

# A Study on C-E Translation of 2017 Report on the Work of the Government under the Theory of Manipulation

Min Shen

School of Foreign Languages, North China Electric Power University, Beijing, China

Liangqiu Lv

School of Foreign Languages, North China Electric Power University, Beijing, China

**Abstract**—The Manipulation School holds that translation is a rewriting of the original text and it shifts translation study from language level to a broader cultural and political level. Among hyper-textual manipulating parameters operating in literary translation, the most essential three are ideology, poetics and patron. This paper shall analyze the translation of 2017 Report on the Work of the Government under the manipulation of the ideology, poetics and patron, which aims to further prove the adaptability of manipulation theory in non-literary translation practice and provide a perspective for studying Report on the Work of the Government and inspire discussions of other hyper-textual parameters in the study of the Work of the Government.

**Index Terms**—the theory of manipulation, manipulating parameters, 2017 Report on the Work of the Government

## I. INTRODUCTION

The release of China's annual national Report on the Work of the Government (RWG for short) attracts readers in and out of China with the opening of two conferences. As an authoritative government document, RWG presents major policies in various walks of life and draws up a blueprint for future development. The translation of RWG is researched from different perspectives but very few from the theory of manipulation. This paper starts with brief introductions to the manipulation theory and 2017 RWG and translation of 2017 RWG from three manipulating parameter, the ideology, patron and poetics, is then expounded. Translation suggestions are provided in the last part. This paper discusses examples of excellent translations for reference and also some translation mistakes for revision.

## II. THEORY OF MANIPULATION

“Manipulation School” derives its name from the anthology called *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies of literary translation*. In the 1980s, Hermans (1985) pointed out that “from the point of view of the target literature, all translation implies a degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose.” (p. 10) Lefevere (2004), one of the founding members of the manipulation school, opines that “translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. Rewriting is manipulation.” (editor's preface) With the extension of translation research, the manipulation theory takes various hyper-textual factors into account. Lefevere (2004) holds that the translation activity does not occur in a ‘vacuum’, but it is manipulated by various ideological and cultural constraints. Lefevere concludes seven controlling factors operating in the literary system among which the most essential three are ideology, poetics and patron.

Manipulation theory has broadened the scope of translation studies as it shifts the translation study from language level to cultural and political level, and from the original text and author to the translated text and translator. As the theory of manipulation develops, it is applied in non-literary translation study.

## III. 2017 REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE GOVERNMENT

Every year, the publication of national RWG draws high attention with the opening of two essential conferences, the National People's Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). The 2017 RWG is delivered at the Fifth Session of the Twelfth National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China on March 5, 2017. The 2017 RWG is composed of a review of China's government work in 2016 and a blueprint and major tasks of the government in 2017. This report touches upon various walks of life, from the economic situation, people's wellbeing, environment protection, government construction, diplomatic relations to government policies and so on.

## IV. TRANSLATION OF 2017 RWG UNDER THE THEORY OF MANIPULATION

Among manipulating parameters such as ideology, patron, poetics, categories and universe of discourse and so on, ideology, patron and poetics are the most essential three. In this part, the translation of 2017 RWG shall be analyzed under these three parameters. All examples in this paper are extracted from 2017 RWG released by Xinhua News Agency.

#### A. *The Manipulation of Ideology*

Ideology refers to the “grillwork of form, convention and belief which orders our actions.” Later the meaning of ideology is extended as it means “the conceptual grid that consists of opinions and attitudes deemed acceptable in a certain society at a certain time, and through which readers and translators approach texts.” (Andre, 2004, p. 16)

Cheng (2003) assumes that in the translation of political documents, words and political meanings behind should be weighed instead of arbitrary addition or omission (p. 18-22). RWG is a kind of political document which involves policies, guidelines and plans of China’s government. Hu (2014) holds that behind friendly and equal cultural interactions are fierce ideological struggles between different political standings (p. 40-42). The translation of the 2017 RWG is manipulated by ideology, which means the translated text shall not violate the interest of China’s government ideologically.

Example 1: “港独”是没有出路的。

Translation: The notion of Hong Kong independence will lead nowhere.

Example 2: 坚决反对和遏制“台独”分裂活动，绝不允许任何人以任何形式、任何名义把台湾从祖国分裂出去。

Translation: We will resolutely oppose and deter separatist activities for Taiwan independence. We will never allow any person to separate Taiwan from the motherland in any form or name.

The topic of “台独” and “港独” touches political nerve as it is related to China’s sovereign integrity, however, the expression “independence” here is politically incorrect and should be revised as “secession”. From Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2017), “independence” refers to “political freedom from control by the government of another country.” In Wikipedia (2017), “independence” is “a condition of a nation, country, or state in which its residents and population, or some portion thereof, exercise self-government, and usually sovereignty, over the territory.” If the word “independence” is used to express “台独” and “港独”, it indicates that “we” in the context which represents China’s government identifies the legality of Taiwan and Hong Kong’s sovereignty as a nation. The word “secession” is a more appropriate expression. In Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2017), “secession” refers to “when a country or state officially stops being part of another country and becomes independent.” Yu (2009) explained that in international law, “independence” refers to “独立权” while secession to “分离权”, connoting that they are two different concepts (p. 73-75). For example, “Quebec Independence Movement” or “Independence Movement in Quebec” is defined as “unilateral secession” by Supreme Court of Canada. Although in some influential newspapers such as the New York Times, “independence” is frequently and purposely used when discussing “台独” and “港独”, in the translation of China’s government report, the word “secession” should be the right choice as it firmly illustrates Chinese government’s standpoint and resolution to crack down on secessionist activities.

#### B. *The Manipulation of Patron*

According to Lefevere (2004), patron who always operates mostly outside the literary system would be referred to the “powers” (persons and / or institutions) “that can further or hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature” (p. 15). He also points out that patron basically consists of three elements: ideological component, economic component and status component.

China’s government is the biggest patron behind the national RWG (both the original Chinese text and translated English text) as the government supports the national RWG in economy, status and publicity. Thus, as an official government document, the national RWG shall never be against the interest of China’s government and it is consistent with China’s policies especially when translating words with Chinese characteristics.

Example 3: 加强社会主义精神文明建设，坚持用中国梦和社会主义核心价值观凝聚共识、汇聚力量，坚定文化自信。

Translation: We will foster stronger observance of socialist cultural and ethical standards, and continue to use the Chinese Dream and core socialist values to build consensus, pool energy, and strengthen our people’s confidence in Chinese culture.

The notion “中国梦” is translated into “Chinese dream” instead of “China’s dream” or “China dream”. Translators argue about the translation version of “中国梦” when it was put forward by General Secretary Xi Jinping at the first time by the end of November, 2012. At the beginning, “中国梦” is translated into “China dream” by crucial media such as “xinhuanet” because it was perceived as China’s national dream at that time, however, in 2013, General Secretary Xi Jinping further explained that “中国梦” is a dream for the whole nation and for each Chinese. Zhang and Ge (2015) opine that given this explanation, “Chinese dream” is a more appropriate expression in interpreting “中国梦” (p. 51-53). From then on, “中国梦” is translated to “Chinese dream” by most media and in the government work report since 2013, “中国梦” has been interpreted as “Chinese dream”. Chen and Cheng (2015) further discuss different meanings of “China” and “Chinese” when the two words collocate with “dream” respectively. In “China dream”, “China” indicates

that the dream is a national one or the dream is related to China but it can also be foreigners' dream that they desire to achieve in China, but in "Chinese dream", "Chinese" illustrates the dream has Chinese characteristics or the dream is about Chinese people and the dream can only be achieved by Chinese (p. 909-923). As the biggest patron behind the translation work, Chinese government insists that crucial notions such as "中国梦" related to Chinese policies be interpreted to "Chinese dream" to get all Chinese involved in the rejuvenation of China.

### C. *The Manipulation of Poetics*

According to Lefevere (2004), Poetics consists of two components. "One is the inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations, and symbols; the other is a concept of what the role of literature is, or should be, in the social system as a whole." (p. 26)

Compared to control factors of ideology and patron, the poetics draws less attention in the manipulation study in China. In manipulation theory, poetics mainly studies translation strategies, word expressions, sentences and genre of text. To some extent translators' translating method is manipulated by poetics. The view of Chinese poetics is different from that of English. Chinese is a paratactic language as balanced sentence structure with hidden logic, rhetoric and four-character forms are widely used. But English is a hypotactic language as plain and clear structures are used to highlight the key information. In the RWG, image-loaded expressions, abbreviations with numbers and four-character forms are commonly used. Besides, rhetoric such as repetition, parallelism is used to strengthen emotions. In C-E translation, translators should "rewrite" the Chinese text to ensure accurate information is delivered and language aesthetics are sensed by target readers.

#### 1. Image-loaded Expressions

Generally, the RWG is a serious political document to introduce Chinese policies, but Chinese culture is also spread through image-loaded expressions. Many images with Chinese characteristics can be found in culture-loaded expressions. The image evokes readers' imagination as it indicates the relationship between the subject and reference in a metaphor and shows resemblance between the two. The imaginations aroused by the image are constrained by culture and thinking patterns. Different nations have different imaginations towards the same image. In translating, translators choose literal translation when the metaphor is consistent with the image and change or delete the image when it is not in case that adverse impression might be engraved on foreigners' mind.

Example 4: 这是政府自身的一场深刻革命，要继续以壮士断腕的勇气，坚决披荆斩棘向前推进。

Translation: This is a profound reform of government itself, which we need to continue to pursue with the courage to make painful self-adjustments and overcome all odds.

Chinese phrase "壮士断腕" is recorded in a book named *Shushufu* written by Dou Gao in Tang Dynasty. The complete quotation is "君子弃瑕以拔才,壮士断腕以全质" which means a junzi (man of honor) can give full play to his ability if he overcomes his weakness; A brave man should immediately cut off his wrist if it is bitten by a snake in case of poison spreading. The phrase "壮士断腕" is a metaphor which indicates that decisions must be made without hesitation. The image of "披荆斩棘" from *The History of Later Han Dynasty* refers to blazing a trail by cutting off thorns on the road which means to remove difficulties and forge ahead. Two image-loaded expressions "壮士断腕" and "披荆斩棘" impress Chinese readers with government's resolution of self-reform. But in translating, bloody and fierce images of "壮士断腕" and "披荆斩棘" are removed, instead, "courage" and "painful" are used to embody government's determination.

#### 2. Abbreviations with Numbers

In the 2017 RWG, conciseness of Chinese language can be sensed through numerous abbreviations with numbers such as "五位一体" "四个全面" "两学一做" "约法三章" and so on. In translating, on the basis of adequate knowledge of China's updated policies, translators should comprehend and complete meanings behind the abbreviations and numbers and expound them via addition.

Example 5: 着力抓好“三去一降一补”，供给结构有所改善。

Translation: We focused on five priority tasks—cutting overcapacity, reducing excess inventory, deleveraging, lowering costs, and strengthening areas of weakness—thereby improving the composition of supply.

The notion of "三去一降一补" was initiated by General Secretary Xi Jinping on the supply-side structural reform. The translator concludes "five priority tasks" for "三去一降一补" and then the content represented by numbers are explained in details. To be more accurate, "三去" is translated into three different verbs for collocation instead of the same word "cutting".

#### 3. Four-character Forms

Four-character forms, because of rhythmic and balanced form, are widely used in RWG, such as "持廉守正" "购租并举" "住有所居" "统筹兼顾" "通观全局" and so on. In translating, translators should break the balanced form of four characters and unite different parts to form one sentence.

Example 6: 质量之魂，存于匠心。

Translation: Quality is born of workmanship.

Example 7: 治理雾霾人人有责，贵在行动、成在坚持。

Translation: Tackling smog is down to every last one of us, and success depends on action and commitment.

In the above two examples, the translator breaks the original form and translates four-character forms into plain and simple sentence.

#### 4. Rhetoric

The most common rhetoric in 2017 RWG is repetition and parallelism for emotional and structural emphasis. Besides, metaphor is also a frequently-used one.

##### a. Repetition

Repetition is repeating of a word, within a sentence or a poetical line, with no particular placement of the words for emphasis.

Example 8: 各地区、各部门不断增强政治意识、大局意识、核心意识、看齐意识。

Translation: All regions and all government departments have steadily strengthened their consciousness of the need to maintain political integrity, think in big-picture terms, uphold the leadership core, and keep in alignment.

The Chinese phrase “意识” is repeated four times successively. The translator reorganizes four Chinese “意识” into one phrase “the consciousness of” and specifies “增强” by adding four verbs including “maintain” “think” “uphold” “keep” to collocate with “political integrity” “in big-picture terms” “the leadership core” and “in alignment” respectively.

##### b. Parallelism

Parallelism refers to a similar form of two or more parts of one or more sentences for a neat form and musical rhyme.

Example 9: 坚持宏观政策要稳、产业政策要准、微观政策要活、改革政策要实、社会政策要托底的政策思路。

Translation: Ensure that macro-level policy is consistent, industrial policy is targeted, micro-level policy injects dynamism into the market, reform policy delivers outcomes, and social policy sees basic living needs are met.

The Chinese sentence lists requirements such as “稳” “准” “活” “实” “托底” for different policies with a balanced and parallelized structure. The parallelism is remained: the first two parts are embodied through a predicative structure while the last three are explained via “verb-noun” structure. For readers’ understanding, the translator explains the meaning behind through a combination of liberal and literal translation rather than listing five parallelized adjectives. Instead of being translated to “steady”, “稳” refers to “consistency” of the macro-level policy; “准” means policy should be “targeted”; “活” refers to “dynamism” injected into the market; “实” means outcomes should be delivered and “托底” means basic needs are met.

##### c. Metaphor

Metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally designates one kind of object by referring to it as another to suggest analogy between them.

Example 10: 坚决打好蓝天保卫战。

Translation: We will make our skies blue again.

In the 2017 RWG, China’s government discusses its resolution to clear hurdles of pollution, heavy air pollution in particular. In the source language, the environment protection campaign is described as a battle to safeguard the clean air, implying grave difficulties the government shall face in pollution control. But in the translated version, the abstract notion of “battle” is deleted and the specific and concise expression “to make our skies blue again” molds the government into an active, forceful and sunny one. Sounds like the slogan “make America great again”, the catchy phrase “to make our skies blue again” shall impress foreign readers with China’s determination in making the skies blue.

Example 11: 推进海绵城市建设, 有效治理交通拥堵等“城市病”, 使城市既有“面子”、更有“里子”。

Translation: Further progress will be made in the development of sponge cities, and effective steps will be taken to address traffic congestion and other urban maladies. All these efforts will make our cities more attractive and function better.

Urban maladies refer to social problems arising from overpopulation in big cities. The original version identifies hidden similarities between “面子” and “里子” and urban development above and under the ground. In the translation version, a concrete expression of outlook (more attractive) and function (function better) of the city is used to substitute for the expression of “面子” and “里子” respectively, which makes it easy to comprehend for foreign readers.

## V. SUGGESTION

In the rewriting of 2017 RWG, the manipulation of ideology emphasizes the dominant ideology of China’s society as it involves the fundamental interest of Chinese government and the Communist Party of China. Translators should be sensitive to political terms and weigh dictions especially sensitive political jargons concerning the land integrity, Taiwan, socialism, special administrative region and China’s stance on international conflicts and so on.

In translating, the patron’s role seems invisible but whose interest should not be violated. Themes discussed in the report and original text are all designed by Chinese government who is the initiator and patron of 2017 RWG and its translation in economy, publicity and staff.

As a political text, 2017 RWG also involves culture with Chinese characteristics. Under the manipulation of poetics,

method of domestication is preferred to foreignization for foreign readers' understanding. In the rewriting of the report, for image-loaded expression, most Chinese images are removed and replaced by specific English expressions; for abbreviations with numbers, meanings that numbers represent should be completed through addition; for four-character forms, the neat Chinese expression form can be broken to deliver unified information; for rhetoric such as repetition, parallelism and metaphor, redundancy should be deleted and the form of parallelism and metaphor can be remained or removed on the basis of briefness, accuracy and conciseness.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This paper expounds three most essential manipulating parameters in the translation of 2017 Report on the Work of the Government. It proves that the manipulation theory can be applied in not only the study of literature translation but in pragmatic texts as well. Translators should bear parameters of ideology, patron and poetics in mind in translating as the translation of RWG is also a kind of political and cultural rewriting.

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**Min Shen** was born in Ningxia, China in 1991. She is a Master Degree candidate from School of Foreign Languages in North China Electric Power University. She received her Bachelor Degree in English major from Xi'an International Studies University in 2015.

**Liangqiu Lv** was born in Anhui, China. He is a professor in the School of Foreign Languages, North China Electric Power University. His research interests cover English teaching, Translatology and science and technology translation. He is a co-editor of *Theory and Practice of Electric Power Translation between English and Chinese* in 2013, *Contrast and Translation between English and Chinese* and *A Translation Course of Science and Technology* in 2014.