

Translator's Visibility in Mediating Confrontational Responses of "Challenge" Strategy at China's Diplomatic Press Conferences

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Abstract—The study aims to unveil how translators deal with confrontational responses through their visibility in translating the diplomatic discourse of China's diplomatic press conferences. Distinct from past theoretical frameworks, this study is grounded in the impoliteness strategies model (Bousfield, 2008) and the concept of translator's visibility. The corpus focuses on the English-translated responses using the "challenge" strategy, delivered by the spokesperson Hua Chunying throughout 2020. Findings show that the translator's visibility is mainly presented at the syntactical and lexical levels, and the discursive level is hardly found. The translation strategy of modulation is used most in syntax and reduction most in lexicon. Additionally, the translator's visibility by using translation strategies can mediate the degree of confrontation. In maintaining the confrontational tone, the main strategies involve modulation in syntax and reduction in lexicon. Linguistic compression and reduction are employed more commonly in weakening the confrontational implication in lexicon, and reduction in syntax. Linguistic amplification is observed more frequently in the lexicon and modulation is more often used in syntax in strengthening the confrontation. This research sheds light on the dynamic interplay between impoliteness strategies and the translator's visibility, contributing to a deeper understanding of the translator's engagement in institutional discourse.

Index Terms—translator's visibility, confrontational responses, "challenge" strategy, diplomatic discourse translation

I. INTRODUCTION

The translator's visibility has been consistently discussed in translation studies, garnering a share of scholarly attention and generating a number of empirical studies. The concept of visibility in this study differs from the one proposed by Angelelli (2004), suggesting translators step out of obscurity and become noticeable to the audience through their own contributions in the real-world interaction with the speakers and as effective co-constructors of communication (Li et al., 2023). In addition, it is different from the term coined by Lawrence Venuti (1995). Venuti calls "resistance" in contesting the Anglo-American cultures in the practice of translation to keep the original foreign features, with the aim of rendering the translator visible (Venuti, 1995, p. 24). Since Venuti put forward this concept, the tension between the professional requirement of being faithful and the translator's subjectivity has been displayed. This study takes the stance that invisibility and visibility are not a dichotomy in the translation; the translator can exert subjectivity to shift the visibility flexibly. The translator's visibility persists throughout the translation process, in which the translator generates the translated piece and becomes noticeable to the target audience. Therefore, the translator's state is not in the two poles between invisibility and visibility but between the strength and weakness of visibility (Zhu, 2017).

More scholars joined the discussion about the translator's visibility. Hatim and Mason (1990) hold that a translator's visibility is more feasible when "translating between languages that are, comparatively speaking, culturally remote from each other" (p. 123). While Lane-Mercier (1997) argued that invisibility and visibility are not easily distinguishable. Both are demonstrations of the translator's presence and subjectivity. If distinguished in a dichotomy, the translator's invisible insertion into the target culture will be proved as an illusion of subjectivity, and the visible heterogeneity will

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be radical domestication (Robinson, 2019). Zhu (2017) stated that invisibility is the ethical requirement for the translator, while visibility is the translator's actual state due to the translation complexity.

In the past years, many studies have demonstrated the translator's visibility in the translation process. A number of these empirical studies focused on the visibility in real translation cases, highlighted in the field of literary translation (e.g., Cleary, 2014; Xu, 2019), and institutional discourse, such as visibility in news discourse translation by Hong (2019) and political discourse translation by Xu and Xiao (2022). However, most of the studies centered on the translator's visibility by emphasizing the otherness while retaining the cultural or linguistic differences in the context of literary works and consecutive interpreting, with little attention paid to the translator's visibility in mediating the discursive confrontation in diplomatic discourse translation.

The challenge strategy was included as a theoretical concept in the impoliteness strategies model by Culpeper (1996), Lachenicht (1980), and Bousfield (2008), respectively, in their works. In this study, the notion is taken from the perspective of Bousfield (2008). According to him, the definition of challenge is to "ask h a challenging question, question h's position, stance, beliefs, assumed power, rights, obligations, ethics, etc." (Bousfield, 2008, p. 132) He claimed there are two fundamental ways of challenges: rhetorical challenges and response-seeking challenges. They are "always issued in the form of a question" (Bousfield, 2008, p. 132). The rhetorical challenges do not necessarily ask for a direct response; instead, they stimulate the interlocutors' given answer, thus increasing the chances of face damage to the involved third-party recipients.

The challenge strategy is one of the common impoliteness strategies found in the confrontational responses of China's diplomatic spokespersons, taking the form of a question. The spokespersons engage in confrontational responses by asserting that a particular standpoint is not permitted or is beyond dispute, targeting both their immediate opponents and the broader international audience and showing uncompromising speech styles. Nevertheless, their primary goal is to persuade the international public (Wu, 2019). Under such circumstances, the effective transmission of the diplomatic stance cannot come into play without the translator's mediation.

As cross-cultural communication becomes increasingly prevalent in today's globalized world, understanding how translators navigate and manage confrontational discourse is of paramount importance (e.g., Robins, 2005). Past research acknowledged that translators act not merely as conduits of language but as cultural mediators who must navigate the delicate balance between faithfulness to the source text and adaptation to the target culture. The profession requires them to be invisible to convey the message without changing the meaning while assuring the confrontational stance will not lead to more disputes and conflicts through their visibility. The translator's visibility is crucial in determining the success of challenge strategy implementation. As a result, the translation of the challenge strategy of the confrontational responses may be mediated because of the translator's visibility. In other words, the strength of the challenge may be increased, weakened, or maintained. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the translator's visibility, which remains under-explored regarding the confrontational response using the "challenge" strategy at the regular press conferences hosted by the Chinese diplomatic spokesperson. Hence, two research questions are posed to be addressed:

- 1) How is the translator's visibility revealed to deal with the confrontational responses with the challenge strategy?
- 2) Through mediating the "challenge" strategy, how does the translator's visibility serve to strengthen, maintain, or weaken the spokesperson's discursive confrontation at regular press conferences?

II. METHODOLOGY

A. *Corpus: China's Diplomatic Spokesperson's Confrontational Responses at Regular Press Conferences*

China's diplomatic regular press conference serves as a crucial tool for the Chinese government to communicate its official stance on various domestic and international issues, allowing the government to disseminate information and updates on its policies, positions, and actions to both domestic and international audiences. In an era of rapid information dissemination, it's a platform for the Chinese government to address and counteract any misinformation or misconceptions that may arise in the media. The conference is held daily from Monday to Friday, and changes will be made according to the diplomatic arrangements. The year 2020 is special for China and the world when the whole of humankind was haunted by the spreading pandemic, regional disputes, and escalated international relations between China and the U.S., which has put China in a dilemma. Questions from the media are politically sensitive and challenging. To safeguard China's national image and interests, the spokespersons' responses displayed uncompromising disagreement and criticism.

B. *Data Collection*

The source material of this study is selected from Chinese diplomatic spokesperson Hua Chunying's responses to the media throughout the year 2020. Her remarks are accessed from the official website of China's MFA and another website, "reciyi.com," which recorded all the bilingual remarks since 2014. Hua Chunying is one of China's influential diplomatic spokespersons and is now the director of the spokespersons. In 2020, she had 35 regular press conferences, including online ones, where she made responses to the questions and statements given by the media attending the conferences. Her responses corpus amounted to around 214,000 Chinese characters and corresponding English-translated around 130,000 characters.

The confrontational responses using the “challenge” strategy are identified according to Bousfield’s (2008) impoliteness strategies model. The inclusion criteria of the challenge strategy should meet the following requirements: the questions posed by the media are contradictory to China’s official stance and policy or stand against China’s positive national image or interests; the spokesperson responded to the media with the challenge strategy to show her disagreements or condemnation directed at the related parties including the third-party recipients involved in the Q&A; the challenge strategy usually takes the form of a question ended with a question mark replying to the media’s questions.

C. Data Analysis

The analysis follows the steps of identification, categorization, and interpretation. In answering the first question, the strategy of challenge in these confrontational responses was selected. Having identified the challenge strategy items in the selected diplomatic discourse of Hua Chunying, the corresponding translation strategies at the lexical, syntactical, and discursive levels, this allows the overall discussion of revealing the translator’s visibility, which is categorized into different types. In answering the second question it is interpreted in a qualitative analysis of how the translator’s visibility contributes to mediating the translation of the challenge strategy. If the translation is found to over-articulate the confrontational responses in the English TT, then it can be identified as an example of strengthening the translation of the challenge strategy. In the same vein, contrarily, the lack of the translator’s alignment with the spokesperson’s diplomatic discourse will be classified as the translator’s visibility in weakening or maintaining the challenge strategy.

III. FINDINGS

A. Translator’s Visibility at Lexical, Syntactical, and Discursive Levels Mediating the Challenge Strategy

(a). Overall Translator’s Visibility Between ST. and TT

To investigate how the translator’s visibility is rendered by the translators, the items of the challenge strategy were selected in the same corpus, including Chinese and English, using the filter function of the Excel. The challenge strategy here should meet the inclusion criterion mentioned in the methodology section. The translator’s visibility is demonstrated at the lexical, syntactical, and discursive levels. Sometimes one challenge strategy may contain more than one level. For such relatively rare conditions, even though they present in the same sentence or question, they are still counted separately for the simple reason that lexicon, syntax, and discourse may reveal different translation strategies contributing to the degree of confrontation.

According to Bousfield (2008), the challenge strategy takes the form of a question, so the use of the strategy is stable, and the selection of it focuses on the sentences with a question mark in the original text. Additionally, the confrontational responses are not just targeted at answering the questions of the journalists but also rebuking or criticizing the involved parties in the mentioned events, so the challenge strategy is in nature conveying different stances and attitudes from those in the questions and should bear the contradictory attitude against the questions. However, it was also found that in the same sentence, there is more than one impoliteness strategy. Thus, the instances selected from the sentences mainly use the challenge strategy.

Furthermore, the confrontational nature of the challenge strategy implies that the translator must employ different translation strategies to handle the potential conflict that may occur in the scene. Thus, in the English corpus, the translation strategies are identified and counted, which presents the mediation and show the translator’s visibility. However, the literal translation strategy is not included because it is equivalent to the original text in the form and meaning without adjustment and does not show the translator’s mediation.

In 2020, Hua Chunying made 472 responses to the media, of which the confrontational responses were identified and amounted to 245 items, more than half of her responses. Eighty-five instances of challenge strategy are identified in the Chinese source text. In the corresponding English translation, if the form and information are adapted, then the translator’s adaptation degree indicates the visibility in different aspects, namely lexicon, syntax, and discourse. The syntactical level ranks first, with 46 instances constituting 62.2% of the 74 instances. The lexical level takes up 32.4%, and the visibility in the discursive level is seldom found; only 4 cases are identified (See Figure 1). At the level of syntax, the translation strategy of modulation is most frequently used. At the lexicon level, reduction is the top option for the translator. As for discourse, linguistic amplification, modulation, and amplification are found, but the quantity is too small, so the discourse level will not be the focus of the analysis.



Figure 1. Translator’s Visibility at Three Levels

More specifically, of the 85 instances, the translator adopted different translation strategies, such as modulation, reduction, linguistic amplification, transposition, linguistic compression, generalization, particularization, and literal translation (See Figure 2). As mentioned above, the literal translation strategy is not included in the discussion, so seven translation strategies were identified, amounting to 74 examples. The top three translation strategies are modulation (23 items, 31%), reduction (18 items, 24%), and linguistic amplification (12 items, 16%), taking up 71% of all the translation strategies in the English target text.

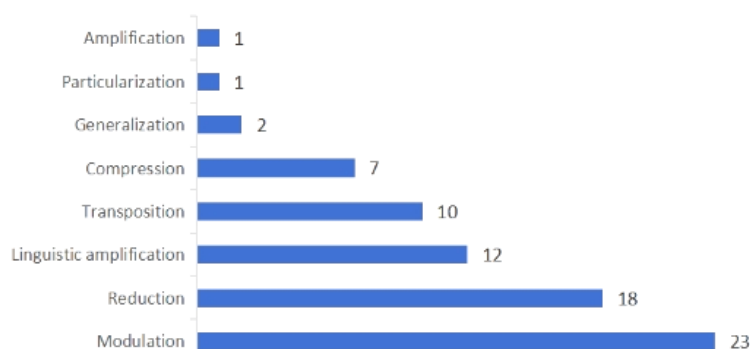


Figure 2. Overall Translation Strategies Demonstrating the Translator's Visibility

(b). Translation Strategies Demonstrating the Translator's Visibility in Syntax

The translator's frequent use of modulation is revealed syntactically (See Figure 3). Molina and Albir's (2002) perspective of modulation is "to change the point of view, focus or cognitive category in relation to the ST; it can be lexical or structural" (p. 510). It means using a phrase that is different in the source and target languages to convey the same idea. Example 1 illustrates the change of the point of view from the British government to the Hong Kong residents in syntax, showing that the translator is visible in this confrontational challenge strategy.

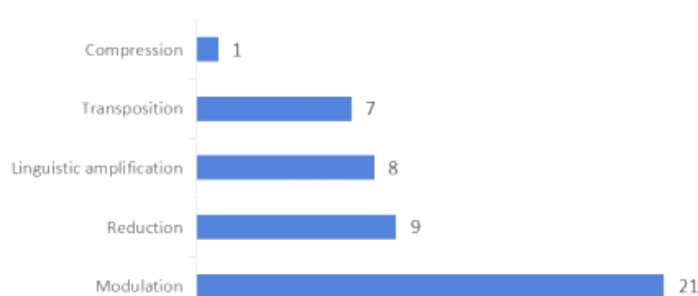


Figure 3. Translation Strategies Demonstrating the Translator's Visibility in Syntax

Example 1 (9 June, 2020)

ST: 至于你提到英方关切香港居民的自由问题，我昨天在这里已经介绍了中方立场。英方不妨回顾一下，在英国对香港 156 年殖民统治期间，他们给过香港民众什么自由、什么民主？28 位港督当中哪一个是由香港民众选举产生的？那个时候英国给予香港民众上街抗议示威的自由吗？英国对香港殖民统治期间，英国《叛逆法》是适用于香港的。香港是中国的一个特别行政区，中国全国人大就香港维护国家安全立法有任何问题吗？在这一问题上不应有任何双重标准，英方应该认清时势，谨言慎行。

Literal translation: Regarding your mention of the British concerns about the freedom of Hong Kong residents, I introduced the Chinese position on this matter here yesterday. The British side might review, during the 156 years of colonial rule in Hong Kong, what freedoms and democracy they gave to the Hong Kong people? Among the 28 governors, which one was elected by the people of Hong Kong? Did Britain give the freedom for Hong Kong residents to take to the streets in protest during that time? The British "Treason Act" applied to Hong Kong during the colonial rule. Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region of China. Is there any issue with the National People's Congress of China enacting legislation to safeguard national security in Hong Kong? There should be no double standards on this issue, and the British side should recognize the situation and proceed with caution.

TT: Regarding the British side's concerns on Hong Kong residents' freedom, I made a statement in yesterday's press conference. I hope the U.K. can review the history and answer the following questions. During the 156 years under British colonial rule, did Hong Kong residents ever enjoy any democracy or freedom? Was any of the former 28 Hong Kong governors elected by the Hong Kong residents? Did the Hong Kong residents then enjoy the freedom to take to the street and demonstrate? The U.K. even applied the Treason Act to Hong Kong during its colonial rule. Since Hong Kong is China's special administrative region, isn't it legitimate for the NPC to pass the legislation for

safeguarding national security in Hong Kong? No double standards should be applied to this matter. The British side should grasp the situation and exercise prudence in its words and deeds.

In this example extracted from the press conference on 9 June 2020, the overall confrontation was fluently delivered. However, there are also signs showing the translator's visibility by modulation. In syntax, there are modulations in sentence structure and word order. China was questioned because it has enacted the national security law in Hong Kong, which is considered as a destruction of the democracy in Hong Kong. As marked in bold, there are four sentences of modulation in the TT of this instance. “英方不妨回顾一下” (The British side might review) was translated into “I hope the U.K. can review the history and answer the following questions,” an SVO structure was changed into an object clause. What's more, “他们给过” means literally “they have given.” “他们” is here referring to the British. The subject is British, but in the TT, the subject was translated into “The Hong Kong residents” and the object into “enjoy.” The focus was shifted. The third bold sentence is in the same manner, re-confirming that Hong Kong is now not under the reign of the British but the Chinese government and the Communist Party. In the last sentence, “有任何问题吗？” (Is there any issue) was modulated into “Isn't it legitimate.” A yes-or-no question using a “is there” structure was changed into a negative question in “isn't it,” emphasizing the certainty of the answer to the question. This modulation also demonstrated the translator's visibility in aligning with the institutional ideology.

(c). *Translation Strategies Demonstrating Translator's Visibility in the Lexicon*

Modulation is rarely found in the lexicon, but the translator's visibility is also found with other strategies, particularly reduction (See Figure 4). Reduction is the most frequently used translation strategy in the aspect of lexicon. It's different from linguistic compression, which is also found in the lexicon, but the quantity is less. Reduction implies the removal or suppression of some information items in the source text that are thought to be unnecessary or redundant (Molina & Albir, 2002). Example 2 displays the reduction of information in the TT.

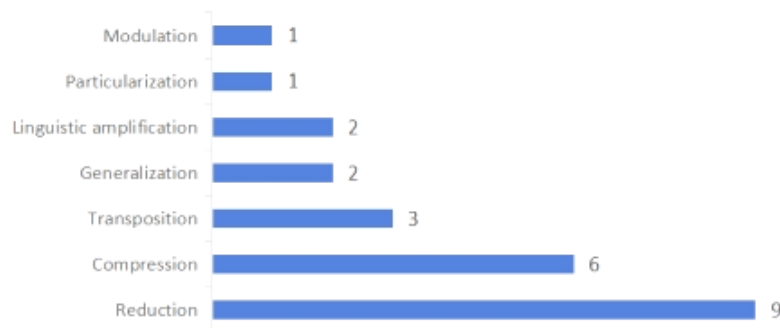


Figure 4. Translation Strategies Demonstrating Translator's Visibility in the Lexicon

Example 2 (4 Dec, 2020)

ST: 我很想请他们解释一下，什么是虚假？谁来定义虚假信息？什么是人权？澳一些军人在阿富汗犯下的罪行是不是真的？让澳方如此暴怒的这张电脑插画反映的情况是不是真的？难道**不讲是非、颠倒黑白**就是他们宣扬的价值吗？难道认为别人生命不如自己的面子重要就是他们引以为豪的价值吗？难道给别人**乱扣帽子掩盖自己罪行、洗白自己**就是他们的共同价值吗？从这个意义上讲，这幅画就犹如一面镜子，照出了个别国家个别人的虚伪和双重标准。

Literal translation: I would like to ask them to explain: What is falsehood? Who defines misinformation? What is human rights? Are the crimes committed by some Australian military personnel in Afghanistan true? Is the depiction in the computer-generated illustration that has so angered Australia accurate? Is it their value system to **not tell right and wrong and reverse white and black**? Is it their pride in valuing their own face more than the lives of others? Is it their shared value **to hide crimes by falsely accusing others and whitewashing their own wrongdoings**? In this sense, this illustration serves as a mirror, revealing the hypocrisy and double standards of certain countries and individuals.

TT: I wonder if they can explain what disinformation is, who should be the one to define disinformation, and what they mean by human rights? Aren't the crimes by some Australian soldiers in Afghanistan true? Doesn't the C.G. comic that made Australia fly into a rage reflect what really happened? Is **fact distortion** the value they uphold? Is it their proud value that other people's lives don't matter so long as they can save their own face? Is it their shared value to **pin the blame to others just to whitewash themselves**? In this sense, the caricature is a mirror showing the hypocrisy and double standards of a few people in these few countries.

This example is a confrontational extracted from the press conference on 4 Dec 2020. The questions are, on the surface, responding to the media but, in nature, criticizing and condemning the Australian side and its soldiers, and the confrontation of the spokesperson was displayed. In this instance, “不讲是非” literally means “not telling right and wrong,” focusing on the ignorance of moral standards, and “颠倒黑白” means “reversing white and black,” with more emphasis on the ignorance of the facts. They are typical four-character structured expressions. In the TT, “fact distortion” conveys the meaning of the latter expression, so the former was reduced. “乱扣帽子掩盖罪行” literally

means the Australian side “casually put a hat on others to cover crimes.” This implies that Australia launched baseless accusations against China. In the TT, it was translated into “pin the blame on others” and “掩盖罪行” was reduced. Compared to the ST, some information was omitted, and the translator is visible in the reduction of the phrases.

A translator’s visibility in discourse is rarely found. The target text employs one amplification, one modulation, and two linguistic amplifications. Since the small size of the instances, it is found that the translator made no difference in the discourse. Therefore, the analysis of it here is omitted.

B. Translator’s Visibility in Maintaining, Weakening, and Strengthening the Confrontation in the Challenge Strategy

In the challenge strategy, spokesperson Hua Chunying responded to the questions and statements from the media that were contradictory to the official Chinese stances, attitudes, and policies. The challenge strategy responses generally provide contrary answers, deny the information, and criticize the involved parties, which present confrontational traits. Although the spokesperson makes confrontational responses and the translator needs to commit to professional requirements to deliver information, the translator must mediate the confrontation.

(a). Translator’s Visibility in Maintaining the Confrontation

Through the visibility of the translator, at the three levels of lexicon, syntax, and discourse, it is found that the translation strategies used by the translator may maintain, weaken, or strengthen the confrontation of the challenge strategy. Statistically, 31 items showcased the weakening, 27 showcased the maintaining, and 16 strengthening. The translator maintained the confrontation by using modulation (11 items) more frequently than other strategies like transposition (4 items) in syntax and reduction (5 items) mostly in the lexicon. No items of maintenance were found in the discourse. Example 3 shows how the confrontation is maintained through the translator’s visibility by using the translation strategy of modulation.

Example 3 (30 Nov, 2020)

ST: 这个问题已经不是哪个国家的内政问题了，应该遭到全世界所有有良知的人的强烈谴责。你难道没有这种感受吗？你难道觉得澳大利亚这些军人的罪行不应该受到谴责吗？你难道不觉得莫里森总理及澳政府在这一问题上没有是非观念应该遭到质疑吗？你觉得中方谴责澳大利亚有些军人在阿富汗犯下残暴罪行有任何问题吗？这个问题跟人权有关，但它跟内政有任何关系吗？

Literal translation: This issue is no longer a domestic matter of any specific country; it should face strong condemnation from all conscientious people worldwide. Don’t you feel so? Do you really think the misconduct of these Australian soldiers should not be condemned? Don’t you believe that Prime Minister Morrison and the Australian government’s lack of a clear moral stance on this issue should be questioned? Do you think there is any problem with China condemning certain Australian soldiers for committing brutal acts in Afghanistan? This issue is related to human rights, but does it have any connection to domestic affairs?

TT: It is no longer a matter of the internal affairs of any country, and it should be strongly condemned by all people with conscience around the whole world. Do you think otherwise? Don’t you think the crimes of these Australian soldiers should be condemned? Don’t you think the lack of basic sense of right and wrong on this issue on the part of Prime Minister Morrison and the Australian government should be questioned? What is wrong with China strongly condemning such brutal crimes committed by some Australian soldiers in Afghanistan? This is about human rights, but what’s it to do with internal affairs?

The spokesperson, Hua Chunying, used consecutive questions to respond to the journalists, making the responses with confrontational implications that the crimes committed in Afghanistan by the Australian soldiers should be condemned. The Chinese government made the condemnation, but the Australian government thought Beijing was interfering the internal affairs of the Australian side. The usages of “你难道没有,” “你难道觉得不应该,” “你难道不觉得,” “你觉得” are basically telling the media that “you should have,” “you should think like this as me,” “you should feel as I feel.” The spokesperson superficially asked but implied that the answers should be absolutely aligned with the official stance. So the modulation from “Don’t you feel so” into “Do you think otherwise,” from “Do you really think” into “Don’t you think,” and from “Do you think” into “What is wrong” were keeping the same form of questions but have changed the point of view from negative to positive, or vice versa. The strong tone of confrontation and doubt was maintained in the TT using the modulation in syntax.

Example 4 (2 Dec, 2020)

ST: 一方面凭空捏造事实，大肆攻击抹黑别人，另一方面又不允许别人对自己干过的坏事错事发表评论，这符合澳大利亚的价值观吗？如果自己明明干了错事坏事，却拒不接受别人批评，甚至倒打一耙，无理取闹，你如何能让人相信你是真心知错而且会真正改错呢？

Literal translation: Does this align with Australia’s values? On the one hand, fabricating facts out of thin air and launching malicious attacks to smear others, while on the other hand, not allowing others to comment on the wrongdoings and bad deeds one has committed. If one has clearly done something wrong or bad, yet refuses to accept criticism, even going so far as to deflect blame unreasonably, how can one convince others that they genuinely acknowledge their mistakes and are committed to making genuine corrections?

TT: Is it in line with Australia’s values that they on the one hand fabricate facts to launch smearing attacks against others while, on the other hand, not allowing others to comment on their erroneous and bad deeds? If you have

obviously done something wrong and bad, but refuse to accept any criticism and even try to shift the blame to others, how can you ever convince people that you know you've done wrong and that you will correct the mistakes?

In this example, the spokesperson, Hua Chunying, questioned the journalists and the Australian side for their criticism of China. Lexically, “凭空,” “大肆,” “无理取闹” and “真心” were reduced by using specific and concise language, emphasizing the negative aspects and preserving the confrontational nature of the original text. The reduction strategy aimed to streamline the expression of certain concepts while maintaining the overall tone of conflict. The Chinese language is more abstract and generalizing. Adverbs are used to modify the verbs to strengthen the tone and attitude. For instance, “大肆” is an adverb to modify “攻击抹黑,” showing the smear is wide and malicious. Through this reduction, the translator's visibility ensures that the intensity and criticism of the source text are retained in the English version.

(b). Translator's Visibility in Weakening the Confrontation

The translator is visible by using the translation strategy. However, the degree of confrontation in translating the challenge strategy can be weakened. It is found more in lexicon and syntax. In the lexicon, linguistic compression and reduction are employed more frequently to mitigate the confrontation implication. The profound political stance of the diplomatic discourse given by the spokesperson and the challenging question from the media determine that the potential conflict may happen. Therefore, the translator is visible to mediate the conflict to avoid more confrontation. Example 5 illustrates how the translator's visibility weakened the confrontation through linguistic compression in the lexicon.

Example 5 (10 Dec, 2020)

ST: 美国在全球环境基金的巨额欠款以及欠荒漠化公约、气候变化公约的应缴会费什么时候能够还? 美国常年将大量垃圾出口到发展中国家, 美方是不是应该对此有个交代和说法?

Literal translation: When will the United States be able to repay its large amount of due fees Global Environment Fund, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the UNFCCC? The United States consistently exports a large amount of waste to developing countries. Shouldn't the U.S. provide an explanation and justification for this practice?

TT: When will it pay the huge amounts of contributions it owes to the Global Environment Fund, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the UNFCCC? What does it say about its export of large amounts of garbage to developing countries every year?

In the original text, the spokesperson criticized the substantial debts and outstanding contributions owed by the United States to the Global Environment Fund, the Convention to Combat Desertification, and the UNFCCC, as well as its export of a large amount of waste to developing countries. The original text also raises the question of whether the United States should be held accountable and provide an explanation for its export of waste to developing countries. In the translated text, the last question has been simplified to “What does it say about its export of large amounts of garbage to developing countries every year?” This approach reduces the complexity of expression, highlighting the key issues. The lexicon of “交代和说法” is condensed to “say about,” simplifying the expression and diminishing direct skepticism. Despite addressing questions concerning the United States, the translator, through language simplification and a relatively objective expression, avoids direct accusations and lessens confrontational elements. This weakens the conflictive tone, allowing readers to assess the issues independently. Another example of weakening is used here by the translator with a reduction in syntax.

Example 6 (7 May, 2020)

ST: 蓬佩奥国务卿为什么要在科学家和专家还没有定论的情况下, 就匆匆忙忙下结论, 咬死“病毒源自武汉实验室”。他的证据在哪里? 请拿出来! 如果拿不出来, 是不是还在炮制过程中?

Literal translation: Why did Secretary of State Pompeo hastily draw conclusions and allegedly claimed the virus came from the Wuhan lab when scientists haven't agreed yet? Where's his proof? Show it! If there isn't any, is he still making it up?

TT: When scientists are busy doing their job, Pompeo has been trying so hard to spread the words that the virus came from a lab in Wuhan. Where is the evidence? Please show us. Perhaps he is still busy fabricating it?

The original sentence “匆匆忙忙下结论, 咬死‘病毒源自武汉实验室’” was reduced to “Pompeo has been trying so hard to spread the words that the virus came from a lab in Wuhan.” This reduction minimized the use of adjectives and adverbs in syntax, simplifying the expression and emphasizing Pompeo's efforts to propagate a specific narrative. The accusation that Pompeo might still be busy fabricating evidence was simplified to “Perhaps he is still busy fabricating it?” This reduction retained the essence of the accusation while reducing the confrontational tone found in the original. The structure of the statements was altered from declarative in the original to interrogative in the translation, as seen in “Where is the evidence? Please show us.” This change makes the queries more direct and inquiry-oriented. The use of simplified expressions and turning some statements into questions helped soften the confrontational tone. This approach makes the questioning appear more objective and encourages readers to think independently.

(c). Translator's Visibility in Strengthening the Confrontation

The translator's visibility can also help to strengthen the confrontation. It's found that linguistic amplification is used

more frequently in lexicon and modulation in syntax. Example 7 shows that the syntactic modulation not only challenges the claims made by the U.S. but also amplifies the confrontational tone, showcasing the translator's visibility and engagement with the discourse.

Example 7 (13 July, 2020)

ST:过去 40 年间, 新疆维吾尔自治区维吾尔族人口从 555 万已经增加到了 1168 万, 是 40 年前的两倍还多, 美方见过这样的种族灭绝吗? 新疆每 530 个穆斯林就拥有一座清真寺, 清真寺总数十多倍于美国, 他们见过这样的宗教压迫吗?

Literal translation: In the past 40 years, the Uighur population in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region has increased from 5.55 million to 11.68 million, more than twice the number four decades ago. Has the U.S. seen such a case of genocide? In Xinjiang, there is one mosque for every 530 Muslims, with the total number of mosques being many times more than in the United States. Have they witnessed such religious oppression?

TT: In the past 40 years, the Uighur population in Xinjiang has increased from 5.55 million to 11.68 million, more than doubling in the past four decades. Is this “genocide” claimed by the U.S.? There is one mosque for every 530 Muslims in Xinjiang, and the total number of mosques in China is more than ten times that in the United States. Is this “religious oppression” claimed by the U.S.?

In the original text, the substantial increase in the Uighur population in Xinjiang over the past 40 years is presented as a fact. However, in the translation, “美方见过这样的种族灭绝吗” (has the U.S. seen such a case of genocide?) is a question using an active voice, modulated into a rhetorical question “Is this ‘genocide’ claimed by the U.S.?” with a passive voice. The use of a passive voice challenges the assertion made by the U.S., increasing the confrontational tone. Similarly, the statement about the number of mosques in Xinjiang is modulated from an active voice into a passive voice, emphasizing the so-called facts are claimed by the U.S. but can be fake. By casting doubt on the claims of “genocide” and “religious oppression,” the translator strengthens the confrontation with the U.S., asserting an opposing viewpoint and adding a confrontational layer to the discourse. Besides the modulation in syntax, which can strengthen the confrontation, the translator also employed the strategy of “linguistic amplification” at the lexical level in the discourse, demonstrating visibility and ultimately strengthening the confrontation.

Example 8 (8 May, 2020)

ST: 如果仅仅因为他援引了一个“也许”, 你们就揪着不放, 那么对于美国总统、副总统、国务卿、国务院发言人以及一些美国议员不断地指责病毒来自武汉、源自武汉实验室, 你们去质问过他们吗?

Literal translation: If just because he cited a ‘perhaps,’ you keep holding on, then have you questioned the U.S. President, Vice President, Secretary of State, State Department spokesperson, and some U.S. lawmakers who continuously accused the virus of originating from Wuhan, from a Wuhan lab?

TT: If you keep picking on him just for citing this word “might”, then how about the U.S. President, Vice President, Secretary of State, the State Department spokesperson and some lawmakers, who falsely accused that the virus came from lab in Wuhan, saying the virus was man-made or leaked? Have you ever questioned them?

This confrontational response targets not only answering the journalists' questions but condemning the U.S. In the translation, the term “源自” (originated from) is amplified to “saying the virus was man-made or leaked.” The addition of “man-made or leaked” introduces a stronger accusation, portraying the U.S. officials as making false and serious allegations. By amplifying the terms, the translator showcases visibility by actively shaping the discourse with stronger language. This choice implies a more assertive stance against the accused U.S. officials. It transforms a general accusation into a more serious one, suggesting that the U.S. officials are making grave and potentially false claims about the virus's origin. This linguistic amplification contributes to a heightened sense of conflict in the discourse.

IV. DISCUSSION

In the responses given by the spokesperson Hua Chunying, 245 confrontational responses were identified from the total of 472 responses to the media. 85 confrontational responses were taken in the form of challenge strategy according to the classification of impoliteness strategies by Bousfield (2008). In terms of the translation strategies, modulation, reduction, linguistic amplification, transposition, linguistic compression, generalization, particularization, amplification, and literal translation were identified. Considering the literal translation did not change the form and meaning of the responses, 11 literal translation cases were excluded from the analysis. Thus, 74 confrontational responses using other translation strategies were included.

The translator's visibility is demonstrated at three levels: lexicon, syntax, and discourse. Forty-six instances, constituting 62.2% at the syntactical level, rank in the first place. The lexical level takes up 32.4%. Nevertheless, only four instances were found at the discursive level. At the level of syntax, modulation is the most frequently used translation strategy. At the lexicon level, reduction is the top option for the translator. As for discourse, linguistic amplification, modulation, and amplification are found, but the quantity is too small, so the discourse level will not be the focus of the analysis.

Accordingly, through the translator's visibility by using the translation strategies at different levels, the confrontation is influenced by the visibility. The translator's visibility may weaken, maintain, and strengthen the spokespersons' discursive confrontation. 31 items showcased the weakening, 27 showcased the maintaining, and 16 strengthening.

Modulation in syntax and reduction in lexicon help maintain the confrontation. Linguistic compression and reduction are employed more frequently in weakening the confrontational implications in lexicon, and reduction in syntax. Linguistic amplification is found to be more frequent in the lexicon and modulation is more often used in syntax in strengthening the confrontation. It is suggested that the translation strategy of reduction can facilitate maintaining or weakening the confrontation. The deletion of some parts of the source text plays an important role in keeping alignment with the spokesperson's stance and helps decrease the confrontation to avoid more conflicts among parties. Additionally, modulation and linguistic amplification can increase the confrontation. The reason may be attributed to the mediation of the discursive focus and the expansion of sentences, which may contribute to a more prominent official attitude and disagreement with the involved parties. Even though institutional ideologies may impact the translator's visibility, the use of translation strategies to influence the degree of confrontation in the translation challenge strategy can be proof of the translator's existence throughout the process.

The above analysis of real examples taken from the spokesperson Hua Chunying's confrontational responses helps increase the understanding of the translator's role. Research has presented that the translator is an active participant and contributor to the formation of institutional discourse (Li et al., 2023). In transferring the language and delivering the information, translators are also regarded as the mediators, the gatekeepers, the brokers, and so forth (e.g., Kang, 2014; Sch äffner, 2020). Instead, traditionally, institutional translators are required to be invisible due to the prevailing institutional authority and strict professional requirements. In addition, the translation of institutional discourse, like the diplomatic discourse at regular press conferences, should align with institutional ideology. Therefore, the translation may be influenced by the authority and the ideology, leading to a mediated translation of the discourse and the translator's active involvement in the discourse.

In the context of Chinese spokesperson Hua Chunying's confrontational responses to the media, the present study aims to expand the existing knowledge body of the translator's mediating role between the speakers and the audience. In diplomatic texts, the institutional translators shoulder multiple roles. Firstly, the translator is responsible for conveying the original message to the intended recipients. Given the particularity of the diplomatic discourse, the translator should not only provide an accurate translation but also consider the specific communicative context. Therefore, the translator is also regarded as a diplomat in translating diplomatic discourse. This means that the translator should also be aware of the need to align with institutional ideologies and principles (Koskinen, 2011). Faced with confrontational responses, the translator, on the one hand, adopts different translation strategies to deliver the message; on the other hand, they keep alignment with the institutional stances. The employment of translation strategies and consistency of ideologies result in the inevitable mediation, making the translator visible in the process. Moreover, when the confrontation is too aggressive and challenging, which may give rise to real diplomatic conflict between the political parties, the translator takes on the role of a visible mediator to reduce the degree of confrontation and ease the nervous atmosphere.

V. CONCLUSION

This article has examined the translator's visibility in translating confrontational responses using the challenge strategy under the frame of Bousfield's (2008) impoliteness strategies model. Different translation strategies were identified from the angles of lexicon, syntax, and discourse, as framed by Molina and Albir (2002). This study presents the importance of taking the spokesperson's confrontational responses at regular press conferences as an interpretive space to understand the translator's mediating role in translating institutional discourse. The examination of the confrontational responses in translation studies offers a novel perspective in discussing the translator's status and presents evidence that the translator is visible in mediating the confrontation.

It must be acknowledged that this study is also limited in some aspects. First comes the single corpus data. This study covers only the year 2020 and focuses on one representative spokesperson's responses at the regular conferences. Therefore, the examples provided are limited. Secondly, it may be challenging to generalize all the findings to other studies related to the translator's visibility because the translation strategies used by the translator are dynamically changing. Moreover, aside from the professional requirement and the institutional ideologies, some more factors can be taken into consideration, such as the translator's ideology, social contexts, political landscape, cultural differences, and the target audience's reception.

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