

Original Research Article

A Corpus-based Study on Adverbs of Degree in C-E Translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received: April 11, 2020

Accepted: May 02, 2020

Volume: 3

Issue: 5

DOI: 10.32996/ijllt.2020.3.5.2

KEYWORDS

Adverbs, Normalization, C-E Translation, Corpus, Xi Jinping: The Governance of China

ABSTRACT

Adverbs play an important role in the language on account of their variety in usage, flexibility in position, and diversity of meanings in different contexts. Considering the inherent distinctions between Chinese and English, the translation of adverbs is critical to representing the idea clearly and smoothly. The paper intends to investigate the adverbial translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* through the corpus-based methods, examining normalization in translating Chinese adverbs of degree. Using corpus software and Log-likelihood Ratio Calculator, the author conducts a research on adverbs of degree in both the comparable corpus and parallel corpus. As a result, the paper finds that weakening instead of normalization is the tendency in translation of adverbs of degree, whether from the perspective of the comparable corpus or the parallel corpus. The translated texts of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* turn out to have fewer adverbs of degree in terms of frequency, compared to the original English corpus. And it can be seen that adverbs of degree are omitted or expressed in another way rather than directly translated from Chinese to English. Motivations are found to be semantic degradation of adverbs of degree, ambiguity of meaning of adverbs of degree, and habitual way of expression. Hopefully, the study will shed some light on the further corpus-based research or translation of political texts in the future.

Introduction

Research Background

In the Twelfth Collective Learning of Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC in 2019, General Secretary Xi Jinping points out the necessity and urgency of a creative, appealing, and credible foreign discourse system. The political discourse system as its core component, epitomizes the party's and the government's philosophy and experience in governing the nation.

In the context of globalization, ties and interactions between China and the rest of the world are closer in aspects of politics, economy, culture, and foreign affairs. Recent years have witnessed China's unprecedented tempo of advancement, which has attracted the attention of foreign politicians, media and public. Under the globalized background, the C-E translation work of the central governmental literature including leader's works and major conference documents can not only introduce the fruits of China's reform and development to the world, but also enhance the national cultural soft power, the foreign understanding of China's improvement, and the international identity of the socialism road with Chinese characteristics.

Huang (2014) once claims that bridging China and the international community is the focus and difficult point when dealing with translation work of Chinese party and government literature. Translation is not a mere conversion from Chinese to English, but rather represents the cross-culture communication and transmission. Especially when it comes to the translation of political

documents which embody the unique governing idea and policy, the job must be done on the basis of conforming to the national conditions with Chinese characteristics, as well as connecting the foreign discourse system and expressions. The arduous challenge of creating new concepts, new categories, and new expressions to voice China's stories on the international stage will be the top priority of foreign translation work in the future, and it will mark a new historical period in translation work.

Fortunately, we are on the way to achieve the aim in unremitting efforts. China is increasingly speaking to the world in a way the global community not only understands but also finds captivating and fascinating. The great popularity of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* all over the world can be the best exemplification to attest it. And its translation scripts will be taken as research materials in this paper to delve into the suitable translation strategies of political documents, hopefully enlightening the translation study.

Research Questions

Adverbs, either notionally or functionally loaded, are commonly used in both Chinese and English. Due to the inherent differences between Chinese and English, the adverbial translation has its recipe. This thesis aims to address the following research questions:

- a. How are the adverbs of degree translated in the English version of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*?
- b. Does the translation conform to the standard of normalization compared to the original English corpus?
- c. How can we learn from the usage of adverbs of degree and apply it to our further translation practice?

In a word, this research attempts to analyze the characteristics of adverbial translation in political documents and find out a guiding principle for C-E translation practices.

Research Significance

Recent years have also seen the rapid development of the corpus-based approach which allows us to gain a deep insight into the previously obscure phenomena due to our limitations. According to Tymoczko (1998), corpus-based translation studies (CTS) lays emphasis on both the process and the product of translation, and takes into consideration the smallest text details chosen by the individual translator, as well as the largest cultural patterns both internal and external to the text. Research in this area covers a diversity of studies, ranging from descriptive studies on translation norms and translator style, to applied studies like translator training. In the center of descriptive corpus-based translation studies, as Baker (1993) indicates, there is certain tendency that presents the nature of translated texts in general and the nature of the process of translation itself, which will manifest itself in recurrent practice. The pursuit of universals or norms intends to discover the natural laws and scientific principles which have more value than others. Combined with the corpus-based approach, it is more objective and accessible to uncover the nature of translation, on the basis of the statistical analysis of abundance of corpus data.

Enlightened by that, the author aims to delve into the normalization of adverbs and gain some universal experience by comparing the C-E translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, a collection of important speeches and written works by Xi Jinping. It has attracted widespread attention, and has been highly acclaimed by countless Chinese and foreign readers. However, recent domestic and foreign researches on it have been either from a general translation approach such as Lin (2016), Zhao (2017), or the political criticism and assessment of Xi's governance. Therefore, in this way the paper will provide a more specific and innovative perspective, which may contribute to the translation studies.

Layout of the Paper

This thesis consists of five parts: Introduction, Literature Review, Research Methodology, Results and Discussions, and Conclusion.

The first part is a brief introduction of the research background, significance and questions that the essay attempts to address. The second part reviews the previous studies on some critical concepts and terms in this research, respectively corpus-based translation studies, normalization, adverbs, and the research object. The third part is the research methodology, which contains the corpus design and data, as well as specific research tools and procedures. The fourth part reveals the research results of adverbs of degree in C-E translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. The author also gives solid exemplifications and analyzes specific adverbs. And lastly in Chapter Five, the author summarizes the findings of the research, and points out the limitations and suggestions for further studies.

Literature Review

As early as in the 1990s, based on the former studies of Vanderauwera (1985) and Blum-Kulka (1986), Baker (1993) first put forward the concept of translation universals, conducting descriptive studies on the characteristics of translation through the corpus-based method. Mona Baker defined translation universals as “features which typically occur in translated text rather than original utterances and which are not the result of interference from specific linguistic systems”. Afterwards, Chinese scholars Hu and Tao (2012) put the hypothesis into practical research. They researched into the translation normalization at the syntactical and lexical level, focused on the case of C-E interpretation in the press conference with the corpus-based methodology.

Corpus-based Translation Studies

The term Corpus-based Translation Studies was first introduced in 1996 by Baker (1996) in her article “Corpus-Based Translation Studies: The Challenges that Lie Ahead”, where she referred it to the branch of translation studies that investigates the nature of translation as a product and a process by means of corpora, based on the statistical analysis of the features of translated texts in relation to non-translated texts and the source texts. The availability of large corpora of both original and translated texts, along with the improvement of a corpus-driven methodology, enables translation researchers to unveil the essence of translated texts as a mediated communicative event. According to Laviosa (2007), it “can be defined as the branch of the discipline that uses corpora of original and/or translated text for the empirical study of the product and process of translation, the elaboration of theoretical constructs and the training of translators”.

Corpus-based translation studies is claimed to grow out of the marriage between descriptive translation studies and corpus linguistics, addressing a diversity of issues related to theory, description and translation practice. And it has the following characteristics. Firstly, the corpus-based translation studies research is based on analyzing a large quantity of naturally occurring corpus texts and focused on actual patterns of translated texts. Secondly, corpus-based translation studies are an essential combination of quantitative statistics and qualitative analysis. By the former, it allows researchers to acquire statistical data in a convenient way from lexical, syntactic, and textual perspectives. By the latter, it means that researchers are endowed with the evidence to interpret these statistical results and generalize the features of translation norms. That’s to say, corpus-based translation studies is empirical in nature. Thirdly, corpus-based translation studies combine not only the linguistic approach by analyzing authentic examples at various language levels, but also the cultural approach by applying the cultural studies theory. The distinctive vantage of corpus has injected much vitality into translation studies.

Normalization

Norm is a key concept in descriptive translation studies. Norm has been classified in different ways by scholars, but generally the notion of it discussed by Toury (1995) and Chesterman (1997) includes two aspects of translation norms: extratextual norms and textual norms. The extratextual norm refers to the external cultural and social context which dominates the whole translation activities, representing reader expectancy about related translation policy, correctness and suitability. The textual norm indicates the regularity during the translation process which dominates the linguistic practice of translators. So in a word, the textual norm manifests the translator’s linguistic choices and tendencies in dealing with the texts, and meanwhile submits to the constraints of the extratextual norm.

The hypothesis of normalization, originally proposed as “conservatism” by Baker (1996), which is also called “conventionalization” in related literature, states that translators tend to “conform to patterns and practices typical of the target language, even to the point of exaggerating them”. Williams (2005) puts forward a general hypothesis of normalization, by observing that “the written texts produced by a population of translators will conform more closely to the norms prevailing for written texts in the language of translation, and this will result in observably fewer instances of atypical or ‘non-conformist’ usage in translated texts. Specifically, we will find fewer examples of unattested words and phrases in translated corpora”. Normalization, together with simplification, explicitation, and leveling out is listed as universal features of translation, which can be seen a product of constraints which are inherent in the translation process itself, which accounts for the fact that they are universal.

Considering the conformation to the norm, except normalization, the other two possibilities are strengthening and weakening. According to Hu and Tao (2012), the strengthening tendency in translation is embodied in two situations: (1) There is no adverb of degree in the original text. But in order to put emphasis on the information of the original text, the translator will add adverbs of degree in front of related adjectives, verbs and adverbs. (2) The magnitude of adverbs of degree in the original text is less than that in the translated text. On the contrary, weakening refers to (1) adverbs of degree are omitted or expressed in another

way, so as to weaken the information of the original text. (2) The magnitude of adverbs of degree in the translated text is less than that in the original text.

Adverbs

Compared with the Indo-European languages, Chinese has its own characteristics, in which adverbs are one special part of speech (Zhang 2000). On the one hand, adverbs have some grammatical features of content words, to act as the syntactic element, serve the referential function or even compose the whole sentence by itself. On the other hand, adverbs have some characteristics of function words, such as adhesion, orientation, grammaticalization and closure. They have more individuality than generality. Although Chinese adverbs are by no means innumerable in terms of the absolute number, they are various and complex in functions and usages. Especially when it comes to Chinese, lacking morphological changes itself in a strict sense, many grammatical functions undertaken by other parts of speech in Indo-European languages are often completed by adverbs in Chinese. Given the particularity and importance of Chinese adverbs, it is of necessity to conduct a thorough study on them in order to fully reveal the rules.

Definitions

Ma (1983) finished the historical masterpiece *Ma’s Basic Principles for Writing Clearly*(《马氏文通》), by combining Chinese tradition and western theoretical methods. It established the first Chinese grammar system and laid the cornerstone for modern Chinese linguistics. It is in this book that the concept of “adverb” was first introduced, and was called “zhuangzi(状字)” by Ma Jianzhong. He defined “zhuangzi” as “words to modify static and dynamic status”.

Because of the speciality and complexity of Chinese adverbs, scholars have defined adverbs in their own way, including Chen (1982), Chen (1978), Wang (1978), Zhu (1982), Xing (2003), etc. The difference between their definitions mainly lies in the emphasis, some on meaning, some on grammatical function. Among others, Zhu (1982) and Xing (2003) give definitions to adverbs from the aspect of syntactic function. The former contends that adverbs are function words that can only function as adverbial modifiers. The latter claims that to distinguish adverbs, one should grip the precondition of pure adverbials.

Apparently, the definitions of adverbs are complicated and diverse from different scholars’ opinions, which can be attributed to their chosen perspectives. In all, we can at least describe adverbs as words to serve as adverbial modifiers (a constituent distinct from subject, verb, object, and complement) in sentences and decorative components (not modified by other components) in predicate structures.

Classifications

Different researchers have put forward different classifications for Chinese adverbs according to their own criteria. Lv (1979) divides adverbs into seven categories; Zhang (1980) discriminates five categories; Zhang (2000) discriminates three categories and eight subcategories; Zhu (1982) discriminates four categories; Wang (1978) discriminates eight categories; Hu (1979), Huang and Liao (1993) divide adverbs into six categories.

To make it clear, the author designs the following chart to list different classifications by scholars.

Table 2-1 Different Classifications of Chinese Adverbs

Scholar	Year	Source	Classification
Lv Shuxiang	1942	<i>Essentials of Chinese Grammar</i>	adverb of location, adverb of time, adverb of dynamism, adverb of degree, adverb of judgement, negative adverb, general adverb
Zhang Jing	1980	<i>A New Edition of Modern Chinese</i>	adverb of degree, adverb of time, adverb of range, adverb of measure, adverb of mood
Zhang Yisheng	2000	<i>Research on Adverbs in Modern Chinese</i>	descriptive adverb, determinative adverb, commentary adverb

Zhu Dexi	2004	<i>Grammar Lectures</i>	adverb of range, adverb of degree, adverb of time, negative adverb
Hu Yushu	2004	<i>Modern Chinese</i>	adverb of degree, adverb of range, adverb of time(frequency), positive(negative) adverb, modal adverb, adverb of mood
Wang Li	2011	<i>Modern Chinese Grammar</i>	adverb of degree, adverb of range, adverb of time, adverb of manner, negative adverb, adverb of possibility or necessity, adverb of mood, correlative adverb
Huang Borong and Liao Xudong	2011	<i>Modern Chinese</i>	adverb of degree, adverb of range, adverb of time(frequency), positive(negative) adverb, modal adverb, adverb of mood

Adverbs of Degree

From the above chart, it can be shown that adverb of degree is recognized as a typical type of adverb by different Chinese scholars, which will be selected as the research object.

Foreign scholars have also done the research on adverbs of degree. According to Klein (1998), the adverb of degree can be further classified into eight categories as the following based on the magnitude.

Table 2-2 Classification of Adverbs of Degree

Classification	Listed Adverbs	Chinese Meaning
绝对副词 (absolute)	completely, absolutely, really	绝对
极度副词 (extremely high)	extremely, awfully, too	极其, 太
高度副词 (high)	very	十分, 非常, 很
中度副词 (moderate)	rather, fairly, pretty, quite	相当
低度副词 (minimal)	somewhat, a bit, a little	有点, 稍微
接近副词 (approximative)	almost, nearly, virtually	几乎
准否定副词(quasinegative)	little, hardly, barely	几乎不
否定副词 (negative)	not, not at all	不

Two domestic papers have contributed to the corpus-based translation study of adverbs of degree. Wang and Li (2015) investigate the applications of adverbs of degree in E-C translation of *Everlasting Song of Sorrow* (《长恨歌》). The study shows that in translating Chinese adverbs of degree, the English version is featured by obvious strengthening to various extents. And the paper has explained the reasons from the perspectives of features of adverbs of degree, the requirement of English

idiomatic expression, the emphasis on the tragic character in the book, and the consideration for the targeted readers. The other one is the research on three Chinese translations of English adverbs of degree in Shakespeare's plays by Liu and Hu (2014). It finds that in translating adverbs of absolute degree and high degree, the weakening tendency is more obvious. The paper also attempts to analyse the tentative reasons behind the feature.

The author will adopt the corpus-based method to study the translation of adverbs of degree in political literature, in an effort to figure out the rules behind it.

Xi Jinping: The Governance of China

Xi Jinping: The Governance of China, a series of our great leader Xi Jinping's speeches and articles, has been the window for foreign nations to get access to China's governing principles and wisdom. Recently scholars have also carried out plenty of research on the authoritative and influential book, however, mainly from two aspects: general translation strategies in its English scripts and political philosophy that can be learned from it.

Researches on the translation approach are listed as the following. Su (2019) uses Eugene A. Nida's theory of functional equivalence to analyze the English translation of the book. Niu (2018) takes the perspectives of culture and language to research into the domestication and foreignization of the English version. Lin (2016) put the political literature in the framework of cultural translation to reveal its general tendency. Zhao (2017) discusses factors on adopting translation strategies such as cultural consciousness, text typology, etc by studying the cases extracted from the text. The paper contends that the English translation establishes a harmonious international discourse system through the application of foreignization, explicitation, simplification, etc.

The other part of researches mainly focuses on the core thoughts inside the book. Zhou (2019) takes *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* as the template, and puts forward different suggestions for strengthening the Party self-discipline.

Foreign papers pay attention to Xi's governance but not any of them focuses on the book specially. Researches done from the aspect of translation mainly generalize the strategies applied in the texts, but few focuses on the normalization or the specific approach of adverbial study. Therefore, this paper successfully goes beyond the confines of general study and delves deeper into the universal laws of adverbial translation in political literature.

Summary

The literature review has shown that corpus-based translation study has so far been the popular approach in C-E translation, with the vantage of large statistics foundation, which well supports the qualitative analysis. Since norms, laws and standards enjoy high status nearly everywhere, the study of translation normalization helps to tap into the discipline and contribute to the efficiency and outcomes. Adverbs are complicated but crucial in both Chinese and English. However, previous researches somehow fail to investigate adverbs of degree in central committee literature, thus unable to provide a comprehensive translation strategic perspective. It is worthwhile to carry out a corpus-based study of adverbs of degree in the authoritative scripts, which will inject enlightenment to translation practice.

Research Methodology

Corpus Design

Comparable Corpus

A comparable corpus refers to one in which the included texts are comparable. It can be monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual. A monolingual corpus consists of original texts and translated texts in the same language from another given source language.

Since the paper intends to investigate the C-E translation normalization of political texts, the author chooses the HKBU Corpus of Political Speeches as a benchmark, compared with the translated texts of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, to form a monolingual comparable corpus in English.

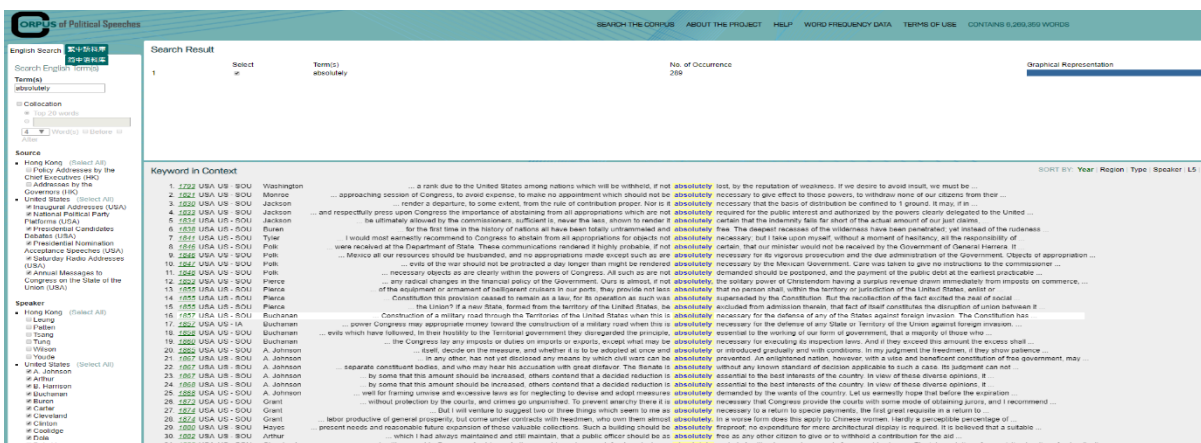


Figure 3-1 Search of “absolutely” in the HKBU Corpus of Political Speeches

The HKBU Corpus of Political Speeches is a crucial resource for those interested in the study of political rhetoric. One of its collections is The Corpus of U.S. Presidential Speeches (1789-2015) (including Inaugural Addresses, Annual Messages to Congress on the State of the Union, National Political Party Platforms, Presidential Nomination Acceptance Speeches, Presidential Candidates Debates and Saturday Radio Address) [corpus size: 4,429,976 words]. It meets the standard of relevant themes, enormous amounts, and definite originality, and therefore will be selected as intralingual comparison.

Parallel Corpus

Briefly speaking, a parallel corpus consists of the source texts of language A and the target translated texts in language B, which are aligned at a certain level. As for this study, the parallel corpus to conduct the interlingual comparison is the combination of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* and its official English version. The statistics shows that the Chinese version has 176,313 characters and the English script has 119,104 words.

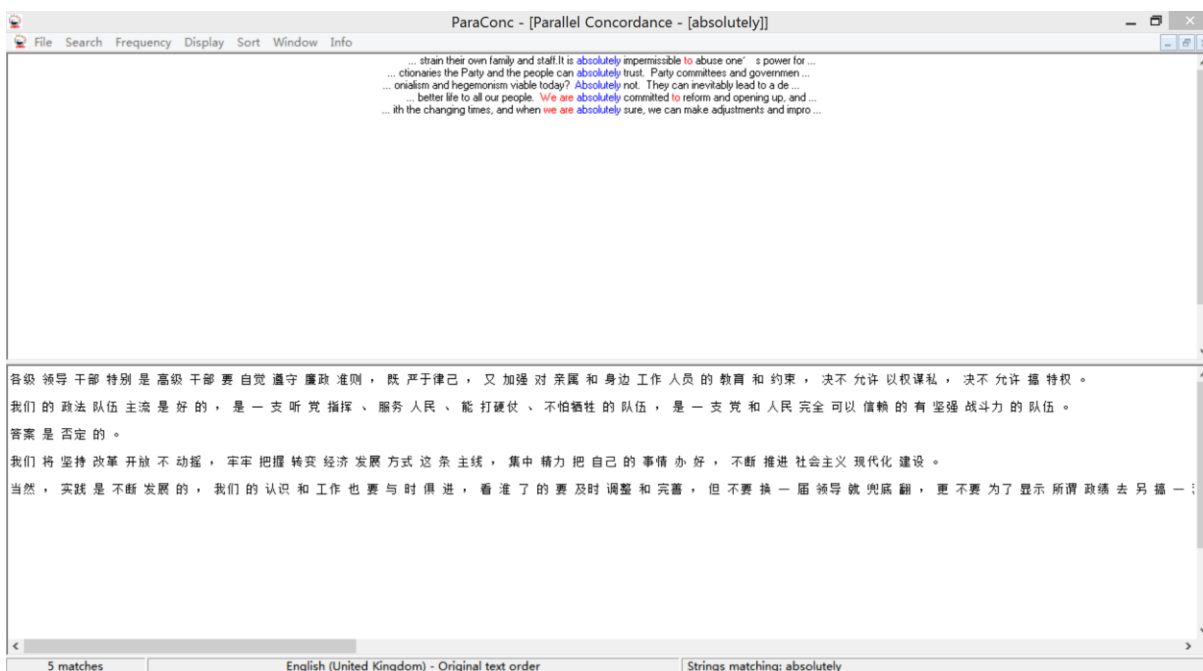


Figure 3-2 Search of “absolutely” in ParaConc

From Figure 3-2, it can be shown clearly that how many “absolutely” are used in the English version and what the correspondence is between the source language and target language.

Research Tools

Several software tools are used for compiling corpora for translation studies, such as EmEditor, ICTCLAS, ParaConc, Antconc, etc. By making use of appropriate software tools, the process of corpus-based study can be achieved, specifically formatting, noise eliminating, word segmentation, sentence alignment, and keyword searching. EmEditor is a text editor primarily used to format texts, eliminate noise and mark texts for later processing. ICTCLAS, the Chinese Lexical Analysis System, is mainly used to tag part-of-speech(POS) in Chinese. ParaConc is a suitable software for parallel corpus study, which provides the powerful functions of text alignment, hot word search, word frequency, etc. Antconc is also a multifunctional corpus software to analyse parameters of the selected texts.

In addition, Log-likelihood Ratio Calculator created by Xu Jiajin of BFSU will be used for in-depth statistical analysis, which could further deepen the research into the relation between original corpus and translated corpus.

This paper integrates the application of these tools to scientifically research into the political corpus.

Research Procedures

The research generally can be divided into two parts. One is an intralingual research of a comparable corpus between the HKBU Corpus of Political Speeches and the English version of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. By comparing these two, the paper attempts to figure out whether the translation conforms to the norm, and if not, what the tendency is. The next one is an interlingual research of a parallel corpus between the Chinese version and English version of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. In this way, the author could better understand the relation between two languages.

In retrospect to the classification of adverbs, the type of adverb of degree is mostly mentioned in the list, and the latest scholars all consider it an important part of adverbs. The paper is going to analyze this specific type in political literature, due to the contrast between the significance of adverb of degree and rather limited research done on the translation of it.

The paper will compare the use of adverb of degree in translation, and study the cases of hot words to come to a conclusion which will shed some light on translation studies.

Summary

Using corpus software and Log-likelihood Ratio Calculator, the author conducts a research on adverbs of degree in both the comparable corpus and parallel corpus. The paper puts forward the hypothesis of normalization, and tests it by comparing the HKBU Corpus of Political Speeches and the English version of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. And then the paper will look into the C-E corpus of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* to figure out the mechanism behind the translation tendency and gain a bigger picture of the translation. Statistical analysis and case study will be combined in this research to have an in-depth investigation of adverbs of degree.

Results and Discussion

As a result, the paper finds that weakening instead of normalization is the tendency in adverbial translation, whether from the perspective of the comparable corpus or the parallel corpus. The translated texts of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* turn out to have fewer adverbs of degree in terms of frequency, compared to the original English corpus. And it can be seen that adverbs of degree are omitted or expressed in another way rather than directly translated from Chinese to English.

Examination of Normalization in Comparable Corpus

Adverbs of Degree in the HKBU Corpus of Political Speeches

By searching the adverbs of degree mentioned above, the author draws the following chart to clearly show the occurrence and frequency of each one. The formulas of frequency are the number of occurrences dividing the total words (4,429,976 words). To be more professional, the paper applies the computation mode of per 1000 word to describe the frequency. Based on the great scale, time span and content of the corpus, the paper can view the result as the native habitual manifestation.

Table 4-1 Frequency of Adverbs of Degree in Native English Corpus

Classification	Adverbs	Occurrence	Frequency (per 1000 words)
absolute	completely	213	0.0481
absolute	absolutely	289	0.0652
absolute	really	565	0.1275
extremely high	extremely	70	0.0158
extremely high	awfully	2	0.0005
extremely high	too	2410	0.5440
high	very	3010	0.6795
moderate	rather	589	0.1330
moderate	fairly	183	0.0413
moderate	pretty	129	0.0291
moderate	quite	227	0.0512
minimal	somewhat	76	0.0172
minimal	a bit	30	0.0068
minimal	a little	397	0.0896
approximative	almost	908	0.2050
approximative	nearly	1246	0.2813
approximative	virtually	160	0.0361
quasinegative	little	1008	0.2275
quasinegative	hardly	102	0.0230
quasinegative	barely	49	0.0111
negative	not	19315	4.3601
negative	not at all	27	0.0061

It can be seen that different adverbs of degree have great variance in occurrence. Words of “not”, “very”, “too”, “nearly”, “little”, “almost” enjoy high frequency in the original corpus. Nevertheless, words of “awfully”, “not at all”, “barely”, “a bit”, “extremely”, “somewhat” boast of low frequency in the original corpus. The distinction among various adverbs of degree in application can instruct us in English usage to some extent.

Adverbs of Degree in Xi Jinping: The Governance of China

By using the same method as 4.1, the author presents the following form to demonstrate the application of adverbs in the translated English version.

Table 4-2 Frequency of Adverbs of Degree in Translated English Corpus

Classification	Adverbs	Occurrence	Frequency (per 1000 words)
absolute	completely	7	0.0588
absolute	absolutely	5	0.0420
absolute	really	7	0.0588
extremely high	extremely	7	0.0588
extremely high	awfully	0	0.0000
extremely high	too	21	0.1763
high	very	24	0.2015
moderate	rather	26	0.2183
moderate	fairly	4	0.0336
moderate	pretty	1	0.0084
moderate	quite	12	0.1008
minimal	somewhat	2	0.0168
minimal	a bit	1	0.0084
minimal	a little	3	0.0252
approximative	almost	3	0.0252
approximative	nearly	3	0.0252
approximative	virtually	0	0.0000
quasinegative	little	5	0.0420
quasinegative	hardly	5	0.0420
quasinegative	barely	0	0.0000
negative	not	264	2.2166
negative	not at all	0	0.0000

From the table, it shows that adverbs of “not”, “rather”, “very”, “too” hit the top frequency, whereas “awfully”, “virtually”, “barely”, “not at all” do not even appear in the translated English corpus. The similar resonance of certain adverbs between the original corpus and translated corpus gives guidance on our choice of words in translation.

Comparison

The examination of normalization in intralingual corpus lies in the comparison between the original English corpus, specifically the HKBU Corpus of Political Speeches in this paper, and the translated corpus in English, namely the self-made *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* corpus. To figure out the latent correlation between these two, the paper uses Log-likelihood Ratio Calculator for mathematical analysis. The following table manifests the result of adverb frequency in the comparable corpus.

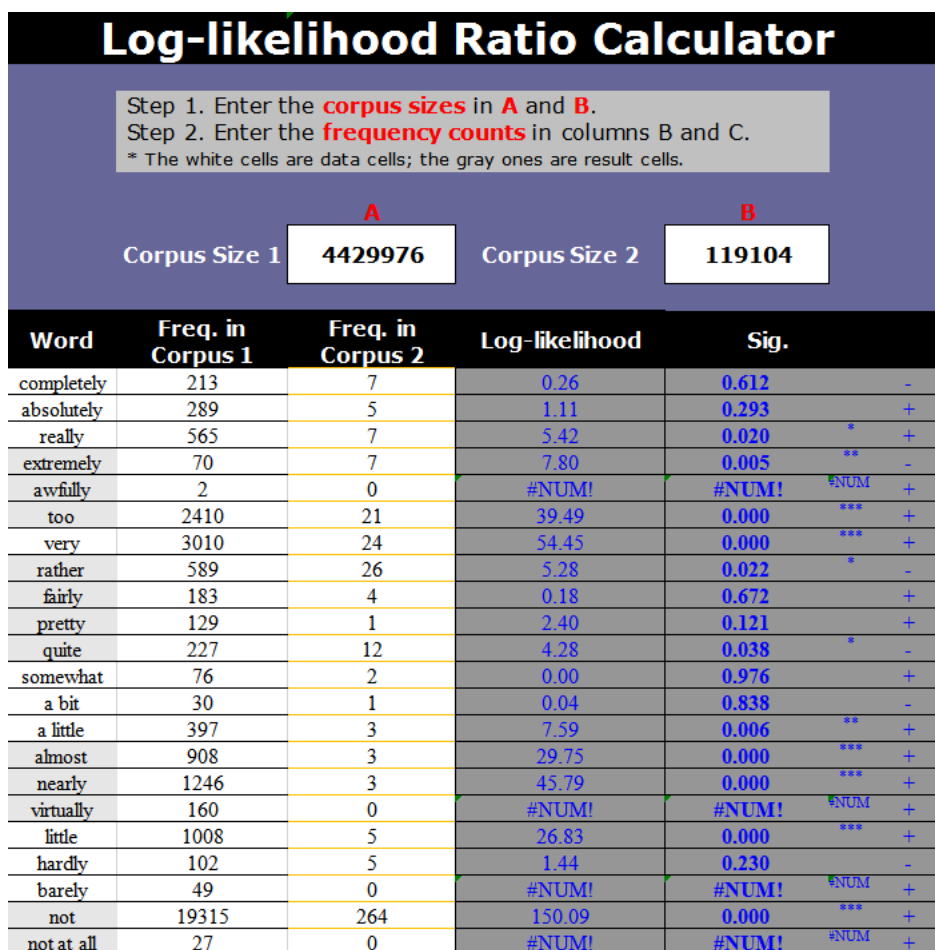


Figure 4-3 Log-likelihood of Adverbs of Degree in Original and Translated Corpus

Figure 4-3 clearly shows the frequency of adverbs of degree in different magnitudes and the comparison between the HKBU Corpus of Political Speeches and the English version of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* corpus, indicated by log-likelihood, sig.(p), and “+” or “-”. It can be seen from the majority of “+” that corpus 1 which is the original English one boasts of more-frequent adverbs of degree than corpus 2 which is the English version of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. Therefore, it refutes the hypothesis of normalization in intralingual corpus. Instead, the translated texts present the tendency of weakening. As mentioned in literature review, weakening refers to (1) adverbs of degree are omitted or expressed in another way, so as to weaken the information of the original text. (2) The magnitude of adverbs of degree in the translated text is less than that in the original text. Judging from the general comparison, the translated text of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* manifests the weakening tendency.

After general overview, the author further draws a figure to vividly perform the contrast between the original corpus and translated corpus in English. The length of the column suggests the frequency of adverbs of degree. The original corpus is saliently more frequent in using adverbs.

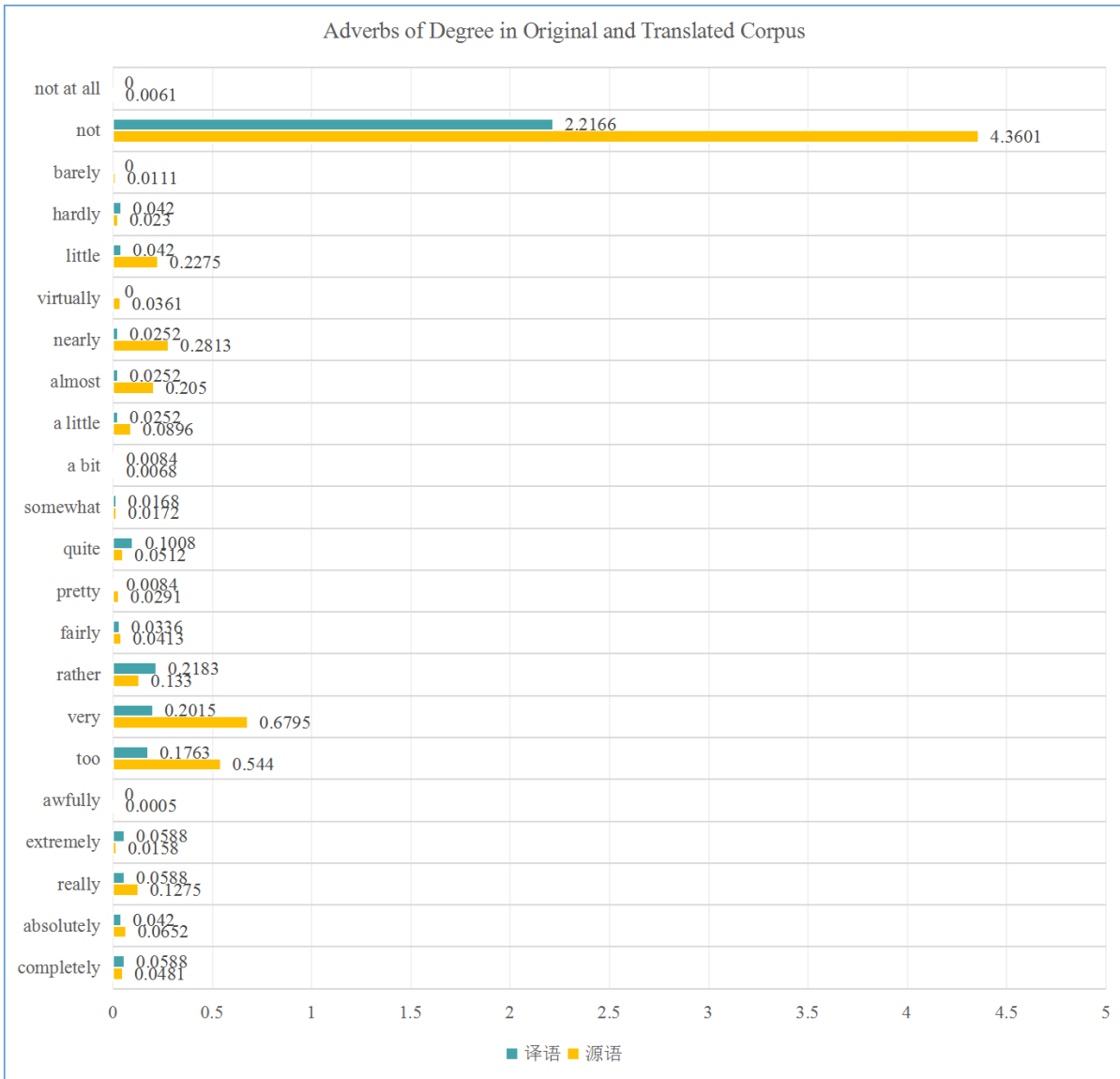


Figure 4-4 Frequency of Adverbs of Degree in Original and Translated Corpus

The frequency of eight types of adverbs of degree can be detected as well. The negative adverb, the high adverb, the extremely high adverb, the approximative adverb are more often applied in political speeches. As to the specific adverb, “awfully”, “barely”, “virtually”, “not at all” are least used in political speeches, which could bring about some referential value to our translation of political texts.

Next, the paper will select some hot words to conduct parallel research between Chinese and its English translation, with the aim to delve into the mechanism behind adverbial translation and figure out the reason of the weakening tendency. The paper selects the Chinese characters of “绝对”, “很”, “相当” and the English word “not”, also standing for different types of adverbs, respectively absolute adverb, high adverb, and moderate adverb, and negative adverb.

Examination of Normalization in Parallel Corpus

It has been discussed that by conducting an intralingual corpus-based research, the weakening tendency is the general trend when translating *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* from Chinese to English. The paper continues to analyze the reason why the use of adverbs of degree is weakened in the English version. So, a parallel comparison from Chinese to English is made.

A. 4.2.1 The Case of “很”

Among the 84 matches of “很” searched in the parallel corpus of ParaConc, only 3 hits are directly translated into “very”. “-ly” also appears such as “largely”, “deeply”, “highly”, “substantially”, and “mostly”, but less than 10 hits. Most of them are omitted and expressed by single adjectives and verb phrases.

- (1) 当前，在改革开放问题上，党内外、国内外都**很**关注，全党上下和社会各方面期待**很**高。

At the current stage, **close** attention to our reform and opening-up drive comes from inside and outside the Party and inside and outside the country as well. The entire Party and all sectors of society have **high** expectations for us.

- (2) 尽管前进道路并不平坦，改革发展稳定任务仍**很**艰巨而繁重，但面对未来，我们充满必胜信心。

Although the way ahead is rugged and the tasks of achieving reform, development and stability are **arduous**, we are confident in our future.

- (3) 今天是五四青年节，**很**高兴来到北京大学同大家见面，共同纪念五四运动 95 周年。

Today, as we celebrate China’s Youth Day I’m **glad** to be here with you, honoring the 95th anniversary of the May 4th Movement.

The above three examples clearly show the omission of “很”, and as Hu Kaibao^[8] has defined, weaken the information of the original text. They apply the use of single adjectives to fully express the Chinese meaning, which avoids redundancy.

As a high adverb, “很” enjoys a high frequency in Chinese texts, but at most times it does not emphasize the information intensity in the context. Take “很高兴遇见你” as an example. If “很” is deleted from the sentence, the expression is rather awkward, which does not conform to the common practice. But in fact, the diction of “很” has nothing to do with the information intensity. According to Quirk et al (1972), “Most commonly, the modifying adverb is an intensifier. The most frequently used modifier, both of adjectives and of adverbs, is very.” It can be seen that due to the pervasive use or even abuse of “very”, the weakening tendency is more and more obvious.

- (4) 大家都**很**关心中国的未来发展。

I know you all have a **keen** interest in China’s future development.

- (5) 这个任务，今天依然**很**现实地摆在我们党面前。

This task still **confronts** our Party today.

Instead of word-for-word adverbial translation, the English version adopts the meaning-loaded adjective “keen” to convey the strong degree of the interest and concern in case 4. And in case 5, the meaning-loaded verb “confront” is applied to describe the importance of the mission in a brief but powerful way. These two cases can also be taken as exemplifications for translators to create the diversity and dynamism of translation rather than stiff transition from one language to the other.

- (6) 农村基层的同志，工作在第一线，条件也不好，一年到头操劳得**很**，**很辛苦**，**很不容易**，我向你们表示诚挚的慰问。

You local officials work in the forefront, face poor conditions, and **toil all year round**. It’s not easy for you. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you all.

In this case, the oral expression of “操劳得很，很辛苦” in Xi’s speech is translated as “toil all year round”, which is a typical case of skillful strategic translation. Since the Chinese version is an oral expression of Xi to the public for his concern, the register tends to be colloquial. The translation does a good job in moulding the register and crystalizing the meaning. Furthermore, the translated words also form a rhythmical and parallel pattern to the former two phrases.

(7) 必须看到·在有的地方和部门·正确用人导向并没有得到**很好**体现。

It must be noted that some localities and departments are not **adopting a correct approach** to appointing officials.

This example showcases the artful application of the verb phrase “adopt a correct approach”. Otherwise if the translation sticks to the sentence order of the Chinese version, it would turn out to be a lengthy one. In addition, the translation uses localities and departments as the subject, which greatly focuses on the key issue and simplifies the sentence structure.

The Case of “相当”

The weakening tendency is apparent in the occurrence of 9 matches of “相当”. It does not simply equal to “rather”, ““quiet””, or “fairly”. Instead, it is omitted, using the adjectives to fully convey the meaning. Examples are as follows.

(8) 我们深知·在**相当**长时期内, 中国仍然是世界上最大的发展中国家·提高 13 亿多人的生活水平和质量需要我们付出艰苦的努力。

We are keenly aware that China will remain the world’s largest developing country for a long time and that to improve life for its 1.3 billion people calls for strenuous efforts.

(9) 中国在今后**相当**长时期仍处于发展上升期·工业化、信息化、城镇化、农业现代化带来巨大国内市场空间.....

China has maintained sound overall economic development. Its growth will continue in the foreseeable future as industrialization, informationization, urbanization and agricultural modernization greatly expand the domestic market.

“相当” occurs often in the phrase “相当长时期” in the whole text. As the two cases show, rather than “for a quite long time”, the translation chooses “for a long time” and “in the foreseeable future”. The collection of these canonical expressions will also enrich translators’ expression bank and boost the lexical diversity.

(10) 现在·一些干部中好人主义盛行·不敢批评、不愿批评·不敢负责、不愿负责的现象**相当普遍**。

With the “nice guy” mentality currently prevailing among some officials, it has become commonplace that many officials dare not criticize errors or take on responsibilities, or are unwilling to do so.

Like the first three cases in 4.2.1, the Chinese adverb does not equivalently occur in the translated text. Instead, the single adjective is used to conclude the meaning. As Zhang (2010) says, “When the speaker uses adverbs, sometimes he does not refer to the degree of the situation, instead, it is a mere completion of the sentence or the filling of syllables.” Since Chinese is prone to apply four-character phrases and emphasize the symmetrical structure, “相当普遍” can be seen as the fulfillment of syntactical function in case 10.

The Case of “绝对”

Searching “绝对” in ParaConc, it can be found that “绝对” shares no equivalence with the English adverb “absolute”. It turns out that certain sentence pattern is employed when expressing the absolute meaning, which could guide our future translation.

(11) 我们党的宏伟奋斗目标·离开了人民支持就**绝对无法实现**。

The grand goal of our Party can never be realized without popular support.

(12) 工作作风上的问题**绝对不是小事**，如果不坚决纠正不良风气，任其发展下去，就会像一座无形的墙把我们党和人民群众隔开，我们党就会失去根基、失去血脉、失去力量。

The issue of working style is in no sense a small one. If misconduct is not corrected but allowed to run rampant, it will build an invisible wall between our Party and the people. As a result, our Party will lose its base, lifeblood and strength.

(13) 级领导干部都要牢记，任何人都没有法律之外的**绝对权力**，任何人行使权力都必须为人民服务、对人民负责并自觉接受人民监督。

Leading officials at all levels must bear firmly in mind the fact that nobody is above the law and that all officials must exercise state power to serve the people, be responsible to the people and be supervised by the people.

(14) **确保部队绝对忠诚、绝对纯洁、绝对可靠**。

It must be loyal, pure and reliable.

The above four cases list out variable translations of the word “绝对”，respectively double negation, prepositional phrases, and modal verb. By using these techniques, apart from the precise expression of meanings, the sentence pattern is as well enriched. The high-quality translation could serve as templates for us to learn from.

So based on the general overview in intralingual corpus and specific cases in interlingual corpus, the normalization hypothesis does not stand in C-E Translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. On the contrary, the weakening tendency is the main rule.

The Case of “not”

The occurrence of “not” in the translated corpus is 264, hitting the top in the list. By exporting all the corresponding C-E sentences containing “not”, the paper selects some specific cases and gives analysis, which may bring enlightenment to the translation of negative meaning.

(15) **必须增强道路自信、理论自信、制度自信，“千磨万击还坚劲，任尔东西南北风”。**

We must have confidence in our path, our theory and our system. We must be as tenacious as bamboo, as described by Zheng Xie: “In the face of all blows, **not** bending low, it still stands fast.”

By scanning the whole texts, large amounts of four-character idioms and classic ancient poems are quoted in Xi’s speeches. They are often concise and compact, embedded with Chinese characteristics, which significantly function to showcase our time-honored history and profound culture. Meanwhile, these typical Chinese terms will cause the difficulty of translation to some extent, which require the translators of the deep understanding and proper strategies to appropriately spread the inside ideas. In terms of this case, Xi quotes Zheng Xie’s poem to describe the resilience and tenacity that we should have on the way of pursuit. The translation first points out the metaphorical object, bamboo, which clearly exposes the image for foreign readers to visualize the scene. Then, “...not bending low, it still stands fast.” vividly presents the firmness under the context of all blows and hits. The negative adverb used here adds brilliance to the present splendor of the positive statement “still stands fast”. Together they integrate to perform a powerful image to readers.

(16) **有一种现象很值得注意，就是在一个地方、一个单位，一个干部好不好，群众有公论，实践有比较，领导心里也明白，但在具体用人时，结果却与事业需要和群众期盼大相径庭。**

There is a phenomenon that we must notice. To judge an official on his work performance in a locality or a unit, people have their own comments, practice has its proof, and leaders are clear in mind, but the final appointment is often **not** according to the actual needs, and usually disappoints people.

In this case, the “not” appears to explain the meaning of the four-character idiom “大相径庭”. In Chinese, it indicates that there is a huge gap or a great distinction between A and B. The translated text skillfully applies the word “not”, instead of expressions like “different from”. It is rather piercing and precise to point out the present practice, and reveals the determination of rectification in political construction.

(17) 国家治理体系和治理能力是一个国家制度和制度执行能力的集中体现。

The national governance system and capacity of a country epitomize **not** only its many systems but also how well it can enforce them.

The translation converses the structure of the noun phrase “集中体现” in Chinese into the verb “epitomize”, and uses “not only...but also...” to emphasize the significance of the national governance. In addition, English is a language that pays more attention to three-dimensional layout while Chinese is more of a plane. “国家制度和制度执行能力” actually refers to two layers of notions, the theoretical system and the practical capacity. The former one is the execution basis of the latter one. They also echo the subject accordingly. Therefore, the application of “not only...but also...” does an excellent job in expressing the accurate meaning, layer-layer progression, and mutual echo.

(18) 任何超越现实、超越阶段而急于求成的倾向都要努力避免，任何落后于实际、无视深刻变化着的客观事实而因循守旧、固步自封的观念和做法都要坚决纠正。

Any tendency to pursue quick success regardless of objective conditions and timing should be avoided, and any outdated or complacent ideas and actions which do not conform to reality, or which neglect fundamental changes of reality, should be corrected without exception.

In Example 18, the text seems not to include the negative word, but the translation conveys the idea clearly by using “not”. It does not interpret “落后于实际” as “fall behind the reality”. Rather, combined with the antecedent “outdated or complacent ideas and actions”, the usage of “not conform to reality” exactly and distinctly suits the situation. So does the translation of “regardless of objective conditions and timing” as “超越现实、超越阶段”, much to the point.

(19) 我完全同意他的看法。

I could **not** agree more.

The sentence sample is selected from the Xi’s answer in an interview. The reason why it is listed here is that the translation takes the native-style expression mode into consideration. And the close tie with the English readers will enable the translated texts to enter the West and spread China’s voice all along.

By searching the high-frequency adverb “很”, “相当”, “绝对” in ParaConc, it comes to the conclusion that the weakening tendency instead of normalization also appears in translation of Chinese adverbs of degree. In addition, the three Chinese adverbs represent different types, which can reflect the pervasive trend. Few do the English translation totally conform to the correspondent relation of adverbs as the chart shows. That’s to say, that “很” is translated into “very” occurs at a rather low rate. Instead, it is often omitted or expressed in another way. The above lists the typical cases of weakening feature. The English adverb of the highest frequency, “not”, is also studied to have a better understanding of the translation, giving examples to our future translation practice.

Motivation Analysis

Based on the statistical result and analysis, it is found that adverbs of degree in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* manifest the weakening tendency. The author attempts to analyze the motivation behind the trend and brings forward the following suppositions.

The semantic degradation of adverbs of degree

Semantic degradation indicates that during the long process of language application and development, the inherent semantic meaning of degree has been degraded. Sometimes adverbs of degree such as “很” are used not to function as emphasis on the

high degree, but as the completion of a sentence or filling of a syllable. The frequency and pervasiveness of “很” manifests not the information intensity, but the degraded semantic meaning and casual use to fulfill the syntactical function. So in translation, these words tend to be omitted, leaving the core word to convey the meaning in a concise and accurate way.

The ambiguity of meaning of adverbs of degree

As Lv (1979) puts it, classification is in need inside adverbs, but to put it clean and tidy is a tough task. It is because adverbs indeed are a hodgepodge. Different adverbs of degree in distinct categories turn out to be not that clear in expressing the meaning in their equivalent degree. That's to say, it is hard to distinguish the difference among “很好”, “相当好”, “挺不错”. Due to the uncertainty of the degree scale, normalization is a tendency unlikely to be conformed to.

The habitual way of expression.

In most cases, adverbs of degree are applied to meet the requirement of idiomatic expressions and parallel lexical and syntactic pattern in Chinese. According to Zhang (2010), speakers will naturally add the same adverb of degree in front of adjectives, in order to keep the consistency of format and balance of pattern. The case 14 above “确保部队绝对忠诚、绝对纯洁、绝对可靠” can serve as an excellent example. Its English version is “It must be loyal, pure and reliable”, which deletes three “绝对” and presents the weakening tendency.

Summary

After conducting research on comparable and parallel corpus, the conclusion could be drawn that the weakening tendency is dominant in C-E Translation of Xi Jinping: The Governance of China. From the perspective of comparable corpus, adverbs of degree used in the English version of Xi Jinping: The Governance of China are less frequent compared to the HKBU Corpus of Political Speeches, manifested by Log-likelihood Ratio Calculator. Then to dig out the reason of the less quantity of adverbs, the author makes a parallel comparison between the Chinese version and the English version. Through case study and analysis, the weakening tendency of adverbs of degree can be seen. Also, specific examples are listed to indicate some referential value on future translation.

Conclusion

Findings

This paper conducts a corpus-based study on adverbs of degree in C-E translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. It attempts to examine the normalization by comparing the frequency of adverbs of degree between the original English corpus and the translated corpus.

It is found that the original texts in the HKBU Corpus of Political Speeches and translated texts in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* are different in terms of adverbial usage. The adverbs of degree in the English version do not manifest a feature of normalization. Instead, weakening is the tendency in comparable corpus. As for the specific types, the negative adverb, the high adverb, the extremely high adverb and the approximative adverb are more often used in political speeches. As to the specific adverb, “awfully”, “barely”, “virtually”, “not at all” are least used in political speeches.

The paper also conducts research on parallel corpus of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* in Chinese and English. It finds that weakening is most applied when translating adverbs of degree, while some special and innovative cases are also listed to give some enlightenment and inspiration to further research on translation.

It can be learned that when translating adverbs of degree, word-for-word equivalence is not a correct approach and may lead to misunderstanding. Instead, they can be omitted or expressed by other adjectives or verb phrases to convey the meaning, considering the semantic degradation and ambiguity of adverbs of degree and habitual way of expression.

Limitations and Suggestions

There are still some deficiencies in this research. First, only some adverbs of degree are discussed in the paper. Though they have high frequency in usage, they are still not typical enough to draw the conclusion. Secondly, the research could be more comprehensive by taking other types of adverbs into consideration. But due to the inability to tag different genres of adverbs, the paper fails to do so. It is a direction that could be researched on in the future.

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Appendix

This is an alphabetical list of common single-word adverbs of degree, which can modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs and convey the extent to which something happens. To further confirm the conclusion of weakening tendency, the paper conducts a log-likelihood ratio calculation on these adverbs. Judging from the majority of “+”, weakening turns out to be the major tendency.

Corpus Size 1		Corpus Size 2				
A		B				
4429976		119104				
Word	Freq. in Corpus 1	Freq. in Corpus 2	Log-likelihood	Sig.		
almost	908	3	29.75	0.000	***	+
absolutely	289	5	1.11	0.293		+
awfully*	2	0	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM!	+
badly*	74	1	0.59	0.442		+
barely	49	0	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM!	+
completely	213	7	0.26	0.612		-
decidedly	8	0	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM!	+
deeply	290	9	0.17	0.678		-
enough	927	17	2.77	0.096		+
enormously	29	0	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM!	+
entirely	276	0	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM!	+
extremely	70	7	7.80	0.005	**	-
fairly	183	4	0.18	0.672		+
far	1870	26	13.95	0.000	***	+
fully	914	57	29.96	0.000	***	-
greatly	476	11	0.26	0.611		+
hardly	102	5	1.44	0.230		-
highly	318	13	1.93	0.164		-
how	2402	55	1.46	0.227		+
incredibly	14	0	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM!	+
indeed	432	11	0.03	0.857		+

Corpus Size 1		Corpus Size 2				
A		B				
4429976		119104				
Word	Freq. in Corpus 1	Freq. in Corpus 2	Log-likelihood	Sig.		
intensely	13	0	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM!	+
just	4691	42	74.40	0.000	***	+
least	747	2	26.51	0.000	***	+
less	2035	9	57.93	0.000	***	+
little	1008	6	23.68	0.000	***	+
lots	46	0	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM!	+
most	5193	80	29.47	0.000	***	+
much	3060	19	69.57	0.000	***	+
nearly	1246	3	45.79	0.000	***	+
perfectly	56	0	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM!	+
positively	13	2	3.48	0.062		-
practically	140	0	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM!	+
pretty*	129	1	2.40	0.121		+
purely	73	0	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM!	+
quite	227	12	4.28	0.038	*	-
rather	589	26	5.28	0.022	*	-
really	565	7	5.42	0.020	*	+
scarcely	119	0	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM!	+
simply	560	8	3.91	0.048	*	+
so	9994	226	7.00	0.008	**	+
somewhat	76	2	0.00	0.976		+

Corpus Size 1		A	Corpus Size 2		B
		4429976			119104
Word	Freq. in Corpus 1	Freq. in Corpus 2	Log-likelihood	Sig.	
strongly	431	1	16.02	0.000	*** +
terribly*	23	0	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM! +
thoroughly	109	14	20.59	0.000	*** -
too	2410	21	39.49	0.000	*** +
totally	88	1	0.99	0.320	+ +
utterly	49	0	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM! +
very	3010	24	54.45	0.000	*** +
virtually	160	0	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM! +
Well	3967	168	29.06	0.000	*** -