

A Study on English Translation of Implicit Meanings in Chinese Political Discourse: Spatial-Temporal Differences

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Abstract: *This study focuses on the translation of Chinese political discourse, with second-year translation students at Zhejiang Yuexiu University as the research subjects. The research explores their understanding and translation of implicit meanings embedded within Chinese political chunks. Through the analysis of translations of five typical sentences, the study identifies varying levels of meaning explication—Zero Explication, Partial Explication, Exceptional Explication, and Complete Explication. Based on the Chinese-English Spatial-temporal Differences Theory, this study analyzes the reasons behind students' explication failures and proposes corresponding teaching strategies to enhance their abilities in translating political discourse from Chinese to English and promoting cross-cultural communication.*

Keywords: Chinese Political Discourse, Explication of Implicit Meaning, Linguistic Chunks, Translation Pedagogy

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1. Introduction

In the context of global power dynamics, the dissemination and translation of a nation's political discourse have become increasingly significant. Chinese political discourse often serves as important material for studying the intricate relationship between language, culture, and political ideology in translation.

The study centers on the translation of Chinese chunks, especially their application in Chinese political discourse. Chunks, as defined by Alison Wray (2002), refer to pre-fabricated language units that can take the form of words, phrases, or sentences, exhibiting strong spatial properties such as discreteness and implicitness. These linguistic units, due to their compactness, often carry meanings that are not immediately apparent and require contextual interpretation. The study aims to address the following research questions:

- How do the student translators perform in understanding and translating the implicit meanings of Chinese political chunks? And what are the characteristic features of their English translations?
- Which teaching strategies can educators apply to strengthen students' understanding of implicit meanings in Chinese political discourse and consequently enhance the accuracy and completeness of their Chinese-English translations?

2. Literature Review

The concept of lexical chunks, also known as prefabricated chunks, was first introduced in psychology by Miller (1956), who described "chunks" as units of memory that aid in information processing. This idea later found its way into linguistics through Becker (1975), who suggested that language is stored and processed in fixed or semi-fixed structures, referred to as "prefabricated chunks". Wray (2002) further emphasized that these chunks are formulaic units ready for immediate use, eliminating the need for grammatical analysis. Research by Altenberg and Granger (2001) and Biber et al. (1999) indicates that about 70% of natural discourse consists of these prefabricated chunks, suggesting their great importance in effective communication.

Lexical chunks are essential for improving both the speed and quality of translation (Wan, 2022; Zhang & Zhu, 2023; Tay, 2021). Their use enables translators to concentrate on the overall meaning of a text rather than getting caught up in individual words, which helps create smoother transitions between languages (Ellis, 2012;

Vuorikoski, 2004; Wang, 2016; Liu, 2023). This is particularly evident among professional interpreters, who usually show a high level of consistency in their use of formulaic language (Conklin & Schmitt, 2012; Henriksen, 2007; Li & Zhang, 2019; Geng, 2024).

However, the translation of lexical chunks is not without constraints. Key factors, such as the translator's linguistic competence, the characteristics of the source text, and the context of the target language, all play great roles in deciding how lexical chunks can be effectively used (Shao, 2018; Meng & Hu, 2015).

Previous research mostly emphasizes the important role of lexical chunks in reducing cognitive load, enhancing fluency, and improving translation quality (Xu & Li, 2021; Tsuji, 2024). However, significant gaps still exist, especially in the systematic study of complex chunks and their use in professional translation contexts. There is also a noticeable lack of research from a cognitive semantic perspective, particularly regarding how differences in spatial and temporal thinking between Chinese and English affect the translation of four-character idioms and other formulaic expressions. Future research should address these gaps by investigating the cognitive processing of Chinese chunks in English translation, particularly through the lens of cognitive semantics.

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3. Guiding Theory: Chinese-English Spatial-temporal Differences

The Chinese-English Spatial-temporal Differences Theory provides an important framework for us to understand how the Chinese and English languages reflect their unique cultural and cognitive perspectives (Liu et al., 2021). This theory has been greatly influenced by early research on linguistic relativity, particularly the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, which suggests that language shapes thought. Building on this foundation, scholars like Wang and Liu (2020) argue that the visual and spatial nature of the Chinese language reflects a worldview that emphasizes spatial relationships over the flow of time. In contrast, English tends to organize experiences through time, as a result, issues such as tense, aspect, and modality are often emphasized in the English language (Comrie, 1985).

3.1. Spatiality in the Chinese Language

Chinese language is characterized by its spatiality preference, which is reflected in its syntactic structure, use of characters, and overall linguistic focus. Spatiality in Chinese is often realized through the visual arrangement of characters and the spatial relationships between entities. In Chinese syntax, sentences frequently rely on spatial markers featuring separateness and discreteness rather than temporal ones characterized by connectivity and continuity to convey meaning. This is evident in the use of nominalization, where actions are often described as static scenes or spatial configurations (Wang & Liu, 2020). Consider the following example:

Example 1:

“中国人民相信，山再高，往上登，总能登顶；路再长，走下去，定能到达。” (Xi, 2018)

Example 1 illustrates the spatial characteristics of the Chinese language through its vivid imagery of journeys and challenges. The chunky phrases “山再高” (no matter how high the mountain) and “路再长” (no matter how long the road) emphasize the idea that obstacles can be overcome. The expressions “往上登” (climb upwards) and “走下去” (continue walking) convey a sense of movement and progression. This spatial focus highlights the relationship between the starting point and the goal, reinforcing the belief that with determination and perseverance, one can reach the summit or destination.

This example demonstrates how the Chinese language uses spatial concepts to convey meaning both semantically and pragmatically. The overall structure of the sentence conveys a sense of hope and resilience, which is central to the Chinese cultural perspective. By using spatial imagery, it succeeds in improving communication and resonating with the audience.

3.2. Temporality in the English Language

In contrast, the English language is heavily focused on temporality. This emphasis on time is expressed through a complex system of tense, aspect and modality, which illustrates the sequencing of actions and events. English sentences typically center around verbs, emphasizing on when actions occur and how they relate to each other temporally (Comrie, 1985).

To illustrate the temporal orientation of the English language, the following examples will be discussed:

Example 2:

“But what remains true is that your graduation marks your passage into adulthood — the time when you begin to take charge of your own life. It’s when you get to decide what’s important to you: the kind of career you want to pursue, who you want to build a family with, the value you want to live by. And given the current state of the world, that may be kind of scary.” (Obama, 2020)

In example 2, the emphasis on time is clear, as shown by the italicized connecting words. The phrase “marks your passage into adulthood” highlights a key moment, showing the transition from one life stage to another. This temporal framing emphasizes graduation not just as an event, but as a significant turning point that influences future choices. The repeated use of “when” in “the time when you begin to take charge” and “It’s when you get to decide” reinforces the idea of specific moments that shape an individual’s life. The mention of the “current state of the world” adds a sense of urgency, suggesting that decisions made during this transitional phase are particularly important.

In summary, this example shows how temporal language structures in English shape the narrative. This contrasts with Chinese, where temporal information is often inferred from context or left implicit. The temporal focus of English requires a more linear and cohesive structure, where the sequence of events is crucial (Huang, 2010). This emphasis on time is deeply embedded in English grammar, influencing not only sentence structure but also narrative style.

The Chinese-English Spatial-temporal Differences Theory provides valuable insights into the cognitive and linguistic differences between Chinese and English. And understanding these differences is of great importance for effective cross-cultural communication.

4. Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology used to explore the cognitive processes involved in translating implicit meanings in Chinese political discourse, drawing on insights from previous studies.

4.1. Participants

The participants in this study are second-year translation students at Zhejiang Yuexiu University. These students have completed two years of rigorous training in translation, providing them with a solid understanding of translation theory and practical skills. Since they represent the typical proficiency level of undergraduate translation students, it would be suitable to have them as the subjects of this study.

A class of 33 students was randomly selected for the study. This sample size is sufficient to provide meaningful insights while keeping data analysis manageable within the scope of the research. By examining how these students tackle translation challenges, valuable information about the effectiveness of their training could be gathered.

4.2. Research Methodology

This study mainly employs a qualitative research methodology to investigate the cognitive processes involved in translating implicit meanings within Chinese political discourse. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth exploration of students’ translation strategies and the challenges they face when dealing with complex linguistic elements.

4.3. Research Procedures

The research process consists of three main steps, which are detailed below.

4.3.1. Translation Task Design

The translation task was created to assess students' abilities to translate implicit meanings. Five sentences were selected from contemporary Chinese political discourse. The structural analysis of these sentences is presented in Table 1, while expert translations are presented in Table 2.

| THUNK TYPE | SENTEN CE NO. | SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXTS | STRUCT URE |
|-------------------------------|------------------|--|---------------|
| 4-CHUNK CONSTRUC TION | 1 | 我们要坚持稳中求进、以进促稳、先立后破。 | 4+4+4 |
| | 2 | 实施制造业重点产业链高质量发展行动，着力补齐短板、拉长长板、锻造新板，增强产业链供应链韧性和竞争力。 | 4+4+4 |
| | 3 | 初心易得，始终难守。以史为鉴，可以知兴替。 | 4+4 |
| 2-CHUNK CONSTRUC TION | 4 | 深入践行绿水青山就是金山银山的理念，协同推进降碳、减污、扩绿、增长，建设人与自然和谐共生的美丽中国。 | 2+2+2+2 |
| 3/5-CHUNK CONSTRUC TION | 5 | 领导干部想问题、作决策，一定要对国之大者心中有数，多打大算盘、算大账，少打小算盘、算小账。 | 5+3+5+3 |

Table 1: Basic information of source text

| SENTEN CE NO. | TARGET LANGUAGE TEXT |
|------------------|---|
| 1 | We should adhere to the principles of pursuing progress while ensuring stability, promoting stability through progress, and establishing the new before abolishing the old. |
| 2 | An initiative for pursuing high-quality development of key manufacturing chains will be launched, with a focus on shoring up weak links, reinforcing strengths, and fostering new capabilities, so as to enhance the resilience and competitiveness of industrial and supply chains. |
| 3 | Though our Party's founding mission is easy to define, ensuring that we stay true to this mission is a more difficult task. By learning from history, we can understand why powers rise and fall. |
| 4 | Acting on the principle that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets, we will make concerted efforts to cut carbon emissions, reduce pollution, pursue green development, and boost economic growth so as to build a Beautiful China featuring harmony between humanity and nature. |
| 5 | Leading officials must have a clear understanding of matters of national significance in analyzing problems and making decisions. Build a strategic vision and think about the overall situation, rather than being short-sighted and focusing only on local interests. |

Table 2: Target language text by expert translators

4.3.2. Translation Task Implementation

Students were required to translate the identified chunks from each sentence using a fill-in-the-blank format. This approach aimed to focus on the most challenging elements of the text, allowing for a clearer assessment of the students' understanding and transmission of the implicit meanings.

4.3.3. Translation Assessment

The translations produced by the students were evaluated using four categories of explication. Zero Explication (ZE) encompassed those translations that did not capture the underlying meaning, resulting in a

significant loss of essential information. Partial Explicitation (PE) referred to translations that partially conveyed the implicit meaning but either omitted or misinterpreted key elements. Exceptional Explicitation (EE) described translations that introduced incorrect or irrelevant meanings, thereby deviating from the intended message. Complete Explicitation (CE) represented translations that successfully made the full implicit meaning explicit, maintaining the fidelity and integrity of the original message. In this way, a thorough evaluation of the students' translation skills has been made, showing both their strengths and areas that may need additional teaching support.

Through these three steps, the study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the cognitive strategies students employ and the challenges they face during the translation process.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Overall Results of Student Translations

The students' overall performance in translating the five selected political sentences varied across four categories of meaning explicitation (viz., zero, partial, exceptional and complete ones). The data, summarized in Table 3, shows significant differences in the number of students achieving each type of explicitation across the five sentences.

| SENTENCE NO. | ZERO EXPLICITATION N (ZE) | PARTIAL EXPLICITATION N (PE) | EXCEPTIONAL EXPLICITATION N (EE) | COMPLETE EXPLICITATION N (CE) |
|--------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | 12 | 7 | 2 | 11 |
| 2 | 8 | 15 | 4 | 6 |
| 3 | 12 | 11 | 2 | 8 |
| 4 | 5 | 17 | 7 | 4 |
| 5 | 14 | 6 | 3 | 10 |

Table 3: Overall results of student translations

The distribution of explicitation categories highlights two main trends that are worth noting.

Firstly, Sentences 1, 3, and 5 exhibit the highest number of ZE translations, where the implicit meanings were entirely lost. Sentence 5, in particular, had the highest number of ZE translations (14 students), followed closely by Sentences 1 and 3, each with 12 students in this category. This indicates that the implicit meanings in these sentences presented significant challenges for the students, making it difficult for them to decode and accurately convey the intended meanings into English.

In contrast, Sentences 2 and 4 had the highest number of PE translations, with 15 and 17 students producing these translations, respectively. This indicates that students managed to convey some aspects of the implicit meanings in these sentences, but they failed to fully capture the overall message of the text, which might be caused by the complexity of implicit elements in these sentences.

5.2 Detailed Results of Student Translations

This section analyzes the student translations of two representative sentences to illustrate their understanding and translation of implicit meanings in the chunky source text. By examining the different levels of explicitation, we can gain insights into the challenges and patterns in translating these complex language chunks. The data for this analysis are summarized in Tables 4 and 5.

| |
|---|
| (1) ST: 我们要坚持稳中求进、以进促稳、先立后破。 |
| ETT: WE SHOULD ADHERE TO <i>THE PRINCIPLES OF PURSUING PROGRESS WHILE ENSURING STABILITY, PROMOTING STABILITY THROUGH PROGRESS, AND</i> |

| |
|--|
| <i>ESTABLISHING THE NEW BEFORE ABOLISHING THE OLD.</i> |
| STT1: (ZE) WE SHOULD ADHERE TO <i>PURSUE STABILITY AND PROGRESS.</i> |
| STT2: (ZE) WE SHOULD ADHERE TO <i>SEEKING PROGRESS, PROMOTING STABILITY, AND ESTABLISHING FIRST.</i> |
| STT3: (PE) WE SHOULD ADHERE TO <i>THE PRINCIPLES OF BUILDING STABILITY FIRST, THEN PROCEED.</i> |
| STT4: (PE) WE SHOULD ADHERE TO <i>SEEKING PROGRESS WHILE ENSURING STABILITY, PROMOTING STABILITY THROUGH PROGRESS, AND ESTABLISHING FIRST.</i> |
| STT5: (EE) WE SHOULD ADHERE TO <i>THE RULES OF MAINTAINING STABILITY WHILE PURSUING PROGRESS, ADVANCING STABILITY BY PROGRESS, AND BUILDING BEFORE DESTROYING.</i> |
| STT6: (CE) WE SHOULD ADHERE TO <i>FUNDAMENTALS OF SEEKING PROGRESS WHILE MAINTAINING STABILITY, PROMOTING STABILITY THROUGH PROGRESS, AND ESTABLISHING THE NEW BELIEFS BEFORE INNOVATION.</i> |

Table 4: Translation examples of sentence 1

| |
|---|
| (4) ST: 深入践行绿水青山就是金山银山的理念，协同推进降碳、减污、扩绿、增长，建设人与自然和谐共生的美丽中国。 |
| ETT: ACTING ON THE PRINCIPLE THAT LUCID WATERS AND LUSH MOUNTAINS ARE INVALUABLE ASSETS, WE WILL MAKE CONCERTED EFFORTS TO <i>CUT CARBON EMISSIONS, REDUCE POLLUTION, PURSUE GREEN DEVELOPMENT, AND BOOST ECONOMIC GROWTH</i> SO AS TO BUILD A BEAUTIFUL CHINA FEATURING HARMONY BETWEEN HUMANITY AND NATURE. |
| STT1: (ZE) ACTING ON THE PRINCIPLE THAT LUCID WATERS AND LUSH MOUNTAINS ARE INVALUABLE ASSETS, WE WILL MAKE CONCERTED EFFORTS TO <i>REDUCE CARBON, LOWER POLLUTION</i> SO AS TO BUILD A BEAUTIFUL CHINA FEATURING HARMONY BETWEEN HUMANITY AND NATURE. |
| STT2: (ZE) ACTING ON THE PRINCIPLE THAT LUCID WATERS AND LUSH MOUNTAINS ARE INVALUABLE ASSETS, WE WILL MAKE CONCERTED EFFORTS TO <i>REDUCE CARBON AND POLLUTION, EXPAND GREEN AND GROWTH</i> SO AS TO BUILD A BEAUTIFUL CHINA FEATURING HARMONY BETWEEN HUMANITY AND NATURE. |
| STT3: (PE) ACTING ON THE PRINCIPLE THAT LUCID WATERS AND LUSH MOUNTAINS ARE INVALUABLE ASSETS, WE WILL MAKE CONCERTED EFFORTS TO <i>REDUCE CARBON, REDUCE POLLUTION, EXPAND GREEN, AND BOOST ECONOMIC GROWTH</i> SO AS TO BUILD A BEAUTIFUL CHINA FEATURING HARMONY BETWEEN HUMANITY AND NATURE. |
| STT4: (PE) ACTING ON THE PRINCIPLE THAT LUCID WATERS AND LUSH MOUNTAINS ARE INVALUABLE ASSETS, WE WILL MAKE CONCERTED EFFORTS TO <i>REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS, REDUCE POLLUTION, ENJOY GREEN DEVELOPMENT, AND PURSUE GROWTH</i> SO AS TO BUILD A BEAUTIFUL CHINA FEATURING HARMONY BETWEEN HUMANITY AND NATURE. |
| STT5: (EE) ACTING ON THE PRINCIPLE THAT LUCID WATERS AND LUSH MOUNTAINS ARE INVALUABLE ASSETS, WE WILL MAKE CONCERTED EFFORTS TO <i>CUT CARBON EMISSIONS, REDUCE POLLUTION, HAVE GREEN LIFE, AND SEEK POPULATION GROWTH</i> SO AS TO BUILD A BEAUTIFUL CHINA FEATURING HARMONY BETWEEN HUMANITY AND NATURE. |
| STT6: (CE) ACTING ON THE PRINCIPLE THAT LUCID WATERS AND LUSH MOUNTAINS ARE INVALUABLE ASSETS, WE WILL MAKE CONCERTED EFFORTS TO <i>REDUCE THE EMISSIONS OF CARBON AS WELL AS THE POLLUTION THE THE ENVIRONMENT, PURSUE THE GREEN DEVELOPMENT AS WELL AS ECONOMIC GROWTH</i> SO AS TO BUILD A BEAUTIFUL CHINA FEATURING HARMONY BETWEEN HUMANITY AND NATURE. |

Table 5: Translation examples of sentence 4

5.2.1. Zero Explication

According to Table 3, 36.4% of the students produced ZE translations for Sentence 1. This indicates that over a third of the students failed to convey any of the implicit meanings present in the original Chinese text, resulting in a significant loss of essential information.

The original Chinese chunk “坚持 ‘稳中求进、以进促稳、先立后破’” contains multiple layers of meaning. The phrase “坚持...(原则)” (adhere to the principles of...) is a common fixed expression in Chinese that many students omitted, leading to a lack of explication regarding “the principle” itself in their translations. Additionally, the relationships between the verbs in the chunks “稳中求进”, “以进促稳”, and “先立后破” were not expressed. For instance, the relational words “中”, “以”, “先”, and “后” were left untranslated.

For Sentence 4, 15.2% of the students produced ZE translations. This relatively lower proportion indicates that fewer students completely missed the implicit meanings in this sentence compared to Sentence 1. The original Chinese chunky sequence “降碳、减污、扩绿、增长” contains several implicit meanings related to environmental and economic strategies. In the translations like “reduce carbon and pollution, expand green and growth”, important semantic elements such as the word “emissions” in the chunk “reduce carbon (emissions)”, “development” in the chunk “pursue green (development)”, and “economic” in the chunk “boost (economic) growth” were omitted, leading to a ZE result. These omissions fail to convey the broader strategic goals of reducing carbon emissions, pollution, and promoting sustainable development and economic growth. The overall message of building a “Beautiful China” through these coordinated efforts is therefore lost.

5.2.2. Partial Explication

For Sentence 1, 21.2% of students provided PE translations. These translations succeeded in conveying some implicit meanings but missed key elements that are crucial for a complete understanding. For instance, in STT3, the meaning of “稳中求进” (pursuing progress while ensuring stability) is not fully captured, and the relationship between “building stability first” and “then proceed” does not accurately reflect the intended logic. In STT4, although the connections between the verbs are partially shown, the specific meaning of “先立后破” (establishing the new before abolishing the old) is not clearly expressed.

For the fourth sentence, “Acting on the principle that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets, we will make concerted efforts to reduce carbon, reduce pollution, expand green, and boost economic growth so as to build a Beautiful China featuring harmony between humanity and nature.” exhibits a partial explication. While it includes some key semantic elements, the expression “expand green” is not as precise as “pursue green development”, thus failing to fully convey the intended meaning of “扩绿”. Additionally, the translation does not explicitly mention the reduction of carbon emissions, which is considered to be an important aspect of the original message.

5.2.3. Exceptional Explication

EE translations accounted for 6.1% of the student outputs for Sentence 1. These translations often introduce incorrect or irrelevant meanings, leading to a distortion of the original text. An example of such exceptional explication is “We should adhere to the rules of maintaining stability while pursuing progress, advancing stability by progress, and building before destroying.” The use of “destroying” to translate “破” from “先立后破” (establishing the new before abolishing the old) significantly misrepresents the intended meaning. In this context, “破” does not imply literal destruction but refers to the process of reform and removing outdated structures. This translation introduces an aggressive connotation that is not present in the original text, resulting in a misleading interpretation.

In contrast, 21.2% of the students provided EE translations for Sentence 4, introducing incorrect or irrelevant meanings. An EE example is “we will make concerted efforts to cut carbon emissions, reduce pollution, have

green life, and seek population growth.” The translation of “增长” as “population growth” instead of “economic growth” introduces a significant error. The original text refers to economic development, not demographic changes. This misinterpretation distorts the overall message, leading to a translation that not only fails to capture and convey the intended meaning but also introduces a concept that is irrelevant to the context of environmental and economic strategies.

5.2.4. Complete Explication

Complete explication was achieved by 33.3% of students for Sentence 1, while only 12.1% for Sentence 4, indicating that fully capturing the implicit meanings was particularly challenging. The fixed collocations should be translated appropriately, so that the relationships between the verbs in each chunk can be clearly expressed, accurately reflecting the intended logic and meaning of the original sentence. This highlights the necessity of thorough understanding of the original text to successfully convey the full message of the Chinese chunky expressions.

5.3. Causes of Explication Failures in Student Translations

According to the Chinese-English Spatial-temporal Differences Theory, the Chinese language emphasizes spatial orientations while English relies more on temporal sequencing. This fundamental difference significantly affects the translation process, especially when dealing with Chinese political chunks that are often compact and laden with implicit semantic and pragmatic meanings. Therefore, students often struggle to shift from the implicit, spatially oriented structures of Chinese to the explicit, temporally organized structures of English. This cognitive and linguistic transition is essential but challenging, as it requires not only language skills but also a deep understanding of the cultural and cognitive frameworks of both languages. Below are three key causes of explication failures:

5.3.1. Differences in Temporal and Spatial Orientations

One major cause of explication failures is the mismatch between the spatial orientation of Chinese and the temporal orientation of English. For instance, in Sentence 1, the Chinese language uses spatial markers like “中” (in the midst of), “以” (through), “先” (first), and “后” (later) to imply relationships and spatial sequences. English, however, requires these relationships to be explicitly stated to convey the intended meaning accurately. Many students struggled to identify and express these implicit connections, resulting in ZE or PE translations where critical elements, such as the cause-and-effect or temporal relationships, were not fully conveyed.

5.3.2. Challenges in Explicating Implicit Information

The compactness and implicit nature of Chinese political chunks often means that key strategic relationships are implied rather than explicitly stated. For example, in Sentence 4, the sequential phrase “降碳、减污、扩绿、增长” represents not just a list of actions but an underlying strategic vision that integrates environmental sustainability with economic growth. However, many student translations failed to fully explicate these elements, often omitting such key terms as “emissions” in “cut carbon emissions” or “economic” in “boost economic growth”. This reflects a broader difficulty in the bilingual transition from the spatially implicit nature of Chinese to the explicitly detailed style required in English, leading to the omissions that disrupt the coherence and strategic intent of the target translation.

5.3.3. Misinterpretation of Cultural and Contextual Details

Another significant factor contributing to explication failures is the misinterpretation of cultural and contextual details. Chinese political discourse is rich in cultural references and idiomatic expressions that often do not have direct equivalents in English. For example, the phrase “先立后破” (establishing the new before abolishing the old) in Sentence 1 reflects a strategic approach to reform, emphasizing gradual change rather than abrupt disruption. Students who misinterpreted this as “building before destroying” introduced an unintended

aggressive connotation, which deviated from the intended meaning. This highlights the need for students to not only translate the words but also to fully understand the cultural and strategic context embedded in the text.

5.4. Teaching Strategies for Translating Chinese Political Discourse

In light of the translation challenges and the underlying causes analyzed above, it is essential to develop effective teaching strategies to enhance students' abilities in translating Chinese political discourse into English.

5.4.1. Enhancing Awareness of Spatial-Temporal Differences

It is essential to cultivate students' awareness of the spatial-temporal differences between Chinese and English. Chinese often uses compact expressions where much meaning is implied. In contrast, English requires clearer and more detailed expressions, especially in political language where clarity is essential. To bridge this gap, translation exercises in classroom settings should focus on identifying and transforming the spatial relationships embedded in Chinese into temporal sequences or explicit connections in English. This can be achieved through targeted exercises where students are tasked with analyzing Chinese sentences, identifying the implicit spatial markers, and converting them into explicit temporal or causal relationships in English. This approach not only helps students understand structural differences but also enhances their ability to convey the full meaning of the original text in English.

5.4.2. Emphasizing Explicitation Techniques

Given that Chinese political discourse often relies on brevity and implicitness, students need to be trained in the techniques that allow them to unpack the condensed meanings and express them fully in English. This can be achieved through the exercises that require students to expand Chinese political phrases into detailed and coherent English sentences. These exercises should be coupled with discussions on the importance of making implicit meanings explicit in translation, particularly in political contexts where misinterpretation can have serious consequences. By regularly practicing this process, students are expected to better handle the complexities of Chinese political discourse.

5.4.3. Deepening Cultural Understanding

Understanding cultural and contextual details in Chinese political discourse is crucial for accurate translation. Chinese political language is deeply connected to cultural references and historical context, which are often implicit and require careful interpretation. To address this, translation instruction should integrate cultural studies with language training. Students should be encouraged to explore the cultural and historical backgrounds of the political texts they are translating. This can be facilitated through case studies, where students research the background of specific political terms or phrases before attempting to translate them. Such research not only deepens their understanding of the source material but also helps them choose the best ways to convey these details in English.

By implementing these strategies, students will improve their language skills, translation abilities and cross-cultural competencies, which will help them not only succeed in relevant translation tasks but also engage actively in international communication.

6. Conclusion

The study has explored the translation of Chinese political discourse, focusing on the translation of Chinese chunks and the explicitation of their implicit meanings. The study reveals that students often struggle with the spatial and implicit nature of the Chinese language, as well as the more linear and explicit nature of English, which could lead to various issues in translation, featured by zero explicitation, partial explicitation, and exceptional explicitation. To tackle these challenges, the author has proposed a series of teaching strategies aimed at improving students' translation skills and helping them better address the specific issues related to translating Chinese political discourse, particularly those involving spatial expressions.

This research enhances our understanding of translating Chinese political discourse and offers valuable insights for translation education in universities. Further studies are needed to assess the effectiveness of these teaching strategies in practice and to continue examining the cognitive processes involved in translation, with the goal of improving the overall quality of Chinese-English translation.

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