A Genre Approach to the Translation of Political Speeches Based on a Chinese-Italian-English Trilingual Parallel Corpus

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Abstract
Using a trilingual parallel corpus, this article investigates the translation of Chinese political speeches in Italian and English, with the aim to explore cross-linguistic variations regarding translation shifts of key functional elements in the genre of political speeches. The genre-based methodology includes a rhetorical move analysis, which is used to highlight key functional elements of the genre, and a functional grammar analysis of translation shifts of the lexico-grammatical elements identified in the previous stage. The findings show that the core communicative function of the genre is “Proposing deontic statements,” and modality of obligation is essential for the realization of this rhetorical function. Afterwards, the analysis of translation shifts of deontic modality reveals that the English translation is characterized by higher modality value shifts in comparison to the Italian translation. This difference may be related to the degree of autonomy in translation choice and understanding of the communicative purposes of the translation genre. In terms of methodological implications, this functionalist approach attempts to providing insights into the communicative purposes of the translation genre by focusing on how key functional elements are translated.

Keywords
political translation, genre analysis, deontic modality, translation shift, trilingual parallel corpus

Introduction
In the context of globalization, political translation has been the subject of increasing interest in recent years. Language is essential in conducting politics (Schäffner, 2004, pp. 117–118), and political translation—as an instrument to make information available beyond national borders—plays an important role in the development of political discourse (Schäffner, 2004, p. 120), which in a prototypical sense refers to texts discussing “political ideas, beliefs, and practices of a society or some part of it” or texts that are “crucial in constituting a political community or group” (Schäffner, 2004, p. 119). In the Chinese context, the translation of political discourse is considered as an important form of “translation for international public relations” (Lv & Zhou, 2014), which is expected to help the international society understand better strategies and policies adopted by the Chinese government in the fields of politics, economics, diplomacy, culture, and so on (Huan et al., 2014, p. 5). The present study explores the functional aspects of Chinese political translation from a genre-based perspective, using a trilingual parallel corpus in Chinese, Italian, and English. The materials under investigation are the original Chinese texts of the book Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (hereafter XGC) (习近平谈治国理政) (Xi, 2014a), its Italian translation (Xi Jinping: Governare la Cina) (Xi, 2016), and its English translation (Xi, 2014b). The book consists of a series of political speeches made by the Chinese General Secretary Xi Jinping at various occasions.

Analytical toolkits developed in discourse analysis, which refers to the study of “language in use” (Brown & Yule, 1983), are often used in translation studies of political texts, such as the use of appraisal system (e.g., Li & Xu, 2018), analysis of discourse recontextualization (e.g., Zheng & Ren, 2017), the use of transitivity and agency system (e.g., Yu & Wu, 2018), analysis of discourse metafunctions (e.g., Mahdiyan et al., 2013), and so on. However, the genre-based approach (Bhatia, 1993; Biber et al., 2007; Swales, 1981, 1990), which examines in particular the communicative purposes and the rhetorical structure of a genre, has been rarely applied in translation studies. Genre analysis emerged in the 1980s and represents an important branch of discourse analysis. The present study uses the genre-based approach to highlight core communicative functions of the genre of political speeches, with an aim to explore its key functional elements, which will be the focus for further analysis in terms of
translation shift, that is, changes occurring in a translation process. By focalizing the research on translation of key linguistic elements used to realize the discourse functions of a genre, we suggest that the integration of the functionalist approach in translation studies can shed light on how discourse functions are realized in translation and thus can provide interesting insights into translation choices which can be related to the interferences of translators with different sociocultural backgrounds.

In this study, the genre-based approach is combined with corpus analysis. Corpus-based translation studies have seen rapid development in recent years with the construction of increasing quantity of parallel corpora. Much of the literature has used bilingual corpus (e.g., Fu, 2018; Hu & Li, 2017), while studies based on trilingual or multilingual parallel corpus are still underdeveloped. Current works related to trilingual or multilingual parallel corpus concern mainly methods for corpus construction and have a focus on the development of natural language processing, corpus-based translation studies, and contrastive linguistics (e.g., Dimitrova et al., 2014; Iruskietra et al., 2015; Miletic et al., 2017; Zeroual & Lakhouaja, in press), while the discourse-analytic approach focusing on real language use in particular genres is rarely found. Moreover, the language pair involving the English language has been a prevailing research subject in corpus-based translation studies (e.g., Chen, 2019; Choi, 2019; Fu, 2018; Labrador, 2016; Veroz, 2017), while other language pairs, such as Chinese-Italian, are much less investigated. Based on a trilingual parallel corpus, the present study investigates the language pairs of Chinese-Italian and Chinese-English from a comparative and descriptive perspective.

The next section discusses the genre approach in translation studies, followed by an overview on studies of political translation. Afterwards, a presentation of the theoretical framework based on move analysis (Bhatia, 1993; Biber et al., 2007; Swales, 1981, 1990) and functional grammar approach (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) of translation shifts is provided, introducing the research questions of the present study. The section of corpora and methods provides a detailed description on the information of the corpora under investigation, the use of corpus tools, and the analytical procedures conducted for the research purpose of this study. The subsequent section presents findings related to the move analysis and the analysis of translation shifts from a comparative perspective, followed by a discussion of these findings. The final section provides concluding remarks and describes the practical and methodological implications of the present study.

**Genre Perspective in Translation Studies**

Functionalist and communicative approaches began to emerge in translation studies in the 1970s, going beyond the traditional narrow linguistic approach. Translations were then examined from the perspective of genre or text type with specific genre features and communicative purposes. One of the most notable theory developed in this period is the Skopos theory (skopos in Greek means “purpose”), which was introduced by Vermeer into translation theory in the 1970s. The Skopos theory regards translation as a specific kind of communicative action with specific purpose and suggests that translation methods are determined by the communicative purpose (Vermeer, 1989/2000). Based on genre features which are constrained by communicative purposes, Reiss (1977/1989) divides text types into four categories (i.e., informative, expressive, operative, and audiomedical) and holds that translation methods should be linked to the textual features of different text type, shedding light on the relationship between text type and translation strategies. Another categorization with a functionalist basis refers to two basic types of translation product: documentary translation and instrumental translation (Nord, 1988/1991). Documentary translation “serves as a document of a source culture communication between the author and the ST [source text] recipient” (Nord, 1988/1991, p. 72) and are often word-for-word and literal translation. Instrumental translation, on the other hand, is function-preserving and is intended to fulfill its communicative purpose with appropriate translation strategies in the target-text context. These two concepts will be referred to in the present study. To have a clear idea on the translation types, Nord (1988/1991) suggests that it is important to conduct a ST analysis to highlight the communicative function and genre features of the ST type. This represents a starting point for the genre-based translation analysis in the present study. Moreover, instead of considering translation as “a secondary or derivative language which lacks originality” (Ji, 2017, p. 54), we view the translation genre as a “highly purposed and complex system” (Ji, 2017, p. 93) which deploys a set of target audience-oriented strategies to enhance the communicative effects and to achieve specific purposes. The understanding of the specific purposes of a translation genre, however, may vary among translators with different sociocultural backgrounds.

Although translation studies saw the emergence of the concept of “genre” since the 1970s, it has rarely applied genre theories and methods developed within the field of discourse analysis. Genre analysis is “a way of analysing, interpreting, and accounting for some of the discursive actions taking place in specific academic and professional contexts” (Bhatia & Nodoushan, 2015, p. 22) and has developed several widely used methods such as the approach of “Generic Structural Potential” (Hasan, 1989, 1996), the new rhetoric perspective (Miller, 1984), and the method of rhetorical move analysis (Bhatia, 1993; Biber et al., 2007; Swales, 1981, 1990; Upton & Cohen, 2009). The present study integrates the genre perspective with translation studies, using the method of move structure analysis. More details can be found in the section “Theoretical Framework.”
Political Translation

Political language is a language for specific purpose and has been the subject of increasing interest in recent years (Romagnuolo, 2009, p. 1). Political translation, although often overlooked in the field of politics, represents actually a form of political activity (Schäffner & Bassnett, 2010, p. 22). As argued by Schäffner (2004, p. 117), political discourse very often relies on translation, which has the function and purpose to make information available beyond national borders (Schäffner, 2004, p. 120). The motivations behind the political translation include “informing the target culture readership about a foreign country’s political event and the personality of its leader because both may have consequences for the future of other nations” (Romagnuolo, 2009, p. 23).

From a functionalist perspective, political translation can be considered as a translation genre with specific purpose. However, the communicative purposes of political translation might be understood in different ways by translators with various experiential and sociocultural backgrounds. In general, the analysis of political translation is considered as of particular relevance in the field of political discourse (Schäffner, 2004, p. 145) and is regarded as a useful tool to help understand the relationship between power and language (Gagnon, 2010, p. 253). It should be noted that, although many political translation studies tend to focus on the relationship between translation shifts and ideological manipulation, not all translation choices are made consciously and scholars should be cautious when making conclusions (Munday, 2007, p. 200). Without asking the translator, it is difficult to determine the relationship between ideological considerations and translation shifts (Gagnon, 2010, p. 255). It is perceivable however how eventual translation shifts are related to shifts of communicative effects, which can serve as an analytical perspective for a better understanding of the dynamics between translator’s considerations, ideological or not, and the realization of the communicative purposes of the translation genre.

In the Chinese context, an increasing amount of Chinese political texts are being translated into English and other languages in response to the need of international communication. In the meanwhile, among the Chinese scholarship there has been a growing amount of studies on political translation (e.g., Fu, 2018; Huang, 2004; Li, 2013; Li & Xu, 2018; Zhang, 2004). Early studies (e.g., Xiong, 1999; Y. Xu, 2000) regarded accuracy as the “overriding institutional norm governing the translation of political texts” (Li, 2013, p. 27). Recent studies (e.g., Huang, 2004; Qiu, 2018) have seen a turn on a target audience-oriented approach, responding to the need of enhancing cross-cultural understanding across national borders. Huang (2004) proposed the principle for publicity-oriented translation: “Three Accomodates,” that is, “accommodate the situations in China, accommodate needs of foreign receptors in terms of their information acquisition, accommodate the thinking patterns of foreign receptors” (Huang, 2004, p. 27; translation by Li, 2013, p. 27). This preference for the functionalist approach on political translation can also be found in scholarship beyond the Chinese context: Schäffner (2004), for example, demonstrates how literary and direct translation can bring about negative political influences toward the target language.

Although political translation studies are drawing increasing attention, most of them focus on English as target language (e.g., Fu, 2018; Li, 2013; Li & Xu, 2018). Moreover, comparative studies of political translations in two or more languages are rarely found. The present study investigates and compares the Italian and English translations of the political speeches published in the book XCG, with an aim to shed light on how different target languages engage translation strategies, which can be related to the decision-making process of translators in specific sociocultural context. The comparative analysis is based on a trilingual parallel corpus, which will be described in greater detail in the section “Corpora and Methods.”

Theoretical Framework

This study combines two levels of analysis: a rhetorical and structural analysis of the genre using the move analysis framework (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1981, 1990) assisted by a corpus-based approach (Biber et al., 2007; Upton & Cohen, 2009) and a lexico-grammatical analysis based on the approach of functional grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). This section presents a general description of the move analysis and the approach of functional grammar, while the next section will explain in greater detail how the two approaches were applied in the analytical procedures.

The method of move analysis was initiated by Swales (1981, 1990) to investigate academic genres, and was introduced later in professional settings (Bhatia, 1993). It is concerned with the identification of rhetorical moves in a genre, which is regarded as a recognizable communicative event “characterized by a set of communicative purposes” (Bhatia, 2004, p. 23). Rhetorical moves, which are definable and largely predictable functional components in a text (Biber et al., 2007, p. 32), take effect in various ways to realize the communicative purpose of the genre. Originally, the move analysis was used to identify the rhetorical pattern of a genre to provide practical guidelines for genre writing (Flowerdew, 2015, p. 102; Swales, 1990). With further development, the move analysis, combined with other methods such as lexico-grammatical analysis (e.g., Bhatia, 2008) and a corpus-based approach (e.g., Upton & Cohen, 2009), is also considered as a useful method to explore the functional and communicative aspects of a genre which can contribute to providing insights into the genre nature (e.g., Bhatia, 2008, p. 172).

In the structural analysis of a genre, moves are often categorized into two types: obligatory move, which is a core and essential element used to achieve the main communicative purpose of the genre, and optional move, which is a
complementary element and has the function in enhancing the communicative effects (e.g., Bhatia, 1993; Henry & Roseberry, 2001; Swales, 1990). Obligatory moves are considered as elements which determine the nature of a genre (Hasan, 1989, p. 62), “in the absence of which the text would not be interpreted as the genre to which the text belongs” (Ansary & Babaii, 2005, p. 215). With the aim of exploring how substantial functions of political speeches are realized in translated texts, the present study has focused on analyzing the core move of the genre under investigation. After that the core move was identified, we conducted an analysis of the lexico-grammatical elements which are used to fulfill the communicative function of the move and then investigated how these are translated in the target text and whether translation shifts take place.

The analysis shows that the substantial functional element used to realize the core move is deontic modality. The functional grammar approach of modality analysis was then integrated in the investigation of deontic shifts in translation. Functional grammar regards the interpersonal component of meaning as an essential part of communication (Halliday, 2004, pp. 28–30). Modality is one important linguistic resource in terms of interpersonal function and is used to “construe the region of uncertainty that lies between ‘yes’ and ‘no’” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 176). As argued by Badran (2001, p. 49), subjectivity is a core notion associated with modality, and a reading of modality can highlight where the language user really stands at the ideological level. Accordingly, we assume that an analysis of modality in translation can shed light on subjective and ideological considerations embedded in the translating process.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, pp. 177–182) discusses four types of modality: obligation (e.g., must), inclination (e.g., will), probability (e.g., may), and useuality (e.g., often). Probability (“possibly/probably/certainly”) and useuality (“sometimes/usually/always”) are used to construe propositions where “the meaning of the positive and negative pole is asserting and denying” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 177). Obligation (“allowed to/supposed to/required to”) and inclination (“willing to/anxious to/determined to”) are used to construe proposals where “the meaning of the positive and negative poles is prescribing and proscribing” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 177). The present study focuses on the modality of obligation, which can also be called as “deontic modality.” Modality of obligation refers to the degree of necessity, permission, command, and responsibility proposed by the language user. It communicates to the target audience to what extent an actor is “wanted to/allowed to/supposed to/required to” do an action. In terms of the modality degree, Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 693) propose the notion of “modality value,” which refers to the modal judgment: high, median, or low. However, although Halliday and Matthiessen have discussed the value of the four modality types with lists of examples, they have not specified what determines the modality value of each modality type. In the present study, the value of modality was analyzed as a main parameter of translation shift. To set a clear analytical ground, we determine the obligation value according to the degree of stress delivered to the addressee by the command or proposal of the addresser. For example, the expression “you should go” is considered to convey lower obligation value than “you must go” since the stress degree delivered by should in general is lower than must.

Based on the rhetorical move analysis of the original genre and the functional grammar approach of lexico-grammatical analysis of the two translation genres, this study addresses the following research questions:

- **RQ1.** What are the main rhetorical and functional features of the genre of Chinese political speeches?
- **RQ2.** Are there translation shifts regarding key rhetorical elements in the Italian and English translations of XCG? If translation shifts are present, are there any similarities or differences between the two target languages?
- **RQ3.** Do the translation shifts impact the communicative effects of the translation genre? Are they related to underlying considerations of translators with different sociocultural backgrounds?

### Corpora and Methods

#### Materials and Corpora

The materials include the original version of the book *XGC* (Xi, 2014a), its Italian translation (Xi, 2016), and its English translation (Xi, 2014b). The original Chinese version was published in 2014 by Foreign Language Press. It contains 79 important works of the Chinese General Secretary Xi Jinping, including his speeches, talks, addresses, answers to questions, instructions, congratulation letters and others, classified into 18 topics. It has been published in various languages and distributed overseas. Its English version is translated by a group of Chinese expert translators, while the Italian version is translated by two Italian sinologists.

The corpora used in this study include a Chinese-Italian-English trilingual parallel corpus and a Chinese corpus annotated with rhetorical moves (Table 1). The trilingual parallel corpus consists of a subcorpus of the original Chinese text of *XGC*, a subcorpus of its Italian translation, and a subcorpus of its English translation. The Chinese annotated corpus contains a sample of 18 speeches of the book, each of which is

| Corpus                                      | Number of tokens |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Chinese-Italian-English parallel corpus     | 392,153          |
| Chinese subcorpus                           | 97,952           |
| Italian subcorpus                           | 155,016          |
| English subcorpus                           | 139,185          |
| Chinese corpus annotated with moves         | 15,026           |

Table 1. Corpus Information.
the first speech of each chapter. The 18 speeches are annotated with rhetorical moves.

**Tools Used in Corpus Building and Data Processing**

The analysis was assisted by various computer programs. The procedures for corpus building and data processing include the following: (a) the original materials (Xi, 2014a, 2014b, 2016) in paper version were scanned and saved in PDF format, then digitized by using the OCR program of Abby FineReader 12 and saved in TXT format; (b) the Chinese texts were split by Segment Ant 1.1.3. into words; (c) with Abby Aligner 2.0, the Chinese texts were first aligned with the Italian texts at the sentence level, then aligned with the English texts, ensuring that the line numbers of each subcorpus were matched and parallel; (d) CUC_Paraconc, a multilingual concordance, was used to investigate the aligned texts in Chinese, Italian, and English; (e) results generated by CUC Paraconc were saved in Excel for further annotation and analysis; (f) selected texts were annotated with rhetorical moves by using NoteTab Light (Figure A1); and (g) WordSmith 7.0 (Scott, 2016) was then used to investigate the annotated texts.

**Analytical Procedures**

The analysis contains two main stages: (a) move analysis based on the Chinese corpus composed by selected texts and (b) analysis of translation shifts based on the Chinese-Italian-English parallel corpus. The two stages were conducted in six main steps (Table 2).

**Stage 1—Move analysis.** The move analysis approach (Bhatia, 1993; Biber et al., 2007 Swales, 1981, 1990) was used to examine the Chinese corpus composed by 18 political speeches (15,026 tokens in total). The first step was to identify main rhetorical moves, that is, textual components with specific communicative functions, to establish a move scheme, which serves as coding instructions for move annotation of the texts under investigation. More specifically, the move identification and annotation included the following procedures:

1. First, a close reading of selected texts was conducted to identify a possible scheme of functional move types. Then, another set of selected texts was investigated to verify the applicability of these candidate move types and to add new move types when necessary. This procedure was repeated for several times. In this procedure, we followed the *Observational Framework for Move Identification* (Yu & Bondi, 2017, p. 280), which considers the formal realizations (e.g., *lexis, grammatical structure, and textual position*) and the metafunctions (*ideational function, interpersonal function, and textual function*) of the textual segments.

2. Afterwards, the identified candidate move types with similar function were grouped to generate a concise move scheme with definitions of each move. For example, the moves “Presenting difficulties/problems” and “Describing external expectations” identified in the initial stage were grouped into the move “Describing circumstances.”

3. Pilot-coding of a set of sample texts was conducted to test the applicability of the move scheme.

4. To check the *stability* (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 211) of the move scheme, the sample texts were reanalyzed and recoded after two weeks, in order to fine-tune definitions of the moves. The *stability* check is one test design proposed by Krippendorff (2004) for reliability measurement of coding procedures, which suggests that the observer could reread, recategorize, or reanalyze the same text after some time has elapsed, to see whether there is any intraobserver inconsistency over time (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 215).

5. Using the move scheme with definitions and the *Observational Framework for Move Identification* (Yu & Bondi, 2017) as coding instructions, the sample texts were recoded by another analyst to check the *reproducibility* (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 211), which is the degree to which a test sample can be recoded in the same way by different analysts (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 215). Ambiguous cases were reanalyzed to fine-tune the move scheme. For example, initially we have identified the move “Stating missions.” The other analyst found difficulties to
distinguish it from the move “Previewing future performance.” With further consideration, we have incorporated the move “Stating missions” into the move “Previewing future performance” and fine-tuned its definition (see Table 3).

(6) When the final version of the move scheme was established (Table 3), the full set of texts under investigation was annotated to build the Chinese Corpus Annotated with Moves (see Table 1).

The annotated corpus was then processed by WordSmith 7.0 (Scott, 2016), using the function of “Only part of file” of the software, to calculate the textual size of each move in order to highlight which was the core and obligatory move and which were optional and complementary moves. Considering the extensiveness of each move and its respective local function, a sample text was then analyzed in terms of the move structure. The local function of the core move and its rhetorical relationship with other moves were discussed, providing insights into the communicative nature of the genre.

Subsequently, the step of lexico-grammatical analysis was focused on the core move to identify key functional elements used to fulfill the local communicative purpose of the move. In comparison to “traditional” move analysis studies conducted by hand (e.g., Swales, 1990), one specific advantage of a corpus-based perspective for move analysis is the identification of typical lexico-grammatical characteristics of moves (Biber et al., 2007, p. 38). The procedural details of this step are as follows:

(1) First, the frequency wordlist of the words used in the core move was investigated using the function of “WordList” of WordSmith. A frequency list of words can be a useful set of hints to the nature of a text, with which “one can get an idea of what further information would be worth acquiring” (Sinclair, 1991, p. 31).

(2) Afterwards, we identified the keywords of the move using the function of “KeyWords” of WordSmith. In corpus studies, keywords refer to words which occur significantly more frequent in a sample of text in comparison with a reference corpus (Scott & Tribble, 2006; Stubb, 2010, p. 25). As discussed extensively by Scott and Tribble (2006), keyword analysis can be used to describe text patterns and help identify subject matters in a corpus. In this study, we generated the keyword list of the core move in comparison to other moves of the genre as reference.

(3) Finally, using the function of “Concord” of WordSmith, we examined the co-occurrence of the identified keyword(s) to explore linguistic patterns which can be hints of the rhetorical function of the move.

To provide a better description of the next analytical stage, we would like to anticipate a part of the findings here. The data suggests that the core move of the genre is “Proposing deontic statements,” which is dominant in the sample corpus (see Figure 1 in the section of “Results and Findings”). The most frequent lexico-grammatical elements of the move are modal words (see Table 6), suggesting their functional importance in the genre. Accordingly, the translation of modal words will be the focus of analysis in the second analytical stage.

Stage 2—Analysis of translation shifts. This stage focuses on the translation of linguistic elements which plays an important role in realizing the communicative function of the genre. As anticipated in the description of Stage 1, the linguistic elements under investigation are the modal words. Among the modal words, 要 (equivalent to “should”) when used to express deontic modality) is most frequently used and was investigated in detail in terms of its translations in Italian and English. In the step of annotation of translation shifts, we went beyond the move and investigated the

| Tag | Move type | Description |
|-----|------------|-------------|
| DEON | Proposing deontic statements | Provides proposals and instructions or describes action plans with the aim to accomplish specific missions. |
| EPIS | Making epistemic statements | Describes a matter of fact, introduces background knowledge or states an epistemic belief. |
| STRA | Presenting strategies/practices | Presents strategies, policies, or regular practices with the aim to achieve a specific objective. |
| CIRC | Describing circumstances | Describes the economic, political, legal, or material context, highlights existing expectations, or underlines difficulties and problems. |
| HIST | Reviewing experiences/actions | Reviews relevant historical events, experiences, past actions or individual stories. |
| PERF | Presenting performance | Presents the effects or achievements of relevant actions. |
| FUTU | Previewing future performance | Makes commitments, expectations, or forward-looking statements in terms of actions to take or missions to accomplish in the future. |
| ATTI | Expressing attitude/emotion | Expresses attitude or emotion of an individual or a community, such as solidarity, gratitude, appreciation, acknowledgment, good will, and empathy. |
general parallel corpus to see how this modal element was realized in the whole translated texts. Using the functional grammar approach, the annotation was based on the value shift of the modal element yao4 and included three categories: enhanced deontic value, equivalent deontic value, and reduced deontic value. Table 4 shows the general value scale of yao4 and the main corresponding deontic expressions used in the Italian and English subcorpora.

When the annotation was completed, relevant data was generated for a comparative analysis of modality shifts in the Italian and English translations. The analysis focused on the cases of enhanced deontic value and reduced deontic value and examined in particular similarities and differences in terms of shift tendency in the two target languages. In the final step, the translation shifts were interpreted in terms of the communicative effects and discussed in consideration of the communicative purposes of the translation genre.

Results and Findings
This section is devoted to the description and discussion of results generated in the two analytical stages, that is, the move analysis and the analysis of translation shifts.

The Move Structure of the Genre of Political Speeches
Based on 18 sample speeches, the analysis has identified eight move types of the genre (see Table 3), each of which conveys a specific communicative function. A statistical analysis of the annotated corpus highlights the extensiveness of each move in the genre (Figure 1).

The extensiveness of a move can reflect its rhetorical role in the genre. As shown in Figure 1, the dominant move is “Proposing deontic statements,” occupying 45% of the textual space, indicating its fundamental role in the genre. It is used to suggest the necessity, obligation, importance, or feasibility of an action with the aim to achieve an objective. Consider, for example:

(1) 我们要坚定维护国际公平正义，维护世界和平稳定。（第十五章，“携手合作，共同发展”）
We should firmly uphold international fairness and justice, and world peace and stability. (“Work Hand in Hand for Common Development,” Chapter 15)

Example (1) is extracted from a speech addressed to BRICS leaders at the Fifth BRICS Leaders Meeting in Durban. The move uses the modal word 要 yao4 “should” to construe a deontic statement. In political discourse, deontic modality functions as expressing value-based stance and involves “the positioning of the speaker with respect to the necessity/rightness (values) concerning the realization of events” (Z. Xu, 2015, p. 248). The value-based stance can be exchanged between speaker and hearer in a deontic proposal, in which the speaker can request the listener to do something or suggest that they both do something (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 178). In Example (1), the value-based stance of the speaker is conveyed in the form of a deontic proposal, in which the speaker suggests to the hearer that they can both take action with respect to the necessity of upholding “international fairness and justice, and world peace and stability.”

The other moves, such as “Making epistemic statements,” “Presenting strategies/practices,” “Describing circumstances,” though less presented in terms of textual size, play an important role as well in constructing a dynamic rhetorical structure together with the deontic move to realize the communicative purpose of the genre. The following example (Table 5) illustrates the move structure of a speech given at a voluntary tree-planting activity in Beijing. For space limitations, only the English translation is provided.

In this speech (Table 5), Move (a) is used to present the performance of the activity “tree-planting campaign,” evaluating its impacts on “environmental protection.” Move (b), on the other hand, highlights the existing problems and difficulties in this respect (“an ecologically vulnerable country,” “scarcity of forest resources,” and “arduous mission”). Afterwards, Move (c) introduces epistemic knowledge to highlight the important role of “forests.” To conclude, Move (d) calls on the audience to act “in accordance with this requirement” to “build a beautiful China.” With different local functions, the four moves interact rhetorically with each other to realize the communicative purpose of the text. By underlining the achievement of the “tree-planting campaign,” Move (a) interpersonally contributes to encouraging the audience to keep on the activity which corresponds to the proposal made by Move (d). After the presentation of positive performance, Move (b) underlines the necessity of respective action by describing negative aspects, while Move (c) highlights the importance of “forests.” In this way, both moves contribute to supporting the statement made by Move (d), which is the core move of the speech.

The role of the deontic move suggests that the substantial communicative purpose of the genre is to call on the addressees to take an action, to follow a principle or to accomplish a mission. This discursive nature reflects also one important function of political activity: proposing action guidelines for the sake of a specific objective. The following analysis focuses on the lexicogrammatical features of the deontic move.

A rhetorical move with a specific communication function is often characterized by the use of specific lexicogrammatical elements. In addressing this linguistic aspect, we investigated the wordlist of the most frequent words in the move “Proposing deontic statements.”

Table 6 shows that the most frequent words are the grammatical words 的 de “of” and 和 he2 “and.” Among the lexical words, the most frequent one is the modal element 要 yao4 “should,” while other lexical elements such as 我们
wo3men “we,” 发展 fa1zhan3 “develop,” and 人民 ren-2min2 “people” are much less frequently used. Another frequent modal word of obligation in the move is 必须 bi4xu1 “must,” which is connoted with higher modality value respect to yao4. Furthermore, we investigated the keywords of the core move, in comparison with the second most frequent move “Making epistemic statements.” The data (Figure 2) shows that the modal word yao4 is the keyword of the move “Proposing deontic statements,” indicating that it is a linguistic element significantly related to the rhetorical theme of the move.

Subsequently we have focused on the lexico-grammatical patterns of the modal word yao4. The concordance analysis shows that yao4 co-occurs frequently with the personal pronoun wo3men “we” on the left, and words of insistence (e.g., 坚持 jian1chi2 “insist”) and words of change (e.g., 加强 jia1qiang2 “reinforce”) on the right. This linguistic pattern (e.g., we should insist, we should reinforce) conveys the
rhetorical function of “suggesting someone doing something” or “appealing someone to do something,” conforming to the communicative purpose of the move “Proposing deontic statements.” The linguistic features mentioned above (frequency, keyness, and lexical patterns) suggest that the modal word *yao4* is a key functional element which plays an important role in performing the rhetorical function of the core move of the genre. The next section will focus on the analysis of the translation of the modal element *yao4* in Italian and English.

**Modality Shifts in Italian and English**

In this stage, we first searched *yao4* in the Chinese-Italian-English parallel corpus using CUC_Paraconc, then extracted all the paralleled instances of *yao4* in original Chinese and in target Italian and English, which were saved in Excel format for annotation of modality value shifts. We picked off instances in which *yao4* is not used as a modal word of obligation, for example, when used as modality of inclination (e.g., 为什么我要强调这一点？ “Why do I want to emphasize this?”) or when used as a part of a word (e.g., 重要, “important”). The total hits of *yao4* used as modality of obligation are 918, ranking among the 10 most frequent words in the general Chinese corpus. This, again, signals the substantial role of deontic statements in the realization of the communicative purpose of the genre.

The annotated data shows that in general both the Italian and the English translations translate the majority of deontic modality with equivalent modality value, prioritizing the principle of faithfulness and accuracy for political translation. However, modality shift exists in some cases and a cross-linguistic difference can be noticed: the frequency of value shifts in Italian is lower than that in English (9.37% vs. 34.64%) (Figure 3). This difference is obvious in terms of enhanced value: in Italian only 1 instance of enhanced value was found (0.11%), while in English the frequency is 213 (23.2%). In terms of reduced value, the cases of shifts are slightly more frequent in English than in Italian.

**Enhanced modality value in translation.** In the English translation of *yao4*, the cases of enhanced value are mainly realized by the choice of the word *must* instead of the equivalent modal word *should*, except for one case where the imperative mood is used. To explore potential patterns of enhanced modal value, we used WordSmith 7.0 (Scott, 2016) to examine the lexical clusters of *must* in the parallel translated texts of *yao4* and compared them to the clusters of *should* to see...
whether there are typical cases where the use of *must* is preferred respect to *should*. The data shows that *Party members must* and *armed forces must* are two specific clusters of *must*. Consider, for example,

(2) 全党要增强紧迫感和责任感 […] (“Study, Disseminate and Implement the Guiding Principles of the 18th CPC National Congress,” Chapter 1) All Party members must heighten their sense of urgency and responsibility […] (“Study, Disseminate and Implement the Guiding Principles of the 18th CPC National Congress,” Chapter 1)

(3) 全军要深刻认识军队在国家安全和发展战略全局中的重要地位和作用 […] (“Build Up Our National Defense and Armed Forces,” Chapter 9)

The whole of the armed forces must have an in-depth understanding of the important role it has in the broad picture of China’s national security and development strategies. […] (“Build Up Our National Defense and Armed Forces,” Chapter 9)

The choice of *must* instead of *should* in the two examples has the effect of emphasizing the necessity of a specific action or an idea, which enhances the obligation stress to the addressees (i.e., *Party members* and *armed forces*). The preference of the use of enhanced deontic value toward *Party members* and *armed forces* may be due to the ideological considerations of the translators, who may consider being highly disciplined as an important quality for these two groups of audience. Although it is difficult to claim with certainty the existence of ideological considerations without asking the translators, it is observable that this modality shift contributes to realizing the communicative effect in strengthening the image of disciplined *Party members* and *armed forces* delivered to the target readers.

**Reduced modality value in translation.** The data shows that reduced modality value is mainly realized by *de-obligation*, that is, the removal of markers of obligation. Strategies of de-obligation in the present sample can be divided into two types: (a) removing the deontic marker or replacing it with non-modal expression and (b) transforming deontic modality into other modality types (e.g., modality of probability or modality of inclination). Consider, for example:

(4) 良性互动, 就是要加强沟通 […] 合情合理解决彼此间的问题。 (第十章, “从中华民族整体利益的高度把握两岸关系大局”) Per interagire positivamente è invece necessario intensificare le comunicazioni […] e risolvere in maniera equa e ragionevole le controversie tra le due parti.

Constructive interactions mean enhanced communication […] and the solving of outstanding problems in a fair and reasonable way. (“Handle Cross-Straits Relations in the Overall Interests of the Chinese Nation,” Chapter 10).

Example (4) is a statement in the talk with Wu Po-hsiung, honorary chairman of the Kuomintang of China, and his delegation. In this example, the deontic marker *yao* is removed in the English translation. A literal English translation would be “In order to interact constructively it is necessary to enhance communication.” However, the sample translation has preferred to remove the modality of obligation, reducing the obligation stress addressed to the audience. The Italian
translation, on the other hand, has preferred a literal translation and has rendered the modal marker into the equivalent expression of *é necessario* “is necessary.”

In general, the frequency of reduced modality value in English is higher in comparison to the Italian translation. This difference concerns mainly the use of the second type of de-obligation, that is, transformation of modality type, which appears frequently in the English translation but rarely occurs in Italian. In English, the modality type shift concerns mainly the substitution of obligation with inclination, which occurs 38 times (4.14%) in the sample. Expressions of inclination used to replace obligation include *we will, our desire to, aim to, be ready to,* and so on. For example:

\[(5) \text{ 要完善立法规划, 突出立法重点 […] (第五章, “坚持法治国家、法治政府、法治社会一体建设”)}
\]

È necessario perfezionare i programmi legislativi, mettere in primo piano le priorità legislative […]

We will improve legislation plans, concentrate on priorities […] (“Develop a Law-Based Country, Government and Society,” Chapter 5)

Example (5) is extracted from the speech at the fourth group study session of the Political Bureau of the 18th CPC Central Committee which Xi presided over. The English translation transforms the modality of obligation into modality of inclination by using the expression of *we will.* In this way, it substitutes the semantics of “requirement” with “commitment,” thus reducing the obligation stress. This semantic shift constructs the addressee as a commitment maker, rather than a requirement maker, which to some extent contributes to bridging the communicative distance between the addressee and the reader. The Italian translation, on the other hand, uses *è necessario* “is necessary” to translate the modal word *yao4*, maintaining the equivalent modality of obligation. Moreover, while the English translation uses the expression *we will,* the Italian translation uses the impersonal form which corresponds faithfully to the ST where the subject of the modal word *yao4* is absent.

**Discussion**

The comparative analysis has shown that the majority of modality is translated with equivalent value either in English or in Italian, suggesting that both translations put the principle of accuracy at the first place. However, translation shifts do exist, which can be accounted by generic difference between the original genre and the translation genre. Starting from a functionalist analysis of the ST, this study highlights that the core rhetorical move of the genre is “Proposing deontic statements.” It is the most extensively used move and often serves as a concluding point in the dynamic move structure, supported by and interacted with other rhetorical moves. The identification of the core move suggests that one essential communicative purpose of the genre is to encourage the audience to take an action, to follow a principle, or to accomplish a mission.

The translation genre investigated in this study, on the other hand, can be regarded as an overt translation (House, 1977/1981, p. 188), since it is not immediately relevant to the target reader as the ST is for the source language audience. In other words, it is regarded as a “translation” instead of a “second original” (Hatim, 2009, p. 43). This suggests that it would not correspond completely with the original genre in terms of communicative purpose. It differentiates from the original genre, and is not expected to have the same effect when addressed to the target reader as the source genre does in the source language context. The contextual configuration constraining the translated text has changed: the recipient, the target social culture, the text producer (author/translator), and the language system are not the same as they are for the source genre. This genre contextual change has an impact on the communicative purpose of the translation genre. It is addressed to a range of readers which are not the audience to whom the original speeches were delivered. The communicative purpose of the original genre, which is to call on the audience to take an action, is no more the most important purpose for the translation genre. For a genre expected to address international public relations, one important communicative task is to let the international society understand better the policies of the Chinese government and to enhance political understanding and mutual trust. Therefore, instead of delivering obligation stress, it is more important to communicate stance and attitude. This aim can be supported by appropriate translation shifts such as the consolidation of the image of disciplined *Party members* and *armed forces,* as well as the reduction of distance with the target reader by transforming requirement into commitment.

These specific translation strategies are found in the English translation, which, as evidenced by the lexico-grammatical analysis of deontic modality, is characterized by higher frequency of modality value shifts in comparison to the Italian translation. The modality value shifts in target English to some extent respond to the shift of communicative needs. This reflects the presence of higher flexibility in translation choices in the English translation in comparison to the Italian translation, which tends to prioritize a literal and faithful translation.

To account for the difference, it is useful to consider the sociocultural status of the translators. The English translation was completed by a group of Chinese translators and proofread by foreign experts, while the Italian translation was commissioned to Italian translators and revised by Chinese that are expert in Italian. We have had opportunities to dialogue with the Italian translators by mail and by video interview (in the following discussion we will use *they* for reference without specifying the statement of each translator). They considered both faithfulness and readability during the translation process. Although they mentioned that in some cases faithfulness
was prioritized to readability by the Chinese experts, these regard mainly the translation of culture-loaded words or political terms. When talking about the modal words, which are linguistic elements conveying subjectivity but often less noticed in translation, they claimed that they have preferred a faithful translation. For example, they would use the impersonal form è necessario (“it is necessary”) to translate yao4 when it does not have a subject in the source language, although they noticed that the English translation prefers to add a subject (e.g., we should). This is also evidenced by the data of the present study.

The Chinese translators, on the other hand, seem to be more flexible when translating modal words, implying that they might be more sensitive to the shift of communicative purpose of the translation genre. One of the translators has claimed in a paper that it is important to consider the communicative effects when translating political discourse to make the translation product more readable for the target readers, by using strategies of omission, amplification, and adaptation when necessary (Huang, 2004). The Chinese translators seem to pay more attention to the skopos of the translation, which is in line with the “Three Accomodates” principle (Huang, 2004) proposed for publicity-oriented translation. As an illustration, the replacement of obligation modality with commitment modality has the effect of shortening the interpersonal distance with the readers, which corresponds to the principle of accommodating “the thinking patterns of foreign receptors” (Huang, 2004, p. 27). The Chinese translators consider the political translation as an instrumental translation (Nord, 1988/1991), which encourages the use of appropriate translation strategies for the realization of its communicative purpose. The Italian translators, on the other hand, prefer a faithful and literal translation. This difference in terms of translation flexibility can be attributed to the level of autonomy in translation choice and the level of sensibility or understanding in terms of the communicative purpose of the translation genre, responding to RQ3. As discussed before, the Chinese translators and the Italian translators have different sociocultural status which may constrain their translating behavior in terms of linguistic, pragmatic, and ideological considerations.

Based on the analysis of a trilingual parallel corpus, this study attempts to provide practical implications for multilingual political translations. In the context of globalization, it becomes increasingly important to achieve political understanding across national borders. A growing number of political discourses are being translated in multiple languages. The findings of this study imply that translators responsible for different languages may vary in understanding the communicative purpose of the translation genre, suggesting that it is important to highlight in anticipation the functional aspects of translation genre when assigning tasks of multilingual translation of political discourse.

In terms of methodological implications, this study has shown how the genre-based approach of translation shift analysis can contribute to translation studies. This study, for the first time, has used the method of move structure analysis to identify key functional elements of the original genre, which constitutes the basis for the functionalist approach of translation shift. A focus on the translation of key functional elements is useful to shed light on the communicative purpose of the translation genre by highlighting the presence of translation strategies related to interferences of translators. This functionalist approach attempts to invite researchers to focus on the investigation of key communicative functions of a genre, which can be useful in providing practical implications for translation.

Conclusion

This research has uncovered that functional shifts in the translation genre exist and present different patterns across translation versions. Responding to RQ 1, the rhetorical move analysis has identified the core move of “Proposing deontic statements,” revealing that “proposing” is one main functional feature of the genre of political speeches. The language of the core move is characterized by the frequent use of the deontic modal word yao4 and its lexical patterns with rhetorical functions of suggesting and appealing. These findings have led to the functional grammar analysis of deontic modality shifts in target English and Italian. In addressing RQ2, the data has shown that both the English and the Italian translations in the majority of cases maintain equivalent modality of obligation of the source language. The former, however, is characterized by higher value shift than the latter, suggesting the existence of interferences made by translators with different sociocultural backgrounds. The translation strategies adopted in the English translation for modality value enhancing or reducing in some degree impact the communicative effect, adapting the translated texts to better fulfill the communicative purpose of the translation genre which is to help foreign readers understand better the social realities of China and its domestic and diplomatic policies (Zhao, 2017). The Italian translation, on the other hand, shows less presence of modality shifts, prioritizing a faithful and literal translation. This difference in terms of translation flexibility can be attributed to the level of autonomy in translation choice and the level of sensibility or understanding in terms of the communicative purpose of the translation genre, responding to RQ3. As discussed before, the Chinese translators and the Italian translators have different sociocultural status which may constrain their translating behavior in terms of linguistic, pragmatic, and ideological considerations.
Appendix

Figure A1. An example of coding.

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