

Translation of Personal Pronouns in Government Work Report from the Perspective of Explicitation

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Abstract: The outreach of government work reports is related to national image and international diplomacy, reflecting a certain political attitude, and its importance is self-evident, so is the outreach of local government work reports, which is also very important for foreign readers to understand China's local development and shape the image of international cities. However, the outreach of local government work reports has not yet received much attention, and there are few official translations. This paper aims to provide more examples for the English translation of pronouns in political texts through translation practice and to raise the attention to the outreach of local government work reports by using the case study method and literature research method to produce a faithful and accurate translation of the Qingdao Municipal Government Work Report. The work report of Government contains a large number of sentences with the first person as the main subject and unattributed sentences, which provide a large number of examples for studying the translation method of personal pronouns in political texts. The translation practice concludes that the English translation of personal pronouns in political texts mainly includes direct translation, additional translation and original meaning substitution. This study supplements the important guiding value of manifestation strategy to the translation of political texts, study the translation methods of personal pronouns in political texts, and further explores the influence of the usage function of personal pronouns on the motivation of manifestation, which has certain reference value for improving the attention of local government work reports for outreach and improving the quality of the publicity of political texts.

Keywords: Explicitation, Personal Pronouns Translation, Government Work Report.

1. Introduction

Political documents refer to the documents issued by the Party Central Committee, the State Council and local governments at all levels concerning the major policies of national and local social and economic development [1]. They represent the position, viewpoint and attitude of the Chinese government [2]. Therefore, an accurate and appropriate translation is an important window for the international community's understanding of China's major political principles, policies and diplomatic, military, economic and culture and so on.

Translation of Chinese political discourse, often regarded high-quality and authoritative by the government and the public [3], has been subject to controversy and has drawn extensive attention from translation practitioners and scholars in China. Previous studies on political texts have focused on the translation of political terms, cross-cultural communication, and the resolution of Chinglish [4-6], but seldom on personal pronouns. This paper aims to study the differences in the use of personal pronouns in Chinese and English political texts, which is a novel perspective, intending to make suggestions for the translation of personal pronouns in political texts.

2. Literature References

Previous translations of government work reports have mostly been carried out in terms of translating characteristic terms, solving Chinglish problems, and cross-cultural perspectives, and relatively little research has been conducted on the translation of personal pronouns.

2.1. The Definition of Explicitation

Domestic and foreign scholars mainly study the explicitation strategy in the field of literature and less in the field of non-literature such as political texts. This practice report attempts to investigate the application of explicit strategies in political texts. The concept of "explicitation" was first proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet of France in their comparative study of English and French stylistics. It is defined as "a stylistic translation technique, a process of directly expressing the content implied in the target language through the analysis of context and situation" [7]. The Explicitation Hypothesis was put forward by Blum Kulka [8], that is, "the translator's interpretation of the original text may lead to the translation being longer than the original text. This lengthy phenomenon shows that the translator has improved the degree of articulation of the translation." Klaudy and Karoly [9] put forward the "asymmetry hypothesis", that is, in the process of translating one language into another, explicit translation strategies are often adopted, but back translation into the source language text will not be implicit. This theory, to some extent, complements the one-sidedness of previous studies, but it is limited to the translation of literary works and does not involve the translation of political texts, which still needs further enrichment. In the study of Huang [10], through two stylistic types (literary text and non-literary text), he examined the subject of personal pronouns from three aspects: frequency of occurrence, frequency of occurrence and conversion type. The research results showed that the frequency and frequency of occurrence of personal pronouns increased in both literary and non-literary texts. Zhao (2011) believes that the obvious tendency of personal pronouns to explicit in Chinese-English literary translation is mainly due to the differences between the two language

systems [11]. It can be seen that Huang's research involves non-literary texts (political documents, laws and regulations, etc.), while other studies are mostly based on literary works.

2.2. The Motivation of Explicitation

Most of scholars study the motivation of explicitation from the perspective of the translator factor, cultural factor, text factor, language factor and the receiver factor. Whether the motivation of explicitation is also affected by other factors is one of the issues worth further discussion. This practice report explores the pragmatic function of personal pronouns as a factor. Scholars found that the use of explicitation techniques is related to the translator's professional level [12]. Professional translators often subconsciously use explicit translation techniques, and linguistic students often use explicitation to solve problems in the translation process. Ke Fei is an early scholar studying the causes of explicitation in China. Taking examples of English-Chinese translation as his research object, he believes that linguistic factors, translator factors, socio-cultural factors and text factors will all have an impact on the explicitation, and the degree of explicitation may be related to the degree of formalization of language and the direction of translation [13]. Using the method of corpus to make a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the explicitation phenomenon in the two translated versions of Hamlet, Hu and Zhu [14] believe that cultural differences are the main causes of the explicitation, but the level of the explicitation is determined by the translator according to the comprehensive quality of the reader, in which the translator's translation strategies and methods will ultimately affect the degree of the explicitation. This practice report attempts to provide reference examples for the factor of semantic and pragmatic functions of personal pronouns.

2.3. The Study of Explicitation of Personal Pronouns

There are few studies on the translation of personal pronouns from Chinese to English. There have been more complete studies on the translation of personal pronouns into Chinese. Huang generally classified the conversion types in the process of translating personal pronouns into Chinese. There are correspondence, substitution, addition and omission. Lu and Xiong [15] proposed that translation of English personal pronouns into Chinese can be done by pronoun themselves, original meaning, collective term, and zero substitution translation. As for the translation of personal pronouns from Chinese to English, scholars generally put forward the translation method of adding personal pronouns, while other translation methods need to be added. Tong pointed out that English and Chinese have different levels of formalization and different levels of dependence on personal pronouns, so translators should pay special attention to the addition of personal pronouns in the conversion process of Chinese and English [16]. Chen proposes that through the omission or insertion of personal pronouns, translators can achieve a complete and concise version of the translation, which helps readers to understand the cohesive relationships which are not clearly represented in the original text [17]. Also, some scholars proposed that the sentence subject "we" in the original Chinese Government Work Report was mostly omitted, and the non-subject sentence composed of "must" and "should" with notional verbs was frequently used, so translators often translate these sentences into active constructions with "we" as the subject [18]. Therefore, this

practice report aims to summarize the relatively complete and specific translation methods of personal pronouns in political texts, which is also the key question to be addressed.

3. The Translation Method of Personal Pronouns in Government Work Report

In the work report of Government, there are a large number of sentences with "we" as the subject and a large number of sentences without subject. In this paper, the author gives examples of personal pronoun translation, and summarizes the translation methods of personal pronoun in political texts, including literal translation, original meaning replacement and additional translation.

3.1. Literal Translation

In a certain context, personal pronouns in English and Chinese are basically equivalent in meaning and usage, so literal translation can be adopted. The translator can also translate them in the form of personal pronouns in the translation.

1. ST: 现在,我代表市人民政府向大会报告工作,请予审议,并请各位政协委员和其他列席人员提出意见。

TT: On behalf of the Municipal People's Government, I will now report to you on the work of the government and ask for your deliberation and approval. I also ask members of the CPPCC and other non-voting participants for their comments.

The first person singular "I" has two functions: self-declaration and generalization. When "I" is used as self-assertion, it has the pragmatic function of expressing position and emphasizing identity, and it is highly subjective, referring to one's own side, thus establishing one's own position [19]. In the opening salutation, the speaker needs to express his identity, reflect his position and authority for the government. Also, the speaker does not need to generalize his position to narrow the distance with the audience. Therefore, the first person singular here can adopt the literal translation method.

2. ST: 在此,我代表市人民政府,向全市人民,向全体人大代表和政协委员,向各民主党派、工商联、无党派人士、各人民团体、社会各界人士,向离退休老同志,向驻青部队和武警官兵,向中央、省驻青单位,向所有关心支持青岛发展的海内外朋友们,表示崇高的敬意和衷心的感谢!

TT: Here, on behalf of the Municipal People's Government, I wish to express sincere thanks to the people of the city, and to all deputies to the Municipal People's Congress and members of the Municipal CPPCC, and to all democratic parties, federations of industry and commerce, personages without party affiliations, people's organizations, and people from all walks of life. I express heartfelt appreciation to retired comrades and the troops stationed in Qingdao and the armed police, to the central and provincial units stationed in Qingdao. I also wish to express my high respect and heartfelt thanks to all friends at home and abroad who care about and support the development of Qingdao!

The "I" in this sentence is still self-referential, referring to the speaker himself, not the government organization in general, with a clear personal identity boundary, so the author adopts the literal translation method here.

3. ST: 为有效应对疫情对经济社会发展的冲击,提振市场信心,我们围绕减免税费、降低成本、加强财政和金融扶持等方面出台了助企纾困 42 条政策。我们将切实推动政策落地落实,及时关注和回应企业发展诉求,全力帮助

广大企业渡过难关、恢复发展。

TT: In order to effectively respond to the impact of the epidemic on economic and social development and boost market confidence, we have issued 42 policies to help enterprises in terms of tax relief, cost reduction, and fiscal and financial support. We will earnestly promote the implementation of policies, pay attention to and respond to the development demands of enterprises in a timely manner, making every effort to help enterprises overcome difficulties and recover development.

From the semantic level, due to the fuzziness and instability of the definition of semantic reference, the first personal pronoun “we” is not a single reference. Its reference can be roughly divided into two categories: inclusive we (including audience) and exclusive we (excluding audience) [20]. The “we” here in this sentence means both the speaker and the audience. Actually, the speaker makes suggestions for all the audience. The pronoun “we” transfer the center of instruction to the audience through pragmatic projection and the speaker suggests from the perspective of audience to reduce the imperative meaning and produce a certain empathy effect, thereby narrowing the distance with the audience and making the discourse more persuasive. In this context, the pronoun “we” has the same semantic and pragmatic functions between English and Chinese, and the author adopts the method of literal translation.

3.2. Original Meaning Replacement

In the Chinese version of the Report on the Work of the Government, there exist a large number of “we” due to its special text requirements of generalizing position and narrowing the distance from the audience. However, due to the ambiguity and uncertainty of its referential definition, its semantic categories differ in different contexts. Therefore, when translating into English, for audiences who are not familiar with the work of the Chinese government, it is necessary to restore it to its original meaning to help the audience truly understand. In Chinese, the receivers can easily identify the objects referred to by personal pronouns through contextual context, while in English, using them alone may lead to unclear or ambiguous references sometimes. Therefore, in the English translation process, translators sometimes need to restore the personal pronouns to the nouns they refer to according to the context. Huang roughly classified the types of transformation in the process of translating personal pronouns from English to Chinese, which includes the substitution. Scholars also proposed that when translating English personal pronouns into Chinese, the method of translating them according to the original words they refer to can be adopted [21]. The translator aims to verify through this translation practice whether this translation method is suitable for translating personal pronouns from Chinese to English.

4. ST: 我市运动员在第三十二届夏季奥运会、第十四届全运会上取得优异成绩。

TT: The athletes in Qingdao have made outstanding achievements in the 32nd Summer Olympic Games and the 14th National Games.

5. ST: 我市对“一带一路”沿线国家进出口总额增长45%，新增国际友城3个，东西部协作更加密切。

TT: Qingdao’s total import and export volume to countries along the “the Belt and Road” increased by 45%. Three new international sister cities were established. The cooperation

between the East and the West is closer.

6. ST: 我市生产总值年均增长6.6%，占全省的比重由2016年的15.8%提高到17%。

TT: Qingdao’s GDP grew by 6.6% annually, accounting for 17% of the province’s total GDP, up from 15.8% in 2016.

7. ST: 胶州湾东岸、西岸、北岸协同发展，我市常住人口突破1000万，跻身特大城市行列。

TT: The east, west and north coasts of Jiaozhou Bay have developed in a coordinated way, and the permanent resident population of Qingdao has exceeded 10 million, ranking among the megacities.

In the above examples, “我市” is used as the subject of the sentence. Chinese readers can easily identify the object they refer to through contextual context, that is “Qingdao”. However, for English readers who do not know well about the Chinese version of the Report on the Work of the Government, they may be confused by the ambiguous references. Therefore, it is necessary to restore them to their referential meanings, which will help English audiences understand the original text more clearly. The translation here is also based on the Report on the Work of the Government (2022), for example,

a. 经过艰苦努力，我们率先实现复工复产。

Thanks to all these arduous efforts, China was able to take the lead in reopening its economy.

b. 过去五年，我国经济社会发展取得新的历史性成就。

Over the past five years, China has scored historic new achievements in economic and social development.

c. 我国对外开放持续扩大。

China continued to open its door wider to the world.

d. 我国发展仍然处于重要战略机遇期。

China remains in an important period of strategic opportunity for development.

The above example sentences restore personal pronouns to their original meanings, making their semantic connotations clear.

8. ST: 在肯定成绩的同时，我们也清醒地看到存在的问题和不足。主要是：经济社会发展质量还不够高，城市综合实力和竞争力与先进城市相比还有差距……

TT: While recognizing our achievements, our government are also soberly clear about the existing problems and shortcomings. The main problems are: the quality of economic and social development is not enough, and the comprehensive strength and competitiveness of cities are still far from advanced cities……

Due to the fuzziness and instability of the definition of semantic reference, the first person pronoun “we” is not a single reference. Its reference has different semantic categories in different contexts and is determined by the negotiation of the author and the reader [22]. If the semantic connotation is not restored, the English audience may feel at a loss and unable to understand. From a semantic perspective, the pronoun “we” here does not include the audience and it refers to the plural meaning, playing a pragmatic function of group emphasis. It emphasizes the group of the government which includes the speaker, to express an alliance position and increase the audience’s impression and sense of identity towards this group. The translator adopted a translation method of restoring the original meaning here, to make the English audience obtain clearer recognition.

3.3. Additional Translation

Due to the differences between English and Chinese, the

two languages have different dependence on Personal pronoun. Huang proposed that English has a high degree of formalization, while Chinese has a low degree of formalization [23]. When translating from a language with a low degree of formalization to a language with a high degree of formalization (such as C-E translation), the dominance between languages is prominent, so Personal pronoun in English are more frequent than in Chinese. In Chinese English literary translation, the explicitation of personal pronoun is mainly due to the differences between the two language systems [24]. English and Chinese have different dependence on personal pronoun, which makes it necessary to pay special attention to adding personal pronoun in the process of Chinese English conversion [25]. Coupled with the features of English emphasizing hypotaxis and Chinese emphasizing parataxis [26], personal pronoun appear obvious in English translation.

9.ST:我代表人民政府向大会报告工作, 请予审议, 并请各位政协委员和其他列席人员提出意见。

TT: On behalf of the People's Government, I will now report to you on the work of the government and ask for your deliberation and approval. I also ask members of the CPPCC and other non-voting participants for their comments.

The second "I" in the translation is mandatory explicitation. English follows strict grammar rules and must meet the sentence structure of "subject+ predicate (object)". Therefore, the addition of "I" here meets the requirements of English grammar.

10. ST: 入选全国首批“千兆城市”, 获批设立国家级互联网骨干直联点。

TT: Our city were selected as the first batch of "gigabit cities" in China, and approved to set up a national backbone direct connection point for the Internet.

11.ST: 获评国家“菜篮子”市长负责制优秀城市。

TT: We were rated as an excellent city with the "vegetable basket" mayor responsibility system.

12.ST: 强化海洋特色优势功能, 打造引领型现代海洋城市。更加注重经略海洋, 加快建设世界一流的海洋港口、完善的现代海洋产业体系、绿色可持续的海洋生态环境。放大海洋科研优势, 提升海洋创新平台能级, 加快建设国际海洋科技创新中心。

TT: We will strengthen the advantages of marine characteristics and build a leading modern marine city. We will pay more attention to the Marine management, and accelerate the construction of world-class Marine ports, a sound modern Marine industrial system, and green and sustainable Marine ecological environment. We will build on our strengths in Marine scientific research, upgrade our platforms for Marine innovation, and accelerate the construction of international center for Marine scientific and technological innovation.

13.ST: 强化科技创新驱动功能, 打造国际化创新型城市。瞄准世界科技前沿, 布局重大创新载体, 培育战略科技力量, 突破关键核心技术, 打造国家东部沿海重要的创新中心。

TT: We will strengthen scientific and technological innovation-driven development and build an international innovative city. We will target the forefront of science and technology in the world, lay out major innovation carriers, cultivate strategic scientific and technological forces, make breakthroughs in key core technologies, and build an important innovation center along the eastern coast of China.

14.ST: 实施制造业提振计划。坚持工业强市、产业兴市, 争创国家制造业高质量发展试验区。坚持高端化、智能化、绿色化发展, 做强智能家电、轨道交通装备、新能源汽车、高端化工、海洋装备、食品饮料、纺织服装等七大优势产业。

TT: We will implement the plan to boost the manufacturing sector. We will adhere to the principle of strengthening and revitalizing the manufacturing industry, and strive to create a national pilot zone for high-quality development of manufacturing industry. We will adhere to the high-end, intelligent and green development, and strengthen seven competitive industries, including strong smart home appliances, rail transit equipment, new energy vehicles, high-end chemicals, marine equipment, food and beverage, textile and clothing.

The government work report mostly describes the work in the future years. The subject of these sentences mostly refers to the government. When translated into English, in order to meet the requirements of English grammar, it is necessary to make personal pronoun mandatory, and explain the referential connotation of the subject, so that English readers can understand the original content more clearly. Therefore, the author added the personal pronoun "we" to refer to the action executor, that is, the government.

4. Conclusion

Due to the differences between English and Chinese languages and cultures, they have difference dependence on Personal pronoun. The inter-lingual explicitation was prominent when the translation happened from the language with lower degree of formalization to the one with higher degree of formalization, such as C-E translation. This was a kind of linguistic factor. Secondly, considering the extra-linguistic factors, it was found that the explicitation was caused by the difference of the relative social status of the language. The tendency of inter-lingual explicitation was relatively prominent in the translation from the language with weaker status to the one with stronger status, such as C-E translation. Chinese is a subject prominent language. Chinese emphasizes on parataxis and the sentence without subject is common, which does not affect the understanding of the source language readers. The beginning of a sentence is mostly a topic, and it is not necessarily a subject. English, on the other hand, is a subject prominent language, attaching great importance to hypotaxis. The two languages have different dependencies on personal pronouns, which makes it necessary to pay special attention to the addition of personal pronouns in the process of conversion between Chinese and English. Therefore, in the process of translating into English, personal pronoun appear obvious explicitation.

There are many studies on the translation of personal pronoun from English to Chinese in literary texts and many scholars have proposed the translation methods of adding, omitting and restoring the original meaning, but there are few studies on the translation of personal pronoun from Chinese to English. This paper mainly explores the translation methods of personal pronoun from Chinese to English. For the translation of personal pronoun, the author summarizes literal translation, substitution of original meaning, addition translation, and puts forward some suggestions for the C-E translation of personal pronoun in political texts, improving the English translation of political texts.

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