

# Analysis on the Translation Methods of the Reported Speech in German Academic Papers—Taking the Translation of “Die Internationalisierung der deutschen Hochschulen” as an Example

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Reporting is essential in language use, including the re-expression of other people's or self's words, opinions, psychological activities, etc. Grasping the translation methods of reported speech in German academic papers is very important to improve the accuracy of academic paper translation. This study takes the translation of “Internationalization of German Universities” (Die Internationalisierung der deutschen Hochschulen), an academic paper of higher education, as an example to explore the translation methods of reported speech in German academic papers. It is found that the use of word order conversion, part of speech conversion and split translation methods can make the translation more accurate and fluent. This paper helps to grasp the rules and characteristics of the translation of reported speech in German academic papers, and also provides a reference for improving the quality of German-Chinese translation.

*Keywords:* academic paper, reported speech, translation

## Introduction

Against the background of increasingly active global academic exchanges, the demand for academic paper translation is gradually increasing. According to Peterlin (2014) and Pfau (2019)'s research on academic paper translation, the academic research on academic paper translation is mainly included in the research of general translation theory, mainly from the perspective of paper type, to conduct in-depth analysis of the characteristics, author, type and style of the paper, and determine the translation strategy of the paper based on this. The academic research on academic paper translation is mainly focused on the macro level of academic translation, such as academic translation principles, history, current situation, etc. Therefore, the academic research on the academic characteristics and research methods of higher education academic papers, a sub-field of academic papers, needs to be further explored. Since the Chinese and German authors of academic papers use different language expressions to annotate the chapter structure and interpersonal interaction (Chen, 2017), and the translators are in different language environments and are restricted by different cultures, when translating

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reported discourse, it is necessary not only to refer to parallel texts, but also to select appropriate expressions in combination with specific contexts.

### Translation of Reported Speech

The academic community generally uses “quotation” to refer to what we call “reported speech”. Reported speech is to spread the events that have occurred, ongoing activities, the situation of events or activities, and people’s speeches, opinions, positions, etc., through different media such as writing, speaking, pictures, audio, video, etc. It is a way for the narrator to intervene in the interaction and has a dialogic nature. The dialogicity of reported speech can promote effective communication, but if the reported speech is improper, it will affect the smooth progress of communication (Wang et al., 2023). The main function of retelling discourse is to self-narrate or retell other people’s opinions, positions, theories, cite other people’s research results, and include embedding data, tables, pictures and providing examples (Chen, 2017). Reported speech plays an important role in explaining opinions and concepts.

There are great differences between the reported speech in Chinese and German academic papers. The reported verbs in Chinese academic papers are relatively concentrated, and the meanings expressed are all neutral or positive. The reported speech in German academic papers mainly has two expression modes: “reference” and “quotation”, including neutral quotation without any emotion and the narrator’s skepticism about the quoted content (Chen, 2017). Therefore, in the process of translating reported speech, it is necessary to deal with it in combination with the context and the language differences between China and Germany. “Internationalization of German Universities” involves many reported speeches. The following will combine concepts and actual translation cases to analyze them according to the two expression modes of “reference” and “quotation”.

#### Processing of Translations of Reference

Speech act theory believes that reference is a behavior of the speaker, rather than expressing the reference itself. The reference process is related to the purpose and intention and is the meaning of the entire discourse (Li, 2010). According to Chen Qi (2017)’s research, in German papers, the main function of the referential expression mode of reported discourse is to introduce examples and data, such as: “etwas anführen/nehmen/betrachten”. The referential structure includes the necessary components and optional parts of reported discourse. The necessary components refer to the source or data source of the quoted discourse, and the optional parts further explain the reasons for the occurrence of the reported behavior and the context of use or the author’s subjective evaluation of the reported content.

##### Example (1)

Originaltext: In den folgenden Kapiteln wird das Phänomen der Internationalisierung der Hochschulen näher betrachtet.

Translation: 以下章节将详细探讨高校国际化现象。

Analysis: “betrachtet” in the original text means “observation”. The literal translation of the original sentence is: “In the following chapters, the phenomenon of internationalization of universities will be further observed.” Passive sentences are rarely used in Chinese, and subject omission is a common phenomenon in Chinese (Yu, 2012). The original text emphasizes the “university internationalization phenomenon” rather than

the doer, so the translation of this sentence should be treated as a subject-omitted sentence. In German papers, “etwas betrachten” is a commonly used referential expression, and the original “betrachtet” is an expression with a neutral meaning. The referential expression in Chinese includes “以.....为例、例如、即 (take... as an example, for example, that is)”, etc. Therefore, it is more appropriate to translate it into “探讨” (“discuss”) in combination with the original context, vocabulary meaning and Chinese expression characteristics.

**【Translation method】** : Free translation, combined with contextual comprehensive processing

Example (2)

Originaltext: Zu erwähnen ist auch das neu entstandene Konsortium zum internationalen Hochschulmarketing ‚GATE Germany‘ (Guide to Academic Training and Education), das an den DAAD angegliedert wurde.

Translation: 另外值得一提的是新成立的国际大学营销联盟“GATE Germany”（德意志学术交流指导委员会，该机构主要进行学术培训和教育指导），该联盟隶属于DAAD（德意志学术交流中心）。

Analysis: “GATE Germany” is an academic exchange steering committee that assists German higher education institutions in self-positioning and display. It is an institution that actively promotes the internationalization of higher education. Therefore, when the original text introduces this institution, the expression method used has a positive color meaning. When translating, while considering the rigor of the language of academic papers, it is also necessary to express the author’s approval attitude. Therefore, based on the above analysis, the Chinese four-character idioms “值得一提 (it is worth mentioning that)” is selected here as the final translation of “erwähnen”.

**【Translation method】** : four-character idioms

Example (3)

Originaltext: Als eines der ambitioniertesten Project mag an dieser Stelle die von der Weltbank finanzierte, African Virtual University’ angeführt werden.

Translation: 例如”非洲虚拟大学”，由世界银行资助，是目前最雄心勃勃的项目之一。

Analysis: The paragraph in the original text mainly introduces the projects of internationalization of higher education, and the “African Virtual University” is a well-known typical internationalization project. According to the Duden Dictionary’s explanation of the verb collocation “etwas anführen”, there are four meanings: “lead, propose, cite, and command”. Therefore, combined with the context of the original text, “African Virtual University” is a case used by the author to prove his point of view, so the translation of “anführen” here should choose the meaning of “cite”. In German papers, “etwas anführen” can be used as an expression with a referential function (Chen, 2017). After adjusting the word order of the translation in combination with the original context, “etwas anführen” is translated as “例如 (for example)”, which is not only faithful to the original text but also in line with the expression of Chinese papers.

**【Translation method】** : word order conversion

### Processing of Translations of Citation

Citation refers to citing other literature in an article. Citation is one of the important ways for authors to create research background and support their own points. The role of citation in academic papers is particularly

important (Zhang et al., 2008, p. 12). In academic papers, the quoted information is mostly thinking activities (other people's interpretation of research). The author has the responsibility to explain the position of the quoted person and express his (or other authors') understanding and attitude. If the reporting verb is not used properly or skillfully, the author's point of view may be difficult to express fully, and the quoted information may be inaccurate, thus incorrectly expressing the author's or the quoted person's point of view. Therefore, the translation of citations requires extremely high accuracy. From the perspective of citation types, Hyland (1999) divides citation into four categories: quote, blockquote, summary, generalization. The first two categories belong to direct citation, retaining the wording of the original text and generally using quotation marks; the latter two categories belong to indirect citation, breaking through the language form of the original text and using new vocabulary and structure to convey the information and ideas of the cited literature. Direct citation can retain the authoritative voice and make readers pay attention to the language and statement style of the original text. Indirect citation can reduce the proportion of reported words in the text and focus readers' attention on the argumentation of the article.

In German papers, the main structure of the expression mode of "quotation" includes the source or data source of the quoted discourse (an essential component of the reported discourse) and the citation verb (Chen, 2017). In "Die Internationalisierung der deutschen Hochschule", the author cited many research results and opinions, and the citation methods used include direct citation and indirect citation.

#### Example (4)

Originaltext: Dieser Grundgedanke wurde 1997 von Edith Cresson, der damaligen für Bildungsfragen zuständigen Kommissarin der Europäischen Kommission, im Rückblick auf das erfolgreiche Bildungsprogramm ERASMUS explizit bestätigt...

Translation: 1997年, 伊迪丝·克雷森 (Edith Cresso) 时任欧洲委员会教育负责专员, 她在回顾成功实施的伊拉斯谟教育计划时, 对这一基本思想明确证实.....

Analysis: The ellipsis in the original text is a large quotation with quotation marks, so the quotation in this case is a direct quotation, which retains the language style of the original text. The verb combination chosen by the author when quoting is "explizit bestätigt", which is an objective statement without the author's subjective judgment. Since the meanings of the referential verbs in Chinese academic papers are all neutral or positive (Chen, 2017), and the meaning expressed here is neutral, there is no need to deal with the conversion of emotion. It can be directly translated as "证实 (confirmed)", which is faithful to the neutral meaning expressed in the original text and conforms to the expression habits of the target language academic paper, making the translation fluent and accurate.

【Translation method】: Direct translation

#### Example (5)

Original text: In dem Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community' betonte die Europäische Kommission die herausragende Rolle der Hochschulbildung in den westeuropäischen Ländern im Hinblick auf die ökonomische, soziale und kulturelle Entwicklung der Gemeinschaft.

Translation: 在《欧洲共同体高等教育备忘录》中, 欧洲委员会强调了西欧国家高等教育对欧洲共同体经济、社会和文化发展的突出作用。

Analysis: Summarization usually involves only one article, while induction involves two or more articles (Zhang et al., 2008, p. 12). The author clearly pointed out in the original text that the source of the quoted content was the document “Memoranda on Higher Education”, so this expression belongs to the “summary” in indirect quotation. Indirect quotation emphasizes the quoted information. Combining with the original text, the focus of this sentence is to highlight the second half of the sentence “the role of higher education in Western European countries in Europe”. Therefore, when translating, the focus of the original text should be highlighted, and the expression of less important information should be simplified. The word “betonnen” itself means “emphasis”, so combined with the context of the original text and the analysis of the quotation method, it is translated as “强调 (emphasis)”.

【Translation method】: Combined with the context of comprehensive processing

Example (6)

Originaltext: Nach Ulrich TEICHLER hat sich hier ein Paradigmenwechsel vollzogen: Die deutsche Hochschulpolitik versucht inzwischen die nationalen Regelwerke derart zu gestalten, dass sie für die Hochschulen beim internationalen Interagieren keine Barrieren mehr darstellen.

Translation: Ulrich TEICHLER认为, 这里发生了范式转变: 德国高等教育政策正试图调整国家法规, 使之不再成为高校间国际互动中的障碍。

Analysis: The original quotation has an introductory word but no quotation marks, which is an indirect quotation. The introductory word is the preposition “nach”, which means: “according to the view of...”. The introductory word in the original text introduces two important contents: one is the source of the view—the narrator, and the other is the summary of the view—“a paradigm shift has occurred here.” When expressing the content of the view in Chinese, it is clearer to use short sentences. Therefore, to make the translation smooth and natural, the sentence should be split into two short sentences, so the preposition “nach” is converted into a neutral verb “认为 (believe)” or “表示 (express)”.

【Translation Method】: conversion and division

## Conclusion

This paper starts from the perspective of linguistic classification of reported discourse, takes the Chinese translation of the academic paper “Die Internationalisierung der deutschen Hochschulen” (Internationalization of German Universities) as an example, and analyzes the Chinese translation methods of reported speech in German academic papers from the two aspects of reference and quotation. The study found that the Chinese translation methods of reference expressions include but are not limited to free translation, comprehensive treatment combined with context, flexible use of four-character idioms and word order conversion, and the Chinese translation methods of quoted expressions include literal translation, comprehensive treatment combined with context, conversion and division. The case types in this study are limited. In today’s information age, the demand for academic paper translation has greatly increased. Translators should use appropriate translation methods based on factors such as context analysis, translation purpose, and target readers.

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