chinese into English. For example, since 1978, one premier has been designated to deliver ten *Reports* during his two 5-year terms. A comparison could be made between the *Reports* delivered by different premiers to see if and how the rhetorical features have changed over time and how these differences have been received by audiences (see Kaufer and Parry-Giles 2014, for an example of such comparative rhetorical analysis). Related research could also be conducted to see the impact and effects of the Chinese government's changes and calls for action as it endeavors to transmit its messages to the outside world. Finally, we believe interesting studies in contrastive rhetoric could eventually be carried out as well.

In the meantime, we submit that the findings from this case study are significant for three reasons. First, this case study is one of the very few attempts to assess translation from a rhetorical perspective and to offer a methodology for how that can be done. As such, it has contributed to a growing field of corpus and computational research studies and proposed methodologies over the past two decades (Baker 2000; Laviosa 1998a, 1998b).

Secondly, this case study shows that machine reading and human close reading can be incorporated in textual analysis, whether it is monolingual or bilingual. Because of its ubiquity and deep penetrability in the language at all levels of granularity (from morphemes to clauses and discourse), rhetorical approaches to translation are more challenging to code by hand. Machine reading of rhetorical features can generate clues and help to capture the major trends for rhetorical analysis. On the other hand, serial reading is indispensable in interpreting the data retrieved by computer tools. The integration of machine reading and human close reading in approaches to translation can help researchers sharpen theoretical hypotheses while improving practical results by providing suggestions available in the bitexts stored in translation memory systems.

Thirdly, we believe this case study has constructive implications for the training of translators in rhetorical approaches to language. Such training would

encourage translation specialists to observe how micro-patterns of perceived audience experience scale at the level of the whole text and corpus level into macro-patterns of interest. Olid-Pena (2012) has been an advocate for tying translation to the rhetorical tradition and among the most powerful ways of doing that is to develop rhetorical pedagogies for translators. In the authors' opinion, this is the most practical implication of this research.

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