

Research on the Communication Techniques of the Official Language of the Two Sessions

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Abstract: The Premier's answer to questions from Chinese and foreign journalists held after the "Two Sessions" is a typical foreign affairs occasion that uses official languages more frequently and involves a wide range of fields. Therefore, a large number of standardized and politically sensitive official languages are used in questioning and answering. Translators need to input and output two completely different languages and cultures during the process of consecutive transmission, and cultural differences will inevitably bring difficulties to translators during translation. The translation of official languages is undoubtedly a clear example. Translators can only successfully complete their interpretation work by finding the patterns through diligent training and extensive accumulation. By analyzing the official translation and the author's translation, the author summarizes the six major characteristics of official language in press conferences, namely the extensive use of subjectless sentences, the extensive use of four character forms, the lack of coherence between sentences, the extensive use of verbs, the inclusion of a large number of idioms and idioms, and the inclusion of traditional Chinese cultural elements. The author attempts to explore the communication skills of official language in press conferences based on these six characteristics, in order to improve the quality of interpretation.

Keywords: Official Language; Press Conference; Intercommunication Techniques.

1. Official Language Content of the Two Sessions

The "Two Sessions" is an important moment to express the country's attitude and a grand event for the Party and the state to showcase the achievements of China's development in various fields such as politics, economy, society, and culture to the international community. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council have always attached great importance to the cause of reform and opening up and foreign exchange activities. As the largest developing country, China's own development and achievements are also a huge contribution to the international community. Therefore, the international community maintains close attention to China's development and attitude. So the attendees of this press conference are mostly professional media reporters, who have standardized language expression and high political sensitivity. They extensively use official language in their questions and answers, which is conducive to the author's understanding of the atmosphere and language characteristics of large-scale international conferences and conducting in-depth analysis on the official language issues that arise during them.

By analyzing the official translation and the author's translation, the characteristics of the official language used in press conferences were identified, namely the extensive use of subjectless sentences, lack of coherence between sentences, extensive use of verbs, the inclusion of many idioms and colloquialisms, and the incorporation of many traditional Chinese cultural elements. The author attempts to explore the communication skills of official language in press conferences from these characteristics, in order to improve the quality of translation.

In the 2015 Premier Li Keqiang's Q&A session with Chinese and foreign journalists, Chinese and foreign journalists raised sharp questions about the Chinese government's recent domestic and foreign policies. First of all,

the reporter of the Financial Times asked Premier Li Keqiang about the decline of China's real estate market and the growing trend of Chinese buying houses overseas. The core of the question was the legitimacy of the purchase funds and the threat to the overseas market. His words were sharp. Faced with such bold questioning, Premier Li Keqiang stated that the act of homebuyers purchasing properties overseas is itself helping to further open up the Chinese market. In addition, Premier Li also made specific interpretations of the housing policies recently introduced by the Chinese government, conveying to the world that the Chinese government has the ability to maintain the sustainable and healthy development of the real estate industry, and showcasing China's stable and prosperous development status to the world. During this period, Ms. Zhang Lu has been translating for Premier Li and foreign journalists with her smooth voice and proficient translation skills. Although the reporter from the Financial Times spoke somewhat strongly during the questioning, which was quite surprising, Ms. Zhang Lu still responded calmly with her excellent translation ability and completed the translation work with high quality. For example, the four character official language of "adapting to local conditions and implementing policies according to different cities" was translated by Ms. Zhang Lu as "And differentiated policies need to be adopted in the light of local conditions." It is both concise and faithful to the original meaning, saving time and expressing clearly.

In 2014, the hot topics of Premier Li Keqiang's answers to questions from Chinese and foreign journalists focused on livelihood issues, which had strong policy implications. Therefore, a large number of official languages were also used in the process of questioning and answering. At the meeting, first, a reporter from CNN asked a question about the "missing Malaysia Airlines" incident. Subsequently, journalists from various countries conducted interviews on issues such as "China's financial and debt problems," "anti-corruption," "China's relations with neighboring countries,"

“economic growth rate,” “streamlining administration and delegating power,” “Hong Kong’s development,” “China US relations,” “comprehensive deepening of reforms,” “cross-strait relations,” “real estate,” “smog,” “China Europe trade disputes,” and “China’s social security”. Although Ms. Zhang Lu, the interpreter, had to deal with many official language expressions during this process, she still calmly and confidently demonstrated her outstanding translation skills and completed the translation task with high quality. For example, in the middle of the meeting, reporters from CCTV and CNTV raised the question of “streamlining administration and delegating power”, and asked Premier Li Keqiang in depth, “How do you think the measures on streamlining administration and delegating power can really be implemented, and to what extent can the reform task be basically completed?” In the face of this question, which has gathered the hearts of many countrymen people, Premier Li Keqiang sincerely replied: “Of course, in the process of promoting streamlining administration and delegating power, we have indeed encountered problems such as avoiding the heavy and taking the light, middle obstruction, and the last mile impassability. How can we return the arrow when we open the bow?” It is the use of a large number of four character official languages, which are also mixed with slang, causing great difficulties for on-site translation. But Ms. Zhang Lu, with her calm and composed demeanor and superb translation skills, translated it smoothly and accurately as “I am aware that in the course of power delegation there have been such problems as a perfect attitude, midway obstruction or power delegation getting stuck in the last mile. But how can an arrow shot be turned back?”.

2. Analysis of the Characteristics of Official Languages

Due to the limited time, numerous reporters, and complex questions at press conferences, both questioners and answerers should strive to simplify and standardize their language to make it concise, accurate, and unambiguous. Meanwhile, as press conferences are mostly used as public occasions for the government to explain national policies to the public, most of the attendees have high cultural literacy and political sensitivity. Therefore, speeches at press conferences often heavily rely on official language in order to achieve concise, refined, and appropriate results. This was particularly evident at the press conference where the Chinese Premier answered questions from Chinese and foreign journalists after the Two Sessions.

The speeches made by Premier Li Keqiang and attending journalists at the press conference after the “Two Sessions” in 2015, which answered questions from Chinese and foreign journalists, extensively used the official language, causing great difficulties for translation. Through the study of Premier Li Keqiang’s speech in 2015, the characteristics of official language in press conferences have been summarized. At the same time, by comparing the author’s translation with Ms. Zhang Lu’s translation, we finally analyzed the communication skills for the official language characteristics in press conferences.

2.1. Use a Large Number of Unowned Statements

In some conferences, especially press conferences, due to limited time, numerous journalists, and complex questions,

both questioners and answerers should strive to simplify and standardize their language to make it concise, accurate, unambiguous, and easy to understand. At the same time, as press conferences are mostly used as public occasions for the government to explain national policies to the public, most of the attendees have high cultural literacy and political sensitivity, and their speeches usually contain a large number of official languages. This was particularly highlighted at the press conference where the Chinese Premier answered questions from Chinese and foreign journalists after the Two Sessions. Due to the fact that this press conference is open to multiple mainstream media from various countries around the world, it is a grand event for the Party and the country to showcase China’s achievements in politics, economy, people’s livelihood, diplomacy, society, culture and other fields to the international community. So accurately interpreting government policies and showcasing the charm of a great country is one of the important significance of this conference. Therefore, in 2015, Premier Li Keqiang extensively used official language in his speech at the press conference after the “Two Sessions” to answer questions from Chinese and foreign journalists. One of the characteristics of official language is the extensive use of subjectless sentences.

2.2. Extensive Use of Verbs

There is a huge difference between English and Chinese, which is that English emphasizes the use of nouns while Chinese emphasizes the use of verbs. In formal diplomatic occasions such as the press conferences of the “Two Sessions”, cleverly avoiding cultural gaps and producing the target language in a fluent and authentic way is also an important way to demonstrate the style of a great power. Ms. Zhang Lu encountered this problem multiple times when translating the speech made by Premier Li Keqiang at the press conference after the “Two Sessions” in 2015 to answer questions from Chinese and foreign journalists.

Example 1: Financial Times reporter: “Hello, Premier. Last year China’s real estate market has been declining, so many Chinese people go overseas to buy houses.”

Example 2: When answering a question from a reporter from the Beijing News about e-commerce, he said, “Because it greatly drives employment, creates job opportunities, and stimulates consumption, people tend to be more enthusiastic about online consumption.”

Example 3: When answering questions about e-commerce, Premier Li said, “Whether it is online or offline physical stores, they must pay attention to integrity, ensure quality, and safeguard consumer rights.”

In these three examples, each sentence contains two or more verbs. If the differences between Chinese and English are not taken into account during translation, and the characteristics of Chinese emphasizing the use of verbs and English emphasizing the use of nouns are not understood, and the verbs in the Chinese source language are not converted into appropriate noun forms in the English target language, then the translator’s English translation will be cumbersome, awkward, and not fluent.

3. Communication Skills in Official Languages

3.1. Additional Translation

When there is a large use of subjectless sentences in official languages, we can use the technique of cross translation to

make the translation logic clearer and the meaning easier to understand. The method of adding words, phrases, or sentences is mostly used in Chinese to English translation. It refers to a translation technique that adds words, phrases, or sentences based on the different ways of thinking, language habits, and expression between English and Chinese, in order to more accurately express the meaning contained in the original text and make the writing fluent. There are many subjectless sentences in Chinese, while English sentences generally require a subject. Therefore, when translating subjectless sentences in Chinese, except for a few that can be translated using English subjectless sentences, passive voice, or “There be...” structure, the subject is usually added according to the context to make the sentence complete.

Premier Li Keqiang’s speech at the press conference for answering questions from Chinese and foreign journalists after the 2015 Two Sessions contained a large number of subjectless sentences, which posed difficulties for translation. The author caused some confusion in the subject during this simulated translation practice. When dealing with such issues on the spot, Ms. Zhang Lu chose to use explicit transmission techniques for translation, adding the correct subject to make the translation sound accurate and smooth. Below, the author’s translation and Ms. Zhang Lu’s on-site translation will be used as examples to compare and analyze the methods and effects of using visualization techniques.

Example 1: 金融时报记者：“总理，您好。去年中国的房地产市场一直在下滑，所以很多中国人都到海外去买房子。现在中国公民已经是纽约、悉尼、伦敦等地最大的海外顾客群体了，当地房价随之被明显抬高。”

Translated by the author: “Premier Li, last year, the development of China’s estate market has declined greatly. So many Chinese people choose to buy houses overseas. Now Chinese people are already the main consumers in New York, Sydney and London. And the price of local houses has been raised greatly.”

Last year, China’s real estate market was on the decline. This prompted a large number of Chinese nationals to start buying homes overseas. Chinese customers have become the largest group of home buyers in New York, Sydney and London and this has significantly driven up local home prices. Although this translation also indicates the trend of rising overseas housing prices, it cannot clearly express the viewpoint of the Financial Times reporter that Chinese consumers’ overseas purchases have led to a significant increase in housing prices, and the language contains a questioning tone.

Ms. Zhang Lu used “this” to refer to the fact that “Chinese customers have become the largest group of homebuyers in New York, Sydney, and London.” As the subject of “housing prices have significantly increased,” it highlighted the correlation between the two and accurately conveyed the views and attitudes of the Financial Times reporter. Here, we use the translation technique of ‘this’ to refer to the previous pronoun as the subject, reflecting clear facts and attitudes.

3.2. Part of Speech Conversion

English emphasizes the use of nouns, while Chinese emphasizes the use of verbs. If a sentence contains two or more verbs, and the translation does not consider the differences between Chinese and English, does not understand the characteristics of Chinese emphasizing the use of verbs and English emphasizing the use of nouns, and does not convert verbs in the Chinese source language into

appropriate noun forms in the English target language, then the translator’s English translation will be cumbersome, awkward, and not fluent. However, answering reporters’ questions after the “Two Sessions” is a major diplomatic occasion aimed at the world, which requires interpreters to provide accurate, fluent, and high-quality translations of the speeches at the meeting. In such a situation, the translator should pay attention to using part of speech conversion techniques to translate the Chinese source language into the authentic English target language.

Below, the author’s translation and Ms. Zhang Lu’s on-site translation will be used as examples to compare and analyze the usage and function of the translation technique of using nouns instead of verbs.

Example 1: 金融时报记者：“总理，您好。去年中国的房地产市场一直在下滑，所以很多中国人都到海外去买房子。”

Translated by the author: “Premier Li, last year, the development of China’s estate market has declined greatly. So many Chinese people choose to buy houses overseas.”

Translated by Zhang Lu: “Last year, China’s real estate market was on the decline. This prompted a large number of Chinese nationals to start buying homes overseas.”

It can be seen that when translating the word “glide”, the author did not pay attention to converting the verbs in the Chinese source language into appropriate noun forms in the English target language, and did not use the translation technique of replacing verbs with nouns. Instead, the word “glide” was directly translated as “decline”, which inevitably made the translation sound like Chinglish. Ms. Zhang Lu’s translation translates ‘slide’ as the noun phrase ‘was on the decline’. By using part of speech conversion translation techniques, Ms. Zhang Lu made her translation sound more authentic and fluent.

4. Summary

Due to the use of subjectless sentences and four character grids in official language during press conferences, there is a lack of necessary coherence between sentences. Therefore, when encountering these situations, translators should pay attention to the appropriate use of translation word addition and part of speech conversion techniques, adding subjects, explanatory phrases, and words expressing logical relationships in the translation to make the translation smooth, enhance logic, and facilitate understanding. In response to the widespread use of verbs in the official Chinese language, translators need to promptly convert verbs into nouns to ensure the authenticity and fluency of the translation. Translators should pay attention to the correct literal or free translation of classic cultures commonly used in translating Mandarin, including idioms, colloquialisms, traditional culture, etc. For some simple and vivid ethnic languages, literal translation can be carried out to preserve and reflect ethnic characteristics and language styles, preserving exotic customs for the translated readers. For language translations with rich ethnic traditional cultural connotations, it is necessary to translate them into a language that the target language readers can understand, in order to ensure the readability and appreciation of the translation.

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