

A study on the English Translation of China's Eco-civilization Keywords from the Perspective of Eco-Translatology: A Case Study of Xi Jinping: The Governance of China III

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Abstract

From the perspective of Eco-Translatology, the translator plays a leading role in the translation process and is required to make adaptive choices from the three-dimensional transformation perspective. This article aims to clarify its precise meaning in a professional context, interpret its deep significance in light of the development of the times, and explore the Chinese cultural connotations it contains. By analyzing the various elements of the translation ecological environment in detail and using specific translation cases, it explains how to make adaptive choices in the three-dimensional transformation strategy when facing different types of ecological civilization keywords, in order to achieve the best fit of the translation in the target ecological environment.

Keywords

China's Eco-Civilization Keywords; Eco-Translatology; Xi Jinping: The Governance of China III

1. Introduction

In the context of globalization, China's ecological civilization has emerged as a significant concept that reflects the nation's commitment to sustainable development and environmental protection. The translation of keywords related to China's ecological civilization into English plays a crucial role in promoting cross-cultural understanding and facilitating international dialogue on ecological issues. However, these translations often encounter challenges due to the profound cultural, philosophical, and political connotations embedded in the original Chinese terminology.

Eco-Translatology, an innovative theory introduced by Professor Hu Gengshen

(2004), offers a novel perspective in the realm of translation studies. It posits that translation should not be viewed merely as a linguistic exercise but rather as an ecological endeavor that emphasizes adaptability and meticulous selection within a well-defined translational eco-environment. This groundbreaking approach acknowledges the complexities involved in translating not only words but also the cultural and contextual nuances that accompany them.

This comprehensive study focuses on the English renditions of keywords related to China's ecological civilization, as articulated in the influential book Xi Jinping: The Governance of China III. This extensive volume encapsulates the nation's political ideologies and ecological aspirations, rendering it a rich source for our analysis. The selected words and expressions are of significant importance as they reflect China's commitment to sustainable development and its global advocacy for an ecological civilization. Eco-Translatology, whose roots can be traced back to Hu Gengshen's works from 2004, provides a robust methodological framework for addressing the complexities inherent in translating such terminology. The theory views translation as a dynamic and responsive process that requires "adaptation and selection" within the unique eco-environment of translation. This holistic perspective highlights the interrelation of linguistic precision, cultural sensitivity, and clarity of communication.

In an era where environmental sustainability has emerged as a critical global concern and China plays a pivotal role in promoting its vision of ecological civilization, the accurate translation of relevant terminology is essential. Such translations not only bridge linguistic differences but also ensure that both the philosophical principles and practical foundations underpinning this civilization are effectively communicated to a broader international audience.

This study establishes a systematic analytical framework grounded in Eco-Translatology to investigate the English translation of key words and expressions associated with China's ecological civilization. First, it delves into the theoretical principles of Eco-Translatology, particularly emphasizing the translator's adaptability and the ecological balance within the translation ecosystem, as well as how these principles can be applied to interpret the inherent linguistic, cultural, and communicative complexities embedded in these key terms. Building on this foundation, the study categorizes the lexical and semantic characteristics of the terms and identifies their unique challenges across professional, temporal, and cultural dimensions. Finally, this paper synthesizes these insights and proposes contextual optimization strategies to recalibrate the ideological essence of the source text with the receptiveness of the target audience, offering refined translation strategies that enhance the accuracy, cultural resonance, and global effectiveness of China's ecological discourse.

2. Theoretical Framework

Eco-Translatology, introduced by Chinese scholar Hu Gengshen in 2004, conceptualizes translation as an ecological process that integrates Darwinian adaptation theory, traditional Chinese ecological philosophy, and modern holistic ecology. Central to this framework is the notion of a “translational eco-environment”, a dynamic system wherein translators mediate interactions among source texts, target cultures, and sociopolitical contexts. The theory underscores the translator’s role as an adaptive agent who balances fidelity to the source material with the requirements of the target ecosystem. Across its three developmental phases—foundational, interdisciplinary, and global—it has established key principles such as the “adaptation-selection mechanism” and “three-dimensional transformation” (involving linguistic, cultural, and communicative adjustments). By emphasizing “purposeful translation”, Eco-Translatology connects Eastern ecological wisdom with global translation studies, cementing its position as China’s first indigenous translation theory.

2.1. Development of Eco-Translatology

Eco-Translatology was proposed by Hu Gengshen, in his seminal presentation at the 3rd FIT Asian Translators’ Forum in 2001 (Hu Gengshen, 2008). Formally defined as “an ecological approach to translation studies that integrates Darwinian adaptation theory, traditional Chinese ecological philosophy, and modern ecological holism” (Hu Gengshen, 2011), the paradigm reframes translation as a dynamic ecosystem where linguistic, cultural, and ideological elements interact. Hu’s 2004 monograph *Translation as Adaptation and Selection* solidified its theoretical foundation, arguing that “translation is not merely text transfer but a process of survival and adaptation within a translational eco-environment” (Hu Gengshen, 2004). This eco-centric perspective diverges from Western functionalist models by prioritizing “harmony between source-text fidelity and target-environment vitality” (Hu Gengshen, 2004). The theory evolved through three distinct phases. Formative Phase (2001–2008): Hu’s initial framework emphasized “translator dominance” and “adaptation-selection mechanisms”, drawing analogies between Darwinian evolution and cross-cultural mediation (Hu Gengshen, 2004). Key works like *Interpretations of Eco-Translatology* introduced the “translational eco-environment” concept, framing translators as “stewards balancing source-text DNA and target-reader ecosystems” (Hu Gengshen, 2008).

Consolidation Phase (2009–2017): The theory expanded into nine interdisciplinary “research focus”, including “translator-community ecology” and “post-translation accountability”. Institutional milestones included the founding of the International Association for Eco-Translatology Research and empirical studies applying the framework to literary translation.

Internationalization Phase (2018–present): Hu’s 2020 monograph *Eco-Translatology: Towards an Eco-Paradigm* systematized the theory for global

audiences, emphasizing “three paradigmatic traits: practicalness, openness, and universality” (Hu Gengshen, 2020).

Eco-Translatology’s core constructs include: Translational Eco-Environment, which defined as “the interactive system encompassing source/target texts, translator communities, and sociopolitical constraints” (Hu Gengshen, 2013), this concept mandates translators to assess “linguistic norms, cultural taboos, and ideological acceptability” holistically (Hu Gengshen, 2013). Adaptation-Selection Mechanism: Rooted in Darwinism, this principle posits that “translators selectively adapt to source-text ecology while adaptively restructuring target-text ecology” (Hu Gengshen, 2013).

2.2. Three-Dimensional Transformation Model

The Three-Dimensional Transformation Model, formalized by Hu Gengshen in *Eco-Translatology: Construction and Interpretation*, posits that translators mediate cross-cultural communication through tripartite adaptations: linguistic, cultural, and communicative. Hu defines this model as “a hierarchical process where linguistic adjustments form the operational surface, cultural compensations address semantic depth, and communicative restructuring ensures pragmatic viability” (Hu Gengshen, 2013).

Linguistic Dimension: The linguistic dimension in translation requires the careful adaptation of syntactic structures, lexical choices, and rhetorical devices to match target-language norms. This process is essential for achieving cross-linguistic equivalence. At the syntactic level, it means restructuring source-language patterns to align with the target language’s grammatical logic, for example, transforming implicit relationships into explicit markers to suit its cognitive frameworks. Lexical adaptation involves balancing literal accuracy with cultural nuance, bridging semantic gaps to evoke similar connotations in the target tongue. For rhetoric, the task is to recreate the original text’s aesthetic and expressive effects through the target language’s phonological, syntactic, or stylistic tools, preserving impact without rigid formal mimicry. Collectively, these adjustments balance faithfulness to the source text with respect for target-language conventions, ensuring translations convey meaning effectively while resonating pragmatically and artistically across cultures.

Cultural Dimension: The cultural dimension in translation centers on addressing cultural voids, namely situations where source-text concepts, references, or practices lack direct parallels in the target culture, through methods like explanatory footnotes or contextual paraphrasing. Explanatory footnotes serve as bridges by offering concise cultural annotations that clarify terms, traditions, or allusions unfamiliar to the target audience, allowing readers to apprehend both literal meaning and cultural context without disrupting the main text’s flow. Contextual paraphrasing, conversely, involves rephrasing source-text elements to align with the target culture’s conceptual

framework, ensuring that underlying meanings and pragmatic intents persist even when direct translation would obscure cultural relevance. As Hu emphasizes, “cultural fidelity must not fossilize meaning; adaptation ensures cross-pollination, not transplantation.” (Hu Gengshen, 2013). This perspective underscores that maintaining cultural faithfulness does not entail rigidly preserving form at the expense of meaning. Instead, adaptive strategies facilitate a process of intercultural fertilization, where ideas are exchanged and reinterpreted to resonate with the target culture while avoiding mechanical transplantation. Such an approach acknowledges that effective cultural transmission requires balancing respect for the source text’s cultural specificity with the target audience’s interpretive capacity, fostering authentic intercultural dialogue rather than superficial linguistic replication.

Communicative Dimension: The communicative dimension in translation emphasizes prioritizing functional equivalence over formal equivalence to preserve the original communicative intent, a principle that directs translators to transcend the mere transfer of linguistic information and cultural connotations. This approach requires focusing on the communicative level to ensure the target text achieves the same pragmatic effect as the source text by adapting linguistic structures, cultural references, and stylistic elements to align with the target audience’s communicative norms. Functional equivalence centers on maintaining the message’s purpose: to inform, persuade, or entertain, by recognizing that different languages employ distinct strategies to convey meaning effectively, strict adherence to formal similarity such as word-for-word translation often hinders rather than facilitates understanding. “This adaptive selection and transformation in the communicative dimension requires the translator to focus on the communicative level beyond the transfer of linguistic information and cultural connotations, ensuring that the original communicative intent is preserved and effectively realized in the target text” (Hu Gengshen, 2013). This insight highlights the translator’s role as a mediator who balances fidelity to the source text with the need to make the message accessible in the target context, prioritizing how the text functions and is received over rigid structural correspondence. By emphasizing functional equivalence, translators bridge communicative gaps, ensuring the core intent, such as rhetorical, persuasive, or expressive, resonates with the target audience as intended and enabling meaningful interlingual communication.

3. Categorization and Features of China’s Ecological Civilization Keywords in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China III*

To better understand the diverse connotations and translation implications of China’s ecological civilization keywords, a detailed categorization is essential. Among these categories, there are philosophical, policy-related and cultural ones. All these vividly illustrate the uniqueness of the key terms in the philosophy of

ecological civilization. The examples discussed in this section are all drawn from *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China III*.

3.1. Philosophical Category

The philosophical underpinnings of China's ecological civilization are deeply rooted in traditional wisdom and modern theoretical innovation, emphasizing a fundamental redefinition of the human-nature relationship. This category is characterized by ideological synthesis and practical orientation, as follows:

Holistic view. It emphasizes that man and nature form an organic whole. For example, the key concept "life community of mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, grasslands, and deserts" (山水林田湖草沙生命共同体) reflects the view of regarding the entire ecosystem as an interconnected and interacting whole. It opposes the isolated treatment of natural elements and requires comprehensive consideration of all elements in the construction of ecological civilization, carrying out systematic protection and restoration.

Dialectical view. For instance, the concept of "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets" (绿水青山就是金山银山) embodies a dialectical understanding of the relationship between ecological protection and economic development. It not only recognizes the contradiction between ecological protection and economic development but also acknowledges the interdependent and mutually transformative relationship between the two. Through reasonable policies and measures, it is possible to achieve the unity of ecological and economic benefits.

Law-based view. Keywords such as "ecological protection red line" (生态保护红线) reflect respect for the laws of nature. It is recognized that the ecosystem has its own operating laws, and human activities must be carried out within the carrying capacity of the ecosystem. One should not violate the laws of nature to ensure the stability and balance of the ecosystem.

Value outlook. The keywords of ecological civilization contain ecological values, emphasizing the intrinsic value of nature and human beings' moral responsibility towards nature. For example, the concept of "green development" (绿色发展) not only pursues economic growth but also pays more attention to the impact of economic activities on the ecological environment. It advocates protecting the natural environment while meeting human needs, and achieving sustainable development between man and nature.

This philosophical system blends historical depth with contemporary innovation. It not only provides a value compass for ecological governance but also translates abstract ideas into actionable systems, showcasing China's unique "unity of knowledge and action" (知行合一) in building an ecological civilization.

3.2. Political Category

Political category keywords in China's ecological civilization exhibit distinct

state-led authority and institutional rigidity, combining normative terminology to enforce policy stringency with rhetorical strategies that legitimize ecological governance. Its defining features include:

Symbolic use of guiding terminology. This is realized by using strategic labeling. Phrases like “Five-Sphere Integrated Plan” (五位一体) and “Beautiful China” (美丽中国) integrate ecological goals into the national development framework, solidifying political consensus. Terms like “Dual Carbon Goals” (双碳目标) (peaking emissions by 2030, carbon neutrality by 2060) use numerical deadlines to emphasize policy inflexibility, with “30-60 Targets” becoming a core symbol in international climate negotiations.

Imperative and mobilizing rhetoric. This is characterized with verb-driven structures or war metaphors. For example, high-frequency verb phrases like “strictly control” (严格管控), “resolutely implement” (坚决执行), and “completely prohibit” (全面禁止) underscore policy rigidity. For example, the “Yangtze River Protection Law” mandates: “No new chemical projects within one kilometer of the Yangtze’s banks.” Ecological governance is framed as “offensive battles” (攻坚战) or “defensive campaigns” (保卫战) (e.g., “Blue Sky Defense Campaign”), creating urgency and collective action.

Institutionalized abbreviations. This is reflected in agency acronyms and coded policy frameworks. Terms like “Central Environmental Inspection” (中央环保督察) streamline bureaucratic language for policy dissemination. The “1+N” framework (one overarching plan plus multiple supporting policies) exemplifies consensus-building jargon within China’s ecological institutional reforms.

3.3. Cultural Category

Keywords of cultural category integrate traditional ecological wisdom with modern values, forming a unique “Chinese-style ecological discourse system”. Their characteristics can be summarized into the following three features.

The first feature is the semantic reinterpretation of classical texts by quoting classics or modernizing ancient language. Phrases like “Tao Follows Nature” (道法自然, from Taoist Tao Te Ching) are revitalized with modern scientific meanings, as in “life community between humans and nature”. The proverb “Take in moderation, use with restraint” (取之有度, 用之有节, from Book of Rites) is repurposed into policy slogans for resource efficiency, leveraging classical authority to reinforce contemporary ethics.

The second feature is the combination of poetic expression and policy discourse by using literary imagery in policies or wordplay and puns. For instance, under the rural revitalization strategy, “picking chrysanthemums east of the fence” (采菊东篱), the pastoral scene depicted by Tao Yuanming, has evolved into a poetic expression of the construction of ecologically livable villages. All localities, relying on the landscape features of traditional villages, are creating ecological agriculture,

pastoral complexes, and developing leisure sightseeing agriculture and rural tourism. This brings the pastoral poetry in the ancient poem into reality, consolidates the spiritual strength for rural revitalization with cultural images, and makes the construction of ecological civilization and rural development complement each other. “Carbon Inclusive” (碳普惠) homophonically links “carbon” (碳) with “universal benefit” (普惠), blending technical jargon with public-friendly messaging. The third feature is the symbolic everyday narratives with the behavioral tagging or ritualized language. Initiatives like “Clean Plate Action” (光盘行动) turn frugality into a tangible practice, transforming abstract ethics into actionable habits. Phrases like “leaving green shade for future generations” (为子孙留一片绿荫) elevate tree-planting into a cultural ritual of intergenerational responsibility. Ultimately, these keywords reinterpret universal ecological values through a “Chinese lens,” avoiding Western abstraction while leveraging cultural soft power to institutionalize “ecological priority” from theory to practice.

4. Optimization Strategies from an Eco-Translatology Perspective

Against this backdrop, the following strategies are explored through practical cases across three key dimensions of Eco-Translatology: linguistic, cultural, and communicative, to illustrate adaptive translational choices in conveying ecological civilization concepts.

4.1. Linguistic Dimension

Example 1:

ST: 绿水青山就是金山银山 (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 19)。

TT: Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 25).

This translation exemplifies linguistic dimension adaptation by strategically reconfiguring the Chinese metaphor “绿水青山就是金山银山” (literally “green waters and green mountains are gold and silver mountains”) into a linguistically natural and conceptually resonant English expression: “lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets.” The translator substitutes the culturally embedded metaphor of “gold and silver mountains”—a symbol of material wealth rooted in China’s agrarian economy, with the abstract term “invaluable assets,” aligning with Western economic discourse while preserving the core idea that ecological value constitutes a form of capital. Linguistically, the transition from the concrete imagery of precious metals (“gold/silver”) to the generalized concept of “assets” enhances cross-cultural clarity, avoiding potential misinterpretations of materialism. Furthermore, the choice of “lucid” for “绿水” (green waters), rather than a literal rendering, subtly adjusts the natural imagery to conform to common English collocations while maintaining poetic parallelism through alliteration (“lucid waters and lush mountains”). The declarative structure reinforces the authoritative tone of the original, transforming a culturally specific analogy into a universally

intelligible policy statement, thereby balancing linguistic fluency with ideological fidelity.

Example 2:

ST: “天不言而四时行，地不语而百物生” (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 360)。

TT: “Heaven and earth do not speak, yet the seasons change and all things grow”. (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 418).

This example primarily demonstrates linguistic dimension adaptation through the translator's strategic reconfiguration of the classical Chinese couplet into syntactically fluent and rhetorically cohesive English, ensuring the preservation of its core philosophical essence. The original lines, “天不言而四时行，地不语而百物生”，utilize parallel structure and rhythmic precision to embody the Taoist principle of wuwei (non-action), illustrating nature's autonomous harmony. The translation synthesizes the two clauses into a unified statement (“Heaven and earth do not speak, yet the seasons change and all things grow”), employing the conjunction “yet” to articulate the intrinsic relationship between cosmic silence and ecological vitality. This syntactic refinement aligns with English conventions of concision and subordination, effectively adapting the source text's parallelism for cross-cultural coherence.

Lexically, the rendering of “四时行” as “seasons change” and “百物生” as “all things grow” introduces dynamic verbs that resonate with contemporary scientific discourse on ecological systems. The translation maintains the foundational terms “Heaven and earth” while streamlining implicit cultural nuances to prioritize universal intelligibility. By integrating these linguistic adjustments, the adapted text successfully communicates the universal theme of nature's self-regulating order, harmonizing classical Chinese poetics with modern English readability. This approach underscores how targeted linguistic strategies can enhance cross-cultural accessibility while retaining philosophical depth, exemplifying a balance between cultural authenticity and global relevance in translational practice.

4.2. Cultural Dimension

Example 3:

ST: 杀鸡取卵、竭泽而渔的发展方式走到了尽头 (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 374)。

TT: Development without thought to the future of the Earth is not a sustainable way to progress-like killing the goose that lays the golden eggs or draining the pond to get all the fish (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 435).

This example illustrates the cultural dimension of adaptation in translation. The original Chinese idioms “杀鸡取卵” (literally “killing the hen to get the eggs”) and “竭泽而渔” (literally “draining the pond to catch all the fish”) are deeply embedded in agrarian Chinese culture. To resonate with the target audience's cultural framework, the translator substitutes these idioms with their Western equivalents—“killing the goose that lays the golden eggs” (a metaphor derived from

a Greek fable widely known in English) and “draining the pond to catch all the fish”. This substitution retains the core metaphor of prioritizing short-term gains at the expense of long-term benefits while replacing culturally specific imagery with more familiar references for the target audience. Furthermore, the translator expands the phrase “走到了尽头” (reached its end) into “not a sustainable way to progress”, thereby providing clearer ideological commentary on sustainability. This addition enhances the text’s relevance and accessibility for international readers without undermining the rhetorical force of the original message. In this way, the translation effectively bridges the cultural-ideological gap between source and target audiences. The translator’s decision to replace Chinese idioms with Western equivalents aligns with the ecological balance principle of Eco-Translatology. Translators serve as mediators between source and target ecosystems, adapting to the cultural logic of the source text (such as agrarian metaphors symbolizing unsustainable exploitation) while selecting expressions that resonate effectively in the target environment. The western idioms (“killing the goose that lays the golden eggs”, “draining the pond to catch all the fish”) are not merely substitutions but ecological analogues—culturally distinct yet functionally equivalent means of conveying urgency regarding short-termism. This approach prioritizes the text’s survival in the target ecosystem, where familiarity with western fables and environmental ethics enhances the rhetorical impact of the metaphors. By integrating the core message into a culturally compatible framework, the translator optimizes the text’s fitness, ensuring that the warning against unsustainable development resonates across ecological boundaries.

Example 4:

ST: 要保障黄河长久安澜，必须紧紧抓住水沙关系调节这个“牛鼻子” (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 378)。

TT: With this in mind, we must make every effort to adjust the sediment-water ratio of the Yellow River. We need to improve sediment monitoring and resolve the problem whereby too many governments are involved in water management (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 439).

This translation exemplifies cultural dimension adaptation by converting the Chinese metaphor “牛鼻子”, a symbol from agrarian traditions where controlling a bull by the nose represents tackling key problems, into “adjust the sediment-water ratio”. The original metaphor, vivid for Chinese audiences familiar with rural practices, lacks resonance in Western contexts, so the translator prioritizes clarity through scientific terminology to preserve the core message about Yellow River governance. This choice highlights functional equivalence, balancing accessibility with authority while acknowledging the loss of rhetorical imagery.

Translating “牛鼻子” as “adjust the sediment-water ratio” demonstrates cultural-ecological adaptation within Eco-Translatology, where translators function as cross-cultural mediators in a linguistic ecosystem. The agrarian metaphor, embodying implicit knowledge about addressing critical issues through decisive

action, is unfamiliar to global readers, so the technical term aligns the text with scientific environmental discourse. This strategy of “selective survival” enhances the text’s “ecological fitness” in global contexts, ensuring the governance principle remains comprehensible. While the vividness of the original metaphor is sacrificed, the translation achieves cultural interoperability, enabling the policy’s intent to resonate across diverse contexts without undermining its functional authority.

4.3. Communicative Dimension

Example 5:

ST: 生态环境没有替代品，用之不觉，失之难存。“天地与我并生、而万物与我为一” (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 360)。

TT: There is no substitute for the current eco-environment. When we use it, we take it for granted. But once damaged, it will struggle to recover. “Heaven and earth coexist with me; all things and I are one” (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 412).

This translation exemplifies communicative dimension adaptation by strategically reconfiguring culturally specific metaphors and philosophical concepts to align with the target audience’s cognitive and ideological frameworks. The phrase “用之不觉” (“use without awareness”) is rendered as “take it for granted,” transforming an abstract observation into a relatable critique of human complacency. Similarly, “失之难存” (“once lost, survival falters”) becomes “once damaged, it will struggle to recover,” reframing ecological fragility through active, consequence-driven language that resonates with western environmental discourse. These shifts prioritize functional equivalence, emphasizing cause-effect logic and human accountability over literal fidelity.

The Taoist maxim “天地与我并生，而万物与我为一” is translated as “Heaven and earth coexist with me; all things and I are one,” retaining its literal form while contextualizing it within modern sustainability narratives. By explicitly attributing the quote to Zhuangzi·Qiwulun (Equalizing Assessments of Things), the translation anchors the ancient philosophy in its cultural origin while leveraging the dual structure of the official title—preserving the original term and explicating its core thesis (Equalizing Assessments of Things)—to balance cultural authenticity with conceptual clarity. This approach ensures that the text’s ecological urgency and philosophical depth resonate across linguistic boundaries, transforming a culturally embedded discourse into a globally intelligible call for planetary stewardship. The translator’s adaptive choices—rephrasing “用之不觉” as “take it for granted” and retaining “天地与我并生” with contextual attribution—strike a balance between cultural authenticity and target-ecosystem clarity. By transforming the original’s implicit passivity into active accountability, the translation resonates with western environmental pragmatism while selectively maintaining Taoist holism, thereby ensuring the text’s adaptability and relevance in global ecological discourse.

ST: “五位一体 ”总体布局、“ 四个全面 ”战略布局 (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 2)。

TT: the Five-sphere Integrated Plan, the Four-pronged Comprehensive Strategy (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 3).

The translation of “五位一体”总体布局 as “Five-sphere Integrated Plan” and “四个全面”战略布局 as “Four-pronged Comprehensive Strategy” exemplifies a strategic adaptive selection process within the framework of Eco-Translatology. This approach enables the translator to balance fidelity to the source text with clarity in the target context, thereby ensuring effective communication. By adapting numerical markers (“Five”, “Four”) and rephrasing culturally specific terms into spatial metaphors (“sphere”, “pronged”), this translation universalizes China’s governance framework, transforming abstract political concepts—namely economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological integration—into terminology that is globally recognizable within administrative contexts. This methodology employs functional equivalents such as “Integrated Plan” and “Comprehensive Strategy,” aligning with cross-cultural policy lexicons while prioritizing systematic coordination over literal adherence. Through selective adaptation, the translator not only preserves the core logic of governance but also enhances accessibility for international audiences. This practice exemplifies Eco-Translatology’s emphasis on maintaining textual vitality by harmonizing source intent with target-reader expectations in a dynamic linguistic ecosystem.

5. Conclusion

This article first classifies the key words in the philosophical, policy and cultural categories, and then analyzes how translators reconcile the unique translation environment in China with the practical needs of communication in the global environment. Taking the three-dimensional transformation model as the analytical framework, it seeks translation strategies under ecological translation studies to evaluate strategies such as cultural grafting, free translation, and analogical substitution, ensuring that translation terms can resonate in both Chinese and Western ecological narratives.

These cases highlight the critical integration of three key translational dimensions in cross-cultural communication. The linguistic dimension focuses on syntactic alignment, ensuring that target-language structures convey meaning clearly while adhering to grammatical norms. The cultural dimension addresses contextual disparities, reworking agrarian metaphors or adapting culturally specific concepts to resonate with global audiences without compromising their core intent. The communicative dimension prioritizes pragmatic effect, standardizing terminology into neutral, universally understandable language to maintain the text’s functional authority. By balancing linguistic accuracy, cultural relevance, and communicative effectiveness, translators craft an approach that honors both the source text’s integrity and the target audience’s needs. These strategies prioritize functional equivalence over literal fidelity, enabling China’s ecological discourse to transcend

linguistic and ideological barriers without diluting its fundamental principles. The translation of keywords of China's ecological civilization under the framework of Eco-Translatology holds significant theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it extends the application of Eco-Translatology to the field of political ecological texts, filling the gap in translation studies regarding insufficient attention to non-Western governance discourses. From a practical perspective, it provides a feasible approach for communicating China's ecological civilization to global audiences, promoting cross-cultural understanding of its sustainable development model. By coordinating cultural specificity with global relevance, it enhances China's role in international environmental dialogues while maintaining the integrity of its ecological philosophy.

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