

# **The Strategies and Impact of the English Translation of *Misery and Glory* from the Perspective of State Translation Program**

## **国家翻译实践视角下《苦难辉煌》英译本的策略与影响研究**

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### **1 Introduction**

Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, General Secretary Xi Jinping has made a series of important assertions on the construction of Chinese discourse and Chinese narrative system. At the National Publicity and Ideological Work Conference in 2013, Xi indicated that we must do a better job of “telling China’s stories, and conveying China’s voice”. At the National Publicity and Ideological Work Conference in 2018, Xi noted that we would improve our ability to engage in international communication so as to tell China’s stories well, make the voice of China heard, and present a true, multi-dimensional, and panoramic view of China to the world. At the 20th National Congress of the CPC, Xi addressed that we would accelerate the development of China’s discourse and narrative systems, better tell China’s stories, make China’s voice heard, and present a China that is credible, appealing, and respectable.

Translation, as an important part of national soft power, plays an irreplaceable role in telling China’s stories and conveying China’s voice. However, as far as the current situation is concerned, most of our modern translation theories are translated from the West, so it is necessary for us to build up translation theories on our own. State Translation Program theory is one of the very original theories.

State Translation Program refers to the autonomous translation program spontaneously implemented by a sovereign state in the name of the state in order to achieve self-interested strategic goals (Ren Dongsheng & Gao Yuxia, 2015, p.93). At present, the translation research on State Translation Program mainly involves the translation of Party and government literature and Chinese novels, but little attention has been paid to the translation of Chinese historical reading. The importance of history as a part of a country’s culture is self-evident. *Misery and Glory* is a historical commentary written by Jin Yinan, a professor of the National Defense University of the People’s Liberation Army. The book focuses on the struggle of the Long March of the Chinese Workers and Peasants’ Red Army (hereafter referred to as ‘the Chinese Red Army’). The text selected for analysis in the thesis are *Misery and Glory* and its English translation, aiming to revealing the translation strategies and impact of the English translation of *Misery and Glory* (hereafter referred to as ‘the English translation’) from the perspective of State Translation Program.

The purpose of the research is to explore the strategies and impact of the English

translation from the perspective of State Translation Program. Specifically, the research will answer the following three questions.

(1) Is the English translation the fruit of State Translation Program?

(2) What are the strategies used in the English translation?

(3) What is the impact of the English translation from the perspective of State Translation Program?

Today's world is in the midst of great changes that have not been seen in a century. State Translation Program, as an important part of national soft power, plays an important role in conveying national image, culture and values. The English translation is a part of State Translation Program, whose strategies and impact are worthy of in-depth research.

Firstly, the research can help reveal the key role of State Translation Program in cultural dissemination and international communication, especially in safeguarding state interests and constructing state discourse. Second, the research can explore how Chinese history and culture can be effectively conveyed to international readers through translation strategies so as to promote cross-cultural understanding and respect. Finally, the research can be used for reference for the foreign translation of other Chinese historical works so as to promote the international dissemination of Chinese culture.

From the perspective of State Translation Program, the research, by means of the concepts related to State Translation Program, adopts the method of textual analysis to explore the strategies and impact of the English translation.

The research consists of six chapters. Chapter one is the introduction, which mainly introduces the background, purpose, significance, research method and structure of the thesis. Chapter two is the literature review. Chapter three, four and five are the body of the thesis. Chapter three analyzes the three-dimensionality of State Translation Program of the English translation in order to demonstrate that the English translation is the fruit of State Translation Program. Chapter four explores the translation strategies of the English translation by comparing and analyzing examples. Chapter five, based on the previous discussion, explores the impact of the English translation from the perspective of State Translation Program. Chapter six concludes the thesis.

## **2 Literature Review**

State Translation Program, originally as a translation concept, is proposed by Chinese scholar Ren Dongsheng. Anthony Pym, a well-known foreign translation theorist, has written an article discussing the concept of State Translation Program, which indicates that the theory has already entered the vision of the international translation community. However, on the whole, there is little research on this theory in foreign countries, so this chapter focuses on the status quo of domestic research.

State Translation Program is an original theory constructed by Chinese scholars. Originally as a concept of translation, State Translation Program first appeared in 2012 in the National Social Science Foundation project "Research on 'foreign translators' in

national translation program” chaired by Ren Dongsheng (Before the publish of Connotation of “Guojia” in Chinese Reference to “Guojia Fanyi Shijian” and Its English Version by Ren Dongsheng and Gao Yuxia in 2022, State Translation Program had been called National Translation Program). In 2015, Ren Dongsheng and Gao Yuxia published a paper entitled “National Translation Program: A New Concept”, which promoted the theorization of the research on State Translation Program. The article systematically discussed the concept, type, three attributes, and three characteristics of State Translation Program. Since then, the academic circle has published many articles around the core concept of “State Translation Program”, enriching the theory of it.

In 2019, Ren Dongsheng published the paper “National Translation Program: A Conceptual Framework”, which is a preliminary attempt to promote State Translation Program being a discipline. The thesis attempts to define the core concept of National Translation Program, discuss its evolution and multidisciplinary sources and build its conceptual framework with subordinate and coordinate concepts (Ren Dongsheng, 2019, p. 112).

In 2022, Ren Dongsheng and Gao Yuxia published the paper “Constructing a Disciplinary Framework of State Translation Program”, which constructs the State Translation Studies as a disciplinary framework that integrates three systems, namely, basic theoretical system, engineering technology system and engineering supervision system, marking that State Translation Program has increasingly become mature.

Since the emergence of State Translation Program, several scholars have applied it to the research on translation. In 2019, Jiang Xiaohua and Ren Dongsheng published “The Shift in Strategy from ST-oriented to TT-oriented in Chinese Political Translation-A Comparative Study of the Translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* and of *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*”. It analyzes from linguistic, cultural and political perspectives the major translation characteristics of the English version of the two works, arguing that the translation strategy for major Chinese political documents has shifted from “ST-oriented” to “TT-oriented”. It also discusses the causes behind this shift (Jiang Xiaohua & Ren Dongsheng, 2019, p.19).

In the same year, Liang Hongtao published “A Study on National Translation Practice: A Case Study of English Translation of Jia Pingwa’s Novels”, which revealed the characteristics of national translation practice by the State in the aspects of translation material selection and translation strategies as well as the manipulative factors behind them and analyzed the reasons why its translation works had such poor reception effect in the alien world (Liang Hongtao, 2019, p.87).

In 2022, Feng Weilan and Pan Weimin argued that the translation of *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* by the Foreign Languages Press is more faithful compared with the Lawrence edition from the perspective of State Translation Program.

The fruits of the research on State Translation Program are abundant, however, there are still some deficiencies in it. First, little attention has been paid to the research on State

Translation Program between Chinese and other languages except English. Second, it lacks the research on interpreting.

In addition, it lacks the research on other text types. The hotspots involved in the current translation research mainly include the translation of Party and government literature and Chinese novels, and there is little attention paid to the translation of Chinese historical reading. The importance of history as a part of the country's culture is self-evident. Therefore, based on the current research situation, it is necessary to use the theory to analyze the translation of historical reading in order to promote the foreign dissemination of Chinese culture. This is what the research is going to do. The thesis focuses on researching the historical reading, *Misery and Glory* and its English translation, from the perspective of State Translation Program.

### **3 Three-Dimensionality of the English Translation**

Whether a text is the fruit of State Translation Program lies in whether it has “state attribute” in terms of translation selection, translation dissemination and translator behavior(Ren Dongsheng & Li Jiayue, 2023, p.65). Namely, the selected text is state text in terms of translation selection; the translation program is launched in the name of state in terms of translation dissemination; the text is translated by the translator who serves the state interests in terms of translator behavior. This chapter demonstrates that the English translation is the fruit of State Translation Program by means of the concept of the three-dimensionality of State Translation Program, i.e. state text, state name and state interests.

State text is a general term for all kinds of texts formed in the process of national governance, and it is the textual expression of state discourse, state interests, and state stances (Ren Dongsheng, 2022b, p.58). *Misery and Glory* is a historical commentary focusing on the Long March of the Chinese Red Army, which also showcases the history of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and the textual content is closely related to the state, meeting the textual conditions of State Translation Program. The English translation conveys the state discourse and state stances to the world, and meets the demands of state interests. Therefore, the English translation is state text.

Translation activities carried out in the name of the state are usually launched and organized by the state or state-empowered institutions. Publication by a state translation institution is one of the iconic features of the fruits of State Translation Program (Ren Dongsheng & Li Jiayue, 2023, p.57). The Foreign Languages Press is the earliest and largest export-oriented international publishing institution in China, and since its establishment it has been undertaking the mission of publicizing and publishing for the CPC and China, making great contributions to making China's voice heard abroad, telling China's stories, spreading Chinese culture, and enhancing cultural exchanges and cooperation.

The English translation is published by the Foreign Languages Press, under the supervision and sponsorship of the State, which gives its translation behavior the name of the State. Therefore, the English translation is a translation program in the name of the

State.

If translations are carried out by translators who are authorized by the state or those who put state interests first and serve the state, and the translations are beneficial to the state, then such translations indicate state interests (Ren Dongsheng & Li Jiayue, 2023, p.64). The fruits of translation program in the name of the state embody the will of the state, and the value orientation is to realize the state interests and serve the strategic goals of the state (Ren Dongsheng & Li Jiayue, 2023, p.62). The English translation is published by the Foreign Languages Press and translated by translators authorized by the state, which is the fruit of translation program in the name of the state, inevitably embodying the state interests.

Specifically, it can be embodied in the following examples. Besides, more such examples can be found in chapter five.

#### **Example 1:**

ST: .....他回忆说：“这位师长的上身穿穿着三件补了许多补丁的单衣，下身穿两条破烂不堪的裤子，脚上穿着两只不同色的草鞋，背着一个很旧的干粮袋，袋里装着一个破洋瓷碗，除此以外，别无他物，与战士没有区别。”（金一南，2020，p.315）

TT: ...He recalled: “The division commander was wearing three single-layer shirts with patches and two pairs of tattered trousers. On his feet were straw sandals of different colors. On his shoulder was a very old haversack. In his pocket was a chipped enamel bowl. That was all of his equipment. Nothing else. Not any different from his troops.” (Jin Yinan, 2020, pp.365-366)

Analysis: In terms of selecting words, the translator is professional. “Tattered trousers” and “chipped enamel bowl” are the precise expression of the TT. The translator does not use literal translation but use free translation to translate “除此以外” in the ST. It is translated as “that was all of his equipment” rather than “except these”, which can make readers further feel the appalling conditions faced by the Chinese Red Army. This indicates that the commander and his troops are equal in wearing, which showcases the good image of the Chinese Red Army and therefore safeguards the state interests.

In a word, the English translation has the three-dimensionality of State Translation Program and therefore is the fruit of State Translation Program.

## **4 Strategies of the English Translation**

The research finds that the English translation mainly uses five translation strategies, namely, annotation, foreignization of political discourse, domestication of rhetorical devices, amplification and omission, which can help readers to understand the work effectively.

## Annotation

Annotation is to add necessary cultural background knowledge in the target text (TT) so as to help readers understand the source text (ST) better. *Misery and Glory* includes a large number of historical events, and in order to enable foreign readers to have a complete understanding of these events, its English translation uses annotation to supplement information on many historical events.

### Example 2:

ST: 所记之事发生在1936年12月12日，史称“西安事变”。（金一南，2020，p.3）

TT: And the flight that he recorded, which took place on December 12, 1936, is remembered in history as the Xi'an Incident<sup>1</sup>. (Jin Yinan, 2020, p.5)

1. The Xi'an Incident. This political turning point was initiated in the City of Xi'an in the northwest of China. While in the city Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Kuomintang and of the Nanjing-based Nationalist government, was detained, on December 12, 1936, by two of his generals, Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng. The aim was to force him to stop the civil war, and ally the KMT with the Communist Party of China to fight Japanese aggression. (Jin Yinan, 2020, p.680)

## Foreignization of Political Discourse

Foreignization is a translation strategy in which the translator translates as close as possible to the ST, and foreignization of political discourse is not only to express the political discourse in its original flavor, but also to make readers of the TT understand its connotation. There are a lot of political discourses in *Misery and Glory*, as for the translation of these political discourses, the English translation mostly adopts the strategy of foreignization.

### Example 3:

ST: 1936年毛泽东在陕北对斯诺谈“三大纪律、八项注意”在红军建设中的重要作用。三大纪律是：行动听指挥；不拿工农一点东西；打土豪归公。八项注意开始是六项：一、上门板；二、捆铺草；三、说话和气；四、买卖公平；五、借东西要还；六、损坏东西要赔。后来又添了两项：不搜俘虏腰包；洗澡避女人。（金一南，2020，pp.413-414）

TT: : During an interview with American journalist Edgar Snow in 1936 in northern Shaanxi, Mao Zedong spoke about the vital role played by the “Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention” in the building of the Red Army. The Three Main Rules of Discipline are as follows:

1. Obey orders in all your actions;
2. Do not take a single needle or a piece of thread from the people;
3. Turn in everything captured.

The Eight Points for Attention were originally six (the last two in this list were added

later):

1. Mount door planks [of your make-shift bed];
2. Bind the straw [in your bed];
3. Speak politely;
4. Pay fairly for what you buy;
5. Return everything you borrow;
6. Pay for everything you damage;
7. Do not ill-treat captives;
8. Do not bathe in the presence of women. (Jin Yinan, 2020, pp.487-488)

Analysis: The Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention are a vivid embodiment of the excellent conduct of the people's military under the leadership of the CPC, which was formed in the early years of the military's founding, and was continually refined during the period of the Agrarian Revolutionary War, the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, and the War of Liberation. Finally, on 10 October 1947, Chairman Mao drafted the "Order of the Headquarters of the Chinese People's Liberation Army on the Reissuance of the Three Main Rules of Disciplines and Eight Points for Attention" (also known as the "Double Ten Order"). Since then, the Three Main Rules of Disciplines and Eight Points for Attention have been fixed and have become the discipline of the whole military.

The refined Three Main Rules of Disciplines are as follows.

1. Obey orders in all your actions;
2. Do not take a single needle or a piece of thread from the people;
3. Turn in everything captured.

The Eight Points for Attention are as follows.

1. Speak politely;
2. Pay fairly for what you buy;
3. Return everything you borrow;
4. Pay for everything you damage;
5. Do not hit or swear at people;
6. Do not damage crops;
7. Do not take liberties with women;
8. Do not ill-treat captives.

“三大纪律八项注意” is translated as “The Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention”. “不拿群众一针一线” is translated as “Do not take a single needle or a piece of thread from the people”. The TT maintains the connotation of the ST. Foreignization expresses the political discourse in its original flavor, which is important for the dissemination of discourse with Chinese characteristics.

### **Domestication of Rhetorical Devices**

Domestication is a translation strategy in which the translator translates as close as

possible to the TT. Readers from different cultural backgrounds cannot easily understand the rhetorical devices of different languages and cultures, so instead of using literal translation, the translator adopts domestication and uses words that are acceptable to the TT readers, which aptly conveys the effect of the rhetorical devices of the ST, helps the readers to better understand the TT, and enhances the readability of the TT.

**Example 4:**

ST: 他也有过“兵败如山倒”的时候。（金一南，2020，p.150）

TT: And he did have some catastrophic failures. (Jin Yinan, 2020, p.167)

Analysis: “兵败如山倒”describes the collapse of an army like a mountain collapsing. In order to let readers understand the real meaning behind the metaphor, instead of using literal translation, the TT adopts domestication, translating it as “catastrophic failures”. This does not give rise to ambiguity for the TT reader and accurately presents the meaning of the ST.

## **Amplification**

Amplification refers to the supplementation of implicit information in the TT to ensure the translation’s accuracy and avoid obstacles to readers’ understanding.

**Example 5:**

ST: 但列宁本人，既提供了意志，又提供了思想。（金一南，2020，p.71）

TT: But Lenin himself provided the Bolsheviks with both will and ideology. (Jin Yinan, 2020, p.75)

Analysis: It is noted before the ST that there are leaders who provide the will of the party, and there are leaders who provide the ideology of the party, which is why Lenin said that there is a need for a group of leaders. Compared to the ST, the translation adds the implicit message-Bolsheviks, stating that Lenin provided the Bolshevik party members with will and ideology, avoiding obstacles to readers’ understanding.

## **Omission**

Omission refers to omitting redundant and repetitive contents or the contents contradicting to the style of the ST in the TT, so as to make the TT more concise and natural.

**Example 6:**

ST: 但颇让党史遗憾、颇让后人遗憾，也颇让革命博物馆内那些大幅“一大”代表照片遗憾的是，“南陈北李”这两个中共建党的中坚人物，一个也未出席。（金一南，2000，p.67）

TT: But a disappointing fact for many studying the history of the CPC is the absence of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, two key people for the founding of the CPC and famously known as “Chen in the south and Li in the north,” at this congress and in the great many pictures exhibited in museums capturing that moment. (Jin Yinan, 2000, p.71)

Analysis: In the ST, the author uses three consecutive“颇让……遗憾”,such parallel structure expresses the great regret. The TT does not use liberal translation, because it is not in line with the style of the TT, and will make readers feel unnatural, so it is translated as a disappointing fact, which makes the TT more natural and also keeps the meaning of the ST.

## 5 Impact of the English Translation

State Translation Program is a kind of national behavior, which essentially belongs to institutionalized translation and mainly serves the state at the level of function, involving state behavior, state strategy, state planning, state ideology, state interests, state image, state capacity, and state discourse (Ren Dongsheng, 2019, p.71). This chapter focuses on the impact of the English translation in safeguarding state interests and constructing state discourse.

### Safeguarding State Interests

The English translation has the attribute of “self-interest” of State Translation Program, in which the translator, with his professional ability of bilingual conversion, serves the state interests through translation, specifically manifested in the three aspects of safeguarding state image, strengthening international dissemination, and being staunch to political stance.

#### Safeguarding state image

##### Example 7:

ST:

……但在敌人以友情、以官爵、以监禁、以死亡的利诱和威胁面前，我们只有衷心叹服刘畴西信仰之坚定与意志之不拔。

对蒋介石、顾祝同的劝说和纷纷前来的黄埔同学，他丝毫不为之所动。（金一南，2020，p.315）

TT:

...But when we look closely at how he dealt with the enemy's temptations and menaces, the promises of friendship and high position, the threats of imprisonment and death, we can but marvel at the firmness of Liu's strong belief and willpower.

Liu was immovable. The efforts of Chiang Kai-shek, Gu Zhutong and the stream of Whampoa classmates counted for nothing. (Jin Yinan, 2020, p.365)

Analysis: Liu Chouxi, as the commander of the Red 10th Army Corps, was unmoved by the threat of death and the persuasion of his Whampoa classmates. “Words of firmness, strong belief and willpower, and counted for nothing” are the faithful expressions to the ST, reflecting Liu Chouxi's heroic image of not being afraid to die for the cause of liberation. This is a reflection of the good image of the Red Army, and safeguarding the image of the Red Army is safeguarding the image of the state, therefore safeguarding the state interests.

### **Strengthening international dissemination**

#### **Example 8:**

ST: 粟裕回忆说：寻淮洲是在革命战争中锻炼成长起来的一位优秀青年指战员；他艰苦朴素，联系群众，作战勇敢，机智灵活。（金一南，2020，p.313）

TT: Su Yu later recalled that Xun Huaizhou was an outstanding young military commander who had grown up with the revolutionary wars. He was hardworking and plain-living, and maintained close ties with the people. He was brave, intelligent and a flexible fighter. (Jin Yinan, 2020, p.362)

Analysis: Instead of translating the phrase “作战勇敢，机智灵活” in liberal translation, the translation converts the verb-作战 (fight) into a noun-fighter and then applies the SVC structure as the previous text does, which ensures the fluency and readability of the TT and strengthens the international dissemination of the English translation, therefore safeguarding the state interests.

### **Being staunch to political stance**

#### **Example 9:**

ST: 中国统一的使命，留给了后人。（金一南，2020，p.574）

TT: The mission of China's reunification was left to posterity. (Jin Yinan, 2020, p.677)

Analysis: The translation of the word “统一”(unification) as reunification, being in line with the historical fact that China was originally united. It can be seen that the translator is very careful in selecting words, which showcases a staunch political stance, therefore safeguarding the state interests.

## **Constructing State Discourse**

The foreign expression of political discourse in State Translation Program is an effective way to make China's voice heard and strive for international discourse (Feng Weilan & Pan Weimin, 2022, pp. 62-63). To construct state discourse and let the world understand Chinese discourse, translators should try to keep the original flavor of political discourse. In order to achieve this effect, translators adopt the strategy of foreignization in the TT.

#### **Example 10:**

ST: 十月革命一声炮响，给我们送来了马列主义，送来了组织指导，甚至送来了部分经费。但没有送来工农武装割据，没有送来农村包围城市，没有送来枪杆子里面出政权。（金一南，2020，p.40）

TT: The gunfire of the Russian Revolution delivered Marx-Leninism to China. From Moscow, China received organizational guidance and even some funds. But Moscow did not teach the Chinese about enclaves of armed forces of workers and peasants. It did not teach them about besieging cities from the countryside, nor did it teach them how political power comes out from the barrels of the gun. (Jin Yinan, 2020, p43)

Analysis: The translation adopts the strategy of foreignization of the political discourses with Chinese characteristics such as “enclaves of armed forces of workers and peasants”, “besieging cities from the countryside”, and “political power comes out from the barrels of the gun”. Such strategy not only preserves the original flavor of the ST, but also helps readers to try to understand their connotations, and therefore constructing the state discourse.

## **6 Conclusion**

### **Major findings:**

The research analyzes the three-dimensionality of State Translation Program of the English translation, explores its translation strategies and impact. Firstly, the research finds that the English translation is a state text serving the state interest in the name of the state, and it is the fruit of State Translation Program. Secondly, through the analysis of a large number of examples, the research finds that the English translation uses five translation strategies, namely, annotation, the foreignization of political discourse, the domestication of rhetorical devices, amplification and omission, which helps the readers to understand the text better. Finally, the research explores the impact of the English translation on safeguarding state interests and constructing state discourse, respectively. The research finds that the English translation presents the awareness of safeguarding state interests mainly in three aspects, namely, safeguarding state image, strengthening international dissemination and being staunch to political stance, and constructing state discourse mainly through the foreignization of political discourse.

Through the above analyses, three questions of this research have been answered. First, the English translation is marked by state text, state name and state interests, presenting the three-dimensionality of State Translation Program and therefore is the fruit of State Translation Program; Second, the English translation employs five translation strategies, namely, annotation, the foreignization of political discourse, the domestication of rhetorical devices, amplification and omission, which can be used to effectively convey China's history and culture to the international readers, and to promote cross-cultural understanding and respect; Third, the impact of the English translation from the perspective of State Translation Program is to safeguard state interests and construct state discourse.

In addition, the research can be used for reference for the foreign translation of other Chinese historical works so as to promote the international dissemination of Chinese culture.

### **Limitations and suggestions:**

Firstly, although the research has analyzed five translation strategies of the English translation through a large number of examples, it has not explored more translation strategies, and it is necessary to study the English translation more carefully in the future in order to explore more translation strategies and their effects.

Secondly, State Translation Program has a strong interdisciplinary attribute. The

research only explores the text from the perspective of the translation discipline, and it is hoped that further studies will analyze and explore State Translation Program from an interdisciplinary perspective in the future.

Thirdly, State Translation Program, as a translation theory, has a strong “state attribute” which is different from other translation theories. To totally understand this, the further studies can be done from two perspectives of translation theories, namely State Translation Program and another translation theory. For example, the further studies can be done from the two perspectives of State Translation Program and Functional Equivalence theory. In such situation, the strong “state attribute” can be showcased clearly by making a comparison of two translation theories.