

Researching the Narrative Features in the Translation of Xi Jinping's Political Discourse from the Perspective of Narrative Theory

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the English translation of Xi Jinping's political discourse. This translation is not only a key component of China's external publicity efforts but also embodies Xi Jinping's diplomatic narrative style and the diplomatic thought of socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era, the latter of which mainly refers to the diplomatic policies and principles advocated by the current Chinese government under the leadership of Xi Jinping. By applying Mona Baker's (2018) narrative theory, this paper aims to investigate whether and how the translation of Xi Jinping's political discourse embodies these four core narrative features—temporality, relationality, causal emplotment, and selective appropriation—through textual analysis. It is found that the translation of Xi Jinping's political discourse clearly manifests these four core narrative features. This not only highlights the key role and the effectiveness of the translator as the subject of translation but also provides strong support for the construction of China's diplomatic narratives. Therefore, the narrative theory of translation has significant applicability to the translation and research of political discourse, offering a powerful analytical tool for this field.

Keywords: narrative features, narrative theory, political discourse, translation, Xi Jinping

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INTRODUCTION

Political discourse is a substantial part of China's distinctive discursive system, and its English translation is a key undertaking in the development of the country's external discourse system (Qiu, 2018). Political discourse distinctively encompasses theoretical, policy-related, and ideological dimensions, and "it is integrally linked with the nation's key political strategies, developmental approaches, and political and diplomatic stances" (Wang, 2023, p. 58). Translating political discourse serves as a vital conduit for disseminating the perspectives of the Communist Party of China's (CPC) policies and the nation's voice on a global scale (Li & Hu, 2020). It not only serves as an essential channel for communicating the extensive policies of the Communist Party of China and the nation but also embodies China's principal ideology and mirrors the essential interests of the broad public. Moreover, it provides the most authoritative guide for other countries to grasp China's political structure, culture, and philosophical outlook (Wang, 2006). Therefore, developing appropriate translation models for political discourse is essential for enhancing China's influence in international discourse.

As the principal pioneer and practitioner of China's diplomatic political discourse, General Secretary Xi Jinping has contributed an array of new ideas, objectives, and pursuits to contemporary development. These contributions emphasize the importance of telling China's story well and spreading its voice while also giving political discourse distinct Chinese characteristics, style, and ethos (Du & Zhang, 2019). The political discourse of Xi Jinping "fully embodies the foreign diplomatic thinking under socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era and demonstrates Xi Jinping's distinctive narrative style in diplomacy" (Zhang & Zheng, 2022, p. 105). Xi Jinping's political discourse translation is an important part of translation for international communication and represents the level of Chinese political discourse translation. The research on the translation of political discourse has drawn more and more interest in the translation studies field in recent years due to ongoing efforts to create an external discourse system (Qiu, 2018). To introduce China's stances and policies and to clarify views and attitudes about political events, political discourse translation serves a significant role in China's worldwide communication. In other words, deepening the understanding and analysis of this domain is a vital part of the publicity of Xi Jinping's thoughts on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era and for strengthening China's international discourse system. The importance of translating Xi Jinping's political discourse should not be undervalued, especially when "the field is burgeoning with multi-perspectival research methods" (Li & Qing, 2021 p. 1).

Political agents across the world may have always counted on narratives for communication, and in recent years, according to Hagström and Gustafsson (2019), they seem to have gained an increasing awareness of the power of storytelling in international politics. Narrative is the daily story on which human relies for survival, where the terms narrative and story are always interchangeable (Baker, 2006; Baker, 2018). As a specific form of discourse, political discourse is essentially a specific narrative act, that is, the representation of practical actions within a particular time and space through language or other mediums (Currie, 2010; Shen & Wang, 2023). Xi (2022c) advocates for adhering to the standpoint of Chinese culture, refining and displaying the spiritual identifiers and cultural essence of Chinese civilization. He calls for the accelerated construction of a Chinese discourse and narrative system. In addition, Xi has repeatedly declared the need to tell China's story well, and to effectively spread the voice of China for international communication (Zhang, 2023). The international communication of

Chinese political discourse is a form of communication activity. As such, it involves not only texts but also social and cultural elements. Baker (2006; 2018) focuses on socio-cultural contexts, particularly ideology. She explains translation activities from the perspective of construction, exploring not only the macro-level impact of translation on social development and particularly on conflict but also examining how translation constructs narratives and how it affects and constructs society through narratives.

From this, it can be seen that the study of the translation of Xi Jinping's political discourse from a narrative perspective is not only a critical way to understand Xi Jinping's diplomatic thought but also provides a solid theoretical foundation for China's external discourse system. Thus, grounded in the existing body of knowledge, the investigation presented herein addresses this key question: How do the narrative features manifest in the translation of Xi Jinping's political discourse? This research question aims to bridge the gap between political discourse translation studies and narrative theory, offering a comprehensive insight into the interplay between translation, politics, and narratives.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Narratology, which emerged in the 1960s, is divided into classical and post-classical phases (Herman, 1997). Classical narratology focuses on the text itself, aiming to uncover universal narrative rules across different works. In contrast, post-classical narratology, as detailed by Hu (2014), is "influenced by political criticism and cultural studies, and emphasizes placing the text within socio-historical and cultural contexts" (p. 3). It concentrates on interdisciplinary research and the interactive relationships among the author, text, readers, and the socio-historical context. Narratology prioritizes the concept of psychological identity and integrates an understanding of the audience's psychological traits (Shen, 2003). The final translation can convey the translator's viewpoints and stances while being easily accepted by readers, embodying the significance of political discourse translation in international communication. Narratives are not neutral as they are "intentional communicative artifacts created by narrators for specific intentions" (Currie, 2010, p. 7). Narrators offer explicit or implicit clues in language organization to aid readers in accurately interpreting these intentions, with the ultimate goal of having readers accept the viewpoints and stances expressed by the narrator.

From a narrative theory perspective, the construction of the narrative context in the translated text is crucial (Xu, 2018). Different narratives produce different effects. Firstly, in the process of narrative context construction, the text must identify the context in which Xi Jinping's political discourse is explained, targeting international audiences. After analyzing how to elaborate facts through narratives, translators should then balance the scope for secondary creativity in the translation content (Zhou & Lyu, 2009), making reasonable additions or deletions so that those unfamiliar with Xi Jinping's thoughts on Socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era can more easily understand the connotations of Xi Jinping's political discourse. Lastly, translators should provide ideas, plots, and clues in the process of narrative context construction (Li, 2015) so that the spiritual essence of the translation can be grasped by the reader. Thus, the translated text will be more acceptable to readers and contribute to the effective communication of Xi Jinping's Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era in the international community. By integrating narrative theory, translators should prioritize the effect of international communication (Shen, 2005) and be rational in dealing with the differences in language features. In the Chinese language, there is a significant emphasis on subject consciousness, whereas English tends to prioritize object consciousness (Lu, 2020). This

divergence underlines substantial differences in linguistic logic and thought processes between speakers of these languages (Wang et al., 2023; Yang, 2023). Translators must also take into account the historical, cultural, and social differences between Chinese and Western people. Only by respecting the linguistic and cultural differences of the target audience in the translation process can better communication effects be achieved.

Mona Baker, a prominent figure in the field of post-classical narratology and translation theory, fundamentally challenges the conventional views on the role of translation in her seminal work, *“Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account”* (Baker, 2006; Baker, 2018). She innovatively introduces narrative theory into translation studies, providing a fresh perspective on translation, particularly on the process of translation. In particular, she keenly perceives the crucial role and unique function that translation plays in contemporary international politics, as well as its complex connection with political culture. Baker (2018) contends that “translation not only connects with culture but also contributes to its formation and plays an important role in international politics” (p. 2). She further argues that “translation helps shape political landscapes, becoming key in global political disputes” (p. 2). In this sense, Baker’s narrative theory in translation holds significant guiding implications for the translation study of political discourse and should be taken into account.

Combined with the practical needs of interpreting and translation research, Baker employs numerous case studies to explore how narratives construct the real world. She specifically discusses the issue of narrative construction in translation and identifies four core narrative features: temporality, relationality, causal emplotment, and selective appropriation (Baker, 2006; Baker, 2018). Narratives are the “stories we experience in our daily lives” (Baker, 2006, p. 3), linking them to translation. She argues that translation constitutes narratives and has intricate relations with international politics and culture, offering a new outlook for translation studies. Political discourse translation is also “a form of narrative that tells China’s story to the international community in a language accepted by the world” (Zhang & Zheng, 2022, p. 107). It constructs China’s image internationally and enhances international understanding of China. The translation of political discourse for international communication is a critical way to construct China’s overall international image. The narrative theory emphasizes the constructive effect of the text, aligning naturally with the purpose of political discourse translation to construct the international image we expect. Therefore, it is feasible to apply Baker’s narrative theory to the study of the translation of Chinese political discourse.

METHODOLOGY

The approach of this investigation is anchored in a qualitative research framework, aiming to delve into the narrative features in the translation of Xi’s political discourse. Operating under an interpretivist position (Saldanha & O’Brien, 2014), this methodology emphasizes the importance of context and depth in the textual examination.

The data for this study are drawn from the volumes of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* (Xi, 2017; Xi, 2020; Xi, 2022). The selection of this source is strategic because it provides a comprehensive picture of the political discourse of a key figure in modern Chinese politics (Xinhua, 2020; Zhang & Zheng, 2022). A purposeful sampling approach (Patton, 1990) is utilized to collect excerpts that vividly demonstrate the narrative features as identified by Baker (2018). Extracts highlighting these narrative features will be manually selected, identified, and collected from the Chinese corpus, along with their respective translations. This approach “ensures the validity and reliability of the results, providing clear reporting of the decision-making process and its motivating factors” (Saldanha & O’Brien, 2014, p. 105).

The investigation is built on the principles of textual analysis (McKee, 2003), enabling a deep dive into the texts to uncover features of narrativity. Through a narrative perspective, this research examines in detail the narrative features embodied in the translations.

In this research, the source text (ST) refers to the Chinese political discourses in the original text of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, while the target text (TT) is the English translation version of these discourses. Focusing on the narrative features embodied between ST and TT, the research examines how translators maintain the spirit of ST while adapting to the expectations and cultural norms of the target language audience. This process not only reveals the role of the translator as a narrative agent but also highlights the fact that translation choices have a wider impact on the international perception of Chinese political discourse.

Acknowledging the delicate nature of political discourse, this research prioritizes the authenticity, neutrality, and credibility of the texts under analysis. Consequently, all source materials are taken exclusively from publications by the Foreign Languages Press, a recognized authority for the official translations of Chinese political content. This careful selection ensures the reliability of the research's data and maintains the integrity of its outcomes (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014), reflecting the discourse as it is intended for an international audience. Throughout the entire research process, we are firmly committed to presenting the results in complete honesty and avoiding data distortion or fabrication to conserve ethical integrity (Burkholder & Thompson, 2020).

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS FOR UNDERSTANDING HOW NARRATIVES WORK

Based on Baker's theory, we found narrative features are reflected in Xi's political discourse translation. We categorize the data into four key narrative features: temporality, relationality, causal employment, and selective appropriation, offering insights into the frequency and relative prominence of each narrative feature, thus enriching our understanding of narrativity in cross-linguistic contexts. As shown in the table below, all four core narrative features are frequently manifested in the translation.

Table 1

A Statistical Analysis of Narrative Features

Narrative Features	Frequency	Percentage
Temporality	6	26.09%
Relationality	6	26.09%
Causal Employment	6	26.09%
Selective Appropriation	5	21.74%
Total	23	100%

To thoroughly grasp the function of narrative, some examples from the word and sentence levels will be analyzed and interpreted in detail. Each is selected to demonstrate the narrative feature embodied in the English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. Based on the following analysis, we can see many examples in the English translation of *Xi*

Jinping: The Governance of China embodying the narrative features. In other words, these features of narrativity play a significant role in the translation of Xi Jinping's political discourse.

TEMPORALITY

The temporality of narrativity means that “each narrative element always appears in a certain sequence” and “it is the sequence of narrative elements that determines the meaning of narratives” (Baker, 2006, pp. 50-51). The sequence of narrative elements affects our interpretation of narratives. Here, temporality involves both temporal sequence and spatial ordering. Therefore, translators should pay attention to the arrangement of the narrative elements. Besides, temporality also implies that everything we experience, and our narratives of the world, “are laden with history” (Somers & Gibson, 1994, p. 44), and in turn, history is shaped by narratives. Here are two examples of Xi Jinping's political discourse in English and Chinese.

Example 1

ST: 邓小平同志对理想信念的重要性具有深刻认识，他说..... (Xi, 2017a, p. 4)

TT: With a profound understanding of the importance of ideals and convictions, Deng commented... (Xi, 2017b, p. 4)

In the given example, discrepancies are evident between the source and the target texts, particularly in the sequencing of words. For instance, the phrase “a profound understanding”, which is the English translation for “深刻认识”, is strategically positioned at the beginning of the sentence. This choice is influenced by humans' subconscious perception of spatial position and spatial ordering. The conventional reading direction for modern Chinese people is from left to right and top to bottom. Consequently, a multi-word sentence is typically perceived based on the order of the appearance of the words, which also implicitly represents a sense of temporality. That is, the initial word in the sequence is likely to make the strongest impression on the reader. As such, by starting the sentence with “a profound understanding”, the attention is drawn away from “Deng Xiaoping” and toward the significance of shared ideals and convictions. Translating in this way not only accentuates the importance of common values and beliefs but also facilitates the target reader's comprehension that unity is predicated on shared ideals and firm convictions. Therefore, the alteration of word sequence by translators is the embodiment of temporality, effectively guiding the target readers toward a more nuanced understanding of the underlying themes.

Example 2

ST: 让党的创新理论“飞入寻常百姓家”。 (Xi, 2020a, p. 313)

TT: ...to promote our Party's innovative theories among the people. (Xi, 2020b, p. 365)

The phrase “飞入寻常百姓家” originates from a famous poem by Liu Yuxi, an illustrious poet of the Tang Dynasty. Within the original poetic context, this line refers to magpies abandoning their nests under the eaves of the elite to settle in the homes of ordinary people. In Chinese culture, magpies symbolize joy and are considered harbingers of good fortune. Although they naturally prefer to nest in groves of trees, they may choose residential areas if they have frequent interactions with the inhabitants and locals. However, Liu Yuxi's poetic intention extends beyond a mere description of avian behavior; he encapsulates his profound sentiments about the sweeping social transformations of his era. The line, therefore, should not be taken literally.

With time, the linguistic and cultural landscape has evolved dramatically. Today, the expression “飞入寻常百姓家” bears a metaphorical meaning, denoting something that is widely accessible to the general populace. This given example is a sentence from the section on Public Communication in the New Era, where President Xi Jinping emphasizes the vital role of public

communication. He employs this poem line, framed in quotation marks, to augment the persuasive power and vivid imagery of his argument.

In terms of translation, the rendering adapts the original text to align with the current temporality of the narrative feature, seamlessly combining elements from both the narrator and the participants. This enables the translation to resonate with international readers, enhancing its readability and acceptance. Furthermore, the English rendition of “飞入寻常百姓家” as “promote...among the people” captures the essence of the phrase in a way that fully conveys the significance of the original quotation. The translation of this sentence by translators is a strong reflection of the temporality of the narrative feature, thereby enriching the translated text.

RELATIONALITY

The concept of relationality posits that the interpretation of a narrative is “intrinsically interconnected with its prevailing social and cultural context” (Baker, 2006, p. 61). This is predicated on the notion that events cannot be fully understood in isolation from their cultural or social context. Consequently, translators should be attuned to the cultural and social context of their target readers to ensure accurate and meaningful translations. To illustrate this, the following are examples for consideration.

Example 3

ST:今天还是要敲敲木鱼、念念紧箍咒。(Xi, 2022a, p. 533)

TT: ... today I still need to remind you again. (Xi, 2022b, p. 619)

The phrase “敲击木鱼” literally translates to “striking a wooden fish”, where “wooden fish” (木鱼) denotes a carved wooden block, originally employed by Buddhists as a percussive instrument for maintaining rhythm during chanting. Initially, “敲木鱼” solely alluded to the physical act of knocking on this wooden instrument. Within the Buddhist context, the action aims to sustain mental clarity among monks, since the fish symbolizes sobriety. Consequently, this idiom permeates everyday Chinese parlance to signify the need for maintaining a clear or sober mind.

The phrase “念紧箍咒” translates literally as “reciting the spell of tightening the Golden Hoop”, an expression originating from the classical novel, *Journey to the West*. In the story, whenever Tang Sanzang, the Monk, needs to restrain Sun Wukong, the Monkey King, he chants this incantation, causing a golden hoop worn by Sun Wukong to constrict painfully. This idiomatic expression has thus been generalized to convey the notion of preventing someone from misbehavior.

For readers unfamiliar with Chinese religious and cultural background, these expressions present interpretive challenges, risking loss of nuance during translation. One possible solution involves supplementing translations with endnotes of all background details, offering readers the opportunity for deeper contextual understanding. However, this approach has drawbacks, including the time-intensive nature of researching these background notes. The target readers don't need to know the background information about the two metaphors. As such, the drawbacks of employing endnotes tend to outweigh the advantages.

These idiomatic expressions can be seen as culturally isolating for international readers and pose a considerable challenge for translators. Given that the translation's primary objective is not to provide an exposition on Chinese Buddhism or the intricacies of *Journey to the West*, omitting these idioms might be justified. In doing so, the translated text successfully conveys the essence of the original idioms, maintaining readability without sacrificing the text's intended impact. This exemplifies the relationality of narrativity, balancing the cultural context of the source text against the need for comprehensibility in the target text.

Example 4

ST: 讲团结不是要搞一团和气, 讲和谐不是要“和稀泥”。(Xi, 2017a, pp. 147-148)

TT: Unity here does not mean keeping on good terms with everybody, and harmony does not mean papering over cracks. (Xi, 2017b, p. 161)

In this example, the Chinese local dialect employs the phrase “和稀泥”, which roughly translates to the act of reconciling contradictions regardless of any principles. A literal translation of this phrase would likely be perplexing for readers unfamiliar with the cultural nuances of the Chinese language. Therefore, to facilitate comprehension among such readers, the idiom “paper over cracks” has been selected as a more culturally relatable alternative. This translation serves two primary functions: first, it eliminates potential barriers to understanding by using a phrase within the target readers’ cultural lexicon; second, it evokes a series of culturally specific interpretations that enrich the narrative. As such, the relationality of this narrative is made manifest in the substitution with a similar expression in the targeted language, emphasizing that a county Party secretary must take a principled stance and articulate his or her opinions rather than merely “papering over cracks”.

CAUSAL EMPLOTMENT

Causal emplotment gives sense to each event. It “allows the events to be weighed and interpreted rather than simply listed” (Baker, 2006, p. 67). Thus, it is often represented by the sequence and order of each independent event, making it possible to give ethical and moral significance to the events being described. Here are some examples to demonstrate this feature.

Example 5

ST: 抓住战略重点, 实现关键突破, 赢得战略主动, 防范系统性风险, 避免颠覆性危机, 维护好发展全局。(Xi, 2017a, p. 54)

TT: We must identify strategic priorities, make key breakthroughs, seize the strategic initiative, prevent systemic risks, and avoid being swept away by crisis, to ensure the sound progression of our great cause. (Xi, 2017b, p. 56)

In this example, there are six paratactic phrases, each of which is an essential element of the source narrative and holds significant meaning for our new long march. People would agree on each of these six elements respectively. However, they may have different opinions about the relations between these six elements. Therefore, different people will have different opinions about the relation between these six elements. Some target readers may believe that “preventing systemic risks” is the ultimate goal; some may consider that “avoiding being swept away by crisis” is the final aim; still, others might think the last element to be the ultimate objective. On the road to the new long march, it is necessary to coordinate both domestic and international situations and promote various tasks in a balanced way. Therefore, these six elements cannot be simply listed in the target text. It is found that “to ensure the sound progression of our great cause” is our ultimate goal, and the first five elements serve as the foundation, which is consistent with our development pattern. The addition of the conjunction “so as to” reflects the causal emplotment of this narrative, effectively coordinating the presentation of China’s development pattern to the target readers, and also guiding the readers to better understand the development pattern.

Example 6

ST: 人民是历史的创造者, 是真正的英雄。(Xi, 2022a, p. 6)

TT: The people are the true heroes, for it is they who create history. (Xi, 2022b, p. 7)

In this particular example, it is noted that an additional conjunction “for” has been added to TT compared to ST. To indicate the relationship between the two clauses, the translator adopts

the translation technique of adding the conjunction “for”. Specifically, making history is a prerequisite for being a hero. The causal relationship suggests that the reason behind labeling the people as true heroes is their active participation and contribution to the creation of history. Before translating this sentence, the translator should have a profound and comprehensive knowledge of the Chinese historical context and the contemporary historical context in particular. The translation effectively maintains the logical and causal connection by structuring the sentence with the cause followed by the reason introduced by “for”. This structure makes the causal relationship explicit and easy for English-speaking audiences to understand, preserving the original message’s intent and impact. The reconstruction of the source narrative indicates the national system of China as well as the position of the people in the state and society. To conclude, the added conjunction reflects the causal emplotment of the narrative feature.

SELECTIVE APPROPRIATION

To produce a coherent narrative, it is considered selective appropriation that “some elements of the narrative are omitted and others are added” (Baker, 2006, p. 71). How the choices are made about these narrative elements “depends on the theme of the narrative as well as our values and judgment” (Baker, 2006, p. 76). This core feature of narrative takes on an important role in translation. Two examples are given below to illustrate this.

Example 7

ST: 这些意见和建议带有普遍性, 刚才大家也谈到了。(Xi, 2022a, p. 59)

TT: These opinions and suggestions reflected problems of general concern, which have also been referenced in your contributions. (Xi, 2022b, p. 68)

This example shows that considering selective appropriation in translation is effective in achieving communicative effect. It appears that the translator considers from the perspective of selective appropriation and converts some expressions into similar statements to ensure readability for the target language readers.

Specifically, instead of translating “普遍性” to “generalization” in its equivalent, translators replace it with “reflected problems of general concern”. The function of “普遍性” is to modify the opinions and suggestions in the source text. However, translators insert the word “problems” and substitute “of general concern” for “opinions and suggestions” in the translation. There are two main reasons for this change. Firstly, the premise of putting forward opinions and suggestions is that problems have been encountered, which is the concealed information in the source text. Against this background, President Xi convened a conference to discuss soliciting public opinions on the 14th Five-Year Plan. The purpose of conducting this is to better identify problems faced by the public. The translation thus emphasizes that opinions and suggestions reflect problems that need to be resolved in the next five years, which is a logic consistent with the context of the source text. Secondly, instead of the equivalent “general”, translators choose “of general concern”. The theme of this passage is to prioritize support for the people. Addressing problems of general concern reflects the prominent status of the people. Compared to the word “general”, the expression “of general concern” better embodies a people-centric attitude and is more in line with the theme of this passage.

When words or expressions are difficult or impossible to translate into corresponding terms or phrases but certain expressions in the target text can replace them, semantic substitution can be considered from the perspective of selective appropriation. Translations that employ semantic substitution from the perspective of selective appropriation are more readily accepted by the target readers, as these narratives are generated based on the communicative habits of the target readers. In this respect, selective appropriation serves as an effective way to achieve

communicative goals, not only ensuring accurate expression of meaning but consideration for the expression habits of the target readers.

Example 8

ST: 粗放型经济发展方式曾经在我国发挥了很大作用，大兵团作战加快了我国经济发展步伐。(Xi, 2017a, p. 239)

TT: The extensive economy once played a great role in accelerating China's economic growth. (Xi, 2017b, p. 261)

In this example, it is found that the translated text has omitted the phrase “大兵团作战” compared to ST. Before translating the second clause, it's essential to understand the true meaning of this certain phrase. In ST, it serves as a metaphor, pointing to an extensive economy. The English translation of this phrase is omitted for two reasons. On the one hand, the real meaning of this phrase is synonymous with the extensive economy mentioned in the first clause. Therefore, the omission of this phrase can make the sentence more concise while not losing any information. On the other hand, if the phrase is translated literally, it may give a misconstrued image of China, leading the target readers to have some interpretation like “China is a warlike country”. The primary focus of this sentence is to illustrate that an extensive economy played an important role in China's past economic growth. Hence, there is no need to directly translate this controversial phrase, thereby preventing unnecessary misunderstandings and conflicts. In summary, the omission is constrained by the topic at hand and also avoids unnecessary misunderstandings and conflicts.

DISCUSSION

This paper has conducted textual analysis for qualitative research to examine the translation of Xi Jinping's political discourse, revealing that it aligns with the four core narrative features proposed by Baker. We observe that the four core features of narrativity, namely temporality, relationality, causal emplotment, and selective appropriation, are embodied in the translation of Xi Jinping's political discourse. To be more specific, the alteration of word sequence and the combination of the elements of the narrator and the participants are indicative of temporality; the adoption of paraphrasing, or the replacement of the source text with similar expressions as well as omission allows for the reflection of the relationality; the addition of conjunction manifests the causal emplotment; and semantic substitution and omission serve the selective appropriation of narrativity. Thus, it is found how narratives work in the translation of Xi Jinping's political discourse, and these four core narrative features play a key role in the translation of political discourse.

Translating political discourse is not a simple language conversion process. Rather, it is a process in which the translator comprehensively interprets the source text “from various dimensions such as political significance, ideological facets, theoretical considerations, and semantic connotations”, and then “reinterprets it in the target language” (Li & Qing, 2021, p.10). The translation of Chinese political discourse is “the act of telling Chinese stories to the international community in a language accepted by the world” (Zhang & Zheng, 2022, p. 107). From this perspective, both narratology and the translation of political discourse for international communication involve storytelling. In the field of translation, political discourse is a rather special genre. Compared to other genres such as literature, art, official documents, reports, and advertising, it is distinctly political and features prominent ideological, theoretical, and logical elements. At the same time, it carries a certain temporal, ethnic, and declarative character (Xie & Wang, 2018). Therefore, the translation of political discourse involves a complicated process. From the analysis of the aforementioned example, narrative theory can guide translators to break

through the conservative view of translation and make a more natural and reasonable interpretation of the translation process of political discourse.

CONCLUSION

This paper explores the applicability of Mona Baker's narrative theory in the translation and research of Xi Jinping's political discourse. Baker's theory focuses on the narrative construction of political conflicts and delves deeply into the interactions among narrative, translation, and conflict. Through textual analysis, this paper incorporates narrative theory to demonstrate the narrative features embodied in the translation of Xi Jinping's political discourse. Furthermore, it shows how the theory enables translators to go beyond conventional perspectives on translation, facilitating a more natural and appropriate interpretation of political discourse translation. Such narrative-driven translations not only accurately reflect the source text's narrative structure but also effectively convey China's stance on the international stage, especially when engaging in dialogues and competition with Western narratives. This not only enhances China's influence and discursive power in the international community but also contributes to shaping and maintaining a positive international image for the country. Overall, the findings of this paper pave the way for subsequent scholarly work by providing three critical recommendations and perspectives that can guide future inquiries: firstly, the integration of narrative theory with translation of political discourse not only expands the scope of narrative theory but also offers a novel perspective for researching the translation of political discourse; secondly, the translator, as a key participant during the translation process of narrative, plays an indispensable role in the "constructivist negotiation or questioning of social reality" (Baker, 2006, p. 105); lastly, the narrative theory of translation provides new theoretical underpinnings for the translation of political discourse, which can aid translators and researchers in effectively communicating political discourse from a "narrative" rather than a "conversion" account.

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