

Exploring Discourse Strategies in the English Translation of the *Shanghai Declaration on Global Governance of Artificial Intelligence* from the Perspective of Discourse-Historical Approach

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Abstract: In the context of global governance, discourse strategies influence the communicative power of texts, which can effectively consolidate or change the audience's viewpoints and opinions, and play a pivotal role in enhancing the persuasive power and legitimacy of texts. *The Shanghai Declaration on the Global Governance of Artificial Intelligence at the opening ceremony of the World Conference on Artificial Intelligence (WCAI)* is released in 2024, which contains a wealth of discourse strategies. This paper analyzes the discourse strategies in the English translation of the declaration from the perspective of discourse-historical analysis, and finds that the declaration employs five strategies (naming, predicating, arguing, perspectivizing, and strengthening and weakening). The naming strategy indicates China's advocacy of rapid, healthy, and high-quality development of AI, concurrent global and regional cooperation, and respect for equality of states and the legal system of each country, and focuses on AI safety; the predicating strategy expresses China's affirmative attitude towards AI; the argumentative strategy employs strong prose sentences, and the perspective-taking strategy adopts the linguistic form of first-person plural, which reflect China's willingness and determination to participate in the global governance of AI; the reinforcing strategy employs the linguistic form of analogy to strengthen the close relationship between data and AI.

Keywords: Discourse-Historical Approach; Global Governance; Discourse Strategies

1. Introduction

Since “social facts are constructed by a certain

discourse system, to understand this construction process, it is necessary to examine the discursive strategies that define and describe social facts”^[1]. *The Shanghai Declaration on Global Governance of Artificial Intelligence*, published on July 4, 2024, responds to *the Global Initiative on Artificial Intelligence Governance* put forward by President Xi Jinping at the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation and Summit, and reflects China's spirit of cooperation in global AI governance, which is an indispensable part of enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of China's global governance. The declaration is a manifestation of national will and is full of effective discourse strategies. These discourse strategies can effectively enhance the persuasive power of the declaration and are important for shaping the international legitimacy of China's global governance concept. “International legitimacy refers to 'the conceptual consensus of the members of the international community, the search for which is guided and constrained by established norms' and derives from the consensus of the members of the international community; the ultimate purpose of the state's behavior in the international community is to seek, like individuals in everyday society, the others' recognition and acception of the identity and policies it possesses”^[2]. International legitimacy can effectively enhance the discourse and influence of the country. Currently, research on the topic of China's global governance mainly focuses on the three aspects of law, politics and administrative science, and few analyze China's global governance-related discourses from the perspective of discourse-historical analysis^{[3][4][5][6]}. In view of this, based on the theory of discourse strategies from the discourse-historical perspective, this paper adopts a qualitative

research method to explore the discourse strategies in the English translation of *the Shanghai Declaration on Global Governance of Artificial Intelligence*, especially naming strategy, predicating strategy, argumentative strategy, perspective-taking strategy and reinforcement and weakening strategies.

2. Discourse Strategy

Discourse-History Approach (DHA) is a research method in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) proposed by Austrian scholar Ruth Wodak, which focuses on multi-layered analysis of the research discourse from the beginning of the text, combining social, cultural, historical and other contextual information^[7]. This method has been used by foreign scholars to analyze discourses related to topics such as sexism, racial discrimination, national identity construction, etc. However, it has received limited attention and application in China.

Discourse strategy in DHA usually refers to the language behaviors and communication styles that we adopt intentionally or unintentionally when communicating with others^[7]. It includes naming, predicating, arguing, perspectivizing, and strengthening and weakening.

Naming strategy refers to the use of language to construct names or references to social subjects, objects, events, processes, and behaviors; this is achieved through a variety of linguistic devices, such as membership classification, indicative components, proper names, appellations, collective nouns, and so on. Naming discourse usually arises in industries and fields. Therefore, when naming discourse, it is important to distinguish between typical and atypical scenarios, paying attention to the breakdown of scenarios in order to better explain the problem^[7]. The naming of applicable occasions is also important, which refers not only to the occasions when the discourse is used, but also to the occasions when the discourse takes place. However, the naming of discourse is more about the occasion of discourse, i.e., the discourse constructed by the socio-cultural context attached to the occasion, such as “Internet discourse”, “political discourse”, “classroom discourse”, etc. and so on.

The predicate strategy refers to the linguistic way of giving features and attributes to social actors, objects, phenomena, events and processes, and the forms of linguistic realization

include: positive or negative evaluative language; explicit predicates or predicative nouns and adjectives^[8].

Argumentation is a language art that involves the collision of ideas. It is different from everyday language and has its own unique characteristics. The process of argumentation involves the reasoning of the arguer using logical thinking, evolving from argumentation to precise argumentation, and finally reaching a conclusion, with the aim of making the audience gradually accept their own point of view and eventually be persuaded.

Perspectivization strategy in discourse analysis focuses on the relationship between social actors and social practices; specifically, this strategy examines the identities of social actors and how they engage in social practices^[7]. This study uses a textual speaker's perspective to shed light on perspectivization strategies, aiming to reveal the interplay between different discourses in a text and to provide insights into the perspectives and identities of social actors in social practices. Power relations are inherent in discourse and are embodied and played out through discourse. The text-speaker perspective not only reveals the relationship between the speaker and the audience, but also reflects the power dynamics between different speakers.

When analyzing relevant discourse, discourse analysts should identify and analyze why the speaker intentionally strengthens or weakens certain aspects of the facts and point out the author's real intention in doing so. In order to emphasize a certain meaning or highlight a certain idea and deepen the listener's impression, the speaker often uses certain words or special sentence structures, or uses some rhetorical devices such as metaphors, analogies and repetitions to strengthen the tone of voice and deepen the listener's impression; the speaker may also blur or hide the information that is unfavorable to his/her own point of view, and weaken the irrelevant or less relevant information.

3. Corpus Analysis

At present, the Shanghai Declaration on Global Governance of Artificial Intelligence has not received much attention in the field of linguistics. In view of this, the following is a discourse strategy analysis of “the Shanghai Declaration”.

3.1 Naming Strategy Analysis

Naming strategy is a strategy to categorize social subjects, objects, phenomena, events, processes and behaviors by means of linguistic forms such as indicators and nouns^[8]. In this paper, we examine the high-frequency nouns in the Shanghai Declaration to explore the Chinese government's attitude towards global governance of AI. After the data statistics, we found that the top 8 high-frequency nouns are development, technologies, cooperation, countries, safety, data, governance, and public, and the number of times they appear is 14, 14, 8, 8, 8, 8, 7, 7, and 7, respectively. From these high-frequency nouns, it can be seen that The Chinese government advocates the rapid, healthy and high-quality development of AI, the parallel progress of global and regional cooperation and respect for the equality of countries and the legal systems of each country, focuses on AI safety issues and puts forward proposals for global AI governance. Specific examples will be given below:

(1) *Maintaining AI **safety** We attach great importance to AI **safety**, especially to data security and privacy protection.*

(2) *We agree to safeguard high-quality **data** development with high-level **data** security, promote the free and orderly flow of **data** in accordance with the law, oppose discriminatory and exclusive **data** training, and collaborate in the development of high-quality **datasets**, so as to better nourish AI development.*

Example (1) demonstrates the importance the Chinese government attaches to AI safety issues, especially data security and privacy security. While developing AI technology, it is also important to pay attention to its safe application, which demonstrates the Chinese government's "people-oriented" concept of AI development.

Example (2) shows the close connection between AI and data, as data is the foundation of AI. Big data facilitates and feeds AI needs. China supports the development of high-quality data with a high level of data security, and supervises the free and orderly flow of data in accordance with the law to better nourish AI development.

3.2 Predicate Strategy Analysis

Predicate strategy refers to the attribution of certain positive or negative features or attributes to social subjects, objects, phenomena, events and processes. Linguistic devices to achieve this include affirmative or negative evaluative language, explicit predicates or predicative

nouns and adjectives, and other evaluative features such as adjectives, juxtapositions, prepositional phrases, relational clauses, linking clauses, intransitive clauses, and participial clauses or phrases. The example *sentence* is as follows:

(3) *We believe that only through global cooperation and a **collective effort** can we realize the full **potential** of AI for the greater **well-being** of humanity.*

Example (3) involves a predicate strategy. The words "potential" and "well-being" indicate that the Chinese government has a positive attitude towards AI technology and greatly recognizes the important role of AI in human development. At the same time, the use of "collective effort" emphasizes the importance of "global cooperation" and "joint efforts" to ensure that AI can be used for human development. At the same time, "collective effort" is used to emphasize that "artificial intelligence" can achieve the goal of serving human beings with real quality.

3.3 Argumentation Strategy Analysis

Argumentation strategy refers to a strategy of serving one's own discursive purpose by means of argumentative language (such as prose, comparison, simile, metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, irony and euphemism, as well as allusion, characterization, presupposition, or implication, etc.). Almost the entire text uses the "subject + main verb predicate" sentence starting with "We", forming a powerful prose structure, enhancing the tone of the discourse on the side of the speaker, and demonstrating the determination to participate in the global governance of AI.

3.4 Perspectivization Strategy Analysis

The strategy of perspectivization mainly refers to the use of direct quotes, indirect quotes and free indirect quotes, which aim to locate the author's point of view and discover the author's involvement or detachment^[8]. This manifesto does not use direct or indirect quotes, but it uses a large number of free indirect quotes, such as "security", "cooperation", "well-being", and other macro-value words that are used with high frequency in the political genre. These high-frequency words carry the common values of humankind, and their appearance can greatly arouse the emotional resonance of the audience. At the same time, the first person plural

perspective of the “declaration” will weaken the distance between the speaker and the audience, and it is easier for the audience to feel the sense of being in the audience, and stimulate their empathy and enthusiasm. In addition, the first person plural also shows the Chinese government’s willingness to participate in the global governance of AI with a positive attitude and responsibility.

3.5 Strengthening and Weakening Strategy Analysis

Strengthening and weakening strategy refers to the strategy of strengthening or weakening certain information through linguistic means. The following are some examples.

(4) *We agree to safeguard high-quality data development... promote the free and orderly flow of data in accordance with the law, ... so as to better nourish AI development.*

Example (4) involves a strengthening strategy. The word “flow” employs the rhetorical device of analogy, comparing data transmission to the flow of liquid, which embodies and strengthens the fluidity of data, and at the same time emphasizes the Chinese government’s commitment to “freedom” and “order” behind the Shanghai declaration. At the same time, it emphasizes the importance that the Chinese government attaches to the development of high-quality data that is both “free” and “orderly” behind the “Shanghai Declaration.” The word “nourish” visualizes the close relationship between data and AI. In addition, the first-person plural point of view is used in the whole article, which somewhat weakens the second-person and third-person point of view, and weakens the distance between the speaker and the audience and has a strong adhesion.

4. Conclusion

This paper takes *Shanghai Declaration on Global Governance of Artificial Intelligence* as the research corpus, and through analyzing the discourse strategies in it, it is found that “The Shanghai Declaration” employs five strategies (naming, predicating, arguing, perspectivizing, and strengthening and weakening) reflecting the

Chinese government’s security concept of “people-centeredness,” emphasizing the importance of cooperation, and its willingness and determination to participate in the global governance of AI. This builds a positive image of the Chinese Government and paves the way for enhancing its international right of speech.

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