Analysis of Translator Behavior from the Perspective of Intervention System Negation of Resource Change

- Taking the Interpretation of the Foreign Minister's Press Conference at the First Session of the Fourteenth National People's Congress as an Example

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Abstract: Criticism of translator behavior expands the social perspective of translator behavior research. Based on the theory of evaluation of negation of resources in intervention system in systemic functional linguistics, this paper uses the "Truth-Pragmatism" continuous evaluation mode of translator behavior to study the translator behavior behind the change in evaluation significance of the interpretation of the Foreign Minister's press conference at the first session of the Fourteenth National People's Congress. The study found that translators possess the attribute of "pragmatism" and there exists a pragmatic social subject choice. The study aims to provide reference and guidance for the development of diplomatic interpretation.

Keywords: translator behavior criticism, intervention system, negation of resources, interpretation

1. Introduction

The press conference of the National People's Congress Foreign Minister is an open platform for China to convey its policy positions to the outside world. It is a window to showcase its international image and a proactive measure to promote the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind. Interpretation is crucial in this context, and research on diplomatic interpretation will promote the optimization of translation strategies, enhance the quality of translated texts for external propaganda, and improve the overall level of external propaganda work, which is of practical significance. Therefore, this paper will combine the theory of evaluation of negation of resources in intervention system in systemic functional linguistics and the "Truth-Pragmatism" continuous evaluation mode of translator behavior to analyze the on-site interpretation of the Foreign Minister's press conference at the first session of the Fourteenth National People's Congress.

"Translator behavior criticism," as one of the original translation theories proposed by domestic scholars[1], conforms to the research trend since the 1990s of gradually highlighting the subjectivity of translators, pioneering new perspectives for the in-depth development of translator research. Its core is the "Truth-Pragmatism" continuous evaluation mode of translator behavior: the former refers

to the behavior of translators seeking the truth of the meanings carried by the original language to achieve pragmatic goals, while the latter refers to the attitude and methods adopted by translators to meet pragmatic needs based on seeking the truth of the meanings carried by the original language[2]. Therefore, this model can describe the traces of translator's social role behavior, explore the general behavioral characteristics of translators, and construct a theoretical system of "translator behavior" criticism combining translation inside and outside[3].

In recent years, scholars tend to use the theory of translator behavior criticism as a research tool, such as analyzing from the aspects of "translation internal behavior" and "translation external behavior" for a single translated work[4], or using the continuous evaluation mode combined with the concept of "capital" to examine the social determinants of translator behavior rationality[5], or analyzing the translation strategies used in party history biographies by comparing vocabulary and phrase translations[6]. For example, focusing on a specific group of translators, comparative studies were conducted on several groups of English translations[7] to discover the translator behavior characteristics of this group and the specific differences among translators. Also, using the theory of translator behavior criticism, the influence of translator's aesthetic consciousness on translator behavior in classical translation was examined[8], or the reliability and validity of medical scale translation were studied[9]. While the diversity of translator behavior research, there is relatively little literature analyzing interpretation with the theory of translator behavior criticism. Among them, the acceptance of Shao Weiping's interpretation at the Foreign Minister's press conference scene as seeking truth and pragmatic translation, analyzing the rationality of translator behavior and the underlying reasons for translator behavior, is relatively high[10].

In the context of related translation studies combining evaluation theory, the overall impact of changes in evaluation on the acceptance of translated texts and their audiences has not been given sufficient attention[11]. Zhang Hong and Duan Yanyan analyzed the changes in evaluation significance of parallel translations within the framework of evaluation theory and used translator behavior criticism for analysis, believing that it is the result of the highlighted social attributes of willful translators[12]. Tan Guangyu and Lu Danyun studied military external propaganda texts' vocabulary translation under the framework of translator behavior criticism, based on the evaluation theory's hierarchical resources[13]. It can be argued that there is relatively little research combining "translator behavior criticism" with "appraisal theory" at present, with less focus on the role of translators in the change of evaluative meaning. The research explanations are relatively broad, mostly revolving around attitude, engagement, and the polarity system, or one of these aspects. There are few studies from the perspective of specific resource changes in specific systems. Therefore, the academic value of this paper is evident.

2. Analysis Framework

Martin & White established the Appraisal theory based on the development of systemic functional linguistics, which interprets and elucidates the attitudes, positions, or viewpoints of language users towards events through the analysis of language. The Engagement system is one of the subsystems of the Appraisal theory, focusing on how language users adopt linguistic resources in response to the evaluative positions referred to in the text and the objects involved[14]. Speakers regulate their responsibility and obligation for what they say or write to different degrees of intervention in response to other propositional voices using different linguistic resources[15].

The Intervention system consists of two branches: Single Voice and Multiple Voices. Single Voice excludes any possibility of dialogue, while Multiple Voices acknowledges the occurrence of various propositions, opening up the space for dialogue. Multiple Voices is further divided into Dialogue Contraction and Dialogue Expansion: Dialogue Contraction resources directly or indirectly oppose propositions contrary to the evaluative opinions of the speaker, suppressing them by introducing other

voices, with methods including denial and assertion; Dialogue Expansion resources allow the speaker's own views to be expressed with higher acceptance while accepting the existence of different positions and viewpoints, with methods including evoking and quoting. As shown in Figure 1:
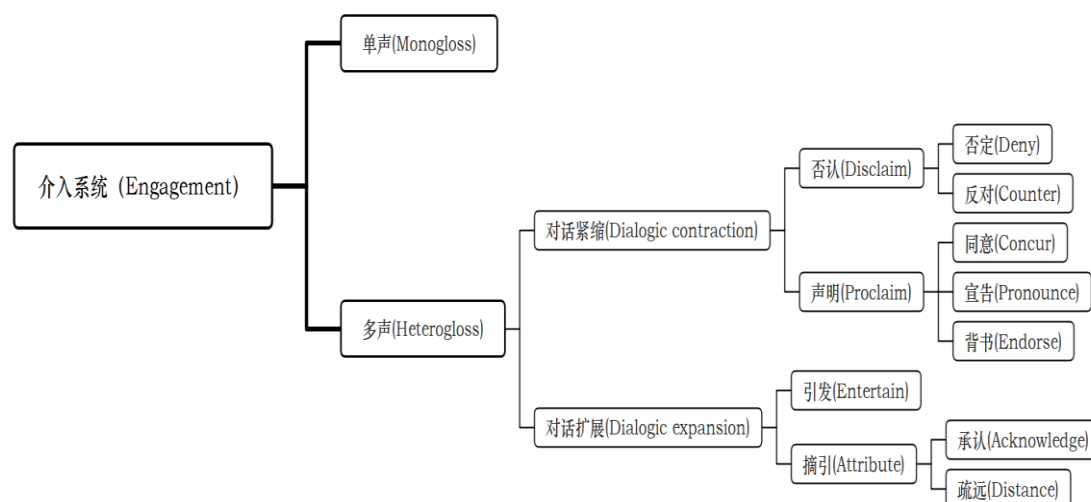

Figure 1: Framework of the Intervention System Theory.

3.   Research Corpus and Methods

This study takes the bilingual full text of the press conference of the First Session of the Fourteenth National People's Congress, where the Minister of Foreign Affairs answered questions from Chinese and foreign journalists about China's diplomatic policies and foreign relations, as the research corpus. The UAM CorpusTool3 tool was used to mark the multi-voice intervention resources in the two texts and Excel spreadsheets were used to statistically analyze the differences in intervention resources used between the two texts.

In the UAM CorpusTool3 software, the author first labeled the whole document of the Foreign Minister's speech as "Original Text" and the entire text interpreted by the interpreter in the same way as "Translated Text". According to the theoretical framework of the Intervention system, layers were set up to divide the segments within a document and mark the words or other structures representing intervention meaning in both texts, assigning features. The author then compared specific differences in intervention resources, observing whether the same intervention resources were used for the same sentence in both texts; if there were changes, the types of changes were recorded and counted. Some resources underwent internal differences in the meaning of dialogue space. For comprehensive and detailed statistics, the author also marked their types of changes and counted them. For example, in the declaration resources, one was used to indicate the speaker's determination and will, such as "将" ("will"), marked as "Declaration I"; the second was used as an emphasis to clarify the insertion of the speaker's subjective voice[16], such as "就是" ("indeed", "really"), marked as "Declaration II"; the third was used as a narrative verb to emphasize the speaker's subjective viewpoint, such as "认为" ("contend"), marked as "Declaration III". Similarly, in the evoking resources, one was used to elaborate possibilities, such as "可以" ("can"), marked as "Trigger I"; the second was an if conditional sentence used to structure the space for dialogue expansion, marked as "Trigger II"; the third was used as mental verbs[14], such as "希望" ("hope", "wish"), marked as "Trigger III"; the fourth was marked as "Trigger IV" for pseudo-questions[14]. The author also used "None" to indicate that words or other structures representing intervention meaning were not used, including but not limited to single voice.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Distribution and Differences of Intervention Resources

The occurrence frequency and proportion of various engagement resources are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Distribution of Engagement Resources in the Original Text.

	Negation	Opposition	Agreement	Declaration	Endorsement	Trigger	Quotation	Estrangement	Total
Frequency	100	45	7	111	5	74	23	24	390
Percentage	25.64%	11.54%	1.79%	28.46%	1.28%	18.97%	5.90%	6.15%	100.00%

Table 2: Distribution of Engagement Resources in the Translated Text.

	Negation	Opposition	Agreement	Declaration	Endorsement	Trigger	Quotation	Estrangement	Total
Frequency	85	39	6	109	5	87	25	22	378
Percentage	22.49%	10.32%	1.59%	28.84%	1.32%	23.02%	6.61%	5.82%	100.00%

The types and frequencies of engagement resource changes between the two texts are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Differences in Engagement Resources.

Change Types (Original Text → Translated Text)		Frequency
None	→ Declaration I	19
Negation	→ None	18
None	→ Trigger I	16
Declaration II	→ None	13
Declaration I	→ None	13
Opposition	→ None	10
None	→ Declaration II	9
Declaration I	→ Declaration II	6
None	→ Opposition	4
Quotation	→ None	4
Trigger I	→ None	4
None	→ Trigger III	3
None	→ Negation	3
Trigger II	→ None	2
Declaration III	→ None	2

Table 3: (continued).

None	⌐	Estrangement	1
None	⌐	Quotation	1
None	⌐	Trigger II	1
None	⌐	Declaration III	1
Estrangement	⌐	None	1
Trigger IV	⌐	Estrangement	1
Trigger III	⌐	Estrangement	1
Trigger I	⌐	Declaration I	1
Endorsement	⌐	None	1
Declaration III	⌐	Declaration II	1
Declaration II	⌐	Trigger II	1
Declaration II	⌐	Trigger I	1
Declaration II	⌐	Declaration III	1
Agreement	⌐	Endorsement	1
Total			140

Comparing Tables 1 and 2, significant differences in the quantity of negation resources and triggering resources between the two texts are observed: "Translated Text" has 15 fewer negation resources than "Original Text," with the largest reduction; "Translated Text" has 13 more triggering resources than "Original Text," with the second largest increase. Specifically, according to Table 3, there is a variety of changes in the types of declarative resources, with frequent occurrences. Among them, the "None ⌐ Declaration II" change has the highest frequency, but compared with Tables 1 and 2, its total quantity change in the two texts is minimal; the "Negation ⌐ None" scenario occurs a total of 18 times, with the second highest frequency; the "None ⌐ Trigger I" scenario occurs a total of 16 times. In this study, the author focuses on the significant changes in the quantity of negation resources as an entry point, and through the analysis of specific changes in engagement meaning classification under these examples, conducts in-depth analysis of possible translator behaviors. It should be noted that while declarative resources and triggering resources have their own characteristics in the two texts, due to space limitations, this paper does not elaborate further, but could be explored in future research.

4.2. Translator Behavior Analysis Results

4.2.1. Unchanged Dialogue Space

One type of change is when the interpreter does not retain all the negation resources from the original sentence, but the translation still presents a consistent contraction effect in the dialogue space.

[Example 1]
Original Text: 中国式现代化一<u>不</u>靠战争，二<u>不</u>靠殖民，三<u>不</u>靠掠夺。
Translated Text: Chinese modernization is <u>not</u> pursued through war, colonization, or plundering.
[Example 2]
Original Text: 美方所谓要给中美关系"加装护栏""<u>不</u>冲突"，实际上就是要中国打<u>不</u>还手，骂<u>不</u>还口，但这办不到！
Translated Text: Its so-called "establishing guardrails" for China-US relations and "not seeking conflict" actually means that China should <u>not</u> respond in words or action when slandered or attacked.

Chinese emphasizes the use of rhetorical devices to convey thoughts and emotions. Specifically, in political documents, common rhetorical devices include repetition and parallelism[17]. Repetitive structures are used for emphasis. Therefore, in the process of translation, translators need language transformation and creativity skills[18], handling characteristics like redundant repetition in Chinese, deleting irrelevant content or structures to avoid cumbersome and disordered information resulting from literal translation, ensuring higher quality interpretation.

In Example 1, in response to a question from the Egyptian magazine "Roz Al-Yousef" about the significance of "Chinese-style modernization" to the world, the Foreign Minister stated that the enlightenment brought by Chinese-style modernization can be understood from at least five aspects, one of which is steadfastly pursuing the strategy of "peaceful development." In this context, the Foreign Minister uses three negations "not" in succession to negate the implicit proposition that "a country needs to rely on war, colonization, and plundering to achieve modernization," indicating its divergence from the concept of "peaceful development." This discourse strategy compresses the dialogue space, emphasizing the reliability of Chinese-style modernization in "adhering to peace, development, cooperation, and win-win, and adhering to the harmonious coexistence of man and nature." The interpreter uses "not" to organize negation sentences, choosing to list three nouns or gerunds in parallel. Although it reduces two negation resources compared to the original text, it still follows the expression strategy of dialogue space contraction, while adhering to English language habits, minimizing the structural redundancy caused by literal translation of Chinese sentence patterns, making the translated text concise and meaningful. In Example 2, when discussing China-U.S. relations, the Foreign Minister criticized the irrational U.S. policy towards China, pointing out the malicious containment and suppression by the U.S. The use of two consecutive negations "not" in "打不还手，骂不还口" contracts the dialogue space, negating the exclusion of the true purpose of the U.S.'s zero-sum game, highlighting the correctness of the proposition "China's firm stance and defense of sovereignty." In the process of consecutive interpretation, the interpreter condensed the core information word "respond," merging the couplet into "should not respond in words or action," which, compared to the original sentence, reduces one negation resource but does not change the dialogue space. Both examples show that changes in engagement resources in diplomatic interpretation may stem from the interpreter's need to handle differences in Chinese and English sentence structures and reorganize sentence structures. While not changing the dialogue space, interpreters process information, remove repetition, present concise translations with accurate political information, and play the role of translators.

4.2.2. Transition from Multi-voice to Single-voice

Another type of change is when the interpreter does not retain the negation resources from the original sentence, excluding the possibility of dialogue, and the engagement shifts from multi-voice to single-voice.

Single-voice is an engagement resource that does not need to reference other voices and viewpoints; the speaker or author believes that the proposition in the current communicative context does not need to be acknowledged or participated in alternative propositions, is inert in the dialogue space, and can be directly announced [14]. The author notes that within the relevant research field, literature explaining the reasons behind the transition from multi-voice to single-voice in terms of translator behavior is almost nonexistent; therefore, this paper attempts to make a preliminary exploration.

[Example 3]
Original Text: 提升中国的国际话语权，当代中国青年义不容辞。
Translated Text: When it comes to making China's voice heard loud and clear, young Chinese have an important role to play.

[Example 4]

Original Text: 如果像有的国家那样政党纷争，只说<u>不</u>做，朝令夕改，再好的蓝图也只是画饼充饥、空中楼阁。

Translated Text: Partisan rift, <u>empty talk</u> and frequent policy flip-flop as seen in certain country will only make even the best blueprint an illusion and a castle in the air.

In Example 3, when answering a question from a reporter of "China Daily" about "how young people can contribute to enhancing China's international discourse power," the Foreign Minister emphasized the improvement of China's diplomatic environment with the negation resource "不," indicating that seizing international discourse power is a responsibility and obligation that young people in the new era must shoulder. The translation shifts from "have an important role to play" to single-voice engagement: first, to reflect the interpreter's understanding of the Chinese idiom "义不容辞" in a brief period and convey the political significance of "Chinese youth must play their due role" to the target language audience. Second, to reflect the interpreter's consideration of target language expression habits, "important role" is a common phrase in English and is easier to understand and accept. In Example 4, when discussing the fifth "unity and hard work" of the Chinese-style modernization enlightenment, the Foreign Minister cited counterexamples, using the negation resource "not" to satirize the political environment of certain countries filled with empty talk and lacking practical action. He pointed out that political parties unable to unite lack integrity and execution, bringing only a superficial future to the people, thereby highlighting the correctness of China's development experience that "only unity and hard work can bring strength" in the face of a scattered and hopeless situation. The translation removes the negation resource from the original sentence and uses "empty talk" as a single voice intervention. "Empty talk" is used to describe discourse or behavior lacking substantial content, capturing both the political connotations conveyed by the Foreign Minister and serving as a commonly used phrase, facilitating listeners' understanding and acceptance. Within the framework of pragmatic translation theory, interpreters fully consider the differences in expression between the source and target languages, employing strategies such as paraphrasing and domestication to make the translation more in line with the target language's expression habits. The author believes that changes in dialogue space may also stem from such processes.

[Example 5]

Original Text: 美国公开声称要"塑造中国周边战略环境"，这恰恰暴露了"印太战略"围堵中国的真实目的，其最终结果只会冲击以东盟为中心开放包容的地区合作架构，损害地区国家的整体和长远利益，注定走<u>不</u>远、行<u>不</u>通。

Translated Text: The US claim to"shape the strategic environment in which China operates"actually reveals the real purpose of its Indo-Pacific Strategy, that is, to encircle China. Such an attempt will only disrupt the ASEAN-centered, open and inclusive regional cooperation architecture, and undermine the overall and long-term interests of regional countries. <u>It is bound to fail</u>.

[Example 6]

Original Text: 当今世界并<u>不</u>太平，动荡与变革交织，团结与分裂碰撞，机遇与挑战并存。

Translated Text: <u>The world is far from tranquil</u>, being entangled in intertwined turmoils and transformation, the clash between unity and division, and the coexistence of opportunities and challenges.

Diplomatic translation possesses certain political characteristics and must prioritize the principle of "political priority and clear stance." While conveying information, it also shapes and conveys the country's political image and stance. In the new era, with China's comprehensive national strength rising, its dominance in international affairs continuously solidifying, China's diplomatic policies and

statements will receive widespread international attention. This also implies that provocations from all sides are increasing, and China faces increasingly complex diplomatic challenges on the international stage, such as sensationalizing sensitive Taiwan issues, disrupting the geopolitical landscape in the Pacific region, and propagating the "China threat theory." In this context, diplomatic language that is implicit, tactful, and skillfully uses circumlocution becomes less applicable, and a firmer stance and deeper political connotations are required[19] for diplomatic translation to safeguard national interests. This makes the nuances of tone, emphasis, and implicit meaning in diplomatic translation worth pondering[20]. Translators need to skillfully adjust the dialogue space to achieve clearer semantic effects, ensuring that the target audience can accurately understand the political significance of the original text.

In Example 5, when discussing the so-called "Indo-Pacific strategy" of the United States, the Foreign Minister negates the proposition that some people believe the US is "capable of shaping the strategic environment around China" by stating "it will not go far and is not feasible," revealing its real purpose of containing China, which will ultimately have a negative impact on the regional cooperation framework centered on ASEAN, believing that this strategy is bound to fail. The translation shifts to single-voice, eliminating the space for interaction with other voices by using an affirmative statement, "It is bound to fail." The "Indo-Pacific strategy" is a geopolitical concept proposed by the United States, which claims to "strengthen cooperation between the United States and Asia-Pacific countries to maintain regional peace, security, and stability." However, behind this lies obvious geopolitical calculations, with the core being division and confrontation, which will undermine the regional cooperation framework centered on ASEAN formed over many years, posing a serious threat to regional cooperation achievements and future development prospects. As "language ambassadors," interpreters must clearly convey China's firm opposition and condemnation to the international community in such important occasions as the NPC and CPPCC press conferences. Using single-voice engagement helps to directly express the subject's viewpoint and attitude while enhancing the clarity of political meanings and increasing persuasiveness. In example 6, the Foreign Minister responded to questions from China Central Television (CCTV) journalists about "the outlook for China's diplomacy in the coming period" and similar topics. In concluding remarks, he used the negating term "不" to refute the implicit judgment of "complete peace in today's world," highlighting the global environment of "not being peaceful" and introducing a new era of Chinese diplomacy characterized by "facing challenges head-on and taking on responsibilities courageously." The interpreter employed a positive statement, "The world is far from tranquil," to reject engagement with other perspectives, directly conveying China's viewpoint that "the world is far from achieving peace," clarifying the political implications, and emphasizing the unique value of Chinese diplomacy in this new journey, which is characterized by its challenges and glory. These two examples illustrate that interpreters prioritize conveying the practical political implications, strengthening political positions, which can lead to changes in the dialogue space. In this process, the identity and subjectivity of the translator are evident.

It should be pointed out that interpreters are often under time pressure during translation, needing to make decisions and choose appropriate vocabulary, handle implicit information, and ensure the accuracy and fluency of the translation in a very short time. Therefore, translators generally cannot deeply analyze and consider as they would in written translation. Time pressure often forces translators to choose a more decisive tone and manner of expression; translations may become more direct and explicit, leading to the shrinking or even elimination of dialogue space.

4.2.3. Transition from Multi-voice to Single-voice

According to Table 3, the occurrence of "none → negation" appeared 3 times; the interpreter

increased negation resources during translation, expanding the dialogicity, and transitioning from single-voice to multi-voice engagement. Due to its limited occurrence and space constraints, this paper only provides a brief discussion.

[Example 7]

Original Text: 中国外交有足够的厚道与善意。

Translated Text: In China's diplomacy, there is no shortage of goodwill and kindness.

In Example 7, the Foreign Minister responds to the so-called "wolf warrior diplomacy" rhetoric trap, pointing out that the essence of Chinese diplomacy is "kindness," but when faced with international provocations and threats, Chinese diplomats will demonstrate determination and action in safeguarding national sovereignty and interests. This sentence is in single-voice, excluding the possibility of dialogue. However, the translation introduces negation resources by using the fixed common phrase "be no shortage of," negating the potential proposition value of "Chinese diplomacy being tough and malicious." This example also demonstrates the interpreter's pragmatic translation; the change in dialogue space is the result of making the translation more consistent with the language expression habits of the target audience.

5.   Conclusion

This paper, based on the intervention system of systemic functional linguistics and the "Truth-Pragmatism" continuous evaluation tool, focuses on the distribution and changes of negation resources in the interpretation of the press conference by the Foreign Minister at the 14th National People's Congress. It explores the interpreter's behavior in the changes and constants of dialogue space. The research found that "pragmatic translation" can explain the changes in dialogue space: first, interpreters pay attention to eliminating repetitive structures in the source language, presenting a more concise target language, facilitating listeners to grasp information quickly; second, interpreters recognize the differences in expression between the source and target languages, using translation techniques to output information in expressions more common and understandable to the target language group; third, interpreters, facing the situation of Chinese diplomacy, in formal diplomatic occasions, focus on political tendencies, conveying more accurate and firm political connotations to the target language group. These processes are all manifestations of the interpreter's subjective role. Through this research, a better understanding of the characteristics, challenges, and development trends of diplomatic interpretation can be achieved, providing theoretical support for improving the quality and abilities of interpreters; it also helps to promote the development of related disciplines and facilitate international communication and cooperation.

Of course, the "Truth-Pragmatism" continuous evaluation mode should be viewed as a unified whole. This paper only discusses the "pragmatic" aspect and does not elaborate further on "truth." To further explore the deep meaning of translator behavior in Chinese diplomatic translation and start from the unity of the "Truth-Pragmatism" continuous evaluation mode is crucial and indispensable in future research topics on translator behavior.

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