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## THREE PHASES OF CHINESE POLITICAL TRANSLATION AFTER 1949: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

This paper explores changes in the translation of political discourse after P.R. China was established in 1949. It also explores the possible factors that had the most impact on these changes. To that end, official political discourse after the establishment of China is divided into 3 phases in terms of political leadership: under Mao Zedong (1949-1976), under Deng Xiaoping (1978-1990) and under Jiang Zemin (1989-2002).

Chinese official Political documents in different genres by these leaders and their translations are analysed in relation to the political and social-cultural background and the major influential translation theories in each historical phase. The analysis of political discourse translation for these three phases reveals that the translation of Mao's work is endowed with Mao's personal cult and class struggle, so the translation is very faithful to the original, whereas the translation of Deng's works is more flexible and target culture-oriented due to the political ideology of the time. The political ideology of Jiang's time also influenced the translation of Jiang's work. While it is still target culture and target language oriented, it becomes more flexible in its form and still serves the political ideology of Jiang's time. It is concluded that although the translation of political discourse is very much bound to the political ideology and the sociocultural context of each phase, the translation and translation practice in each phase differ significantly due to other factors such as the translators and the translation theories influential in each historical phase.

## Three Phases of Chinese Political Translation after 1949: Similarities and Differences\*

By

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### 1. Introduction

Chinese translation theories and practices have seen great change in the wake of social transformation in China and the development of Western translation studies. Consequently, many academic studies have investigated the development and evolution of translation research and practice in China. Although much research has been conducted on the translation of Chinese political discourse into English (Xu and Mu 2009), this has generally been confined to translation theories of a certain period, with few comparisons made across different political phases and little investigation of the factors influencing political translation (Shi 2012).

This study examines and compares the English language translations of political discourse in each political phase of China after 1949, in the context of their individual characteristics. The paper explores the development of China's political discourse translations through selected works, with a critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework. It investigates social cultural ideology, the purpose of translation, domain translation theories, and the subjectivity of the translator after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. Due to socio-political differences in each political phase, translation practices in China experienced significant changes through the following 50 years. These five decades are divided into three phases, aligning with the changes of leadership; namely, 1) the Mao Zedong 毛泽东 phase (1949-1976), 2) the Deng Xiaoping 邓小平 phase (1978-1990), and 3) the Jiang Zemin 江泽民 phase (1989-2002).

The political discourse of each period was imprinted with characteristics reflecting the changing political leadership. Between the founding of the PRC and 1978, the dominant ideology was characterised by class struggle. With the economic 'reform and opening-up' policy (*gaige kaifang* 改革开放) (1978), the discourse became much more open and multifarious, with a socialist market economy as the central theme. In Jiang's era, in the context of growing social contradictions and

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international divisions, Chinese political discourse was marked by concern with social (in)equality and global (in)security, and it responded to these problems with the notion of the ‘Three Representatives’ (*san ge dai biao* 三个代表). This paper hypothesises that differences in translation of Chinese political discourse are influenced by political and historical characteristics, among other factors. To test this, I examine these influences and the changes in the production of translations in each phase.

This paper first examines the English translation of Chinese official political discourse in each of the three phases, analysing some typical translation features in the works of Mao, Deng, and Jiang. It makes a comparison of the original documents and the translations commissioned by the Foreign Language Press (the official translation agency of the Communist Party of China), as the official translation of a political document is often regarded as the most authentic and reliable (Xu and Mu 2009). As argued by Munday (2001), the official translation of a political document often reflects the most advanced theories of the process of translation.

Vertical comparisons will also be made of the characteristics, similarities, and differences between the official translations in each of the three phases, with the aim of exploring the primary influences on the translation production from lexical, discourse, and socio-cultural points of view, using CDA.

Articles on similar politics and economy topics from each of the three phases were selected for comparison. For Mao’s phase, examples were taken from *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Volume 4. This contains the largest amount of important work written by Mao himself during the Chinese Civil War (1927-1949), and the translation itself was a significant event in the 1950s. For Deng’s phase, examples were selected from *The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Volume 2 and Volume 3. The latter is considered the most important part of Deng’s work, as it includes articles on building socialism with Chinese characters. In addition, articles about political reform, the socialist market economy, and the issue of Hong Kong are the major concerns of the phase. For Jiang’s phase, examples were taken from *The Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*, Volume 1. This is a record of the formation and development of the thoughts of the ‘Three Representatives’.

## 2. A Critical Discourse Analysis of Political Translations

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a critical approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice and focuses on the ways in which social and political domination are reproduced in texts and talks (Fairclough 1989, 1992, 1995). It was proposed by Norman

Fairclough in 1989 and henceforward deployed as a method of multidisciplinary analysis throughout the humanities and social sciences. It does not confine itself only to method; the overriding assumption shared by CDA practitioners is that language and power are linked. In this study, CDA is applied as the key methodology in the analysis of the process of translation. This approach facilitates the examination of the discourse from a three-dimensional point of view, using linguistic, social interaction, and social cultural perspectives to analyse changes in official political discourse and the reasons for them.

In his conceptualisation of discourse, Fairclough (1989) developed three levels of analysis; namely, that of (spoken or written) language texts (textual analysis), of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution, and consumption), and of discursive events as instances of sociocultural practice. According to Fairclough (1989), 'It is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice and focuses on the ways social and political domination are reproduced in text' (p. 20). Accordingly, all texts should be examined in three progressive steps: first is the linguistic description of the text, including analysis of syntax, metaphoric structure, and certain rhetorical devices. Second is an explanation and interpretation of the process in which the text is produced – that is, the text's production and consumption, as well as how power relations are enacted. The third step is the explanation of relationships between sociocultural practice and the production of text.

For Fairclough (1995), text is a product rather than a process. He uses the term 'discourse' (p. 39) to refer to the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part. In addition to the text, the process includes the process of production (of which the text is a product) and the process of interpretation, for which the text is a resource (Fairclough 1995). Text analysis is correspondingly only a part of discourse analysis, which also includes analysis of productive and interpretative processes. The language knowledge of the translator, the representation of the natural and social worlds that the translator inhabits, and the values, beliefs, assumptions, and social condition of a particular time all have an impact on the productive and interpretative process of translation (Fairclough 1989).

The linguistic and non-linguistic factors mentioned above shape the social conditions of production in relation to three levels of social organisation: 1) the level of the social situation or the immediate social environment in which the discourse occurs, 2) the level of the social institution that constitutes a wider matrix for the discourse, and 3) the level of the society as a whole (Fairclough 1989). The following diagram (Figure 1) sets out the framework of the three-

dimensional CDA designed to analyse the relationship between texts, processes, and their social conditions and both the immediate conditions of the situational context and the more remote conditions of institutional and social structures.

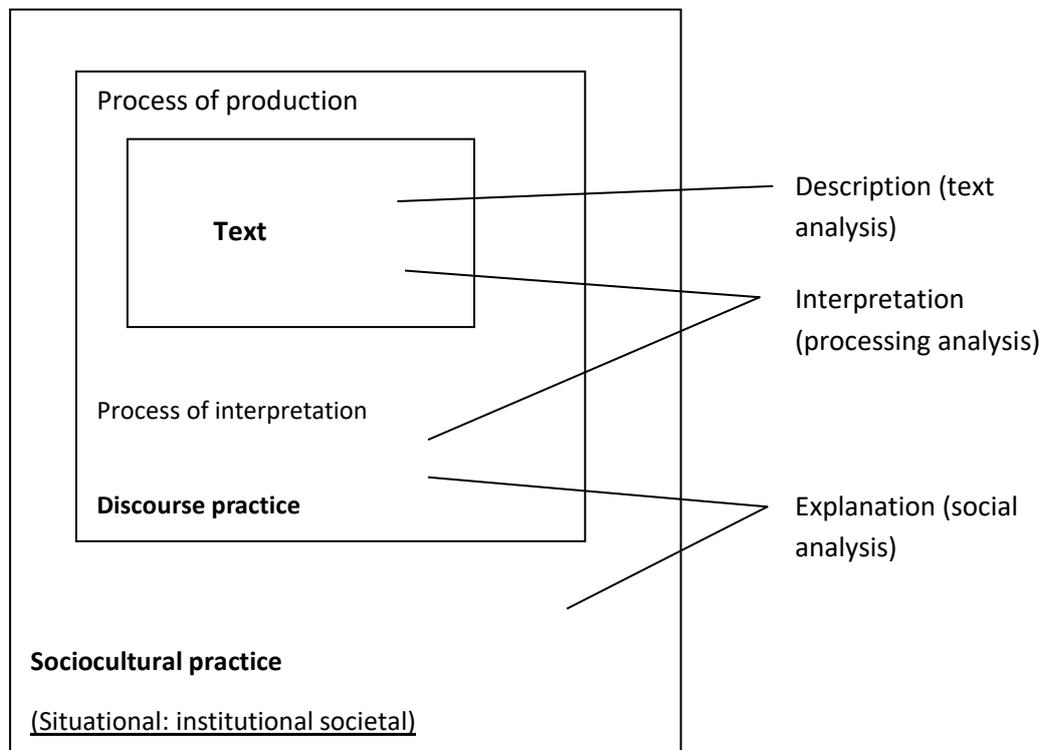


Figure 1: Fairclough's three-dimensional framework (Fairclough 1989: p.25)

In this study, the translation analysis of political discourse from source text into target text helps us to depart from the linguistic level to 'relate the fine grain of linguistic behaviour to politics, or political behaviour' (Schaffner 2004: p. 119). The translation analysis can be traced through lexical choices; restructuring of text, such as selection reproduction, summarisation, and local transformation (addition, deletion, permutation, substitution); and genre selection, such as stylistic and rhetorical formulation of the text production. The translation strategy can thus be examined through this linguistic analysis, which fits the textual analysis level of CDA. On the next level, which is discourse practice, the link between textual analysis and social practice is explored. At this level, the purpose of translation is examined, the (in)visibility of the translator, target reader, translation strategies, and dominant translation theories of the time are considered to further support this. The third level of analysis considers the political background and dominant political

ideology of each of the three phases, which is also the social practice level in the three-dimensional framework.

In the text analysis stage, the Australian-based National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI<sup>†</sup>) marking criteria is employed as a textual analysis framework to examine the translation of these political documents in terms of accuracy, resource of language (comprehension of original), resource of language (expression of translation), and technique (translated too literally in some segments and too freely/paraphrased in others) (NAATI 2013).

### 3. Politics and Ideology of Chinese Political Discourse and Its Translations

#### 3.1 The Mao Phase, 1949-1976

A key feature of the Mao Zedong era was the establishment of a new state and new system in China under the pattern of the two world camps. China under Mao had a new look: the establishment of an independent state, the development of socialist industrialisation, a highly organised and ideological society, the general participation of the public in the political life of the country, the common consciousness of the society as a whole, and the establishment of common values (Brown 2012). The new country, new system, and new society were products of the victory of the Chinese revolution. The factors that contributed to the success of the revolution continued to exert a major influence, influencing the governance of the country and effectively shaping Chinese society during Mao's phase (Shi 2012).

The ideology of Mao Zedong was first confirmed as the guiding principle of the Chinese Communist Party at the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress in 1945 (Brown 2012). Several different editions of *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong* have since been published in China to publicise the philosophy of Mao Zedong prior to the establishment of the PRC in 1949.

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<sup>†</sup> NAATI<sup>†</sup> is the national standards and accreditation body for translators and interpreters in Australia. It was designed to assist in meeting diverse and changing communication needs and expectations. It sets, maintains, and promotes high national standards for translating and interpreting and implements a national quality-assurance system for accreditation of practitioners who meet those standards.

### 3.1.1. Translation Activities during Mao's phase

In the 17 years following the establishment of Communist China (1949-1966), the translation industry developed as a requirement for both international diplomacy and disciplinary development. Translational institutions were established, academic journals published, and translation research conducted (Xu and Mu 2009). However, theoretical translation research remained in its infancy, as empirical research work and research papers were scarce (Xu and Mu 2009) and the focus of translation studies was limited to practice and strategy.

During this phase, there were no systematic translation theories to guide translation activities (Xu and Mu 2009). Literature creation and translation activities were a result of inspiration and wit, as classical literature and traditional aesthetics were dominant in the 30 years after 1950. As a result, little attention was paid to the development of translation theories in China. Translators worked according to their own preferences, while readers evaluated the translations according to their own tastes. This aesthetics-oriented principle was dominant for the first 30 years (Cheung 2009).

### 3.1.2. Translation of The Selected Works of Mao Zedong

Translation of The Selected Works of Mao Zedong began in the 1950s, initiated by Stalin during Mao's state visit to Russia in 1950 (Liu 2009). Prior to this, Chinese political discourse had seldom been translated into foreign languages (Xu and Mu 2009). *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong* Volumes 1, 2, and 3 were first translated in the 1950s and published by Lawrence and Wishart Publications. Qian Zhongshu (钱钟书) and Wang Zuoliang (王佐良) were the works' major translators.

The first translation of Chinese political discourse began with translators gathering together in the *Zhong Zhi* Hotel in Beijing on 25 October 1960. The translation was conducted in secret and the produced work was considered to be the most unimpeachable and unparalleled translation work (Liu 2009). The translation process followed a strict procedure: 1) first translation, 2) modification of the translation, 3) examination of the translation, 4) finalising of the translation in group discussion, 5) the second modification and embellishment by foreign experts, 6) finalisation by foreign experts, 7) unification of the editions, 8) third finalisation in group discussion, 9) read-through by the finalisers, 10) discussion of questions by experts in China and abroad, 11) last finalisation, and 12) typing and proofreading. The texts were so delicately translated that hours were spent deciding even which article to use, and the translation of a single proper noun could take days (Liu 2009).

The following paragraphs compare excerpts from *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong* – with the original Chinese texts marked as ‘source text’ and the English translations as ‘target text’. They are analysed from lexical, discourse, and socio-cultural perspectives. The lexical-level text analysis considers accuracy, resource of language, and technique, according to the NAATI criteria.

In Example 1, Mao’s writing has a casual and spoken style that is sometimes ironic and humorous. The translation seeks to reproduce these qualities for the target reader. For example, the translation of *jiaopen* (脚盆) as ‘tub’, which contains fish and meat, was intended to maintain Mao’s graceless colloquial style of metaphor.

### Example 1

Source text : 太行山、太岳山、中条山的中间，有一个脚盆，就是上党区。在那个脚盆里，有鱼有肉，阎锡山派了十三个师去抢 (Mao 1969).

Target text: ‘The Shangtang area, rimmed by the Taihang, Taiyueh and Chungtiao Mountains, **is like a tub. This tub contains fish and meat**, and Yen Hsi-shan sent thirteen divisions to grab it’ (Mao 1975).

Although the translators sought to reproduce the original, this translation is more ‘rewriting’, as defined by Nida’s formal equivalence (Nida 1964). The cultural elements in Example 2 below reflect how the ideology of the time emerged in the translation process.

### Example 2

Source text: 美国帝国主义者及其走狗国民党反动派 (Mao 1969).

Target text: ‘U.S. imperialists and their **running dogs**’ (Mao 1975).

In Example 2, ‘running dogs’ is a very well-known term in translation with a Mao-period gloss. Dogs, in Western culture, do not have the same connotation as they do in Chinese culture, and a running dog is simply a dog that runs. This expression delivers to the Chinese reader of the source text a disdainful impression of a person who helps someone do harm to the general public. Although it could be translated as ‘hatchet man’ or ‘tool’ or ‘flunky’, the original was retained to comply with Mao’s original wording.

There is also evidence that information was selected based on the ideology of the ruling party. For example, in *On the Kuomintang's different answers to the question of responsibility for the war* (Mao 1969), a paragraph of Chiang Kai-shek's announcement is quoted:

### Example 3

Source text: 这个论点，不是别人的，是第一元名战争罪犯蒋介石的。蒋介石在其元旦声明里说：‘中正为三民主义的信徒，秉承国父的遗教，本不愿在对日作战之后再继之以剿匪的军事，来加重人民的痛苦 (Mao 1969).

Target text: ‘It is the argument of none other than War Criminal No.1 Chiang Kai-shek. In this New Year's Day statement he said: As a devoted adherent of the Three People's Principles and the teachings of the Father of the Republic, **I** was reluctant to follow the conclusion of the war against Japan with the armed suppression of the bandits and thereby to aggravate the sufferings of the people’ (Mao 1975).

Here, the quotation in the original text is made directly by Chiang Kai-shek. The modest and decent style and traditional manner would impress the Chinese native speaker who read the source text – especially the underlined sentence: ‘中正为三民主义的信徒’. Here, 中正 is the *zi* 字 (name) of Chiang Kai-shek, which follows an old Chinese tradition. In ancient times, people addressed one another and referred to themselves using *zi* 字 – rather than *ming* 名 (name) – to show a sense of modesty and politeness. However, this tradition is absent from the target text, simply replaced by ‘I’, without further explanation. Thus, the target text lacks the flavour of the original and presents the speaker as less genuine and modest – and it is this effect that the target text intended. This is clearly not a faithful translation of the original, nor a fully communicative translation, according to Newmark's definitions (Newmark 1981). The cultural background is neglected as it does not serve the purpose of the translation. In practice, the purpose of the translation determines the way in which the text is translated.

As the translatability of a text depends on how tightly connected the cultural background of the source language and the target language are and the proximity of the source's cultural background and the target readers (Munday 2001), the translator plays an active and creative role in the translation process. The translator should regard the source text as a medium through which source culture is revealed, restricting themselves according to the source's social and cultural background.

The translation process is one of cultural transfer into the target culture expressed by the target text, and the method of translation thus depends on the purpose of the target text.

As such, the neglect of the cultural aspect in this translation strategy is, again, a reflection of the purpose of the translation and the political ideology of the Mao period. Although there is a cultural gap here between Chinese and English, the translator could use footnotes (as in the above examples) to elaborate on what they have chosen to hide in the translation. However, the translator seems to have made themselves visible in the translation here; the original text is thus 'foreignised' to express emotion and a political attitude. Accuracy, in NAATI standards (NAATI 2013), is once again neglected; and instead, the purpose of the translation and the political ideology is made primary. The translation positions of the major translators of Mao's works cannot be found in this translation. The translators reflect the social, cultural and political ideology; they should be either 'visible' or 'invisible' (as in previous examples) to suit the purpose of translation and the ideology it is designed to carry.

### 3.1.3. Key Findings

In the above examples, the translations are strongly influenced by political ideology. In Mao's phase, the purpose of the translation of *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong* was to introduce and disseminate the experience of socialist construction in China (at the suggestion of Stalin). The target readers were thus those in other countries taking the road of socialism (Yin 2009). Communication with the target readers was not the objective of the translation, which was more source culture-oriented. The translators could be either visible or invisible, depending on the different strategies they applied. The target text might be 'domesticised' or 'foreignised' (Fairclough 1989), as cultural communication was not considered the purpose of translation. The traces of cultural output appeared more often in the footnotes than in the main translation (Zhang 2013). This could be due to the 'left' thinking of the Mao phase and the personality cult that existed around the man himself (Brown 2012), rather than a subjective output of the culture. As we see in the translation of *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, the source text is substantially maintained and literally translated (Zhang 2013).

The translation of Mao's writing precisely reproduces the casual and coarse writing style, as well as the ironic and humorous flavour of the original text. The translation is faithful to the original on both the lexical and cultural levels. Formal equivalence here outweighs dynamic equivalence.

Although *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong* is a collective work of translation, the main translators' positions are not reflected in the text. On the textual level, this is because it is a translation of political documents written by Mao himself, most of which point out political directions for the entire country, thus the translation is less subjective. On the contextual level, the political ideology of Mao's phase exerted many constraints on the process of translation at this time (Zhang 2013).

Finally, although the translators sought to reproduce the original, on the lexical level, the translation process was ultimately one of rewriting due to its purpose. The ideology of the ruling class during Mao's phase determined the strategies for the translation of *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*.

### 3.2. The Deng Phase, 1978-1990

The translations of *The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* were produced under different political conditions to that of Mao's work. While the latter was produced during the hypersensitive period of the Cultural Revolution, the former emerged in a comparatively looser political environment due to the reform and opening-up policy.

Deng was the core of the Chinese Communist Party's second generation of central collective leadership. His policies during this period have been named 'Dengism' or 'Deng Xiaoping theory' (*Deng Xiaoping lilun* 邓小平理论) (Zhai 2015). Deng implemented policies aimed at building socialism with Chinese characteristics, focusing on both material progress and cultural and ethical progress. His major theories include, but are not limited to, his 'opening-up to the outside world' policy, the establishment of a 'market-oriented economy as the primary stage of socialism', and 'one country, two political systems' (Zhai 2015). During this period, China was transformed from a closed country with a planned economy to a more open state, with a booming economy. His theories were embedded in the national constitution as the basic and guiding ideology of the Party, giving cultural and intellectual support to the PRC (Zhai 2015).

#### 3.2.1. Translation Activities During Deng's Phase

Deng's official leadership period ran from 1978 until 1990. In this time, the reform and opening-up policy restored the connection between China and the world (Zhai 2015); and as demand increased for communication with the outside world, the Chinese translation industry recovered. The Translation Association of China was established in 1982, at which time China became a member of the International Federation of Translators (Xu and Mu 2009). The academic field of translation studies grew, as global communication became more frequent. Research areas expanded

and their influence deepened. Many academic journals were resumed, and new ones established. Western translation theories, especially linguistic theories, were introduced into China, gradually overtaking the primacy of Russian translation scholarship (Shi 2012). The number of research works also increased in this period. Though the focus remained on translation skills and practice, an increasing number of studies explored applied translation studies and the history of translation (Xu and Mu 2009).

From 1979 to 1988, Chinese traditional translation theories remained dominant, and researchers had only just begun to consider the difference between Chinese and foreign translation theories. However, Western translation theories appeared and began to influence the Chinese tradition (Xu and Mu 2009). Eugene Nida (Nida 1964) and Peter Newmark (Newmark 1981) were famous representatives of the field at the time; and their theories were introduced into China in 1979 and 1981, respectively. Nida's dynamic equivalence and functional equivalence theories, in particular, had substantial influence (Nida 1964). Western translation theories began to bloom, though they lacked critical analysis and were not yet fully developed (Chen 2000).

### 3.2.2. The Translation of The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping

The policy of 'opening-up to the outside world' made translation an issue of great significance. The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, Volumes 1 to 3, were translated into many languages. The first English translation was published in 1984 by the Foreign Language Press Beijing, providing what was then the most reliable source of political, economic, and diplomatic information to the rest of the world (CPC Central Party History and Literature Research Institute 2013).

In the translation of Deng's work, the restructuring of sentences was flexible and the expression lacked the rigidity of Mao's phase. Translators sought equivalent ways of reproducing a source text and were more likely to adopt a sense of dynamic equivalence and semantic translation to identify the closest natural equivalent of the source language message (Nida 1964).

The following are some examples of the flexible strategies used to translate the word *gao* 搞 into English:

#### Example 1

Source text: 全党讲大局，把国民经济搞上去 (Deng 1993).

Target text: ‘The whole party should take the overall interest into account and **push** the economy forward’ (Deng 1994).

### Example 2

Source text: 怎样才能把国民经济**搞**上去? (Deng 1993)

Target text: ‘How can we **give a boost to** the economy?’ (Deng 1994).

### Example 3

Source text: 一定要把铁路上**搞**派性活动的里外联系切断 (Deng 1993).

Target text: ‘It is imperative to cut the internal and external connections of individuals who **engage in** factional activities in the railway department’ (Deng 1994).

### Example 4

Source text: 破坏国家经济建设, 在混乱中**搞**投机倒把, 升官发财 (Deng 1993).

Target text: ‘They take advantage of the resulting confusion to **speculate and profiteer**, grabbing power and money’ (Deng 1994).

### Example 5

Source text: **搞**社会主义怎么能等呢? (Deng 1993)

Target text: ‘How can we afford to delay in **advancing** the cause of socialism?’ (Deng 1994).

In these examples, the character *gao* 搞 in the source text bears different meanings in different contexts. It appears five times and is translated with five different variations. In Example 1, *gao* 搞 means ‘to work on, to propel, and to promote’, but it is translated as ‘push’ in the target text. In Example 2, *gao* 搞 has a very similar meaning to *gao* 搞 in the first example, but here it is translated as ‘boost’. The difference in the wording is to avoid repetition and to emphasise the slight variation in meaning due to their different contexts. Contrary to the first two examples, *gao* 搞 can also have negative connotations. In Examples 3 and 4, for example, *gao* 搞 means ‘a misdoing, to speculate, to profiteer’. It is translated here with a flexibility that means the original wording is not taken very seriously; rather, the meanings and connotations seek the ‘naturalness’ of the source text, with the casual style of Deng’s language maintained. Although the parallel effect cannot be obtained for the

term *gao* 搞 as well as formal equivalence, the term is accurately translated and manages a dynamic equivalence and similarity in spirit. The translation here is more target reader-focused and the target text is domesticized.

The functional theories of Hans J. Vermeer and Christiane Nord focus on the choice of translation strategy that must be made during the process to produce a functionally adequate result (Munday 2001). The above examples show that the translation strategy applied in these translations was a dynamic equivalent, rather than a formal one. The source text is domesticized to improve communication. To meet the needs of the target reader, metaphors and idiomatic expressions are employed that are more natural in terms of semantics and lexicon.

Idiomatic expressions cater to the needs of the target reader, according to NAATI standards (NAATI 2013). Here, translators bring their subjectivity into play. According to Mary Snell-Hornby (1995), ‘cross-culture transfer’ means that the key measure of a translation is how meaningful the target text is for the target reader: the translator thus takes an active and creative role in the process. Moreover, the process is a cultural transfer into the target culture, expressed by the target text; thus the method employed depends on the purpose of the target text. The purpose of the translation is therefore demonstrated (Munday 2001).

Comparing this translation strategy with that of Mao’s period, we can conclude that the root of this change was a change in the purpose of translation. Cultural communication was given great attention in Deng’s period in the light of the ‘opening-up’ policy (Shi 2012); and thus, in line with this ideology, translators sought to bridge the cultural gap between the Chinese source text and the English target text (Zhang 2013).

Example 6 illustrates the strategy and style of translation in Deng Xiaoping’s period and invites comparison between the different strategies applied in the Mao and Deng periods.

### Example 6

Source text: 如果中国在一九九七年，也就是中华人民共和国成立四十八年后还不把香港收回，任何一个中国领导人和政府都不能向中国人民交代，甚至也不能向世界人民交代。 如果不收回，就意味着中国政府是晚清政府，中国领导人是李鸿章(3)。(Deng 1993)

Footnote:

Source text: 3, 李鸿章 (一八二一—一九零一), 安徽合肥人. 晚清军政重臣. 一八七零年起任直隶总督兼北洋大臣. 他曾代表清政府主持签订了中英《烟台条约》, 《中法新约》, 中日《马关条约》, 《中俄密约》及辛丑条约一系列割地赔款, 丧权辱国的不平等条约. (Deng 1993).

Target text: 'If China failed to recover Hong Kong in 1997, when the People's Republic will have been established for 48 years, **no Chinese leaders or government would be able to justify themselves for that failure before the Chinese people or before the people of the world**. It would mean that the present Chinese government was just like the government of the late Qing Dynasty and that the present Chinese leaders were just like **Li Hongzhang** (13)' (Deng 1994).

Footnote:

Target Text: '13, Li Hong Zhang (1823-1901), **a native of Hefei, Anhui Province**, was an important military and administrative official during the late Qing Dynasty. In 1870 he became Governor of Zhili (present-day Heibei) Province and Minister in Charge of the Northern Coastal Provinces. On behalf of the Qing government he presided over the signing of unequal treaties such as the Sino-British Yantai Treaty, the Sino-French New Treaty, the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Shinomoseki, the Sino-Russian Secret Pact, **and the Peace Treaty of 1901 with 11 countries including Great Britain, the United States, Russia, Germany and Japan**. Under the terms of these treaties China relinquished sovereignty, ceded territory and paid indemnities' (Deng 1994).

In the underlined sentence (*Renhe yige Zhongguo lingdaoren he zhengfu dou bu neng xiang Zhongguo renmin jiaodai, shenzhi ye bu neng xiang shijie renmin jiaodai* 任何一个中国领导人和政府都不能向中国人民交代, 甚至也不能向世界人民交代 [Deng 1993: p. 23]), *bu neng jiaodai* 不能交代 is an idiomatic expression which means 'to disappoint someone by not accomplishing the task given'. The expression itself comes with a connotation that the subject of this verb bears responsibility and obligations. But the translation 'no Chinese leaders or government would be able to justify themselves for that failure before the Chinese people or before the people of the world' is very different. The sense of responsibility and obligation has disappeared; and the sentence is now neutral in its content. Neither accuracy nor lexical connotation is achieved in this translation, which sounds much less harsh to the target reader and is adapted more to the target readers' code of language. Reflecting the ideology of Deng's time, the translation of his works is more flexible and target reader-oriented, though political ideology still dictates the communicative purpose of the translation (Zhang 2013).

As seen in the underlined part of the same footnote, some information was added to the target text to explain some historical background to the target reader. This background would be common knowledge to a Chinese reader; thus, again, this is a ‘rewriting’ of the Chinese source text to serve the communicative purpose of the time. The translator becomes ‘visible’ in the domestication of the target text.

### 3.2.3. Key Findings

The translation of *The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* was more flexible due to the major changes in the dominant political ideology of the time. Translators worked subjectively, using creativity in their choices of words and expressions that reflected the characteristics of the time. The purpose of the translation was to meet the needs of the reform and opening-up policy and to gain mutual understanding with the outside world. The target reader was the international community; and the ideology is reflected by the translations. Translation in this phase became more ‘natural’, as can be seen from the strategies adopted and the lexical choices (Zhang 2013).

In Deng’s phase, although Chinese traditional translation theories remained dominant, Western theories were being introduced into China. Nida’s dynamic equivalence is the most well-known of the theories studied by Chinese scholars (Xu and Mu 2009). Without the restrictions of Mao’s political ideology, Chinese traditional translation theories could be utilised, whilst being aided by Western translation theories. As a result, the translation of *The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* was very different to that of Mao’s works in terms of strategy. The work is more target culture- and target reader- oriented, while some expressions are nevertheless carefully translated and reproduced without loss of the Chinese characteristics of the source text (Zhang 2013).

In the translation of Deng Xiaoping’s work, the restructuring of sentences was more flexible, avoiding the rigidity of Mao’s phase. From early in Deng’s phase, Western translation theories, such as Nida’s equivalence and some cultural theories, were widely discussed. While Western theories were more uncritically accepted during Deng’s phase, translators and language experts began to study them critically during Jiang’s phase.

### 3.3. The Jiang Phase, 1989-2002

The time of Jiang Zemin was one of deepening reform, a flourishing socialist market economic system, and China’s continued opening-up to the outside world. Jiang Zemin, the core of the

Chinese Communist Party's third-generation of central collective leadership, developed his own thoughts with the hope of accelerating economic reform and building a socialist market economy in the primary stage of socialism. He also wished to solve the existing social problems in ethical and cultural life, such as the moral deterioration seen under Deng's reform (Shi 2012).

### 3.3.1. Translation Activities in Jiang's Phase

This phase saw a flourishing of Western translation theories and the development of translation studies in China. With the opening-up to the outside world, academic exchange increased both in quantity and in depth (Xu and Mu 2009). More Western translation theories were introduced from different schools, such as cultural studies, functional studies, deconstructionist theories, and feminism. However, at the same time, these theories and propositions were no longer adopted without question, but now critically analysed. Linguistic theories by Nida and Newmark were still given attention, but researchers began to view them through a critical lens (Xu and Mu 2009).

### 3.3.2. The Translation of The Selected Works of Jiang Zemin

The Jiang phase shared the basic political ideology of Deng's phase, while reform and opening-up was deepened. China enjoyed better international standing, with richer and more common communication. However, it also began to face the consequences of Deng's opening-up policy. According to Shi-Xu (2012), 'Especially recently, against the context of growing social contradictions and international division, contemporary Chinese political discourse is markedly concerned with social (in)equality and global (in)security' (p. 97).

The political translation of this period was even more flexible than that of the Deng phase. Translators became more visible in domesticating the target text to reflect the purpose of the process.

#### Example 1

Source text: 上海的同志在发言中提到了要打'中华牌'、'世界牌', 走联合开发的路子 (Jiang 2006).

Target text : 'In their speeches, representatives of Shanghai proposed **creating Chinese brands and world brands** and working for development through cooperation' (Jiang 2010).

A striking change can be seen in Example 1. In the source text *da Zhongguopai, shijiepai* 打中国牌,

世界牌 means ‘to develop domestically and internationally’, and the phrase *dapai* 打牌 means literally ‘to play cards’. However, in the target text, it is treated as ‘creating Chinese brands and world brands’.

The translation of political discourse in the Jiang phase shifted its focus from sensitive subjects, due to the side effects of the opening-up policy.

### Example 2

Source text: 在这里, 我要向所有为香港平稳过渡作出贡献的英国朝野人士表示感谢 (Jiang 2006).

Target text: ‘Here, I would like to express my thanks to **the British nationals, both within and without the government**, who have contributed to the smooth transition of Hong Kong’ (Jiang 2010).

Example 2 is a very typical purpose-oriented and cultural-based translation. It reflects the political ideology of this era, which aimed to minimise political and social differences and problems. The expression *Yingguo chaoye renshi* 英国朝野人士 was translated as, ‘To the British nationals, both within and without the government’. China and Britain are countries with very different political systems. Britain adopts a constitutional monarchy; the party that wins a majority of seats in the House of Commons forms the government as the ruling party, while the second largest party takes the role of the opposition (Yan 1999). In contrast, China is a one-party state. The term *Yingguo chaoye renshi* 英国朝野人士 is thus a concept from a foreign culture. The translation does not consider the foreignisation or domestication of the concept in the source or target culture. Although this should be translated as ‘the ruling party and the opposition’, it is translated in a vague manner. This is due to concerns of patronage, rather than cultural difference. The language and cultural gap are dealt with according to the purpose of translation and the ideology of the ruling class. Although the term is translatable through the cultural gap, the translator served the ideology of this period. The cultural differences between the target readers were unimportant. The purpose of the translation and political sensitivity were the dominant factors which determined the target text.

Example 3 is from *Speech at the ceremony to mark the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China* (Deng 1993). Emperor Daoguang’s reign in the Qing Dynasty was supplemented with a time range, as was the Treaty of Nanking and the Convention of Peking.

Footnotes are not used here, unlike in the translations of Mao and Deng's work.

### Example 3

Source text: 从秦代到清代道光年间，中国一直对香港实行管辖，行使主权。十九世纪中叶，英国两次发动鸦片战争，迫使腐败无能的清政府签订《南京条约》和《北京条约》(Jiang 2006).

Target text: '**From the Qin Dynasty (221-206BC) to Emperor Daoguang's reign in the Qing Dynasty (1820-50)**, China always exercised jurisdiction and sovereignty over Hong Kong. Following the two Opium Wars waged by Britain in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the British government forced the corrupt and incompetent Qing government to first sign the **Treaty of Nanking in 1842** and then **the Convention of Peking in 1860**' (Jiang 2010).

### 3.3.3. Key Findings

In Jiang's phase, the translation of political discourse became more flexible and purpose-oriented. This phase shared the basic political ideology of the Deng phase, while it also began to face problems arising from the opening-up policy. The production of translation thus became politically sensitive and target text-oriented. Accuracy became less important, and serving the purpose of conveying ideology became the primary goal. Cultural differences were diminished during this period, and the target text was further domesticated either because the ruling class intended to blur politically sensitive concepts or through catering to the target reader (Zhang 2013).

Strategies remained purpose-driven, reflecting the ideology of the ruling class. Political translations in this phase were even more flexible than in Deng's time. Translators became more 'visible' in domesticating the target text according to the purpose of the translation (Zhang 2013). In this case, the subjectivity of the translator was dominant in the translation of Jiang's work.

During this phase, Chinese traditional translation theories gave way to Western schools of thought, as theories from different Western schools were introduced into China and Chinese translation scholars began to treat them more critically. Under the influence of the political ideology of the period, the translation of *The Selected Works of Jiang Zemin* was more flexible in terms of strategies applied. Although political translation in this phase seems more flexible in its form, political ideology still directed the process of translation such as through using distortions to avoid politically sensitive concepts (Zhang 2013).

#### 4. Concluding Thoughts: New Models of Political Translations

Yin Chengdong (2009) claims that the official translation of *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong* is the highest quality of any other leader's official translation since 1949 because it is the collective work of the most gifted translators and language experts. However, this paper applies culturally oriented translation theories to argue that the work is representative of the ideology of the period: a purpose-driven translation that neglects many other elements that should also have been taken into consideration, according to Fairclough (1992). In the translation of Mao's work, lexical choices and sentence structures, as well as target readers and their culture, should have been given more attention to achieve dynamic equivalence. Although the lexicon and style are more delicately translated for *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, dynamic equivalence and cultural orientation are not achieved because the work is so strongly influenced by the ideology of Mao's phase.

The translations produced during Deng's phase appear more compatible with the source text, as they are more in accordance with both Chinese traditional translation criteria and Western cultural theory (Zhang 2013).

Translation of political discourse in Jiang's phase was conducted in a rougher manner than in the other two phases considered here. Although the primary ideology of this time can be described as harmonious, the social problems emanating from Deng's phase had begun to influence translation in Jiang's time (Shi 2012).

The political documents examined in this study are measured using the standard of the NAATI criteria (NAATI 2013). On this basis, the greatest accuracy is seen in Deng's translation, with dynamic equivalence best achieved in this work. The translation of Mao is more formally equivalent, as this work was constrained by Mao's personality cult and 'left' thinking, while the translation of Jiang's work does not suggest equivalence was a primary consideration and is rather more sensitive to political concerns (Zhang 2013).

Regarding syntactic choice, the translation of Mao's works clearly strived to maintain Mao's syntactical style and structure and imitate the spoken tone employed in most of his original works (Yin 2009). However, the translations of Deng and Jiang's works were more flexible in both syntactic style and tone, employing more idiomatic expressions. The translators introduced their own subjectivity to the style, and the resulting target text is more target reader-focused (Zhang 2013).

From a discourse practice and social practice point of view, the purpose of the translation of Mao's works was to introduce to the outside world the experience of building socialism in China (Yin 2009). However, the translation of Mao's works was not target reader-focused, as the translators were constrained by the social cultural ideology of Mao's time. His personality cult and the 'left' thinking of the society had a substantial influence on the text production. This explains why it is the only era in which social political ideology contradicted the purpose of the translation. In Deng and Jiang's translations, the purpose serves the ideologies of their respective times (Wu and Zhang 2013).

Due to the factors cited above, the translators were ultimately more invisible in Mao's phase, though traces of them can be identified where amendments were needed to 'correct' contradictions between the translation and political ideology. In the translation of Deng's work, the translators had more room to incorporate their own subjectivity, thus idiomatic translations appeared and the resulting texts cater more to the language habits of target readers. However, in the translations of Jiang's work, the translations seem overly flexible, either due to inappropriate translations or because of the political sensitivities they sought to avoid.

Neither classical Chinese translation theory criteria nor theories mentioned by the major translators of Mao's work are clearly reflected in this work, as political ideology overwhelmed all other concerns. However, in the translation of Deng's work, the dynamic equivalence proposed by Nida is carefully applied. For Jiang's translation, Chinese scholars were beginning to apply cultural and functional translation theories more critically (Xu and Mu 2009), and the purpose of the translation – which served the political ideology – was made primary. As a result, translation in this phase was more flexible even than translations of Deng's work.

In summary, Table 1 below details the most influential factors in each of the three phases, under the framework of CDA (Fairclough 1992). Five elements are cited; namely, social, cultural, and political background and ideology; the purpose of the translation; the target reader; the translators' subjectivity; and mainstream translation theory (Fairclough 1992).

The table shows that the greater the focus on political ideology, the less attention is given to factors such as mainstream translation theories, the target reader, and the translators' subjectivities. This is true in each of the three phases, according to the specific features of each period. Thus, each phase is given a name corresponding to the dominant characteristic of its political translations.

As the maintenance of Mao's personal writing style was reflective of the political ideology of his time, political translations of this period can be described as employing the 'loyalty model'. Political translations under Deng's phase took all features into consideration, representing a 'balancing model'. In Jiang's phase, the ruling class intended to soften politically sensitive concepts while also catering to the target reader, while translators became overly powerful and dynamic equivalence was not achieved. Thus, the translation method of this phase can be described as the 'reforming model'.

CDA		Mao	Deng	Jiang
Socio-cultural analysis	Social, cultural, and political background and ideology	Y	Y	Y
Discourse analysis	Mainstream translation theories		Y	
	Target reader		Y	
	Purpose of translation	Y	Y	Y
	Translator's visibility		Y	YY
Text analysis	Translation strategy		Y	
		Loyalty model	Balancing model	Reforming model

Table 1: Different models of political translation under the critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework (own research).

Table 1 shows that, in Mao's phase, the sociocultural and political background and ideology and the purpose of translation were the factors that drove the translation strategy. Other factors indicated in Table 1 were secondary to these. Although traditional Chinese translation theories remained dominant, the translation theories of the primary translators of the work could not be brought fully into play due to the requirement of maintaining Mao's personal writing style. The translators are invisible in the process, their subjectivity overwhelmed by the political ideology of the period. The target reader is thus, in turn, placed into a secondary position.

However, in Deng's phase, all six factors are considered. The purpose of the translation was to open-up and communicate with the outside world, as the political ideology of Deng's phase was more tempered. Translations of this period see more dynamic equivalence, attempting to balance both source reader and target reader. Chinese traditional theories continued to dominate, while

Western translation theories were slowly being introduced. Translators became visible, their subjectivities reflected in the texts. Traces of translation strategies can also be identified, with influences by both traditional Chinese and Western scholarly thought (Chen 2000).

In Jiang's phase, following the changes of political ideology from Deng's period, translation served the purposes of the opening-up policy and sought to diminish various social problems. As a result, translation became even more flexible, as shown in Chapter 3. Mistranslations even arise in the efforts to avoid politically sensitive concepts. Although more diverse streams of Western translation theory began to play a more prominent role during this time, few traces of corresponding strategies can be found in Jiang's translation. The translators are very visible, with text occasionally either overly or casually translated. For this reason, two *yeses* are given for translator visibility in Jiang's work (Table 1).

Although, in previous examples, flexible translations sought to cater more to the target reader, some of the meaning and flavour of the original texts would still inevitably be lost. Although meaning can be achieved on the linguistic level, a deeper level of meaning – with domestic values, beliefs, and social representations that carry ideological force – is not necessarily delivered (Venuti 1998). The target reader, again, is placed in a secondary position, as Jiang's work has neither formal equivalence nor dynamic equivalence.

In sum, the translations of Chinese political discourse in the Mao, Deng, and Jiang eras were all primarily driven by the ideological states of the Communist Party of China during each historical period. Although factors such as sociocultural difference, the purpose of translation, the visibility of the translators, and the different translation theories and strategies all had an impact on the production of the text, political ideology was the overriding concern, with all other factors expected to serve this.

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# J C M

No 3

CHEN ZHANG

## BIO

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