Translation Strategies for Political Texts from a Hypotaxis-Parataxis Perspective with Reference to the 2025 Government Work Report

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Abstract— *From the perspective of hypotaxis and parataxis, this study conducts an analysis of the Chinese-English translation strategies adopted in the 2025 Government Work Report, and explores the essential differences between the two languages in terms of syntactic structure, logical expression and textual organization. The findings indicate that English attaches great importance to linguistic form and structure, with a clear distinction between primary and secondary components within sentences, whereas Chinese emphasizes the overall logic, coherence and semantic expression of language, without a distinct hierarchy among internal components. Through a comparative analysis of typical sentence segments in the Report, this paper reveals that there exist many structural transformations from parataxis to hypotaxis in the English translation process. These transformations not only reflect the structural characteristics of English and Chinese, but also play a crucial role in clarifying logic, explicating responsible subjects and enhancing international acceptability in the process of ideological communication.*

Keywords— hypotaxis; parataxis; Government Work Report; structural transformation

I. INTRODUCTION

The Government Work Report, as a typical, representative, and periodic political document, covers a wide range of content and serves as an important channel for the international community to understand China and a window for China's external communication. It plays a crucial role in accelerating the construction of China's discourse and narrative systems, telling China's stories well, and communicating China's voice effectively. Within the two distinct language families of English and Chinese, the contrast between hypotaxis and parataxis represents one of their most significant differences. Chinese frequently uses personal subjects and active voice, while English often employs impersonal subjects and passive voice. Furthermore, Chinese syntax is guided by meaning, where sentence construction revolves around the core axis of conceptual intent, focusing on the expression of the meaning itself. English syntax adheres to form, where sentence construction centers on the subject-predicate structure, strictly following formal grammatical rules. This difference is particularly pronounced in the translation of

political texts, as political discourse is typically characterized by rigorous logic, clear accountability, and multiple layers of meaning. The purpose of this study is, while respecting the linguistic differences between English and Chinese, to focus on the core characteristics of hypotaxis and parataxis, thereby providing a translation approach for political texts that is grounded in theory and practical applicability.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Hypotaxis and parataxis are central topics in the contrastive study of English and Chinese languages. Tracing the origin of these concepts, they were explicitly proposed by the linguist Wang Li in his work Chinese Grammar Theory (1954): "Chinese compound sentences often employ parataxis, which is referred to as 'parataxis' in Western languages. Parataxis is an anomaly in Western languages but is the norm in Chinese. Chinese relies heavily on parataxis, where connective elements are often not necessary; Western languages rely more on hypotaxis, where connective elements are indispensable in most

cases." Here, Mr. Wang Li points out their most fundamental distinction: Chinese achieves coherence by relying on inherent semantic relationships and context (parataxis), while Western languages rely more on formal means for connection (hypotaxis).

The renowned linguist Lian Shuneng also offers profound insights: English emphasizes hypotaxis, valuing structural rigor and often employing various explicit cohesive devices; Chinese emphasizes parataxis, focusing on functional and semantic expression, often relying on word order and internal logical connections, resulting in concise forms. Specifically, hypotaxis refers to languages expressing syntactic relationships and logical hierarchy through formal markers (such as conjunctions, relative pronouns, prepositions, inflections, etc.); parataxis refers to languages achieving coherence primarily through semantic relationships, context, and logical reasoning, with minimal use of formal markers (Nida, 1982). English is a typical hypotactic language; sentences are built around the subject-predicate core, constructing complex, lengthy sentences through explicit relationships of subordination, coordination, and modification, making logic externally visible. Chinese is a typical paratactic language; sentence structures are looser, often comprising run-on sentences and coordinate clauses, with logical relationships frequently implied within word order and context (Wang Li, 1954).

English hypotactic devices are rich and varied, including relatives, conjunctions, prepositions, and other morphological changes. Statistics show there are approximately 100 common conjunctive words and about 286 prepositions in English. These devices appear with high frequency in political texts to ensure logical rigor and structural clarity. Chinese parataxis primarily relies on word order, repetition, parallelism, antithesis, contracted sentences, and four-character structures to achieve semantic coherence. Chinese has fewer prepositions (about 35), mostly grammaticalized from verbs, and conjunctions are often omissible.

III. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

(I) Conversion of Parts of Speech

Chinese frequently uses verbs, giving sentences a strong sense of dynamism; English frequently uses nouns, prepositional phrases, and other static structures, making expression more concise, objective, and formal. In the English translation of the Government Work Report, converting verbs into nouns is a common technique. Making appropriate changes to certain parts of speech in the source text without altering meaning can make the translation more natural and fluent.

Example 1: 坚定不移全面深化改革扩大开放，增强发展内生动力。

Translation: We deepened reform and opening up comprehensively with unswerving commitment and boosted the internal momentum of development.

Analysis: The source text contains multiple action cores (深化, 扩大, 增强). The attitudinal modifier "坚定不移" is translated as "with unswerving commitment," achieving a conversion from dynamic to static expression through the prepositional structure "with + noun phrase" functioning as an adverbial. The verb-object structure "内生动力" is converted into the noun phrase "internal momentum," making the semantics more concise and the structure more compact. Meanwhile, the predicate verbs "deepened" and "boosted" are retained, forming a typical English sentence pattern of "verb + nominalized components."

Example 2: 大力推动创新驱动发展，促进产业结构优化升级。

Translation: We made major efforts to promote innovation-driven development and upgraded the industrial structure.

Analysis: "大力推动" is translated as "made major efforts to promote," converting the Chinese adverb "大力," which intensifies the action, into the noun phrase "major efforts." The entire structure shifts from "adverbial + verb" to "verb + noun + infinitive," demonstrating static treatment in English. "创新驱动发展," a four-character phrase with implied verbal relationships, is translated as the compound adjective-noun structure "innovation-driven development," which better aligns with the lexical habits of political texts.

(II) Addition of Words

The addition of words is a common expressive technique in translation, guided by the core principle of "adding words without adding meaning." Specifically, additions mainly fall into two categories: first, supplementing content implied by the source text's context and logical relationships but not explicitly stated on the surface (such additions must be rooted in the source text's semantic logic to ensure no deviation from core meaning); second, filling in elements omitted in the source text's grammatical structure to make the translation grammatically sound and semantically complete (e.g., elliptical sentences in English, implied subjects in Chinese, requiring addition to restore complete syntactic relations).

Example 3: 加大单边开放力度，对所有同中国建交的最不发达国家产品全面给予零关税待遇。

Translation: We expanded unilateral opening up, adopting zero tariffs on all products from all the least developed countries that have diplomatic relations with China.

Analysis: The source text consists of two coordinate clauses, exhibiting two distinct paratactic features: first, subject ellipsis—the agent performing "加大" and "给予" is implied by context; second, implied logical relationship—a consequential logic of "overall measure → specific implementation" exists between the first clause "加大单边开放力度" and the second "给予零关税待遇," but no formal markers connect them; coherence is achieved solely through semantic association. By adding the omitted subject "We," the Chinese subjectless sentence is transformed into a complete English subject-predicate structure, clarifying the agent. The semantically implied logical connector is added by using the present participle phrase "adopting..." as an adverbial of accompaniment, constructing a hypotactic framework of "main clause + attendant adverbial" that replaces the paratactic semantic linkage of Chinese.

(III) Voice Transformation

The difference between parataxis and hypotaxis is also reflected in voice choice: Chinese emphasizes agent awareness, frequently using active voice, where the agent is often implied; English commonly uses passive voice, placing the "recipient of action" as the subject to downplay the agent and highlight objective facts. This transformation is a key strategy in political text translation for achieving the requirement of "objectivity and rigor."

Example 4: 脱贫攻坚成果持续巩固拓展，义务教育、基本养老、基本医疗、社会救助等保障力度加大。

Translation: Achievements made in poverty alleviation were further consolidated and expanded, and greater support was provided for compulsory education, basic old-age insurance, basic medical insurance, and social assistance.

Analysis: In the source text, "巩固拓展" and "加大" are both active expressions, implying the government or relevant policies as the agent. The translation converts both to passive voice ("were consolidated and expanded"; "was provided"), placing "Achievements" and "support" in subject position, thereby emphasizing objective outcomes rather than the implementing agent, aligning with the English political text convention of focusing on facts. "脱贫攻坚成果" is translated as "Achievements made in poverty alleviation," using a past participle phrase as a postpositive modifier, making the structure compact and logically clear. "保障力度加大" is not directly translated as "strengthened support" but rendered as "greater support was provided," combining a comparative adjective with passive voice to convey the meaning of increased intensity within a static expression. The translation uses the coordinating conjunction "and" to connect the two passive clauses, forming a parallel structure "A were..., and B

was...," exhibiting English hypotactic characteristics while maintaining semantic coherence.

(IV)Division and Combination of Sentences

Division involves breaking down long or complex sentences from the source text into several simpler or shorter sentences for translation; combination involves integrating multiple independent sentences from the source text into one coherent sentence. Both aim to align with the target language's expressive habits and grammatical structure, thereby enhancing the translation's fluency. Chinese, emphasizing parataxis, uses a "topic-comment" framework, where clauses are strung together like bamboo joints to achieve semantic coherence. English, emphasizing hypotaxis, centers on a "main clause-subordinate clause" structure; sentence construction resembles a grapevine, where the main clause is the trunk supporting all components, and various clauses and modifiers are grapes attached to it, tightly integrated through hypotactic means like subordinating conjunctions and participle phrases, forming a semantically hierarchical system. In the Chinese-English translation of the Government Work Report, the application of combination is particularly significant and typical.

Example 5: 我们将坚持稳中求进、以进促稳，守正创新、先立后破，系统集成、协同配合。

Translation: We will stay committed to pursuing progress while ensuring stability, promoting stability through progress, upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground, establishing the new before abolishing the old, and promoting systematic integration and efficient coordination.

Analysis: The source text is a typical slogan-style series of parallel phrases—six four-character structures arranged in parallel, semantically compact and rhythmically distinct. There are no conjunctions between the phrases; coherence relies on internal logic and context, reflecting the Chinese characteristic of "guiding form with meaning". The translation employs combination, integrating all six phrases under the same main structure "We will stay committed to..." and connecting the final coordinate element with "and," forming a series of parallel gerund phrases as the object: "$V\text{-}ing_1$, $V\text{-}ing_2$, $V\text{-}ing_3$, $V\text{-}ing_4$, and $V\text{-}ing_5$." Within each phrase, hypotactic devices like subordinating conjunctions ("while") and prepositions ("through," "before") are used to explicate logical relationships. For instance, "稳中求进" is translated as "pursuing progress while ensuring stability," accurately presenting the concurrent relationship of "seeking progress amidst stability."

IV.   CONCLUSION

Using hypotaxis and parataxis as the theoretical framework and the bilingual texts of the 2025 Government Work Report as corpus, this paper analyzes the structural transformations and strategies manifested in the English translation of political texts. English exhibits hypotactic characteristics, emphasizing formal norms and structural rigor, with a clear hierarchy among language components and direct presentation of logical relationships. Chinese is characterized by parataxis, focusing on the inherent coherence and holistic expression of meaning, without the need to deliberately emphasize component hierarchy, and placing greater emphasis on contextual adaptation.

Through a comparative analysis of typical sentence segments in the Report, this paper summarizes common transformation strategies in the English translation process: conversion of parts of speech (e.g., static conversion of verbs to nouns/prepositional structures), addition of words (explicitation of subjects and logical connectors), voice transformation (objective conversion from active to passive), and division/combination of sentences (structural integration from Chinese run-on sentences to English complex sentences with subordination). These strategies are not applied in isolation but interweave to serve a core objective: while faithfully conveying semantics, achieving a structural transformation from Chinese parataxis to English hypotaxis, ensuring the translation conforms to English syntactic norms and adapts to the cognitive habits of an international audience.

This paper further confirms the explanatory and guiding power of the hypotaxis-parataxis framework in the field of political text translation, revealing the underlying thought and cognitive patterns reflected by linguistic structural differences. This aids translators in addressing key issues such as logic clarification, agent identification, and appropriate tone, thereby enhancing the translation's accuracy, acceptability, and communicative effectiveness. Only by deeply understanding and flexibly applying the corresponding transformation strategies can translators "capture the meaning" without "neglecting the form" in translation, truly achieving accurate transmission and effective communication of political discourse, and contributing to the construction of a discourse system that bridges China and the world.

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