



Strategies in Interpreting Culture-Loaded Expressions in Diplomatic Interpreting: From the Perspective of Three-Dimensional Transformations

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Abstract

China's international exchanges are becoming increasingly vibrant, and diplomatic interpreting plays an indispensable role in facilitating these interactions. In diplomatic contexts, culture-loaded expressions are always challenges for interpreters. Guided by the principles of Eco-Translatology's three-dimensional transformation framework, this study examines the interpreting records of three key events: the Press Conference held by Premier Li Qiang in 2023, President Xi Jinping's address at the 15th BRICS Summit, and Premier Li Qiang's speech at the 2024 World Economic Forum. These events serve as case studies for exploring the application of the three-dimensional transformation perspective in diplomatic interpreting, particularly in relation to various culture-loaded expressions. The study further analyzes how interpreters navigate linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions to ensure accurate adaptation and selection in diplomatic interpreting. It also provides an in-depth exploration of the strategies employed in the translation of culture-loaded expressions within the realm of diplomatic discourse.

Subject Areas

Culture

Keywords

Culture-Loaded Expression, Diplomatic Interpreting, Three-Dimensional Transformation

1. Introduction

Interpreting, particularly in the diplomatic sphere, plays an essential role in ensuring effective communication and mutual understanding among nations, especially during high-stakes events such as press conferences. As globalization accelerates, the demand for diplomatic interpreters who can proficiently navigate the intricacies of intercultural communication has grown substantially.

Diplomatic Chinese-English interpreting is a specialized form of interpretation, distinguished by several key features. First, formality is paramount, as diplomatic contexts demand strict adherence to established protocols and conventions, requiring interpreters to maintain professionalism and accurately convey the speaker's intent and tone. Second, dynamism characterizes the fluid nature of interpreting, where interpreters must remain responsive to both verbal and non-verbal cues, adapting to real-time situational changes. Lastly, complexity is inherent, as interpreters must navigate cultural, political, and social nuances, requiring a deep understanding of diverse customs, values, and etiquettes to ensure accurate communication and avoid misunderstandings.

The concept of Eco-Translatology, proposed by Professor Hu Gengshen, offers a novel and holistic framework for understanding translation processes. Drawing from ecological principles, Eco-Translatology views translation as a dynamic interaction between the linguistic, cultural, and communicative systems within which it occurs. This approach builds upon Darwin's theory of evolution, emphasizing the interdependence between translation and its surrounding environments. It highlights the importance of achieving a harmonious balance between the source and target languages, which reflects traditional Chinese wisdom about the harmony between humans and nature. The term "ecology" in Eco-Translatology metaphorically represents the interconnectedness and complexity of translation practices. Concepts such as diversity, adaptation, and symbiosis are used to explain translation phenomena, with the ultimate goal of fostering a holistic understanding of translation that transcends mere linguistic concerns and embraces a broader ecological perspective encompassing cultural and communicative dimensions.

This paper focuses on the interpreting of three conference addresses, which are the press conference addressed by Premier Li Qiang in 2023, the discourse addressed by President Xi Jinping at the 15th BRICS summit and the discourse addressed by Premier Li Qiang at the opening ceremony of the world economic annual meeting 2024. When analyzing these three addresses, this paper employs the three-dimensional transformations to explicate strategies for diplomatic interpreting, and to understand how to carry out transformation and adaptation in three dimensions, namely language, culture and communication.

2. Literature Review

This part provides an overview of the existing studies on Eco-Translatology, culture-loaded expressions and diplomatic interpreting both at home and abroad. It

delves into the origins and developmental trends of the three-dimensional transformations theory of Eco-Translatology, highlights the recent research trends and areas of focus, and identifies the research topics that have yet to be explored. Additionally, this chapter synthesizes the academic discourse surrounding diplomatic interpreting, with a specific emphasis on Chinese diplomatic settings as its primary context of analysis.

2.1. Previous Studies on Eco-Translatology

Unlike Western approaches that have been prompted by identifiable circumstances, this theory is based on ancient Chinese notions about harmony between man and the environment [1]. Previous studies on Eco-Translatology have explored the intersection between translation studies, environmental studies, and cultural studies, focusing on the environmental implications and cultural aspects of translation and interpreting activities. These studies have shed light on various dimensions of Eco-Translatology, including its theoretical foundations, methodological approaches, and practical applications.

As an interdisciplinary approach to Eco-Translatology research, Eco-Translatology studies apply ecological rationality to conduct a comprehensive study of translation from an ecological perspective. It is an ecological paradigm and research field of “translation is adaptation and choice” [2]. Studies have proposed methodological approaches for analyzing Eco-Translatology, employing interdisciplinary methods that integrate linguistic, cultural, and environmental perspectives. As highlighted by Hu, translation and ecology share a direct and explicit connection, Hu’s viewpoint underscores the interdependence and dynamic nature of translation, drawing parallels to ecological processes [3].

Ancient Chinese emphasized the harmonious relationship between heaven and human, which is illustrated in Eco-Translatology that believes translators should strive for the unity between themselves and the translation ecology [3]. During translation and interpretation, translators are expected to adapt to the translational eco-environment so that the target text conforms to the rules of translational ecology [4]. According to Hu, translation involves the transformation of language, and language itself is a product of culture. Culture, in turn, is an inherent aspect of human activities, and humans are an integral part of nature [3]. And that is the explanation of Eco-Translatology, which contains three dimensions, namely linguistics, culture and communication (a part of human society and nature). To visually represent this relationship, Hu proposed a relationship sequence diagram, as illustrated in **Figure 1**:

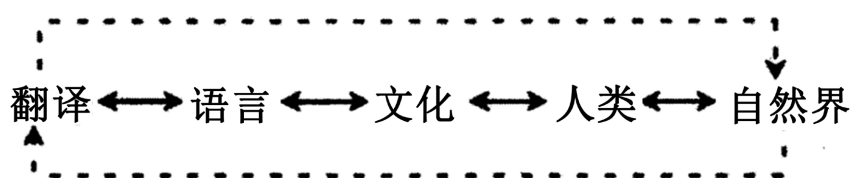


Figure 1. The relationship sequence between different items in Eco-Translatology.

Recent developments in Eco-Translatology reflect a notable shift toward emphasizing Chinese cultural identity, especially in the context of China's growing global influence and national strategies. Over time, there has been a move from the traditional domestication approach, which aimed to make foreign texts more accessible to target audiences by simplifying cultural elements, to a more foreignizing strategy that preserves and highlights the unique aspects of Chinese culture. This shift is evident in both literary and political translations, where terms, idioms, and cultural references are increasingly retained or minimally adapted with explanations to convey cultural richness. For example, in translations of works by contemporary Chinese authors like Mo Yan and Yan Lianke, culturally specific terms such as *guanxi* (关系, social connections) and *xiaokang* (小康, moderately prosperous society) are often left untranslated or explained through footnotes to emphasize their cultural significance.

The adoption of this approach aligns with China's "going global" strategy, which seeks to present a more authentic and distinct image of Chinese society and values. Furthermore, Eco-Translatology has played a role in this evolution, offering a framework that highlights the interconnectedness of text, translator, and cultural context. In this model, translation is viewed as a dynamic process where cultural, linguistic, and communicative factors interact, and the role of the translator is to navigate these elements while preserving cultural integrity [5]. As a result, modern translations not only serve linguistic and communicative functions but also contribute to cultural diplomacy, reflecting a broader goal of fostering global understanding through cultural visibility. This trend signifies a shift in translation practices, where cultural identity is no longer sacrificed for ease of comprehension but actively showcased to engage international audiences with China's unique worldview. The strategic inclusion of cultural references in translations is not merely a linguistic choice but a reflection of China's broader political and cultural objectives on the global stage.

To sum up, previous researchers have conducted a detailed study on the three-dimensional transformation theory of Eco-Translatology. However, there is no comprehensive research on diplomatic interpretation, especially on the interpretation of culture-loaded expressions under this circumstance.

2.2. Previous Studies on Culture-Loaded Expressions

Culture-loaded expressions are words, phrases or expressions and sentences that have special meaning or connotation in a specific cultural context. Idioms, slangs, allusions and proverbs belong to culture-loaded expressions. Researches on culture-loaded expressions examine words that convey cultural connotations, values, or meanings unique to specific cultures or communities. These studies explore how such expressions shape communication, language use, and intercultural understanding. Drawing from cultural linguistics and semantics, scholars analyze how culture-loaded terms reflect cultural values, influence discourse, and impact language perception and interpretation. By investigating the semantic, pragmatic,

and cognitive aspects of these expressions, researchers aim to understand their cultural significance and the role they play in shaping intercultural dialogue.

The most popular classification of culture-loaded words was proposed by Nida. He classified culture into five types: ecological culture, material culture, social culture, religious culture and linguistic culture [6]. In accordance with Nida's theory, several scholars have made adaptations to align it with their own research. Newmark introduced a categorization of culture-loaded words, encompassing various domains such as ecology, material culture, social culture, organization, gestures, and habits [7].

Studies have identified and analyzed various strategies used in translating culture-loaded expressions. These strategies include literal translation, adaptation, domestication, foreignization, cultural substitution, and transliteration, etc. Researchers have examined the effectiveness and implications of each strategy in conveying the original cultural meaning to the target language audience.

Though meaning of culture-loaded expressions can be translated, it's hard to preserve the cultural meaning completely [8]. While it remains challenges in translating culture-loaded words, researchers have explored the notion of cultural equivalence and the challenges posed by untranslatability. Culture-loaded words often lack direct equivalents in other languages, leading to difficulties in accurately conveying the cultural nuances and values associated with these words. Studies have examined the concept of untranslatability and proposed alternative techniques to bridge the cultural gaps.

2.3. Previous Studies on Diplomatic Interpreting

Interpreting in diplomatic settings involves not only language but a broad range of elements and factors that make communication possible. Diplomatic settings include national institutions (e.g. Ministries, Presidential Offices, Houses of Parliament, etc.), international institutions (e.g. the United Nations and its family of agencies, the European Union, WTO, NATO, etc.), and a number of international or inter-regional military organizations [9]. In recent years, due to China's cultural output, there has been an increasing focus on culture-loaded terms and poems in this field [10]. Researchers have emphasized the significance of maintaining neutrality, accuracy, and confidentiality while interpreting in diplomatic contexts. The interpreters act as linguistic and cultural mediators, ensuring effective communication and understanding between parties. However, interpreters sometimes serve mainly the purpose of adding prestige to conferences where their linguistic mediation is not really necessary [11].

Interpreting in diplomatic settings, as a major type of interpreting, is both similar to and different from other types of interpreting. In terms of similarity, diplomatic interpreting aims at facilitating the communication between speakers, sharing the same communicative function as other types of interpreting. In terms of differences, diplomatic interpreting is under huge limitation by its high seriousness and political nature [4].

Language skills and competence are fundamental for diplomatic interpreters. Studies have highlighted the importance of high-level proficiency in both the source and target languages. Diplomatic interpreters need to possess a deep understanding of diplomatic terminology, idiomatic expressions, and cultural references specific to the diplomatic sphere. Interpreters who provide this type of interpreting service must be able to deliver their interpretations in real-time, with precision and attention to detail, and an acute awareness of political implications [12]. The flexibility of translation is influenced by factors such as topic gravity, political sensitivity, linguistic parallelism, audience language awareness, and educational background, and can be classified into low, medium, or high levels [13].

In conclusion, studies on interpreting within diplomatic contexts highlight the field's unique complexities, which extend beyond linguistic proficiency to include cultural nuances and political sensitivity. As mediators, interpreters facilitate effective communication between parties, ensuring that language barriers do not hinder diplomatic discourse. While sharing general communication goals with other interpreting forms, diplomatic interpreting stands apart due to its gravity and inherently political nature. Proficiency in diplomatic terminology, the ability to convey intricate ideas accurately, and sensitivity to cultural and political subtleties are essential for interpreters in this field. Additionally, the degree of interpretative flexibility is shaped by factors such as topic importance, political implications, and audience background, underscoring the specialized skills needed for success in diplomatic interpretation.

2.4. A Comparison between Eco-Translatology and Other Theories

In diplomatic interpretation, Eco-Translatology's strengths are especially evident compared with other major conventional theories. For example, during a joint press conference involving Chinese and foreign representatives, a speaker might use strategically vague language to maintain diplomatic tact (e.g. “我们一贯主张以和平谈判解决争端,” or “We have always advocated for resolving disputes through peaceful negotiations”). Conventional theories, such as Nida's dynamic equivalence or Vermeer's Skopos theory, often emphasize functional fidelity or purpose-driven translation. These approaches might prioritize a literal or purpose-focused rendition, potentially overlooking the cultural nuances and contextual demands for flexibility in diplomatic discourse.

Eco-Translatology, on the other hand, allows interpreters to adapt dynamically to audience expectations and situational needs, selecting expressions such as “aligns with the shared interests of all parties” to preserve the original meaning while ensuring appropriateness in tone. This approach balances the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions, which are critical for maintaining the delicate atmosphere in diplomatic interactions. Compared with other translation theories, Eco-Translatology offers a more flexible analytical framework. While equivalence theories often focus on achieving “faithfulness” and “equivalence,”

Eco-Translatology emphasizes adaptability in target context, highlighting the active role of the interpreter as a mediator. This multi-dimensional perspective not only considers linguistic transfer but also cultural, emotional, and power dynamics, making it particularly effective in managing cultural conflicts and sustaining negotiation atmospheres in diplomatic settings [3].

By applying Eco-Translatology, researchers and practitioners gain a deeper understanding of real-world interpreting challenges. This theoretical perspective enriches translation studies by broadening the scope of research to include contextual and ecological factors. In the field of diplomatic interpreting, Eco-Translatology positions interpreters not merely as linguistic intermediaries but as active participants in maintaining ecological balance within cross-cultural communication. **Table 1** shows a comparison of application in diplomatic interpretation guided by Eco-Translatology and other theories concluded by the author through various previous researches.

Table 1. Comparison between Eco-Translatology and other theories.

| Aspect | Eco-Translatology | Other Theories |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Focus | Adaptation and selection within an ecological system. | Fidelity to meaning (e.g., equivalence theories) or specific functional goals (e.g., Skopos theory). |
| Cultural Sensitivity | Integral to the adaptive process, emphasizing dynamic balance. | Often secondary to linguistic or functional concerns. |
| Interdisciplinary Approach | Incorporates insights from ecology, sociology, and communication studies. | sociology, and communication studies. Primarily grounded in linguistic or functionalist perspectives. |
| Real-Time Application | Flexibly adjusts to dynamic, high-pressure settings like diplomatic negotiations. | May require pre-defined objectives that are difficult to adapt in fluid environments. |

3. Research Design

This research investigates strategies for translating culture-loaded expressions in diplomatic interpreting, employing the three-dimensional transformations framework of Eco-Translatology as its theoretical basis. Focusing specifically on three addresses delivered by President Xi and Premier Li, this study examines the challenges that diplomatic interpreters face in capturing the cultural subtleties and connotations inherent in language used by political leaders in high-profile settings. Additionally, the research aims to identify effective strategies for achieving accurate, culturally nuanced interpretations in diplomatic contexts.

3.1. Research Methods

This study adopts a qualitative method to investigate the strategies employed in the interpretation of culture-loaded expressions in diplomatic interpreting. A case

study approach is utilized in this study, with the conferences address being the primary source of data. This design allows for an in-depth exploration of the specific context and provides valuable insights into the strategies used by diplomatic interpreters.

3.2. Data Collection

The primary data for this research is collected from the interpreting transcripts of three important events in 2023 and 2024. These transcripts serve as the basis for identifying culture-loaded expressions and analyzing the strategies employed by diplomatic interpreters in translating them. The data collection process involves a systematic examination of the linguistic and cultural aspects of the interpretations. The data analysis process will follow a case analysis approach. Initially, the transcripts will be carefully reviewed to identify instances of culture-loaded expressions. These expressions will be coded and categorized based on their cultural significance and the challenges they present in the translation process. The analysis focuses on the strategies employed by diplomatic interpreters to accurately convey the cultural nuances and connotations. The analysis involves identifying patterns, themes, and variations in the translation strategies used. The theoretical framework for this research is the three-dimensional transformations of Eco-Translatology. This framework provides a comprehensive perspective on the interplay among language, culture, and translation in diplomatic contexts. It offers a theoretical lens to examine the strategies employed by diplomatic interpreters in handling culture-loaded expressions and sheds light on the complexities of diplomatic interpreting. In terms of data collection, the author of this article successfully found the Chinese texts of three cases, as well as the transcripts of on-site interpretations.

4. Analysis of Strategies in Translating Culture-Loaded Expressions

4.1. Culture-Loaded Expressions in Three Cases

This part summarizes the culture-loaded expressions in three cases as the basis for detailed case analysis. The first case is the press conference addressed by Premier Li Qiang in 2023. The second case is the address called “Seeking Development Through Solidarity and Cooperation and Shouldering Our Responsibility for Peace” delivered by President Xi Jinping at the 15th BRICS Summit. The third case is the special address made by Premier Li Qiang at the opening ceremony of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2024.

4.1.1. Culture-Loaded Expressions in Case One

The press conference held by the Premier of the People’s Republic of China takes place during the annual sessions of the National People’s Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), commonly known as the “Two Sessions”. During this period, the Premier of the State Council of China usually holds a press conference to address and interact with the media,

providing interpretations and discussions on the government work report, major policies, etc. Given to the limited space, some of the most representative culture-loaded expressions in this address are listed below (See **Table 2**).

Table 2. Culture-loaded expressions in case one.

| Culture-Loaded Expressions in Case one in Source Language |
|---|
| 1. 我们始终坚持 人民至上、生命至上 。 |
| 2. 两岸同胞是一家人， 血浓于水，打断骨头连着筋 。 |
| 3. 做好“三农”工作、推进乡村振兴 。 |
| 4. 中国地域辽阔， “十里不同风、百里不同俗” 。 |
| 5. 乡土文化，不能 千村一面 。 |
| 6. 我们将抓住耕地和种子 “两个要害” 。 |
| 7. 鼓励大家多种粮， 确保 14 亿多中国人的饭碗牢牢端在自己手中 。 |
| 8. 中国依然是全球投资 高地 。 |
| 9. 要 深入基层、心入基层 ，更多地 接地气 。 |
| 10. 这几年在美国国内有些人在炒作两国“脱钩”的论调，有时还很 热 。 |
| 11. 各级政府部门和公务人员，都要有服务意识、发展意识，特别是在履行审批、管理职能时， 不能光踩刹车、不踩油门；不能尽设路障、不设路标 。 |

4.1.2. Culture-Loaded Expressions in Case Two

The 15th BRICS Summit marks the annual meeting of the leaders of the BRICS nations, which include Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The summit serves as a platform for these emerging economies to discuss and coordinate on a wide range of global issues, including economic cooperation, sustainable development, and geopolitical challenges.

In the address delivered by Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, several culture-loaded expressions are listed below (See **Table 3**).

Table 3. Culture-loaded expressions in case two.

| Culture-Loaded Expressions in Case Two in Source Language |
|---|
| 1. 金砖合作正处于 承前启后、继往开来 的关键阶段。 |
| 2. 发展是各国不可剥夺的权利，不是少数国家的 “专利” 。 |
| 3. “利莫大于治，害莫大于乱。” 当前，冷战思维阴魂不散，地缘政治形势严峻。 |
| 4. 金砖国家要弘扬 海纳百川 的精神，倡导不同文明 和平共处、和合共生 。 |
| 5. 国际规则要依据联合国宪章宗旨和原则，由大家共同书写、共同维护，不能谁的 胳膊粗、嗓门大 ，谁就说了算。 |
| 6. 和合共生、天下大同 是中华民族千百年来美好追求 |
| 7. 金砖国家要践行真正的多边主义……，反对搞 “小圈子”、“小集团” 。 |

4.1.3. Culture-Loaded Expressions in Case Three

The World Economic Forum Annual Meeting is a gathering of global leaders from business, government, academia, and civil society to address pressing economic, social, and environmental challenges facing the world.

In the address delivered by Premier Li Qiang, several culture-loaded expressions are listed below (See **Table 4**).

Table 4. Culture-loaded expressions in case three.

| Culture-Loaded Expressions in Case Three in Source Language | |
|---|---|
| 1. | 产业链供应链是经济发展的“血管系统”，任何干扰破坏，都会在世界经济大循环中形成“梗阻”、“断点”，既牺牲发展效率，又会诱发各种经济风险和社会问题。 |
| 2. | 把合作的纽带拉紧，把互惠的蛋糕做大，不断提升全球产业链供应链的稳定性，才真正符合各方共同利益。 |
| 3. | 中国历来“言必信、行必果”，是重信守诺的国家。 |
| 4. | 目前中国的中等收入群体超过 4 亿人，未来十几年将达到 8 亿人，对越来越多商品、服务的需求从“有没有”向“好不好”转变，消费升级的动能强劲。 |

4.2. Classification of Culture-Loaded Expressions in Three Cases

Under the theoretical framework of three-dimensional transformations and giving the characteristics of diplomatic interpreting, the culture-loaded expressions in these three cases can be divided into three general categories, which are the expressions related to linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions. And all of these can be divided into the following categories.

Interpreters often come across various types of culture-loaded expressions during diplomatic events. In the subsequent analysis, a detailed explanation for each category is provided (See [Table 5](#)).

Table 5. Different culture-loaded expressions in three dimensions.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Linguistic dimension | Four-character words |
| | Proverbs and idioms |
| | Colloquialisms |
| Cultural dimension | Material culture-loaded words |
| | Social culture-loaded words |
| Communicative dimension | Political expressions with Chinese characteristics |
| | Units of measurement |

4.3. Strategies in Translating Culture-Loaded Expressions from the Perspective of Three-Dimensional Transformation

This section provides a detailed analysis of the strategies used in interpreting culture-loaded expressions, focusing on three primary aspects. Firstly, the analysis explores typical examples to illustrate how interpreters manage linguistic transformations of culture-loaded expressions, examining strategies at the language level. The second part addresses terms related to material and social culture, evaluating whether the translated content effectively preserves and clarifies the cultural significance embedded in the source language. Finally, the third part focuses on expressions from the communicative dimension, particularly analyzing politically charged phrases and idioms with distinctive Chinese characteristics, to assess how they are adapted in diplomatic context.

It is worth noting that among the culture-loaded expressions selected by the author, some may belong to one or two categories at the same time. For example, “十里不同风，百里不同俗” can be regarded as a proverb and classified into a

culture-loaded expression in the language dimension for analysis. At the same time, the measurement units “十里” and “百里” in this sentence are measurement units with Chinese characteristics that can be classified into the analysis of the communicative dimension. Therefore, the author starts from the existing translations and analyzes the translation strategies and methods adopted by the translators to determine which dimension is better consistent with the culture-loaded expression in actual situation.

4.3.1. Strategies in Linguistic Dimension

Eco-Translatology emphasizes that the transformation of linguistic dimension is embodied in the adaptation and selection of language forms in different translation ecological environments [14]. The linguistic form of a language is a reflection of the connotations it carries, albeit to a certain extent. When it comes to interpretation, it becomes imperative for the translator to not only grasp the inherent connotation but also recognize the informational function embedded within the language itself. The environment, diplomatic event, is always set in official venues with political leaders. Four-character words, as a unique form of Chinese expression, is also always found in Chinese leaders' speeches. Therefore, it requires interpreters to achieve semantic and lexical transformation. In addition, idioms, proverbs and colloquialisms are also common in those speeches, which exert demand to translators to adapt to the language form of the source language, but also to convey the semantic meaning of the source language.

The author takes linguistic culture-loaded expressions to analyze firstly, with the intention of analyzing the skills and choices that the interpreters adopted, and how did the interpreters complete the transformation at linguistic dimension.

(1) Four-Character words

Four-character words provide a concise and expressive means of communication, allowing individuals to convey complex ideas or sentiments in a succinct manner. They add depth, elegance, and poetic charm to written and spoken Chinese discourse. There are a large number of four-character words in spoken Chinese discourse. In order to delve into the analysis of four-character words, the author investigates the approaches employed by interpreters to achieve effective interpretation and transformation. In this part, the author selects several salient examples from the discourses for analysis.

1) 我们始终坚持人民至上, 生命至上。

We have always **put the people and life above everything else**.

“人民至上, 生命至上” is quite common in China during COVID-19 pandemic, which not only showed the resolution that the Communist Party of China had in combating virus, but also embodied Chinese government's responsibility to Chinese people. How to translate “至上”, which means “above everything” into English is not an easy question. There is a reasonable version created by interpreters: We have always put the people and life above everything else. “Above everything else”, as a literal translation version, has specifically convey the meaning of putting people and their life first.

2) 金砖合作正处于**承前启后、继往开来**的关键阶段。

We gather at a crucial time to **build on our past achievements and open up a new future** for BRICS cooperation.

The Chinese idioms “承前启后” and “继往开来” share a similar meaning, both emphasizing continuity and progress. “承前” signifies inheriting the achievements and legacies of the past, carrying forward the contributions of previous generations, while “启后” highlights inspiring and paving the way for future generations. In his speech, President Xi underscored the importance of BRICS building on past achievements while seizing new opportunities for development. These two idioms are structurally identical and semantically aligned, making literal translation an appropriate choice to preserve their original grammatical and rhetorical balance. While Chinese emphasizes parataxis and English relies on hypotaxis, the interpreter bridged the linguistic gap by integrating the meanings and connecting the two phrases with “and.” The use of “build on” effectively conveys the dual actions of inheriting (承) and advancing (继), maintaining the idioms’ essence. Ultimately, the interpreter skillfully respected the linguistic differences and ensured the audience could grasp the nuanced meaning, successfully achieving a transformation at the linguistic level.

(2) Idioms and proverbs

1) 中国历来“**言必信，行必果**”，是重信守诺的国家。

China is a country that **attaches great importance to commitments**, honoring its words with concrete actions all along.

“言必信，行必果” is an idiom that originates from ancient Chinese, which means a person cherishes his promises, and delivers outcomes no matter what he does. But its unique contrasting format makes it difficult for interpreters to directly find the corresponding format and content in the target language. Therefore, the interpreter adopted free translation to convey its meaning. By using “attach great importance to”, the version clearly delivers the meaning behind this sentence, although there is no word that conveys the meaning “cherish” or “treasure”. What’s more, “重信守诺” shares the same meaning as “言必信，行必果”, under this circumstance, it’s advisable to omit one of repetition to make the translation concise while to the point.

(3) Colloquialisms

Colloquialisms in political speeches can serve several purposes. It can help to humanize leaders and make them appear more approachable and relatable to the general public. It can also create a sense of camaraderie and solidarity by using language that resonates with the experiences and concerns of the audience.

1) 政府鼓励大家多种粮，**确保 14 亿多中国人的饭碗牢牢端在自己手中**。

We encourage our farmers to produce more grain so as to make sure that **the rice bowl of the over 1.4 billion Chinese people will always be firmly held in our own hands**.

The original expression “确保 14 亿多中国人的饭碗牢牢端在自己手中” conveys the importance of ensuring the livelihood and well-being of the vast

population in China. The phrase “饭碗” (rice bowl) symbolizes sustenance, food security, and the basic needs of the people. The expression emphasizes the responsibility and commitment to safeguarding the people’s livelihoods and ensuring their basic food security. The interpreter here chose literal translation to deliver the main idea of this sentence. It not only specifically conveyed the determination to ensure food security of Chinese people, but also made this colloquialism clear and easy for the audience to understand.

2) 这几年在美国国内有些人在炒作两国“脱钩”的论调，有时还很热。

In recent years, some in the US have been **trumpeting** the idea of decoupling from China. And sometimes it could become quite a **hot topic** on the media.

“炒作”and “热” are colloquialisms in Chinese. The term “trumpeting” in the interpretation conveys the idea of advocating or emphasizing the viewpoint. And the translation of “热” into “hot” is a simplification and adaptation made by the interpreter in order to make the translation more understandable for the audiences. The original Chinese term “热” has a broader range of meanings than its English counterpart “hot” . It refers to concepts such as popularity, enthusiasm, intensity, or fervor, depending on the context.

By translating “热” into “hot,” the interpreter simplifies the translation and conveys the general sense of intensity or popularity associated with the original term. This adaptation helps to make the translation more accessible and relatable to English-speaking audiences who may not be familiar with the specific connotations of the Chinese term. In a word, the interpreter used the skill of adaptation to translate “热” as “hot” in order to effectively convey the sense of intensity or popularity associated with the original term. This adaptation makes the translation more understandable for the audiences by using a widely recognized English word.

From the above analysis, it can be therefore concluded that, firstly, for some four-character words in Chinese that can correspond to English meanings, the interpreter adopts a literal translation method and ensures that the translation is as foreign as possible. Thirdly, when it comes to colloquialisms, the interpreter adopted literal translation to deliver its meaning due to the fact that it has already been easily understood and informal in source language. Under this circumstance, literal translation not only adapts to the language form of original language but also successfully expresses its conversancy in semantic meaning.

4.3.2. Strategies in Cultural Dimension

Culture, as a significant term in everyone’s life, influences the whole society in terms of everything. It is emphasized the significance of cultural connotations in translation [3]. As one dimension in three-dimensional transformation theory, the cultural dimension should not be overlooked. Therefore, in this part, the author will take two types of transformation at cultural dimension, which are material culture-loaded expressions and social culture-loaded expressions to further analyze the skills and methods that the interpreters adopted in diplomatic interpreting.

(1) Interpretation of material culture-loaded expressions

As mentioned before, the material culture-loaded expressions mainly include some words related to people's daily life, like food, transportation, cloth, etc. Under this circumstance, metaphor is a common figure of speech.

1) 产业链供应链是经济发展的“血管系统”，任何干扰破坏，都会在世界经济大循环中形成“梗阻”、“断点”，既牺牲发展效率，又会诱发各种经济风险和社会问题。

As we all know, industrial and supply chains in the economy **are like the circulatory system of the human body**. Any obstacles or disruptions can **slow down or block** the flow of lifeblood of the world economy, which not only compromises development efficiency but also triggers various economic risks and social problems.

Premier Li compared industrial and supply chains to circulatory system of the human body. However, in the source language, there are no corresponding content. If the interpreter just adopts literal translation to handle this sentence, which means giving up “in the economy”, “the human body” it would be difficult for the audiences to understand the “circulatory system”. In addition, “梗阻” and “断点” are nouns, the interpreter adopted “slow down” and “block”, as two verbs to interpret. These metaphors highlight the interconnection and interdependence of various sectors and components within the economy, emphasizing the potential consequences of disruptions. The interpreter recognized that the metaphor of the “circulatory system” may not be immediately familiar to the English-speaking audience. By adding complement and explanation to the metaphor and transferring the gender of words, the interpreter bridged the cultural gap and ensures that the metaphor is easily comprehensible to the target audience.

2) 各级政府部门和公务人员，都要有服务意识、发展意识，特别是在履行审批、管理职能时，不能光踩刹车、不踩油门；不能尽设路障、不设路标。

Government departments at all levels and civil servants must be conscious of their duty to serve the people and promote the country's development. In particular, when exercising approval and management responsibilities, the relevant government departments should **not just slam on the brake, but also hit on the accelerator**. They should not just **set up roadblocks**, but also **put up road signs**.

It is common that the connotation of cultural images is different in two languages. It requires interpreters to replace the original cultural image in order to help the audience understand better. However, in this sentence, “刹车” “油门” and “路障” “路标” are also familiar cultural images in English language. Therefore, it is reasonable that the interpreter chose literal translation here. Because under this circumstance, the audience could understand these connotations. In a word, the interpreter is suggested to shift between literal translation and free translation on the basis of specific metaphor.

(2) Interpretation of social culture-loaded expressions

Just as mentioned before, social culture-loaded expressions refer to words or phrases that bear substantial cultural and societal implications. In this part, the

author will choose old sayings or some familiar ancient poems that president Xi and premier Li quoted in their speeches.

1) 和合共生，天下大同是中华民族千百年来美好追求。

Similarly, **harmonious coexistence** has been the aspiration of the Chinese nation for thousands of years.

“天下大同” is an obvious Chinese culture-loaded expression that comes from *Book of Rites*, which is an ancient Chinese classic. If the interpreter just literally translates this phrase, it would be “everything in this world has no difference”. However, this version cannot transfer its original meaning of “universal harmony” in Chinese. At the same time, “和合共生” shares similar meaning with “天下大同”. Therefore, the interpreter here correctly adopts free translation to convey the meaning of these two expressions. By interpreting it into “harmonious coexistence”, the interpretation version not only helps the audience understand these two phrases but also shows China’s willingness to safeguard peace and aspiration to keep harmonious coexistence with other countries on the journey to prosperity.

Through the above analysis of culture-loaded expressions in cultural dimension, it’s clear that whether it is the material culture-loaded expression or social culture-loaded expression, it reflects a strong Chinese cultural characteristics and unique cultural background as well as connotation behind it. Therefore, literal translation is not appropriate here. Metaphors, as a large part of material-level expressions, require interpreters to convert words or further explain words. Therefore, when interpreting culture-loaded expressions at cultural dimension, the method of free translation is more effective and widely adopted. In terms of social culture-loaded, ancient Chinese poems cannot be interpreted word by word, otherwise it will lose its sense of beauty and profound semantic meaning. Thus, free translation as well as culture substitution are suggested to be adopted to cater the language behavior of target language audience and make compensation for the gap between cultural connotations existed in different cultures. However, if in a specific context, the ontology and the vehicle have the same cultural connotations and extended meanings in different cultures, they only need to be translated literally in that context. But this situation is not commonly seen in diplomatic interpreting.

4.3.3. Strategies in Communicative Dimension

Communication is the process of transferring information, ideas, thoughts, or feelings between individuals or groups. It is a fundamental aspect of human interaction and plays a crucial role in various aspects of life, including personal relationships, business transactions, education, and social interactions. In this part, the author took political expressions with Chinese characteristics, units of measurement and further explanation of Chinese expressions as examples to further illustrate how interpreters successfully achieve effective communication through the transformation at communicative dimension.

(1) Interpretation of political expressions with Chinese characteristics

“Political expressions with Chinese characteristics” refer to the unique political ideologies, concepts, and strategies that have emerged in the context of China’s political system and cultural background. These expressions often reflect the principles and policies advocated by the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese government.

1) 在去年底召开的中央农村工作会议上，习近平总书记对建设农业强国、做好“三农”工作、推进乡村振兴作出了全面部署。

During the Central Rural Work Conference held late last year, General Secretary Xi Jinping made comprehensive instructions on building a strong agriculture, **advancing work relating to agriculture, rural development and farmers, and promoting rural revitalization.**

In this sentence, “建设农业强国” “做好‘三农’工作” and “乡村振兴” are expressions in socialism with Chinese characteristics due to unique national conditions in China. Firstly, “建设农业强国” means building an agricultural leading country. However, the word “country” is always omitted in English. For example, when translate “经济体” or “经济大国” into English, the translator always tends to use “economy” or “major economy” instead of “major economic country”, because this kind of expression is more common and authentic in English. Therefore, the interpreter here adopted domestication strategies to ensure the target language audiences can easily understand the meaning within their cultural backdrop. Secondly, the abbreviations of Chinese policies are also commonly existed, and they are always in the form of “number” plus the center word, for example, “四个意识” and “四个自信”. “三农问题” refers to issues related to agriculture, farmers and rural areas. If it is interpreted as “three agricultural issues”, the audiences will be confused if they do not understand the national conditions of China. Therefore, the interpreter here adopted the method of interpreting the source material with extra explanation. Both languages involved in translation are products of culture, and the motivation and influence of translation activities are driven by culture [12]. Those political expressions can be deemed as Chinese social culture. Interpreting these expressions need the interpreter to choose appropriate methods.

2) 特别是长期在大机关工作的年轻同志，要**深入基层、心入基层**，更多地**接地气**。

In particular, young people working in government ministries should reach out to the people, **keep people’s needs and interests close to their heart**, and **be down to earth** in their work.

In most cases, interpreters were taken as invisible men or women who should act like the channel that convey the message from one language to another [15]. However, in diplomatic interpreting, the interpreter is suggested to participate in the conversation by further “interpret” the special meaning of Chinese political expressions. For example, in this case, “大机关” “深入基层、心入基层” and “接地气” are Chinese political expressions. “接地气” is literally translated into “receive/accept the earth’s aura” and is used to describe someone or something that

is in touch with the grassroots, down-to-earth, or connected to the everyday concerns of the common people. In translation, it is rendered as “be down to earth in their work,” which effectively conveys the intended meaning. Similarly, the literal meaning of “深入基层，心入基层” is going deeply into the grassroots and put one’s hearts in the grassroots. The translation “keep people’s needs and interests closed to their heart” accurately conveys the intended meaning. Therefore, it can be concluded that when encountering these culture-loaded expressions, free interpretation should be adopted as the priority to convey the meaning.

(2) Interpretation of units of measurement

It is universally acknowledged that units of measurement are commonly used in Chinese, ranging from some proverbs and idioms, for example “半斤八两” “十拿九稳”, even to people’s name or location name like “七里塘” “八里河”, etc. In this part, the author aims at analyzing those units of measurement that exist in diplomatic interpreting, and the method that the interpreter adopted to dispose it.

1) 中国地域辽阔，“十里不同风、百里不同俗”，要因因地制宜，打造各具特色的乡村风貌

China is a vast country. **Cultures and customs vary from village to village, even though they are just miles apart.**

2) 乡土文化，不能千村一面

We should avoid a situation where **all villages look the same.**

“里” is a unique unit of measurement in Chinese. “一里” is approximately five hundred meters. In this sentence, “十里” and “百里” are not the exact distance of five thousand meters or 5 kilometers. Actually, it implies that regional differences exist even in close proximity. The translation “cultures and customs vary from village to village, even though they are just miles apart” effectively conveys this idea of diversity and regional variation. It emphasizes the diversity of customs and traditions across different regions, which effectively communicates the message that cultures and customs can differ significantly even over short distances.

In diplomatic interpretation, culture-loaded expressions at communicative dimension are primarily translated using free translation, supplemented by amplification or reduction strategies to accurately convey the original meaning. Expressions related to Chinese politics, particularly those linked to socialism with Chinese characteristics, are best rendered through free translation. When this approach falls short, amplification provided. Similarly, Chinese-specific units of measurement should prioritize meaning over foreignization to ensure clarity. Interpreters may also use domestication strategies, cultural equivalents, and explanations to make the translation more accessible and culturally relevant to the target audience, thus facilitating effective cross-cultural communication in diplomatic contexts.

4.4. Strategic Differences between Domestic and International Events

The analysis of interpretation strategies reveals notable distinctions between

international and domestic political contexts. In international settings, interpreters prioritize neutrality, diplomatic sensitivity, and clarity to ensure messages are accessible and respectful to diverse audiences while avoiding cultural or political misinterpretations. For instance, terms like “human rights” or “core socialist values” are carefully rendered to maintain diplomatic balance, with culturally specific references explained or omitted when necessary.

Conversely, in domestic political contexts, interpretation emphasizes ideological alignment and cultural resonance. Interpreters align closely with national narratives, highlighting political objectives, social values, and cultural significance. Phrases like “Chinese Dream” or “major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics” are interpreted to reinforce the national agenda, often with less adaptation for global audiences. Persuasive and rhetorical language is frequently employed to inspire patriotism and foster national unity. These differences reflect the contrasting priorities in each context: neutrality and clarity in international discourse versus ideological reinforcement and cultural resonance in domestic communication.

5. Conclusions

This research, from the perspective of three-dimensional transformation in Eco-Translatology, mainly focuses on the interpreting of culture-loaded expressions from the linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions in diplomatic occasions, which reveals the fact that interpreting needs continuous adaptation and selection through the analysis of three cases. In this part, the author presents major findings of the research, its contribution and its limitations.

In this research, the author analyzes the strategies adopted by the interpreters in interpreting culture-loaded expressions based on the theory of three-dimensional transformations of Eco-Translatology. And these three different situations require interpreters to flexibly adopt three different methods.

From the case analysis above, this paper mainly selects three kinds of culture-loaded expressions in linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions. Interpreters adopted both literal translation and free translation to handle the source language. To sum up, when encountering culture-loaded expressions at the linguistic dimension in diplomatic interpreting, it is suggested to adopt both literal translation and free translation with literal translation as a mainstay, to reach the balance between language form and its semantic meaning. Secondly, when encountering culture-loaded expressions at a cultural level, interpreters still need to make quick and accurate choices between literal translation and free translation. In most cases, free translation is the main approach, with literal translation as the second choice. In terms of translation strategies of culture-loaded expressions in the communicative dimension, in most cases, free translation is adopted. For some distinctive Chinese expressions, the interpreters should also provide corresponding explanations.

According to the three-dimensional transformation theory, language, culture,

and communication are intrinsically interconnected, influencing and transforming one another. This theory provides robust explanatory power for handling culture-loaded expressions in diplomatic interpreting, offering interpreters comprehensive theoretical guidance. Interpreters must adapt their strategies across the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions, with different expressions often aligning with specific dimensions or involving cross-dimensional considerations. Furthermore, the application of this theory facilitates global understanding of contemporary China, supports the international dissemination of traditional Chinese culture, and contributes to enhancing Sino-foreign communication, advancing the construction of a shared future for humanity and the realization of China's national rejuvenation.

There are still some limitations in this study.

Firstly, this study is completed through case analysis. It chose three discourses delivered by President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang. Only some salient examples are selected for analysis. What's more, some culture-loaded expressions can be put in two categories and analyzed from two perspectives. Therefore, it is hard for the author to choose from which perspective this kind of culture-loaded expression should be analyzed. The author mainly analyzes the interpreter's translation version to determine which dimension the strategies and skills used in the interpretation are closer to, thereby classifying these culture-loaded expressions that can be applied to two dimensions. Due to space limitations, the author did not conduct a more in-depth comparative analysis and research on these culturally loaded words. But this content is of great value for future research. What's more, in diplomatic interpretation, there are a number of Chinese culture-loaded expressions that neither free nor literal translation fully captures cultural nuances. In this case, interpreters often try to adopt hybrid strategies, like adding explanations. However, in the selected corpus analyzed in this paper, the translation of this category of culture-loaded expression is not addressed, which can serve as a direction for future research.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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