Navigating Cultural Connotations in Translation: Blending Paradigms to Illuminate *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ* in Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's Government Reports

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Abstract—This study delves into the translation challenges of Premier Li Keqiang's *Report on the Work of the Government* (RWG), a notable piece in Chinese political discourse. It focuses on translating the cultural nuances embedded in *Diǎngù* 典故 (allusions) and *Shúyǔ* 熟语 (formulaic expressions) into English to enhance global comprehension. Using an interpretive qualitative methodology, the research identifies deficiencies in translating these cultural connotations from the RWG (2013-2022) and explores their root causes, considering translation strategies employed. It integrates Venuti's theories of domestication and foreignization with Aristotle's concepts of *logos* and clarity in *style*. Thematic analysis uncovers key translation issues: loss of original imagery, disrupted logical flow, and verbose redundancy, primarily due to challenges in maintaining *logos* and stylistic clarity. The study's significance lies in pinpointing these translational gaps and introducing a novel approach that amalgamates diverse theoretical frameworks, offering unique insights and methods to effectively connect language, culture, and political communication in translation studies.

Index Terms—cultural connotations, *Diǎngù* 典故 (allusions), *Report on the Work of the Government*, *Shúyǔ* 熟语 (formulaic expressions), translational deficiencies

I. INTRODUCTION

Within the dynamic realm of Chinese political discourse, the *Report on the Work of the Government* (hereafter referred to as RWG) delivered by Premier Li Keqiang at the annual National People's Congress has garnered considerable attention from scholars due to its adept use of *Diǎngù* 典故 (allusions) and *Shúyǔ* 熟语 (formulaic expressions). Within the purview of this study, the term *Diǎngù* is delineated as a literary reference. It encapsulates the incorporation of historical narratives or quotations from esteemed figures present in poetic and literary works (Huang & Liao, 2019). Conversely, *Shúyǔ* pertains to phrases and sentences which display a recurrent and consistent pattern. Over time, they have garnered widespread acceptance and are now regarded as representative lexical entities (Huang & Liao, 2019).

These culture-specific expressions play a crucial role in comprehending the intricate fabric of China's cultural legacy and the transmitted political feelings. Nevertheless, despite the extensive research conducted on the RWG and its various ramifications, there remains a noticeable deficiency in the scholarly discussion regarding the translational difficulties posed by these complex cultural connotations, particularly when transferring them into English.

The current study aims to examine the English translations of cultural connotations included in Premier Li's RWG from 2013 to 2022, in order to overcome this notable gap in research. Thus, this inquiry is guided by two primary research inquiries:

1) What deficiencies are evident in the English translations of cultural connotations articulated via *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ* within Premier Li's RWG?

2) In relation to the translation strategies employed, what factors contribute to these deficiencies in rendering these cultural connotations into English?

In order to adequately address the two inquiries, an interpretive qualitative approach has been employed. The dataset consists of both the simplified Chinese and official English versions of Premier Li's RWG from 2013-2022. The selection of this particular time frame is based on its coverage of Premier Li's term, which allows for a full examination of the present condition of translating cultural implications in Chinese political literature. The data includes a thorough

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collection of 117 culture-specific Chinese culture-specific expressions, along with their corresponding English translations. The theoretical framework of this study is constructed by integrating Venuti's nuanced concepts of domestication and foreignization with Aristotle's (1991, 2007) enduring viewpoint on persuasion, particularly the notion of *logos* and the stress on clarity in *style*.

The article is presented in a methodical manner, following a logical sequence. After the preceding introduction, section 2 will explore the current scholarly conversation, identifying significant areas that have not been adequately addressed and emphasizing the originality of the present study. Section 3 provides a comprehensive overview of the research concept and methodological complexity. Following this, Section 4 provides a comprehensive explanation of the conceptual foundations that inform the study. Section 5 of the report offers a detailed analysis of the found translational deficiencies and their underlying causes. Finally, the Conclusion section provides a comprehensive summary of the study's results, highlighting their significance in the fields of translation studies, foreign diplomacy, and intercultural communication.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chinese political discourse, particularly in the Premier's RWG, is replete with intricate cultural connotations, predominantly expressed through *Diǎngù* 典故 (allusions) and *Shúyǔ* 熟语 (formulaic expressions). These unique linguistic elements underscore the depth of cultural richness inherent in Chinese political communication (Aina et al., 2022; Chen, 2017; Tan & Xiong, 2023), posing distinct challenges to translators tasked with rendering the RWG's nuanced messages for international audiences.

In order to grasp contemporary developments in the relevant academic field, an exhaustive literature review was undertaken covering a span of 21 years, from January 1, 2003, to January 1, 2023. The rationale behind selecting this time frame was twofold: it encapsulates Premier Li's tenure, thus offering valuable insights into the current state of translating cultural connotations in Chinese political texts, and it aligns with the notion of study maturity (Kraus et al., 2020). This in-depth search, executed on CNKI – China's primary academic index, resulted in 73 initial hits. In parallel, a search on Scopus, a renowned database of peer-reviewed literature, yielded 14 additional records, including articles, theses, and book chapters. Cumulatively, from both CNKI and Scopus, 87 pieces were initially retrieved.

However, upon rigorous manual screening, centred on titles and abstracts, only 36 pieces from this collection were deemed directly pertinent to the research topic. A review of these works reveals a variety of theoretical frameworks, such as systematic functional linguistics (Kang, 2020), dialogue theory (Shi & Zhao, 2020), eco-translatology (Dou, 2020; Liu, 2022), skopos theory (Zhang, 2020; Zhao, 2020), and the juxtaposition of domestication and foreignization (Qi et al., 2021; Zhang, 2021).

A. On Diǎngù

Remarkably, only about one-fifth of the existing literature delves into the translation of cultural connotations articulated through *Diǎngù* in the Chinese Premier's RWG. In comparison with other political texts, notably President Xi's international speeches and works, research in this area appears underrepresented, thereby pointing to a research void in terms of sheer volume and depth.

While the translation of cultural connotations, especially those expressed through *Diǎngù*, has been approached predominantly through the prisms of linguistics, pragmatics, and translatology (Kang, 2020; Liu, 2022; Zhao, 2020; Zhang, 2021), a notable observation emerges: the absence of the lens of rhetorical persuasion, often hailed as a foundational interdisciplinary approach in Western translation studies. In addition, the literature reveals no scholar who has combined Aristotle's theory with Venuti's domestication and foreignization as an integrated theoretical framework. This absence accentuates a crucial gap in the extant research.

From a methodological standpoint, while numerous studies have illuminated the challenges associated with translating cultural connotations inherent in Chinese political discourse, there remains a noticeable gap in the in-depth examination of the translation strategies employed to convey these connotations from the Premier's RWG from Chinese to English (Du, 2019). Specifically, the extant literature seems to favor discussions on distinct translation techniques, such as addition, omission, or literal translation. However, there is a paucity of emphasis on the broader strategies that determine the primary function of the target text (hereafter referred to as TT). Moreover, there is scant exploration into the fundamental reasons underpinning these shortcomings, especially concerning translation strategies (Du & Zhang, 2019; Qiu, 2018).

B. On Shúyǔ

Amidst the burgeoning interest in political translation within China (State Language Work Committee, 2019; Wang, 2020), an evident gap also persists regarding English translations of *Shúyǔ*'s cultural connotations and the driving factors behind any inadequacies. Among the identified academic pieces, only 15 address these particular concerns. A significant number of scholars have overlooked macroscopic translation operations in transferring *Shúyǔ* into English (Wang, 2020), thus creating a distinct gap in methodological approaches in existing research.

And while some have leaned on theories rooted in skopos theory and functional equivalence, there's a marked tilt away from linguistic and translatological methodologies. Notably, the rhetorical persuasion approach remains

underutilized in the realm of translating cultural connotations articulated via *Shúyǔ* (Yang & Wang, 2020; Yu, 2020), either as a standalone theoretical base or in combination with other methodologies, indicating a prominent theoretical gap in the prior studies.

III. METHODOLOGY

In addressing the research objectives—to examine translation deficiencies and investigate the reasons behind such inadequacies—this study adopts an interpretive qualitative approach in line with the principles of descriptive translation studies. Utilizing a purposeful sampling strategy, the study ensures the selected samples shed light on the myriad translation challenges central to the research questions as outlined by Patton (2015). The focus is on capturing the spectrum of deficiencies in the English translations of cultural connotations expressed through *Diǎngù* 典故 (allusion) and *Shúyǔ* 熟语 (formulaic expression) within Premier Li's RWG from 2003-2022. For data acquisition, the study employs document review, recognized as a fundamental technique in qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 276), sourcing from both the simplified Chinese and official English versions of Premier Li's RWG. The research employs a bifurcated data collection strategy: initially drawing on the exposition and classification of *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ* in the *Modern Chinese Textbook* (Huang & Liao, 2019), and subsequently gleaning insights from eight contemporary Chinese dictionaries—valid up to June 30th, 2022—specializing in *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ*. Comprising 117 instances of *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ* paired with English translations from Premier Li's RWG between 2013 and 2022, these translations were officiated by the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau, later affiliated with the Research Institute of Party History and Literature of the CPC Central Committee in 2018. Through thematic analysis, the study concentrates on the nature and origins of deficiencies in translated cultural connotations.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Toury (2012, p. 185), only studies anchored within a specific theoretical construct are acknowledged as genuine research endeavors. To this end, this section explores two pivotal theories: Venuti's (2008) construct of domestication and foreignization within cultural studies, and the customized framework grounded in Aristotle's (1991, 2007) mode of persuasion—*logos*, alongside his proposition regarding *style* in the rhetorical realm. These constructs form the bedrock of this research.

A. Venuti's Domestication and Foreignization

Venuti's strategies are essential analytical instruments, primarily addressing the conundrums of cultural translation. They facilitate the "cultural transfer between communities" (Buden et al., 2009, p. 200). This realm of cultural translation dovetails seamlessly with terms like "domesticating", "foreignizing", and "ideology" derived from the cultural turn paradigm (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990; Venuti, 2008). As Baumgarten (2012, p. 59) elucidates, the selected translation strategy frequently mirrors the dominant "ideology". Such a framework is indispensable for discerning the subtleties in cultural transfers, thereby asserting its significance to this investigation.

B. Aristotle's Logos and Clarity in Style

The core intent of translating cultural nuances in political documents is external persuasion. Aristotle's mode of persuasion, *logos*, facilitates the conveyance of "truth" through knowledge. This means the translator must present the source text (hereafter referred to as ST) data as logical evidence to the readership, which directly pertains to Premier Li's RWG challenges. *Style*, in its essence, pivots around diction. Aristotle (1991, 2007, pp. 197-198) maintains that the quintessence of style should "to be clear", aligning aptly with the subject at hand. This clarity implies that the mode of expression significantly affects comprehension. Achieving such clarity requires adherence to linguistic standards, prioritizing coherence and conciseness over perplexing or intricate phrasings. Drawing parallels between rhetorical and translation styles, it becomes evident that the translator is tasked with the duty to transparently present ST "facts" (Tytler, 1978, p. 90) while encapsulating the author's stylistic essence (Chan, 2004, p. 68; Hermans, 2003). The convergence of these viewpoints accentuates the rationale for infusing Aristotle's insights into this study's theoretical scaffold.

C. Symbiotic Fusion of Two Theories

Venuti and Aristotle offer perspectives that, when interwoven, shed light on each other. Venuti (2008, p. 226) terms foreignization as a "cultural intervention", laying emphasis on the unique characteristics of the ST. Such translations immerse the readers in the "foreign", mirroring Aristotle's remarks on the allure of distant marvels (Aristotle, 1991, 2007, p. 198). Complementing this, Aristotle's theory deepens Venuti's dichotomy by highlighting the ultimate objective—persuasion. Though Venuti concedes that complete domestication is elusive and foreignization invariably involves some form of domestication, Aristotle underscores the imperativeness of clarity in translations. This concept of "clarity", deemed vital to compelling rhetoric by Aristotle (1991, 2007, p. 198), emerges as a guiding light. In sum, intertwining Aristotle's framework with Venuti's theory illuminates the advantages of "applying plural theoretical paradigms in translation studies" (Pym, 2014, p. 4). This symbiotic relationship magnifies the individual strengths of

each theory, proffering a comprehensive analytical tool. The subsequent section will delineate the data coding and analysis procedures anchored in the aforementioned theoretical base.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section provides a comprehensive examination of the identified translational deficiencies and their root causes. Drawing from Venuti's (2008) distinctions, it delves into the discrepancies that arise when English translations endeavor to convey the diverse cultural connotations inherent in *Diǎngù* 典故 (allusion) and *Shúyǔ* 熟语 (formulaic expression).

A. Deficiencies in Identified English Translations

This section, grounded in Venuti's (2008) demarcation between foreignizing and domesticating strategies, seeks to address the primary research query: What deficiencies are evident in the English translations of cultural connotations articulated via *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ* within Premier Li's RWG? The term "deficiencies" signifies notable instances where the translation either lacks fidelity or diverges from the source's intended meaning, particularly in rhetorical persuasion.
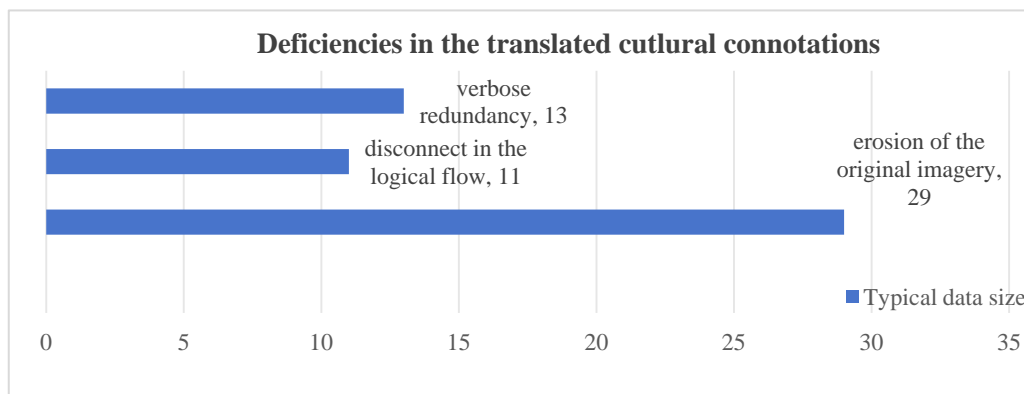

Figure 1. Deficiencies of the English Translations of Cultural Connotations in Premier Li's RWG 2013-2022

An in-depth analysis, as demonstrated in Figure 1, identifies three prominent deficiencies in the English translations of the cultural connotations articulated through *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ* in Premier Li's RWG 2013-2022.

The primary deficiency is the erosion of the original imagery. This study understands "original imagery" as the unique manner in which cultural significance, conveyed through *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ*, manifest to the audience. This erosion denotes a failure to faithfully encapsulate the vividness, symbolism, or emotional impact of the source imagery. Consequently, much of the cultural significance inherent in the ST doesn't resonate adequately in the TT. Such translation insufficiencies may result in misinterpretations of the political nuances, undermining its rhetorical impact.

The next deficiency centres on a disruption in logical flow. "Logical flow" refers to the consistent alignment wherein each component or concept linked to the cultural connotations, relayed through *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ*, seamlessly connects. Discrepancies in this flow signify an inability to maintain the original narrative's coherence and sequence. Such inconsistencies may sow confusion, risking misconstrued interpretations of the intended political rhetoric and its persuasive essence.

Lastly, this research identifies verbose redundancy as a significant translation shortfall. In the TT context, this pertains to superfluous or repetitious details that neither add clarity nor value, only serving to extend the text. Such verbosity and redundancy cloud the translation, impeding its precision in mirroring the source's political intent. As a result, the persuasive potency of the translation weakens, diminishing its impact on the target audience (hereafter referred to as TA).

After identifying the main categories of deficiencies in English translations, it is necessary to go deeply into each. Subsection 5.1.1 delves into the "erosion of original imagery," examining how certain translations, while maintaining surface-level accuracy, may accidentally strip the original content of its deep cultural and rhetorical complexity.

(a). Erosion of the Original Imagery

Cultural nuances in Premier Li's RWG are chiefly conveyed through *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ*, acting as tools for political communication. Their translations are crucial for preserving China's intended political image, especially given their unfamiliarity to English speakers. Emphasizing foreignizing translation can bridge this gap, particularly in today's world where many gravitate towards foreign cultures (Mu & Liu, 2021; Zhang, 2022). Venuti (2008) notes that foreignization, by maintaining the original's essence, offers readers a window into Chinese cultural subtleties. However, if these translations inadequately relay the cultural depth, the "erosion of the original imagery" occurs. This imagery represents the perception of cultural symbols and values within *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ*, essential for reflecting China's cultural foundation and embedded political sense. Instance A1showcase this erosion.

Example (A1)

ST: 建设群众身边的体育场地设施，促进全民健身<u>蔚然成风</u>。(2022)

TT: We will see that more sports venues and facilities are built close to people's homes and promote <u>extensive</u> public fitness activities. (2022)

In Example (A1), the strategy of using a domesticating translation becomes palpably clear. The translation of the *Chéngyǔ* "蔚然成风(*wèirán chéngfēng*)" to the term "extensive" highlights a notable erosion of the original imagery. While this domesticating approach may strive for clarity in the TT, it often sidesteps the depth and nuance intrinsic to the original phrase. "蔚然成风(*wèirán chéngfēng*)", with its roots in *Zhōngguó Tōngshǐ 中国通史* penned by the renowned Lǚ Sīmiǎn 吕思勉(1884-1957), initially depicted the thriving trend of Tang Dynasty poetry. Today, its connotations extend to signify the widespread adoption of a practice or trend (*Editorial Board of Dictionary of Chéngyǔ 成语*, 2021). In the ST's context, it conjures an evocative image of an entire nation adopting physical fitness, akin to a sweeping, invigorating breeze.

In stark contrast, the TT's domesticating strategy opts for "extensive". This term, though directly accurate, misses the cultural layers embedded within the *Chéngyǔ*. While "extensive" communicates breadth, it lacks the dynamism and profound engagement that the original phrase encapsulates. This kind of translation, though aiming to simplify content for an English-speaking audience, risks diluting the cultural richness and political undertones of the source material. Consequently, the narrative shifts from a cultural celebration of fitness to a more utilitarian perspective on its promotion. This not only causes an erosion of the original imagery but might also overshadow the political message in the ST, which underscores the government's commitment to nurturing a health-conscious nation.

From the aforementioned analysis, a clear pattern emerges: English translations of such cultural connotations frequently truncate the intricate imagery and the resonant political tones inherent to the ST. Such truncations not only risk diluting cultural nuances but can also cloud the political essence of the original message, potentially presenting a distorted view of China's strategic vision. In light of this, adopting a foreignizing translation strategy, as advocated by Venuti (2008), appears as a potential remedy. By emphasizing the disparities in culture and language between the ST and TT, this approach strives for a faithful retention of the original's cultural and political nuances. It challenges the mould of the target culture's linguistic norms rather than succumbing to them.

(b). Disconnect in the Logical Flow

The Chinese language often omits elements considered fundamental in English, which can act as markers for English readers, aiding their understanding. Thus, translators face the critical task of making implicit logical connections in the ST explicit in their translations. However, a recurring issue observed in the English translations of cultural connotations from Premier Li's RWG is the frequent absence of these crucial connections. In this research context, logical flow emphasizes the delicate interrelations among various aspects of the cultural connotations, as expressed through *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ* in Premier Li's RWG. It's essential that these cultural nuances weave seamlessly with other ST elements, creating a harmonious and unified narrative.

The inherent logical flow of the original text is critical, yet when a translation overlooks this, the narrative can become fragmented. This fragmentation jeopardizes the integrity of culturally nuanced meanings and their subtleties. Consequently, there exists a risk of diluting or even misrepresenting the political message intrinsic to the original Chinese text. Such shortcomings not only diminish the potency of the TT but might also project a distorted image of China.

This subsection delves into the intricate issue of disruptions in logical flow, recognized as the second major deficiency in the English translations of the cultural nuances found in the ST. Examples B1 is provided for closer inspection.

Example (B1)

ST: 严格落实中央八项规定精神，<u>持之以恒</u>纠治"四风"，进一步为基层减负。(2022)

TT: We strictly complied with the central Party leadership's eight-point decision on improving work conduct, <u>kept up our efforts to</u> tackle pointless formalities, bureaucratic, hedonism and extravagance, and took further steps to ease the burdens of those working on the ground. (2022)

In Example (B1), the domesticating translation strategy manifests itself in the *Chéngyǔ* "持之以恒 (*chízhī yǐhéng*)", translated as "kept up our efforts". While this captures the perseverance suggested by the Chinese phrase, it neglects the original's specific connotations, introducing a disconnection in logical flow.

The ST's structure presents a clear prerequisite-action sequence. The action "严格落实中央八项规定精神(*yángé luòshí zhōngyāng baxiàng guīdìng jīngshén*)" (strictly adhering to the central Party leadership's eight-point decision) sets the stage for subsequent actions, underscoring a condition-action relationship crucial to the ST.

However, the TT using the domestication strategy places "kept up our efforts" parallel to "complied with the eight-point decision". This misplacement disrupts the logical progression, potentially hindering English-speaking readers from discerning the original's interplay between actions. Instead of a sequential flow, the TT presents them as separate entities.

This misstep could muddle the intended message. If readers miss the original's logical link, they might not grasp the *Chéngyǔ*'s cultural implication and its political undertones. The core message emphasizes a steadfast commitment to the Central Party leadership's mandates, which, upon adherence, motivates actions against tendencies opposing the

principles of the Communist Party of China. Understanding the relationship between these points is crucial. Moreover, the *Chéngyǔ* "持之以恒" conveys more than mere perseverance; it resonates with undying dedication to a purpose.

Translators, therefore, should make implicit Chinese logical connections explicit in English. To address the highlighted translation gap, proposed adjustments include starting the TT with a conjunction like "in light of", making it a subordinate clause. The subsequent parts should form a unified main clause, ensuring logical coherence. Finally, substituting "kept up our efforts" with "persevere in" offers a closer alignment to "持之以恒".

(c). Verbose Redundancy

Effective writing emphasizes conciseness, an ethos articulated by the principle that "a sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines" (Strunk & White, 1979, p. 23). As outlined previously, concision is a crucial benchmark in assessing clarity of *style*. Commonly labeled as brevity or succinctness, it centres on omitting superfluous elements, ensuring a message's essence remains intact using the fewest words.

However, certain English translations of cultural connotations from *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ* in Premier Li's RWG display verbose redundancy. The term 'verbose' indicates text is more extended or convoluted than required, often presenting ideas in a roundabout manner. On the other hand, 'redundancy' pinpoints repetitive elements, be they words, phrases, or ideas. A redundant statement might be succinct but repetitive, whereas a verbose and redundant statement is both lengthy and repetitive.

In the context of this research, verbose redundancy in the TT implies excessive, repetitive words that elongate text unnecessarily. This excess can stem from either word overuse (verbosity) or repetitive information (redundancy). It obscures the original's intent, compromising translation fidelity. Verbose redundancy not only makes the TT burdensome but also impedes the TA's understanding. As Ghazala (2008, p. 253) mentions, it's "draggy and boring", adding no value. Pinkham (2000) adds that redundant information wastes the reader's time and dilutes the imagery vital for conveying the cultural and political meanings behind Premier Li's RWG. Deemed a sign of weak rhetoric, unnecessary repetition can weaken a narrative (Grave & Hodge, 2018, p. 103).

Thus, superfluous words that detract from the TT's intent should be excised to preserve the original's nuances. Put simply, a translator's role is to deliver the TT clearly and briefly, ensuring the TA's understanding remains unclouded. In this subsection, Example C1 serves to illuminate this translation shortcoming.

Example (C1)

ST: 因地制宜创造性开展工作，把各方面干事创业积极性充分调动起来。（2022）

TT: We should <u>work</u> in creative ways <u>in light of actual conditions</u> and motivate all stakeholders to pursue development endeavors. (2022)

In this illustrative example, the Chinese *Chéngyǔ* "因地制宜(*Yīndì zhìyí*)" is translated as "work...in light of actual conditions", which manifests verbose redundancy, particularly in the use of "in light of actual conditions". This phrasing mirrors a domesticating approach, which, while aiming to provide clarity for the target audience, sometimes results in over-explanation.

Both "in creative ways" and "in light of actual conditions" in the TT endeavour to capture the essence of the ST's directive of innovative adaptation to local scenarios. This translation choice culminates in "redundant twins", where two phrases with synonymous undertones are presented in tandem. Furthermore, the addition of "actual" before "conditions" injects an extraneous qualifier. Given that "conditions" intrinsically signifies prevailing realities, its pairing with "actual" only serves to elongate the text without adding discernible clarity.

This translation, in its bid to be overtly explicit, not only features redundant phrasing but also incorporates superfluous modifiers. Such verbosity detracts from the cultural richness of the *Chéngyǔ* "因地制宜", potentially overshadowing the central message: the government's unwavering commitment to devising region-tailored, flexible strategies that resonate with and cater to localized needs.

In the above analysis of examples A1, B1, and C1, three key deficiencies were identified in the translation of cultural connotations from Premier Li's RWG: erosion of original imagery, disconnect in logical flow, and verbose redundancy. The following section will explore the root causes of these issues, focusing on the translator's strategies.

B. Causes of the Deficiencies

Translating cultural connotations, particularly conveyed through *Diǎngù* 典故 (allusion) and *Shúyǔ* 熟语 (formulaic expression) in Premier Li's RWG, poses a challenge due to potential gaps in cultural knowledge among English-speaking audiences. Thus, translators act as "cross-cultural specialists" (Snell-Hornby, 1992; as cited in Katan, 2014, p. 21), moving beyond mere translation to the careful selection of strategies. To understand the previously identified inadequacies, it's essential to explore their strategic origins. Such insights can guide translators through these multifaceted cultural terrains.

Within this context, the subsequent section delves into these translational deficiencies, juxtaposing them with Venuti's (2008) concepts of domestication and foreignization, as well as Aristotle's (1991, 2007) perspectives on *logos* and clarity in *style* for persuasion. It seeks to answer the second research query: In relation to the translation strategies employed, what factors contribute to these deficiencies in rendering these cultural connotations into English? This

subsection is bifurcated: firstly, it addresses the failure to reproduce the *logos*, and secondly, it highlights the lapse in preserving the clarity of *style*.

(a). Failure to Reproduce the Logos

For Aristotle, *logos* transcends mere logic. It embeds content within cultural, historical, and societal contexts, requiring accurate articulation and reasoning. In this study, *logos* denotes the foundational understanding behind the cultural nuances in Premier Li's RWG. When *logos* isn't captured accurately in translation, it can dilute the imagery, shifting cultural perceptions.

Example (A2)

ST: 不因事难而推诿，<u>不因善小而不为</u>，要让每一个身处困境者都能得到社会的关爱和温暖。（2019）

TT: There should be no reluctance to act because something is not easy, and <u>no failure to act because the benefit seems small</u>; we must ensure that care and compassion reach everyone in need. (2019)

Example A(2) highlights the dictum "不因善小而不为(*bùyīn shànxiǎo ér bùwéi*)", derived from the historical chronicle *Sanguozhi: Shuzhizhuan* 三国志.蜀志传 of China's Warring States period. Its translation, "no failure to act because the benefit seems small", erodes the original imagery. This erosion stems from a failure to capture the *logos*—the inherent logical essence of the cultural nuances in the phrase.

Delving deeper, the ST uses a rhetorical paradigm for persuasion. The dictum serves as a foundation, emphasizing that actions shouldn't be judged solely by their apparent magnitude. The core message promotes action based on the deed's intrinsic value, not its perceived impact. Yet, the translation doesn't capture this subtlety. In framing the TT, the translator appears to balance both domestication and foreignization.

In the TT, "善小" is translated as "benefit seems small", reflecting a domestication strategy tailored for English speakers. There's also an evident attempt to retain the original's structural essence, suggesting a foreignization approach. However, this combination results in inaccuracies. The pivotal phrase, "不因...而不为", is rendered as "no failure to act because", deviating from the original's nuance of "not refraining from doing ... because". Where "failure to do" implies a missed obligation with potential consequences, "refraining from doing" indicates a deliberate choice, rooted in personal conviction. These distinctions are vital. The translation, in this case, fails to mirror the source dictum's logical foundation, compromising the imagery.

By emphasizing accessibility for the TA, the translator may have unintentionally diluted the original's depth. This dilution doesn't just cloud the cultural references but may also obscure the intended political message of the ST.

This discussion underscores a key translation deficiency: not reproducing the *logos* faithfully. Misinterpreting cultural nuances might cause the original political message to lose its impact on the TA. In international discourse, Premier Li's RWG aims to enhance global comprehension of governmental narratives. Overlooking intricate cultural references might diminish the text's persuasive efficacy. The following subsection will explore the clarity lapse in style, which relates to two other deficiencies noted previously, logical disconnect and verbose redundancy.

(b). Lapses in Preserving the Clarity in Style

Aristotle (1991, 2007, pp. 197-198) emphasizes *style* as vital to effective rhetoric, focusing on diction or word choice. He champions clarity, intertwined with linguistic finesse, as the cornerstone of oratorical *style*. Clarity facilitates the audience's understanding of discourse. In this study, clarity mandates concise and coherent expression, devoid of unintended ambiguity. Neglecting clarity, Aristotle warned of "frigid language" (1991, 2007, p. 198), which dampens persuasion.

Drawing a parallel, a rhetorician's style mirrors a translator's. Their pursuit of linguistic clarity, particularly coherence and concision, critically shapes the conveyance of cultural connotations and the TT's reception. Thus, "clarity in style" in this research addresses discursive level clarity. Here, translators strategically communicate cultural nuances from *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ* in Premier Li's RWG with coherence and brevity, balancing accuracy with the ST's intent.

However, observed lapses in stylistic clarity occur when translating certain *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ* from Premier Li's RWG. These lapses manifest as a logical disconnect and verbose redundancy. The former disrupts coherence and sequence, while the latter compromises brevity and message impact. This subsection examines the failure to maintain stylistic clarity, identifying it as the underlying cause of these translation issues. The discussion draws from Aristotle's insights on rhetorical *style* and Venuti's (2008) domestication-foreignization theory. Examples B2 (showing disconnect in logical flow) and C2 (highlighting verbose redundancy) will guide the analysis.

Example (B2)

ST: 服务业在国内生产总值中的比重上升到 50.5%，首次占据<u>"半壁江山"</u>。(2016)

TT: The service sector as a proportion of GDP rose to 50.5 percent, accounting for <u>more than half</u> for the first time. (2016)

In example (B2), the *Chéngyǔ* "半壁江山(*Bànbì Jiāngshān*)" traces back to "Dongqingshu: Tigang 冬青树.提纲" by Jiǎng Shìquán 蒋士诠 from China's Qing Dynasty. Originally illustrating a portion of a nation preserved post-invasion, it now metaphorically signifies half the country's territory. The translation, however, modifies it to "more than half," disrupting the logical flow. This lapse results from not preserving style clarity, especially coherence, during the *Chéngyǔ*'s English translation.

The ST is bifurcated by a conjunction comma. It first underlines the growing service sector's prominence in China's GDP and then mentions the sector's dominance over half of the nation's wealth, as referenced by the *Chéngyǔ*. This sequential structure establishes logical continuity. Yet, the English rendition of the *Chéngyǔ*, through domestication, interrupts this flow.

The phrase "半壁江山" directly signifies half of the nation, while "more than half" is a domesticated adaptation for TA familiarity. This translation, however, lacks coherence. Instead of preserving the ST's consequential "effect," it morphs into a modifying participle phrase, altering the original logical continuity and diminishing the *Chéngyǔ*'s dominant essence.

Premier Li's use of "半壁江山" underscores the service sector's pivotal economic role, indicating a shift in China's economic landscape. It suggests an evolving economy with the service industry holding significant importance alongside manufacturing. Regrettably, the translated phrase loses its rich historical and political undertones, diminishing its impact. This not only erases cultural connotations but also attenuates embedded political messages. Consequently, the TT's persuasive potential is hampered, undermining the ST's primary objective of resonating with and influencing its audience.

Example (C2)

ST: 统筹兼顾、突出重点，扎实做好各项工作。（2019）

TT: We should <u>take coordinated action that covers all sectors</u> and focus on clear priorities, to deliver a solid performance in all areas of work. (2019)

In Example (C2), the *Chéngyǔ* "统筹兼顾 (*Tǒngchóu Jiāngù*)" is rendered as "take coordinated action that covers all sectors", leading to verbose redundancy. The phrase "covers all sectors" is superfluous, as its essence is already captured in "take coordinated action". This redundancy results from not maintaining clarity in style during translation.

The *Chéngyǔ* integrates two verbs: "统筹 (*tǒngchóu*)", implying holistic coordination, and "兼顾 (*jiāngù*)", hinting at balancing varied interests. In context, "统筹兼顾" denotes comprehensive, balanced management with prioritization. The English translation, however, lacks concision and clarity, showing a domesticating strategy. The term "take coordinated action" inherently suggests an integrated approach, making the addition of "covers all sectors" redundant.

While strategic repetition can emphasize themes, overuse can hinder comprehension. In Premier Li's RWG, redundancy, especially concerning *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ*'s cultural connotations, risks diluting the ST's nuances. This not only obscures expressions like "统筹兼顾" and their political undertones but also compromises the translation's intent.

The above analysis underscores the consequences of forsaking clarity in *style*, pinpointing logical disconnections and verbose redundancies in the English translations of cultural connotations conveyed via *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ* from Premier Li's RWG. These shortcomings, more than mere linguistic discrepancies, can cause gaps in cultural conveyance. The resultant translation loses both the profound cultural significance and the original's political messages. By deviating from the ST's structure and brevity, the translation's persuasiveness diminishes, impacting its ability to resonate and influence its TA.

VI. CONCLUSION

Premier Li's RWG, laden with intricate cultural connotations epitomized by *Diǎngù* 典故 (allusions) and *Shúyǔ* 熟语 (formulaic expressions), underscores significant challenges in translation. A thorough analysis of the literature on the subject reveals three main gaps: a lack of understanding of the translation shortcomings of these cultural nuances, a methodological gap in general translational approaches, and a theoretical chasm that doesn't sufficiently embrace rhetorical persuasion or interdisciplinary cohesion. While a large portion of earlier research has remained myopically focused on either specific details or broad theoretical paradigms, this study aims to fill these gaps. The research offers a novel theoretical perspective on translating such connotations by closely examining the deficiencies of the English translations of cultural connotations given by *Diǎngù* and *Shúyǔ* in Premier Li's RWG from 2013 to 2022 and delving into the underlying causes of these inadequacies.

A comprehensive analysis of these translations reveals significant discoveries that have a profound impact on the fields of translation, rhetoric, and cultural communication. The English translations of cultural connotations in Premier Li's RWG of the studied period exhibit three primary deficiencies: the erosion of original imagery, disruption in logical flow, and verbose redundancy. Rather than being isolated obstacles, these deficiencies together hinder the clear transmission of China's complex perspectives and policy narratives. Central to these translational challenges are a diminished "*logos*" and a clear oversight in maintaining clarity in *style* – both pivotal for effective persuasion. These observations highlight the importance of accurate translation when conveying China's complex position to a worldwide audience. Any oversight could have a huge impact on China's reputation abroad, diplomatic relations, and cross-cultural comprehension. This research presents a detailed blueprint for practitioners, highlighting the need for skilled translation systems that can deftly negotiate both linguistic and cultural differences. In conclusion, this study highlights the essence of meticulous and culturally sensitive translation in political discourse, advocating for both linguistic accuracy and a deeper cultural exchange.

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