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Article:
Pan, F and Wang, B (2021) Is interpreting of China's political discourse becoming more target-oriented? – A corpus-based diachronic comparison between the 1990s and the 2010s. Babel: international journal of translation, 67 (2). ISSN: 0521-9744

https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.00215.pan

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Is interpreting of China's political discourse becoming more target-oriented? – A corpus-based diachronic comparison between the 1990s and the 2010s

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Abstract: Interpreting is an activity embedded in a particular socio-cultural context that underpins norms of interpreting. Adopting the descriptive translation studies approach, this study aims to find out whether the interpretation for the Chinese government by institutional interpreters is becoming more target-oriented in the 2010s in comparison with the 1990s. Through both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the Corpus of Interpreted Chinese Government Press Conferences in the 1990s and that of the 2010s, the study reveals that there is a significant increase in the total number of target-oriented shifts in the 2010s, manifested predominantly in "inserting hedges before propositional statements" and "modality shifts to attenuate ST's categorical force", though only minimal differences are found for the number of shifts in "explicitation of emphatic meanings", "specification of Chinese source deictic lexis" and "explicitation of implicit logic relations" between the two periods. The results thus indicate a general trend of becoming more target-oriented in interpreting, particularly a tendency to mitigate ST's illocutionary force to a greater extent in the 2010s. Such changes in China's institutional interpreting are correlated with the evolving socio-political context and the norms of institutional interpreting.
Key words: China's political discourse, institutional interpreting, target-oriented shifts, corpus-based diachronic comparison

1.Introduction

Since its initiation of Reform and Opening up in 1978, China has been intensifying its effort to integrate into the international community and to increase its visibility in global affairs. Particularly after its entry into the WTO in 2001, China has been more willing than before to open itself to the outside world and to articulate its own voice internationally. One important medium to fulfill this goal is translation and interpreting of its political discourse. Starting from the early 1990s, the Chinese government has been

providing translation of its Government Work Reports and interpreting of its government press conferences. In its institutional translation and interpreting practices, though faithfulness to the original has been upheld as a traditional principle, recent years have witnessed an increasing awareness of the acceptability to the outside world (e.g. Huang, Huang & Ding 2014). In fact, changes in rendering strategies and textual choices, albeit in a subtle manner, have been perceived in written translations across the time. For instance, Li & Li's (2015) diachronic study of the translations of Chinese political speeches from 1970s to 2010s revealed an increasing number of target-oriented shifts across the span of period, which, as they argued, serve to enhance the level of reception to target readership. In a similar vein, it will be meaningful to inquire into interpreting to see if any changes of comparable shifts can be observed throughout the past decades, since no such investigation has been conducted so far. This idea of looking into interpreters' outputs diachronically is also underpinned by the recognition that interpreting, though cognitively constrained, is essentially a norm-based activity (Wang 2012), and the fact that drastic changes have occurred in Chinese society socio-culturally and economically in recent decades.

In this regard, this study attempts to investigate target-oriented shifts in interpreting for Chinese government press conferences from a diachronic perspective. Specifically, a diachronic parallel corpus which covers interpreted press conferences of Chinese Premiers of the State Council in the 1990s and in the 2010s was built for this purpose. The aim is to identify whether and how changes can be observed in target-oriented shifts in interpreting outputs with reference to the changing socio-cultural context which underpins norms of interpreting. By so doing, the study also tries to provide a tentative framework of analysis into possible "shifts" and norms in interpreting, especially in Chinese to English interpreting of political discourse.

2. Research background

2.1 Institutional interpreting as a norm-governed activity

Since Shlesinger (1989) opened the discussion on the possibility of extending the concept of norms to interpreting studies, it has been widely recognized that interpreting, as a socially situated activity, is governed by norms (e.g. Gile 1999; Straniero Sergio & Falbo 2012; Wang 2012). Many scholarly works also indicate that norms tend to be sociocultural and/or situational specific. In particular, the impact of institutions on shaping and

passing on norms has been underlined by a number of scholars. For instance, Marzocchi's (2005) comparison of initial norms in two court interpreting settings highlights the relevance of institution to norms. Duflou's (2007) research also spotlights the professional norms operating in a particular interpreting environment (the EU setting) rather than norms in conference interpreting in general. Other researches into interpreting within institutional contexts also confirm the interdependency between institution and interpreter's behavior or choices (Beaton 2007, 2010; Fovo 2018; Fu, 2019).

The same is especially true to interpreting for Chinese government where ideology and power relationship play a prominent role in shaping interpreters' behavior. Interpreting services for Chinese government speakers are offered not by freelance interpreters, but by staff interpreters from the Office of Translation and Interpreting (OTI) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who are not merely professionals of interpreting but also civil servants and, less noticeably, subordinates to the government speakers. The multiple roles assumed by these staff interpreters imply the complicated nature of their work as they would have to act within the constraints of a distinctly host of norms – not just professional norms as set by some (inter-)national translation organizations but also institutional norms from the department within which they work. Despite the generally expected neutral or invisible role on the part of professional interpreters, who are innocent builders of bridge across cultures, much literature on these staff interpreters' reflections or on institutional guidelines and requirements unveils that they would place loyalty to government speakers at the top position. For instance, the former Premier Zhou Enlai emphasized that interpreters need to keep informed of actual situations and learn actively government policies or stances in order to perform their job well, a guideline that has been maintained by the OTI (cited in Shi 2009). Further, Shi (2007, 57), a senior interpreter and ex-director of OTI, argues that "if interpreters understand (government's) policies, they would be in a good position to correct any errors automatically", which points to interpreters' gate-keeping role as government staffs or insiders beyond a merely communication-enabling function. Moreover, evidence from empirical investigation of norms as manifested in these staff interpreters' performances also uncovers that loyalty to government speakers or to their department is prioritized in their interpreting practice (Wang 2012; Fu 2019). These findings echo Shlesinger's (1999) observation that norms may potentially collide especially in institutional settings (see Marzocchi 2005, 97). Despite the tension that may occur, existing evidence shows that institutional norms often prevail at the expense of other norms in these staff

interpreters' performance.

2.2 "Shift" in interpreting

In interpreting, "shift" is a term borrowed from translation studies which is used to refer to the small changes "that build up cumulatively over a whole text as a result of the choices taken by or imposed on the translator" (Munday 1998, 542). More precisely, for interpreting, it describes those changes found in the target speeches as compared with source speeches as a result not of the systemic differences between languages, which are obligatory, but of deliberations on the part of interpreters. Shifts may be differentially motivated, but can be roughly categorized into two major types: source- and target-oriented, which fulfill adequacy and acceptability (Toury 1995) of interpreting respectively. Source-oriented shift represents interpreter's desire to reproduce the original message fully or to do it for speaker's sake, in line with such norms as "maximizing information recovery" (Gile 2009, 211).

Target-oriented shift, on the other hand, embodies interpreter's attempt to accommodate target communicative conventions and/or the demands of target audience, in compliance with norms like "maximizing the communication impact of the speech" (Gile 2009, 212). In dialogue interpreting, shifts in address forms and personal pronouns have frequently been observed to meet the cultural expectations of target audience (e.g. Pöchhacker 1995; Diriker 2004; Chang & Wu 2009). Regarding conference interpreting where the simultaneous mode is the dominant style, a number of target-oriented shifts, though not always specified as such by researchers, are also readily identifiable in the literature. These include shifts in speaking subject to facilitate understanding (Diriker 2004), shifts in mood and modality to alleviate illocutionary force (Monacelli 2006), addition in rendering proper names to enhance the accessibility to target audience (Meyer 2008), addition of hedges and modal particles to mitigate speech acts (Magnifico & Defrancq 2017), paraphrase of figurative language (Spinolo 2018), and explicitation of various forms such as metaphorical strings (Beaton 2007). Particularly, Gumul (2006, 2017) has used "explicitating shifts" as a cover term to encompass a wide range of transfer operations, such as cohesion-related explicitation, meaning specification, and insertion of hedges among others. Noteworthy is that, while simultaneous interpreters are more prone to follow the speakers closely, largely due to the strict temporal and cognitive constraints of the mode, interpreters in the consecutive mode, as is the case of interpreting for

Chinese Premiers' press conferences, are more advantaged to mediate between interactants, thereby introducing more shifts.

With respect to Chinese to English interpreting, particularly in consecutive mode, a number of shifts that are target-oriented have widely been reported by researchers, such as specification of the Chinese deictic items 这个/这些 (*zhege/zhexie*) and addition of logical connectives (Hu & Tao 2009), addition of cohesive devices and explicitation of speaker's intended meaning (Wang 2012; Wang & Qin 2015), manipulation of terms of address (Sun, 2014), addition of audience-oriented hedges (Pan & Zheng 2017), shift in modality to accommodate target communicative norms (Li 2018; Fu 2019), etc. However, quite a few of shifts observed are sporadic in nature and identifiable only by detailed manual analysis, which is both time-consuming and "difficult to separate universal tendencies from text-specific features" (Gumul 2017: 317). Still, the reasons behind these shifts are either left unexplored or are inconsistent in existing studies with some attributed to the influence of norms (Diriker, 2004; Monacelli 2006; Wang 2012) while others to cognitive operations (Gumul 2017).

Nevertheless, those features recorded in previous studies will serve as useful references in our diachronic examination of the outputs by Chinese institutional interpreters. Yet, this study shall distinguish itself in not only describing, but also comparing changes in target-oriented shifts across time with interpreting norms taken into account, an issue rarely touched upon in existing literature. In addition, the potential of corpus for quantitative analyses will be fully explored in this study to identify trend of regularities.

3. Research design and data

3.1 Research questions and methodology

Against the above backdrop, this study aims to address the following two research questions:

(1) Whether, and in which way, changes in target-oriented shifts can be observed, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in interpreting for Chinese government press conferences in the 1990s and the 2010s;

(2) How these changes of target-oriented shifts in the interpreters' performance correlate with the evolving socio-cultural context and the norms embedded in it.

To this end, the descriptive translation studies approach (Toury 1995) is adopted, in which we describe objectively what occurs in the interpreted

product, drawing on corpus methodology. Specifically, to begin with, a top-down analysis is conducted first, in which those target-oriented shifts reported in previous studies (e.g. Wang 2012; Wang & Qin 2015; Li 2018) are summarized so that the foci of analysis are identified. Then a bottom-up analysis is conducted into the diachronic parallel corpus, in which major target-oriented shifts are identified through source-target comparison. By integrating the two procedures, only those regularly occurring target-oriented shifts, that are identifiable and retrievable through parallel corpus tools such as ParaConc, are filtered out. The whole procedure ultimately confirms five major types of target-oriented shifts, namely inserting hedges before propositional statements, modality shifts to attenuate ST's categorical force, explicitation of emphatic meanings, explicitation of implicit logic relations, and specification of Chinese source deictic lexis. These shifts are chosen as they can be linguistically indexed and thus analyzable by corpus software to allow for any regular patterns to be discerned.

These identified shifts shall serve as our departure point of analysis, with both quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted, to capture the nature and the extent of changes that may arise across the time.

3.2 Research data

The materials used in this study are drawn from the interpreting outputs for Chinese government press conferences in the 1990s and the 2010s respectively. For homogeneity of data, only those interpreted events for the Premiers of State Council are included. However, due to accessibility, only five sets of interpreting data from the 1990s were available (see Table 1 for details). Therefore, for balance of corpus structure, another five sets of data from the 2010s (i.e. 2013 to 2017) were selected for comparison. All the data, originally kept in the form of audio/video recordings, was then transcribed and stored in machine-readable format. The resulting source and target texts were aligned sentence by sentence and input into ParaConc, a corpus program for parallel text alignment and analysis. This produced a parallel corpus with two comparable sub-corpora: the Corpus of Interpreted Chinese Government Press Conferences in the 1990s (CICGPC-1990s) and the Corpus of Interpreted Chinese Government Press Conferences in the 2010s (CICGPC-2010s). The corpus specifics are presented in Table 1 below. As the sizes for the two sub-corpora vary, it is decided that the normalized frequency of occurrences will be calculated in subsequent quantitative analysis in order to offset the effect resulting from unequal

corpus sizes.

Table 1 Details of the corpus in the study

	Years	**Speakers**	**Interpreters**	**ST word count**	**TT word count**
CICGPC-1990s	1990	Premier Li Peng	I1 (male)	7308	5279
	1991		I1+I2 (male +female)	10169	7577
	1993		I1+I3 (male+ male)	5164	4181
	1998	Premier Zhu Rongji	I4(female)	6956	5215
	1999		I5(female)	6700	5044
	Total			36297	27296
CICGPC-2010s	2013	Premier Li Keqiang	I6(male)	8293	6292
	2014		I7(female)	9764	6755
	2015		I7(female)	8770	7043
	2016		I7(female)	10861	7457
	2017		I7(female)	10534	8089
	Total			48222	35636

3.3 Institutional interpreting of Chinese premiers' discourse

The press conferences involved are all held following immediately the conclusion of the annual National People's Congress and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (commonly known as the "Two Sessions"). During these press conferences, the incumbent Premier answers publicly questions from both Chinese and international journalists, enabled through Chinese-English consecutive interpreting service in both ways.

For the 1990s corpus, there are two premiers contributing five events, and for the 2010s corpus, one premier, who has been in office in his second term, contributes another five. All of the premiers are males, delivering on policies of China's economy, politics, diplomacy and military affairs. Though consecutive interpreting service is provided in both directions, for data consistency, only interpreting from Chinese to English is included for materials of the corpora. Altogether, there are two male and three female interpreters serving for the 1990s events, and one male with another female interpreters for the 2010s events. All of these interpreters for the "Two Sessions" press conferences are highly competent professionals from the OTI of China Foreign Ministry, who have received intensive training within institution and possess at least ten years' experiences of interpreting (Guo

2013). Consequently, variables such as the speakers, topics, interpreter's gender and experience are unlikely to make much difference to interpreters' outputs collected in the two corpora.

4. Quantitative results

With the corpus tools on ParaConc, a comparative analysis of the source and target texts is conducted about the above four identified types of target-oriented shifts, with each occurrence counted and recorded. Further, for data comparability, the raw frequency for each type of shift is normalized in terms of its occurrence in every 10,000 words of interpreted texts for each corpus, followed by statistical analyses executed on the total raw frequency for each type to see if any significant differences can be observed across the two corpora. The detailed results are summarized and presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Comparison of target-oriented shifts between CICGPC-1990s and CICGPC-2010s

Types of target-oriented shifts		**Linguistic markers**	**CICGPC-1990s**		**CICGPC-2010s**		χ^2	**P**
			Raw freq.	Normalized freq.	Raw freq.	Normalized freq.		
Inserting hedges before propositional statements		*I(we) think/know believe/hope/understand/ feel/want to; in my view; let me say*	69	25.3	125	35.1	4.515	0.034
Modality shifts to attenuate ST's categorical force		*will, can, would, need, may, could, might*	126	46.2	209	58.6	4.320	0.038
Explicitation of emphatic meanings		*actually; as a matter of fact; it is true that; the truth is; always; does; indeed; only; really; still*	43	15.8	81	22.7	3.479	0.062
Specification of Chinese source deictic lexis		*它, 它们, 这个, 这, 此, 这(次/里/项/样/些/种)*	41	15.0	56	15.7	0.014	0.907
Explicitat	Purpose relation	*in order to; so as to; so that*	10	3.7	20	5.6		
	Cause-e	*as a result; because; due*	35	12.8	27	7.6		

ion of implicit logic relations	ffect relation	*to; thanks to; therefore; hence*						
	Illustrative relation	*for example/ instance; such as; that is*	27	9.9	29	8.1		
	Adversative relation	*a-/though; but; however; rather; yet*	30	11.0	44	12.3		
Subtotal			102	37.4	120	33.7	0.500	0.480
Sum			381	139.6	591	165.8	6.839	0.009

As can be seen in Table 2, the 2010s corpus exceeds the 1990s corpus in the normalized frequencies of shifts in "inserting hedges before propositional statements" (35.1 vs. 25.3), "modality shifts to attenuate ST's categorical force" (58.6 vs. 46.2), "explicitation of emphatic meanings" (22.7 vs. 15.8), and "specification of Chinese source deictic lexis" (15.7 vs. 15.0), with significant differences found for the former two types ($P<0.05$ respectively). In comparison, the normalized frequency for the 1990s corpus surpass that of the 2010s in the shift of "explicitation of implicit logic relations" (37.4 vs 33.7) but insignificantly ($P>0.05$). In general, since significant difference in terms of total frequencies (139.6 vs.165.8, $P<0.01$) can be observed between the two corpora, the first research question regarding whether there is an observable trend towards more target-oriented in interpreters' performance across the two periods can be answered with a positive yes.

5. Qualitative analysis

In this section qualitative analysis will be done in order to have a closer examination of the changes in different categories of shift between the two periods.

5.1 Changes in "inserting hedges before propositional statements"

In daily speeches, though a speaker may frame linguistically his attitude or evaluation towards a proposition, cases are also that a proposition is presented baldly without referring explicitly to its source of cognition. In the materials under study, it is found that interpreters would frequently make

speakers' personal responsibility for the validity of propositions clear by inserting hedges before bald propositional statements. Hedges here refer to linguistic devices that are used to "qualify categorical commitment, expressing possibility rather than certainty" (Hyland 1996, 251). Their surface forms include *I (we) think/believe/know//hope/understand/feel/want to, in my view* and *let me say* in the investigated materials. In Hyland's (ibid) classification, these hedges, which are used to qualify propositions at utterance level, serve an interpersonal function and are primarily audience-oriented. Specifically, by acknowledging personal responsibility, these hedges indicate that the proposition uttered is only an alternative and personal interpretation rather than a conclusive one, thus leaving room for negotiation to audience. They serve to mitigate the illocutionary force of speech acts and grant to hearers an active role for the ratification of claims. In example 1, the bald propositional statement expressed in the second clause of ST is hedged in the rendition with the addition of *I believe*, which indicates that the proposition is only a personal interpretation. In this way, ST's categorical force is attenuated by inserting the hedge. As a frequently observed phenomenon, it is found that the normalized frequency of inserting hedges for the 2010s corpus (35.1) outnumbers that of the 1990s corpus (25.3) in this type of shift.

(1) ST: *中美经贸关系的发展从来都是双赢的，这一点美国的商人们心里最清楚。*

[Literally: The development of China-US economic and trade relation has been win-win, this point the US businessmen's hearts know most clearly.]

TT: Business cooperation between our two countries has always been of mutually benefit, something that I believe the US business people know the best.

5.2 Changes in "modality shifts to attenuate ST's categorical force"

The analysis of parallel texts also reveals remarkable shifts in modality to attenuate ST's assertive force. As modality represents the intermediate degrees or indeterminacy "between the positive and negative poles" (Halliday 2000: 88), a modalized expression in the TT can attenuate ST's assertive statement, rendering the TT less definitive or face-threatening. Actually, contrastive linguistic studies between Chinese and English have revealed observable difference in the rhetorical conventions and styles of persuasion between the two cultures. Precisely, while Chinese culture prefers assertive and authoritative statements in persuasion, Anglo-American culture is characterized by more tentativeness and caution

in making claims by giving due attention to possible counterarguments (e.g. Nisbett 2001; Hu & Cao 2011). Therefore, in numerous studies, it has been found that interpreters or translators working from Chinese to English tend to resort to modal verbs as a vehicle to adapt to English communicative conventions (e.g. Wu & Zhang 2015; Fu 2016; Li 2018).

In example 2, when talking about the issue of globalization, the Premier made an assertion by saying "some problems have also occurred in this process". The interpreter, on the other hand, added the modal verb "may", which suggests a possibility by indicating the speaker's epistemic judgment. Together with the insertion of two other hedges (i.e. "I believe", "we don't think"), the modality shift mitigates the assertive force in the ST. Apart from adding modal verbs, ST intensifiers are often replaced with modal verbs in the TT. In example 3, on the issue of China-US relation, an intensifier "still" is used in the ST to highlight the sharpness of some differences between the two countries, which may serve as a face-threatening act to hearers. This word is, however, switched into the modal "could" in the TT, which greatly alleviates the assertive force of the ST.

(2) ST: *实际上，全球化使各国都受益了，不过在这个过程中也有一些问题，像分配等方面，但它们不是全球化本身的问题。*

[Literally: Actually, globalization has made all countries be benefited, but some problems have also occurred in this process, such as distribution and other aspects, yet they are not problems resulting from globalization per se.

TT: I believe it is fair to say that all partied have benefited from globalization. Some issues and problems <u>may</u> have occurred in this process, for example with respect to distribution. But we don't think they are the results of globalization per se.

(3) ST: *中美两国之间有广泛的共同利益，当然也存在着分歧，有的还是比较尖锐的。*

[Literally: China-US the two countries have broad common interests, of course there are differences too, some are <u>still</u> quite sharp.]

TT: There are broad common interests between China and the United States. There are also some differences between the two countries, and some differences <u>could</u> be quite sharp.

In our materials, the addition of modal verbs or the switch from an intensifying expression into a modalized one is frequently observed, as summarized in Table 2. Generally, an observable increase is found in the frequency of "modality shifts to attenuate ST's categorical force" between

the two periods. Hence, a more target-oriented tendency can be argued for interpreters' outputs in the 2010s in terms of modality shifts.

5.3 Changes in "explicitation of emphatic meanings"

The orality and situatedness of delivering at press conferences imply that certain paralinguistic and extralinguistic features, such as pitch, intonation, pause, stress and gestures, will inevitably carry an amount of information that may not be directly accessible to the target audience. Messages of emphasis are part of this information that are frequently transmitted through stress, Chinese-specific tone, pauses, or other para-/extralinguistic means (Wang & Qin 2015). These intended emphases are often converted into linguistically encoded information by interpreters through the addition of a number of linguistic markers, including *actually, as a matter of fact, it is true that*, *the truth is, always, does, indeed, only, really* and *still* in our materials.

In example 4, when commenting on the economic relation between China and Russia, the Premier articulated the underlined Chinese word *大幅* [substantially] with a stress and a prolonged intonation, accompanied with a concomitant gesture of his forefinger pointing to the desktop, to highlight the growing economic relation between the two countries. This paralinguistic and extralinguistic information is captured by the interpreter, who seated close to the Premier, and recontextualized linguistically in the rendition by adding the adverb "actually". Meanwhile, this addition also serves as a reinforcement of the emphatic meaning expressed in the precedent phrase "the truth is". In example 5, talking about the Korean nuclear issue, the Premier put accent on the underlined Chinese word *各方* [all parties] to emphasize that no party shall be able to be immune from the cost of possible conflict. The interpreter here chooses to supplement the word "only" to make explicit the emphasis that harm is the only thing to be expected for all parties.

(4) ST: *特别是今年前两个月，中俄贸易额是大幅增长。*

[Literally: Especially in the first two months of this year, the China-Russia trade volume grows substantially.]

TT: The truth is in the first two months of this year, there was actually a big surge in China-Russia trade.

(5) ST: *紧张很可能会导致冲突，会使各方都受损。*

[Literally: Tension may possibly lead to conflict, and will make cost to all parties.]

TT: Tensions may lead to conflict and only bring harm to all the parties involved.

Statistically, the normalized frequency of this type of shifts for the 2010s corpus (22.7) is higher than that for the 1990s corpus (15.8). The results thus indicate interpreters in the 2010s tend to explicitate speaker's intended emphatic meanings on a more regular basis than the 1990s.

5.4 Changes in "specification of Chinese source deictic lexis"

In oral speeches, speakers would resort to linguistic devices such as deictic lexis to establish cohesive links between different parts of utterances. This is true for both English and Chinese. The decoding of these context-dependent messages requires the hearers' knowledge of the source language and also their comprehension of the meanings negotiated. Consequently, it has been found that ST deictic words are frequently specified by interpreters to promote understanding for target hearers in interpreting between different language combinations (e.g. Hu & Tao 2009; Gumul 2017). In our Chinese source texts, those frequently occurring deixis include *它/它们*, *这*, *这(个/次/里/项/样/些/种)* , *此*. They are frequently specified by interpreters into what they actually refer to. In example 6, the Chinese deictic lexicon *此* (*this/here/now*) is transformed into the specific nominal phrase "the future of this relationship" in the TT. This specification of the Chinese deixis in the rendition may help to clarify its potentially ambiguous meaning for target readers since several nouns show up before the deixis in the ST. Our above statistical analysis reveals that, the normalized frequency of this type of shift for the 2010s corpus (15.7) is higher than that of the 1990s corpus (15.0), but the difference is only negligible. Thus, only a limited trend of becoming more target-oriented is found in interpreters' performance with regard to "specification of Chinese source deictic lexis".

(6) ST: *不管谁当选美国总统，虽然中美关系经历过风风雨雨，但是一直前行，我对此持乐观态度。*

[Literally: No matter who gets elected the US president, despite China-US relation experienced winds and rains, but continues to move forward, I take an optimistic attitude about this.]

TT: Well I said that China-US relations have been going forward in spite of various twists and turns during the past several decades. I am optimistic about the future of this relationship no matter who gets elected.

5.5 Changes in "explicitation of implicit logic relations"

Besides the explicitation of speaker's intended meanings, the implicit source logic relations are also frequently made explicit in the target texts by adding a variety of logical connectives. These explicitated logic relations fall into four types: purpose, illustration, causality, and adversative relation.

5.5.1 Explicitate "manner-purpose" and "cause-effect" relations

Conventionally, Chinese language relies on word order or the intrinsic meanings involved, rather than explicit logical connectives, to denote the "manner-purpose" or the "cause-effect" relations between clauses (Feng & Chen 2008). Sentences like these typically unfold with the manner or the cause presented before the purpose or the effect. Though evident to Chinese speakers, the implicit logic relations, if rendered directly into English, may pose a difficulty to target audience's understanding. In our materials, it is found that interpreters regularly choose to announce the purpose of an act with the addition of connective phrases such as *in order to, so as to,* and *so that*, or to spell out explicitly a clause as the cause or the effect of another clause by adding *as a result, because, due to, thanks to, therefore* and *hence.* In example 7, the interpreter connects two seemingly independent clauses by explicitating the first as the manner and the second as the purpose through adding the connective "so as to". In example 8, the connective "hence" is added in the TT to mark the second sentence as a result of its preceding sentence, though the relation between which is only left implicit in the ST. As for their occurrences, the 2010s corpus surpass the 1990s corpus in terms of "explicitation of purpose relation" (normalized frequencies 5.6 vs. 3.7), but falls behind in "explicitation of cause-effect relation" (7.6 vs. 12.8).

(7) ST: *增进两国人民之间的友谊，夯实中美关系的社会基础。*

[Literally: Enhance the friendship between the two countries' people, tamp the social foundation of China-US relation.]

TT: And we need to deepen our friendship between the people of our two countries so as to build stronger social foundation for good bilateral relations.

(8) ST: *但中国城镇化进程还在加快，中国房地产市场的需求是刚性的。*

[Literally: But China's urbanization process is still speeding, the demand in China's housing market is rigid.]

TT: At the same time, urbanization is still picking up speed in China. Hence, the housing demand in China is here to stay.

5.5.2 Explicitate illustrative and adversative relations

It is a typical case in Chinese that a speaker would illustrate a point by giving examples without indicating explicitly the relation between the point and the specifics, i.e. an illustrative relation (Wang & Qin 2015). It is also not uncommon that semantically contrastive clauses are uttered sequentially without marking linguistically the adversative relation in-between them (Feng & Chen 2008). Despite this, the implied logic relations are still comprehensible to Chinese listeners by virtue of their access to the situational context and the semantic meanings involved. In interpreting, however, we found that this implicit illustrative relation is frequently made clear by interpreters through adding connective phrases including *for example, for instance, such as* and *that is*, and the implicit adversative relation explicitated by adding lexicons like *a-/though, but, however, rather* and *yet.* In example 9, the interpreter made clear the second sentence as an illustration of the point made in the first sentence by adding the phrase "for instance". Still, the addition of the phrase "and so on" at the second sentence final further clarifies the illustrative relation to the target audience. In example 10, where the connective *but* is supplemented to mark the second clause as semantically opposite to the first, the implied adversative relation is rendered transparent. Statistical counts show that, the 2010s corpus exceeds the 1990s corpus in terms of "explicitation of adversative relation" (normalized frequencies 12.3 vs. 11.0), but is surpassed by the latter in terms of "explicitation of illustrative relation" (8.1 vs. 9.9).

(9) ST: *因此我们有很多对话的渠道。我们同美国、同欧盟、同澳大利亚, 我们都有人权方面的对话的渠道。*

[Literally: So we have lots of channels of dialogue. We, with US, with EU and with Australia, we all have channels of dialogue in human rights.]

TT: We also have a lot of channels of dialogue in human rights area. <u>For instance</u>, we have dialogue channels with the United States, with the European Union, and with Australia and so on.

(10) ST: *我看你的面孔是一个西方人，你的中文说得这么流利。*

[Literally: I can see from your face (you) are a westerner, you spoke Chinese so well.]

TT: You have a Westerner's face, <u>but</u> you speak Chinese so well.

Taken together, as the total normalized frequency of shift in "explicitation of implicit logic relations" for the 2010s corpus (33.7) falls behind the 1990s (37.4), though only minimally, the trend of becoming more target-oriented in interpreters' performance is not found in this regard generally.

5.5 Summary

To sum up, two major trends can be observed from the above results: firstly, there is a general trend of becoming more target-oriented in interpreters' outputs, indicated by the significantly higher total number of target-oriented shifts for the 2010s corpus than that for the 1990s corpus. Secondly, there is an increasing trend for interpreters to mitigate ST's illocutionary force, because the 2010s corpus outstrips the 1990s in terms of both "inserting hedges before propositional statements" and "modality shifts to attenuate ST's categorical force".

In comparison, no observable changes are found for shifts in "explicitation of emphatic meanings", "explicitation of implicit logic relations", and "specification of Chinese source deictic lexis". The insignificant differences for the latter two types between the two periods might be explained in terms of interpreters' conscious knowledge of them as two viable interpreting techniques. In fact, while talking about political conference interpreting, the need to "add some transitional connectives" or to "specify once more the antecedents of deictic lexis" had long been noticed and suggested by Guo (1984, 17), former director of OTI, in order to "better achieve clarity and logical organization". Further, in introducing its pre-service training system within institution, Ren (2004, 62), former vice director of OTI, mentioned particularly that interpreters would be intensively trained to command the technique of logic memory, where they learn how to grasp the main points of ST and the (implicit) logic relations between clauses within seconds, with a view to enhancing their short-term memory capacity. It is likely that these "shifts" in academic terms are internalized by interpreters as interpreting techniques through institutional training, hence the minute variation across time. This result seems parallel to Gumul's (2006) finding that cohesion-related explicitation appears to be mainly subconscious and automated behavior.

6. Discussion

The sociopolitical and ideological contexts in which the institutional interpreters operate and the roles they are ascribed to inescapably have an impact on their performance. As shall be evident from our analysis of institutional discourses, the overriding consideration in these interpreters' decisions that are made on a regular basis is subject to the overwhelming institutional norms, expectations as well as pressures.

The analysis of various meta-discursive texts in earlier periods discloses that interpreters for Chinese government have long been expected to function as a faithful echo to the government speakers, who, as political superiors, possess unquestionable power and authority. The traditionally prioritizing faithfulness in interpreting can be traced back to the first Premier and foreign minister of the People's Republic of China Zhou Enlai, who "has no demand for interpreters to use exquisite wordings" but "has a strict demand on accuracy and completeness" in the 1950s and 1960s, a principle that has guided in-house interpreters since then (Guo 2004, 1). In addition, adherence to institutional disciplines in diplomatic settings, where interpreters are repeatedly warned not to commit political errors by overstepping their duties, has always been accented. For instance, Guo (1984, 17) once declared that, "in political meetings, disciplines are particularly important. Whether one agrees or not the speaker's remarks, one has to faithfully transmit them and is in no way allowed to alter them according to one's own assumptions or ideas". And a set of administrative regulations is executed against interpreters' conduct, where interpreters are regularly evaluated in view of their on-site performances and the feedback from the employer department as a criterion for their promotion and remuneration (Shi 2009, 12), thereby guaranteeing their each performance conforming to institutional expectations. Indeed, the emphasis on "faithfulness" in interpreting has been maintained at a unique and supreme position, rarely doubted, until at least the 2000.

However, the analysis of meta-discursive texts in recent years also brings to light a change in interpreters' perception of interpreting in the past two decades or so. In an article titled "How to do a good job in performing diplomatic interpreting", Shi (2007, 60) explicitly argued that "language changes with time. Each age has its own distinctive language" and that interpreting needs to keep up with the change in times. Our analysis reveals that this shifting attitude of institutional interpreters goes in parallel with the flux in the macro socio-political context of China. An important turn in China's political orientation between the two periods (the 1990s and the 2010s) is the implementation of the "go globally" [*走出去*] strategy, aligning largely with the tremendous economic progress that China had made. In China's Reform and Opening up campaign since 1978, though the "bring in" [*引进来*] strategy had been adopted as the dominating practice in the early period in order to develop the national economy, the "go globally" strategy, initially put forward as a national strategy by the top leadership in 2000 and formally stipulated by the 16th CPC (Communist Party of China) National Congress in 2002, was introduced as an integral complement to the

"bring in" strategy. This new strategy provides that more efforts be made in order to "actively participate in international economic and technological cooperation and competition and open wider to the outside world" (official translation of the CPC report in 2002).

One important practice in this aspect is the promotion of Chinese discourse internationally through intensified translation and interpreting efforts in order to "create a favorable international public opinion environment for China's development" (Huang 2015, 6). In the years that follow, the calls for more acceptability in political translations begun to be heard and tend to heat up recently among a number of leading institutional translators/interpreters, such as Jia (2013), Chen (2014) and Huang (2015), to name a few. As suggested by them, translating/interpreting Chinese political speeches has been endowed with the task of "relating Chinese stories in a well-formulated way and introducing China to the international community" proposed by the top leadership (Chen 2014, 9). They almost unanimously argued that the traditional source-priority translation has serious drawbacks in promoting Chinese discourse internationally in the age of globalization when China "is irrevocably coming to the fore on the world stage" (ibid, 9). As pronounced by Chen (ibid, 9), a senior interpreter/translator and ex-director of OTI, the traditional ST-first translations "are often rigid and thus difficult to be accepted by foreigners". He argued for using more accurate and idiomatic English expressions to enhance the acceptability of translated political texts and speeches to foreigners. The implication of such shift in institutional orientation on translator's performance is evidenced unequivocally in Li & Li's (2015) diachronic study noted in the introduction. As a special form of linguistic transfer activity, interpreting, though not so prominently noticed as translation, has also been appealed to be more target-oriented. As an evidence, Shi (2009, 12), in another article titled "Diplomatic interpreting in the past six decades", commented explicitly that:

> In recent years, one direction that diplomatic interpreters strive for is to interpret to their best in a language that is intelligible to and can easily be understood by foreigners, on account of the particular occasions and target audience of the speeches made by the top leaders of the Chinese government and the senior officials from the Foreign Ministry. While ensuring faithfulness to the original, the renditions should be made more lively and fluent. Our practice proves that this has produced good effect and has won widespread credit.

This institutional shift towards more target-oriented is also confirmed by Chen, mentioned above, in a recent interview conducted by Li (2018). In this sense, the general trend of becoming more target-oriented discovered in our study can be understood, more or less, as a mirror of the adjustment in institutional orientation shaped by the evolution of socio-political situations in China across time. Moreover, in 2004, Zhang, the then director of OTI, commented particularly that the rendition of Chinese political speeches had always been criticized as "loaded with bureaucratic air, overstatements and political clichés" by foreigners (Zhang 2004, 55), which "results in a sense of remoteness and makes it difficult to generate a sense of identification among the audience" (ibid). He contended that "if a translator or interpreter does not pay attention to this and seek to alleviate the problem to some extent or partly resolve it, s/he can hardly be evaluated as having satisfactorily fulfilled his or her task" (ibid). Interpreters' actual performance seems to coincide with this instruction as found in Li's (2018) systematic study of modality shifts in interpreting for Chinese government, where a significant "weakening" trend to mitigate government speaker's illocutionary force is discovered. Coupled with the general trend in institutional orientation, it follows likely that interpreters in the 2010s are in a position readier to mitigate ST's illocutionary force than in the 1990s, which may explain the second trend found in our study.

Despite the overwhelming institutional impact on interpreters, another factor that cannot be ignored lies in the fact that "with DTS there has been a major shift away from the source text (ST) to the target text (TT)" (Straniero Sergio & Falbo 2012, 15). This global shift in translation/interpreting perspective may also contribute to the diachronic changes in these institutional interpreters' performance in a parallel way. The question remains to what extent the changes are attributable to the evolving institutional norms or to the global shift in translation/interpreting perspective worldwide.

To summarize, our results suggest a general trend of becoming more target-oriented in China's institutional interpreting of political discourse, manifested predominantly as a greater tendency to mitigate ST's illocutionary force in the 2010s. Contextual analysis reveals that such changes in institutional interpreters' performance are framed within the evolving socio-political situations and the norms of institutional interpreting in China. In general, the findings of our study contribute to a deeper understanding of the intricacy involved in interpreting as a not simply cognitively constrained but also norm-governed activity. The approaches taken in this study may also shed light on the possible framework of

analysis for further inquiries into norms and shifts in interpreting, particularly in Chinese to English interpreting of political discourse. It is hoped that these conclusions drawn on interpreting between Chinese and English can be corroborated by more findings on interpreting in other language pairs.

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