

English translation of political texts from the perspective of explicitness and implicitness

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Abstract: Hypotaxis and parataxis are two important concepts in linguistics, describing two different ways of organizing sentence structure. They also constitute a fundamental topic in comparative English-Chinese studies and translation theory. Specifically, English sentences tend to be hypotactic, focus on grammatical structure and semantic logic, while Chinese tends to be paratactic, pays more attention to context and sequence. Based on the differences between English and Chinese, this paper starts with the explicit and implicit conversion strategies of sentence elements in the translation of the Government Work Report. Upon analysis, it becomes evident that the frequency of converting implicit elements in Chinese to explicit ones in English is higher. Therefore, under the perspective of hypotactic and paratactic, this paper explores how to appropriately use this conversion strategy to optimize the readability of translations and make them more in line with Chinese expression habits. According to translation practice, it has been found that most of the words that are implicit in the original text, such as abbreviations, relational pronouns, grammatical markers, etc., can be made explicit to enhance the fluency of the translation. This paper hopes to provide more reference for English-Chinese translation by studying the explicitness and implicitness between English and Chinese.

Key words: overt; covert; the Government Work Report; English-Chinese translation

1 Introduction

The Government Work Report is a document of a governmental nature, covering a review of the work done by the government in the past year, the work currently being carried out, and the deployment and outlook for future work. The report includes summaries and arrangements of work in various fields, such as economy, politics, society, culture, science, and technology. It represents the official thoughts and actions of the Chinese Government and is a very important window to exhibit the work of the government to the other countries. Therefore, it is crucial to accurately convey the content of the report. However, many scholars have used different translation strategies to achieve this goal, but few have studied it from the perspective of explicitness and implicitness.

The domestic research on hypotaxis and parataxis in English-Chinese translation started relatively late, but some progress has been made, such as Ke Fei's *Covert and Overt in Translation*, which summarizes the expressions of explicitness and implicitness in Chinese and English and analyzes their causes. However, there are fewer studies on the application of explicitness and implicitness in political texts, and most of them are in the research on literature and corpus, such as *The Study of Chinese Translation of Shakespeare's Hamlet* by Hu Kaibao and Zhu Yifan, which focuses on the

phenomenon of explicitness and its motivation; and Hu Xianyao and Zeng Jia, who focuses on the corpus analysis of the explicitness of grammatical markers in the translation of novels.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that there are fewer studies on political texts under the perspective of explicitness and implicitness. Political text belongs to the information text, which mainly conveys information, and through the analysis of the Government Work Report, two important features are found: one is that in terms of vocabulary, it is manifested in the frequent repetitive words and numerical abbreviations. The second is that in sentence structure, there is a lack of connection between sentences, and often use coordinate predicates, phrases, and non-subject sentences. As a result, its style tends to be more covert. This paper takes the Government Work Report as an example, analyzes the manifestations and reasons for the differences between implicitness and explicitness in Chinese and English, then analyzes with specific cases, and finally concludes the strategy of explicit and implicit conversion in Chinese-English translation.

2 A comparative analysis of explicitness and implicitness in English and Chinese

According to Lian Shuneng, English is hypotactic, while Chinese is paratactic. In English, conjunctions, prepositions, affixes and various lexical morphological changes are often used to explicit the connection between sentences [1]. In contrast, Chinese tends to be more implicit, and its cohesive ties include sentence order, repetition, and compact sentences. Chinese follows the basic rules of chronological, spatial, and causal order.

English pays more attention to hypotactic, and its explicit features are reflected at the following two levels: at the level of grammatical structure, English has a more complete system of grammatical categories, with strict requirements for word changes and references, and further embodies its formal norms through logical grammar; at the level of logical relations, English emphasizes overt coherence in sentence, and usually adds cohesive ties in syntactic structure, including connections and relational words, etc., to realize the natural transition between sentences and paragraphs, thus making the translation more fluent [2].

There are three main reasons for the hypotaxis of English. First, English is a synthetic language with abundant derivational affixes and its grammatical meanings are heavily dependent on inflectional changes, whereas Chinese is a typical language with only root words and almost no derivational or inflectional morphemes [3]. Derivation is the core of word formation in English, with strong hypotactic features. Derived morphemes, such as prefixes and suffixes, are conducive to the formation of new words, while Chinese lacks such derivatives. Moreover, English uses inflection to express grammatical meanings such as tense and number, whereas Chinese prefers to use vocabulary or hints to express meanings in context. In addition, Chinese is a semantic language, so in the way of organizing the language, semantic collocations are the most important, with a strong emphasis on word order.

The second is that in most English sentences, no matter how complex or long, there must be at least an S-V structure. And the subject determines the number of predicates, that is, the subject determines whether the predicate chooses the singular or plural form [4]. In the most cases, the subject in a sentence is essential. When there is nothing to serve as the subject, the sentence must have a formal subject (such as "it" and "there"). However, in Chinese, the subject can always be omitted if both the speaker and the listener know or can realize the subject.

Third, English sentences are more tree-like, while Chinese sentences are more bamboo-like. The way English sentences develop is the way a big tree grows. Usually, there is a main trunk, and the other parts are connected as if they were branches and the main trunk, which are connected through proper cohesive ties or morphological means, making the main-subordinate relationship between sentences clear [5]. However, Chinese does not have a rigorous syntactic structure. The development of sentences is the way bamboo grows, without distinguishing between the "trunk" and "branches". This

type of sentence components are not related, the structure is loose, and most of them are connected by context. Therefore, the logical relationships in Chinese are formally implicit.

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that there are explicit and implicit differences between English and Chinese, and this difference will bring some difficulties to translation, so this paper applies the explicit and implicit perspectives to guide the translation practice [6]. The translator reveals the grammatical markers and connections between sentences by adding information, quantifiers, pronouns, connectives, etc., to improve the fluency of the translation.

3 Case analysis

3.1 Syntactic explicit

Chinese and English have different grammatical conventions. English expresses the meaning of explicit grammar by changing the morphology of words, including affixes, number words, tense, and moods. In Chinese, on the other hand, tense is not revealed through morphological changes of the verb itself, but through temporal adverbs and other means [7]. In the process of C-E translation, translators need to pay special attention to these grammatical differences to ensure that the translation accurately expresses the grammatical meaning of the original text.

ST1: 2022 nian shi dang he guo jia li shi shang ji qi zhong yao de yi nian.

TT1: The year 2022 was a year of great importance in the history of the Communist Party of China and our country.

Analysis: This report summarizes last year's work and reviews what happened in the past. Therefore, it is necessary to use the past tense in translation, rather than simply translating "shi" as "is". This is a point that requires special attention and reflection in the translation process.

ST2: Zai yi xi jin ping tong zhi wei he xin de dang zhong yang jian qiang ling dao xia, wo men jing shou le shi jie bian ju jia kuai yan bian、xin guan yi qing chong ji、guo nei jing ji xia xing deng duo chong kao yan.

TT2: Under the strong leadership of the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, we have met numerous tests, including accelerated changes on the international landscape, the Covid-19 pandemic, and a domestic economic slowdown.

Analysis: In this example, attention should be paid to the manifestation of tense and number in the process of Chinese-to-English translation. For example, the word "jing shou" in the original text expresses the past tense, meaning "in the past time, our country has encountered multiple tests". For Chinese readers, the meaning of "has" is obvious. However, when translating into English, it is necessary to emphasize the meaning of "Although our country's development has faced multiple tests such as the accelerated evolution of the world's changing situation, the impact of the new crown epidemic, and the downturn of the domestic economy, etc., we have successfully coped with them", which indicates that the results have already been achieved [8]. Therefore, to clearly express the implied meaning in Chinese, the present perfect tense should be used. In addition, in the process of translation, it is necessary to pay attention to the differences between English and Chinese in the singular and plural forms, for example, "kao yan" is translated as "tests", which can indicate that our country is faced with a number of development challenges. The same goes for "yan bian → changes". These are the linguistic differences that need to be noted when translating from Chinese to English.

3.2 Information explicit

Government work reports often contain a large number of sentences with hidden subjects, because Chinese tends to use verb-object constructions or omit the subject. However, in the process of Chinese to English translation, the implied subject needs to be added appropriately according to the context, for English is a language that highlights the subject [9]. This difference needs to be noted in the process of Chinese to English translation to ensure that the translation is clear and fluent.

ST3: Mian dui jing ji xin de xia xing ya li, guo duan ying dui、ji shi tiao kong.

TT3: Confronted with new downward pressure on the economy, we acted decisively and made timely adjustments.

ST4: Zhen dui qi ye sheng chan jing ying kun nan jia ju, jia da shu kun zhi chi li du.

TT4: We stepped up relief support to enterprises facing growing difficulties in operation and production.

Analysis: In the above example, according to the context, we can analyze that the subject of "acted decisively and made timely adjustments" and "stepped up relief support" is the Chinese government, and a series of actions need to be taken, so here we need to use the method of amplification, and add the subject "we" in the English translation. Therefore, it is necessary to explicit the subject in the C-E translation, which can make the information of the original text clearer and enhance the fluency of the translation [10].

ST5: Ge ji zheng fu yao da li zhi chi guo fang he jun dui jian she, shen ru kai zhan "shuang yong" huo dong.

TT5: Our governments at all levels should give strong support to the development of national defense and the armed forces and conduct extensive activities to promote mutual support between civilian sectors and the military.

ST6: Mian dui xin de ren wu he tiao zhan, ge ji zheng fu yao zeng qiang "si ge yi shi".

TT6: In the face of new tasks and challenges, our governments at all levels must be keenly aware of the need to maintain political integrity, think in big-picture terms, follow the leadership core, and keep in alignment with the central Party leadership.

Analysis: In the two examples mentioned above, the original texts contain political terms, and their translation requires a great deal of background information about Chinese politics and culture [11]. However, this information was unfamiliar to foreign readers and required clear explanations. In translating "shuang yong" and "si ge yi shi", the translations added specific information, transformed the content of the original text, and explained the original meaning to convey the implied meaning to the target readers. Thus, the additions to the information in the original text can make the semantics more complete, better enable the readers to understand the translation, thus improving the readability of the translation.

3.3 Logic explicit

Logical explicit refers to adding suitable connections between sentences in the translated text to manifest the implicit logical relationship. The Government Work Report is mostly in the form of imposing prose sentences, which can realize semantic connection without borrowing connections and have strong coherence. This section analyzes the logical explicit methods used by translators in the process of C-E translation of the report with regard to the three relations of union, cause and effect and purpose [12].

3.3.1 Joint relationship explicit

Joint relationship indicates that two or more words or sentences exist together and there is no primary or secondary relationship between them. The Government Work Report often uses equal combinations and neatly arranged phrases, so in order to make the translation have the strict logical relationship in English, it is necessary to covert the joint relationship in the English translation.

ST7: Bao zhang hua fei deng nong zi gong ying he jia ge wen ding, gei zhong liang nong min zai ci fa fang bu tie, jia da dui zhu chan qu zhi chi li du, rang nong min zhong liang you he li shou yi、zhu chan qu zhu liang you nei zai dong li.

TT7: To ensure reasonable returns for grain growers and incentivize major grain-producing areas, we will ensure the provision of agricultural supplies such as chemical fertilizers at stable prices, continue to provide agricultural supply subsidies to grain growers, and step up support for major grain-producing areas.

Analysis: In the example, the sentence is loose and there is no explicit connection between the phrases. After analyzing, it can be found that the first three sentences belong to concrete measures, and the last sentence belongs to the

result, so the joint relationship between the phrases is explicitly shown by adding "and", and secondly, the translation also adds "such as" to explicit the relationship between the sentences and make the structure of the sentences clear [13].

3.3.2 Causality explicit

Causality indicates a logical relationship, in which one thing causes another to occur or has an effect. The Government Work Report lists the initiatives taken by the government and the results produced afterwards, which shows an obvious causal relationship, but the report does not directly use the form of causality to connect, so to explicit the implied logical relationship, it is necessary to add connections such as "thus" or "and" in the C-E translation [14].

ST8: Chi xu jia qiang she hui zhi an zong he zhi li, yan li da ji ge lei wei fa fan zui, kai zhan sao hei chu e zhuan xiang dou zheng, yi fa yan cheng hei e shi li ji qi "bao hu san", ping an zhong guo、 fa zhi zhong guo jian she qu de xin jin zhan.

TT8: We continued to take a full range of measures to maintain law and order, cracked down hard on illegal and criminal activities of all types, and launched campaigns to combat organized crime and handed out severe punishments, in accordance with the law, to criminal gangs and those who provided protection for them, thus making fresh headway in building a Peaceful China and advancing the rule of law in China.

Analysis: In this example, these five individual verb phrases combine to form a sentence that is not directly related to each other and appears to be parallel; however, a deeper understanding reveals that their meanings are not equally important. The first four sentences are centered on action, while the last one mainly describes the possible effects of the action, and thus they have a sequential logic. In the translation, the translator uses the word "thus" to express the implied relationship in the source text and to make the sentences more logical [15].

3.3.3 Purpose relationship explicit

Purpose relationship refers to the logical relationship between the existence and occurrence of something and the goal or objective it realizes. The Government Work Report contains a large number of actions taken by the government as well as its expected results, but the purpose relationship between the two is not logically coherent because of the lack of connections, so the connections "to" and "in order to" can be added in the translation to explicit the implied purpose relationship.

ST9: Tui jin chang zu fang shi chang jian she, wen di jia、 wen fang jia、 wen yu qi, yin cheng shi ce cu jin fang di chan shi chang jian kang fa zhan.

TT9: We kept land costs, house prices, and market expectations stable and adopted city-specific measures to facilitate sound development of the real estate sector.

ST10: Wei rao bu duan ban、 tiao jie gou、 zeng hou jin kuo da you xiao tou zi.

TT10: We expanded effective investment to shore up weak links, promote structural adjustments, and sustain growth momentum.

Analysis: In Example 9, the preceding verb-object phrases are all measures whose ultimate purpose is to "cu jin fang di chan shi chang jian kang fa zhan", so the logical conjunction "to" is added in the C-E translation to make the purpose relationship obvious. In Example 10, "kuo da you xiao tou zi" is the purpose of three prose phrases, so the translator also added "to", which makes the purpose relationship obvious [16].

4 Conclusion

Through the above analysis, it can be found that Chinese tends to be more paratactic, and appears to be looser in sentence structure, with a lack of explicit formal connections between the sentence components, and its cohesive ties relying more on semantic coherence as well as contextual undertones. The sentence in the original text is usually longer, and its structure tends to be monolithic, with more use of coordinate phrases or predicates, as well as the structure of

connecting a series of phrases with commas, causing the hierarchical relationship not being particularly obvious. In contrast, English pays more attention to hypotactic, with obvious formal markers for the connections between sentence components, and a tighter structure with more prominent subject-predicate relationships and clearer hierarchical relationships [17].

Therefore, in the process of translation, the translator should not only have a basic understanding of the meaning of the original text, but also needs to grasp the deep logical relationships latent between sentences, and utilize, for example, additional information, pronouns, connections, etc., to explicitly show the relationships that implicit in the original text. For sentences with complex verb-object structure or containing multiple clauses, the translator can first divide the sentence components, integrate the sentence information, sort out the implied relationships, as well as clearly express the actions and results, and translate them in line with the target language expression habits. In the case of long sentences with no subject and multiple clauses, the translator needs to grasp the subject of the sentence and add the subject appropriately to ensure that the information of the sentence is more complete. In addition, for some cases with category words, repetitive words, or cultural words, it is necessary to add information to explicit the implied meaning, convey the implied meaning to the target readers and make the translation clearer.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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