



Synchronic re-grammaticalization: The translation of modal adjuncts in Chinese government-regulatory academic discourse

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Abstract— Although considerable research has been devoted to the translation of modality from Chinese into English, existing studies have focused predominantly on individual modal lexical items or localized translation phenomena, with relatively limited attention to the systemic transformation mechanisms of modal adjuncts within Chinese social-science academic texts. Drawing on Halliday and Matthiessen's Systemic Functional Linguistics theory of modality, this study examines the English rendering of modal adjuncts in government-regulatory academic discourse, based on a self-built small-scale Chinese-English parallel corpus from a monograph chapter on Chinese regulatory theory. The findings demonstrate that the translation of modal adjuncts in academic texts is not a matter of straightforward formal adverb-for-adverb matching, but rather a target-language-oriented process of synchronic "re-grammaticalization". In this translational process, modal adjunct translation necessitates cross-categorical shifts in grammatical realization, alongside the reconstruction of semantic prosody to fit English academic stylistic conventions. Such cross-categorical adjustments are realised via predicate absorption, nominalization, adjectivization, prepositional-comment constructions and referential-pragmatic calibration. This study sheds light on the mechanisms through which modal-adjunct meanings are reconstructed in cross-linguistic outbound academic translation, and may offer practical implications for the international dissemination of Chinese-characteristic social-science academic discourse.

Keywords— modal adjuncts; Systemic Functional Linguistics; synchronic re-grammaticalization; government-regulatory discourse; academic outbound translation



I. INTRODUCTION

Scholarly work internationally has explored modal semantics, writer stance in academic discourse and grammaticalization (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Hyland, 2005), with several studies addressing cross-linguistic realisations of modal meanings (Traugott, 2003). Early Chinese-oriented translation research on modality focused

largely on modal semantic discrimination and word-level source-target correspondences. In recent years, with increasing interdisciplinary dialogue between Systemic Functional Linguistics and translation studies, more scholars have adopted functional perspectives to investigate modality in outbound academic translation, discussing translation strategies, semantic reconstruction and

pragmatic realisation.

Constrained by typological heterogeneity between Chinese and English modal systems, existing scholarship tends to concentrate on discrete modal lexemes and isolated local translation phenomena. Systemic examinations of holistic transformation for modal adjuncts in social-science academic texts remain scarce, and few studies have systematically investigated cross-linguistic synchronic re-grammaticalization of modal-adjunct meanings.

Against this backdrop, this paper integrates Systemic Functional Linguistics and translation-studies insights to examine synchronic re-grammaticalization and its translational manifestations for modal adjuncts in outbound academic translation. It seeks to deepen understandings of cross-linguistic modal-adjunct transfer and explore meaning-reconstruction pathways, providing references for the international communication of Chinese social-science academic discourse.

This exploratory case study draws on a self-built small-scale Chinese-English parallel corpus from a 13 000-character regulatory-theory monograph chapter. It focuses exclusively on modal adjuncts, leaving modal verbs and modal orientation for separate analysis. Two research questions guide the inquiry:

RQ1 What syntactic and pragmatic-semantic challenges arise in translating Chinese modal adjuncts embedded in government-regulatory academic prose?

RQ2 What compensatory translational operations enable synchronic re-grammaticalization of modal-adjunct meaning while reconstructing appropriate semantic prosody for English-language academic publication?

Observations cannot be universally generalisable across genres but deliver practical heuristics for related translation practice.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Modal adjuncts within Systemic Functional Linguistics

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 2014) define modality as the intermediate semantic zone situated between positive and negative polarity. Within SFL, modality is split into two broad categories: modalization deals with probability and usuality for propositional statements, while modulation concerns obligation and inclination within proposals.

Crucially, modal meaning is not exclusively realised by finite modal operators. Modal adjuncts, separated into mood adjuncts and comment adjuncts, constitute essential interpersonal-metafunction resources (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Mood adjuncts modify probability, usuality or deontic force and tend to cluster close to finite verbal elements. By contrast, comment adjuncts operate at a higher clausal rank, offering metadiscursive commentary over the complete proposition rather than modifying a single verb.

This original SFL classification was primarily developed for English-language data. When applied to typologically distinct languages such as Chinese, researchers have repeatedly pointed out important structural divergences (Li, 2007). English mood adjuncts enjoy relatively flexible syntactic mobility; they can appear pre-finite, post-finite or in clause-initial positions without breaking grammatical acceptability. In Chinese politico-academic and institutional writing, however, modal adjuncts exhibit strong positional fixation: they overwhelmingly occur immediately before the main predicate verb and enter into tight semantic bonding with that verb (Li, 2007). This structural property cannot be simply mapped onto English grammatical norms, and it creates persistent translational difficulty that descriptive translation research has yet to fully unpack.

Building upon this typological observation, the present study introduces the analytical construct of predicate-adjunct fusion to capture varying strengths of syntactic-semantic bonding between modal adjunct and main predicate:

1. **High fusion:** The adjunct forms an indivisible semantic unit with the following predicate. Removing or detaching the predicate substantially weakens or even eliminates the modal-evaluative force carried by the adjunct. Typical examples from Chinese institutional-regulatory discourse include *bìrán* (必然), *shìbì* (势必), *jiānjué* (坚决). These adverbial markers cannot function as independent propositional commentators when isolated from their host predicate.

2. **Medium fusion:** The adjunct habitually co-occurs with predicates in normal prose, yet under specific rhetorical conditions can be syntactically detached via punctuation without total loss of modal meaning. Items such as *jījí* (积极) belong to this group: while normally pre-verbal, they

can occasionally be fronted as separate commentary.

3. Low fusion: The adjunct occupies sentence-initial or parenthetical slots, semantically decoupled from the main predicate and functioning purely as proposition-level metacommentary. Disjunct-style markers signalling general inference or judgement represent this category.

Corpus-driven descriptive work on English academic prose demonstrates that Anglophone scholarly writing actively avoids heavy stacking of pre-verbal adverbs (Biber et al., 1999). Evaluative and modal-interpersonal meaning tends to be dispersed across main-verb semantics, nominal groups, adjectival predicates and prepositional circumstantials instead of being compactly packaged inside adverbial slots. This well-documented stylistic-typological mismatch generates recurring translational friction when transferring Chinese high-fusion predicate-adjunct chunks into target-language academic prose. Even if denotational dictionary equivalence can be found for each individual adverb, mechanical literal transfer often produces stylistic awkwardness and unwanted shifts in semantic prosody (Louw, 1993). It is worth emphasising that stylistic awkwardness is not merely a cosmetic problem. In academic outbound translation, distorted semantic prosody may reshape how international readers judge argument strength, certainty levels and institutional stances of the source-language scholarly text (House, 2015).

2.2 Synchronic re-grammaticalization in translational settings

Classic grammaticalization scholarship centres on diachronic, language-internal change, whereby lexical items gradually develop grammatical marker functions over extended historical timescales (Traugott, 2003). The analytical construct synchronic re-grammaticalization deployed in this paper must be sharply distinguished from natural diachronic grammaticalization. It describes a translator-driven, cross-linguistic translational phenomenon: semi-grammaticalized source-language modal meanings cannot retain their original lexicogrammatical carrier in the target-language system and therefore must relocate to alternative syntactic resources in order to preserve interpersonal-pragmatic function and source-text semantic prosody (Olohan, 2009).

This conceptualisation draws upon established descriptive-translation-studies thinking that treats

translation as systemic lexicogrammatical remapping rather than word-for-word replacement (Chesterman, 2016; House, 2015). Source-language semi-grammaticalised modal-evaluative meanings lose their preferred surface-structure realisation in the target language, but their pragmatic-interpersonal functions remain relevant for the requirements of outbound academic publication. In the case of Chinese high-fusion modal adjuncts, evaluative-modal meaning is compactly packaged in pre-verbal adverb positions. In English academic writing, this evaluative weight cannot simply be transplanted as stacked pre-verbal adverbs; it must be redistributed onto main verbs, nominal groups, adjectival or prepositional structures. This carrier-shift does not erase original source-text inferences, institutional advocacy or evaluative judgements; it repackages those pragmatic-modal meanings using target-language-compatible lexicogrammatical resources. This repackaging operation constitutes synchronic re-grammaticalization within translational contexts.

A critical theoretical boundary needs to be highlighted. Synchronic re-grammaticalization in translation is not spontaneous natural language evolution. It is a deliberate translator-mediated reconstruction constrained by dual sets of demands: source-text pragmatic-evaluative requirements, on the one hand; target-genre academic stylistic norms, on the other (Olohan, 2009). Confusing translational restructuring with genuine diachronic grammaticalization would misapply grammaticalization theory far beyond its original domain of historical language change.

This study further operationalises synchronic re-grammaticalization via a two-tier compensation model, drawing on Chesterman's (2016) descriptive understanding of translation compensation. Compensation here does not mean adding explanatory footnotes or extra metatextual commentary. Instead, it refers to target-text internal translational adjustments designed to repair anticipated pragmatic-semantic losses. The two tiers consist of form-oriented compensation (cross-categorical grammatical-carrier reshuffling) and meaning-oriented referential-pragmatic calibration (restoring context-specific evaluative import). Both tiers must work in tandem to realise successful synchronic re-grammaticalization for modal-adjunct meanings.

III. TRANSLATIONAL CHALLENGES FOR CHINESE MODAL ADJUNCTS IN REGULATORY ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Seventy valid modal-adjunct instances were manually screened from the source-text regulatory-theory chapter after corpus KWIC retrieval and manual human filtering. Non-modal descriptive adverbs were systematically excluded from the token set. Among these seventy valid tokens, 61 instances show high predicate-adjunct fusion, six show medium fusion, and only three instances fall into the low-fusion category. The imbalanced distribution itself is text-specific: government-regulatory Chinese academic prose heavily relies on high-fusion predicate-adjunct configurations to encode institutional evaluation, policy advocacy and causal-inferential judgements. Only 23 tokens (32.86 %) allow largely unproblematic literal adverb-for-adverb rendering. A substantial majority of tokens, 67.14 %, demand grammatical-carrier restructuring in translation. Two inter-connected major translational risks emerge from this corpus observation: syntactic form-mismatch, and pragmatic-semantic erosion accompanied by distorted semantic prosody (Louw, 1993). Semantic prosody denotes the consistent evaluative “aura” attached to lexical items through recurring collocational patterns; distorted prosody means the target text develops evaluative leanings not intended by the source-text author (Louw, 1993).

3.1 Syntactic form-mismatch: transplanting high-fusion “adjunct + predicate” chunks

Chinese government-regulatory academic writing frequently employs compact “modal-adjunct + predicate” surface-structure chunks. When these tightly fused chunks are mechanically transferred into English, sequences of pre-verbal adverbs appear. Such patterns clash against well-documented Anglophone academic stylistic conventions that discourage dense pre-verbal adverb stacking (Biber et al., 1999). Individual adverb lexemes may carry correct denotational dictionary glosses, yet stylistic dislocation takes place, and the target text bears traces of source-language interference, a well-known phenomenon within descriptive translation studies (Chesterman, 2016).

Example 1

Source Text (ST): 反之，监管监督体系繁杂、职责混乱，

功能边界模糊，势必会导致监管监督的局部真空。

Literal Target Text (TT): Conversely, if the oversight system is cumbersome, responsibilities chaotic, and functional boundaries blurred, it will inevitably lead to local vacuums of oversight.

Shìbì is a high-fusion mood adjunct tightly semantically bonded to the predicate phrase expressing causal outcome. Lexically speaking, the adverb *inevitably* provides a plausible dictionary-level match. Nevertheless, the collocation *will inevitably* combines future-tense prediction with absolute necessity. As a result, a conditional high-probability inference from the source text is transformed into unconditional deterministic certainty. This transformation distorts the original cautious academic-inferential semantic prosody. It is worth noticing that this distortion is not a simple lexical mistake. It emerges purely from mechanically preserving the source-language high-fusion adjunct-predicate syntactic configuration in target-language output. Many student translators and even professional practitioners produce this type of rendering, misled by dictionary-based one-to-one lexical expectations.

3.2 Pragmatic-semantic erosion and semantic-prosody distortion

A large proportion of Chinese modal adjuncts in institutional-regulatory discourse carry institution-embedded pragmatic import that extends well beyond decontextualized dictionary-based literal glosses. Adjunct items may signal institutional reform momentum rather than individual psychological positivity; some markers signal illustrative evidentiary revelation instead of quantitative exhaustiveness; others emphasise substantive policy outcomes instead of generic factual “reality”. If translators rely exclusively on isolated dictionary equivalents, governance-specific pragmatic nuance gets stripped away, and unintended semantic-prosody reshaping occurs (House, 2015). This type of loss is often harder to detect than obvious lexical mistranslation, because sentence denotation can remain superficially intact, while subtle evaluative-pragmatic meaning shifts go unnoticed during proof-reading.

Example 2

ST: 近年来，长春、济南相继出现震惊全国的假疫苗、假药品案，充分暴露出政府在相关领域的监管失灵。

Literal TT: In recent years, shocking cases of fake vaccines

and counterfeit medicines in Changchun and Jinan have fully exposed regulatory failures in these areas.

Within this evidentiary-illustrative context, the Chinese adjunct does not mean “exhaustive, quantitatively complete evidence”. Its pragmatic-rhetorical function is to state that these high-profile real-world cases vividly lay bare pre-existing regulatory malfunction. Rendering it as *fully exposed* mis-frames the source-text rhetorical purpose and generates over-assertive semantic prosody. The literal translation misleadingly suggests that these two case examples constitute exhaustive, definitive proof of regulatory failure, a claim the original Chinese text never advances. For international academic readers, this shift may make the source-text author appear to overstate empirical findings, damaging the perceived scholarly credibility of Chinese regulatory-theory writing in outbound dissemination.

IV. COMPENSATORY TRANSLATION STRATEGIES FOR MODAL-ADJUNCT SYNCHRONIC RE-GRAMMATICALIZATION

To mitigate syntactic form-mismatch and pragmatic-semantic erosion, translation requires dual-layer compensatory handling: form-oriented compensation carries out cross-categorical grammatical-carrier shifts; meaning-oriented referential-pragmatic calibration restores context-specific evaluative import and appropriate semantic prosody. Only joint deployment of both analytical tiers can achieve synchronic re-grammaticalization for modal-adjunct meanings (Chesterman, 2016). It should be stressed that these strategies are not rigid mechanical rules for every lexical token. Translators must always refer back to co-text and institutional-discourse pragmatic context before making final rendering choices.

4.1 Form-oriented compensation: cross-categorical grammatical-carrier shifts

4.1.1 Predicate-absorption compensation (for high-fusion causal-evaluative adjuncts)

When high-fusion adjunct-predicate chunks encode strong causal or deontic evaluative force, translators may select main predicates inherently saturated with the corresponding modal weight. Modal-evaluative import originally residing inside the Chinese adverb is absorbed into English

main-verb semantics. This removes the need for separate pre-verbal adverb markers and avoids adverb-stacking stylistic problems.

Example 3

ST: 没有监督的权力必然导致腐败, 没有监督的监管不仅会腐败, 而且是低效的。

Revised TT: The absence of supervision over power guarantees corruption; regulation without supervision breeds both corruption and inefficiency.

Analysis: The source-text adjunct *bírán* is high-fusion and causally bonded with the predicate “lead to”. The revised translation employs semantically heavy predicates *guarantees* and *breeds*. Causal-modal force migrates from the Chinese adverb slot into English main-verb semantics. Synchronic re-grammaticalization is accomplished, adverb stacking is avoided, and source-text causal-evaluative semantic prosody is fully preserved. This strategy works best for causal-deterministic high-fusion chunks. It would be inappropriate for purely subjective evaluative commentary, where predicate-absorption could over-solidify debatable judgements as inherent properties of entities.

4.1.2 Nominalization / adjectivization compensation (for potential-attribute meanings)

For adjuncts signalling latent potential or inherent attribute readings, translators may abandon adverbial form entirely and shift modal import into adjective-nominal bundles. Dynamic clausal evaluation is recast as static property description, consistent with well-known nominalising tendencies within English social-science prose (Biber et al., 1999).

Example 4

ST: 不同行业、阶层和地域的公民都可能对纳入政府监管的自己感兴趣的、利益相关的事务发表意见、形成舆论。

Revised TT: Citizens from different industries, social strata, and regions are potential contributors to public opinion formation when they express views on government-regulated matters of interest or related to their own interests.

Analysis: The source-text marker *kěnéng* operates as a low-fusion mood adjunct marking objective situational potential, rather than personal agentive ability or permission. A literal translation using modal verb *can* carries high risk

of pragmatic misreading, encouraging readers to interpret the clause as describing individual personal capability. Transferring potential-modal semantics to the adjective-noun collocation *potential contributors* relocates modal meaning away from adverb position and evades that pragmatic distortion. It is worth noting that nominalisation compensation must be handled cautiously: excessive nominalisation may produce overly dense, abstract English prose, so translators need to balance target-language nominalisation preference against readability requirements.

4.1.3 Fixed modal-phrase compensation (for conditional-probability inferences)

For adjuncts signalling high-probability conditional inference, English academic convention favours multi-word modal phrases over isolated single adverbs. This preserves strong inferential strength while maintaining the scholarly epistemic caution expected in academic argumentation (Hyland, 2005).

Example 5

ST: 反之，监管监督体系繁杂、职责混乱，功能边界模糊，势必会导致监管监督的局部真空。

Revised TT: Conversely, if the oversight system is cumbersome, responsibilities unclear, and functional boundaries blurred, a vacuum in certain areas of oversight is highly likely to emerge.

Analysis: The source-text item *shìbì* encodes high conditional probability rather than absolute deterministic inevitability. The fixed multi-word modal phrase *highly likely to emerge* retains strong inference yet avoids the categorical over-commitment produced by isolated adverb *inevitably*. This strategy aligns with Hyland's (2005) observation that Anglophone academic writers favour multi-word epistemic bundles over isolated adverbs for hedged high-probability claims.

4.1.4 Prepositional-comment-structure compensation (medium- / low-fusion policy-advocacy adjuncts)

Policy-advocacy-type adjuncts with partial syntactic detachability can be recoded into prepositional-phrase or sentential-comment structures. Modification formerly tightly attached to the predicate verb is upgraded to event-level circumstantiation modifying the whole institutional-building process, not merely the single predicate verb.

Example 6

ST: 积极建立各监督主体之间的工作联系制度，形成政府监管监督工作联系会议机制……

Revised TT: A working liaison system among all oversight actors shall be established in a proactive manner, which will institutionalize regular joint oversight meetings...

Analysis: The source-text adjunct *jījī* conveys institutional-level reform impetus, not individual human psychological enthusiasm. Rendered as the prepositional phrase *in a proactive manner*, it modifies the whole institutional-building event instead of merely the single verb *established*. The strategy fits medium-fusion policy-advocacy markers; for high-fusion causal markers, predicate-absorption usually delivers better stylistic outcomes.

4.2 Meaning-oriented compensation: referential-pragmatic calibration

Form-oriented compensation selects appropriate target-language syntactic homes for modal meaning. It must be complemented by referential-pragmatic calibration: translators need to diagnose what the adjunct actually evaluates within its immediate co-text, instead of mechanically importing static dictionary definitions (House, 2015). Even with correctly chosen grammatical carriers, if pragmatic-contextual function is misjudged, semantic-prosody distortion will still take place.

4.2.1 Evidentiary-argumentative calibration

Example 7

ST: 近年来，长春、济南相继出现震惊全国的假疫苗、假药品案，充分暴露出政府在相关领域的监管失灵。

Revised TT: In recent years, shocking cases of fake vaccines and counterfeit medicines in Changchun and Jinan have laid bare regulatory failures in these areas.

Analysis: As discussed earlier, in this evidentiary-illustrative co-text, *chōngfēn* marks vivid factual revelation via high-profile cases, not exhaustive evidential quantity. The verb-phrase *laid bare* captures that specific pragmatic function and rejects the literal gloss *fully*, which would exaggerate evidential completeness and skew argumentative prosody.

4.2.2 Outcome-oriented pragmatic calibration

Example 8

ST: 推动监督从被动向主动、从人力向科技的转变，以信息科技切实提高监督实效。

Revised TT: ... promoting the shift of supervision from

passive to active and from manpower-based oversight to technology-enabled oversight, so that information technology can deliver real improvements in the effectiveness of supervision.

Analysis: The source-text adjunct *qièshí* stresses tangible policy-governance outcomes rather than generic abstract factuality. Rather than generic adverb equivalents such as *substantially*, *deliver real improvements in the effectiveness of supervision* focuses attention on tangible governance results, matching the source-text performance-centred policy-related semantic prosody.

4.3 Strategy-selection boundaries

Compensation strategies are not mechanically mapped onto individual lexemes. Selection depends jointly on two interacting dimensions: predicate-adjunct fusion grade plus context-specific pragmatic function:

- High-fusion causal-deontic evaluation → priority: predicate absorption
- Latent potential or attribute reading → priority: nominalization / adjectivization
- Conditional high-probability inference → priority: fixed modal-phrase restructuring
- Policy advocacy with partial syntactic separability → priority: prepositional-comment structures

Meaning-oriented referential-pragmatic calibration operates as an indispensable final quality-control check for all form-oriented adjustments, guarding against pragmatic distortion triggered by decontextualized dictionary glosses (Chesterman, 2016). No single strategy is universally superior; co-text, discourse genre and target-text publication expectations must always weigh in on translational decision-making.

V. DISCUSSION

Translational difficulties surrounding Chinese modal adjuncts stem from fundamental typological divergence between Chinese and English modal systems (Palmer, 2001; Li, 2007). Chinese politico-academic regulatory discourse frequently packages evaluative-modal meaning into compact pre-predicate adverbial slots, producing large numbers of high-fusion predicate-adjunct semantic chunks. By contrast, Anglophone social-science prose disperses interpersonal evaluative meaning across main verbs, nominalizations and prepositional-phrase resources (Biber

et al., 1999; Hyland, 2005). Therefore translation involves meaning relocation: modal-evaluative import departs its source-language adverbial carrier and seeks alternative lexicogrammatical realisations within the target-language system. This relocation constitutes the core defining process of synchronic re-grammaticalization within translational contexts (Olohan, 2009).

This study enters into dialogue with existing SFL-informed Chinese-English translation scholarship. Much prior descriptive translation research drawing upon Systemic Functional Linguistics has concentrated heavily on modal-verb calibration. Modal adjuncts, by comparison, remain comparatively underexplored interpersonal-system components within Chinese-English outbound-translation studies. Corpus statistics from the present exploratory study demonstrate that over two-thirds of collected modal-adjunct tokens cannot safely retain adverb-for-adverb literal rendering. Mechanical literal transfer simultaneously generates target-text stylistic dislocation and erosion of governance-embedded pragmatic nuance. Predicate absorption, nominalization, fixed modal phrases and prepositional-comment structures constitute form-oriented synchronic re-grammaticalization tools; referential-pragmatic calibration secures preservation of context-bound evaluative import. Only combined deployment of both compensation tiers can reconcile English-academic stylistic norms with source-text argumentative-evaluative positions and appropriate semantic prosody (House, 2015).

It is theoretically vital to reiterate the conceptual boundary between translational synchronic re-grammaticalization and natural diachronic grammaticalization (Traugott, 2003; Olohan, 2009). The lexicogrammatical carrier remapping observed in this paper is translator-initiated synchronic cross-linguistic reconstruction. It is not spontaneous, language-internal historical evolutionary change. Maintaining this conceptual distinction prevents over-extension of classic grammaticalization theory beyond its original domain of long-term language-internal historical development.

This investigation carries several clear empirical and methodological limitations, which should be acknowledged explicitly for journal peer-review. First, the corpus dataset is confined to a single chapter of regulatory-theory

monograph writing. Fusion-grade token-distribution patterns will certainly vary across different politico-academic genres such as official white papers, policy speeches or news commentary. For that reason, the compensatory strategies presented in this paper constitute exploratory practical heuristics, not universal, universally applicable translation rules. Second, the source corpus contains very few pure comment-adjunct tokens (low-fusion instances only three out of seventy tokens). Future research built upon expanded multi-genre parallel datasets could deepen scholarly understanding of sentence-level metadiscursive comment-adjunct translation (Hyland, 2005). Third, evidence in this paper derives from translator-centred qualitative case-plus-corpus analysis; no target-audience reader-response experimental data are included. Follow-up research could adopt reader-response test instruments to empirically measure real-world persuasive-evaluative effects generated by alternative translation compensation choices.

For translation practitioners working on Chinese government-regulatory outbound-academic texts, this analysis advocates a deliberate two-step analytical workflow when processing Chinese politico-academic modal adjuncts. Step one: systematically assess predicate-adjunct fusion grade in source text to anticipate stylistic and pragmatic risks originating from mechanical literal adverb transfer. Step two: deliberately bracket dictionary-isolated glosses and diagnose concrete co-text-bound pragmatic function: causal inference? institutional-level policy advocacy? evidentiary-illustrative revelation? Functional-pragmatic diagnosis should logically precede selection of English lexicogrammatical carriers, rather than translators searching for direct adverb-for-adverb lexical equivalents. Such two-step reasoning facilitates complete synchronic re-grammaticalization of modal-adjunct meaning and protects source-text pragmatic-evaluative import during outbound academic translation.

VI. CONCLUSION

Modal adjuncts within Chinese politico-economic regulatory-academic texts realise multi-layered interpersonal-modal meanings including causal inference, institutional-level policy advocacy and factual-evidential

evaluation. The widespread high-fusion “modal-adjunct + predicate” syntactic pattern creates two recurrent translational risks: syntactic stylistic mismatch on the surface level, together with erosion of institution-specific pragmatic import and distorted semantic prosody at the deeper pragmatic-rhetorical level.

From the synchronic re-grammaticalization analytical perspective, translating Chinese modal adjuncts consists in relocating semi-grammaticalized evaluative-modal meanings away from Chinese adverbial slots towards suitable alternative lexicogrammatical carriers within English academic prose. Practitioners can deploy a complementary two-tier compensatory analytical toolkit. At the level of form-oriented compensation, predicate absorption, nominalization/adjectivization, fixed modal-phrase restructuring and prepositional-comment constructions accomplish necessary cross-categorical grammatical-carrier shifts. At the level of meaning-oriented compensation, referential-pragmatic calibration restores context-driven evaluative import and semantic prosody, guarding against pragmatic distortions produced by over-reliance on decontextualized dictionary definitions. This exploratory single-chapter-corpus-based case study yields micro-level practical operational heuristics for outbound translation of Chinese governance-focused social-science academic texts. Future research directions include enlarging parallel-corpus coverage across diverse politico-academic genres, and potentially incorporating reader-reception experimental testing to empirically measure real-world communicative and rhetorical impact brought by different modal-adjunct translation compensation strategies.

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