

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Quoting Chinese Political Discourse through Translation: An Analysis of Xi Jinping's Climate Change Discourse in English-language News Media

Received: 23 November 2022; Revised: 19 May 2023; Published: 26 May 2023

Yuan Ping

Hangzhou Dianzi University, Hangzhou, China

Email: y.ping@hdu.edu.cn

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2962-6464>

Abstract:

Climate change is a heated topic that attracts media and political attention. Previous research has analyzed political discourse using different approaches from various perspectives. However, few studies have investigated the recontextualization of Chinese political discourses in the mass media via translation. This study analyzes how President Xi Jinping's discourses on climate change are translated and represented in the Chinese, British and American media. It draws on political discourse analysis and the narrative theory conception of quoting, including direct, indirect and mixed quotations. The study analyzes a selection of Xi's translated quotations through manual coding and examines Chinese and English news outlets' speech representation. The quotations are interpreted in their socio-political contexts and in relation to aspects such as journalistic conventions. The findings show that these factors contribute to the narrative shifts observed between institutional translation and news translation. The study provides insights into cross-cultural communication and the role of translation in shaping public opinion on important global issues such as climate change.

Keywords: translation of political discourse; political discourse analysis; critical discourse analysis; quoting; *China Daily*; *The New York Times*; *Financial Times*

1. Introduction

Climate change is a heated topic that attracts global media attention (Bødker & Morris, 2021; Pan et al., 2021). As a major economic power, China's role in addressing climate change internationally is very important. It is also a key component of "telling Chinese stories well", President Xi Jinping's 2013 slogan for promoting a positive image of his country (Yang, 2021). Xi has publicly commented on climate change on numerous occasions since he took office and English-language media incorporate his discourse into their news reports through a special form of translation that falls between it and journalism (Valdeón, 2015; 2020).

Language plays a critical role in politics (Chilton, 2004) and a growing body of literature recognizes its importance and the way political ideas are disseminated via news reporting across nations and languages (Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009). Xi's discourses have attracted increasing interest among researchers (e.g., Wang, 2017a; 2017b; Wang, 2021) and studies over the past two decades have provided important information on Chinese political discourse from the perspective of translation



studies (e.g., Li & Li, 2015; Wang & Feng, 2018; Li & Pan, 2020; Gu & Wang, 2021; Gao & Munday, 2022).

Despite the importance of quoting in news discourse, little study to date has been conducted on its narrative functions or the narrative nature of these political discourses from the perspective of translation studies. Moreover, few studies have investigated the recontextualization of Chinese political discourses in the mass media. Recontextualization refers to the process of extracting texts, signs or meanings from their original context and reusing them in another (Connolly, 2014), something which can affect the narrative nature of the text by changing the way the story is told and understood (Altamazi, 2020). This study seeks to examine how Xi's discourse on climate change is quoted in the English-language press and to compare these with the official Chinese translations. The study provides significant insights into cross-cultural communication and the role translation plays in shaping public opinion on important global issues such as climate change.

The paper starts with a brief overview of previous studies on political discourse analysis (PDA) from the perspective of translation studies and quoting in political news discourse. It then describes the data and methods used in this study and presents the findings of the research, focusing on three types of quotations. The results are then discussed in their socio-political contexts and in relation to matters such as quoting practices.

2. Previous Studies on Political Discourse Analysis

“Political discourse” is a commonly used term and yet difficult to define precisely, as it depends on the nature of the politics in question. It can be used to refer to a range of written and spoken texts involving various actors in political communication (van Dijk, 1997). In a narrow sense, PDA can be described as “the study of political language where the focus is on aspects of language structure” (Wilson, 2015, p. 776). This study uses the term in its restricted sense to refer to the language of political figures to allow for a more focused analysis.

Various approaches and perspectives have been used to analyze political discourse, such as the critical discourse approach (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012), the discourse-historical approach (Chilton & Schäffner, 2002) and the socio-cognitive approach (van Dijk, 2008). Researchers often adopt the critical discourse approach to study the link between discourse, ideology and various discursive issues in politics, such as argumentation, representation and interaction (van Dijk, 1997). According to Chilton (2004, p. 198), there are generally two ways of approaching PDA: one is “human interaction” and the other is “the way that humans represent the world in their minds in the process of linguistic communication”, both paths highlighting the importance of social and cognitive aspects. Some discourse analysts adopt the discourse-historical approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA) “which enables analysis of political communication in its historical, socio-political and organizational contexts” (Wodak, 2009, p. xiv). This study draws on the critical discourse approach to analyze the relationship between language and power in political speeches.

A considerable amount of literature has been published on PDA over the past two decades (e.g., Chilton & Schäffner, 2002; Chilton, 2004; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). These studies have



provided important information on how political discourse contributes to our understanding of language and society. However, Randour et al.'s (2020, p. 438) systematic review of 20 years of research on political discourse concludes that “political discourse is generally limited to the discourses of (institutionalized) political elites and most specifically to oral monological speeches” and that “[m]ost studies focusing on political elites deal with Western countries (from Europe and North America) or with the European Union” (Randour et al., 2020, p. 433). Insufficient scholarly attention has also been paid to non-Western political figures’ discourses.

Translation studies scholars have also analyzed political discourses from their perspectives. As Schäffner (2004, p. 137) points out, “translations (as target texts) reveal the impact of discursive, social, and ideological conventions, norms and constraints”. Schäffner and Bassnett (2010, p. 21) demonstrate that “the media play an important role in the transmission of information about politics and political events from other countries”. Chinese political translation, possessing distinctive features, has attracted increasing academic attention (Li & Li, 2015). Most studies focus on the institutional translation of political written and spoken texts (e.g., Wang & Feng, 2018; Li & Pan, 2020), and several of these have specifically examined the translation of political news in the contemporary Chinese context. An example is Liu’s (2021) study of the coverage of China’s Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in translations of Chinese news when compared to the original reports. Alvaro (2013) explores the treatment of several Chinese political discourse terms in the English-language *China Daily*. Kuo (2001) analyzes reported speech in Chinese political discourse. These studies examine various factors that influence recontextualized political discourse in news, but few have investigated the recontextualization of Chinese political discourses in the mass media. Zheng and Ren’s (2018) study of how interpreted Chinese political discourse is recontextualized in English news is a rare example. One of their findings is that most English-language news reports rely heavily on the interpreted versions of Chinese political discourse and it is suggested that we reevaluate how political discourse is presented in news reports.

3. Translingual Quoting of Political Discourse

Quotations are crucial in communication because they offer reliable and verifiable evidence to strengthen an argument. In discourse analysis, reported speech generally comprises direct quotations and indirect quotations. Direct quotation is used “when another’s utterance is framed as dialogue in the other’s voice”, whereas indirect quotation is used “when another’s speech is paraphrased in the current speaker’s voice” (Tannen, 2007, p. 102). By examining the different ways in which speech is presented, such as through direct speech, indirect speech, free direct speech, free indirect speech, and narrative report of speech act (Leech & Short, 2007), a stylistic analysis provides insights into the text’s meaning and effects. These types of speech more often exist in literary rather than news texts and Matsushita (2021) points out that certain forms of quotations may appear differently in a literary piece than in a news article.

The translation of quotations in journalism has attracted growing academic interest. Quotations are significant because, as Bell (1991, p. 207) notes, “a quote is valued as a particular incontrovertible fact because it is the newsmaker’s own words”. Tuchman (1972, p. 668) also notes that by “[a]dding more



names and quotations, the reporter may remove his opinions from the story by getting others to say what he himself thinks". The phenomenon of quoting has been studied from various perspectives. The term "quoting" is used by Haapanen and Perrin (2020, p. 2) to refer to "the discursive, translingual, and transcontextual process of embedding real or staged-as-real extracts from formerly produced communicational offers into new, emerging communicational offer". Several terms have been coined to describe this phenomenon, such as "translingual quoting" (Haapanen & Perrin, 2019) and "transquoting" (Matsushita, 2021). The term "translingual quoting", abbreviated as "transquoting" or "TQ", is defined as "the sub-process of news-writing by which utterances from sources are both quoted and translated" (Haapanen & Perrin, 2019, p. 15). Haapanen and Perrin (2019), for example, importantly identify two types of TQ in Swiss television newsrooms: "translating ready-made quotes" (p. 35) and "translating interview utterances" (p. 36).

The difference between the use of indirect and direct speech in journalistic discourse is significant. As Waugh (1995, p.129) argues, "direct speech is interpreted by the reader as being an authentic, accurate, verbatim replication of what was originally said, whereas indirect speech is interpreted as a paraphrase". Several studies in news translation have identified ideological manipulation of quotations. Using various quotations as examples, Chen (2009) investigates how the ideologies of certain newspapers have shaped translated news articles. Furthermore, studies have analyzed how political figures' speeches are quoted and translated into another language in news media e.g., Schäffner (2008) on Vladimir Putin's in the English news; Scammell (2018) on Nicolas Sarkozy's in the British press; and Matsushita (2020) on Barack Obama's and Donald Trump's in the Japanese press. As Schäffner (2012, p. 115) indicates, "the way direct and reported speech is combined can also contribute to the positioning and construction of the political actors". However, the studies on TQ have mainly focused on direct and indirect speech; little analysis has been done on other types of quotations, such as mixed quotations, with Cappelen & Lepore (1997) and Geurts & Maier (2003) being rare exceptions. The current study combines PDA drawn from CDA and various concepts from narrative theory to explore how Xi's political discourses on climate change are translated in the domestic and international English-language press.

4. Data and Methods

The research data comprises a corpus of Xi's Chinese speeches and statements delivered at UN Climate Change Conferences since 2013 and their official institutional English translations and a corpus of news reports containing English translations published in mainstream domestic and English-language media outlets in the UK and the US. Table 1 details the news events, timeline and genre of discourse. The bilingual English and Chinese full texts were downloaded from the *China Daily* website. The 26th UN Climate Change Conference was hosted by the UK in Glasgow. The Chinese president did not attend the conference in person but sent a written statement to the 1 November 2021 World Leaders Summit as part of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Leaders' Summit on Climate was a virtual conference organized by the US government. The Climate Ambition Summit was a one-day virtual conference co-hosted by the UN, Chile, France, Italy and the UK to mark the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement. The 2015 UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) was held in



Paris and was attended by parties to the Kyoto Protocol. These events were selected because the Chinese president delivered speeches/statements at them and the bilingual versions of these speeches can be found online.

Table 1. Information on the Selected Events

Conference	Timeline	Type
COP26	31 Oct–13 Nov 2021	written
The Leaders' Summit on Climate	22–23 Apr 2021	oral
The Climate Ambition Summit	12 Dec 2020	oral
COP21	30 Nov–12 Dec 2015	oral

The news outlets selected for this study are *China Daily (CD)* from the mainland of China, the *UK Financial Times (FT)* and *The New York Times (NYT)* from the US. *CD* is selected as it is one of the most widely circulated English-language daily newspapers in China. It is owned by the Communist Party of China (CPC)'s publicity department, has a readership of over 350 million, and is key in telling Chinese stories to the world. The *FT* is a prominent daily that specializes in business and financial news and provides readers with in-depth coverage of climate change and related issues, with a strong emphasis on sustainability. The *NYT* is a daily with a global readership and prominently covers environmental issues. Newspapers from China and the US were selected as these are the two largest economies and biggest emitters of greenhouse gases in the world. Dailies from the UK and the US were selected because those countries (co-)hosted climate change conferences or summits.

Relevant news articles were collected from the LexisNexis news database using the keywords “Xi Jinping” and “climate change”. A timeline of two weeks from the outset of each event was constructed for each news outlet since it is generally believed that constructed week sampling is effective for the content analysis of online news (Hester & Dougall, 2007). Constructed week sampling was used to ensure that the sample of news stories analyzed was representative of the larger population of news stories published by each outlet. After the news articles were collected from each news outlet, an initial reading was conducted to screen out articles that contained the keywords “climate change” and “Xi Jinping” but were not necessarily about the climate conferences or did not contain any quotations from Xi. Figure 1 shows the number of news articles on each event by the news outlets that contain at least one quotation from Xi. A total of 186 news articles were collected from the news outlets: 121 from *CD*, 24 from the *FT* and 41 from *NYT*. As can be seen from Figure 1, each news outlet varied significantly in the attention it paid to different events and in its comparative coverage with the other outlets. *CD* published the greatest number of articles on each event, particularly COP21. The *FT* focused mostly on COP26. The *NYT* published its largest number of news articles on the Leaders' Summit on Climate and its lowest number on COP26.



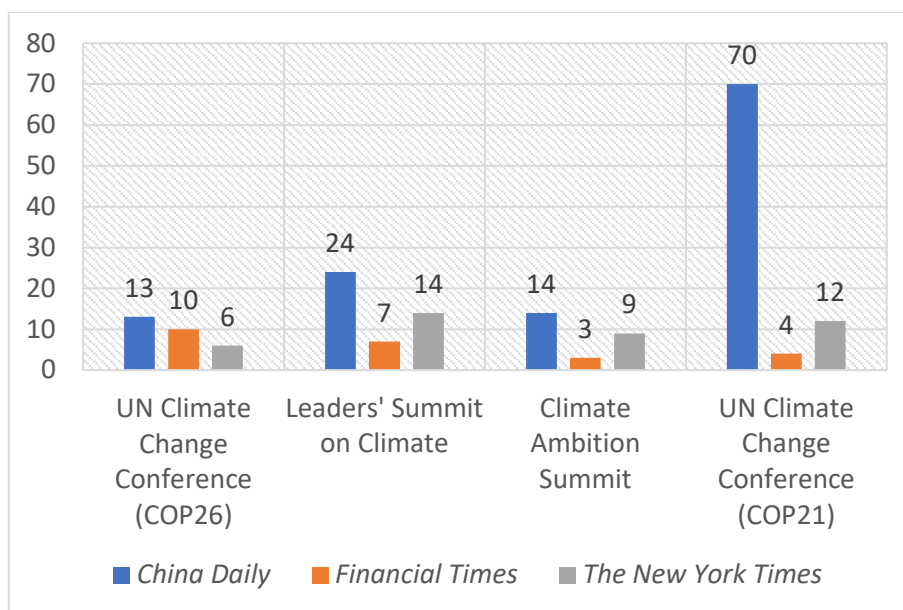


Figure 1. Number of News Articles on Each Event per News Outlet

The data was manually coded: each quotation was annotated and categorized as either direct, indirect, or mixed. A direct quotation is an utterance between quotation marks. An indirect quotation is a statement without quotation marks followed by a reporting clause. A mixed quotation is made up of both direct and indirect quotations. The quotations in the English news were compared with the official English translations to identify any deviations between them as indicating possible inaccuracies or misrepresentations. The analyses of these quotations were interpreted in their socio-political contexts, such as journalistic conventions. These factors contributed to the differences in the narratives between those of the Chinese government (institutional translation) and those of the news outlets (news translations), providing valuable insights into the methods of translation and their effects.

5. Results

The descriptive statistics of quotations by each news outlet are displayed in Table 2. The news articles from the selected media outlets include a minimum of one quotation. *CD* employed the greatest number of quotations: 63 direct, 196 indirect and 41 mixed. That is an average of 2.33 direct, 2.84 indirect and 1.95 mixed quotations in each article. The *NYT* utilized four direct, 25 indirect and 10 mixed quotations, at an average number of 1.33 direct, 1.32 indirect and 1.0 mixed. The *FT* used the lowest number of quotations: two direct, seven indirect and five mixed, an average of one quotation of each type in every *FT* article. The subsections below provide 10 examples of each type of quotation from the news outlets. These examples were selected as representative of articles containing the highest number of each type of quotation.



Table 2. Descriptive Statistics by the News Outlet

News outlet	Quotation	N	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	SD
<i>CD</i>	Direct	27	1	11	63	2.33	2.06
	Indirect	69	1	10	196	2.84	2.62
	Mixed	21	1	6	41	1.95	1.20
<i>FT</i>	Direct	2	1	1	2	1.00	0.00
	Indirect	7	1	1	7	1.00	0.00
	Mixed	5	1	1	5	1.00	0.00
<i>NYT</i>	Direct	3	1	2	4	1.33	0.58
	Indirect	19	1	4	25	1.32	0.75
	Mixed	10	1	1	10	1.00	0.00

5.1 Direct quotation

Among the 63 direct quotes from *CD*, 34 were from news articles on COP21, 13 were from articles on the 2021 Leaders' Summit on Climate, 10 on COP26 and six on the Climate Ambition Summit. One 23 April 2021 *CD* article contains 11 direct quotations: seven in the main text and four at the end. Example 1 is one of the direct in-text citations. It quotes Xi verbatim addressing the importance of international cooperation in confronting climate change from the official translation of his remarks at the Leaders' Summit on Climate.

Example 1

ST (source text): 面对全球环境治理前所未有的困难，国际社会要以前所未有的雄心和行动，勇于担当，勠力同心，共同构建人与自然生命共同体。(Xi, 2021a)

TT (target text): "Faced with unprecedented challenges in global environmental governance, the international community needs to come up with unprecedented ambition and action. We need to act with a sense of responsibility and unity, and work together to foster a community of life for man and nature," Xi said. (Cao, 2021)

OT (official translation): Faced with unprecedented challenges in global environmental governance, the international community needs to come up with unprecedented ambition and action. We need to act with a sense of responsibility and unity, and work together to foster a community of life for man and nature.

The *FT* applies two instances of direct quotations, one in an article on the Climate Ambition Summit and the other on COP26. Example 2 is from a news article on the Climate Ambition Summit in the *FT* Asian Edition of 18 December 2020. This direct quotation is an extract of the official translation of Xi's statement at the Climate Ambition Summit on 12 December 2020. The journalist combines the



first sentence on China's commitment to tackling climate change and the middle section of the second sentence on promoting a green economy and social development. However, the first half of the second sentence and the latter half of President Xi's statement were omitted.

Example 2

ST: 中国历来重信守诺，将以新发展理念为引领，在推动高质量发展中促进经济社会发展全面绿色转型，脚踏实地落实上述目标，为全球应对气候变化作出更大贡献。(Xi, 2020)

TT: "China always honours its commitments," he told world leaders at a UN climate summit this month. "We will promote greener economic and social development in all aspects." (Hume, 2020)

OT: China always honors its commitments. Guided by our new development philosophy, we will promote greener economic and social development in all respects while pursuing high-quality development. We will take solid steps to implement the targets just announced, and contribute even more to tackling the global climate challenge.

The *NYT* embeds two direct quotations in its news articles on the Climate Ambition Summit and the Leaders' Summit on Climate respectively. Example 3 is from an *NYT* article of 12 December 2020 which includes two direct quotations. It directly quotes one of the three proposals made by Xi at the Climate Ambition Summit on 12 December 2020 which calls for win-win multilateral cooperation among nations. The direct quotations are divided into two sentences, connected by the narrator and reporting verb.

Example 3

ST: 在气候变化挑战面前，人类命运与共，单边主义没有出路。我们只有坚持多边主义，讲团结、促合作，才能互利共赢，福泽各国人民。(Xi, 2020)

TT: "In meeting the climate challenge, no one can be aloof and unilateralism will get us nowhere," Mr. Xi said. "Only by upholding multilateralism, unity and cooperation can we deliver shared benefits and win-win for all nations." (Sengupta, 2020)

OT: In meeting the climate challenge, no one can be aloof and unilateralism will get us nowhere. Only by upholding multilateralism, unity and cooperation can we deliver shared benefits and win-win for all nations.

5.2 Indirect quotation

Indirect quotations represent the most frequently used type of quotations at each news outlet. *CD* incorporates a total of 196 indirect quotations in its articles. The maximum number of indirect quotations for one article is 10, and this occurs in four different news articles. Examples 4 and 5 are two indirect quotations from a *CD* piece on 30 November 2015. These indirect quotations are close adaptations of the official translation of Xi's remarks at the opening ceremony of the Paris Conference on climate change. Example 4 splits the original translation into two parts, connected by a reporting



clause with the narrator and reporting verb. Example 5 combines the first sentence and the first part of the second sentence into an indirect quotation, followed by a narrative clause.

Example 4

ST: 巴黎大会应该摒弃“零和博弈”狭隘思维，推动各国尤其是发达国家多一点共享、多一点担当，实现互惠共赢。(Xi, 2015)

TT: The Paris Climate Change Conference should reject the narrow-minded mentality of zero-sum game, Chinese President Xi Jinping said here Monday, urging all countries, developed countries in particular, to assume more shared responsibilities for win-win outcomes. (*CD*, 2015)

OT: The Paris Conference should reject the narrow-minded mentality of “zero-sum game” and call on all countries, the developed countries in particular, to assume more shared responsibilities for win-win outcomes.

Example 5

ST: 巴黎协议不是终点，而是新的起点。作为全球治理的一个重要领域，应对气候变化的全球努力是一面镜子，给我们思考和探索未来全球治理模式、推动建设人类命运共同体带来宝贵启示。(Xi, 2015)

TT: The Paris Conference is not the finishing line, but a new starting point, as an important part of global governance, Xi told delegates at the opening ceremony. (*China Daily*, 2015)

OT: The Paris Conference is not the finishing line but a new starting point. As an important part of global governance, the global efforts on climate change can be taken as a mirror for us to reflect on what models to have for future global governance and how to build a community of shared future for mankind. Much valuable inspiration may thus be drawn.

The *FT* integrates a total of seven indirect quotations in its articles, with one indirect quotation in each news article. Example 6 is an indirect quotation from a piece of the *FT* national edition of 22 April 2021. The subordinate clause is a rendition of Xi’s reiteration, at the Leaders’ Summit on Climate, of China’s plan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, which he first announced in his address to the UN General Assembly in September 2020.

Example 6

ST: 去年，我正式宣布中国将力争 2030 年前实现碳达峰、2060 年前实现碳中和。(Xi, 2021a)

TT: Xi has moved to position China as a global leader on the climate front, announcing in September that its carbon dioxide emissions would peak by 2030 and reach net zero by 2060. (Shepherd, 2021)

OT: Last year, I made the official announcement that China will strive to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060.

The *NYT* includes a total of 25 indirect quotations, with a minimum of one and a maximum of four. Example 7 illustrates two indirect quotations from an *NYT* piece of 12 December 2020. The two



subordinate clauses originate from Xi's announcement about China's concrete commitments for 2030 at the Climate Ambition Summit. The first indirect quote is an adaptation of the first commitment (the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions) and the second quote summarizes the fourth commitment (to the increase of wind and solar energy). Both quotes can be traced back to Xi's statement and its official translation with necessary adjustments and omissions.

Example 7

ST: 在此，我愿进一步宣布：到 2030 年，中国单位国内生产总值二氧化碳排放将比 2005 年下降 65% 以上，非化石能源占一次能源消费比重将达到 25% 左右，森林蓄积量将比 2005 年增加 60 亿立方米，风电、太阳能发电总装机容量将达到 12 亿千瓦以上。(Xi, 2020)

TT1: Speaking at an online summit on the fifth anniversary of the Paris climate agreement, Xi Jinping, China's leader, said that by 2030, China would reduce its carbon intensity by over 65 percent. (Sengupta, 2020)

TT2: Mr. Xi also said China would triple wind and solar power capacity to over one billion kilowatts and expand its forests. (Sengupta, 2020)

OT: Today, I wish to announce some further commitments for 2030: China will lower its carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP by over 65 percent from the 2005 level, increase the share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to around 25 percent, increase the forest stock volume by 6 billion cubic meters from the 2005 level, and bring its total installed capacity of wind and solar power to over 1.2 billion kilowatts.

5.3 Mixed quotation

Mixed quotations constitute the second most used quotation type for the *FT* and the *NYT*, but the least used for *CD*. Example 8 is a mixture of direct and indirect quotations from a *CD* article of 1 December 2015. All three quotations are adapted from Xi's opening remarks at the Paris Climate Change Conference. The first direct quotation is from the first half of OT1, and the second direct quotation is taken from the latter half of OT3. The section between the two direct quotations is an adverbial clause "adding that the conference should yield positive and practical results" which is an indirect quotation of "the Paris Conference will yield satisfying results" from OT2.

Example 8

ST1: 巴黎大会应该摒弃“零和博弈”狭隘思维，推动各国尤其是发达国家多一点共享、多一点担当，实现互惠共赢。

ST2: 我相信，只要各方展现诚意、坚定信心、齐心协力，巴黎大会一定能够取得令人满意的结果，不辜负国际社会的热切期盼。

ST3: 巴黎大会正是为了加强公约实施，达成一个全面、均衡、有力度、有约束力的气候变化协议。(Xi, 2015)



TT: “The Paris Conference should reject the narrow-minded mentality of a zero-sum game,” said Xi, adding that the conference should yield positive and practical results with a “comprehensive, balanced, ambitious and legally binding” agreement. (Lan & Fu, 2015)

OT1: The Paris Conference should reject the narrow-minded mentality of “zero-sum game” and call on all countries, the developed countries in particular, to assume more shared responsibilities for win-win outcomes.

OT2: I believe that with all parties making joint efforts with sincerity and confidence, the Paris Conference will yield satisfying results and meet the high expectations of the international community.

OT3: This Paris Conference is hence convened to strengthen implementation of the UNFCCC and bring about a comprehensive, balanced, ambitious and binding agreement on climate change.

The *FT* includes five mixed quotations, four in news articles on the Leaders’ Summit on Climate and one in an article on COP26. Example 9 is a mixed quotation from an article from the *FT* Asian Edition of 27 April 2021. The journalist renders the line from Xi’s remarks at the Leaders’ Summit on Climate on 22 April 2021. The line consists of a direct quotation on “phase down” coal consumption in the 15th Five-Year Plan and the rest of the indirect quotation on limiting the increase in coal consumption in the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025).

Example 9

ST: 中国将严控煤电项目，“十四五”时期严控煤炭消费增长、“十五五”时期逐步减少。(Xi, 2021a)

TT1: President Xi Jinping also pledged to “phase down” coal consumption in the five years from 2025, the first time China’s government has committed to reduce its use of the fossil fuel. (Johnson, 2021)

TT2: President Xi Jinping of China said his country would “strictly limit increasing coal consumption” in the next five years and phase it down in the following five years. (Sengupta, 2021)

OT: China will strictly control coal-fired power generation projects, and strictly limit the increase in coal consumption over the 14th Five-Year Plan period and phase it down in the 15th Five-Year Plan period.

A total of 10 mixed quotations were found in the *NYT* articles, one in every article. Example 10 shows two examples of mixed quotations in the *NYT*. TT2 in Example 9 is from an *NYT* article of 22 April 2021. It consists of a direct quotation and another indirect quotation from President Xi’s speech at the Leaders’ Summit on Climate. The TT in Example 10 is formed of a direct quotation and an indirect quotation from Xi’s written statement at the World Leaders’ Summit. The journalist quotes Xi’s statement verbatim and adds the reporting verb and the subject of the reporting clause before the quotation.



Example 10

ST: 中国秉持人与自然生命共同体理念，坚持走生态优先、绿色低碳发展道路。(Xinhua News Agency, 2021)

TT: Chinese President Xi Jinping sent only a written statement, promising that his country “will continue to prioritize ecological conservation and pursue a green and low-carbon path to development.” (Rogers, 2021)

OT: China will continue to prioritize ecological conservation and pursue a green and low-carbon path to development. (Xi, 2021b)

6. Discussion

The results show that indirect quotations are the most used by all three news outlets in the case of President Xi’s political discourse on climate change. Direct quotations are the second most used by *CD* but the least used by the *FT* and *NYT*. Bell (1991, p. 207–209) lists three main functions of direct quotation: “a quote is valued as a particularly incontrovertible fact because it is the newsmaker’s own words”; “A second function is to distance and disown, to absolve journalist and news outlet from the endorsement of what the source said”; and “The third function of direct quotation is to add to the story the flavour of the newsmaker’s own words”. *CD*, as a CPC-owned newspaper, undoubtedly acts as a mouthpiece for the party general secretary, quite unlike the *FT* and *NYT* politically. Unsurprisingly, direct quotations of President Xi are the least employed, perhaps reflecting the respective common quoting practices among news outlets in China, the UK and the US. It is surprising to find that direct quotations are the second most used in *CD*, but the least used in the *FT* and the *NYT*, both of which prefer mixed quotations. This finding differs from that of Bassnett (2005, p. 124), who states that direct speech is “a standard British convention, used by both tabloids and broadsheets”. A possible explanation for these results may be the small number of quotations in the *FT*. *The NYT Manual of Style and Usage* notes that “Readers have a right to assume that *every word* between quotation marks is what the speaker or writer said. ... it is usually wise to paraphrase long comments” (Siegal & Connolly, 2015, p. 324, italics in original). This may explain the reasons why the *NYT* articles seldom include lengthy direct quotations but employ indirect and mixed quotations instead.

The study has identified few deviations between the direct quotations in the English-language news and the official translations. It is most likely that the journalists at English-language news outlets refer to the official translation instead of the original Chinese speeches when writing news articles. This finding broadly parallels that of Zheng and Ren (2018), who found that English news relies heavily on interpreted versions of Chinese political discourse, with a higher percentage of direct quotations than indirect quotations. This latter point, however, is not the case in the current study, though this may be due to the different nature of the data examined. The data examined by Zheng and Ren (2018) are the interpreted versions of spoken political discourses, which are crucially shaped by immediacy and more likely to feature colloquial expressions, while this study investigates the official translated versions done by in-house institutional translators.



Certain shifts were observed between the indirect quotations of President Xi's political discourse and the official translations of his speeches/statements, especially in the news articles from the *FT* and the *NYT*. These shifts may be attributed to differences in access to source material. Chinese journalists are more readily able to verify information against the original speeches/statements than *FT* and *NYT* journalists, who instead tend to rely on official English translations. The role that translation has played thus becomes invisible in the news production process in the *FT* and *NYT* particularly. As Bielsa & Bassnett (2009, p. 72–73) note, “news translation is doubly invisible, not just because of the need to adopt a domesticating strategy that values fluency and hides its very intervention, but also because translation has been successfully integrated within journalism”. This is certainly the case in this study, as it is difficult to determine the source of the quotations and whether they were translated from the original Chinese versions or edited from the official English translations.

7. Conclusion

The study examines how Xi's discourse on climate change was represented in the English-language press by comparing quotations from three news outlets with the official translations of President Xi's speeches and statements. Based on the number of news articles collected for this study, the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference attracted the most attention among all three news outlets, followed by the Leaders' Summit on Climate in 2021. The Climate Ambition Summit and COP26 were given less attention. The finding shows that the news outlets in all three countries employ indirect quotations the most and direct quotations the least, except for *CD* which employs the fewest mixed quotations. Translation of Xi's speeches and statements on climate change into English for a wider audience mainly occurs in institutional settings. The study found few differences between the official Chinese translations and the translated words directly quoted in *CD*, *FT* and *NYT*. This suggests that these English news outlets likely have used the official versions as sources and generally quoted Xi from the official English versions in direct speech. *CD* mainly paraphrased him in indirect quotations, whereas the *FT* and *NYT* paraphrased him in reported speech.

The findings of this study provide insights into understanding the translingual quoting (TQ) of Chinese political discourse. Their validity may be limited by the small sample size. To further test the robustness of the results, future research should include a broader representative sample. An additional limitation is that the annotation of quotations was done solely by the author, whereas two or more researchers could have crosschecked each other's coding to potentially achieve greater accuracy. Further work is also needed to fully understand the implications of TQ in political discourse. Future research needs to examine closely the link between TQ and ideology. As Cronin (2017, p. 1) highlights the importance of translation in understanding the interconnectedness and vulnerability of our world in the face of climate change.

Declarations and Acknowledgments:

The author declares there is no conflict of interest.

This work was supported by the Scientific Research Fund of Zhejiang Provincial Education Department [under grant number Y202147036]; the Fundamental Research Funds for the Provincial Universities of



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

© 2023 All Terrain Publishing

Zhejiang [under grant number GK219909299001-224]; and the Ministry of Education Humanities and Social Sciences Research Youth Fund Project [under grant number 22YJC740059].

I would like to thank the editors and reviewers for their insightful comments and helpful suggestions, which have greatly improved the quality of this manuscript.

References

Academic references

- Altahmazi, T. H. M. (2020). Creating realities across languages and modalities: Multimodal recontextualization in the translation of online news reports. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 35, 100390.
- Alvaro, J. J. (2013). Political discourse in China's English language press. *World Englishes*, 32(2), 147–168.
- Bassnett, S. (2005). Bringing the news back home: Strategies of acculturation and foreignisation. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 5(2), 120–130.
- Bell, A. (1991). *The language of news media*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bielsa, E., & Bassnett, S. (2009). *Translation in global news*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Bødker, H., & Morris, H. E. (Eds.). (2021). *Climate change and journalism: Negotiating rifts of time*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Cappelen, H., & Lepore, E. (1997). Varieties of quotation. *Mind*, 106(423), 429–450.
- Chen, Y. M. (2009). Quotation as a key to the investigation of ideological manipulation in news trans-editing in the Taiwanese press. *TTR: traduction, terminologie, redaction*, 22(2), 203–238.
- Chilton, P. (2004). *Analysing political discourse: Theory and practice*. London: Routledge.
- Chilton, P., & Schäffner, C. (Eds.). (2002). *Politics as text and talk: Analytic approaches to political discourse*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Connolly, J. H. (2014). Recontextualisation, resemiotisation and their analysis in terms of an FDG-based framework. *Pragmatics*, 24(2), 377–397.
- Cronin, M. (2017). *Eco-translation: Translation and ecology in the age of the anthropocene*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Fairclough, I., & Fairclough, N. (2012). *Political discourse analysis: A method for advanced students*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Gao, F., & Munday, J. (2022). Interpreter ideology: 'Editing' discourse in simultaneous interpreting. *Interpreting*.
- Geurts, B., & Maier, E. (2003). Quotation in context. *Belgian Journal of Linguistics*, 17(1), 109–128.
- Gu, C., & Wang, B. (2021). Interpreter-mediated discourse as a vital source of meaning potential in intercultural communication: the case of the interpreted premier-meets-the-press conferences in China. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 21(3), 379–394.
- Haapanen, L., & Perrin, D. (2019). Translingual quoting in journalism: Behind the scenes of Swiss television newsrooms. In L. Davier, & K. Conway (Eds.), *Journalism and translation in the era of convergence* (pp. 15–42). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Haapanen, L., & Perrin, D. (2020). Linguistic recycling: The process of quoting in increasingly mediated settings. *AILA Review*, 33(1), 1–20.
- Hester, J. B., & Dougall, E. (2007). The efficiency of constructed week sampling for content analysis of online news. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 84(4), 811–824.
- Kuo, S.-H. (2001). Reported speech in Chinese political discourse. *Discourse Studies*, 3(2), 181–202.



- Leech, G. N., & Short, M. (2007). *Style in fiction: A linguistic introduction to English fictional prose* (2nd ed.). Harlow: Pearson.
- Li, J., & Li, S. (2015). New trends of Chinese political translation in the age of globalisation. *Perspectives*, 23(3), 424–439.
- Li, T., & Pan, F. (2020). Reshaping China's image: A corpus-based analysis of the English translation of Chinese political discourse. *Perspectives*, 29(3), 354–370.
- Liu, N. X. (2021). Political discourse analysis in operation: Belt and Road Summit coverage through translation. *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 16(3), 394–415.
- Matsushita, K. (2020). Reporting quotable yet untranslatable speech: Observations of shifting practices by Japanese newspapers from Obama to Trump. *AILA Review*, 33(1), 157–175.
- Matsushita, K. (2021). Diverging narratives: exploring the hidden influence of transquoting in framing the journalistic portrayal of Shiori Ito. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 21(3), 366–378.
- Pan, Y., Opgenhaffen, M., & Van Gorp, B. (2021). China's pathway to climate sustainability: A diachronic framing analysis of *People's Daily's* coverage of climate change (1995–2018). *Environmental Communication*, 15(2), 189–202.
- Randour, F., Perrez, J., & Reuchamps, M. (2020). Twenty years of research on political discourse: A systematic review and directions for future research. *Discourse & Society*, 31(4), 428–443.
- Scammell, C. (2018). *Translation strategies in global news: What Sarkozy said in the suburbs*. Cham: Palgrave.
- Schäffner, C. (2004). Political discourse analysis from the point of view of translation studies. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 3(1), 117–150.
- Schäffner, C. (2008). 'The prime minister said...': Voices in translated political texts. *SYNAPS*, 22, 3–25.
- Schäffner, C. (2012). Unknown agents in translated political discourse. *Target*, 24(1), 103–125.
- Schäffner, C., & Bassnett, S. (Eds.). (2010). *Political discourse, media and translation*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Siegal, A. M., & Connolly, W. G. (Eds.). (2015). *The New York Times manual of style and usage*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Tannen, D. (2007). *Talking voices: Repetition, dialogue, and imagery in conversational discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tuchman, G. (1972). Objectivity as strategic ritual: An examination of newsmen's notions of objectivity. *American Journal of Sociology*, 77(4), 660–679.
- Valdeón, R. A. (2015). Fifteen years of journalistic translation research and more. *Perspectives*, 23(4), 634–662.
- Valdeón, R. A. (2020). Journalistic translation research goes global: Theoretical and methodological considerations five years on. *Perspectives*, 28(3), 325–338.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1997). What is political discourse analysis?. *Belgian Journal of Linguistics*, 11(1), 11–52.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2008). *Discourse and context: A sociocognitive approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wang, B., & Feng, D. (2018). A corpus-based study of stance-taking as seen from critical points in interpreted political discourse. *Perspectives*, 26(2), 246–260.
- Wang, G., Liu, M., & Xin, Y. (2022). Categorisations of developed and developing countries in UN news on climate change. *Social Semiotics*, 1–17.
- Wang, J. (2016). Narrative mediatisation of the "Chinese Dream" in Chinese and American media. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 15(1), 45–62.



- Wang, J. (2017a). Representing Chinese nationalism/patriotism through President Xi Jinping's "Chinese dream" discourse. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 16(6), 830–848.
- Wang, J. (2017b). Representations of the Chinese communist party's political ideologies in President Xi Jinping's discourse. *Discourse & Society*, 28(4), 413–435.
- Wang, X. (2021). Construing community with a shared future in President Xi Jinping's diplomatic discourse (2013–2018): The role of personal pronouns *we* and *they*. *Critical Arts*, 35(3), 35–51.
- Waugh, L.R. (1995). Reported speech in journalistic discourse: The relation of function and text. *Text*, 15(1), 129–173.
- Wilson, J. (2015). Political discourse. In D. Tannen, H. E. Hamilton, & D. Schiffrin (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (2nd ed., pp. 775–794). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Wodak, R. (2009). *The discourse of politics in action: Politics as usual*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Yang, Y. E. (2021). China's strategic narratives in global governance reform under Xi Jinping. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 30(128), 299–313.
- Zheng, L., & Ren, W. (2018). Interpreting as an influencing factor on news reports: A study of interpreted Chinese political discourse recontextualized in English news. *Perspectives*, 26(5), 691–707.

News articles

- China Daily*. (2015, November 30). Xi warns against mentality of zero-sum game.
- Cao, D. (2021, April 23). Xi calls for international effort to address climate challenges. *China Daily*.
- Hume, N. (2020, December 18). Copper bulls bet green agenda will push metal on towards record high. *Financial Times*.
- Johnson, S. (2021, April 27). European sustainable fund inflows surpass all other ETFs for first time. *Financial Times*.
- Lan, L., & Fu, J. (2015, December 1). Climate summit 'a new starting point'. *China Daily*.
- Rogers, K. (2021, November 2). Biden tries to reassert American leadership, and his own. *The New York Times*.
- Sengupta, S. (2020, December 12). China, in nudge to U.S., makes a new promise to tackle global warming. *The New York Times*.
- Sengupta, S. (2021, April 22). China's leader, Xi Jinping, promises to 'strictly limit' coal. *The New York Times*.
- Shepherd, C. (2021, April 22). Xi puts tensions aside to join Biden climate change summit. *Financial Times*.
- Xinhua News Agency. (2021, November 1). 习近平向《联合国变化框架公约》第二十六次缔约方大会世界领导人峰会发表书面致辞.

Speeches/statements

- Xi, J. (2015). 携手构建合作共赢、公平合理的气候变化治理机制 (Work together to build a win-win, equitable and balanced governance mechanism on climate change).
- Xi, J. (2020). 继往开来，开启全球应对气候变化新征程 (Building on past achievements and launching a new journey for global climate actions).
- Xi, J. (2021a). 共同构建人与自然生命共同体 (For man and nature: Building a community of life together).
- Xi, J. (2021b). Unite for action: To protect the planet, our shared home.



About the Author:

Yuan Ping holds a Ph.D. in translation studies from the University of Leeds in the UK. He is currently the Research Director of the Institute of Translation Studies and a lecturer in English language and translation at the School of Foreign Languages in Hangzhou Dianzi University in China. An active member of staff there, he delivers courses in translation and interpreting as part of both undergraduate and postgraduate programs of study. His research interests lie in news translation, critical discourse analysis, narrative theory and corpus-based translation studies.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

© 2023 All Terrain Publishing