Interpreters’ Institutional Alignment and (Re)construction of China’s Political Discourse and Image: A Corpus-based CDA of the Premier-Meets-the-Press Conferences

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List of Abbreviations

**CE-PolitDisCorp**: Chinese-English Political Discourse Corpus  
**TIS**: Translation and Interpreting Studies  
**ST**: Source Text  
**TT**: Target Text  
**CDA**: Critical Discourse Analysis  
**CL**: Corpus Linguistics  
**CADS**: Corpus-assisted Discourse Studies  
**CIS**: Corpus-based Interpreting Studies  
**CTS**: Critical Translation Studies  
**CASS**: Corpus Approaches to Social Sciences  
**SFL**: Systemic Functional Linguistics  
**UN**: United Nations  
**NAATI**: National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters  
**AIIC**: Association internationale des interprètes de conférence  
**CPC**: Communist Party of China  
**FMPRC**: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China  
**NPC**: National People's Congress  
**CPPCC**: Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference  
**CCTV**: China Central Television  
**ROU**: Reform and Opening-up  
**SAR**: Special Administrative Region
Abstract

Drawing on corpus-based Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study addresses the research questions relating to the government interpreters’ alignment vis-à-vis their institutional employer and (re)construction of China’s discourse and image as civil servants at China’s Premier-Meets-the-Press conferences. A typical discursive event, the interpreter-mediated and televised press conferences provide the Chinese premier the opportunity to answer journalists’ questions on various topical issues, and, in doing so, present China’s global diplomacy and domestic developments to a global audience. Featuring relatively comprehensive coverage of discourse at different levels, Fairclough’s (1989; 1992; 1995) three-dimensional model is employed as a general theoretical framework. I argue, however, that his CDA model needs to be further enriched and adapted in a way that accounts for the dynamic and bilingual interpreter-mediated event. Given the triadic nature of the press conference setting (featuring the interactions between the Chinese officials, interpreter and journalists), the Bakhtinian concept of dialogised heteroglossia is discussed, which highlights the negotiated nature of interpreting where the interpreters are caught up in an ideological ‘tug-of-war’ between the centripetal force represented by the Chinese government and the centrifugal force exerted by the (foreign) journalists who pull away from the centre and challenge Beijing’s official narratives. Furthermore, (political) interpreting is conceptualised as a (re)contextualisation process at a macro-level, which necessarily involves numerous micro instances of decision-making, stance-taking and possibly shifts when rendering information into the sociopolitical, cultural and linguistic contexts of the TT. Proposed as an enrichment of Fairclough’s framework, these macro-level conceptualisations permit an empirical analysis of the interpreters’ alignment and (re)construction of China’s discourse and image, focusing on ideologically salient shifts in bilingual comparative CDA. For more systematic and objective analysis, the mixed-methods approach of corpus-based CDA is operationalised on 20 years of press conference data (1998-2017) to explore the interpreters’ agency and discursive mediation at various levels (e.g. lexical, collocational and diachronic) and from different perspectives (self-referentiality, China’s discourses concerning reform and opening-up and its core national interests, China’s discourses on its past achievements, current conditions, future actions, and China’s discourse on people). The findings suggest that the government-affiliated interpreters do actively mediate in the process through a variety of linguistic and discursive means (e.g. foregrounding, ideologically salient additions, mediation of self-referential items and modality). Such interpreter agency points to their crucial role in communicating beyond national borders, (re)telling the ‘Chinese story’ and in the international news and knowledge (re)production, (re)construction and dissemination processes in our increasingly globalised and mediat(is)ed world (e.g. the interpreted discourse into English is often further mediated and quoted verbatim by such media outlets as BBC, CNN and The Financial Times). This interdisciplinary study makes a solid contribution to the hitherto under-explored area of interpreter-mediated interaction in a political and institutional setting and enriches scholarship in related areas of CDA, corpus linguistics, discursive psychology, media and communication studies, the political sciences and Chinese studies.
Declaration
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The author

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Thanks to the increasingly frequent international communications between peoples speaking different languages, interpreting has flourished and is being widely used in a variety of different modes and settings. This study explores China’s political interpreting as firmly embedded within the historical period of Reform and Opening-up. The pragmatist Reform and Opening-up (Gaige Kaifang) initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 has been a major watershed in China’s recent history, where the country has shifted away from a preoccupation with its socialist goals and started to embark on a road of constructing ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’. Such pragmatism focusing on economic reform signals China’s dramatic transition from a once homogeneous, inward-looking and ideologically isolated country to an increasingly open and dynamic nation (now the second largest economy as of 2018) which is inextricably connected with the outside world.

The profound sociopolitical change directly resulting from the Dengist reform, facilitated not least by technological development and the broader trend of globalisation, has revolutionised the way China communicates internally and engages with other players in the global arena. The increasing need for global diplomacy and international engagement has witnessed the development and institutionalisation of the interpreter-mediated Premier-Meets-the-Press conferences (from originally an ad hoc event gradually to one that started to be widely broadcast on TV in 1998). Now this high-profile communicative event has become a fixture held towards the end of China’s ‘two sessions’ in March each year, that is, the National People’s Congress (NPC) and Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), attracting the attention of a global audience. The press conferences are consecutively interpreted, which typically include opening remarks from the Chinese premier (optional) and Q&A sessions with questions posed by both domestic and foreign media.

A typical regime of truth (Foucault 1984) and locus of ideology, this discursive event enables the Chinese premier (ranked second in China’s political hierarchy) to answer domestic and
international journalists’ questions on a wide range of topics (anti-corruption campaign, China’s economic and political structuring, GDP growth, Tibet, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Syria crisis, the Korean peninsula, air pollution and the US election etc.) and, in doing so, present Beijing’s positions and a desired version of China’s official narratives. As such, like the establishment of the Confucius Institute worldwide and the launch of the CCTV English International channel (now rebranded as CGTN), this high-profile interpreted event constitutes a vital platform for articulating Beijing’s discursive formation and projecting China’s ‘soft power’ (Kurlantzick 2007) and ‘discursive power’ (Gustafsson 2014). This is of particular relevance at a time when Beijing is increasingly seeking to ‘properly tell China’s story and properly convey China’s voice’ (jianghao zhongguo gushi, chuanbohao zhongguo shengyin) as evidenced in the official government slogan in recent years.

Communist party members themselves, the press conference interpreters are civil servants in mainland China and, more specifically, employees of the dedicated Department of Translation and Interpretation as part of China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (FMPRC). These interpreters are usually graduates from top language programmes offered at such elite universities as Beijing Foreign Studies University, China Foreign Affairs University, Shanghai International Studies University and Wuhan University in mainland China. They have to successfully pass the competitive civil service examination and undergo stringent processes of examination and selection to be recruited as civil servants and government interpreters with the FMPRC. Once recruited, they are subject to rigorous and systematic training on a daily basis before they are allowed to take on important interpreting tasks, for example, to accompany the Chinese president on state visits overseas or to interpret for the high-profile press conferences. Being able to interpret at the highest possible level like this is considered the ‘holy grail’ of the interpreting profession in mainland China and these interpreters are often compared to the ‘national team’ of translation (Ren 2004: 61) as they represent the highest possible standards of translation and interpreting China has to offer.

The civil servant status of these staff interpreters gives them a great sense of job security and pride since providing professional interpreting services for high-level government officials is
generally considered an admirable job. Their high visibility in accompanying high-level government officials and appearing on televised press conferences also affords them something of a celebrity status, evidenced in their huge following of fans nationwide (especially a considerable number of trainee translators and interpreters and millions of English learners in mainland China). Interestingly, several in-house translators and interpreters with the FMPRC Department of Translation and Interpretation backgrounds have even gone on to take prominent government positions as key diplomats and politicians. Some of the translator/interpreter-turned diplomats and officials include Mrs Fu Ying, who has served as China’s vice foreign minister and ambassador to the United Kingdom and Australia, and Mr Yang Jiechi, who has served as state councilor and China’s foreign minister.

According to the prescriptive requirements on the FMPRC’s official website (in Chinese) dealing with the recruitment and examination of government interpreters¹, apart from generic criteria like having solid linguistic foundations, good general knowledge, a calm disposition and the ability to handle pressure (criteria similar to those of the AIIC), interpreters are required to ‘convey messages accurately’ (my translation) to work for the FMPRC. Therefore, a political press conference interpreter is expected to fulfill the role as a highly qualified professional to provide interpreting services accurately and faithfully. However, in the same document, it is explicitly prescribed that qualified interpreters must also be ‘adamant in stance’, be ‘familiar with China’s positions on major issues and sensitive to China’s policies’ and have the ability and willingness to ‘fight at the forefront of the diplomatic work for the party and country’, ‘resolutely safeguard China’s national interests’ and to ‘devote to the motherland’s diplomatic cause with a high sense of mission’ (my translation). In addition, these interpreters are required to ‘build the bridge for communication’ as ‘China is actively exploring major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics’ in order to ‘build a world of enduring peace and common prosperity’ (my translation). The latter few points are in line with the main responsibilities of China’s foreign ministry², that is, to ‘implement the state's

¹The official FMPRC website is available here (last accessed: 8th June 2018):  
²http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zyzz_663306/ (last access 08/09/2018)
diplomatic principles and policies and related laws and regulations; safeguard national sovereignty, security and interests on behalf of the state; run diplomatic affairs on behalf of the state and the government; and handle diplomatic activities between leaders of the CPC and the state with foreign leaders’ (FMPRC website in English).

A critical examination of the prescriptive metadiscourse (cf. Diriker 2004; Gu 2018a; Zwischenberger & Pöchhacker 2010) regarding government-affiliated interpreters’ requirements in the Chinese setting reveals seemingly contradictory expectations. That is, they must translate accurately and faithfully on the one hand (presumably in an objective and impartial manner like a conduit) and be firm in stance and safeguard the interests of the government and China loyally and actively facilitate China’s global diplomacy and international engagement on the other. Notably, the latter requirement seems to carry obvious ideological overtones, thus calling for active interpreter mediation and intervention (which is something unheard of in the official metadiscourses of such organisations and professional bodies as the AIIC, NAATI and the UN).

Apart from indicating the essentially complex nature of political interpreting in China, such a seemingly conflicting metadiscursive representation points to the need for a critical and systematic analysis regarding the government-affiliated interpreters’ level of agency and possible ideological mediation in practice. Considering the need for the government-affiliated interpreters to (1) have a firm stance and safeguard Beijing’s interests and to (2) facilitate China’s publicity, diplomacy and global engagement, it is interesting to examine empirically the interpreters’ level of institutional alignment and their possible (re)construction of China’s discourse and image in English, that is, China’s international voice. As such, drawing on 20 years’ Premier-Meets-the-Press conference data (1998-2017), this corpus-based CDA study aims to approach this sensitive yet highly worthy topic in China’s institutional setting. This can be of particular interest considering the potentially far-reaching international impact of China’s interpreter-mediated discourse in communicating beyond national borders in an increasingly mediat(is)ed and (re)mediat(is)ed world (e.g. on TV, newspapers and social media sites like Twitter), thanks to technological advancements (cf. Strowe 2013). This
interdisciplinary study promises to further enrich interpreting studies and contribute to CDA, corpus linguistics, the political sciences/Chinese studies, communication and media studies, and image studies.

1.2 Rationale

Through reviewing the relevant literature, this section provides the rationale for this corpus-based CDA study examining issues relating to power and ideology at the interpreter-mediated political press conferences in China. Interpreting, as a spoken version of translation, predates translation by millennia (Cronin 2002). However, despite such historical antiquity, interpreting studies remains a relatively recent area of scholarly enquiry. Unlike its more well-researched translation counterpart, interpreting studies (IS) research has traditionally focused on different processes and aspects of consecutive and simultaneous conference interpreting (e.g. cognitive issues, note-taking, working memory and multitasking) as well as the various aspects of interpreter teaching, training and assessment (Chmiel 2010; Gile 1995; Moser-Mercer 2008), possibly as part of the ‘experimental’ interpreting research (Gile 1998). More recently, attention has focused on public service interpreting (also known as community or dialogue interpreting) from various perspectives and in different settings and localities (cf. Angelelli 2004; Tipton 2008; Tipton and Furmanek 2016; Valero Garcés 2005; Wadensjö 2001).

As part of an increasing trend of product-oriented research, scholars in public service interpreting have explored interpreters’ active agency role in triadic communication (e.g. Edmondson 1986; Jones 1998; Diriker 2004; Mason 1999) and examined interpreting in these settings as an interpreter-mediated interaction, drawing for example on Conversation Analysis (CA). Shifting away from a focus on Reddy’s (1979) conduit model which contends that interpreters are merely invisible translating machines (Pöchhacker 2004) who are expected to ‘just translate, translate everything, translate adequately’ (Wadensjö 1995: 115) without personal agency, interpreters are increasingly conceptualised as visible and legitimate participants (e.g. Wadensjö 1998; Roy 2000) and important co-constructors (Berk-Seligson 1990; Wadensjö 1992) who actively mediate in the process. However, despite public service
interpreters’ demonstrated agency, conference interpreters’ ideological mediation in various political and institutional settings (e.g. televised presidential debates and political press conferences) has attracted little scholarly attention.

Translations are not made ‘in a vacuum’ (Lefevere 1992: 14) and are an ideologically embedded undertaking (Schäffner 2003) shaped by vectors of power (Strowe 2013; 2016). Interestingly, as part of a noticeable trend termed by Bassnett and Lefevere (1990) using the contested concept ‘cultural turn’ and, more recently, the ‘power turn’ (cf. Strowe 2013; Tymoczko & Gentzler 2002), translation studies has gradually shifted away from a preoccupation with equivalence on a linguistic level and started to broaden its focus to such notions as discourse, narrative, power, and ideology within certain cultural, socio-political, conflictual and institutional contexts. So far, there has been a relatively large body of research exploring ideology and power in translation (written discursive communication) for instance taking a narrative (Baker 2006; 2010a; Harding 2011) or a (critical) discourse analytical approach (Hatim & Mason 1990; Kang 2007; Kim 2017; Li and Li 2015; Munday 2007; Spiessens and Van Poucke 2016; Valdeón 2007; Zhang 2013).

As a special form of translation, interpreting should not be exempt from issues of ideology and power since interpreters cannot avoid being immersed in ideology as users of language representing others’ (ideological) language use (Pöchhacker 2006). However, despite Cronin’s call for a so-called brand new ‘cultural’ or ‘social’ turn in interpreting studies to explicitly address questions of power and ideology and issues such as class, gender and race (2002: 387), only relatively few studies have explored such sociopolitical dimensions in political interpreters’ mediation. However, despite the very limited number, the extant research examining power and ideology enacted in and related to interpreting in various sociopolitical and institutional settings has started to challenge the long-held commonplace belief and prevalent (prescriptive) professional metadiscourses regarding interpreters’ invisibility and impartiality.

Such empirical and product-oriented research involves (1) studies that focus on the various
(macro-)sociological aspects of interpreting such as norms (Diriker 2004) as well as field and interpreters’ *habitus* (Inghilleri 2003, Katan and Straniero-Sergio 2001, 2003; Dal Fovo 2018) often taking a Bourdiesuan perspective and seeing interpreting as an interpersonal, situated and contextualised type of communication; (2) studies taking a narrative approach (Baker 2010b; Boéri 2008) where ‘interpreters play a crucial role in both disseminating and contesting public narratives within and across national boundaries’ (Baker 2006: 5); and (3) studies taking a (critical) discourse analytical approach (Beaton 2007; Beaton-Thome 2010, 2013; Schäffner 2012).

Within the latter strand, Beaton’s (2007) and Beaton-Thome’s (2010) studies illustrate how the EU’s ideological discourse and institutional hegemony are strengthened by the simultaneous interpreters through various linguistic/discursive means (e.g. repetition, metaphor strings and personal pronouns) at the European Parliament. However, due to the huge differences in political system, institutional setting, languages used and interpreting mode, it remains to be seen whether similar findings might also hold true in interpreter-mediated political encounters in China (e.g. consecutively interpreted government press conferences).

Unsurprisingly, like the situation described above that scholarly research ‘on ideology and interpreting is still in its infancy’ (Martin 2016: 239), issues relating to discourse, ideology and power in political interpreting remain even less explored in China, not least due to the politically sensitive and risky nature of the topic in China’s sociopolitical context. As such, regarding the landscape of interpreting studies research in the Chinese context, despite its relatively late start, interpreting-related research has developed rapidly, yet is not without its limitations. Traditionally, scholarly attention has focused largely on anecdotal or reflective accounts of interpreting from interpreters of varying levels of experience (e.g. Dai 2004), the various technical aspects relating to the interpreting process such as note-taking (Chang 2015) and terminology preparation (Xu 2015), the various aspects concerning interpreting teaching and training (Li 2015; Liu 2005), quality assessment (Huang 2009), interpreter quality requirements (Yi 2000), and a large body of studies summarising interpreting strategies to
adopt in rendering challenging poems, expressions and idioms (e.g. Deng 2013; Li 2010) often drawing on small samples or individual examples. Many of these have taken a prescriptive approach and a predominantly source-oriented view.

Nevertheless, there has more recently been a limited yet certainly growing body of empirical interpreting studies research which is more descriptive, product-oriented and draws on larger corpus data sets (e.g. corpora extracted from China’s interpreter-mediated political press conferences). The vast majority of these more descriptive corpus-based studies so far have investigated norms in interpreting (Wang 2012), the various single grammatical elements, linguistic features and phenomena including modality (Fu 2016; 2018; Li 2018) drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics, coherence in interpreting through metadiscourse (Fu 2017), hedging devices (Pan and Zheng 2017), the attributive modifying structures (Wang and Zou 2018), and the passive construction, the optional connective ‘that’, and the infinitive particle ‘to’ (Hu & Tao 2013). These studies in the Chinese context belong to a growing body of research called corpus-based interpreting studies or CIS (cf. Setton 2011; Straniero Sergio & Falbo 2012; Russo, Bendazzoli, & Defrancq 2018), which came as an offshoot of corpus-based translation studies (Shlesinger 1998). Attention in CIS in general has focused on such linguistic features and interpreting phenomena as norms and quality (Straniero Sergio 2003), interpreters’ style (Straniero Sergio 2012), explicitness as an interpreting universal (Morselli 2018), topical coherence (Dal Fovo 2012), filled pauses (Defrancq & Plevoets 2018), interpretese (Aston 2018), optional ‘that’ (Kajzer-Wietrznzy 2018), and phrasal verbs (Cresswell 2018). In line with the general developments in CIS, these studies in the Chinese context (e.g. drawing on interpreter-mediated political press conference data) arguably have not engaged sufficiently and critically with the discursive and ideological dimensions of interpreting. This is despite the fact that the discursive event constitutes a vital regime of truth (Foucault 1984) and a site of ideology and the fact that power, T&I processes and products often intersect at different levels and with many permutations (Strowe 2016).

Among only a handful of studies that have touched more or less upon interpreters’ agency and discursive mediation in the broader Chinese setting, Hui Liu’s (2010) doctoral thesis
examines the influence of audience design on interpreters’ behavior using data transcribed from the ‘two sessions’ press conferences in China. In the study, she challenges the public perception that interpreters are mere sounding machines with little or no personal agency and confirms that the interpreters’ behaviour varies according to target audience. From a different perspective, using critical discourse analysis, Pin-ling Chang’s (2012) doctoral study focuses on hegemony and resistance, exploring how (inexperienced) trainee simultaneous interpreters from mainland China and Taiwan without institutional affiliations tend to interpret the same politically sensitive speeches differently due to disparities in ideology and identity. To accompany the CDA analysis, surveys and interviews are also used to further validate her CDA findings. However, it remains to be seen what the results would be like for interpreting undertaken in a naturally occurring real-world setting by experienced interpreters.

Drawing on Goffman’s participation framework, Tingting Sun’s (2012) doctoral thesis explored the way in which interpreters position themselves in government press conferences through a textual analysis of six (one-off) SARS-related press conferences. Her study finds that those interpreters position themselves mainly through their negotiation of institutional alignment and protection of the ‘face’ of institutional superiors. However, her selection of data is relatively homogeneous (medical and crisis management) and less political in nature, focusing on the government’s epidemic prevention and emergency measures. Also drawing on Goffman’s participation framework, Cheng Zhan (2012) looks into the mediating role of interpreters through examining personal pronoun shifts and footing changes using data taken from diplomatic meetings in China’s Guangdong province (which involve mostly friendly exchanges with foreign diplomats and consul-general members to foster partnerships). These studies call into question the normative role of government interpreters as a faithful echo, although they have not extensively addressed issues of ideology and discourse and taken a critical approach.

In recent years, attention has started to focus on government-affiliated interpreters’ discursive mediation, drawing on corpus-based CDA. To the best of my knowledge, the only such studies include Li’s (2016) doctoral thesis and Wang and Feng’s (2018) study. Attention in the
former study is focused on the translators/interpreters’ role in mediating appraisal resources when rendering China’s political discourse (Chinese-English). The authors in the latter study have investigated the interpreters’ treatment of the specific lexical item 问题 (wenti), roughly meaning ‘question’, ‘issue’ or ‘problem’. For the authors, this item is particularly attitude-laden and possesses the potential for ideological manipulation, thus representing a critical point in the interpreters’ decision-making process (which is indicative of their stance-taking). It illustrates that the interpreters’ lexical choices tend to align with and ‘reflect the government’s stance and attitude on different political and social issues’ (Wang and Feng 2018: 258).

Given the fact that issues relating to ideology, power and discourse remain largely under-explored in interpreting studies research in China and beyond (for instance adopting the mixed-methods approach of corpus-based CDA), this study aims to address this gap and examine systematically the government-affiliated interpreters’ institutional alignment and (re)construction of China’s discourse and image from different perspectives and at various levels. Situated at the intersection between various areas and disciplines, the application of this triangulated corpus-based CDA approach to China’s interpreter-mediated political press conferences promises to yield useful findings and lead to productive interdisciplinary cross-fertilisation.

1.3 Research Questions
In view of the metadiscursive description that the government-affiliated interpreters are required to (1) have a firm stance and safeguard Beijing’s interests and to (2) facilitate China’s publicity, diplomacy and global engagement, the aims and objectives of this study are to conduct an empirical examination of their possible agency and level of mediation in the actual interpreting practice. The idea of agency and mediation might consist of two constitutive and related aspects: their potential institutional alignment and discursive (re)construction of the Chinese government’s image. With this in mind, the overarching question and the more specific sub-questions are detailed as follows:
Overarching question:

*What insights can be gained regarding government-affiliated interpreters’ institutional alignment and (re)construction of China’s political discourse and image, through corpus-based CDA?*

To answer the overarching question, two more specific and interconnected research questions are formulated:

(1) *To what extent do the interpreters, as civil servants and members of China’s ruling elite, align themselves institutionally and strengthen, maintain or weaken the government’s ideological discourse?*

(2) *How might these interpreters serve to (re)construct the Chinese government’s discourse and image in the interpreting process?*

### 1.4 Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Corpus Data

Given the nature and aims of this study, the interdisciplinary, descriptive and problem-oriented theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is adopted to identify traces of ideology and power in interpreting that are ‘out of sight’ (Paltridge 2006: 178). Viewing discourse as essentially a type of social practice (Fairclough and Wodak 1997), CDA scholars believe that there is a dialectical relationship between language use and the world around us. That is, discourse is viewed as both socially constituted and socially constitutive with the power to shape new sociopolitical realities. CDA aims to problematise and unpack the opaque power relations and the often hidden and subtle ideologies enacted, produced and perpetuated in discourse. As a socially engaged framework, CDA not only examines the linguistic choices in text *per se* but also explores the sociopolitical and ideological dimensions of language use in a detailed and in-depth manner.

Rather than being a monolithic and homogeneous school, CDA is pluralistic in nature,
featuring different sub-trends. These include notably Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework (1989; 1995), van Dijk’s socio-cognitive model (1988; 1997; 2008) and Ruth Wodak’s discourse-historical approach (1995; 2001). However, despite its multifarious nature, all CDA approaches are united by the ‘shared perspective on doing linguistic, semiotic or discourse analysis’ (van Dijk 1993: 131), the shared view of discourse as social practice and the common critical take-nothing-for-granted and take-nothing-at-face-value attitude.

The use of CDA in translation and interpreting studies has to do with their considerable compatibility in various aspects. Discourse is social and mediated in nature (by various agents), and a critical examination of discourse is often descriptive and focused on the product from an interdisciplinary perspective. Similarly, as interlingual and intercultural communicative processes, translation and interpreting are also mediated and social in nature and are embedded within certain sociopolitical and cultural contexts. As such, translation and interpreting are rarely ideologically neutral and thus are subject to critical interrogation in a descriptive manner.

Given the aims of this study, CDA is considered to be more suitable than the (similarly) socio-politically oriented narrative theory that is increasingly adopted in translation and interpreting studies (cf. Baker 2006). Despite the overlap, a social narrative approach assumes the ‘entire narrative’ as ‘the unit of analysis’ (Baker 2010a: 349). That is, narrative-inspired studies tend to focus more on the macro-level structuring and overall organisation of events and experiences as temporally linked and sequentially connected in storytelling within a larger sociopolitical and cultural context (Frank 1998). Some of the main (macro-level) analytical tools are temporality, relationality, causal emplotment and selective appropriation (Somers and Gibson 1994; Baker 2006). By contrast, a critical discourse analytical approach is arguably more textually oriented and is attentive to the power and ideology enacted in language at a micro-level with a broader analytical toolkit.

Unlike van Dijk’s socio-cognitive model and Ruth Wodak’s discourse-historical approach
(which are more specialised in nature), Fairclough’s three-dimensional model is arguably the most comprehensive CDA framework (Crichton 2010; Sheyholislami 2001) and can thus provide a general point of departure for this study (see Chapter 2 for more detail). Drawing extensively on Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and various other theories and notions (e.g. from Foucault, Bakhtin and Gramsci), Fairclough’s theoretical framework is one of the most widely applied within CDA. It promotes methodological openness and welcomes the introduction of relevant concepts and notions in other fields to foster interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary dialogue. Given the dynamic, negotiated and triadic nature of the bilingual discursive event, the concepts of dialogised heteroglossia and (re)contextualisation are discussed to further enrich and complement Fairclough’s framework mostly applied to analysing monolingual written discourse. Conceptualising the bilingual and dynamic event as a site of dialogised heteroglossia\(^3\) means that the interpreters can be seen as being placed in the ideological tug-of-war between the centripetal force represented by the Chinese government (seeking to centralise and present an officially sanctioned version of truth, fact and reality) and the centrifugal force represented by the journalists (seeking to de-centralise and pull away from the official narrative through posing challenging and sensitive questions). This permits an examination of the interpreters’ level of alignment when faced with these competing forces. Also, the dynamic interpreting process is conceptualised as a form of (re)contextualisation, which highlights numerous instances of micro-level decision-making, stance-taking and (re)contextualisations when interpreters (de)contextualise information from the ST and then render it into a different language and sociopolitical/cultural context. Such conceptualisations permit bilingual comparative critical discourse analyses between the ST and TT, focusing on ideologically salient shifts.

Despite its usefulness in revealing hidden power and ideology enacted in discourse, CDA has its limitations and is subject to a number of criticisms (cf. Billig 2003; 2008; Poole 2010; Widdowson 1995). As a predominantly qualitative approach, CDA is sometimes accused of

\(^3\)Beaton (2007) and Beaton-Thome (2010; 2013) first recognised the essentially multivoiced and heteroglossic nature of multilingual communication in a political and institutional setting, that is, the European Parliament (EP).
being subjective and not representative enough. Widdowson claims that there is sometimes a lack of objectivity as discourse analysts tend to select or ‘cherry-pick’ texts that are more likely to support their assumptions and they do not offer complete analysis but ‘only partial interpretation’ (1995: 169) that is in line with their own views and stances. Or, as Stubbs maintains, CDA scholars find what they expect to find, whether ‘absences or presences’ (1997: 102). With this in mind, a corpus-based CDA approach (Baker 2010; Baker 2012; Hardt-Mautner 1995) is employed in this study to minimise researcher bias and lead to more systematic analysis as a ‘useful methodological synergy’ (Baker et al. 2008), triangulating between the qualitative and quantitative. Incorporating corpus linguistics as a supplementary tool in support of CDA will enable the researcher to make good use of such a methodological synergy and benefit from their combined advantages of being emancipatory (Mautner 2009: 32), in-depth and, relatively, more systematic, complete and objective.

The mixed-methods approach is applied to the CE-PolitDisCorp corpus (Chinese-English) established by the author, which consists of transcribed data extracted from 20 Premier-Meets-the-Press conferences (1998-2017). The data was transcribed verbatim from videos of the press conferences available on such video-sharing websites as YouTube and Youku. The 20 years’ press conference data covers three latest Chinese governments: the Jiang-Zhu (1998-2002), Hu-Wen (2003-2012) and Xi-Li (2013-2017) administrations respectively. The diachronic nature of the data covering potentially sensitive themes and topics makes it interesting to examine the interpreters’ agency and ideological mediation. The CE-PolitDisCorp corpus is made up of various subcorpora (cf. Chapter 3). In carrying out the analysis, attention is focused on ideologically salient ‘shifts’ between the ST (Chinese) and the TT (English) at different levels.

1.5 Organisation of the Thesis
Following this brief introduction, Chapter Two discusses the theoretical framework, that is, corpus-based CDA as employed in this study. More specifically, important concepts central to CDA such as discourse and ideology are first discussed in this chapter, where a working definition of ‘ideology’ is provided. This chapter then elaborates on Fairclough’s
three-dimensional theoretical framework and argues for the need to further complement his framework using the concepts of *dialogised heteroglossia* and *(re)contextualisation*, given the bilingual nature of political interpreting in the dynamic, negotiated and triadic press conference setting. In view of the criticisms levelled at the predominantly qualitative CDA, corpus linguistics (CL) approaches are incorporated for more systematic analysis. In Chapter Three, attention is focused on methodology and data used in this study. In this chapter, detailed discussions are provided on the mixed-methods approach of corpus-based CDA, which permits the researcher to ‘shunt’ between the qualitative and quantitative and approach the data at various levels of abstraction. After this, the composition of the press conference corpus data, its collection and preparation processes, and the CL software used are discussed. The specific subcategories to be examined and the corresponding procedures for analysis are also covered.

As the first data analysis chapter, Chapter Four focuses on the interpreters’ institutional alignment. The subcategories examined are: (1) self-referentiality; (2) key themes central to China’s reform and opening-up discourse and (3) issues relating to China’s core national interests. In the second data analysis chapter, Chapter Five, attention is focused on the interpreters’ (re)construction of China’s discourse and image. The subcategories explored are (1) China’s discourse on its past actions and achievements; (2) its current conditions; (3) the future possibility, volition, obligation and commitment in the government’s discourse; (4) China’s discourse on people. Having presented the two data analysis chapters, in Chapter Six, I revisit the objectives of this corpus-based CDA study and discuss its main findings, scholarly contributions and limitations, before outlining suggestions for future research.
Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis that informs the present study and sets out a case for its application in examining interpreter-mediated political discourse in the Chinese context. It begins with an overview of CDA’s theoretical underpinnings, key assumptions, criticalness, diversity and common objectives. This is followed by more detailed discussions of two concepts central to CDA, namely, ideology and discourse, leading to a working definition of ‘ideology’ for the present study. Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional approach and its particular relevance will then be presented. Despite the usefulness of his (textually-oriented) framework, this chapter argues that it needs to be further enriched and complemented theoretically, bearing the dynamic and interpreter-mediated nature of the bilingual press conferences in mind. As such, the negotiated and interactional political press conference setting is theorised using Bakhtin’s concept of dialogised heteroglossia, where the interpreter can be seen as being located at the interface between the centripetal force of the Chinese government and the centrifugal force of (foreign) journalists. Similarly, press conference interpreting as a whole is conceptualised as a (re)contextualisation process at a macro level with the interpreter serving as the vital discursive link between the original and interpreted discourses. The incorporation of these concepts highlights the potentially vital role of the interpreters and permits an investigation of their possible institutional alignment and (re)construction of Beijing’s discourse and image, focusing on ideologically salient ST-TT shifts. This is followed by a discussion of corpus-based CDA as a means to minimise subjectivity and researcher bias. The chapter concludes by discussing the crucial global ramifications of political interpreting in a mediat(is)ed and (re)mediat(is)ed world, highlighting the usefulness and applicability of CDA to China’s sociopolitical context despite its Western origin and orientation.

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis: An Overview

Founded by Norman Fairclough and others, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a critical theory aims to explore the power and ideology enacted in language use that are often ‘out of sight’ (Paltridge 2006: 178). Primarily qualitative in orientation, CDA is considered instrumental to the understanding of the otherwise hidden power relations and ideological
underpinnings instantiated in discourse in various political and socio-cultural contexts. The tradition emerged in the late 1980s as part of a dramatic shift of focus in Linguistics from the more ‘introspective’ (Stubbs 2001: 150) preoccupation with internalised language to an increasingly keen interest in externalised language (Chomsky 1988) involving in-depth analysis based on real-world naturally occurring materials as its data. CDA is a theoretical framework and methodology for enquiry into language rather than an object of linguistic study per se, as is the case with syntax, phonology or semantics.

CDA traces its ‘most immediate fons et origo’ (de Beaugrande 2006: 41) to Critical Linguistics of the East Anglia School in the 1970s (e.g. Fowler et al. 1979). As a descriptive, interdisciplinary and problem-oriented tradition, CDA views discourse ‘as a form of social practice’ (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 258) that is dialectically linked to the broader sociopolitical context it finds itself in. The socially embedded nature of discourse means that it is both socially shaped and socially constitutive, which forms the key theoretical assumption of CDA. The idea that CDA is an effective way to critically analyse discourse is premised upon the belief that if the linguistic forms of language use can be closely tied to its functions on a sociopolitical level then in-depth analyses of language can ‘reveal’ issues of ideology and de-mystify the otherwise opaque workings of power that often lead to domination or unequal power relations. Although it remains to be seen to what extent ideology is ‘there’ to be revealed and ‘read off’ from syntactic constructions, the common critical, revelatory and emancipatory agendas of CDA are indeed of ‘very considerable’ significance (Stubbs 1997: 114).

A distinguishing feature of CDA, as the name suggests, is its ‘critical’ approach to discourse with a view to deconstructing and unpacking systematically how the social world is constructed and maintained through discourse, which, to varying degrees, might involve unequal power relations and domination that are ‘hidden from people’ (Fairclough 1989: 4). It is the presupposition that ideology, domination and exercise of power implicated in language

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4 Such profound change has also seen the rapid development of corpus linguistics (see section 2.3 for more details).
use are something not clear to people under normal conditions (Bourdieu 1977) that necessitates critical study of discourse by CDA scholars\(^5\). The word ‘critical’ etymologically derives from the word *krinein* of Greek origin, which means to make a judgement or distinction (Chilton 2006). The ‘criticalness’ in CDA can be traced more directly to its forefather Critical Linguistics on the one hand, and the ideology critique in Marxism (e.g. Althusser and Gramsci) and theories of the Frankfurt School (e.g. Jürgen Habermas) on the other. Chilton *et al.* (2010: 491-495) make clear that ‘critical’ within CDA involves at least three interrelated concepts. Firstly, CDA aims to make explicit the otherwise non-obvious relationship between discourse, power and ideology, to challenge things and never take them for granted. Secondly, being ‘critical’ involves putting theory into action and seeing critical analysis of discourse itself as a form of social practice. Finally, CDA is subject to self-critical and self-reflexive evaluations. The last point is also in line with the Habermasian view stressing the need for a truly critical science to remain ‘self-reflective’ (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 261). This means that critical studies like CDA might never be fully objective and bias-free yet must reflect on the (ideological) interests involved and consider ‘the historical contexts of interactions’ (Titscher *et al.* 2000: 144) of specific social and linguistic issues (see section 2.5 for more discussions of ‘criticalness’ in CDA and its applicability in the Chinese context).

Apart from the key feature of being ‘critical’, CDA is also highly interdisciplinary and diverse. Located at the crossroads of various disciplines, CDA draws upon various theories and concepts: Marxist perspectives on ideology and power mechanisms, Halliday’s Systemic-Functional Grammar, Foucault’s concept of discourse, Bakhtin’s intertextuality, and Moscovici’s social cognition theories, among others. Three most widely applied CDA approaches are Norman Fairclough’s Three-dimensional model (1989, 1992, 1995), van Dijk’s

\(^5\) This seems to be based on an assumption that ordinary lay readers or listeners are largely unsuspecting, naïve, and, therefore, readily manipulated by the powerful, whereas CDA scholars are the privileged few equipped with the critical ability to read between the lines and uncover power and ideology enacted in texts. Chilton (2005: 22), for example, asserts that humans might be ‘naturally endowed with the ability’ which prevents them from being ‘easily hoodwinked by powerful verbalisers’ after providing an overview of the recent research in cognitive sciences. In response, Fairclough (2009) argues explicitly that systematic semiotic analysis of discourse is very much necessary as ordinary people’s critical instinct alone cannot be relied upon to make sense of the increasingly complex semiotic and non-semiotic elements that constitute our lives.
Socio-cognitive Approach (1988; 1997; 2008), and Ruth Wodak’s Discourse-Historical Approach (1995; 2001). Fairclough’s approach investigates discourse on three interdependent levels with discourse practice serving as the link that mediates between text and the wider sociocultural and political context (see section 2.1.1 for the influences of Marxism on Fairclough’s conceptualisation of ideology and section 2.2 for detailed discussions of Fairclough’s framework). Unlike Fairclough’s general tripartite framework, van Dijk’s (1988) socio-cognitive approach is more specialised in nature, exploring the interconnections between discourse, cognition and society. By contrast, unlike the previous two frameworks, ‘historical’ occupies a special place in Ruth Wodak’s Discourse-Historical Approach. Unsurprisingly, her approach emphasises the centrality of historical contexts in explaining and interpreting discourse. For Wodak, discourse is almost ‘always historical, that is, it is connected synchronically and diachronically with other communicative events which are happening at the same time or which have happened before’ (Wodak & Ludwig 1999: 12). CDA, as such, is not a monolithic paradigm or school that aims to provide one unitary framework with a fixed set of canons for data collection and analysis.

There are occasional criticisms that CDA is characterised by eclecticism and ‘methodological anarchism’ (Feyerabend 1975) for invoking concepts and theories from various epistemological standpoints almost on an ‘ad hoc’ basis as deemed useful and convenient (Widdowson 1998: 137) by the analysts. This in fact represents a great strength of CDA, that is, its theoretical/methodological openness and flexibility in terms of the theories, concepts and analytical toolkits to be employed. This is in stark contrast to theories that are ‘total and closed’ (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 5). Indeed, the operationalisation of CDA can be tailored to the specific aims and situations of each individual project. Increasingly, there are calls amongst CDA scholars to promote ‘transdisciplinary’ dialogues with other disciplines and theoretical perspectives for mutual growth without making one internalised in another (Fairclough 2003). CDA, as such, can be thought of as a loosely defined yet interconnected set of approaches bound together by a few commonly ‘shared perspectives on doing linguistics,

Feyerabend’s (1975) concept ‘methodological anarchism’ contends that pluralism in research should be promoted because a single research method is not the only way to knowledge and an undue number of prescriptive methodological guidelines might limit scholarly research and hold back scientific progress.
semiotics or discourse analysis’ (van Dijk 1993: 131), with the unmasking of ideology and power in discourse as a legitimate objective of investigation. Van Dijk (2007) details at least seven common denominators seen in different CDA approaches, which include the interest in and use of naturally occurring language, a focus on larger units than isolated words and sentences, the extension of the definition of ‘discourse’ to the multimodal and multisemiotic aspects of interaction and communication, and an emphasis on the study of language use within various social, cultural, situative and cognitive contexts. In a similar vein, Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 271-280) believe that all CDA approaches in general recognise the mediated nature of the link between text and society and, at the same time, view relations of power as discursively constructed, and the socially conditioned and constitutive discourse as doing ideological work and being essentially historical.

2.1.1 Ideology and CDA

Having provided an overview of CDA, the central concept of ‘ideology’ is discussed here. Ideology occupies a prominent position in the humanities and social sciences and is of particular importance in CDA. Rather than offering a comprehensive account of the historical development of the concept, this section seeks to only give a brief yet critical review of the major trends and conceptualisations of ‘ideology’ over time that are of immediate relevance to CDA and the present study. This permits the researcher to formulate a working definition of ‘ideology’ towards the end of this section.

Variously defined since its relatively neutral coinage in 1796 by French philosopher and aristocrat Destutt de Tracy, the intrinsically vague, diffuse and complicated concept often defies a single precise definition to capture all its complexities. As a result, it remains perhaps ‘one of the most ambiguous terms in the terminological arsenal of the social sciences’ (Markiewicz 1979: 115). To date, this concept has been defined and developed by Marxists and non-Marxists, linguists and non-linguists alike with definitions ranging from ‘false consciousness’ to simply everyday opinions and ideas. Ideology (or French: idéologie) was originally coined by Destutt de Tracy to mean the ‘science of ideas’ conceptualised from an epistemological point of view relating to zoology. However, this neutral, if not potentially
positive, term ‘never made it’ (van Dijk 1998: 2) as a science in its own right as it soon took on negative and pejorative connotations when vehemently attacked by Emperor of France Napoleon Bonaparte as a subversive, erroneous and ‘abstract doctrine that would confuse people and undermine the rule of law’ (Krieger 2001: 381). Later, the concept entered into the theories of German philosopher Karl Marx (1818-1883) and was redefined philosophically in what many believe a reductionist and class-oriented way as ‘a theoretical doctrine and activity which erroneously regards ideas as autonomous and efficacious and which fails to grasp the real conditions and characteristics of social historical life’ (Thompson 1990: 34-35). In The German Ideology, Marx and Engels (1970, first published in 1846) explicitly argue that in every single epoch the ideas belonging to the dominant ruling class are inevitably the ruling ideas, which are almost always employed in the interest of the ruling class to make the proletariat oblivious to the real relations between different classes in a society. Therefore, the traditional Marxist notion of ‘ideology’ as pertaining to economic base and superstructure sees ‘ideology’ as ‘a form of cognitive distortion, a false or illusory representation of the real’ (Gardiner 2002: 60) that is structurally induced in capitalist societies. Put simply, Marx and Engels view ideology as ‘false consciousness’, thereby creating a true/false dichotomy.

Evidently, Marxism, especially the traditional version, has contributed significantly to ‘ideology’. As Freeden (2003: 10-11) observes, there are four indelible Marxist contributions: ‘social and historical circumstances have significance in moulding political and other ideas’, ‘ideas matter’, ‘ideologies are endowed with crucial political functions’ and ‘what you see is not always what you get’. However, despite such contributions, the traditional Marxist conceptualisation of ideology has drawn heavy criticism on several counts. The economic determinism or economism central to the Marxist conceptualisation is regarded as reductionist and monist (Fairclough 2013) in failing to take into account diversity and scope of human agency. Also, such a negative, value-laden, and somewhat anachronistic Marxist view is often accused of being unduly ‘preoccupied with ideas of true and false cognition, with ideology as illusion, distortion and mystification’ (Eagleton 1991: 3). The excessive emphasis placed on the dichotomies between true and false, good and bad is criticised by Fowler (1996: 165), who contends that ideologies per se are not essentially bad or ‘false’
forms of consciousness. I would argue further that even if ideologies were, it would require
god-like transcendental observers to tell between truth and untruth, reality and unreality. In
the real world, such completely objective and bias-free judges simply do not exist and it is
almost human nature for people to believe that ‘Ours is the Truth, Theirs is the Ideology’ (van
Dijk 1998: 2). Eagleton (1991: 2) similarly maintains that nobody would perceive their own
thinking as ideological just in the same way as nobody would habitually refer to themselves
as a fatso or admit that they themselves have halitosis. Furthermore, the traditional Marxist
definition also sees ideology as something reified7 and static, and treats the concept as an
instrument of domination and power that is exerted almost invariably from the dominant to
the dominated in a unilateral8 manner. The nature of Marxism as something of a grand
philosophical and sociological theory and meta-narrative also seems to eschew any empirical
research relating, for example, to how ideology is actually enacted in language to achieve
certain ideological goals.

This traditional Marxist view of ideology was later developed and re-defined by such
neo-Marxist scholars as Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser. As opposed to earlier
Marxism characterised by the undue focus on economic determinism, class, and ‘false
consciousness’, Gramsci and Althusser, comparatively speaking, take a less reductionist and
more cultural approach to ideology (e.g. cultural hegemony). Althusser, for example, regards
ideology as a ‘new reality’ (Freeden 2003: 25), rather than ‘purely mental or
(mis)representational qualities’ (Howarth 2000: 12) that obscure reality. Notably, Althusser
posits the notion of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). For Althusser, even without
resorting to Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) (e.g. courts, prisons, police, military forces,
and other mechanisms involving punishment and physical violence), various means and
methods relating to ISAs can be used by the ruling class to reinforce the predominant position

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7Reification is defined by Thompson (1990: 65-66), as ‘a mode of operation of ideology through which power relations
which are transitory states are represented as if they were timeless, natural and permanent’.
8However, later Marxist thinkers acknowledge that ideology should not automatically be something exerted from the
powerful to the powerless and from the ruling to the ruled, thus somewhat recognising resistance from the less powerful.
Lenin for example argues that ideology is not the exclusive right of the dominant ruling class and there are both bourgeois
and socialist ideologies. Lukács echoes this opinion and urges that the proletarian ideology should be used as ‘the objective
and the weapon itself’ (Lukács 1971: 70) to liberate the proletarian class from domination. Even so, ideology to them is still
closely related to domination and exploitation.

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of the dominant class (e.g. through the media, various communicative practices, religious and educational institutions, sports/social clubs and even the family). Althusser’s ideas have greatly influenced postmodern ideology critiques (Hawkes 1996), which are also invoked in CDA.

As another important development and ‘high point’ (McLellan 1989: 28) in Marxist discussions of ideology, Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci (1971) formulated the concepts of ‘hegemony’ and ‘manufacture of consent’ in the Fascist prison in the 1930s after he was captured by the Mussolini regime. For Gramsci (2003), dominant groups tend to sustain their power using a combination of two forces, that is, consent used in a ‘civil society’ and coercion in a ‘political society’. Civil society is the major realm where identity formation, intellectual activities, and hegemony take place, while political society can be viewed as institutions that regulate the society from above and make use of the ‘apparatus of state coercive power’ (e.g. prison and police) to enforce discipline on those failing to ‘consent’ (Gramsci 2003:12). In a civil society, hegemony plays an important role in surreptitiously imposing the dominant ideology upon the ruled in a way that appears completely innocent, natural and even commonsensical in the ruling group’s legalisation and legitimisation of power.

Hegemony, however, is not a ‘once-and-for-all achievement’ (Eagleton 1991: 115) but something that has to be constantly negotiated, renewed, maintained or even defended on the part of the dominant power to engage with the potential counter-hegemonic forces. This can be achieved through the establishment of ‘cultural institutions, such as schools, universities, and churches’ (Fleming 2007:47). As such, the consensual rule of the dominant class is gradually internalised into seemingly spontaneous, invisible and habitual things amongst the dominated. The Gramscian concept ‘hegemony’ constitutes an enrichment and expansion to the traditional Marxist notion of ‘ideology’ in that it gives the otherwise abstract and ‘ossified’ definition a ‘material body and political cutting edge’ (Eagleton 1991: 115-116). The emphasis on cultural hegemony and the winning of consent also signifies a shift of focus from one that is solely on class and truth value to other social relations (gender, ethnic groups
etc.). However, despite Althusser and Gramsci’s significant contributions to ideology using more cultural approaches, their views still ‘remain imprisoned within the overarching assumptions of Marxist theory’ (Howarth 2000: 12) in that they still perceive ideology as pertaining to domination and exploitation. Also, their approaches to ideology are again highly philosophical and sociological in nature, without paying much attention to the link between ideology and language use on an empirical level. This was later developed by other scholars (e.g. the Bakhtin circle and CDA).

Rather than seeing ideology as being negative and pernicious and leading to domination or exploitation, an alternative and more neutral view considers ideology as something manifest in all discourse (Voloshinov 1973). The Bakhtin circle, featuring Mikhail Bakhtin, Valentin Voloshinov and Pavel Medvedev, promoted a broad pansemiotic view that ideology is all-pervasive in all discourse\(^9\) and discourse is almost quasi-synonymous with the concept of ‘culture’ (Nöth 2004: 13). Notably, Soviet linguist Voloshinov expands on ‘ideology’ in his seminal book *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*\(^10\), arguing that ideology cannot be understood in the traditional Marxist sense as an illusory mental phenomenon. Voloshinov contends instead that all signs represent, depict and stand for things lying outside, and ‘whenever a sign is present, ideology is present too’ (1973: 10). According to Voloshinov (1973: 19), the properties of the ‘word’ are an ideological sign, which is ‘implicated in literally each and every act and contact between people’ and ‘countless ideological threads running through all areas of social intercourse register effect’ in the word. Voloshinov’s view that all language use is ideological seems to recognise the pervasive nature of ideology as something of a social ubiquity and such a pansemiotic view is indeed a progress from the classical Marxist conceptualisations of ideology characterised by the true/false dichotomy and economism. However, Voloshinov’s conceptualisation is not without flaws. If the traditional Marxist view of ideology is considered to be at one end of the ‘ideology’ spectrum, the overly broad pansemiotic definition should be placed somewhere near the other end. This is because

\(^9\)As Morris (1994: 245) notes, this might be because the Russian equivalent ‘ideologiya’ is less politically coloured than its English counterpart.

\(^{10}\)The book was initially published in 1929 but it was not published in English until 1973. Voloshinov attempts to introduce linguistics into Marxism in the book and is credited for his original contribution to Marxist linguistics. The book is viewed as an introduction to the ideas of the Bakhtin circle. It is disputed as to whether the book was authored by Voloshinov or Bakhtin.
seeing all everyday language use as necessarily ideological constitutes an overstatement and risks extending the concept too far (despite the advantage of making the concept more inclusive and neutral). Taking such an unduly broad definition deprived of its critical edge would potentially render the concept less useful, if not meaningless, in conducting empirical studies for example using CDA. Perhaps as Nöth (2004: 14) asserts, it is necessary to distinguish between ideological and non-ideological language use ‘in spite of the all-pervasive presence of ideology’ in everyday situations. A similar point is also made by CDA scholar Fairclough (1992: 91) who refuses to believe that all language uses are ‘irredeemably ideological’.

CDA is another major tradition that aims to explore ideology, or, more precisely, its nexus with language use. While CDA has generally been influenced by Marxism, it can be argued that its focus is not on ideology per se but rather the centrality of language use, or discourse, in reflecting ideologies, constructing social realities, and contributing to changes in power relations, for example, in the service of the powerful. Premised upon this assumption, CDA is considered essential in de-mystifying and deciphering the otherwise opaque ideologies and power underpinnings enacted in language use (Wodak 2001).

However, although the concept is widely viewed as a central and legitimate objective for CDA (Beaugrande 2006), ‘ideology’ has been defined variously by mainstream CDA scholars (e.g. van Dijk, Ruth Wodak and Norman Fairclough) from slightly different perspectives. It is conceptualised by van Dijk from a more multidisciplinary perspective as ‘representations shared by members of a group’ (1998: 8), thereby underscoring the social and cognitive/mental aspects of ideology as the interface connecting social structure and cognition. Put another way, ideology to van Dijk is as social as it is cognitive, allowing a myriad of social ideas and beliefs to be organised by members of certain groups regarding what is right and wrong. For Ruth Wodak, it is ‘rather the more hidden and latent type of everyday beliefs which often appear disguised as conceptual metaphors and analogies’ (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 8) that may be of particular interest. Ideology is often seen in her Discourse-Historical Approach as a one-sided perspective or world view made up of related
mental representation, opinions, attitudes, convictions, and evaluations shared by members of a specific social group (Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 88).

Unlike van Dijk’s and Wodak’s definitions, Fairclough adopts a noticeably Marxist view of ideology and is particularly influenced by ‘Western Marxism’ (Fairclough and Wodak 1997), seeing domination and exploitation as usually established and sustained ideologically through cultural means. Fairclough (2013: 172) subscribes in particular to the views of Western Marxists Gramsci and Althusser, and, like them, opposes the rigid and reductionist ‘classical’ Marxist approach. Fairclough recognises Althusser’s (1970) contention that ideology is inevitably connected to and often inculcated by ‘ideological state apparatuses’ (ISAs) in a particular society. In reference to the concept of ‘state power’ similar to the Althusserian ISAs, Fairclough (1989: 33) asserts that ‘a whole range of social institutions such as education, the law, religions, the media, and indeed the family’ might ‘collectively and cumulatively ensure the continuing dominance of the capitalist class’ through naturalisation and legitimation.

ISAs, of course, are far from something unique to capitalist societies. They very much exist in all societies (big or small, young or old, capitalist or communist) and can even exert their influence far beyond national borders in an age of globalisation and mediatisation. As such, the seemingly innocuous BBC, English-medium schools, the Commonwealth Games, NBA, McDonald’s, Starbucks, China’s Confucius Institute, and of course China’s political press conferences can all be viewed as sites of ideology that potentially serve in the interest of certain countries or groups and, as a result, contribute to the maintenance or shifts of power.

In recognising the unchanging presence of ideology throughout human history, Althusser (1970: 150) observes that ‘ideology has no history’ and is exactly like ‘the unconscious’ that can ‘interpellate’ people, stripping them of their autonomy and freedoms and turning them into subjects through ISAs. However, while Fairclough shares Althusser’s view that ideology generally works in subtle ways ‘by disguising its ideological nature’ (2013: 67), he is at variance with Althusser’s view which regards people merely as passive subjects. Fairclough (1992: 91) maintains that people are ‘also capable of acting creatively to make their own
connections between the diverse practices and ideologies to which they are exposed’. Similarly, Fairclough takes issue with Althusser’s position on ideology as one single totalising and monolithic entity, arguing instead that individuals can actually be positioned within various ideologies, which can engender a sense of uncertainty and instability. This leads to Fairclough’s extensive use of the Gramscian concept of ‘hegemony’ (formulated by Lenin originally), which remains a mainstay in Fairclough’s conceptualisation of ideology in that it is ‘tied to action’ and ‘judged in terms of their social effects’ rather than their ‘truth values’ (Fairclough 1995: 76).

Fairclough refuses to see ideology through the lens of true/false dichotomy or as ‘an abstract system of values’ (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 75). He contends instead that, while CDA analysts should not remain completely indifferent to the issue of truth, they should not in the very first instance claim things as true or false or claim a ‘privileged position from which judgements of truth or falsity can be made’ (Fairclough 1995: 18)11. Fairclough does not believe ideology is something obvious and easily visible. Instead, he views it as something implicit, hidden, and sometimes even taken for granted by people as common-sensical through processes of legitimatisation and naturalisation. According to Fairclough (1989: 4), such emphasis placed on ideology as contributing to domination or exploitation is usually achieved through ‘means of manufacturing consent’. For him, in seeking both cultural leadership and domination, hegemony not simply cuts across but integrates the political, economic, ideological and cultural domains in a society (Fairclough 1995: 76). Hegemony can, thus, be viewed as a dynamic and ongoing process that is about establishing alliances, constantly integrating and (re)structuring itself, and, ultimately winning consent by way of concessions or other ideological means. The negotiated hegemonic struggle can, therefore, be viewed as a complicated, unstable yet constantly evolving ‘compromise equilibrium’ (Gramsci 1971). Fairclough draws parallels between the Gramscian concept of hegemony and his frequently invoked Foucauldian concept ‘order of discourse’ and also the dynamic and

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11However, CDA scholars including Fairclough have been accused of being subjective and approaching data from a priori assumptions and their own ideological and political standpoints. Poole (2010: 152), for example, contends that Fairclough ‘habitually chooses texts’ which he finds ‘politically distasteful’, and, as such, the actual analysis becomes ‘an exercise in justification’ rather than ‘a voyage of exploration’. See section 2.3 for further details.
dialectical relations between particular discursive events and their respective macro political and socioeconomic structures (discourse is both socially shaped and socially shaping). Fairclough believes that the Gramscian concept of hegemony can be ‘fruitfully’ synthesised into his CDA framework because it not only provides the requisite theoretical grounding for ideological and discursive analyses but also avoids both ‘economism’ and ‘idealism’ (1995: 76).

As such, Fairclough can be regarded as having ‘reformulated the Marxist model in a more Gramscian style’ (Tymoczko & Ireland 2003: 66) in his approach to ideology. Influenced heavily by (Western) Marxist scholars, Fairclough (1995: 14) defines ideology as ‘propositions that generally figure as implicit assumptions in texts, which contribute to producing or reproducing unequal relations of power, relations of domination’. Or perhaps as another more frequently cited Faircloughian definition suggests, ideologies are ‘representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation’ (Fairclough 2003: 9). Despite the minor differences in wording, it is quite evident that Fairclough generally sees ‘ideology’ as relating to asymmetric power relations and as an instrument for domination and exploitation in the service of the powerful. For Fairclough, ‘language is a material form of ideology, and language is invested by ideology’ (2013: 59), and CDA is simply one way, among others, to raise ‘consciousness of exploitative social relations through focusing upon language’ (1989: 4, emphasis added). This represents a ‘critical’ view of ideology and for him the concept should be used critically if it is mentioned at all (Fairclough 1995: 17). This distinguishes itself from other broad ‘descriptive’ conceptualisations, for example, as ‘positions, attitudes, beliefs, perspectives etc. of social groups’ or simply as ‘worldview’ (Fairclough 2003: 9). An example of such a broad ‘descriptive’ conceptualisation is translation and interpreting scholar Mason’s (1994: 25) definition, which regards ideology as a ‘set of beliefs and values which inform an individual’s

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12The concept ‘hegemony’ is highly relevant to the case of China’s interpreter-mediated political press conferences on various levels. For example, on an institutional level, when internalised, the government’s institutional hegemony along with other prescriptive orders of discourse pertaining to how the interpreters should behave can potentially colour the way in which they align themselves institutionally and conduct interpreting tasks. The interpreters in turn can also further contribute to the government’s institutional hegemony through various discursive means.
or institution’s view of the world and assist their interpretation of events, facts, etc.’.

I concur with Fairclough’s view in general terms that ideology usually works in subtle ways and needs to be defined in a critical manner in a framework aiming to analyse discourse critically. However, although Fairclough somewhat recognises the complex and dynamic aspects of hegemonic ideology in the dominant group’s legalisation of power, his view (at least evidenced in his Marxist definitions) still seems to indicate that ideology will almost inescapably lead to domination and exploitation one way or another. This, according to Hall (1997: 50), sees ideology and power as generally ‘radiating in a single direction — from top to bottom — and coming from a specific source — the sovereign, the state, the ruling class and so on’. Such a (Marxist) definition of ideology, I argue, inevitably limits its scope of application in failing to account for adequately the existence of competing ideologies more or less on an equal footing (e.g. the US and the former Soviet Union), ideologies in resistance and perhaps only seeking to level the playing field (e.g. affirmative action in the US), ideologies promoting internal cohesion (e.g. the call for solidarity in Europe after the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris), ideologies for the survival and betterment of mankind (e.g. environmentalism and anti-Fascism), ideological beliefs from the vantage point of nation states’ long-term national interests (e.g. Brexit), and ideological attempts of a city or country to construct a more desirable and favourable image (e.g. propagandist or promotional materials). His definitions also fail to pay sufficient attention to the constantly shifting historical context a particular ideology is situated within.

It is worth noting that a relatively new working definition of ideology was formulated by interpreting and translation scholar Beaton-Thome. She defines ideology as the ‘temporarily stable implicit social assumptions that shifting group members take for granted in their everyday social practices’ (2007: 12) after rejecting the reified view of ideology of some Marxist scholars and CDA researchers. The reified view, for her, denies dynamism and fluidity and closes ideology ‘to the hybrid influence from other ideologies’ (ibid.: 11). However, despite its obvious merit and validity for the context of her study, her definition, too, appears to suggest that just about any social assumption shared by people in everyday
practices would automatically and legitimately qualify as ‘ideology’. A definition like this seems too broad to be useful for the purposes of the present study dealing with interpreted political discourse in an institutionalised governmental setting.

Having critically examined some of the major definitions of ideology formulated to date and bearing the nature of this study in mind, a new working definition of ideology is presented by the researcher to avoid both an unduly broad definition and one that is reified and narrow. I am indeed of the opinion that ideology should be defined critically at least in a way that serves the goals, interests or agendas of certain social and political groups with the potentiality to contribute to the maintenance or shifts in power relations discursively (whether one group ends up being dominated, exploited or otherwise). As such, ‘ideology’ shall be defined as ‘a temporarily stable set of socially and historically shaped values and beliefs held by social or political group member(s) that is aimed at certain goals and interests, usually embedded and enacted in discourse, often mediat(is)ed by various agents and on different platforms, and can potentially contribute to the maintenance or shifting of power relations’ for the purposes of the present study. This definition not only reflects Beaton-Thome’s emphasis on dynamism but also acknowledges the essentially social, purpose and goal-driven, often mediated (e.g. by interpreters/translators or on TV/social media sites) and diachronic/historical nature of ‘ideology’ with a critical edge. This new definition also recognises its close connections with other ‘moments’ (Fairclough 2001), namely, power and discourse in everyday social practices (see the end of section 2.1.2 for the links between these ‘moments’).

Once articulated, ideology can register discursive effect and potentially have discursive ramifications. Thus, ideology can at least partially be gauged by its discursive effects. That is, the enactment of ideology and power in discourse is essentially complex in nature, which can be explicit or implicit and conscious or unconscious (e.g. as a result of hegemony) and might also co-occur with other phenomena and intersect with other non-ideological factors. This makes ideological salience and discursive effect particularly helpful yardsticks in evaluating power and ideology manifested in discourse on a practical level (particularly given the
potentially far-reaching global ramifications of the interpreted discourse into lingua franca English in effecting change). As such, attention in this corpus-based CDA analysis is focused mostly on discursive effect, rather than a detailed account of the exact reason or motivation in each individual case that is ideologically salient.

2.1.2 Discourse and CDA
In what follows, I focus on another concept central to CDA, discourse, and the dialectical links between discourse and other ‘moments’ (Fairclough 2001) in the social process, namely ideology, power and society. Etymologically, discourse is derived from the Latin word discurrere meaning to run back and forth, for example, in a race or in an exchange of ‘ideas or speech between two or more participants’ (Hodge 2012: 4). Like ideology, discourse is another fuzzy term that is often difficult to pin down with a single unequivocal definition. So far, there have been ‘many conflicting and overlapping definitions formulated from various theoretical and disciplinary standpoints’ (Fairclough 1992: 3) by linguists and non-linguists alike. In light of this, I shall only focus on discourse in a way that is immediately relevant to CDA.

It is perhaps Foucault’s post-structuralist view of discourse as a constitutive force that has influenced Fairclough and other CDA scholars’ conceptualisations of discourse most heavily. Foucault (1972: 80) sees discourse as ‘the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualisable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements’. He eschews the Marxist concept ‘ideology’, yet seems to define it ideologically. That is, each society ‘has its regime of truth’, ‘its general politics of truth’, which the society ‘accepts and makes function as true’ (Foucault 1980: 131). This view concerns how ideologies might function in the form of language at institutional, cultural and societal levels, which allows Foucault to conduct sociological analysis without using the Marxist concept of ideology.

Foucault’s post-structuralist view that ‘discourse constitutes the social’ (Fairclough 1992: 55) is in stark contrast to the now much criticised Saussurean structuralist conceptualisation of
language as a closed system of signs characterised by the arbitrary and unmotivated relationship between the signified and signifier. For Saussure, ‘the sign is there to be used, but cannot be altered’ (Kress 2001: 32), which seemingly indicates individuals’ inability to exert any influence through language use. In dismissing such a structuralist view, Foucault recognises the active part played by discourse in reflecting the underlying power structures and contributing to ‘the production, transformation, and reproduction of the objects’ and subjects of social life (Fairclough 1992: 41). However, Foucault’s sociological approach to ‘discourse’ focuses predominantly on the abstract ‘domain of all statements’ (Foucault 1972: 80) without paying attention to the more concrete textual details (Fairclough 1992). In contrast, most CDA scholars, influenced by Foucault, take a more linguistic and textually-oriented approach to discourse and anchor their claims about discourse through close and usually manual analyses of texts within certain sociopolitical and cultural contexts.

Following this linguistic trend, a great many definitions have been given for the concept amongst (critical) discourse analysts. Blommaert (2005: 3) claims that discourse is composed of ‘all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity’ that exist in ‘social, cultural and historical patterns and development of use’. Kress (1985) views discourses as systematically organised sets of statements that give expression to the meanings and values of an institution. Usually, discourse is defined in terms of how it differs from the related concept ‘text’. Discourse can be viewed as a more abstract form of knowledge, which is realised in a concrete form as text (cf. Lemke 1995; Wodak and Reisigl 2009). According to Hatim (2008: 89), discourse is ‘the institutional-attitudinal framework within which both genre and text cease to be mere vehicles of communication and become fully operational carriers of ideological meaning’. A clear distinction is also made by Fairclough (1989: 24), according to which discourse is ‘the whole process of social interaction of which text is just a part’. In sum, it can be concluded that discourse, as the constantly (re)negotiated process of social interaction, tends to highlight the ‘social conditions’ of text production and interpretation and is thus more abstract and interactive, whereas text can be viewed as the ‘product’ (ibid.: 25) and concrete textual realisation of discourse.
Another distinction worth making here is the one between discourse and language. Within CDA, discourse is a useful alternative to the relatively static notion of language (Hodge 2012: 3). This is because discourse is more dynamic and has a ‘decisive advantage’ in referring to the ‘studies of processes and structures, language and thought, social processes and meanings in circulation’ (ibid.). In other words, it can be argued that language *per se* might not be powerful: yet, it gains power and becomes ideological by the people who make use of it. Furthermore, another important aspect of discourse is its attention to context. Van Dijk (1985, 1997), for example, views discourse as comprising both text on the micro level and context on the macro level. This highlights the need to take into consideration the extra-linguistic aspect of discourse and make use of it as a useful resource in discourse analysis. As such, compared with language or text, discourse is considered more informative, dynamic and process-oriented a concept with a broader application13 amongst CDA scholars. In principle, critical discourse analysis (CDA) focuses not simply on text but also on discourse practice within certain sociopolitical contexts.

The central view of discourse as ‘a form of social practice’ (Fairclough 1989, 1992, 1995) in CDA implies the duality of human agency and social structure in the sense that there is an underlying dialectical relationship between discourse and the situation(s), institution(s) and wider sociocultural structure(s) which frame it (Fairclough & Wodak 1997: 55). While discourse is crucial in potentially engendering transformation and effecting change, the socially constitutive discourse is just one element or one ‘moment’ (Fairclough 2001), which is dialectically linked with other ‘moments’ in the social process. As such, highly complex social action cannot be fully reducible to discourse alone.

In what follows, I will explore briefly the internal links or, to quote Foucault (1980), the ‘intermeshed’ relationships between discourse, ideology and two other central concepts in

13However, despite such distinctions, the actual use of these concepts is not always clear and there is sometimes confusing interchangeable use between text, discourse and language use. For example, discourse is defined by Fairclough as ‘spoken or written language use’, which could be extended to ‘other types of semiotic activity’ (1995: 54). However, almost the same definition is assigned to ‘text’ to emphasise its written, oral and visual aspects (ibid.: 57). Similarly, Fairclough seems to treat ‘text’ and ‘language use’ as equivalents evidenced, for example, in ‘language use - any text - is always simultaneously constitutive...’ (ibid.: 55). Adding to the confusion is the use of the word ‘discourse’ as both a countable and uncountable noun in Fairclough’s works.
CDA, that is, power and society. As one of the major foci in CDA, such an intricate quadrilateral nexus between these ‘moments’ can be viewed as dialectical in the sense that one element usually both influences and ‘internalises’ (Harvey 1996) the others without being reducible to them. On a micro level, discourse, ideology and power all exist and operate within certain societies. They, in turn, effect changes in society as a whole in their own ways. More specifically, discourse is both socially conditioned and is of considerable import in constituting the social (Shotter 1993), especially given the mediatised and globalised world we live in. Likewise, ideology and power are also closely related in that ideology is both a mechanism of power and a tool which contributes to shifts in power relations. Similarly, discourse rarely operates in a vacuum free of power. Discourse, instead, is often invested with power, used in the interest of power, and, as a result, has potential power consequences perhaps just as Foucault (1980: 93) maintains that ‘there can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourse of truth’. In a similar vein, discourse is not only a locus and favoured vehicle of ideology (Fairclough 1989) but also functions ideologically (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). As such, the ideological underpinnings of power are not only manifested in discourse but also are legitimised or challenged in discourse. The inner links between these ‘moments’ can be summed up as ‘language connects with the social through being the primary domain of ideology, and through being both a site of, and a stake in, struggles for power’ (Fairclough 1989: 15). It is precisely because power and ideology are usually in disguise that special attention needs to be paid to deciphering ideologies (Wodak 2001: 10) and deconstructing the complicated power underpinnings enacted in discourse (see section 2.1.1 for a working definition of ‘ideology’ formulated by the researcher which accounts for the intricate relationships between these ‘moments’).

2.2 Overview of Fairclough’s CDA Framework
Fairclough is the founder and one of the most influential practitioners in the tradition of CDA. His framework approaches discourse three-dimensionally, drawing on various theories and concepts as theoretical insights from such scholars as Halliday, Althusser, Gramsci, Habermas, and Foucault. This section starts by discussing Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional model and its particular relevance to the current study. However, despite the usefulness of his
framework, this section argues that it suffers from a number of weaknesses and needs to be further enriched and enhanced theoretically to account for the dynamic and bilingual nature of the interpreter-mediated press conferences. Accordingly, two highly important concepts *dialogised heteroglossia* and *(re)contextualisation* are introduced to further complement Fairclough’s framework.

### 2.2.1 Three-Dimensional Framework

Central to Fairclough’s (1989, 1995) framework is a dialectical view of the relationship between discourse and the non-discursive facets of the social world. Premised on the assumption that texts cannot be analysed in isolation from their wider social contexts, he examines the underlying ideology and power relations enacted in discourse through investigating three interdependent components on micro, meso and macro levels (see Figure A below for the relationship between text, discourse practice and social practice).

(1) **Analysis of text (micro-level):** the object of analysis (analysis in the 1st dimension is descriptive in nature and might engage with written text, verbal text, visual text and other modalities). Drawing particularly on Halliday’s Systemic-Functional Linguistics (1988) as the main resource for textual analysis, Fairclough takes a multifunctional view of language, which simultaneously has three major functions: (1) ideational: the function of constructing representations of the world, (2) interpersonal: the function of constituting social interactions, and (3) textual: the function of creating cohesively structured texts and communicative events.

(2) **Analysis of the discourse practice (meso-level):** the processes by means of which the object is produced, disseminated and received (analysis in the 2nd dimension is interpretative in nature and is focused on the processes of text production, text distribution, and text consumption, for example, within institutional settings).

(3) **Analysis of the social practice (macro-level):** the sociocultural, political and historical contexts which govern these processes (analysis in the 3rd dimension is explanatory in nature
and is conducted not just at an immediate situational and institutional level but also within the wider political, economic and sociocultural contexts).

![Figure A: Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework](image)

As such, Fairclough’s approach to CDA incorporates three interconnected layers of investigation (text analysis, discourse practice analysis, and social practice analysis as situated within certain sociocultural contexts). The particular advantage of the Faircloughian approach lies in its flexibility to approach discourse with three main points of entry, which means that as long as the three analytical dimensions are adequately covered by the researcher it does not matter which specific dimension the researcher starts with. Also, his framework is highly descriptive and explanatory in nature with a very strong focus on textual analysis. This specific property of his approach is of significant socio-political import as describing can be viewed as a ‘political act’ in the sense that ‘redescribing the world is the necessary first step towards’ making a difference (Rushdie 1992: 13-14). Furthermore, Fairclough’s framework also features theoretical and methodological openness to draw on various concepts and methods to strengthen individual projects. Given the nature of the present study focusing both on the examination of political discourse instantiated in text (product) and how discourse is produced and mediated by the interpreters (process) as situated within certain institutional and sociopolitical contexts, Fairclough’s three-dimensional approach seems particularly apt as a general theoretical framework.

However, despite its obvious usefulness in exposing the underlying workings of power and ideology through analysing discourse three-dimensionally, Fairclough’s approach and CDA in general have been criticised for the perceived over-emphasis on text in actual application,
without paying enough attention to the discourse practice and the context. Blommaert (2005) and Philo (2007) for example contend that excessive emphasis is often placed upon textual analysis despite the incorporation of discourse practice analysis (production, reception etc.) in principle. In terms of context, Widdowson (2004) asserts that CDA has sometimes failed to provide close analysis of context. Such a view is also echoed by Shi-xu (2014), who argues that CDA scholars often treat text and talk as the predominant focus despite the definitional proclamations that both text/talk and context will be closely examined. For Shi-xu (2014), a more holistic approach should be taken to account for the ambiguities, complexities, interconnections, and dynamics of a particular discursive event in certain contexts. Apart from the insufficient attention paid to discourse practice and context, it is also worth noting that CDA has been applied mostly in analysing static monolingual written discourse. Given the comparative nature of the present study involving different languages, CDA needs to be further developed and complemented theoretically for operationalisation in the highly dynamic, interactional and, occasionally, frictional bilingual encounters that characterise these interpreter-mediated press conferences. With this in mind, the concepts dialogised heteroglossia (2.2.2) and (re)contextualisation (2.2.3) are introduced in the following sections.

### 2.2.2 Dialogised Heteroglossia

Given that Fairclough’s framework is not well equipped theoretically for the dynamic setting of the premier’s press conferences, Bakhtin’s concept of dialogised heteroglossia is discussed here to strengthen and further complement his framework in a way that accounts for the triadic multilingual interactions between the Chinese government officials, interpreter, and journalists (cf. Gu 2019; Gu forthcoming). The incorporation of this concept is of particular use for addressing the first research question exploring the interpreters’ level of institutional alignment when caught between different ideologies.

Originally developed by Bakhtin (1981) in examining literary texts, dialogised heteroglossia refers to the constant struggle and conflict between the ‘official’ centripetal force and the ‘non-official’ centrifugal force (Clark & Holquist 1984: 210) which exist in almost any
language, discourse and utterance. In the process, the centripetal force pulls towards the official, unitary and monoglossic and attempts to legitimise, ‘fix meaning and univocalise the sign’ and enforce a sort of ‘ideological closure or homophony’ (Gardiner 1992: 90). Simultaneously, there often exists a centrifugal force that seeks to decentralise and pull away from the centripetal one aiming to unify the ‘verbal-ideological world’ (Bakhtin 1981: 270). The concept of dialogised heteroglossia recognises the dynamic, complex and dialogical nature of discourse which is fundamentally ‘polyphonic’, ‘double-voiced’ and ‘double-languaged’ (Bakhtin 1981). This often co-existence of centripetal and centrifugal forces is also in line with Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) observation that, although almost all discourses seek to take a potentially dominant position, complete domination rarely goes unchallenged and an ideological closure is never fully possible. Therefore, signs are never completely unitary and stable but rather involve dynamic struggle that is negotiated constantly between the centralising and decentralising, the unifying and disunifying.

Beaton (2007) and Beaton-Thome (2010; 2013) first recognised the essentially multivoiced and heteroglossic nature of simultaneous interpreting (multilingual communication) in a political and institutional setting, that is, the European Parliament (EP). In Beaton’s (2007) doctoral thesis, communication in the EP setting is seen as a ‘constant struggle between the centripetal forces of homogenisation and the centrifugal forces of heterogeneity’ (2007: 29). Whilst her introduction of the Bakhtinian concept into interpreting studies is highly original, she assumes that ‘interpreter axiology’ (or interpreter’s individual ideological stance and evaluation in simpler terms) is a ‘potential centrifugal’ force (Beaton 2007: 31), whereas the institutional ideology of the EP is a centripetal one. Therefore, the interpreter’s institutional and ideological positioning under investigation is examined through placing the interpreter between the centripetal force of the EP and the presumed centrifugal force of his or her own ideological stance (the latter is unknown and is exactly what the researcher sets out to reveal in the first place).

The concept ‘intertextuality’ used frequently in CDA and particularly Norman Fairclough’s framework can also be subsumed under Bakhtin’s idea of the ‘dialogicality’ of language (1986).
In comparison, I argue that, broadly speaking, (political) press conferences would constitute a more typical and straightforward case of dialogised heteroglossia, which feature ‘multifaceted and multilayered plurality’ (Busch 2013: 24). That is, press conferences inevitably involve journalists (who are inquisitive by nature) trying to challenge and tease out information from speakers who seek to offer consistent and convincing ‘official’ answers. This is particularly true for the interpreter-mediated political press conferences in China, which can be viewed as a dynamic site of power and ideological struggle that goes beyond information and opinion gathering (Weizman 2008). The Bakhtinian concept is highly relevant to this particular setting in China on many levels. On the one hand, the very establishment of this discursive event can be viewed as a conscious and active attempt on the part of China to de-centralise and counter the univocalising centripetal force of the West at a time when non-Western and developing societies are still excluded, marginalised and portrayed as the cultural or ideological other (Shi-xu 2005). In other words, China seeks to justify its policies and positions, (re)construct its discourse, and challenge what has long been considered mainstream or even commonsensical in a world where global opinion seems largely homogenised and standardised by dominant Western media outlets like BBC or CNN (Reeves 1993).

On the other hand, however, within the institutional setting of the premier’s press conferences, it is the Chinese government that seeks to univocalise information, offer an official narrative and portray its image in a potentially positive light using the ‘authoritarian’ and ‘sacred’ word with ‘indisputability, unconditionality, and unequivocality’ (Bakhtin 1986: 133). Such an attempt to convey messages monoglossically, however, is often challenged by (foreign) journalists from different ideological and political backgrounds. These journalists potentially function as a centrifugal force and seek to counter the ‘monologising’ (Beaton-Thome 2007: 29) centripetal force that is the Chinese government in this case. Through asking potentially sensitive and challenging questions (for example regarding Taiwan, Tibet, democracy, human rights, or China’s territorial row with Japan), they call into question the officially sanctioned

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15 Although the Chinese discourse is arguably much stronger than that of most developing countries, China is still very much othered ideologically and occupies a weaker position discursively vis-a-vis the dominant West.
discourse and potentially destruct the positive image China wishes to paint.

Conceptualising the dynamic press conference setting as a type of dialogised heteroglossia highlights the (visible) presence of the interpreter as being ideologically embroiled in a tug-of-war between the univocalising and unifying centripetal force of their institutional employer and the potential centrifugal force represented by (foreign) journalists who ask challenging and sensitive questions (see Figure B for an illustration). Informed by the Bakhtinian concept, the interpreters’ level of institutional alignment can be fruitfully examined through studying how meaning is (re)negotiated in such dynamic exchanges when they are located at the interface between the Chinese government officials (centripetal force) and journalists (centrifugal force) who come from different ideological standpoints and pull in different directions. This therefore constitutes an adjustment and further development of Beaton-Thome’s employment of the Bakhtinian concept in interpreting studies based on China’s political press conference setting.

![Figure B: Premier’s press conference as a site of dialogised heteroglossia](image)

**2.2.3 (Re)contextualisation**

To better account for the dynamic and bilingual nature of the interpreter-mediated press conferences and address the criticisms that discourse practice and context are often left out of the picture in the actual CDA analysis (including Fairclough’s framework), the highly relevant and ideologically salient concept of *recontextualisation* is discussed here. The political press conference interpreting as a whole can be theorised as a dynamic recontextualisation process with the interpreter serving as the vital discursive connecting
point between the original discourse (ST) and the interpreted discourse (TT). Such a conceptualisation is closely related to the second research question investigating the interpreters’ agency in (re)constructing China’s discourse and image.

Originally used in Bernstein’s (1990) work on the sociology of pedagogy, recontextualisation has been used in several CDA studies mostly in investigating instances of monolingual written texts being de-located from the old context and then re-located in a new context (cf. Fairclough 1995, Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, van Leewen and Wodak 1999). The dynamic concept of recontextualisation is ideologically salient from the perspective of political discourse as ‘every time a discourse moves, there is a place for ideology to play’ (Bernstein 1996: 24). An investigation of how texts are (re)contextualised can help shed light on power and ideology involved in the discourse production process. As such, a focus on recontextualisation points to the actual discourse production process and is of particular ideological significance in interrogating (political) discourse.

Translation can be viewed as a form of recontextualisation in the sense that information is inevitably de-contextualised from the original context and then (re)produced in the specific sociopolitical and cultural context of the target language. For instance, House (1997) views translation as recontextualisation from the perspective of translation quality assessment. Even more relevant to the present study is Kang’s (2007) work. In examining how North Korea is discursively (re)constructed in translation, Kang argues (2007: 221) that ‘the translating agent’ often re-situates content within a new context and, in doing so, ‘parts of the prior discourse as manifested in the source text may be lifted from their original setting, re-perspectivised, differently foregrounded, blended with other voices and relocated in a new setting’. As such, it can be said that the effects of ideology and exercise of power in translation are almost always ‘inscribed within processes’ of (re)contextualisation (Baker 2006: 332).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, interpreting, as a unique spoken form of translation, remains even less explored in terms of recontextualisation. To the best of my knowledge, only a handful of
studies have focused on interpreting from the perspective of (re)contextualisation. These include Schäffner’s (2012) article titled “Unknown agents in translated political discourse”. Using one-off interpreted meetings between Sarkozy and Merkel as well as between Merkel and Obama as small case studies, she draws on CDA and investigates how the original interpretation is used and (re)contextualised in the production of texts in other genres (joint letters, official transcripts, and news stories). Similarly, Zheng & Ren (2018) explore how interpreted Chinese political discourse is (re)contextualised in English-language news reports, thus pointing to the role of interpreting as an influencing factor on news reports. These studies, however, have focused on individual cases of the interpreting product recontextualised into various types of other documents.

I argue that actually interpreting as a whole can be conceptualised as a unique form of (re)contextualisation. This is because discourse is inevitably de-contextualised from the original language and context and then (re)contextualised in a new language and its associated sociopolitical, economic and cultural context. As a ‘heteroglot subject’, the interpreter’s role involves rendering one ‘heteroglot semiotic’ into another ‘heteroglot semiotic’ (Grant 2004:12). Therefore, the interpreter functions as the intertextual connecting point linking the original discourse (ST) and the interpreted one (TT) and constitutes a potentially uncertain and ‘additional’ factor (Beaton 2007: 275) in the communication process. In this process, the interpreter plays a fundamental role as (re)contextualisation, for van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999), almost always gives rise to transformations. This is because (re)contextualisation is itself a form of social practice influenced by the specific ‘roles, interests, purposes and power of those who do the contextualising’ (Holy 1999: 57). Since meanings are fundamentally context-bound, any attempt to manipulate meaning necessarily involves ‘manipulation of its contextualisation’ (Holy 1999: 53).

![Diagram](image.png)

Figure C: Interpreting as a (re)contextualisation process at a macro level
Conceptualising interpreting as such at a macro level highlights the hidden power and ideology involved and the possibility of interpreter mediation and manipulation in (re)contextualising the original discourse (see Figure C for an illustration). In other words, theorising interpreting as a dynamic (re)contextualisation process means that it is necessarily negotiated in nature and entails numerous individual instances of decision-making, stance-taking and (re)contextualisations at micro levels (e.g. what information is added, suppressed or even silenced and what elements are foregrounded or backgrounded). This is closely related to the second research question, that is, the interpreters’ possible (re)construction of Beijing’s discourse and image in English. Such a conceptualisation permits a comparative analysis between the source text and target text to investigate the hidden power and ideology enacted in interpreting, focusing on ideologically salient shifts and transformations and taking into consideration the broader sociopolitical and cultural contexts. This also makes it possible to look into the ‘borderline between text and discourse practice’ (Fairclough 1995: 61) and enables the researcher to ‘map systematic analyses of spoken or written text onto systematic analyses of social contexts’ (1992: 193-194). In other words, a comparative intertextual analysis between the ST and TT can be viewed as an analytical bridge linking text and discourse practices, thus looking at both ‘text from the perspective of discourse’ and ‘traces of the discourse practice in the text’ (ibid.).

2.2.4 Shift: A Useful Analytical Device for Studying Interpreter Mediation

With these in mind and given the comparative and contrastive nature of the study, in operationalising the enriched and revised framework, attention is focused on ‘shifts’ (Catford 1965; Toury 1995; Wang 2012). The analytical tool of translation ‘shift’ is highly instrumental here, which refers to the ‘departure’ from formal correspondence in the process of translation (Catford 1965: 73). Such shifts or departures (e.g. additions and omissions) can entail a wide array of changes that occur at a lexical, syntactic, semantic, morphological, stylistic and/or pragmatic levels in the bilingual communication process, that is, translation/interpreting. According to Toury (1995: 57), there exist two major types of shifts: (1) ‘obligatory shifts’, or the changes which occur because of the systematic (grammatical) differences between two languages, and (2) ‘optional shifts’, or the changes that are optional
in nature and come about due to the interpreters’ strategies, discretionary decisions and various (ideological) considerations in the decision-making process.

Considering the aims of this study, attention is focused on the latter category, particularly on those shifts of ideological salience (Beaton-Thome 2007). These ideologically salient shifts are often related to some of the ‘critical points’ in translation/interpreting which are ‘those points and lexical features in a text that in translation are most susceptible to value manipulation; those points that most frequently show a shift in translation, and those that generate the most interpretative and evaluative potential; those that may be most revealing of the translator’s values’ (Munday 2012: 41). These can be viewed as areas that are most ‘value-rich’ and ‘sensitive’ and thus subject to ‘substantive intervention’ from the translator/interpreter (ibid: 2). As such, focusing on those ideologically salient shifts, close comparative CDA analyses between the original and interpreted discourses can shed light on ideology and power ‘at work’ (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999: 109) and help explain how meanings are negotiated and mediated by the interpreters when ideologically located at the interface between Chinese government officials and journalists and when (re)contextualising the source discourse. The linguistic and discursive categories likely to be ideologically salient might include personal pronouns, ideological additions and omissions, nominalisation and passivisation, backgrounding and foregrounding, the establishment of an us versus them dichotomy, the creation of in-group versus out-group identity, modality, repetition, register and connotation change, and the employment of intensifiers etc.

To sum up, given the particularly complex, dynamic and interpreter-mediated nature of the press conferences, the Bakhtinian concept of dialogised heteroglossia was discussed to locate the interpreter between the centripetal force of the Chinese government and the centrifugal force represented by the journalists at this discursive event. Similarly, the interpreting activity was conceptualised as a (re)contextualisation process at a macro level with the interpreter serving as the pivotal discursive link between the original discourse (ST) and the interpreted discourse (TT). This macro-level process consists of numerous instances of micro-level decision-making, stance-taking and shifts that might be indicative of interpreter agency.
Without doubt, the incorporation of these concepts offers further theoretical insights and serves to complement Fairclough’s CDA framework, otherwise applied mostly to analysing monolingual written discursive communication in a relatively static setting. The enriched framework is adopted in analysing the interpreters’ institutional alignment (Chapter 4) and their (re)construction of Beijing’s discourse and image (Chapter 5), focusing on ideologically salient shifts at various levels.

Given the more data-driven nature of this corpus-based CDA study (cf. chapter 3), the actual data analysis will not be arranged based on Fairclough’s framework dimension by dimension. Instead, important concepts (e.g. hegemony) and analytical tools in his framework (e.g. foregrounding, backgrounding and repetition) will be extensively invoked and the three main dimensions will be reasonably well covered in my data analysis in a balanced and adequate manner (text and talk on the micro-level, the actual discourse practice on the meso-level, and the broader sociopolitical context on the macro level). This includes attention to (1) text analysis (e.g. ideologically salient patterns in the interpreted English discourse per se); (2) discourse practice analysis (e.g. comparative analyses between the STs and TTs to highlight how the interpreted discourse is produced by the interpreters and how the interpreted discourse might be further disseminated, mediated and (re)contextualised by various media outlets); and (3) social practice analysis (e.g. analysis will be presented in view of the broader sociopolitical and cultural contexts).

I argue further that this type of televised interpreter-mediated press conference provides an ideal site to make more comprehensive use of Fairclough’s CDA framework as the production and dissemination aspects of the interpreted discourse can be monitored through critically comparing the ST and TT. This is in contrast to the investigation of monolingual written discourse in that how discourse is produced (by what agent and in what setting) is usually difficult, if not impossible, to trace and pin down. The nature of this type of interpreting as situated within an institutional setting covering a wide range of topics (Taiwan, the Chinese economy, China’s territorial dispute with Japan, China-US relations etc.) can shed useful light on the specific sociopolitical contexts in which the original and interpreted
discourses are produced. Furthermore, the fact that the interpreted discourse (TT) and the original one (ST) can be compared and contrasted would leave little if any room for the researcher to unduly read ‘meanings into texts on the basis of their own unexplicated knowledge’ (Stubbs 1997: 4) as is usually the case with analysing monolingual written discourse. Therefore, relatively speaking, subjectivity and researcher bias can also be greatly reduced in theory.

2.3 Corpus-based CDA

Despite the usefulness of the predominantly qualitative CDA, the tradition is sometimes accused of being biased and lacking objectivity, in part, due to the fact that ‘there is no accepted canon of data collection’, selection and analysis (Wodak & Meyer 2009: 32). Widdowson (1995, 1998, 2000), Toolan (2002), Engelbert (2012) and Poole (2010), for example, highlight the potential danger that CDA researchers sometimes start from specific foregone conclusions or a priori assumptions and then only search and ‘cherry pick’ information that is in support of their own political and ideological views, whether ‘absences or presences’ (Stubbs 1997: 102). As such, the traditionally qualitative CDA sometimes does not offer complete analysis but provides ‘only partial interpretation’ (Widdowson 1995: 169).

Issues of subjectivity are acknowledged yet are considered inevitable by several CDA scholars as discourse is almost always about certain topics or issues and exactly which specific discourse to examine is unavoidably reflective of the researcher’s academic interest or, at least, the sort of material he or she is familiar with. Wodak (1989: xiv) observes that no research is completely objective as the values, interests and decisions of the researcher always guide the analysis. Fairclough argues also that CDA analysis can never be completely objective in the sense that its analysts, being human, cannot themselves avoid ‘engaging with human products in a human, and therefore interpretative, way’ (1989: 27). In response to the criticism that CDA is premised upon a priori assumptions, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1997: 7) assert that the criticism itself is based upon the naïve and problematic assumption that it is possible to conduct research that is completely free from a priori ideological judgements. This is echoed by Meyer (2001: 17) who wonders if it is at all possible to gather insight
solely from looking at empirical data without any value judgements or ‘preframed categories of experience’. This explains why ‘retroductability’ and ‘transparency’ are emphasised amongst CDA scholars to make analysis transparent and explicit in a way that permits other analytical studies to take place for example with a different aim and objective (cf. Wodak & Meyer 2009).

Therefore, the focus should not be to make CDA analysis completely objective and value-free but one to minimise subjectivity and researcher bias involved. In fact, CDA scholars such as Fairclough (2003: 6) do indeed believe that CDA ‘can be usefully supplemented by the quantitative analysis’ offered by corpus linguistics. The idea of such a ‘triangulation’ between CDA and corpus linguistics has followed Fairclough’s (2003) call to promote ‘transdisciplinary’ dialogues with other disciplines and theoretical perspectives and Baker’s (2010) call to foster dialogue between quantitative and qualitative methods and to make use of this ‘useful methodological synergy’ (Baker et al. 2008). Corpus linguistics software like WordSmith and AntConc can offer both quantitative and qualitative perspectives (Mautner 2009) on data. Quantitatively, corpus linguistics tools can provide information, for example, regarding word frequencies and lexical items of statistical significance, while qualitatively they allow researchers to access individual occurrences of certain words (concordance lines) and identify interesting (collocational) patterns. As such, instead of focusing on just one piece of cherry-picked text, conducting corpus-based CDA analysis on a large corpus can significantly reduce subjectivity, make data analysed more representative, and yield more generalisable results (Mautner 2009).

With this in mind, a large bilingual corpus (CE-PolitDisCorp) consisting of 20 years’ transcribed data (1998-2017) retrieved from the Premier-Meets-the-Press conferences is established by the author for corpus-based CDA analysis. In doing so, the present research stands to benefit from their combined advantages of being both revealing, in-depth, and, considerably, more systematic and objective. The author therefore believes that the triangulation between CDA and corpus linguistics can help provide a sounder and more rigorous theoretical framework for the purposes of the present study (more detailed
discussions on the mixed-methods approach combining corpus linguistics and CDA can be found in Chapter 3 and an assessment regarding the robustness of the CDA framework and this triangulated corpus-based CDA approach is presented in Chapter 6, that is, the conclusions chapter).

2.4 Institutional Political Interpreting and the Ramifications of Interpreted Discourse in a Mediat(is)ed and Remediat(is)ed World

Conceptualising interpreting as a dynamic and constantly negotiated process with the interpreter serving as the vital linking bridge between the ST and TT is of particular relevance to the present study involving interpreted discourse in institutionalised\textsuperscript{16} political settings. As Kang (2008) observes, translators in institutionalised government settings are no longer just language professionals who simply turn texts into the other language based on previous training and professional experience. The same is also true for interpreting in institutionalised political settings as the goal of such interpreting is not just to produce a seemingly neutral and accurate text but to produce discourse that can be employed as an ideological tool in achieving certain agendas and effecting change both institutionally and beyond. The case of the premier’s press conference interpreting in China represents a typical form of such institutionalised political interpreting in the sense that the institution itself is the author of both the source text and its translation (and interpreting) (Koskinen 2011).

Political interpreting in a highly institutionalised setting is of increasing importance, given that international politics of today requires political actors to provide explanations and justifications for their policies and decisions and construct their image in a certain manner to domestic and international audiences. As a mediated form of political communication, interpreting of this sort can have far-reaching ramifications in shaping global perception and in potentially contributing to shifts in power relations. This is particularly the case in view of

\textsuperscript{16}By ‘institution’, I subscribe to Koskinen’s traditional and concrete ‘administrative understanding’ of the term, which might involve such settings as the government, parliament, police station or hospital (Koskinen 2011: 56). It is worth noting that ‘the bond between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese government is incredibly close and inseparable’ (Li 2013: 69-70) given the current one-party rule in mainland China. As such, the institutional discourse and ideology demonstrated at the premier’s press conferences can generally be viewed as the official discourse and ideology of the Communist Party, the Chinese government and even China as a sovereign state.
the increasingly connected, mediat(is)ed and remediat(is)ed world we live in (Gu 2018b), where political discourse can be produced, disseminated and consumed almost simultaneously. At a time when newsworthiness requires speedy reporting, what the interpreter says at this televised event (in English) is often taken for granted, headlined and quoted verbatim almost automatically as the officially sanctioned and necessarily correct version of Beijing’s discourse by international media outlets such as CNN, BBC, the Financial Times, the Daily Mail or Al Jazeera (cf. Gu 2018a; 2018b).

An example of this would be the premier's press conference in March 2016, where China’s economic downturn was a key topic that drew global attention. At the conference, the Chinese premier Li Keqiang answered questions about China’s economy in Mandarin Chinese and almost immediately he was quoted on the BBC website as conveying the reassuring message in English that China would ‘not suffer a hard landing, we have full confidence in the bright future of the Chinese economy’ (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-35818730). Clearly, what is quoted verbatim is not the Chinese premier’s exact words in Chinese but the English interpretation produced by the interpreter. Such a seemingly ordinary yet ideological message can be highly powerful on a global scale. That is, once mediated by the interpreter, mediatised on TV and remediatised on various platforms (e.g. BBC, New York Times, Facebook and Twitter) and consumed by the global audience, this reassuring message can potentially have far-reaching impact internationally, for example, in (re)constructing a positive image of the Chinese government being highly competent, confident and in control. This can also convey the ideological message that China is still a robust and stable economy that welcomes investment from foreign governments and companies.

This highlights the importance of interpreting as a crucial starting point in the entire international news and knowledge construction, dissemination and circulation processes, thus pointing to the interpreters’ vital role in communicating beyond the immediate institutional setting and national borders and in (re)constructing the discourse and image of certain players in the interpreting process. This, as such, calls for the need to treat the interpreted discourse
(product) not as an inconsequential derivative but something important in its own right with widespread international impact. It is precisely because of the far-reaching global ramifications of the interpreter-mediated discourse that a CDA analysis of their agency and potential mediation is highly necessary in China’s political and institutional setting.

2.5 CDA and ‘Criticalness’ in the Chinese Context

Last but not least, this section addresses a point of concern regarding the applicability of CDA outside the Western context, arguing in particular for its relevance in the critical investigation of political discourse in China. As a framework that has drawn almost exclusively on Western intellectual and scholarly traditions, CDA is believed to have been used largely in the post-industrial, well-represented and ‘densely semiotised First-World societies’ like the US and Europe and seems to be closed ‘to particular kinds of societies’ (Blommaert 2005: 35-36). Whilst CDA has now attracted growing scholarly attention in non-Western and developing countries, there is still a noticeable shortage of empirical CDA studies conducted in these regions. Therefore, it remains interesting to explore CDA’s applicability in a non-Western developing country like China.

Concerns about CDA’s applicability to non-Western societies have been voiced by a few scholars to date. Kramer-Dahl (2003), for example, calls into question whether the critical agenda of CDA can be fruitfully applied in some Asian countries with a pragmatic and even survivalist attitude and a deep-rooted tradition of (political) compliance focusing on the overarching goal of economic success. Shi-xu (2014), a vociferous critic of CDA and proponent of a cultural approach to discourse analysis, similarly calls into question whether CDA can be mechanically used and indiscriminately followed in analysing non-Western discourse for example in the Chinese context (given its Western origin and orientation along with a European language-centric view of ideology). He asserts that CDA itself has gradually become a hegemonic academic discourse which has been universalised and globalised. This means that the critical agenda of CDA, when employed ‘aculturally’ and ‘unproblematically’, could engender further misunderstanding and solidify the deep-seated stereotype towards the already disadvantaged developing world. If this is the case, it might end up being not
dissimilar to the Orientalist or Imperialist discourses (Said 1978; 1994) in spite of CDA’s apparent avowal to combat social injustice, prejudice and domination in the first place.

Shi-xu has made a pertinent and valid point indeed in recognising that the Chinese discourse is still marginalised by its Western counterpart and the cultural elements should be taken into account. However, despite the merit of such thinking, his approach seems to have overemphasised the cultural specificity of China’s political discourse as if culture were the most important, if not the only, guiding principle behind its discursive formulation. As such, in practice, his cultural approach to China’s discourse becomes a matter of justification and explaining things away through listing China’s traditional cultural beliefs and quoting ancient Chinese philosophers’ words as he deems appropriate. Such a reductionist approach adds little to our understanding of China’s contemporary political discourse and seems to suggest that the Chinese discourse is almost too culturally unique to be subjected to critical evaluation.

Although CDA is generally Western in origin and orientation, it would be erroneous to consider that a critical approach is restricted only to certain sociopolitical and cultural milieu in the West and should, thus, be eschewed in a non-Western society like China completely. Being critical, according to Chilton (2006), is a universal property of the human mind. In fact, the idea of ‘critical’ is also embedded historically, philosophically and politically in the Chinese context. For instance, according to ancient Confucian belief, exercising self-critique is considered a ‘public duty’, while critiquing others is best expressed in a mild manner to achieve ‘harmony’ (Yang 2012: 79). In China’s relatively more recent history, Soviet Union style criticism and self-criticism were also enforced both amongst China’s political elites within the communist party and, more notably, amongst the general public during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Even though the traditional Chinese understanding of criticalness might differ slightly from its Western counterpart, it would be a mistake nonetheless to assume that in this day and age political discourse in China operates in a (cultural) vacuum free from power and ideology, still uses ancient culture and wisdom as its sole point of departure and is immune from any critical scrutiny as a result. In fact, political
discourse in China, as a form of social practice, is inevitably shaped by complex power relations both domestically and internationally and is therefore very much interwoven into the wider human discourse in an age of globalisation. This means that the Chinese discourse can and should be scrutinised critically perhaps just to the same extent as its UK, US, Japanese or Iranian counterparts.

Furthermore, Shi-xu’s pessimistic view seems to be based on a negative understanding of the word ‘critical’. It is worth re-emphasising that ‘critical’ in CDA is not to be simplistically understood as ‘criticising’, being negative and painting a ‘black and white picture’ (Wodak 1999: 186). Instead, ‘critical’ means taking a sceptical attitude, distancing oneself from the data, exploring the seemingly obvious, distinguishing complexity, and denying easy dichotomous explanations (Wodak 1999). An example of CDA being both critical and positive is the concept of Positive Discourse Analysis posited by Martin (2004: 182) as a ‘complementary’ aspect of CDA after drawing upon the Chinese philosophical thought of yin/yang. For him, there are two faces of CDA, namely CDA realis (the deconstructive face) and CDA irrealis (the constructive or complementary face), with the former serving to expose and deconstruct discourse used in the service of power and domination and the latter serving to describe and reveal how discourse is constructed for example in countering dominant ideology or fighting injustice.

As such, a critical approach to discourse does not have to be applied negatively or exclusively in Western societies. Instead, it is a matter of recontextualising CDA in the Chinese context to engage in critical self-reflection throughout and take into consideration the unique cultural and linguistic elements where necessary. While the current study investigates the political interpreters’ role from the perspective of power and ideology within the institutional setting of the Chinese government, the researcher does not automatically assign any value judgment or assume that the workings of ideology and power are inevitably negative with sinister motives. In fact, the researcher very much recognises that the premier’s press conferences, as a typical discursive event and site of ideology, also represent an attempt to resist and counter the dominant Western hegemonic discourse (see section 2.2.2 for more
detail). Bearing these in mind, the researcher believes that this study will constitute a fruitful attempt to make use of this so far largely Eurocentric tradition in analysing interpreter-mediated political discourse in a major developing and non-Western country.

2.6 Concluding Remarks

This chapter began with an overview of CDA and critical discussions of two key concepts, namely, ideology and discourse in the tradition. After a critical review of the various definitions of ‘ideology’ over time, a working definition of ‘ideology’ was formulated for this study. This was followed by detailed discussions of Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework and its particular relevance to the present study as a general framework. To help address some of the criticisms levelled at his largely textually oriented model (e.g. insufficient attention to discourse practice and context in actual analysis) and to better account for the dynamic, negotiated and bilingual nature of the interpreter-mediated event, the concepts of dialogised heteroglossia and (re)contextualisation were discussed to complement Fairclough’s CDA framework. Conceptualising the press conference setting as a type of dialogised heteroglossia permits an analysis of the interpreters’ level of alignment when located at the interface between the centripetal force of the Chinese government and the centrifugal force of (foreign) journalists. Similarly, theorising interpreting as essentially a (re)contextualisation process points to the vital role of the interpreters in (re)contextualising Beijing’s discourse as the vital discursive connecting point between the ST (Chinese discourse) and TT (interpreted English discourse). This highlights the interpreters’ possible mediation in (re)constructing China’s discourse and image in the process. Furthermore, corpus linguistics (CL) was introduced as a means to complement CDA in light of the criticisms it suffers regarding objectivity and representativeness. As such, a corpus-based CDA approach, enriched and enhanced by the concepts of dialogised heteroglossia and (re)contextualisation, would provide a sound theoretical framework for the purposes of the current project. Drawing on this improved CDA framework, the research questions relating to the interpreters’ agency can be studied through systematic comparative and contrastive analyses between the original and interpreted discourses, focusing on ideologically salient shifts that occur in interpreting at various levels. This chapter concluded by highlighting the
crucial importance and international ramifications of institutionalised political interpreting in an increasingly mediat(is)ed and remediat(is)ed world. Last but not least, a case was made regarding the usefulness and applicability of CDA in the specific Chinese setting, despite its Western origin and orientation.
Chapter 3 Methodology and Data

This chapter discusses the methodology and data used in the present study. It begins by providing a brief overview of the major strands of scholarly research methods in interpreting studies, providing a rationale for adopting a pragmatist mixed-methods approach involving a synergy between the typically qualitative CDA and the typically quantitative Corpus Linguistics in this study. Pragmatist and flexible in nature, this triangulated and layered corpus-based CDA method offers multiple points of entry, permitting the researcher to shunt (Halliday 1961; Partington 2006) between the quantitative and qualitative and promising to provide more systematic and nuanced insights into the interpreters’ agency.

It then introduces the Chinese-English Political Discourse Corpus (CE-PolitDisCorp) established for the purposes of this study, before describing and justifying the corpus composition as well as the approaches to data selection, collection and preparation. Detailed discussions on the subcategories under investigation and the specific procedures adopted in each subcategory are also provided in this chapter.

3.1 Methodology

This section focuses on the methodology of this study. After a brief survey of the main methodological strands in interpreting studies (IS) research so far, attention is focused on the triangulated approach of corpus-based CDA adopted in the present study, which constitutes a typical case of pragmatist mixed-methods research combining the typically qualitative and quantitative.

3.1.1 Mixed-methods Research in Interpreting Studies

Despite the relatively late start compared with its translation counterpart, interpreting studies research has undergone rapid development over the past few decades, featuring a number of methodological strands. This section briefly discusses methodologies in interpreting studies in broad terms, before justifying the pragmatist mixed-methods approach (cf. Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998) adopted in the present study.
Broadly aligned with the positivism\textsuperscript{17} versus interpretivism\textsuperscript{18} discussions, Hale and Napier (2013) have elaborated on the positivistic (predominantly quantitative) and phenomenological (predominantly qualitative) methods in interpreting studies. Similarly, Gile (1998) highlights the two main strands, namely the experimental and observational approaches, in empirical interpreting research. An experimental approach is largely quantitative and deductive and is usually done through controlling certain variables in a specifically generated laboratory setting. The inherently positivistic nature of this strand makes it ‘more closely aligned’ with science\textsuperscript{19} (Hale & Napier 2013: 149). Unlike the experimental approach, the observational trend in interpreting research is also known as ‘naturalistic’ research owing to the fact that situations and phenomena are investigated as they naturally occur. Studies carried out within this strand are often qualitative in nature (e.g. an ethnographic or a discourse analytical approach), largely following the interpretivist (phenomenological) research philosophy.

At a time when academic studies are becoming increasingly inter-and-multidisciplinary and the boundary between positivism (quantitative) and interpretivism (qualitative) is increasingly blurred, pragmatist mixed-methods research is a growing trend in interpreting studies. Pragmatism, as Morgan (2007) observes, can be viewed as an alternative paradigm that overcomes the traditional philosophical schism between positivism and interpretivism. A pragmatist mixed-methods research provides a ‘salient bridge’ (Ridenour and Newman 2008: 62) connecting the quantitative (positivism) and qualitative (interpretivism). Therefore, the methodological and philosophical standing of a mixed-methods study can be viewed as being

\textsuperscript{17}Positivism is based on the ontological assumption that reality and meaning exist independently of human consciousness. The positivist philosophy is commonly adopted in the natural sciences in order to offer \textit{explanation} (Ricoeur 1991) or to find out law-like causal and deterministic regularities. This paradigm is often considered ‘scientific’ and objective with minimal researcher involvement.

\textsuperscript{18}An interpretivist (constructivist) approach subscribes to a relativist ontology, viewing reality as multiple, dynamic and relative (Hudson and Ozanne 1988). As such, reality is socially constructed rather than objectively ‘out there’ (Guba and Lincoln 1989: 12). Researchers are social actors and there exists a nexus between researchers and the research itself. Commonly adopted in the social sciences and humanities, an interpretivist (constructivist) method describes recurring patterns and aims to gain in-depth meaningful understandings (Weber 1922) without necessarily making generalised or timeless claims.

\textsuperscript{19}While the experimental method might appear to be rigorous and scientific at face value, this method is often carried out in an artificially created environment and the data gathered is usually not authentic naturally occurring language. This means that the ultimate claims made often cannot be viewed as representative of actual interpreting in real-life settings. Perhaps just as Gerver (1976: 202) remarks, the context-free and artificial conditions in the experimental approach might potentially render meaningless any linguistic claims regarding ‘what really goes on’ in actual interpreting.
positioned on a continuum between positivism and interpretivism. According to Hale and Napier (2013), a pragmatist mixed-methods approach tests or explores the same issue using different methodologies and from different perspectives. This can help better account for the complexity of the interpreting practice and process (Pöchhacker 2011). A central concept in mixed-methods research is triangulation. Having originated from the fields of land surveying and geometry, triangulation refers to the simultaneous application of various methods in one research design. A triangulated approach permits the analyst ‘to cross-check and verify the reliability of a particular research tool and the validity of data collected’ (McNeill & Chapman 2005: 23). It is believed that, by investigating a certain (interpreting) phenomenon from two or more methodological positions, more accurate, comprehensive and convincing observations can be made.

It is worth noting that the actual research design and paradigm decision are a ‘logical conclusion’ after reflecting carefully upon the specific purpose of a study, rather than a starting point (Ridenour and Newman 2008: 28). As made clear in previous chapters, the objectives of this study are to identify ideologically salient shifts at different levels and shed light on the interpreters’ agency in aligning institutionally and (re)constructing China’s image and discourse. Interdisciplinary and problem-oriented in nature, the present study can be seen as being located at the intersection of interpreting studies, (critical) discourse analysis, media and communication studies, and the social sciences within a specific sociocultural and political background. This, therefore, calls for an analytical method that can help process the data in a flexible and pragmatic manner. Following a ‘pragmatic philosophy’ (Creswell 2009), a mixed-methods approach involving the combined use of the typically qualitative CDA and the typically quantitative Corpus Linguistics (CL) is adopted in this study to allow close critical readings of data on the one hand and to make the analysis as objective and systematic as practicable on the other.

3.1.2 Corpus Linguistics and CDA
As discussed in section 3.1.1, a mixed-methods approach is adopted in the current study, following a pragmatist research philosophy. With this in mind, this section discusses in more
detail the triangulation between corpus linguistics (CL) and CDA, which enables the researcher to ‘shunt’ (Halliday 1961; Partington 2006) between the qualitative and quantitative and permits a critical analysis of the interpreters’ possible agency at different levels of abstraction.

As a prime example of pragmatist mixed-methods research in linguistics, the combined use of corpus linguistics and CDA is considered a ‘useful methodological synergy’ (Baker et al. 2008; Baker & Levon 2015). The idea of such a triangulated approach has followed Hardt-Mautner (1995)’s call to foster a dialogue between the typically quantitative (corpus linguistics) and the typically qualitative (CDA) and Fairclough’s (2003) call to promote transdisciplinary dialogues with other disciplines and theoretical perspectives. That is, CDA can indeed be ‘usefully supplemented by the quantitative analysis’ offered by corpus linguistics (Fairclough 2003: 6). For Hardt-Mautner (1995), both quantitative and qualitative statements about the data have their uses, and the analysis will be all the richer if both can be made.

This synergistic mixed-methods approach addresses some of the criticisms levelled at CDA. That is, the traditionally qualitative CDA is sometimes accused of cherry-picking in a way that suits researchers’ own aims and agendas. Furthermore, the manual nature of CDA analysis is often considered ‘ill-suited’ for handling a ‘sizeable’ amount of data (Hardt-Mautner 1995: 1) in a systematic manner. In comparison, conducting CDA analysis using a large corpus can significantly offset the insufficiency of a traditional CDA approach (Wang and Feng 2018) and can help identify a wider range of ideological positions and interesting patterns which are unrealistic to achieve with the naked eye (Baker 2006). Therefore, the union of corpus linguistics and CDA promises to reduce subjectivity, make the data analysed more representative, and in theory yield more generalisable results. So far, this triangulated mixed-methods approach combining corpus linguistics and (critical) discourse analysis has been used predominantly in analysing monolingual discourse in various settings (cf. Baker et al. 2008; Baker & Egbert 2016; Baker & Levon 2015; Baker & McEnery 2015; Partington 2017; Partington et al. 2013) yet is rarely applied in analysing interpreted
discourse. The synergy between CDA and corpus linguistics promises to lead to more systematic analysis and yield more objective and convincing findings in the present study exploring the government-affiliated interpreters’ agency and mediation in the Chinese context.

Bearing the overarching triangulated method in mind, the general approaches relating to its application are discussed here. For the purposes of this corpus-based CDA study, the actual analysis is carried out on a number of broadly defined and salient subcategories. These analytical subcategories correspond to the research questions of this study, each approaching the interpreters’ potential institutional alignment and (re-)construction of China’s discourse and image from a different perspective. To answer the research question relating to the interpreters’ institutional alignment, the specific subcategories explored are (1) self-referentiality, (2) prominent discourses central to the post-1978 reform and opening-up, and (3) issues relating to China’s core national interests. To address the question concerning the interpreters’ potential (re)construction of Beijing’s discourse and image, the subcategories examined are their mediation of (1) China’s past actions and achievements, (2) China’s discourse on its current conditions, (3) future possibility, volition, obligation and commitment in China’s discourse, and (4) China’s discourse on people (detailed discussions on the subcategories and the specific procedures adopted in each subcategory are provided in section 3.3 and 3.4).

The subcategories arrived at are based jointly on initial observations made using the AntConc software (e.g. word frequency), prior studies carried out in related areas, as well as the researcher’s familiarity with the corpus data and background knowledge in the Chinese context. For instance, the decision to focus on self-referentiality has to do with the fact that the various items relating to China/Chinese government (e.g. we, our, China) are among the top items on the frequency list. Similarly, a decision was made to examine issues relating to China’s core national interests (Taiwan, Tibet, Hong Kong etc.) because these place names/topics appear frequently on the frequency list and might constitute areas where the interpreters’ level of mediation is the strongest. In other words, these subcategories can
potentially be seen as some of the ‘critical points’ (Munday 2012) where the interpreters’ level of manipulation and stance-taking is the most salient.

Whilst the specific procedures for studying the different individual subcategories may vary, a general approach is as follows. Using AntConc’s WordList tool, eligible items for a certain subcategory are first identified in both subcorpus A and B (if possible). The total (raw) frequencies of identified items in both subcorpora are established and then compared20, thus giving a rough idea in terms of how the specific subcategory is maintained or affected on an overall level as a result of interpreting.

With this statistical information as a useful starting point, more refined and contextualised analyses are carried out. Using the ‘Kwic Sort’ function and/or the ‘Collocates’ tool, the collocational profiles of certain identified items are examined to locate ideologically salient patterns in the English subcorpus (subcorpus B). Concordance lines featuring certain items/patterns might also be generated and closely examined in order to find additional patterns. The patterns identified in subcorpus B are then searched in subcorpus C (containing data in both Chinese and English aligned at a paragraph level). This permits direct one-to-one comparisons21 between the identified patterns in English and their Chinese originals in a retrospective fashion to uncover any ‘added value’ (additions, omissions etc.) as a result of interpreting. Such detailed manual comparisons make it possible, for example, to trace and work out the percentage at which certain discursive patterns might be directly triggered by the ST or added/omitted by the interpreters. In cases where there are simply too

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20The interpreting at the press conferences is a typical form of institutional self-translation, where the interpreted discourse represents the English version of China’s official discourse. Therefore, in theory, the identified items should more or less have a comparable level of distribution in subcorpus A and subcorpus B. Given the directly comparable nature of the ST and TT, absolute (raw) frequency is considered a useful parameter for studying shifts on macro and micro levels, rather than nominalised ones (e.g. adjusted for per 100 or 1,000 tokens).

21For systematic and orderly one-to-one comparisons, there are 2 ways directionally: to adopt a ST-oriented approach to compare the Chinese ST with its English TT or alternatively conduct research the other way around to identify patterns in the English TT and then trace retrospectively what was said in the first place in the ST. The latter is a safer way of proceeding. Chinese is typically characterised by run-on sentences and is relatively less bound by grammatical or linguistic devices than English. Context, therefore, has to be relied upon in expressing meaning. This is particularly the case in spontaneous spoken Chinese. The flexible and comparatively loosely structured nature of Chinese along with the small degree of inaccuracy inevitably caused by Chinese segmentation mean that it is reasonable to start with the more well-researched discourse in English (e.g. within CDA and corpus linguistics). This retrospective way of comparison is also in line with the product-oriented view taken in this project seeing interpreting as the English version of Beijing’s discourse and an independent entity representing China’s global voice (rather than an inconsequential derivative or epiphenomenon).
many instances of certain items, a sampling of 100 concordance lines (cf. Pearce 2014) is conducted to arrive at an approximate number regarding the percentage of shifts (additions, omissions etc.) between the two subcorpora. If particularly salient discursive patterns are found, they might also be approached from a diachronic perspective to trace how the patterns might change over the administrations (1998-2017). In addition, representative examples of qualitative CDA analysis are provided to demonstrate the interpreters’ mediation at the micro level. Such detailed manual analyses are highly important in illustrating the interpreters’ (sometimes nuanced and subtle) ideological mediation. This is particularly the case considering that ‘ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible’ (Fairclough 1989: 85). In the entire process, the broader sociopolitical context will be taken into consideration. Also, instead of treating ‘the corpus as an isolated black box’, relevant concepts, theories and literature will be invoked as part of the ‘corpus-external data’ (Partington et al. 2013: 10) in my data analysis.

Rather than a linear or static application, the actual operationalisation22 of the corpus-based CDA approach in this study is highly dynamic, interactive and stratified, involving the frequent shunting back and forth between the quantitative (e.g. various statistical analyses) and the qualitative (e.g. the close contextualised readings of concordance lines and analyses of illustrative examples). A traditional corpus linguistics approach tends to privilege statistically important items and patterns as a common assumption undergirding and justifying corpus linguistics is that what appears frequently is automatically of significance (Partington et al. 2013: 8). Typicality and recurring items/patterns are certainly of importance. This, however, is usually done at the expense of other inconspicuous, isolated or even singular instances of ideology.

Statistically insignificant items/patterns instantiated in discourse can in fact be just as revealing,

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22This flexible method shows some resemblance to Partington’s approach entitled corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS), which rejects the traditional dichotomy between corpus-based and corpus-driven approaches (cf. Tognini-Bonelli 2001). However, it is recognised that the corpus-based method has gradually incorporated features of this CADS approach and the distinction between a corpus-based approach and a corpus-assisted approach has become increasingly blurred (Fruttaldo 2017). Therefore, the name ‘corpus-based’ is used in this study in a general manner.
thus meriting some serious attention on the part of analysts. From the vantage point of ideology and discourse, seemingly unrepresentative or even singular utterances made by powerful government officials (e.g. the Chinese premier in this case), when interpreted into the global *lingua franca* English and then re-contextualised and re-mediated in various other forms (e.g. news report and social media), can arguably ‘carry more weight discursively’ (Baker 2006: 19) than other repeated yet relatively pedestrian statements made elsewhere. Put simply, to quote Einstein, not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts. As such, in addition to a strong focus on quantitative analysis and statistically important patterns, some attention on more contextualised and manual analysis (e.g. on individual concordance lines and examples) is also crucial.

In a word, this layered mixed-methods approach provides sufficient analytical leeway to engage with both patterned typicality of statistical importance and other singular, one-off, nuanced and non-obvious instantiations of ideology and both immediate collocations (co-texts) and the broader sociopolitical contexts. Such constant and recursive shunting between the qualitative and quantitative strikes a methodological golden mean, thus promising to shed useful light on the government-affiliated interpreters’ institutional alignment and (re)construction of China’s discourse and image at different levels of abstraction (this layered approach also fits well with Fairclough’s three-dimensional model, which forms the theoretical framework of this study; see chapter 2 for more detailed discussions).

### 3.2 Corpus Data

Having discussed the methodological approach used in this study, this section details the various aspects of my corpus data. Corpus design, as Sinclair (1991: 13) argues, is an important first step for studies involving the use of a corpus, which is inevitably determined by the intended purpose and nature of the study in mind. Given the research questions and nature of this project, the Chinese-English Political Discourse Corpus (CE-PolitDisCorp) was established specifically for the purposes of investigating China’s political discourses in Chinese and English as well as the government-affiliated interpreters’ agency in the
interpreting process. In this section, I discuss aspects relating to my corpus data and the principles that have guided its development and preparation.

3.2.1 Chinese-English Political Discourse Corpus: an Overview

This section provides an overview of data in the Chinese-English Political Discourse Corpus (CE-PolitDisCorp) including the specific purpose and focus of its establishment. The data in the CE-PolitDisCorp is extracted exclusively from the ‘Premier-Meets-the-Press’ conferences in mainland China (1998-2017). The annual interpreter-mediated press conference is held towards the end of each year’s two sessions, that is, China’s National People’s Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). They respectively represent China’s top legislative and top political advisory bodies, constituting the most important symbol of deliberative and consultative democracy in China.

Situated within a broader context of change, the premier’s press conferences can in many ways be viewed as a direct result of China’s reform and opening-up in 1978. This vital turning point, if not a complete sea change, marks China’s gradual integration into the international community and signals its increasing commitment to global interaction and engagement. Initially organised on an ad-hoc basis in the late 1980s, the press conferences began to be institutionalised and ritualised from 1993 as an annual practice. However, it was in 1998 that the interpreter-mediated event started to be widely broadcast\textsuperscript{23} to the general public as a result of the rapid technological advancements (Yi 2016). Gradually, the premier’s press conference became the centrepiece of each year’s two sessions, drawing widespread attention from domestic and international media outlets. The year 1998, as such, can be viewed as an important watershed in the history of the press conferences as a communicative practice (video recordings and transcripts have also become widely available since that year).

The Chinese premier is second in rank in the Chinese government (directly after the president) and is the highest-level government official to answer questions at press conferences in China.

\textsuperscript{23}These press conferences usually take place in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing and are broadcast live on China’s state-owned broadcaster CCTV as well as on a few state-owned media outlets online (e.g. Xinhuanet).
The premier’s press conferences, to the best of my knowledge, form the only established televised event for China’s top leadership and decision-maker to openly address the general public and answer a wide range of questions of domestic and international concern (see data selection section and Appendix 2 for more detailed information on the range of topics covered). These high-profile conferences serve as an important instrument, enabling the government to provide arguably the most authoritative source of information in terms of its official policies and positions.

Unlike, for instance, the CECIC (Chinese-English Conference Interpreting Corpus) developed for the study of China’s conference interpreting in general by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University, the CE-PolitDisCorp established by the researcher is more specialised in nature, focusing on political discourse. The CE-PolitDisCorp is based on the conceptualisation that the premier’s press conferences are an important discursive event characterised by its political agenda. That is, this interpreter-mediated event can be viewed as a vital technology in the Foucauldian sense, which enables China to produce a desired version of truth and fact through its discursive formulations (Foucault 1988). Discourses articulated in both languages are socially shaped and socially shaping (Fairclough 1989), respectively representing Beijing’s official voice in Chinese and its state-sanctioned voice in English (both are of great import in their own rights in effecting change). As such, a key focus of the CE-PolitDisCorp is on the highly pertinent yet often neglected issues concerning discourse, power and ideology in political interpreting in the Chinese context.

3.2.2 Data Selection

and Li Keqiang (2013-present). In total, 8 interpreters have been involved in the interpretation of these press conferences: Zhu Tong (1998, 1999), Xu Hui (2000), Zhang Jianmin (2001, 2002, 2003), Dai Qingli (2004), Lei Ning (2005), Fei Shengchao (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009), Zhang Lu (2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017), and Sun Ning (2013). These government interpreters are highly competent and experienced interpreting professionals affiliated with China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and more specifically with the Department of Translation and Interpretation. Broadly speaking, they are Communist party members themselves and civil servants employed as part of the Chinese government. The average length of a Premier-Meets-the-Press conference is approximately 2 hours. As such, the CE-PolitDisCorp contains 37 hours and 42 minutes’ worth of transcribed data in total. The mode of interpreting in these press conferences is consecutive. In terms of format and structure, a premier’s press conference includes firstly the chairperson’s (invariably brief and formulaic) remarks in Chinese and the corresponding interpretation into English at the very beginning to signal the start of the session. This may then be followed by an optional section containing the Chinese premier’s opening remarks of varying lengths in Chinese and their English interpretations (sometimes the premiers proceed to answering the journalists’ questions directly). This is followed by a long Q&A session. These two components (the premier’s opening remarks and the Q&A session) together constitute the bulk of each year’s data. The Q&A session features frequent and dynamic exchanges in speaking turns between the Chinese premier, interpreter, and journalists. These include questions posed by journalists either in Chinese or English (and their interpretations into the other language) as well as the premier’s answers in Chinese (and then their interpretations into English). The mainland Chinese journalists and journalists from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao ask questions in Chinese, whereas international journalists pose questions either in English or Chinese. At the end, the chairperson again makes very brief and formulaic remarks, thanking the Chinese premier and journalists for coming and declaring the conclusion of the press conference.

24A typically brief statement made by the chairperson at the beginning of each year’s press conference can be illustrated in the following example (interpretation into English): ‘Ladies and gentlemen, good morning. We are honoured and privileged to have with us Premier Wen Jiabao of the State Council. He is here to meet the press and answer your questions. First of all, a few opening remarks from Mr Premier’ (Chairperson’s opening statement in 2005).
Regarding the topics involved, the 20 years’ press conferences have covered the following key subject areas: (1) China’s domestic issues and policies (e.g. anti-corruption campaign, war on pollution, one-child policy, democracy and the possibility of direct election in China, social security, food safety, Tibet, Taiwan, and the student protest in 1989), (2) economic and financial issues (e.g. China’s GDP growth rate, China’s macroeconomic policies, stimulus measures), (3) the mainland’s relations with Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan (e.g. chief executive election in Hong Kong, Taiwan Independence) as well as (4) China’s foreign relations and international policies (e.g. the US pivot to Asia, China’s stances on Syria and Crimea, the Korean Peninsula, China’s territorial disputes with neighbouring countries). As such, the CE-PolitDisCorp data selected (1998-2017) constitutes an invaluable resource, representing a discursive continuum for investigating the interpreters’ discursive mediation vis-à-vis the changing geopolitical, economic and sociocultural backgrounds over the past two decades. The questions posed by the journalists touch upon a wide range of sensitive and controversial topics, thereby providing ample scope for investigating government interpreters’ agency. Given the diachronic and high-profile nature of the data, the results yielded can be deemed indicative of China’s (interpreted) political discourse and political interpreting overall. More detailed information about each year’s press conference data (tokens, name of Chinese premier, name of interpreter, duration of press conference, media outlets and topics involved) is provided in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

With respect to data selection, a pertinent question concerns whether to use a reference corpus. Focusing on keyness, a reference corpus is sometimes used as a way to highlight and isolate distinguishing features of a specific corpus under investigation (Stubbs 1996). However, given the essentially comparative and contrastive nature of the present study focusing on ST-TT shifts at different levels, introducing an external reference corpus is not considered particularly useful\(^\text{25}\). Attention is thus focused exclusively on the CE-PolitDisCorp

\(^{25}\)The patchy, fragmentary and topic-based nature of the interpreter-mediated press conferences featuring individual questions means that it is difficult to find another corpus that can be systematically employed as a reliable point of reference. For the same reason, determining what to analyse based on another external corpus can be problematic in this study as it is likely that unique yet inconsequential items with inordinately high keyness are foregrounded as a direct result of the journalists’ questions asked. This potentially prevents the researcher from gaining a deep understanding of the interpreting data itself and risks consistent salient patterns central to China’s (interpreted) discourse being overlooked at an early stage.
corpus as a holistic free-standing entity in its own right.

3.2.3 Corpus Composition and Organisation
As mentioned in section 3.2.2, the interpreter-mediated press conference data is heterogeneous in structure, featuring the journalists’ questions, the Chinese premier’s answers as well as the interpreters’ renditions into another language. For organisational purposes and ease of meaningful analysis using corpus linguistics tools, it was necessary to further separate the CE-PolitDisCorp data into various subcorpora to achieve a certain level of homogeneity in each subcorpus.

Bearing the research questions and the various constitutive components of the press conferences in mind, the CE-PolitDisCorp is divided into the following subcorpora (see Table A): (1) **Subcorpus A** (China’s official discourse in Chinese, which includes the Chinese premier’s opening remarks and answers in Chinese only); (2) **Subcorpus B** (China’s interpreted discourse in English, which includes the corresponding English interpretations of the Chinese premier’s opening remarks and answers only); (3) **Subcorpus C** (China’s official discourses in Chinese and English, which constitute the sum of subcorpus A and subcorpus B). That is, data in subcorpus C only contains Chinese premier’s opening remarks and answers in Chinese and then their corresponding English interpretations (without including the journalists’ questions and their respective interpretations). The bilingual data in subcorpus C is presented in exactly the same temporal and sequential ST-TT order as the Chinese premier and the interpreter’s utterances naturally occur. Consequently, the bilingual data is aligned at a paragraph level for easy and direct comparisons between the ST and TT (see Figure D below for an illustration). It is thus considered unnecessary to go through the practical and technical difficulties of undertaking further ST-TT alignment work, for instance, at a sentence or lexical level; (4) **Subcorpus D** (bilingual data involving the journalists’ questions and their corresponding interpretations into the other language only). Subcorpus D is not used in this study but will be drawn upon for future research purposes. Given the brief and highly formulaic nature of the chairperson’s remarks, they are not included in the above corpus. More detailed information is provided in section 3.3 and 3.4 regarding how analyses
are carried out using these subcorpora.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subcorpus A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China’s official discourse in Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127,696 tokens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A: Corpus structure and composition

![AntConc interface](image)

Figure D: An illustration of Chinese ST and English TT in the AntConc interface

### 3.2.4 Data Collection and Transcription

In the previous sections, the selected data as well as the constitutive subcorpora of the CE-PolitDisCorp were outlined. Compared with a (written) translation corpus, building an interpreting corpus is considerably more complicated, labour-intensive and time-consuming in nature (Shlesinger 1998). This section sets out the data collection and transcription processes in establishing the CE-PolitDisCorp.

In terms of data collection, videos containing the press conferences can be found on China’s official government website as well as on video-sharing sites such as YouTube and Youku.
Transcripts are partially available, for example, on China’s State Council website, newspaper *China Daily*’s website and various English-learning and interpreter/translator training websites in China. However, the bilingual data available online has either been stylistically and grammatically edited as a form of official record or has been transcribed in a rough and thus less accurate way by language learners (sometimes even a better written translation is provided by language learners based on the original source text in Chinese).

These revised or improved transcripts are of no interest to the researcher given the present study’s focus on naturally occurring language used in real-world press conferences. Put differently, what is needed is not what ‘could have been’ or ‘should have been’ rendered but rather analysable data that can accurately reflect the original source discourse and how it ‘has been’ (Straniero Sergio 2003: 135) interpreted. To this end, the existing transcripts have been carefully checked against what was said on the video clips and then re-edited into the original state in a way that faithfully captures the Chinese premiers’, journalists’ and interpreters’ utterances. In cases where transcripts were not available, additional work was carried out to orthographically transcribe the audio data (in exactly the same sequential and temporal order as each year’s press conference has naturally occurred).

The dynamic nature of interpreting means that there are various multimodal and paralinguistic dimensions to this triadic interpreter-mediated encounter (facial expressions, body language, modulation of tone, pitch of voice *etc.*). However, it is worth noting that only a very limited number of close-up shots involve the interpreters in the video clips and it is difficult to transcribe such multimodal elements due to the ‘evanescent’ nature of interpreting (Gile 1998: 86). Also, as Hu (2016: 198) notes, such paralinguistic elements as laughter and modulation of tone are often ‘so subtle and subjective as to defy description’. Bearing the research questions and the various real-world challenges in mind, spoken discourse — the core semiotic element — will constitute the predominant focus of transcription and analysis in this case.

In addition to this, only the paralinguistic elements of hesitations, pauses and unusual
loudness were transcribed. Hesitations and pauses can often indicate uncertainty or a tentative attitude, while unusual loudness can be seen as a sign of being emphatic or defensive. These elements might help lend further credence to my analysis. In light of the above considerations, the specific transcription method adopted in this study (see Table B) was based jointly on the transcription conventions set out by Mason (2001: vii) and Hu (2016: 199). More intricate transcription methods were not adopted as complex transcription might prevent the corpus linguistics software from identifying interesting (collocational) patterns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paralinguistic details</th>
<th>Transcription conventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuing intonation</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminating intonation</td>
<td>(«.) in Chinese and (.) in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning intonation</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis, stressed syllable or unusual loudness</td>
<td>CAPITAL LETTERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hesitations and short pauses (&lt;3s)</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long pauses (&gt;3s)</td>
<td>......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simultaneous or overlapping utterances</td>
<td>[ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaudible or unintelligible utterance</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B: Transcription conventions for the CE-PolitDisCorp

3.2.5 Data Preparation

As discussed in 3.2.4, the bilingual data for each year’s conference was collected and re-edited into the original state following the transcription conventions above. However, an additional process of segmentation is needed before the corpus data in Chinese can be meaningfully investigated using corpus linguistics software (Huang et al. 1997). Segmentation can be defined as the process of tokenisation to separate long running strings of characters into a number of analysable word tokens (Xiao and Hu 2015: 47). This is regarded as ‘an essential and non-trivial process’ (ibid.) in conducting corpus linguistics research involving Chinese.

The need to undertake this additional preparatory work is attributable to the systematic differences between Chinese and alphabetic languages like English, Dutch, Italian and Portuguese. In these alphabetic languages, the boundaries between word tokens are clearly
demarcated by blank spaces and punctuation marks. However, as an ideogrammatic language, Chinese in the normal (unsegmented) state appears in the form of continuous strings of individual characters. In Chinese, a word can take the form of one single character (e.g. 我 meaning ‘I’) or a sequence of two or more characters (e.g. 一起 means ‘together’, 国家 means ‘country’, 曼彻斯特 means ‘Manchester’). In most cases, reasonably educated Chinese native speakers have no difficulty in understanding Chinese sentences written in the raw untokenised form as a parsing or segmenting process is undertaken mentally when one reads the text (although ambiguities do appear in extremely rare situations).

In order for the Chinese discourse to be further processed, the Chinese segmenter SegmentAnt 1.1.0, developed as an accompanying tool for the AntConc concordancer, was used to tokenise the Chinese corpus data (see section 3.2.7 for more detailed discussions on AntConc and its main tools). Whilst the vast majority of Chinese sentences in the CE-PolitDisCorp could be satisfactorily segmented using the Chinese segmenter (powered by and based on an inbuilt dictionary), the segmentation results were not always accurate and reliable. To solve this problem, additional manual correction and post-editing work was carried out by the researcher to ensure a greater level of accuracy. As there are often various linguistic criteria in terms of what constitutes a word in Chinese (Packard 2000), there is a lack of unified standard for Chinese segmentation. Bearing this in mind, the researcher’s discretion had to be used when necessary to segment the data in a reasonable, meaningful and consistent way.

In addition to Chinese segmentation, another related aspect of data preparation concerning POS-tagging is briefly addressed here. POS-tagging refers to the (sometimes laborious) process of assigning a priori part-of-speech tags (noun, verb, adverb etc.) to individual tokens as a means of disambiguation to guarantee more accurate retrieval of certain grammatical categories. However, as Olohan (2004: 51) observes, ‘the extent to which any tagging or annotation is used will depend on the purpose of the corpus’. Given the essentially contrastive and comparative nature of my project focusing on ideologically significant ST-TT shifts (rather than a particular grammatical feature per se), elaborate grammatical tagging
was considered unnecessary\textsuperscript{26}. This is particularly the case given that excessive tagging can be a ‘perilous activity’ as it might lead to ‘text contamination’ where the text loses its ‘integrity’ (Sinclair 2004: 191). As such, the researcher chose to stay constantly open to salient patterns identified using CL software without imposing unnecessary pre-assigned labels and, thus, risking bringing potentially unexpected factors into the data analysis.

\textbf{3.2.6 Metadata and File Naming Conventions}

If corpus linguistics, an empirical science, aims to reveal patterns of certain linguistic behaviours through inspecting naturally occurring language use like laboratory specimen, then metadata serves to restore and specify the context, enabling researchers to link the specimen directly to its original habitat (Burnard 2004). Metadata — literally data about data — provides the provenance and other useful background information about the corpus data itself. Exactly what metadata to include differs from project to project. Given the aims of the current study, the following metadata is considered essential: Chinese premier’s name, interpreter’s name, year of press conference, nature of speaking turn (question, answer, interpretation), language used as well as journalists’ media affiliations. Relevant metadata is provided within the corpus text files and in file names. Within the corpus files, metadata is enclosed in angle bracket in the appropriate place as a means to distinguish metadata from the actual corpus data. An example of this is as follows (Figure E):

\begin{verbatim}
<Speaker=“Wen Jiabao”>
<Interpreter=“Fei Shengchao”>
<Year=“2008”>
<Language=“English interpretation”>
<Journalist=“CNN”>
Figure E: Example of metadata provided
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{26}Elaborate tagging can also slow down data processing and be problematic from the perspective of data viewing and analysis (excessive tagging can result in even less context and make it practically difficult to analyse the retrieved concordance lines on the computer screen).
Also, for ease of corpus data management, analysis and interpretation, files in each constitutive subcorpus were chronologically arranged and systematically named to capture the essential metadata (see section 3.2.3 regarding corpus composition). The file naming conventions are as follows:

1) Files in subcorpus A and subcorpus B are named in the format of <<YearSubcorpusNAME_Language_PremierINTERPRETER>>.

For instance, <<07SubcorpusA_Ch_WenFSC>> and <<16SubcorpusB_En_LiZL>> refer to ‘file in subcorpus A containing Premier Wen Jiabao’s CHINESE discourse in 2007 (interpreted by FEI SHENGCHAO)’ and ‘file in subcorpus B containing Interpreter ZHANG LU’s ENGLISH interpretation (of Premier Li Keqiang’s Chinese discourse) in 2016’ respectively.

2) Files in subcorpus C are named in the format of <<YearSubcorpusC_Languages_PremierINTERPRETER>>.

As such, <<16SubcorpusC_ChEn_LiZL>>, for example, signifies ‘file in subcorpus C containing bilingual data in CHINESE and ENGLISH from the 2016 press conference featuring Premier Li Keqiang’s Chinese discourse and interpreter ZHANG LU’s English interpretation.

Metadata provided in individual files and file names can therefore be used as prompts to help the researcher better make sense of the corpus data. As the final step of data preparation, the re-edited, segmented and non-tagged data was converted into the Unicode (UTF-8) format and then saved in the form of .txt files. Now, the CE-PolitDisCorp data is in the correct machine-readable format and can be considered ‘concordancer-ready’ for further analysis using CL software.
3.2.7 Concordancer Software

In this section, the concordancer AntConc as well as its key tools and functionalities useful to the present study are briefly introduced. AntConc 3.4.4w (windows) is a freeware developed by Professor Laurence Anthony based at the Waseda University in Japan. The corpus linguistics software contains several useful tools that permit data analysis on compiled corpora. Its key tools include Word List, Collocates, Kwic Concordancing, Clusters/N-Gram, Kwic Sort and File View etc.

The Word List tool of AntConc counts all tokens in the corpus based on raw frequency and then generates a list of words in a certain order. This provides a useful starting point for further analysis in terms of what items are statistically significant and might thus merit some additional attention. Another useful tool offered by AntConc is ‘Collocates’. The ‘Collocates’ tool can be employed to identify collocates that occur in the neighbourhood of a selected search item and be used to study non-sequential patterns in the corpus. Another relevant tool is Clusters/N-Grams. Unlike the Word List function which is designed to identify frequently occurring individual tokens, AntConc’s Clusters/N-Grams tool facilitates the mining of continuous clusters of various lengths (2, 3, 4, 5, 6 adjacent tokens etc.) in the corpus. This is highly helpful in locating frequently occurring phraseologies and expressions (e.g. ‘thanks to’, ‘as a matter of fact’, ‘as a result’).

AntConc, similar to other Corpus Linguistics software, also includes the concordance tool. The tool displays retrieved results in a Kwic (Key Word In Context) format, where the search item (node word) appears in the middle of a set of concordance lines with a number of tokens on each side. This software also has the ‘search window size’ function to provide expanded concordances. In other words, the analysts are left with the choice to adjust the number of tokens on each side of the search item (to have more context or less context based on the actual needs of a particular study). Also, the software is equipped with the Kwic Sort tool. Using the Kwic Sort tool, generated concordance lines containing a certain search item (node word) can be further arranged to identify interesting (collocational) patterns at different levels (N-3 and N+3 levels). This means that the three adjacent tokens to the left and right of the
search item can be sorted at 1L, 2L, 3L and/or 1R, 2R, 3R levels to identify patterns (see Figure F for a screenshot of the Kwic Sort tool as well as AntConc’s user interface). Furthermore, through clicking a search item on a concordance line, the item can be examined in the text it is from. Similarly, the ‘File View Tool’ can be used, if necessary, to display the (entire) text in a file, thereby enabling analysts to move beyond the immediate concordance lines and gain more in-depth contextual insight into the corpus data.

The AntConc software therefore enables the researcher to more objectively locate salient items in the corpus and more systematically identify (collocational) patterns that would otherwise be difficult to identify in a manual way. It is also worth noting that this CL software supports data analysis for both English and Chinese, thus making it possible to simultaneously investigate and compare the bilingual data in CE-PolitDisCorp using one software. As part of the AntConc package, there is also a Chinese segmenter called SegmentAnt 1.1.0. (see section 3.2.5 for more details about Chinese segmentation). More
detailed discussions are provided in sections 3.3 and 3.4 regarding how various CL tools are employed step-by-step in investigating the different subcategories relating to my research questions.

3.3 Procedures for Studying Interpreters’ Institutional Alignment

Having discussed the general corpus-based CDA approach for this study, this section details the subcategories to examine and the specific step-by-step procedures adopted in studying the interpreters’ level of institutional alignment. Given the time and space constraints, the subcategories investigated are (1) self-referentiality, (2) prominent discourses central to the post-1978 reform and opening-up, and (3) issues relating to China’s core national interests.

3.3.1 Self-referentiality

The ability for an autonomous and self-regulating institution to maintain and reproduce itself is crucial. According to Luhmann (1990: 19), each and every (political) system is confronted with the need to form a unique identity and the ‘imperative to legitimate itself’. It is through self-referencing that an autonomous, or autopoietic, system recursively ‘produces and reproduces the elements’ central to itself.\(^{27}\) (ibid.: 39-40). It can be argued that, to varying degrees, all systems, institutions, and organisations thrive on self-reference for their autonomous and continued existence (e.g. in the form of institutional rules and policies).

From the perspective of interpreting, ‘self-referentiality’ is vitally important on two major counts in the current study. Firstly, as Beaton (2007: 277) argues in her study investigating metaphor strings in the EU, self-referentiality can serve to strengthen the process of ‘ideological stabilisation’ within a particular institution. As such, the way in which self-referential items are rendered by the interpreters concerns, for instance, how the

\(^{27}\)Although this sort of (re-)production might be ‘logically circular and therefore empty’ (Luhmann 1990: 41), self-reference constitutes a vital ‘modus operandi of the system’ (Lambropoulou 1995: 694) nonetheless. For example, an international organisation like the United Nations sustains and justifies itself from within through repeated self-references as in the following sentences: ‘We, the United Nations, must call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and immediate, unimpeded humanitarian access. We, the United Nations, must stand with the people around the world who are calling and acting to bring an end to this death and destruction’ (Extracted from the UN General Assembly Emergency Special Session 32nd meeting, 2009).
Chinese government’s institutional presence, ideology and voice might be sustained, weakened or strengthened in its English discourse. Also, self-referentiality is central to the investigation of the interpreters’ identity and institutional alignment. The first-person plural pronoun ‘we’ and its various related forms (our, ours, us, ourselves), for example, have long been considered as salient markers of group membership and institutional alignment within Critical Discourse Analysis and beyond. This includes ‘in-group’ identity (cf. van Dijk 1984), ‘institutional identity’ (cf. Sacks 1992) and footing (cf. Goffman 1981).

Preliminary analysis of the data finds that ‘self-referentiality’ is a highly pronounced feature and relevant concept in both Chinese and English. Unsurprisingly, given the one-to-many nature of the discursive event, self-references are constantly used by the Chinese premier in answering the journalists’ questions and addressing the general public. This is evidenced in the fact that self-referential terms such as ‘we’, ‘China’, ‘our’ are amongst the most frequent lexical items (see screenshot of the English Word List below in Figure G). Over the past few decades, the Chinese government led by the Communist party has been the uncontested key actor at the heart of China’s diplomacy, policies and decision-making. Considering the current one-party system in mainland China, the government, the Communist Party, and China as well as the first-person plural ‘we’\(^{28}\) can all be deemed synonymous and interchangeable in nature and central to the idea of self-referentiality.

To investigate the interpreters’ potential institutional alignment and strengthening of the government’s ideology, first-person plural pronoun ‘we’ (and its related forms) as well as other frequently occurring self-referential terms (e.g. ‘China’ and ‘government’) are identified in both subcorpus A (Chinese discourse) and subcorpus B (interpreted English discourse) using AntConc’s Word List tool. The identified self-referential items might be placed into different sub-groups for ease of further analysis (e.g. such items as we, our*, us can be seen as representing a broader group of WE and China/Chinese can be seen as belonging to a broader category of CHINA).

\(^{28}\)It can be understood that even in cases of anaphoric or inclusive use of ‘we’ (referring, for instance, to China/Chinese government and a foreign country/government mentioned earlier) the interpreters arguably are still (partially) aligning themselves with Beijing as representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs and China’s ruling elite.
Having established the self-referential items in both subcorpora, the absolute frequencies of identified items are counted individually and then added up in each subcorpus. In doing so, the overall occurrences of self-referentiality in both subcorpora can be compared on a global level. If the interpreters are found to over-articulate self-referential terms in the English TT, this then may constitute an example of repetition (Fairclough 1989) as a result of interpreting. It should be assumed that the more times the various self-referential items are mentioned by the interpreters the stronger the institutional ideology in English and the stronger the interpreters’ alignment with their institutional employer. From the perspective of image, this is also significant as cumulatively an active overall image of the government being constantly present and in control can be (re)constructed.

With this as a useful departure point, further data-driven approach might be taken to focus on the top three sub-groups of self-referentiality (e.g. the WE-ness) to shed more light on the interpreters’ level of institutional alignment. If possible, the top sub-group(s) of self-referentiality might be compared (e.g. relationally with other sub-groups) and explored from various perspectives (e.g. diachronic). In addition, illustrative micro-level examples of CDA analysis are provided. Also, the identified self-referential items would provide a useful starting point, permitting further fine-grained investigations regarding the research question concerning specifically the interpreters’ (re)construction of China’s image and discourse (see 3.4.1 and 3.4.2 regarding the interpreters’ mediation of Beijing’s discourses on its past
achievements and current conditions respectively).

3.3.2 Prominent Discourses Central to the Post-1978 Reform and Opening-up

The second subcategory explores the interpreters’ possible mediation of and alignment vis-à-vis China’s broader reform and opening-up discourse. The decision to focus on this specific subcategory is because (lexical) items central to this broader reform and opening-up theme are prominent on the Wordlist (e.g. reform*/restructur* 392 instances; develop* 539 instances; econom* 526 instances; modern* 45 instances). An analysis of the interpreters’ mediation of China’s reform and opening-up discourse has bearing on how the overarching justificatory discourse legitimising China’s post-1978 political system and economic policies is rendered into English.

In exploring each topic (e.g. reform, development, economy) constitutive of the broader reform and opening-up discourse, attention is first focused on how the core items relating to each thematic topic are rendered between the ST and TT at a lexical level overall based on raw frequency (e.g. 发展 versus develop*). If there is increased (re)production of related items in English, this suggests further interpreter alignment and strengthening of the relevant discourse at a lexical level in interpreting. If the opposite is found, it can be seen that the ideological discourse in Chinese is somewhat diluted in the English interpretation lexically. This is followed by close examinations of the concordance lines and/or collocational patterns featuring certain lexical items in English and then comparisons with their Chinese counterparts to identify any possible shifts and transformations. In the form of examples, manual CDA analysis is provided to illustrate the micro-level ST-TT shifts as a way of demonstrating their possible alignment.

3.3.3 Issues Relating to China’s Core National Interests

In addition to the first two subcategories, it is worth noting that the interpreters’ alignment might also manifest itself through their level of positioning vis-à-vis China’s official line and fundamental interests. This makes ‘China’s core national interests’ a particularly salient subcategory to examine. Having been ‘an official discourse’ in China since 2002 (Shih 2002:
196), ‘China’s core national interests’ is an important notion that has been repeatedly stressed and made explicitly clear by the government on various occasions. As clarified by China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Qin Gang in July 2010, ‘areas relating to national sovereignty, security, territorial integrity, and developmental interests are all part of China’s core interests’. At the premier’s press conference in 2010, former Premier Wen Jiabao argued further that in implementing China’s foreign policies the ‘fundamental objective is to uphold China’s national interests, China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity in particular’. This analytical subcategory, politically sensitive in nature, involves a great degree of justification and safeguarding of China’s national interests, thus making it particularly interesting to study the interpreters’ possible ideological mediation and institutional alignment in the process.

To this end, AntConc’s Wordlist function is first employed to generate a list of frequently occurring terms in the English subcorpus. Then, terms central to China’s core national interests are identified. With regard to the selection criteria, the terms chosen should concern hot-button issues bearing on China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. As such, the frequently addressed topics relating to ‘Hong Kong’, ‘Taiwan’, ‘Tibet’ and ‘Macau’ are selected for further analysis. These topics/issues are considered to be China’s internal affairs that ‘absolutely brook no encroachment or damage’ (Liu 2014: 183), which can often evoke an outpouring of patriotic feelings and nationalistic sentiments. These items are arguably more interesting to investigate than other relatively soft topics like the development of the CDMA mobile network and the promotion of reading nationwide as a good habit amongst the Chinese public.

With this as a useful departure point, the identified core items (e.g. ‘Taiwan’ and ‘Tibet’) as well as their related forms (e.g. ‘Taiwanese’ or ‘Tibetan’) are investigated in the English subcorpus to identify ideologically salient patterns. This is achieved using the ‘Collocates’ tool and/or the ‘Kwic Sort’ tool to examine the three continuous tokens to the left and right of the selected item (node word). Any interesting (collocational) patterns found in the English subcorpus (e.g. ‘our Taiwan compatriots’. See Figure H) are searched in subcorpus C, thus permitting direct ST-TT comparisons on a one-to-one basis for salient shifts. Illustrative
examples of manual CDA analysis are then provided to give a snapshot of the workings of the interpreters’ mediation at a micro level.

3.4 Procedures for Studying Interpreters’ (Re)construction of China’s Discourse/Image

This section details the subcategories examined and sets out the step-by-step procedures in investigating the interpreters’ role in potentially (re)constructing China’s discourse and image. Attention is focused on the interpreters’ mediation of (1) China’s past actions and achievements; (2) China’s discourse on its current conditions; (3) China’s discourse concerning future possibility, volition, obligation and commitment and; (4) China’s discourse on people. The specific procedures adopted are detailed below.

3.4.1 Interpreters’ Mediation of China’s Past Actions and Achievements

Political discourse inevitably deals with the past. At the premier’s press conferences in particular, there is a perceived tendency for the Chinese premiers to provide a ‘laundry list’, itemising the things their administrations did in the past. From the perspective of discourse, accomplishments unmentioned are as good as accomplishments not achieved. Such detailed accounts of the government’s past achievements form a routine component and ritualised practice at the press conferences. The repeated enumeration of Beijing’s achievements is of
particular import and relevance given the increasingly performance-based legitimacy witnessed in China in recent decades.

As Fewsmith (2001) and Guo (2006) observe, contrary to the ideology-driven and charisma-based governance, legitimacy in the post-Mao and post-1978 era hinges very much on the deliverance of utilitarian socio-economic benefits to the people. In other words, the rule of the government rests on the concrete tangible things it accomplished or at least on what it promises to deliver. Failing to do so adequately potentially diminishes ‘the trust of the citizens and undermines or even loses its legitimacy’ (Salevao 2005: 152). Therefore, the premier’s press conferences give the Chinese leadership an opportunity to provide a list of Beijing’s past achievements in order to win over the audience and seek widespread accolade and consent from the public. Therefore, the manner in which past achievements are mediated and (re)presented by the interpreters in English constitutes an interesting area worth some critical attention.

With this in mind, the top self-referential items previously identified (e.g. we, government and China) will be first searched in the English subcorpus to generate concordance lines. The concordance lines retrieved are further refined and sorted to the right using the Kwic Sort tool. This permits the identification of salient patterns relating to how China’s past actions and achievements are discursively (re)presented in English. Concordance lines featuring the identified patterns in English will then be critically compared with their Chinese counterparts on a one-to-one basis as a way to trace what the patterns are in the first place and establish the extent to which they are triggered by the Chinese originals. Examples of manual CDA analysis are also provided to illustrate how China’s past actions and accomplishments are rendered by the interpreters discursively. The ramifications of the interpreters’ possible mediation are discussed, particularly from the perspective of image (re)construction.

3.4.2 Interpreters’ Mediation of China’s Discourse on Current Conditions
This subcategory explores how China’s discourse on its current conditions might be mediated discursively through interpreting. An investigation of China’s current national conditions
(guoqing) is crucial on many levels. First and foremost, this specific subcategory (relating to what China has, is and is doing) bears directly on China and the Chinese government’s self-representation (cf. Wagner and Wodak 2006; van Dijk 1993) and can thus be deemed central to its projection of image. That is, discourse articulated in this subcategory permits the Chinese premier to construct a certain version of fact, truth and reality and portray a certain image for China in a direct and unequivocal manner. Also, detailed analysis of China’s current conditions is of great importance in the sense that it, for example, concerns how a series of political decisions and socioeconomic policies may be explained, justified and legitimised discursively using China’s (national) conditions at present as rationale (e.g. China being an ancient civilisation with a unique history and culture, China’s huge population size as well as China’s current stage of development).

To do this, the ‘self-referential item+be’ structures (e.g. ‘China is’, ‘government is’ and ‘we are’) are first searched in the English subcorpus to generate concordance lines, which are then sorted to the right using the Kwic sort tool. Results that do not concern China’s self-portrayal of what it is and is doing are eliminated (e.g. ‘as far as China is concerned’ or ‘we are neighbours’). The eligible concordance lines in English are critically examined for possible (recurring) themes that may form the rationale and basis of Beijing’s decisions, positions and policies. To identify shifts indicative of the interpreters’ potential discursive (re-)construction of China’s self-representational image, the concordance lines in English are compared directly with their Chinese originals one-to-one, focusing on salient additions and omissions in interpreting. Representative examples of CDA analysis are also provided to demonstrate the range of discursive strategies adopted in the interpreters’ (possible) mediation. Similarly, the ‘self-referential item+has/have’ structures are investigated in the English subcorpus. The retrieved concordance lines are sorted to the right to identify recurring themes. The eligible concordance lines are then contrasted with their Chinese originals to establish what might be added or omitted. Representative examples are again presented to highlight the interpreters’ micro-level mediation.
3.4.3 Interpreters’ Mediation of Future Possibility, Volition, Obligation and Commitment in Chinese Government’s Discourse

Another prominent feature of the premier’s press conferences concerns the government’s future plans, objectives and actions. Arguably, at the heart of Beijing’s discourse on its future plans and actions is the use of modality. This is evidenced in the fact that modal verbs are highly prominent on the Wordlist (such words as will, can, need, would and should are respectively ranked 11th, 36th, 38th, 53th and 62nd on the frequency list). The pervasive use of modality runs through China’s political discursive articulation. For example, the extract below (English interpretation) is from the Premier-Meets-the-Press conference in 2014, where Premier Li Keqiang itemises the things the government must and will do in order to combat corruption.

Corruption is the natural enemy of a people’s government. We must apply the rule of law in both thinking and action in fighting corruption. And we must put the exercise of power and use of public money under institutional checks. This year, we are going to continue to streamline administration and delegate government powers. We are going to release to the public a list of powers as quickly as possible, set down a clear boundary for the exercise of power to ensure that the power will not be abused. We will also carry out comprehensive audit in those areas which are of high concern to our public, for example the revenues on the transfer of land use rights and transfer of mining rights. We will take institutional steps to ensure that the rent-seeking behaviors and corruption will have nowhere to hide. Thank you.

Essentially informative, persuasive and justificatory in nature, political discourse is ‘never devoid of modality, but rather, fully imbued with it’ (Fu 2016: 111). Modality touches on ‘the question of what people commit themselves to when they make statements, ask questions, make demands or offer’ (Fairclough 2003: 165). Indeed, a wide variety of attitudes and stances ranging from certainty to ability, from possibility to obligation and from willingness to determination can be expressed using modality in political discursive articulation. This makes modality very much ‘a matter of ideological interest’ (Fairclough 2001:106) within CDA. From the perspective of interlingual communication, modality can be highly revealing in terms of the translator or interpreter’s (in)visibility and agency (Venuti 2000). As such, modality constitutes an interesting area of investigation in shedding light on the interpreters’ potential (re)construction of China’s discourse and image. In other words, this subcategory
bears on how levels of future possibility, volition, obligation and commitment articulated in Chinese (e.g. what needs, may, can, should, will and must be done) might be (re)constructed in the interpreted English discourse.

Modality can be realised in various ways. For more systematic and focused corpus-based analysis in a practical and manageable manner, attention is focused mostly on what Biber et al. (1999) call ‘core modal verbs’ (e.g. must, should, can, may and will). Core modal verbs are relatively homogeneous and fixed in nature and, according to Fairclough (2003: 168), constitute ‘explicit’ and ‘archetypical markers of modality’. Also, as Halliday and McDonald (2004) argue, there is a great level of comparability and applicability between these modal verbs in English and Chinese, thus making a contrastive investigation possible.

Bearing the selection criteria in mind, eligible core modal verbs are identified in both subcorpus A and subcorpus B, for example, using AntConc’s Word List function. In each subcorpus, the occurrences of all eligible items are counted and added up. As such, the overall number of identified modal verbs can be compared between the two subcorpora, thus permitting a rough analysis in terms of how Beijing’s future actions and plans (exemplified in core modal verbs) might be maintained or manipulated overall as a result of interpreting.

In addition, further more refined analyses are carried out. For detailed insights into the interpreters’ possible mediation, a new revised taxonomy is proposed by the researcher. This revised taxonomy contains five grades, which synthesises semantic meaning with modality value. The identified items in both subcorpora are placed into the five groups. This promises to shed light on the distributional profile and patternings of modality value shift between Chinese and English. This, for example, also permits an analysis in terms of whether the interpreters might help convey an additional layer of willingness, obligation, determination or commitment in the English interpretation (or otherwise).

Using these as a starting point, more contextualised analyses are carried out. This might first involve an exploration of the collocational patterns relating to the (core) modal verbs
established (e.g. government should, we need, China will, we must) in English. While it is impossible to trace the exact workings of ST-TT shifts for all collocational patterns, particularly salient or interesting pattern(s) will be critically compared with their Chinese STs on a one-to-one basis for illustrative purposes. Throughout the process, detailed examples of manual CDA analysis are provided to demonstrate any micro-level shifts that have come about in interpreting.

3.4.4 Interpreters’ Mediation of China’s Discourse on People

A government assumes myriad roles and makes various decisions, which could range from feeding the population to maintaining law and order and from preventing external attack to raising the people’s socioeconomic and educational standards. Fundamentally, decisions made by any government can have a direct or indirect bearing on the livelihood of the people (the UK’s EU referendum, China’s reform and opening up etc.). The interests of the people arguably constitute an important element at the core of a government’s administration and decision-making. This is in the sense that a government’s legitimacy and even longevity depend in large part on how well it can win popular support and handle the often delicate and dynamic government-citizen ties (which is at least partially mediated through discourse).

People-related concepts are of particular relevance in the Chinese context. The Reform and Opening-up initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 marks a major watershed in China’s recent history, signalling a noticeable transition from a predominantly ideology-driven style of governance to one that is increasingly pragmatist and people-oriented in the post-1978 era. This trend is exemplified and enshrined in former Chinese president Jiang Zemin’s ‘Three Represents’ theory, where the Communist Party ‘represents the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people of China’. This is also evidenced in the fact that ‘人民’ and ‘people’ are amongst the most frequent lexical items in both subcorpora (ranked 30th and 22nd respectively). As such, a focus on how people-related items are rendered by the interpreters can shed light on their potential discursive mediation and (re)construction of Beijing’s image (e.g. how it treats its own people). A critical examination of this subcategory also promises to provide useful insights on the government-citizen ties in China’s
sociopolitical context.

To this end, using AntConc’s Wordlist function, people-related concepts are established in both subcorpus A and subcorpus B. Notably, the broad notion ‘people’ might take various forms in both subcorpora. Regarding the selection criteria, the focus is not on just any nouns relating to the physical being of a person or nouns referring to specific occupational groups in both languages (farmers, employees, tourists, pupils, 消费者 ‘consumers’, 投资者 ‘investors’). Instead, generic people-related concepts in a philosophical, sociopolitical and legal sense (e.g. people, individuals, citizens, the public, civilians) are of more interest and will, thus, be selected from the frequency lists in both discourses. The frequencies of the identified items are counted individually and then added up in each subcorpus. As such, the overall frequencies of people-related concepts in both subcorpora can be compared on a macro level to establish whether the presence of people-related concepts might be roughly maintained or significantly affected as a result of interpreting (e.g. any overall tendency for the interpreters to under-articulate or over-articulate certain people-related items). Also, based on the statistical information acquired, the various people-related items can be traced and tracked between the English and Chinese subcorpora for salient trends of change through interpreting.

For a more refined contextualised analysis, the collocational profiles of certain important lexical item(s) (e.g. people) might be further investigated in the English subcorpus. This might involve exploring the collocational patterns of the selected item(s) through sorting to the left and right using AntConc’s Kwic Sort tool. Particularly interesting and salient patterns in English will be discussed and directly compared with their corresponding Chinese originals on a one-to-one basis to work out the percentage at which the TT patterns are triggered by the ST. Throughout the process, detailed qualitative CDA analyses are provided as illustrative examples in the data analysis chapter vis-à-vis the broader sociopolitical context.
3.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has discussed the methodological approach of corpus-based CDA. Following the research philosophy of pragmatism, this triangulated approach combines the typically qualitative CDA and the typically quantitative corpus linguistics (CL), constituting a prime example of mixed-methods research. This dynamic corpus-based CDA approach provides multiple points of entry, enabling the researcher to frequently shunt between the qualitative and quantitative and engage with the data at different levels of abstraction. That is, this mixed-methods approach permits a (comparative) analysis of certain items at an overall level, the identification of interesting collocational patterns, and close readings of concordance lines, amongst others. As such, this layered and dynamic application of the corpus-based CDA approach can be viewed as a powerful synergistic ‘joint venture’ in studying the government-affiliated interpreters’ agency. Compared with purely manual CDA analysis, the pragmatist union between CL and CDA can facilitate data analysis in a more balanced, holistic and (procedurally) systematic manner, thereby promising to lead to more confident claims. This chapter also discussed the various aspects relating to the CE-PolitDisCorp corpus (data selection, collection and preparation etc.) as well as the corpus analytical software used. To answer the research questions, the different subcategories under investigation are briefly introduced and the specific procedures adopted in each subcategory are also discussed. More detailed data analyses are provided in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively.
Chapter 4 Data Analysis: Interpreters’ Institutional Alignment and Strengthening of Government’s Ideological Discourse

This chapter focuses on the government-affiliated interpreters’ institutional alignment and their potential strengthening of the government’s ideological discourse. The corpus-based CDA analysis was carried out on the following subcategories (1) self-referentiality (section 4.1), (2) prominent concepts central to China’s broader post-1978 reform and opening-up discourse (section 4.2), and (3) key issues concerning China’s core national interests (section 4.3).

4.1 Self-referentiality

All (political) systems, for Luhmann (1990: 19), are confronted with the need to form a unique identity and with the ‘imperative to legitimate’ themselves. It is through self-referencing that autonomous or ‘autopoietic’ systems (e.g. institutions and organisations) recursively produce and reproduce elements essential to themselves so as to thrive and continue their existence (e.g. in the form of organisational rules, regulations and policies) (ibid: 39-40). As such, institutional self-referentiality seems crucial to the study of the interpreters’ alignment and their potential strengthening, maintaining or weakening of the institution’s ideological presence. This section investigates the interpreters’ mediation of identified self-referential items between the ST and TT directionally overall (4.1.1) and from a relational (4.1.2) and diachronic perspective (4.1.3).

4.1.1 Overall Level of Self-referentiality between the ST and TT

To examine how self-referentiality is generally rendered by the interpreters, self-referential items were established in both subcorpus A (Chinese) and subcorpus B (English) using AntConc’s Wordlist function and then counted. Self-referential items here are understood to include direct mentions of both China, the ruling party, the Chinese government and key institutions established by the government. Notably, a short phrase might contain more than one self-referential item (e.g. 我们中央政府; literally ‘our central government’). In such

\[\text{Since the interpreters’ institutional alignment is often inextricably linked to the strengthening of the government’s institutional presence and ideological discourse, they are examined and discussed together in this chapter.}\]
relatively rare cases, even though they appear in one short phrase, they were counted separately for the simple reason that *our, central* and *government* are all constitutive elements contributing to the idea of self-referentiality. In other words, discursively and ideologically, saying ‘our central government’ (emphasising the presence of ‘we’ and the ‘central’ position of the government at the heart of China’s policies and decisions) is far from the same as just using the seemingly plain ‘the government’ or ‘we’.

Furthermore, the one-to-many nature of the press conferences involving the Chinese premier directly answering journalists’ questions means that, comparatively speaking, the use of *we* is stable and homogeneous, referring predominantly to the Chinese government/China represented by the Communist Party. Arguably, even in the extremely few cases involving the anaphoric use of *we* (e.g. referring to the Chinese and Indian governments), the interpreters are still aligning (partially) with China and the Chinese government they work for. As such, it is unnecessary to further distinguish what *we* refers to in this particular setting.  

In limited cases where items (e.g. *government*) in the corpus might refer to a foreign government (e.g. the Japanese or Indian government), the item (e.g. *government*) was searched in the respective subcorpus to generate concordance lines. The concordance lines were then re-arranged using the Kwic Sort function (three words to the left or right of the item). In doing so, the instances that are not self-references of China/the Chinese government can be easily identified and discounted.

The self-referential items identified from the Chinese subcorpus and the English subcorpus are presented in Table 1 below. In aggregate, there are 3049 instances of the identified self-referential items in subcorpus A, whereas there are 5679 mentions of the identified self-referential items in subcorpus B. In other words, the frequency of self-referential items in the English TT is almost double that of the Chinese ST (a significant 86.3% increase *vis-à-vis*

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This scenario is rather different from, for instance, the UK parliamentary debate or debate in the EU setting as in Beaton-Thome’s (2010) study. In her case, it is identified that ‘we’ can be used exclusively or inclusively by MEPs to refer to the countries they represent or the EU institution as a whole.
Table 1: Identified self-referential items in both subcorpora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-referential item in ST</th>
<th>Frequency in ST</th>
<th>Self-referential item in TT</th>
<th>Frequency in TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>我们</td>
<td>1360</td>
<td>Various forms of the first-person plural ‘we’</td>
<td>2989 (we 2103; us 133; our* 753)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>中国</td>
<td>818</td>
<td>Chin*</td>
<td>1411 (China 1076/Chinese 335)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>政府</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>government(s)</td>
<td>596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>国家</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>(the/this) country</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>中央</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>central</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>全国</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>党</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>(the) party</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>国务院</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>State Council</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>中央政府</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>central government</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>两会</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>NPC and CPPCC sessions/two sessions</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>祖国</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>motherland</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>人大</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>党中央</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Central Committee</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>人民代表大会</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>National People’s Congress 29</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我国</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Our country</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>中华 (China or Chinese with the emphasis on the cultural and civilisational dimensions)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>中共 (abbreviated form of ‘the Chinese Communist Party’)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CPC (abbreviated form of ‘Communist Party of China’)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>共产党</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Communist Party (of China)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>政协</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>CPPCC</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,049</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,679</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the Chinese discourse due to interpreting). If a roughly similar level of institutional self-referentiality can be viewed as a general degree of interpreter alignment and maintenance of the government’s ideological presence in the TT, then a marked 86.3% increase would constitute the interpreters’ strong alignment and vigorous strengthening of the government’s institutional hegemony. Discursively, the interpreters’ increased (re)production of these
self-referential items works to convey an image that the Chinese government is the chief agent actively involved in different aspects of China’s day-to-day operation.

More specifically, the top three self-referential items in the Chinese subcorpus are 我们 (literally we, 44.6%), 中国 (literally China, 26.8%) and 政府 (literally government, 12.1%), together accounting for 83.5% of all self-references identified. Similarly, the top three self-referential items in the English subcorpus are the first-person plural WE, that is, we and its related forms (52.6%), CHINA, that is, China and Chinese (24.8%) and GOVERNMENT, that is, government(s) (10.5%), constituting 87.9% of all identified self-references in subcorpus B. Apart from their mediation of self-referentiality overall, the interpreters’ increased alignment is also evidenced pronouncedly in their mediation of the top three self-referential items across languages (a marked increase of 119.8%, 72.5% and 61.5% respectively after interpreting). Given the prominence of WE (we, our*, us), CHINA (China/Chinese) and GOVERNMENT, they will form the focus of discussions here.

The interpreters’ frequent use of these self-referential items is highly revealing discursively. The first-person plural pronouns (we, us, our*), for example, are indicative of the interpreters’ positioning and in-group identity (van Dijk 1984). Also, the interpreters’ proliferated use of Chin* and government(s) clearly delineates the geographic context of China and specifies that the Chinese government is the chief social actor behind China’s policies and actions. Example 1 illustrates the interpreter’s increased alignment at a micro level through the vigorous (re)production of various self-referential items in English (a scenario that is reflective of the overall picture in the CE-PolitDisCorp). The interpreters’ additions of self-referential items can also be found in examples 3, 4, 5 and 9 in this chapter.

31Further analysis illustrates the often inextricably connected nature of the various self-referential items, where the first-person plural we and its various forms, government, Communist Party, China/Chinese are sometimes juxtaposed with each other. This is evidenced explicitly in the following appositions (e.g. ‘we as government’ [three times in 2004], ‘we as a nation’ [2005] and ‘we the Chinese nation’ [2007]) and the juxtaposition of various self-referential terms (e.g. [our] party and [our] country, [our/the] party and [the] [central] government, whole party and all the Chinese people, our government, Chinese government). The interwoven, mutually internalising and mutually enhancing nature of these items is unsurprising, given the current one-party rule in mainland China, where the CPC party represents both the ruling party, the Chinese government and, of course, China.
Example 1 (2016)

ST: 所以政府下决心要推进全国医保联网。今年要在基本解决省内就医异地能够直接结算这个基础上，争取能够用两年时间，老年人在异地生活能够住院费用直接结算，使合情合理的异地结算问题能够不再成为群众的痛点。当然，这需要我们有关部门下大力气。我们执政的目的为什么？落脚点还是为了改善民生，就是要让群众对民生的呼声要求，来倒逼我们的发展，推动和检验我们的改革。

Gloss: So the government is determined to push ahead with the national portability of medical insurance. This year will, on the basis that direct settlement of expenses at a provincial level can basically be resolved, strive to use two years’ time to enable the elderly people living away from their hometowns to directly pay hospitalisation fees and to make reasonable and legitimate out-of-town payment issue no longer a point of pain for the masses. Of course, this requires all of our relevant departments to make great efforts. The purpose of our administration is for what? The departure point still is to improve people’s livelihood, that is, to let the masses’ demand for well-being reversely drive our development, push and test our reform.

TT: So the Chinese government is fully determined to achieve national portability of medical insurance schemes at a faster pace. This year we will basically achieve the direct settlement of such expenses at the provincial level. And we also plan to use two years of time to achieve the direct settlement of hospitalisation expenses by retired elderly people in places away from their hometowns, so as to remove this high concern on the minds of our people. And this requires that all relevant government departments to make tremendous efforts. All the government's work is to improve the well-being of our people. So we need to use the concrete wishes for a better life by our people to drive our development, and reform and test the results of our reform.

In this example extracted from the Premier-Meets-the-Press Conference in 2016, the overall message has been relatively accurately rendered. However, there are a number of salient signs indicative of the interpreter’s institutional alignment. In terms of self-referentiality, a considerably stronger presence of the Chinese government can be found in the TT vis-à-vis the ST. As marked in bold, while there are 5 instances of self-references in the ST (government, our, our, our and our), 12 instances were identified in the English TT (more than twice the number in ST). Notably, none of the additions was triggered by the ST or the grammatical differences between the two languages.

More specifically, self-referential items such as Chinese and government have been added to specify that it is the ‘Chinese’ government that is fully determined and all relevant ‘government’ departments are to make tremendous efforts. In addition, a very noticeable
collocational pattern ‘our people’ can be detected in the TT. That is, 群众 (the masses), 民生 (people’s livelihood) and 群众 (the masses) have all been rendered into English as ‘our people’ with the addition our (three instances in this short extract alone). Discursively, the interpreter’s repeated use of ‘our people’ indicates a relationship of ‘belonging’, re-confirming the reality that the people are under the leadership of the Chinese government and the Communist party (of which the interpreter is a core member). Cumulatively, such active engagement (re)creates a positive image of the government being competent, committed and duty-bound to serve the people over the 20 years’ data.

Having examined the general tendency for interpreters to proliferate the use of self-referential items as a way of aligning institutionally and reinforcing the government’s institutional hegemony, it is useful to further pinpoint the position where these items appear in sentences/clauses for more refined analysis. This brings to the fore the discussions regarding theme/rheme in Systemic Functional Linguistics. Themes, as ‘discourse-initiating units’ (Halliday 2004: 89), occupy the first position and form the point of departure for clauses, which are followed and commented on by rhemes. For Halliday (2004), elements in the thematic position tend to draw more readers/listeners’ attention than elements in the rhematic position. This is echoed by Baker (2018), who believes that the overall choice and ordering of themes plays an important part in organising a text and in providing a point of orientation for a given stretch of language. A focus on theme-rheme has proven ideologically salient (cf. Potter 2016, which examines English and Arabic news reports). For Baker (2018), in translation and interpreting studies, the cumulative effect of thematic choice should not be underestimated. The choice of theme therefore can be a way of linguistic engineering in interpreting, which is of particular interest from the perspective of ideology and discourse. Chinese and English follow a similar SVO (subject+verb+object) structure, thus making the two languages directly comparable overall regarding theme/rheme.

Notably, themes and subjects often have considerable overlap as themes typically are subjects in both languages (unmarked theme). Exceptions, however, do exist, where themes are not the subjects (marked theme). An example of this is ‘over the past four years, this government
(subject) has achieved a lot’. Given the nature of the project, the identification and comparison of what appears in the subject position as the actual agent or initiator behind the various actions is of more relevance and interest ideologically than simply what comes first in a sentence or clause. As such, attention is focused on the instances of major self-referential items that appear in the subject position in this study. To this end, the top three self-referential terms in Chinese and English were searched in both subcorpora. The retrieved concordance lines were further sorted to facilitate the researcher’s observation. The self-referential items are found to largely assume preeminent positions as the subjects of sentences/clauses in both subcorpora.

Statistically, 我们 occupies the subject position in the Chinese clauses/sentences 1157 times, out of 1360 mentions of 我们 in the Chinese subcorpus. In comparison, we assumes the subject position in English 2013 times, out of 2989 instances of the broader WE (we, us, our*) identified. Similarly, 政府 occupies the subject position 223 times in Chinese, whereas government occupies the subject position 326 times in English. This same trend is also found in the comparison between 中国 and China. In other words, statistically, self-referential items tend to be rendered significantly more explicit as subjects in English, thus further foregrounding the Chinese government discursively as the social actor and agent directly responsible for a range of actions in the interpreted discourse. This is aptly illustrated in Example 2, where the Chinese ‘government’ becomes the subject/theme in the English interpretation (rather than ‘the government’s work’).

Example 2 (2007)

ST: 政府工作走过了四个年头，它告诉我们必须懂得一个真理...
Gloss: The government’s work has gone through four years. It told us that must understand one truth...
TT: This government has been serving the people for four years. The four years of government work has taught me three things...

This and the interpreter’s employment of the present perfect continuous structure highlight the vital role of the Chinese government as the chief actor in ‘serving the people’. The tendency for self-referential items to be rendered more prominent and assume the
subject/theme position in English can also be found in examples 3, 4 and 6.

To sum up, a comparison of the identified self-referral terms between subcorpus A and B points to government-affiliated interpreters’ significantly increased alignment institutionally with the Chinese government. Such increased alignment is salient discursively on many levels. First and foremost, the interpreters’ repeated additions of self-referral items demonstrate their in-group identity (van Dijk 1984) institutionally in the sense that they are core members of the Chinese government and are amongst the top echelon of China’s ruling elite. Going beyond being merely indicative of interpreters’ institutional identity, the perceived tendency also strengthens the centripetal force and ‘unitary language’ (Beaton 2007: 279) of the specific institution, leading to increased presence and institutional hegemony of the government overall. From the perspective of image (re)construction, the pervasive presence of the various self-referral items in the TT also helps (re)create an image of the government being a highly active, competent and committed actor in charge of China’s day-to-day running in the interpreted English discourse.

4.1.2 Interpreters’ Negotiation of Self-referentiality from a Relational Perspective

Having examined the interpreters’ mediation of self-referral items directionally between the ST and TT, their alignment is now approached from a relational perspective. This makes it possible to see how China’s official institutional voice is negotiated by the interpreters, that is, the relative foregrounding and/or backgrounding32 of certain self-referral items over others through interpreting. Given the prominence of the first-person plural pronouns (we, our*, us) in the CE-PolitDisCorp, attention was focused on the relationships between the collective WE and the premier’s personal voice I, WE and CHINA as well as WE and GOVERNMENT.

32Discussions on foregrounding and backgrounding can be found in Fairclough (1995). In this corpus-based study, however, foregrounding and backgrounding refer to the frequency shift of a certain item as a result of interpreting. In other words, if certain items are featured more (or less) prominently in the TT, they are relatively foregrounded (or backgrounded). This is of interest from the perspective of the interpreters’ ideological mediation.
4.1.2.1 Collective WE vis-à-vis Personal I

To explore the relational nexus between the government’s collective voice WE and the Chinese premier’s personal voice I as a result of interpreting, personal pronouns 我们 and 我 were searched in subcorpus A. Similarly, personal pronouns related to WE (we, our*, us) and I (I, my, mine, me, myself) were searched in subcorpus B. Information regarding the frequencies of these personal pronouns and the WE/I ratios in both subcorpora is presented in Table 2. Statistically, the WE/I ratios for subcorpora A and B are 1.025 and 1.51. To put things into perspective, for every 1000 mentions of the broader I, there are 1025 and 1510 mentions of the broader WE in Chinese and English respectively. This points to a significant (relative) foregrounding of the ideological presence of a collective WE in English proportionately at the expense of that of the premier’s personal voice. This is achieved through the interpreters’ proportionally stronger alignment with the collective WE (presumably the voice of China and, by extension, the voice of the Chinese nation and civilisation represented and led by the Communist party and the government).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Subcorpus A (Chinese)</th>
<th>Subcorpus B (English)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broader WE</td>
<td>我们 (1360)</td>
<td>we 2103; our* 753; us 133 (2989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broader I</td>
<td>我 (1327)</td>
<td>I 1516; my 245; mine 1; me 181; myself 36 (1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE/I ratio</td>
<td>1.025</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Broader WE and broader I in both subcorpora

4.1.2.2 Collective WE vis-à-vis GOVERNMENT and CHINA

Similarly, the relational links between the collective WE (we, us, our*), GOVERNMENT and CHINA (China and Chinese) are discussed here. Firstly, the WE/GOVERNMENT ratios were calculated in both subcorpora. Statistically, the WE/GOVERNMENT ratios are 3.686 and 5.015 in subcorpus A and B. That is, for 1,000 mentions of GOVERNMENT, there are 3,686 and 5,015 mentions of the broader WE in Chinese and English respectively. While there is a (dramatically) increased presence of government in the TT in absolute terms (a 61.5% increase over the ST, which is in itself significant), the interpreters, comparatively, are
more inclined to use *we* and its related forms in the TT, hence a relative backgrounding of the more specific notion ‘government’. In a similar vein, the WE/CHINA ratios were calculated in both subcorpora. Statistically, the WE/CHINA ratios are 1.663 and 2.118 (for 1,000 mentions of *China/Chinese* there are 1,663 and 2,118 mentions of the broader WE in the ST and TT). As such, while items subsumed under WE and CHINA were both statistically (over)produced in the TT in absolute terms, the broader CHINA has been comparatively backgrounded in interpreting.

While the various lexical items subsumed under the broader WE (*we, us, our*) apparently refer to the government and China, WE is arguably an embodied and subtle concept in the unique Chinese context. According to the guiding ‘Three Represents’ Thought that was written into the Constitution, the Communist Party of China (CPC) must always represent the development trend of China’s advanced productive forces, the orientation of China’s advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people. As such, the broader WE in the Chinese context inseparably represents not just the Communist party, the government, and China as a political entity but also the entire Chinese nation and civilisation by extension. Discursively, the first-person plural *we* and its related forms are more engaging, affective and evocative in nature than the more specific and perhaps cold and transitory item *government* (consider, for example, ‘yes, we can’, ‘we’ve got it covered’, ‘come fly with us’ in commercial and political language use).

Rather than dichotomising China, the government and, for instance, the people, the interpreters’ proliferated use and relative foregrounding of the collective WE (*we, us, our*), in effect, foster a sense of ‘collective intentionality’, which, according to Searle (1995: 24-25), represents ‘a sense of doing (wanting, believing, etc.) something together’. This strengthened sense of togetherness conveyed by the interpreters seems to highlight the inseparable nature of the will/achievements of the government and the will/achievements of the people. In other words, the relative foregrounding of WE indicates that, although the Chinese government under the CPC is the predominant social actor in charge, ‘we’ are in this together every step of the way in China’s progress *en route* to the realisation of its socialist goals and the ‘great
rejuvenation of the Chinese nation’. As such, discursively and cognitively, the interpreters’ foregrounding of the collective WE has consolidated and naturalised the leadership role of the CPC, thereby further strengthening the hegemonic discourse that WE led by the CPC represents the collective voice of the Chinese people as well as the Chinese nation and civilisation.

4.1.3 A Diachronic Analysis of the Broader WE across Administrations

As mentioned above, the broader WE, that is, we and its related forms are featured most prominently in the CE-PolitDisCorp both in absolute terms and relationally. For a deeper understanding of interpreters’ alignment, the broader WE was investigated further from a diachronic perspective. The 20 years’ press conference data can be divided into three administrations: Premier Zhu (1998-2002), Premier Wen (2003-2012) and Premier Li (2013-2017). In each period, 我们 and its English equivalent WE (we, our* and us) were searched in both subcorpora. Mentions of the items in each period were counted and adjusted based on average annual frequency for comparison diachronically (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese subcorpus (freq/freq per year)</th>
<th>English subcorpus (freq/freq per year)</th>
<th>Increase (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zhu (1998-2002)</strong></td>
<td>327/65.4 (7082.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>493/98.6 (6101.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wen (2003-2012)</strong></td>
<td>646/64.6 (8614.5 tokens/year)</td>
<td>1,624/162.4 (7166.3 tokens/year)</td>
<td>151.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Li (2013-2017)</strong></td>
<td>387/77.4 (9740.4 tokens/year)</td>
<td>872/174.4 (7698.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>125.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td>1,360/68</td>
<td>2,989/149.45</td>
<td>119.78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Frequencies of the Broader WE across administrations

While on average there is roughly a similar number of 我们 in the ST during each administration each year (65.4, 64.6 and 77.4 respectively), the interpreters have shown increased alignment with the premier’s articulation of the first-person plural 我们 in each period (a 50.8%, 151.4% and 125.3% increase respectively). In particular, there is a dramatic surge in the interpreters’ first-person plural pronoun use in the TT, with premier Wen’s administration being a pronounced watershed. The sudden spike in interpreters’ alignment
witnessed in premier Wen’s administration became relatively stabilised and continued into his successor premier Li’s administration.

Interestingly, the quantitative analysis conducted by Wu & Zhao (2016) focusing on the aggressiveness of Chinese premiers’ answers in Mandarin Chinese also identifies the administration starting from 2003 as an important ‘watershed’. Since 2003, the adversarialness of the premiers’ answers has decreased significantly, which, as they posit, might have to do with the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) crisis that broke out in China that year. The previous way of blocking and downplaying negative news and the inefficient release of information made the government understand the crucial importance of transparency and a less aggressive attitude in the maintenance of government-journalist ties (Liang & Xue 2004). This seems to suggest that, in lieu of the more aggressive approach of the previous government, the Hu-Wen administration adopted a more open style of governance featuring active engagement (at least evidenced in these press conferences). This perceived trend of engagement has, in turn, been further facilitated by the interpreters through their increased alignment with the government starting from 2003. As such, the decrease in adversarialness of the premiers’ answers has, to some extent, been compensated by the interpreters’ more pronounced and active positioning using WE, which leads to an increasingly strengthened level of togetherness and the government’s institutional hegemony.

In sum, benefitting from CDA analysis based on a large corpus, this section has investigated the interpreters’ mediation of self-referentiality from various angles. In absolute terms, there is markedly increased (re)production of self-referential terms in the English TT (86.3% increase), pointing to increased and active interpreter alignment institutionally. Such increased (re)production of self-referential items has significantly strengthened the government’s ideological presence and institutional hegemony overall, (re)creating an active image of the government being omnipresent, responsible and in control cumulatively over the 20 years. In addition, an examination of the specific position of the top-three self-referential items in both subcorpora shows that statistically the top-three self-referential items tend to more frequently occupy the subject position in clauses and sentences in English. As such, the
Chinese government is rendered more explicit and prominent in the interpreted English discourse as the chief social actor in China responsible for a range of actions.

From a relational vantage point, the broader WE (we, our*, us) proves to be the voice of choice adopted by government-affiliated interpreters. Proportionately, its frequent use is employed at the expense of the premier’s personal voice I, and seems to have relatively backgrounded the presence of GOVERNMENT and CHINA. The frequent use of the first-person plural we and its related forms indicates the interpreters’ positioning as part of the government and helps (re)construct ‘collective intentionality’ (Searle 1995: 24-25) and an emphatic sense of togetherness in English. Further diachronic investigation of the broader WE demonstrates that the interpreters tend to actively (re)produce the we-related items in each administration. This, however, is most pronounced during premier Wen’s administration (2003-2012), a period featuring a softer approach adopted by the Chinese leadership. To some extent, the sharp drop in the adversarialness and ideological force of the premier’s answers in this period seems to have been compensated for by a great strengthening in the government’s institutional hegemony due to the interpreters’ increased alignment.

Admittedly, given the consecutive mode of interpreting and the pressure these press conference interpreters are under, the additions of we and its related forms (e.g. our, us) can be considered a convenient coping strategy and a relatively safe option for interpreters when they (re)structure their utterances from notes. From a product-oriented perspective, however, the proliferated use and relative foregrounding of the first-person plural WE (vis-à-vis GOVERNMENT and CHINA) can be of great significance discursively. This not only is indicative of their institutional identity but also works to enhance the government’s institutional hegemony in the English discourse in a less noticeable yet cumulative manner. This is perhaps in line with Fairclough’s observation that ‘ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible’ (1989: 85).

Given the limited space, more detailed and contextualised discussions regarding the interpreters’ use of the top-three self-referential items will be presented throughout the data
analysis chapters both in the form of patternings and examples. For instance, the pattern [top three self-referential items+has/have+done/been doing] is discussed in 5.1 in studying the interpreters’ (re)construction of China’s discourse on its past achievements. Also, the patterns [top three self-referential items+is/are+noun/doing] and [top three self-referential items+has/have+noun] are explored in 5.2 in investigating the interpreters’ (re)construction of China’s discourse on its current conditions. Similarly, in examining the interpreters’ mediation of China’s discourse on its future actions, the pattern [top three self-referential items+modal verbs (should/must/can etc.)+do] is also touched upon. In addition, such ideologically salient patterns as ‘our Hong Kong/Taiwan compatriots’ and ‘our people’ are discussed in some depth in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively.

4.2 Prominent Discourses Central to the Post-1978 Reform and Opening-up Theme

There are two major discourse modes in contemporary China, that is, revolutionary discourse (1949-1977) and reform discourse since 1978 (Gu 1996). The change in discourse mode reflects a major ‘ideological shift’ (Scollon & Pan 1997) towards a pragmatist approach, focusing on reform and economic development. The interpreter-mediated press conferences became institutionalised and have been continuously held over the broader historical period of China’s reform and opening-up (hereafter ROU). The overarching ROU discourse (containing various specific constitutive discourses) underpins China’s development and has been central to China’s discursive formations in recent decades. This section explores how the major elements (e.g. reform, development, economy and stability) constitutive of the overarching post-1978 discourse are (re)presented in English and investigates the interpreters’ level of institutional alignment with Beijing.

Given that discourse is inevitably constructed on many levels, the corpus-based analysis approaches the various constitutive discourses both at a lexical level overall and in the form of collocations and patterned constructions. A focus on lexical items is of great importance. The premier’s frequent (or infrequent) articulation of certain important items (reform, economy and Taiwan etc.) reflects the government’s level of attention, which is often widely used by the media and China observers as a major barometer to decipher Beijing’s changes in
policy and shifts in its priorities. On a lexical level, the various forms of certain lexical items are explored and compared in both subcorpora from an overall perspective and diachronically. This constitutes the most straightforward and targeted way of investigating interpreter alignment. Statistically, the more times certain item(s) are (re)articulated in interpreting, the more prominence they are given in the TT (hence a higher level of interpreter alignment vis-à-vis the government’s policies and a strengthening of its ideological discourse). If the opposite is found, it can be viewed that the ideological discourse is somewhat diluted (thus a weakening of the ST).

Additionally, discourse is (re)constructed through collocations or the ‘company’ (Firth 1957: 179) certain items keep. A word’s collocations are ‘statements of the habitual and customary places of that word’ (ibid: 181). Collocations can be of significance either because they are frequently repeated or they are unexpected (Sinclair 1991). The collocate lists of certain items are generated for both subcorpora and placed into different semantic groups, thus making it possible to shed light on the actual propositional content and identify what items/concepts are made more closely related to the search items and what are given more prominence in the interpreted discourse. To do this, T-score is selected as the collocate measure and the default window span of 5 words to the left and right of the node word is employed for both subcorpora.33 Throughout the process, attention is placed on interesting patterns discerned in the concordance lines.

Where necessary, attention is also paid to the interpreters’ rendition of fixed slogan-like formulations or tifa (提法). The pithy and definitive-sounding formulations are condensed distillations of the government’s ideological discourses. Studying the important slogans and fixed constructions can indicate major sociopolitical and ideological changes in the Chinese context and pinpoint the interpreters’ level of alignment with China’s discursive formulations. Examples are also provided to illustrate the micro workings of interpreter agency.

33Although the optimal window span for investigating collocates remains a matter of dispute, a span of -5 and +5 is commonly adopted and is considered sufficient to retrieve ‘more than 95% of all relevant information’ (Thomas 1993: 47). As such, an initial window span of 5 words to the left and right is set as a starting point. If necessary, the span is widened.
4.2.1 Discourse on Reform

Without doubt, reform constitutes a key component of the reform and opening-up programme. To explore the interpreters’ alignment, China’s discourse on reform is approached at the following levels:

4.2.1.1 Overall Level of Alignment on Reform

For an overall comparison, 改革* and reform*/restructur* (both are used to render 改革 in Chinese) were searched in subcorpus A and B respectively. Reform*/restructur* are found to be more prominent in the interpreted discourse than their Chinese counterpart both in absolute terms (21.4% increase) and diachronically in each period (Table 4). Such increased (re)production (cf. Example 3) constitutes a case of repetition (Beaton 2007; Fairclough 2000; Lahlali 2012). This signals an increased level of interpreter alignment overall, thereby reinforcing China’s reform discourse at least lexically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese subcorpus (freq/freq per year)</th>
<th>English subcorpus (freq/freq per year)</th>
<th>Increase (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zhu (1998-2002)</td>
<td>68/13.6 (7082.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>76/15.2 (6101.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen (2003-2012)</td>
<td>183/18.3 (8614.5 tokens/year)</td>
<td>214/21.4 (7166.3 tokens/year)</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li (2013-2017)</td>
<td>72/14.4 (9740.4 tokens/year)</td>
<td>102/20.4 (7698.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Reform*/restructur* in both subcorpora and across the administrations

Interestingly, the interpreters’ increased (re)production of reform*/restructur* has become more pronounced progressively over the three administrations (11.8%, 16.9% and 41.7% respectively). From a product-oriented perspective, this conveys a heightened sense that, as China’s reforms deepen, the Chinese leadership is increasingly reform-minded and determined to go ahead with various reforms.

4.2.1.2 Collocational Patterns Relating to Reform

For a more refined analysis, the collocates of 改革* and reform*/restructur* were
established in both subcorpora (excluding such items as of, a, in, and, to, is). The collocates were then categorised into the following semantic groups (Table 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social actor (self-referential items)</th>
<th>Chinese subcorpus (freq)</th>
<th>English subcorpus (freq)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>动(53); 进行(23); 推 (10); 继续(8); 深化(8); 实行(8); 建立(7); 完善(7); 解决(6);坚持(6); 进一步(5); 形成(5); 解放(4); 促进(4); 加快(3); 加强(3); 调整(2); 稳定(2); 确保(2); 激活(2); 前进(2); 考力(1);</td>
<td>我们(68); 中国(42); 政府(26);</td>
<td>We(93)/our(48)/us(4); China(51); government(38);</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action and change</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>进(46); 必须(8); 会(8);</td>
<td></td>
<td>pursu:* (27); advance:* (13);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>应该/应当(6); 需要(6); 可以(4);</td>
<td></td>
<td>press (ahead with) (12); deepen:* (12);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>continue(10); conduct:* (8); promote(7); further(7); forward(7); introduce*(7); start*(6); end* (6); push*(6); streamlin* (5); establish* (4); launch* (4); achieve* (3); complet* (3); supply (3); stimulate (1); stabilised (1); energise (1); accelerate (1);</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modality</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>带(66); 需要(19); 必须(11); can(10); should(8); to have(2);</td>
<td></td>
<td>will (56); need (19); must (11); can (10); should (8); have to (2);</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other related important concepts and propositional content</th>
<th>Chinese subcorpus (freq)</th>
<th>English subcorpus (freq)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>体制(86); 制度(44); 农村(35); 经济(34); 政治(33); 改革(28); 金融(22); 建设(18); 汇率(16); 发展(15); 企业(15); 机构(12); 社会(11); 人民币(11); 成功(11); 机制(10); 市场(10); 国有(10); 银行(9); 财税(8); 粮食(8); 人民(8); 结构(7); 管理(7); 税费(7); 司法(7); 医疗(7); 财政(6); 社会主义(6); 目标(6); 国家(6); 领导(5); 过程(5); 行政(5); 简政放权(5); 结构性(5); 商业(5); 税收(4); 现代化(4); 市场化(4); 创新(4); 政策(3); 投资(3); 进程(1); 进展(1);</td>
<td></td>
<td>system(s) (64); political (36); economy/economic (35); opening (up) (28); rural/countryside/agriculture (28); structural/structure (19); development/develop (18); market (14); exchange rate (14); financial (13); state (12); tax (11); enterprise(s) (11); step(s) (10); RMB (9); institutional (9); measure(s) (8); effort(s) (8); grain(s) (8); fee (7); distribution (7); interest(s) (7); regime (7); taxation (6); banking (6); social/society (6); people (6); initiative(s) (6); sector (5); process (5); commercial (5); education(al) (5); task (4); success (4); modernisation (4); innovation (4); governance (4); goal (4); banks (4); socials* (4); income (3); progress (3); management (3); stability (2); adjustment (2); invest/investment (2);</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Collocates of reform*/restruct* in both subcorpora

Comparative analysis shows that self-referential items (‘we’ and its related forms, ‘government’ and the toponym ‘China’) are amongst the top collocates in both subcorpora. Interestingly, these self-referential items are rendered considerably more prominent in the TT (234 instances) than the ST (136 instances), constituting a 72% increase. This increased prominence in the interpreted English discourse further highlights the Chinese government’s
crucial role as the predominant actor behind China’s various reforms. This is illustrated in Examples 3 and 4 in this section.

Also, reform*/restructur* in the TT are more closely associated with modality (will, need, must, can, should, have to) than in the ST (104 instances versus 78 instances). The more modalised TT conveys a stronger level of willingness and commitment in the government’s reform efforts (Figure 1 illustrates the close associations of reform* with ‘we’ and/or modality in English).

![Table with text]

Figure 1: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring reform*, ‘we’ and modality (by collocation)

Regarding actions (verbs), the information has been more or less accurately rendered, including, for instance, what, how and why to pursue, advance, deepen and push forward various reforms. Finally, in terms of propositional content and major concepts, the collocate list suggests that China has been focusing on various reforms (e.g. market-oriented reform, banking reform, SOE reform, rural reform, exchange rate reform and housing reform).
Comparisons between the items on both lists illustrate that these miscellaneous reforms are the result of the Chinese STs. This points to a general maintenance of the Chinese discourse.

Although the propositional content has been largely maintained by the interpreters, items relating specifically to China’s system and institutional structure seem to be significantly under-represented in the TT. There are 154 instances of system and institution-related items in the ST (体制 86; 制度 44; 机构 12; 结构 7; 结构性 5). However, there are interestingly only 92 instances in the interpreted TT (system/systems 64; structure/structural 19; institutional 9). This deficit is evidenced visibly in the interpretation of 政治体制改革 and 经济体制改革. While the two constructions are successfully conveyed between the two subcorpora statistically in number, clear shifts in wording were identified. Out of the 21 instances of 政治体制改革 (literally: political system reform) and 13 instances of 经济体制改革 (literally: economic system reform) in the ST, 13 instances (62%) and 9 instances (69.2%) are rendered into English respectively as ‘political restructuring’ and ‘economic restructuring’ without explicitly mentioning ‘system’ (see Figure 2). Examples of this are ‘reform is an eternal theme of history. Political restructuring and economic restructuring should be advanced in a coordinated way’ and ‘political restructuring offers a guarantee for our economic restructuring endeavour. Without political restructuring, the economic restructuring would not succeed. And the achievements we have made in economic restructuring may be lost’.

Rather than adopting the obvious strategy of literal translation, which is consistently seen in the treatment of other specialised reforms, the pronounced tendency to translate political/economic system reform in Chinese as political/economic restructuring is salient ideologically. In the Chinese context, political and economic system reforms appear to be gradual and ameliorative processes underpinned by the upholding of the socialist system. Political reform, as Premier Wen explicates, revolves around ‘what is socialism, how to build and improve socialism’ and ‘what kind of party to build and how to build it’ (2003 conference). Therefore, fundamental systematic change is ‘never on the agenda’ and the reform process, if anything, is ‘aimed to re-strengthen the existing political system’
address the deep-rooted problems in the economy and achieve restructuring, transformation of the economic growth and resettlement of people, as well as in the field of cooperate restructuring. In this context we need to learn how to help between maintaining fast yet steady economy development, restructuring our economic structure, and managing to give priority to transforming the growth pattern and economic restructuring in all our efforts. And to do that, we must an eternal theme of history. Political restructuring and economic restructuring should be advanced in a coordinated way not succeed. And the achievements we have made in economic restructuring may be lost. Third, I take the view that it is impossible for us to complete the arduous task of economic restructuring and changing the growth pattern in a second, political restructuring offers a guarantee for our economic restructuring endeavor. Without political restructuring, all these above-mentioned goals we must pursue economic restructuring and political restructuring. Fifth, we must ensure that each and every of the country. This government plans to push forward political restructuring in three aspects. First, scientific and reasonably. I believe reform is an eternal theme of history. Political restructuring and economic restructuring should be government. We have always approached the subject of political restructuring from two major perspectives. One is we will never copy the western model when we carry out political restructuring. In other words, we will NOT copy the whole system. It will be a gradual process. It is by no means easy to pursue political restructuring in such a big country with 1.3 billion population. We will press ahead with economic restructuring, political restructuring and various reforms in other aspects. The country will enjoy continuous vigor and vitality. Second, political restructuring offers a guarantee for our economic reform and political restructuring. Without success in the political restructuring, the economic reform in China cannot succeed. I think that is a question involving the political restructuring so that should be done according to the need for our economic restructuring endeavor. Without political restructuring, the economic restructuring would not grasp two crucial links, namely, to continue to advance strategic restructuring of our economy and to continue to operate.

Figure 2: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring economic/political restructuring (sorted to the left)

Similarly, economic system reform in the Chinese context is not a switch towards capitalism but reform predicated on the espousal of ‘socialist market economy’ (more detailed discussions on ‘socialist market economy’ and ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’ can be found in 4.2.3 and 4.2.7).

Whilst mentions of political/economic system reform in Chinese are of relevance domestically and serve to show the government’s resolve to effect positive changes (e.g. tackle corruption, streamline administration), system reform in English seems to indicate more drastic changes to mend the dysfunctional or faulty system. The word restructuring by
comparison places more emphasis on the government’s self-improvement institutionally as if it were a corporation. Arguably, opting for a literal rendition in English potentially risks the incremental economic and political reforms being misconstrued by the outside world as any fundamental changes in China’s (presumably faulty) political and economic systems. As such, the repeated articulations of political/economic restructuring can be seen as the interpreters’ conscious decision to accommodate the TT audience to avoid causing misinterpretation and speculation internationally. This level of exceptional and nuanced treatment and (re)contextualisation suggests that the interpreters have aligned with the government and taken into account the international reception and potential global consequences of the ST message (see example 4).

Moreover, China’s discursive articulation on reform is often closely associated with other important abstract concepts. For example, there are 28 instances of the overarching construction 改革开放 (literally: reform and opening-up34) in Chinese and the same number of its rough equivalents in English: reform and opening-up (21 instances); reform, opening-up and (socialist) modernisation (drive) (4 instances); reform, opening-up and build* socialism with Chinese characteristics (2 instances); reform and opening wider (1 instance). Reform is also closely associated with ‘development’ and, to a lesser extent, ‘stability’ in English: reform and develop (1 instance), reform and development (11 instances) and reform, development and stability (2 instances). The juxtaposition of these concepts shows that cognitively reform is inextricably linked with development and stability in China. That is, there cannot be real development without reform. Similarly, without stability as the precondition, reform and development are impossible. These patterned constructions are accurate reflections of the ST.

34Given the limited space, the related notion ‘openness’ is briefly explored. While there are 121 instances of 开放/放开/敞开/公开 in Chinese, there are 136 instances of open* (open, opened, opening, opening-up, openness) in English (a 12.4% increase), thus making the government appear more committed to further opening-up in English. Diachronically, this trend is reflected in each administration. Interestingly, there are increasing mentions of ‘openness’ across the three administrations in both languages (2.6, 5.9 and 9.8 times per year in Chinese versus 4.2, 5.9 and 11.2 in English). This points to an increasing level of openness as China’s reform and opening-up progresses (where China has transformed from a closed inward-looking country to an increasingly open nation keen to embrace the world). Some of the concordance lines featuring openness include ‘only a nation that is open and inclusive can prosper’, ‘China will unswervingly pursue the policy of opening-up to the outside world’, ‘we will further open up China to the rest of the world’, ‘we should open the Chinese telecommunications market to foreign investors’.
The examples below illustrate some of the points discussed above (the underlined sections indicate major shifts). Example 3 concerns the interpreter’s additions of self-referential items and the word ‘reform’ as well as the use of the high-modality ‘must’. Example 4 concerns the interpreter’s additions of self-referential items and the nuanced treatment of ‘economic/political system reform’ in the TT.

Example 3 (2016)

**ST:** 所以简政放权必须一以贯之。哪里遇到问题碰到阻力就要设法去解决。

**Gloss:** So the streamlining of administration and delegation of power must be consistent. Where problems are met and resistance is encountered, efforts need to be made to solve them.

**TT:** We must make persistent efforts to forge ahead with this government reform and wherever there is an obstacle to this reform, the government must get right on it.

Example 4 (2011)

**ST:** 而做到所有这一些，都必须推进经济体制改革和政治体制改革。

**Gloss:** To achieve all these, economic system reform and political system reform must be pushed forward.

**TT:** If we are to achieve all these above-mentioned goals, we must pursue economic restructuring and political restructuring.

### 4.2.2 Discourse on Development

Another element essential to the overarching reform and opening-up discourse is development. Development is closely related to various kinds of reform and is central to the course of China’s modernisation. The pragmatist emphasis on development is encapsulated in Deng Xiaoping’s famous post-1978 guiding slogan that ‘development is the only hard truth’ (*fazhan caishi yingdaoli*).

#### 4.2.2.1 Overall Level of Alignment on Development

For a general idea of the interpreters’ alignment, 发展* and develop* (develop, developing, developed, development) were searched in both subcorpora. Statistically, development-related items are rendered more visible in English both in aggregate and in all three administrations (Table 6). This points to stronger interpreter alignment in (re)articulating China’s discourse, making development appear more prominent on the
government’s agenda in English. This is illustrated in Example 5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese subcorpus (freq/freq per year)</th>
<th>English subcorpus (freq/freq per year)</th>
<th>Increase (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zhu (1998-2002)</strong></td>
<td>42/8.4 (7082.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>61/12.2 (6101.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wen (2003-2012)</strong></td>
<td>291/29.1 (8614.5 tokens/year)</td>
<td>357/35.7 (7166.3 tokens/year)</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Li (2013-2017)</strong></td>
<td>118/23.6 (9740.4 tokens/year)</td>
<td>121/24.2 (7698.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>2.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td>451</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Develop* in both subcorpora and across the administrations

**Example 5 (2011)**

**ST:** 在今后五年以至中国经济发展的相当长时期, 我们要把转变经济增长方式作为主线, 真正使中国的经济转到主要依靠科技进步和提高劳动者素质上来, 着重提高经济的增长的质量和效益。

**Gloss:** In the coming five years and even for a fairly long time in China’s economic development, we will take the transformation of economic growth pattern as the main focus to really make China’s economy shift towards one that mostly relies on technological progress and improvement of labour force quality, emphasising on raising the quality and efficiency of economic growth.

**TT:** In the next five years and even for a much longer period of time to come in the course of China’s economic development, we will take the transformation of China’s economic development pattern as our priority task so that we will be able to refocus China’s economic development to scientific and technological advances and to higher educational level of the labour force. And we will be able to in that way raise the quality and efficiency of China’s economic development.

As this example shows, there is increased production of the lexical item development in the TT, which makes the concept more prominent in English. This (re)constructs an image that Beijing is highly keen on development in the interpreted discourse.

**4.2.2.2 Collocational Patterns Relating to Development**

For more detailed analysis, the top collocates were established through searching 发展* and develop* in both subcorpora, which were further placed into the following semantic categories (Table 7). A comparison shows that, while the action (verbs) and the propositional
content are generally well maintained in the TT, China and the Chinese government again are rendered more prominent as the chief social actor through the interpreters’ increased employment of self-referential items (95.6% increase). Also, developments in various areas are rendered more modalised or with higher modality value, thus indicating a stronger sense of willingness, commitment, obligation and determination in the interpreted English discourse. These are illustrated in Examples 6 and 7 as well as Example 5 above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social actor (self-referential items)</th>
<th>Chinese subcorpus (freq)</th>
<th>English subcorpus (freq)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>我们(75); 中国(72); 政府(6); 中央(5)</td>
<td>China (129)/Chinese (8); we (100)/our (60)/us (6); government (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action and change</td>
<td>保持 (24); 进一步 (16); 改善 (13); 有利于 (13); 推进 (13); 调整 (12); 促进 (12); 转变 (10); 支持 (10); 解决 (9); 向前 (8); 坚持 (8); 维护 (8); 协调 (7); 推动 (7); 实现 (7); 重视 (6); 提高 (6); 继续 (6); 加快 (5); 鼓励 (5); 关注 (5); 扩大 (5); 努力 (5); 抑制 (4); 集中 (4); 持续 (4); 加强 (4); 制定 (3); 落实 (3)</td>
<td>continu* (19); support* (16); pursu* (15); achiev* (14); further (13); enjoy* (10); transform* (10); improve* (10); promot* (9); encourage (7); maintain* (7); coordinat* (7); enhance (6); help (6); give (6); boost* (6); ensure (5); accelerat* (5); focus (4); sustain* (4); vigorously (3); strengthen (3); concentrat* (2); introduce* (2); handl* (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modality</td>
<td>要/需要 (49); 会 (24); 可以 (13); 必须 (11); 应该 (4)</td>
<td>will (58); should (16); need (15)/needs (3); can (15); must (8); may (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>内容 (115); 关系 (57); 和平 (41); 两岸 (30); 社会 (30); 国家 (30); 香港 (28); 稳定 (26); 市场 (19); 合</td>
<td>economic (85)/economy (25); country (48); countries (35); social (30); relations (27); Hong Kong (26); peaceful (19); peace (15); market (19); reform (18); new (16);</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 7: Collocates of develop* in both subcorpora.

| Other related important concepts and propositiona l content | world(14); west(13); cross-straits(13); cooperation(13); mainland(12); education(11); socialist(11)/socialism(1); infrastructure(10); sector(10); policy(10); largest(9); stability(9); rural(9); efforts(9); system(9); financial(9); all-round(7); science(8); agriculture(8); common(8); Tibet(8); future(8); housing(8); good(8); path(7); pattern(7); opportunities(7); cultural(7); itself(7); ties(7); course(7); relationship(7); trade(7); people(9); scientific(6); Taiwan(7); improvement(6); urban(6); project(6); energy(6); enterprises(6); major(6); own(6); needs(2); important(6); growth(6); uncoordinated(5); healthy(5); sustainable(5); strategy(5); technology(5); structure(5); fast(5); culture(5); priority(5); democracy(5); strategic(5); friendly(5); quality(5); prosperity(5); political(5); Japan(5); public(5); international(5); coordinated(4); goals(4); commitment(4); domestic(4); progress(4); uneven(3); unsustainable(3); drivers(3); structural(3); steady(3); democratic(3); stable(3); global(3); unbalanced(2); imbalance(2) |

### Example 6 (2012)

**ST:** 房地产的发展毫无疑问要充分发挥市场配置资源的基础性作用。

**Gloss:** The development of the real estate market without doubt needs to fully exploit the fundamental role of the market in resource allocation.

**TT:** In developing the housing market, we must fully bring out the fundamental role of the market in allocating resources.
Example 7 (2006)

ST: 中国通过建设的实践摸索到了一条科学发展的道路。
Gloss: China, through the practice of construction, explored a road of scientific development.
TT: Through China’s own development and practice in this regard, we have successfully explored a road towards scientific development.

Given that ‘development’ as an abstract noun (385 instances) accounts for 71.4% of all mentions of develop* (539 instances) in the TT, attention was focused on ‘development’ as a search word for more refined analysis. Some of the concordance lines featuring ‘development’ include ‘if China could have another 20 to 50 years of development, our country will surely emerge stronger than ever before’ (2004), ‘China’s development and stability in itself constitutes a biggest contribution to peace and prosperity of the world’ (2006), and ‘development will remain the top priority for China and we need a peaceful international environment’ (2015).

By sorting to the left and right of ‘development’, the following patterns are identified:

(1) Development in specific areas

The word ‘development’ is found in various developments (the patterns and their frequencies are detailed below).

Economic/economical/economy development (55)
Economic and social development (16)
Infrastructural/infrastructure development (5)
Cultural development (3)
Agricultural development (2)
Science and technology development (2)
Housing development (2)
Science and education development (1)

These patterns illustrate that Beijing is committed to a range of developments, yet development on the economic front remains a predominant focus. Such attention to the economy shows the crucial importance of economic development to China’s overall progress.
This is in line with the observation that economic performance constitutes a major source of legitimacy for the Chinese government (Pan 2009: 113). Such performance-based legitimacy is of particular relevance in the administrations covered by the press conference data as the recent leaderships are ‘unable to claim the revolutionary credentials’ like their predecessors (Marinelli 2013: 113). These patterns are accurate reflections of the ST.

(2) General outlook on development

The concordance lines also suggest that the discursive articulation on development in English is not restricted to certain specific areas but is closely linked with other abstract concepts. This sheds light cognitively and conceptually on China’s official outlook and thinking pattern on development (see Figure 3 as an example).

Figure 3: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘development’ and other concepts (sorted to the left)
The patterns and their occurrences are detailed below:

- Reform and development (11)
- Peace and development (7)
- Stability and development (5)
- Reform, development and stability (2)
- Peaceful development (17)
- Socialist development (2)
- Common development (7)
- Future development (4)
- Further development (3)
- Greater development (3)
- Own development (5)
- Scientific development (3)
- Innovation-driven development (1)
- Shared development (1)

Interestingly, the collocational patterns indicate the often interconnected nature of development with other major concepts (e.g. reform, peace, stability) in China’s discursive articulation. This suggests cognitively that, to Beijing, development, reform, stability and peace go hand in hand, and a stable and peaceful environment is the conditio sine qua non for reform and development. Without such an environment, real development is not possible. Notably, the repeated mentions of peace and development (7 instances) and peaceful development (17 instances) can be seen as a response to the ongoing ‘China threat’ rhetoric emanating from the West (Huntington 1996; Munro 1992), thereby discursively reassuring the world that China is committed to peace. This is in the sense that China seeks to avoid the Thucydides trap of confrontation with the status quo power (the US) and will not challenge the international system in its (re)emergence as a major global power. Such a development philosophy, by extension, also explains China’s non-interventionist foreign policy in handling international relations, emphasising peace and stability in other (developing) countries and their pursuit of own development paths commensurate with their unique national conditions.

Notably, peaceful development has been a frequent pattern in the English subcorpus since 2006. Its Chinese equivalent appeared initially in 2004 during Hu Jintao’s presidency in the
form of 和平崛起 (peaceful rise). However, given the potentially ambitious and aggressive connotation of ‘rise’, the formulation was officially revised to the ‘more anodyne and diplomatic’ (Buzan 2010: 5) 和平发展 (peaceful development) in 2005 to avoid skepticism and misinterpretation internationally. Clearly, the interpreters have aligned with the official change responsively and interpreted it as peaceful development in all press conferences after 2005 (cf. Figure 4). In this way, the nuanced and desired image of China is well maintained in English by the interpreters.

Figure 4: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘peaceful development’ (by year)

(3) Imbalances in development

Despite China’s rapid development in recent decades, the government recognises that there are still wide gaps and imbalances in development, for instance, between China’s East and West and between the urban and rural areas (Figure 5). This is evidenced in such patterns as unbalanced development (1), uncoordinated development (1), uneven development (2), unstable development (1), uncoordinated and unsustainable development (2) and the premier’s repeated call for sustainable development (3), all-round development (6), healthy development (3) and coordinated development (2). Close comparisons show that these
patterns in English are accurate (re)presentations of the original.

4.2.3 Discourse on the Economy

Another central aspect of China’s pragmatist reform and opening-up is ‘economy’. This explains, in part, why economic issues often take centre stage in each year’s press conference. It is therefore interesting to examine the interpreters’ alignment in (re)articulating China’s discourse on the economy at the following levels.

4.2.3.1 Overall Level of Alignment on the Economy

To establish the overall level of interpreter alignment on economy-related items, 经济* and econom* were searched in both subcorpora. As Table 8 suggests, the various forms of the word ‘economy’ are mentioned more in the TT both in aggregate terms and diachronically in each period. The proliferated mentions of econom* constitute a case of lexical repetition (Beaton 2007), pointing to an increased level of interpreter alignment with the government’s discourse on ‘economy’ overall. This is of particular relevance given that the Chinese government’s economic performance and the concrete benefits it delivers economically constitute an important source of its achievements and legitimacy (Zhao 2009: 426).
Interestingly, the presence of the various forms of the word ‘economy’ has increased over time in both subcorpora. On an annual basis, the numbers rose dramatically in Wen’s administration from relatively low levels in Zhu’s administration before becoming relatively stabilised in Li’s period. This trend is not surprising given China’s entry into the WTO in 2001 and the fact that China is now a major driver of global economy after decades of economic reform. In other words, with the deepening of China’s reform and opening-up, ‘economy’ is featured increasingly prominently at these press conferences.

4.2.3.2 Collocational Patterns Relating to the Economy

For more contextualised analysis, the collocates of 经济* and econom* were generated in both subcorpora and presented based on the following semantic categories (Table 9). A comparison between the collocates for 经济* and econom* shows a situation that largely resonates with the results for the reform and development discourses examined previously. For example, the Chinese government and the broader WE are made more visible in the interpreted discourse, thus making it more emphatic that the government is the social actor responsible for China’s economic activities.

Regarding modality, the level of commitment and determination is relatively well maintained in the TT. In terms of the propositional content, 经济* and econom* in both subcorpora are strongly associated with development and growth. This indicates that economy constitutes an important area in China’s overall development and the maintenance of steady and reasonably
high economic growth (evidenced in such collocates as ensure, steady, stable and maintain) is a core preoccupation for Beijing given the increasingly performance-based nature of the government’s legitimacy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>social actors</th>
<th>Chinese subcorpus (freq)</th>
<th>English subcorpus (freq)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>中国 109; 我们 66; 政府 7</td>
<td>China 99/Chinese 42; we 84/our 75/us 5; government 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| action and change | |                      |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
|                   | 发展 116;保持 30;增长 29;复苏 17;解决 14;推进 14;促进 14;调整 12;稳定 12;平稳 11;下行 11;影响 10;支持 9;建设 9;运行 8;继续 8;开放 8;转型 7;改善 7;推动 7;带来 7;实现 7;提高 6;增加 6;协调 6;升级 6;防止 5;转变 | Development 93/develop 13; growth 81; restructuring 22; steady 13; recovery 13; ensure 10; downward 9; continue 9; transformation 8; achieve 8; stable 6; promote 6; maintaining 6/maintain 5; grow 6; transforming 5/transform 2; managing 5; upgrade 4 |

| modality | |                      |
|----------|--------------------------|
| 要 38; 会 22; 可以 12; 必须 11; 应该 6 | will 47; need 11; must 11; can 10; should 8 |

| Other related important concepts | |                      |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 世界 39; 改革 34; 社会 29; 问题 25; 体制 25; 香港 24; 市场 24; 结构 17; 政治 17; 贸易 14; 国际 14; 压力 14; 合作 13; 金融 11; 速度 11; 目标 11; 困难 11; 国家 10; 国民 8; 方式 9; 就业 9; 实体 9; 两岸 9; 自由 7; 民生 7; 文化 7; 政策 7; 形势 7; 企业 7; 财政 6; 社会主义 6; 矛盾 6; 法治 6 | trade 30; social 27; global 27; market 26; world 19; cooperation 19; political 17; Hong Kong 16; structure 15; problem 13; reform 12; country 11; structural 10; socialist 9; regulation 9; real 9; pressure 9; measures 9; international 9; inflation 9; progress 8; financial 8; target 7; system 7; national 7; quality 6; performance 6; momentum 6; efficiency 6; vitality; society 5 |

Table 9: Collocates of econom* in both subcorpora

To identify more specific patterned constructions, concordance lines containing ‘econom*’ were sorted on both sides in English. Amongst the most frequent patterns are direct references to China’s domestic economy: Chinese economy (37 times), China’s economy (24 times), our economy (16 times), national economy (7 times), real economy (6 times) and the nature of China’s economy, that is, market economy (14 times). These concordance lines are
relatively evenly distributed across the 20 years’ data, suggesting that China’s domestic economy has consistently been an important topic on the government’s agenda. Notably, of the 14 instances of market economy, 9 instances (64.3%) are premodified by ‘socialist’.

After the previous less-than-successful endeavours, China started to pursue a ‘socialist market\textsuperscript{35} economy’ in the post-1978 era under the rubric of ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’. ‘Socialist market economy’, as such, constitutes a fundamental formulation discursively at the core of China’s economic reform, which justifies and rationalises the pragmatist shift from the previous centralised planned economy (1949-1978) to one that harnesses the power of market in resource allocation (often deemed capitalist and the antithesis of communism or socialism). The underlying rationale is that China is very much in the ‘primary stage of socialism’ and therefore needs to incorporate elements of market techniques to develop. Such economic pragmatism is cited as essentially a form of ‘state capitalism’ (Bremmer 2010) and there is believed to be structural contradiction between China’s (capitalistic) market-oriented economic reform and its ideological formations officially as a socialist country (Wu 2001). Nevertheless, such a pragmatic and flexible approach has facilitated China’s sustained economic growth and unprecedented rise in recent decades.

Close critical comparison shows that the central formulation ‘socialist market economy’ is rendered more visible in English (6 mentions of 社会主义市场经济 in the ST versus 9 in the TT), hence a 50% increase. Therefore, China’s justificatory discourse relating to its economic system is further legitimised and justified in the interpreted discourse. This is evidenced in Example 8, where the interpreter added ‘under the socialist market economy’

\textsuperscript{35}An examination of the related notions 市场* and market* in both subcopia shows that great emphasis is placed on market in China’s discursive articulations. This is evidenced in such patterns as (1) market-based and market oriented, (2) housing/stock/capital/securities/international/financial/real estate/currency/domestic market(s) and (3) market access/demand/entities/vitality/supply and demand/mechanisms/forces/potentials. These suggest that China has targeted a range of markets since its ‘market-oriented’ reform and is committed to widening ‘market access’ to other countries, making use of ‘market supply and demand’ and further stimulating ‘market vitality’. Interestingly, ‘market’ is rendered significantly more prominent in English both overall (172 mentions versus 227 mentions and hence a 32% increase) and diachronically (51.5%, 34.4% and 21.3% increase in each administration). This shows increased interpreter alignment, conveying a stronger commitment to market-oriented reforms in English.
and thus further foregrounded the essentially socialist nature of China’s economy.

**Example 8 (2001)**

**ST:** 所以在现在我们政府的职能，我刚才讲了，就是要转变为代表国家来对市场进行监督，查处，保护消费者和人民的利益。

**Gloss:** So, now, our government’s function, as I said earlier, is to shift towards representing the country to supervise the market, to investigate and punish and protect the interests of the consumers and people.

**TT:** The function of the government under the socialist market economy is to properly supervise over the market operations, strengthen regulation, fight against those shoddy goods and fake products and to protect the rights and interests of the consumers and of the people.

Also, Beijing’s discourse on economy goes beyond China’s domestic context and has an international dimension. Interestingly, such collocational patterns as *global economy* (14), *world economy* (9), *international economy* (4) and *globalised economy* (1) began to surface around 2008 in the English subcorpus, roughly coinciding with the global financial crisis started that year (Figure 6).

![Figure 6: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring global(ised)/international economy (sorted to the left)](image)

This sudden uptick in the references to global/world/international economy marks a
noticeable shift in China’s official economy discourse from one that was largely inward-looking (focusing on domestic economic policies and initiatives) to one that is increasingly internationally-oriented. This is unsurprising given that China, left relatively unscathed by the economic downturn, became a major engine for world economic growth and the fact that China overtook Japan as the world’s second largest economy in the aftermath of the financial crisis. Notably, China’s economic growth started to slow down gradually around 2015, entering into what is officially called a ‘new normal’. At a time when the Chinese economy is in need of restructuring, mentions of new economy (3 instances) and sharing economy (1 instance) start to appear in the 2016 and 2017 conferences as potential new drivers of China’s economic growth. Close comparisons between the TT and ST show that the patterns and trends (re)presented in English are accurate reflections of the Chinese originals, hence a general level of interpreter alignment.

4.2.4 Discourse on Modernisation

China’s discourse on modernisation, according to Tong (2000), may be understood within four historical periods: firstly, the discussion revolving what should be adopted as ti (substance) and yong (function) in the late 19th century; secondly, the focus on science and democracy at the beginning of the 20th century; thirdly, the search for and experimentation with a socialist mode of modernisation in the second half of the 20th century; and, finally, the pursuit of modernisation in the broad period of reform and opening-up. This section focuses on the last period, investigating China’s (interpreted) discourse on modernisation and the level of interpreter alignment vis-à-vis the government.

4.2.4.1 Overall Level of Alignment on Modernisation

现代 * and modern* were first searched in both subcorpora for an overall idea of the interpreters’ level of alignment lexically. It is shown that the ideological discourse on modernisation has been very much maintained in interpreting (44 instances versus 45 instances). Diachronically, the same trend is found in each administration. This constitutes a case of interpreter alignment vis-à-vis the government’s modernisation discourse overall.
4.2.4.2 Collocational Patterns Relating to Modernisation

A comparison between the collocates generated for 现代* and modern* shows a similar trend as discussed in sections 4.2.1, 4.2.2 and 4.2.3. That is, there is a more explicit identification of the Chinese government as the social actor in the interpreted English discourse, although there is no noticeable change in the propositional content per se. Attention is now focused on the adjective modern and noun modernisation respectively in the data.

Figure 7: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘modern’ (sorted to the right)

A closer examination of the concordance lines featuring modern (Figure 7) suggests a range of efforts and initiatives which the government intends to establish, build or set up. These include modern agricultural capacities (line 1), modern commercial banking system (line 2), modern corporate system (lines 4-6), modern government (line 10) and modern society (line 13). ‘Modernity ends when words’ associated with it (progress, advance and development, and growth etc.) lose attraction (Therborn 1995: 4). The repeated articulation of the various initiatives reflects the situation that China’s modernisation efforts are in full swing and
related topics still enjoy great currency discursively. These patterns are accurate (re)presentations of the Chinese original, showcasing a general level of interpreter alignment.

Similarly, an investigation of the items to the left and right of the noun ‘modernisation’ in English (Figure 8) reveals that the dynamic metaphorised modernisation drive is a common construction (lines 8-9, 14-15, 19-20). As a noun, ‘drive’ means ‘a vigorous onset or onward course toward a goal or objective’ (Dictionary.com), ‘a planned effort to achieve something’ (Cambridge dictionary) or ‘a strong systematic group effort’ (Merriam-Webster dictionary), carrying a sense of dynamism, force and collective effort.

Comparisons between the instances of modernisation drive and their Chinese counterparts show that more abstract language is used in the ST (现代化 1 instance, 现代化建设 4 instances and 现代化进程 1 instance), referring to either the abstract notion of modernisation or the abstract process of modernisation construction. As such, the metaphorical language use in the interpreted TT indicates a stronger sense of momentum and determination on the part of the interpreters. This coincides with other dynamic and metaphorised language used in English (re)presenting China’s modernisation as a goal (line 12) to achieve (lines 1-3, 6 and 19), advance (line 14), pursue (lines 17-18) and work towards (line 22). Meanwhile, modernisation is also likened to a road (line 15), course (line 18) and long journey (line 22) containing various steps (lines 15-16). These and the metaphorised language modernisation drive constitute a conceptual metaphor of MODERNISATION AS A ROAD/JOURNEY. Metaphor has been investigated in translation and interpreting studies (Beaton 2007; Schäffner 2004). Beaton’s study, for instance, investigates the interpreters’ employment of conceptual metaphor strings in strengthening the EU’s institutional hegemony and ideology. The government interpreters’ use of metaphorised language in the Chinese context is therefore in line with and further contributes to our understanding of metaphorical language use in translation and interpreting as shown in these previous studies.
Figure 8: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘modernisation’ (sorted to the left)

The following examples illustrate how the interpreters’ (re)construction of the conceptual metaphor MODERNISATION AS A ROAD/JOURNEY (e.g. advancing, modernisation drive and in the course of) strengthens the English discourse in conjunction with other underlined features (e.g. the emphasis on People’s Republic of China and addition of our and central).

Example 9 (2012)

ST: 建国以来，在党和政府的领导下，我国的现代化建设事业取得了巨大的成就。

Gloss: Since the country’s founding, under the leadership of the party and government, our country’s cause of modernisation construction yielded tremendous achievements.

TT: Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, under the leadership of
our party and the central government, remarkable achievements have been made in advancing our modernisation drive.

Example 10 (2016)

ST: 我们推动现代化，既要建设丰富的物质财富，也要向人民通过文化来提供丰富的精神产品，用文明和道德的力量来赢得世界的尊重。

Gloss: We, in pushing ahead with modernisation, both need to build rich material wealth and need to provide to people, through culture, rich spiritual products, winning respect from the world with the power of culture and morality.

TT: In the course of pursuing modernisation, we should not only work hard to create rich material wealth but also meet our people’s growing cultural needs and win the respect of other countries with the strength of culture and civilisation.

Furthermore, modernisation is often juxtaposed with other concepts ‘reform, opening-up’ (lines 7-9 and 21) as well as China’s ‘national revival’ (line 6). This suggests that cognitively modernisation is a key component of China’s reform and opening-up programme and represents an important formula for China’s national rejuvenation after a ‘century of humiliation’ (bainian guochi) signalled by the First Opium War fought with the British (1839-1842). Saliently, modernisation is portrayed as ‘socialist’ in nature (line 21), thus emphasising discursively the very essence of modernisation in China. Direct one-to-one comparative analyses between the TT and ST in subcorpus C suggest that the identified patterns are triggered by the Chinese original.

4.2.5 Discourse on Global Involvement and International Engagement

Situated firmly in a globalised world, the reform and opening-up has also witnessed China’s transition from a once closed and inward-looking country to one that is more open to the outside world. It is thus interesting to investigate the (re)presentation of China’s discourse on its global engagement and the interpreters’ level of alignment.

4.2.5.1 Overall Level of Alignment on China’s Global Involvement and International Engagement Discourse

For a general understanding, 全球* and glob* (globe, global, globalise, globalised, globalising, globalisation, globally), 世界* and world* (world and worldwide etc.) and 国际* and international* (international and internationally) were respectively searched in both
subcorpora. Some of the concordance lines are: ‘China’s economy is already tied to the
globalised economy’, ‘we are willing to work with the countries of the world to maintain
global peace’, ‘China will continue to work with other countries to advance the international
efforts in tackling climate change’, ‘China is ready to work with other countries in the world
in building a fair and equitable new international political and economic order’, ‘China will
shoulder our due international obligations as a large developing country’, ‘China takes an
active part and safeguards the international system’ and ‘China is ready to work with other
countries to further improve the international governing system’.

Statistically, there are 16 mentions of 全球* and 60 mentions of glob* (a 275% increase),
165 mentions of 世界* and 158 mentions of world* (a 4.2 % decrease) as well as 121
mentions of 国际* and 144 mentions of international* (a 19% increase). Overall, there are
302 instances of items relating to the globe, world and the international in Chinese yet 362
instances of their counterparts in English, hence a noticeable 19.87% increase (Table 10).
This suggests the interpreters’ increased alignment with the government’s discourse on its
international engagement, thus making Beijing appear more internationally minded and
globally focused in English (at least lexically).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese subcorpus (freq/ freq per year)</th>
<th>English subcorpus (freq/ freq per year)</th>
<th>Increase (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zhu (1998-2002)</td>
<td>40/8 (7082.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>48/9.6 (6101.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen (2003-2012)</td>
<td>160/16 (8614.5 tokens/year)</td>
<td>198/19.8 (7166.3 tokens/year)</td>
<td>23.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li (2013-2017)</td>
<td>102/20.4 (9740.4 tokens/year)</td>
<td>116/23.2 (7698.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>13.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>19.87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Items relating to the world and globe in both subcorpora and across the administrations

From a diachronic angle, as Table 10 illustrates, the Chinese premiers’ utterances in Chinese
tend to be increasingly globally focused and internationally minded (rising from 8 to 16 and
then to 20.4 times per year across the administrations). This attests to China’s shift from a
closed and ideologically isolated country in Mao’s era, a relatively inward-looking country in Deng’s era featuring the diplomatic policy of ‘keeping a low-profile’ (*taoguang yanghui*), progressively towards further (and perhaps irreversible) global integration and proactive involvement in world affairs. This trend is evidenced in China’s entry into the WTO, initiation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and proposal of the ‘Belt and Road Initiative’. Meantime, China has also called for a new type of major-country relationship with the United States and offered to provide ‘China solutions’ to the world’s pressing problems. Clearly, the interpreters have demonstrated increased institutional alignment with the government in all of the three periods and have facilitated China’s growing international involvement in its global voice, that is, English. The interpreters’ repeated additions of lexical items and expressions relating to the world are exemplified in the following extracts (the underlined sections are added by the interpreters).

**Example 11 (2005)**
TT: The importance of friendship between China and India is immeasurable for Asian countries as well as for the world.

**Example 12 (2017)**:
TT: The requirement for raising our own products’ quality and upgrading our own industries to a medium-high level actually needs us to open even wider to the outside world by introducing more advanced products and technologies.

Without doubt, such micro-level additions show the interpreters’ further alignment with Beijing’s discursive articulation on its international participation and global engagement. Cumulatively, such additions help (re)construct an image that China is more internationally engaged and globally minded in English than the Chinese originals.

**4.2.5.2 Collocational Patterns Relating to China’s Global Involvement and International Engagement**
Having explored the interpreters’ alignment on an overall level, attention was focused on international* and global* and their respective patterns, given the limited space.
4.2.5.2.1 International*

To this end, international* was searched in the English subcorpus. The retrieved concordance lines are sorted to the left and right. The following collocational patterns are identified: international financial crisis (22), international community (9), international market(s) (8), international environment (8), international practice(s) (6), international issues (3), international law(s) (3), international obligations (3), international currency (3), international effort(s) (2), international organisation(s) (2), international standard(s) (2), international asset (1), international commodity prices (1), international trade (1), international resources (1) and international rescue effort (1).

Comparative analyses in subcorpus C show that most of these are more or less accurate (re)presentations of the ST. However, the patterns ‘international community’ and ‘international practice(s)’ seem particularly revealing ideologically and are thus discussed below.

(a) International Community

‘International community’ is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as ‘the countries of the world considered collectively’. Often used by politicians and journalists in the realms of geopolitics and international relations, the term conveys a sense of legitimacy and credibility through the indication of common consensus worldwide on certain issues. The term is not without its critics. Noam Chomsky argues that the inclusive sounding ‘international community’ is used almost exclusively to refer to the United States and its Western allies. Similarly, Martin Jacques (2006) sees the term as ‘a way of dignifying the west, of globalising it, of making it sound more respectable, more neutral and high-faluting’. The term, as Wang’s (2008) corpus-based analysis suggests, can assume different meanings for different justifying purposes.

An investigation in both subcorpora shows that there are 9 instances of ‘international community’ in English (see Figure 9) yet only 3 instances of its literal equivalent 国际社会 in Chinese (a 200% increase). Comparative analysis in subcorpus C reveals that, of the 9
instances of ‘international community’, only 2 are triggered directly by the ST (22.2%), 6 are triggered indirectly by ordinary and unmarked items semantically related to the ‘world’ (国际, 世界, 世界, 国际上, 世界, 全世界) and 1 is not even triggered by the ST but added by the interpreter.

![Concordance Hits 9](image)

Figure 9: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘international community’ (by year)

The interpreters’ proliferated use of ‘international community’ in English is salient ideologically, representing a strengthening of the Chinese originals. The functions of the interpreters’ employment of the term can be categorised into the following aspects:

(1) *To lend further credence and legitimacy to China’s (territorial) claims:*

This is evidenced in the example below (‘international community’ is triggered by the ST in this case), which suggests that China’s claim is justified and universally recognised and supported. Such usage is similar to that used by Western countries (as discussed above).

**Example 13 (2004)**

ST: There is but one China in the world. Both the mainland and Taiwan are part of China. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of China allow no division. China’s sovereignty over Taiwan has been explicitly recognised in the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation. And it is a principle universally recognised by the international community.

(2) *To translate general items relating to ‘the world’ as ‘international community’:

Discursively, compared with using the more generic items related to the ‘world’, the
interpreters’ repeated mentions of the family-like conceptualisation ‘international community’ emphasise a strong sense of togetherness and international membership, thus helping portray China as a relevant, important and visible member of a big family of nations in English. This is illustrated in the following examples.

China’s expected position in the world: ‘to ensure that our nation is duly respected in the international community’ (2008); the discourse of Sino-US ties: ‘a great deal of attention has been paid to China-US relations in the international community’ (2017) and ‘it has already sent out a very clear message to the whole international community that China-US business ties will get even closer’ (2015); Also, China’s climate change discourse: ‘the issue of climate change concerns human survival, the interests of all countries and equity and justice in our international community’ (2010).

The mentions of the more emphatic ‘international community’ in these examples are respectively triggered by general unmarked items 世界 (the world), 全世界 (the whole world), 世界 (the world) and 世界 (the world) in Chinese.

(3) The interpreter’s addition of ‘international community’ untriggered by the ST.

The addition once again helps portray China as an active member and important stakeholder of a bigger interconnected family of nations in an emphatic manner. This is exemplified in: ‘Last year there was this concern in the international community about the downward pressure on China’s economic growth’ (2014).

To sum up, through the repeated use of ‘international community’, the interpreters have aligned institutionally and helped further boost China’s claims, emphasise China’s international membership and facilitate its global integration in the English discourse.

(b) International practice(s)

Having discussed the collocation ‘international community’, attention is now focused on
another interesting pattern ‘international practice(s)’. Statistically, there are 6 instances of ‘international practice(s)’ in the English subcorpus (Figure 10), which are associated with ‘in line with’ (line 1), ‘consistent with’ (lines 2, 5, 6), ‘according to’ (line 3) and ‘common’ (line 4).

Figure 10: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘international practice(s)’ (by year)

These represent a justificatory discourse, where conforming to an expected and widely recognised international standard is used as a justification to strengthen China’s positions and arguments and to deflect criticisms. Examples of this are ‘we must conduct fundamental reform in this system so that an investment and funding system that is in line with the international practice and in line with the requirements of a market economy can be put into place’, or ‘the practice of China in the Internet management is also consistent with the established international practice’ as remarked by the premier in response to the journalist’s question on China’s ‘Internet censorship’ issue.

Interestingly, all 6 instances of ‘international practice(s)’ appear in the first two administrations (1998-2012) and mentions of it are completely absent in the latest Xi-Li administration so far (2013-2017). This shows that, at a time when China was less integrated globally and was in a weaker position politically and economically (first two administrations), China tended to use the adherence to international standards as a way to justify what the government had done and proposed to do in English. Comparative analysis in subcorpus C suggests that there are 4 instances of its literal equivalent 国际惯例 in Chinese. Despite the relatively small numbers, this indeed points to a tendency for the interpreters to use this expression and further legitimise the government’s actions in the first two administrations.
Unlike this relatively defensive and conformist mode of discursive articulation, China appears less preoccupied with justifying its actions using the perceived international standards during the Xi-Li administration. Now over three decades into the pragmatist reform and opening-up, China is increasingly seeking to play a more proactive role in shaping the rules of the game as a major global player (e.g. AIIB bank, Belt and Road Initiative). As such, the interpreters’ language use both reflects and contributes to the shifting power relations globally against a changing sociopolitical background.

4.2.5.2.2 Glob*

Having explored international*, 全球* and glob* (globe, global, globalised and globalisation) are now investigated in the corpus to study China’s level of global engagement in both subcorpora. As illustrated in Table 11, the interpreters have shown increased alignment through increased (re)production of the related items in each period and overall. Notably, there are considerably more concentrated articulations of the identified items in the third administration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese subcorpus (freq/freq per year)</th>
<th>English subcorpus (freq/freq per year)</th>
<th>Increase (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zhu (1998-2002)</td>
<td>1/0.2 (7082.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>1/0.2 (6101.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen (2003-2012)</td>
<td>1/0.1 (8614.5 tokens/year)</td>
<td>18/1.8 (7166.3 tokens/year)</td>
<td>1700%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li (2013-2017)</td>
<td>14/2.8 (9740.4 tokens/year)</td>
<td>41/8.2 (7698.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>193%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>275%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Items relating to glob* in both subcorpora and across the administrations

A close inspection of the concordance lines containing glob* shows that ‘economy’ is featured prominently in the (re)presentation of China’s discourse on its global engagement (see section 4.2.3 for China’s discourse on economy in detail). This is evidenced in the following recurring patterns: ‘global economic + noun’ (9 instances), ‘global economy’ (13
instances), ‘global trade’ (7 instances), ‘economic globalisation’ (2 instances). Unsurprisingly, this can partially be explained by the fact that China is itself a big beneficiary from economic reform and the trend of economic globalisation.

Interestingly, for items directly related to globalisation (globalised and globalisation), diachronically, there is only one explicit mention each in Premier Zhu and Premier Wen’s administrations (in 2001 and 2008 respectively), indicating that China in these two periods was still relatively domestically oriented. Notably, however, there is a sudden spike in 2017 where globalisation is mentioned 8 times (Figure 11). At the 2017 press conference, it seems that Beijing became a vocal advocate for globalisation.

![Figure 11: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring globalis* (by year)](image)

To contextualise this, China’s such espousal of globalisation as a vocal proponent in 2017 came at a time when the future of globalisation was shrouded in uncertainty, following the UK’s Brexit Referendum and Donald Trump’s electoral victory. Such concentrated mentions constitute an intertextual response to the recent events that put globalisation potentially in danger, thus reassuring the world of China’s ongoing commitment. As seen in the screenshot, it is constructed discursively that China ‘itself has benefitted from globalisation’ (line 8) and ‘China has championed economic globalisation and free trade’ (line 3), which represent China’s ‘consistent position’ (line 3).
Notably, China’s discourse on its global engagement is also constructed in conjunction with other important concepts: ‘China will remain committed to opening-up’ (lines 8) and ‘seize the opportunities of opening up’ in globalisation (line 9) and ‘peace, development and cooperation and globalisation are indivisible’ (line 7). This, therefore, suggests a nexus cognitively between these concepts. Comparative analyses in subcorpus C show that the above patterns are accurate (re)productions of the STs.

To sum up, an investigation of China’s discourse on its international engagement and global involvement shows that relevant items are given more primacy in the interpreted TT in both absolute and diachronic terms, thus (re)creating an increasingly proactive image of China overall as a global player.

More refined analyses focusing on the collocational patterns of international* (specifically ‘international community’ and ‘international practice(s)’) and glob* reveal that China’s discourse has shifted from a relatively conformist, defensive and justificatory mode towards one that increasingly shows initiative, international engagement and more recently international leadership as a defender of free trade and champion of an open globalised market. The interpreters have no doubt facilitated such a change in the process through their alignment.

4.2.6 Discourses on Stability and Harmony

This section explores two interrelated discourses, that is, stability and harmony within China’s reform era. The post-1978 era features great emphasis on social stability and harmony by China’s recent leaderships. Such attention is reflected in the government’s preoccupation with ‘stability maintenance’ (or weiwen) and social harmony through various
means. As such, it is interesting to investigate the (re)presentation of Beijing’s discourses on stability and harmony in English and the interpreters’ level of alignment.

4.2.6.1 Discourse on Stability

Focusing first on stability, 稳* (稳定，稳定性，稳健，稳固，平稳 etc.) was searched in subcorpus A. Similarly, ‘steady’, ‘stable’ and stabili* (including stability, stabilise, stabilised, stabilising, stabilisation) were searched in subcorpus B to gain an overall snapshot of the interpreters’ alignment.

Some examples of the government’s discourse on stability are ‘we are fully capable of maintaining stability and normal public order in Tibet’ (2008), ‘what interests me most is to maintain peace and stability in the Taiwan strait’ (2008), ‘the Chinese economy has stabilised and it’s turning for the better’ (2010) and ‘China needs a stable neighbourhood and a peaceful international environment for its domestic development’ (2016). Statistically, there are 157 stability-related items in Chinese and 156 in English, hence a general level of interpreter alignment in (re)articulating China’s stability discourse.

For more refined contextualised analysis, the word ‘steady’ was searched and sorted in the English subcorpus. The concordance lines (Figure 12) show that ‘steady’ refers largely to economic growth (lines 2-5, 11-19, 21 and 24-26), other areas of development and progress (e.g. in urbanisation and the housing market) as well as China’s bilateral ties with Russia (line 20) and the US (line 22). Steady growth and sound developments in these areas are conducive to China’s overall stability domestically. These patterns are accurate reflections of the Chinese STs.
Given the limited space, attention is focused on the abstract noun ‘stability’ in the data (74 instances in total). Thematically, the item is used mostly to areas considered to be within or part of China (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet and Macao), China’s adjacent and neighbouring areas (the South China Sea, the Asia Pacific region, South China and Northeast Asia) as well as China-Russia relations. Further sorting of the concordance lines shows that the construction of China’s stability discourse in English is closely associated with other abstract

Its associations with predominantly positive abstract concepts (development, progress, security, peace, growth and unity etc.) show that the achievement of these is very much contingent on the maintenance of stability. Discursively, this relates to a popular ideation that China’s development needs a stable social order (Zeng 2016), leading to the idea that stability is good and therefore instability is inevitably bad. The positive value of stability justifies that stability — as a public good — needs to be provided by a strong centralised state power (ibid), thus indirectly bolstering the authority and legitimacy of the Chinese government as the restorer and guarantor in safeguarding China’s stability and development. The following example relating to the student-led protest in 1989 is a good case in point.

**Example 14 (2003)**

**ST:** 我也深知中国的稳定和发展来之不易。80 年代末 90 年代初，世界风云变幻，苏联解体，东欧剧变，在中国也发生了一场政治风波。党和政府紧紧依靠人民，采取果断措施，稳定了国内局势，并且继续推进改革开放，走中国特色社会主义道路。13 年来，中国所取得的巨大成就说明稳定是至关重要的。

**Gloss:** I too deeply know that China’s stability and development didn’t come easy. At the end of the 1980s and in the beginning of the 1990s, the international situation was tumultuous: the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the drastic changes in Eastern Europe. In China too occurred a political turbulence. The party and government firmly
relied on the people, took decisive measures and stabilised the domestic situation and continued to push ahead with the reform and opening-up and take the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics. 13 years on, China’s massive achievements indicate that stability is vital.

TT: I know so well the stability and development of this country have not come by easily. The end of the 1980s and beginning of 1990 saw highly volatile international situation. The Soviet Union disintegrated, Eastern Europe changed drastically and political turbulences also occurred in China. The Party and government relied firmly on the people, took resolute measures and stabilised the domestic situation. And we also further advanced our reform, opening-up and built socialism with Chinese characteristics. The tremendous achievements we have scored over the past 13 years have fully proven that stability is of vital importance.

This example follows an argumentative strategy of argumentum ad consequentiam, representing the resort to a ‘consequentialist’ argument (Sandby-Thomas 2014: 68). That is, without the Party and government (social actor) taking resolute measures and stabilising the domestic situation following the will of the people, the chaos and turbulence (undesirable) would have continued and, as such, economic reform and all the remarkable accomplishments would not have been possible. This therefore indirectly reminds people of the upheavals and chaos (luan) firmly embedded in China’s history. The emphasis that ‘stability is of vital importance’ is seemingly an intertextual reference to Deng’s famous ‘stability prevails over everything’. The TT is an accurate reflection of the ST. However, the intensifier ‘fully’ is added by the interpreter, thus making the stability über alles discourse more convincing and emphatic in English.

In response to a similar question in 2004 touching upon this ‘very serious political turbulence’ at the end of the 1980s and in the beginning of the 1990s, premier Wen further argued that the ‘tremendous achievements’ made in ‘China’s reform, opening-up and socialist modernisation’ is attributable to ‘the fact that we have always upheld unity of the party and safeguarded social and political stability’ and if China could have another 20 to 50 years of stability it ‘will surely emerge stronger than ever before’. Contrary to the conventional belief that legitimacy is the source of stability and instability is the result of a lack of legitimacy, the case in China is often a ‘reverse causal process’ where the discourse and promise of continued stability can contribute to ‘regime legitimation’ (Yuen 2014: 5) domestically.
Globally, the interpreter’s alignment with the premier’s stability discourse can also be viewed as of vital significance discursively in conveying a sense that the government is the ultimate guarantor of stability and development in China in front of the international audience.

4.2.6.2 Discourse on Harmony

Attention is now focused on a closely related concept of harmony. For an overall idea of the interpreters’ alignment, 和谐 and harmon* (including harmony and harmonious) were searched in both subcorpora. There are 11 instances of 和谐 in Chinese yet 15 instances of harmon* in English (36.3% increase). This points to the interpreters’ increased alignment and strengthening of the government’s discourse on harmony overall. Diachronically, a general level of interpreter alignment is found in each period.

For more contextualised analysis, the retrieved concordance lines were examined. As Figures 13 and 14 show, mentions of 和谐* and harmon* start to surface in both subcorpora since 2005, when the discursive formulation ‘harmonious society’ (hexie shehui) was put forward by the Hu-Wen administration at a time when societal tensions accumulated (e.g. wealth gap, social injustice and inequality) after years of rapid economic growth.

This signature formulation has its roots in ancient China and represents a case of ‘pseudo-Confucianization’ (Delury 2008), which recontextualises China’s traditional thoughts in the new sociopolitical context. The harmony discourse has focused largely on China’s domestic front especially in the first few years starting from 2005 in both subcorpora. Examples of this are: ‘to realise social fairness and justice and to build a harmonious society, we have to rely on reform’ and ‘we are opposed to taking such radical moves, which disturb and undermine social harmony’ in Tibet.
Since 2010, the harmony discourse has shifted from a preoccupation with internal affairs to an increasing focus on harmony regionally and globally (lines 5-6 and 11 in the Chinese screenshot and lines 6, 11-15 in the English screenshot). This is evidenced for instance in ‘free trade can not only promote the growth of the world economy, it will also promote
harmony in the world’ (line 6). This, at least based on the corpus data, shows a clear ‘inside first and then outside’ pattern in gradually extending China’s harmony discourse to an international dimension in the form of a ‘harmonious world’ (this further attests to the observation of China being increasingly globally minded as discussed in section 4.2.5).

Comparisons between the concordance lines in both languages show that explicit references of 和谐 (harmon*) are made relatively sparingly in the ST since the start of the Xi-Li administration in 2013 possibly due to the new government’s ‘Chinese dream’ proposition (indeed only one mention by the new premier in 2014 in Chinese that as long as China and its neighbours ‘respect each other, properly manage differences and pursue mutual benefit, there will be harmonious sounds instead of jarring noises’).

Interestingly, the idea of harmony has nevertheless continued in the English TT (cf. Lines 12-15 of Figure 14), feeding into the interpreters’ rendition in recent years (this accounts for the deficit mentioned previously between the ST and TT). This can be seen as an internalised kind of interpreter alignment with the previous government’s key discursive formulations and an overall grasp of the communist party’s common parlance after having worked within the institution for an extended period of time. Discursively, the interpreters’ (repeated) mentions of harmon* represent a furtherance of the proposed ‘harmonious world’ formulation, thereby showing China’s initiative as a major power in English. This trend is evidenced in Example 15, where the additions of harmon* and other interesting shifts serving to strengthen the ST are underlined.

Example 15 (2016)

**ST:** 中国始终主张要有一个稳定的周边环境，友好的睦邻关系。维护地区的稳定，实现睦邻友好，关键还是要靠地区国家努力。

**Gloss:** China has all along advocated a stable neighbourhood environment and a friendly good-neighbourly relationship. To maintain regional stability and realise good-neighbourly friendship, the key resides in the efforts of countries in the region.

**TT:** China all along believes in pursuing harmonious coexistence with its neighbours and we always believe that we need to have a stable neighbourhood environment. It is up to the efforts of regional countries to maintain regional stability and harmony in the neighbourhood.
It is worthy of note that睦邻 was consistently rendered into English using the fixed expression ‘good-neighbourly’ in earlier press conferences. However, as the example shows, the interpreter in this more recent press conference preferred to explicitly mention ‘harmonious’ and ‘harmony’, hence a noticeable alignment with Beijing’s ‘harmonious world’ discourse on topics concerning international relations and policies. The interpreters’ tendency to further highlight the ‘harmonious world’ discourse in English also manifests itself in Example 16 concerning China’s opinion on the Ukraine and Crimea issues.

**Example 16 (2015)**

**ST:** 我们希望邻居之间都和睦相处，希望看到一个欧洲和其它国家共同发展共赢的局面。

**Gloss:** We hope that neighbours, amongst themselves, coexist peacefully and hope to see a scenario featuring co-development and win-win between Europe and other countries.

**TT:** We hope that there will be harmonious coexistence between neighbours and what we hope to see is that there will be the pursuit of common development and win-win outcomes between Europe countries, between all countries in the world.

To conclude, an examination of the stability and harmony discourses essential to China’s ROU sheds light on China’s domestic and international outlooks on stability and harmony. That is, stability-related items often go hand in hand and closely collocate with other abstract concepts such as development, peace and prosperity. This indicates implicitly the indispensable leadership of the CPC government as the social actor in achieving stability and harmony. In the process, the interpreters have demonstrated (increased) alignment in getting the ideological message across concerning stability and harmony overall (e.g. 36.3% increase in harmony-related lexical items in the TT).

**4.2.7 Discourse on Socialism**

Despite the reform and opening-up (focusing on the economy, market, development, modernisation and globalisation etc.), China officially remains a socialist state in the post-1978 era. This makes it interesting to explore the significance and relevance of ‘socialism’ in China and how China’s discourse on socialism is mediated by the interpreters.
4.2.7.1 Overall Level of Alignment on Socialism
For a general idea of the interpreters’ alignment, 社会主义* and socialis* were searched in both subcorpora. Some of the retrieved concordance lines (in English) are ‘we need to continue to develop the socialist democracy to ensure the freedoms and rights enjoyed by our people’, ‘we will develop socialist democracy, improve socialist legal system, and run the country in accordance with law’, ‘equity and justice are the defining features of socialism’ and ‘we need to continue to adhere to the road of building socialism with Chinese characteristics’. Statistically, there are 42 mentions of 社会主义 in subcorpus A and 43 mentions of socialis* in subcorpus B (a moderate 2.3% increase), indexing the interpreters’ alignment with and maintenance of the government’s discursive articulation on socialism overall. The same pattern is also observed from a diachronic perspective where China’s ideological discourse on socialism has been well maintained through interpreting in all of the three administrations.

4.2.7.2 Collocational Patterns Relating to Socialism
For more refined and contextualised analysis, the collocational patterns of ‘socialism’ and ‘socialist’ are examined respectively in the corpus.

4.2.7.2.1 Patterns Relating to ‘Socialism’
Using the Kwic Sort function, the concordance lines featuring ‘socialism’ were first sorted. As shown in Figure 15, ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’ is a frequent pattern (lines 14-18). This slogan-like formulation is the ‘central watchword of Chinese political and economic development’ (Lavagnino 2017: 281), which constitutes a crystallisation of all the reforms, initiatives and ideological formulations in the post-1978 period. This overarching formulation highlights that the application of socialism in the Chinese context needs to take into account China’s unique national conditions. ‘Socialism with Chinese characteristics’, therefore, provides sufficient ‘discursive space’ (Chen 2005: 46) and justification for China’s pragmatist market-oriented reforms under Communist rule. Such pragmatism is epitomised in Deng Xiaoping’s audacious and explorative learn-as-you-go ‘crossing the river by feeling the stones’ (mezhe shitou guohe) approach and his famous cat metaphor that ‘it does not matter
whether it is a black cat or a white cat, as long as it catches the mice it is a good cat' (*buguan heimao baimao zhuadao laoshu jiushi haomao*). Comparative analysis in subcorpus C shows that this overarching construction has been well maintained in interpreting (5 instances of ‘中国特色社会主义’ and 5 instances of ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’).

Notably, it is articulated that ‘**only** through reform, opening-up and building socialism with Chinese characteristics’ under CPC leadership (line 14) can China be successful and prosperous, thus discursively enforcing a sort of ideological closure that effectively eliminates other alternatives and possibilities. Also, ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’ collocates strongly with the verb ‘build’ (lines 14-17), indicating that it is conceptualised as a ‘cause’ (line 16), ‘road’ (line 17) and ‘goal’ (line 18) to ‘safeguard’ (line 16), ‘adhere to’ (line 17) and conscientiously pursue.
Interestingly, on numerous occasions, socialism is constructed discursively through metaphorical language. For example, as seen from the screenshot above, socialism is likened to be a ‘big ocean’ that ‘never turns away streams’ (line 13) and a ‘big ocean’ that ‘will never dry up’ (line 8). Similarly, socialism is also described as a ‘high mountain’ that ‘never turns away stones so it becomes towering and strong’ (line 11). Metaphorical language use is achieved through comparing one domain ‘with another more familiar domain of reality’ to enhance the understanding of the less familiar (van der Valk 2003: 330). Through a social representation process known as ‘anchoring’ (Moscovici 2000), the abstract concept ‘socialism’ is objectified and crystallised into more familiar and concrete images (e.g. ocean and mountain). As such, a more vivid picture of socialism is presented to the audiences. Moreover, it is articulated that socialism can ‘only develop itself’ by drawing upon all the fine fruits of advanced human civilisation’ (line 5) and socialism ‘can only make progress by constant self-improvement and self-readjustment’ (line 6). The two concordance lines intensified by ‘only’ further emphasise the necessity for China’s political system to constantly improve and enrich itself. Socialism is even constructed as welcoming and being compatible with democracy and the rule of law (line 1), which are often considered to be the key tenets associated with capitalism in the West. Such flexible understanding and (re)interpretation of socialism focusing on inclusiveness, therefore, provide further discursive justification for China’s pragmatist market-oriented reform since 1978 after the previous (unsuccessful) attempts to pursue a rigid form of socialism. These patterns identified in English are found to be accurate (re)presentations of the ST.

### 4.2.7.2.2 Concordance lines featuring ‘Socialist’

In addition, concordance lines containing the adjective ‘socialist’ were retrieved and sorted in the English subcorpus to identify patterns. In all of the 25 concordance lines retrieved (Figure 16), ‘socialist’ is used to modify the following patterns: socialist countryside (lines 2-4), socialist democracy (lines 5-9), socialist development (lines 10-11), socialist legal system (lines 12-13), socialist market economy (lines 14-22), socialist modernisation (line 23) and socialist system (lines 1, 24 and 25). All of these specific policies and initiatives are part and parcel of the establishment of ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’. The repeated
employment of ‘socialist’ distinguishes, emphatically, China’s countryside, democracy, development, legal system, market economy and modernisation from those of a capitalist society. The patterns are found to be accurate reflections of the ST, hence a general maintenance of the Chinese discourse.

The prevalence of the premodifier ‘socialist’ shows that, despite the market-oriented reforms redolent of a capitalist approach, socialism still remains (at least discursively) a defining and relevant feature responsible for various facets of China’s sociopolitical life. Put differently, socialism still constitutes an important hallmark at the heart of China’s day-to-day operation. The interpreters’ alignment and consistent and repeated mentions of the premodifier (25 instances) at such high-profile press conferences further justify and reaffirm the essentially
‘socialist’ nature of China’s sociopolitical and economic systems to the international audience, despite the fact that China’s current system has been argued to be otherwise in practice (see section 4.2.3 for more detailed discussion regarding ‘socialist market economy’).

To conclude, this section has examined the key themes constitutive of China’s post-1978 reform and opening-up discourse (e.g. reform, development, modernisation, stability, harmony and socialism). Comparative analyses focusing on the overall frequencies of various lexical items between both subcorpora suggest the interpreters’ general alignment and often increased alignment through their increased (re)production of certain items (e.g. reform*/restructur*, develop* and econom*) in English. The interpreters’ proliferated mentions of such lexical items constitute a case of repetition (Beaton 2007; Fairclough 2000; Lahlali 2012). From a product-oriented perspective, this leads to the interpreters’ maintenance and sometimes further reinforcement of China’s reform and opening-up discourse, thus strengthening the government’s institutional hegemony overall. Such (increased) alignment in a cumulative and imperceptible manner is in line with Fairclough’s observation that ‘ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible’ (1989: 85).

Further investigation of the interpreters’ alignment at the level of collocational patterns illustrates that, while there is no significant change to the propositional content per se, China and the government are often given more prominence as the chief social actor in the interpreted English discourse. Also, the TT is rendered more modalised, exhibiting a stronger level of commitment, willingness and certitude. Interestingly, China’s ROU discourse is often successfully (re)presented in an intertwined web, appearing in the form of seemingly axiomatic dyads and triads (‘reform and development’, ‘reform, opening-up and modernisation’, ‘reform, opening-up and building socialism with Chinese characteristics’, ‘stability and development’, ‘socialist market economy’, ‘socialist modernisation’ and ‘socialist development’ etc.). Apart from being simply indicative of the government’s discursive and thinking patterns, cognitively, the juxtaposition and entanglement of these core concepts lead to the internalising and mutual enhancing of the various elements central to China’s ROU discourse. This, facilitated by the interpreters, renders China’s transition
towards the pragmatist market-oriented reforms more justified, naturalised and convincing overall discursively.

In addition, the various condensed overarching discursive formulations (e.g. Socialism with Chinese characteristics) are well (re)produced and maintained in the interpreted discourse. The boundaries of language demarcate the boundaries of one’s world and, as such, words and sentences possess the power to limit people’s thoughts (Wittgenstein 1961). The premiers’ repeated articulations of the ritualised guiding formulations, facilitated by the interpreters, might further consolidate and render unchallenged China’s hegemonic ROU discourse, particularly given the high-profile nature of the televised event.

Therefore, on the domestic front, the interpreters’ (increased) alignment helps portray the government as the indispensable actor for China’s reform, development and modernisation and, meanwhile, the gatekeeper in safeguarding China’s stability and harmony. Internationally, the interpreters have facilitated China’s transition from an ideologically isolated and inward-looking country increasingly to one that proactively engages in global affairs. This, most importantly, is achieved discursively without compromising the essentially ‘socialist’ nature of China’s reform and opening-up efforts.

4.3 Issues Relating to China’s Core National Interests

This section investigates the interpreters’ alignment vis-à-vis the government’s official line (stances and positions) on issues bearing on China’s core national interests. Consistently an important focus for all administrations and particularly ‘an official discourse’ in China since 2002 (Shih 2002: 196), core national interests (or hexin liyi) are critical areas relating to China’s domestic and international policies and positions. On these issues, there is usually little room, if any, for negotiation. The Chinese government has made explicitly clear on various occasions the importance of its core national interests, repeatedly calling foreign governments to respect its ‘major concerns’ (e.g. the one-China principle). As clarified by China’s former Foreign Ministry spokesperson Qin Gang in 2010, ‘areas relating to national sovereignty, security, territorial integrity, and developmental interests are all part of China’s
core interests’. At the press conference in 2010, former Premier Wen Jiabao argued further that in implementing China’s foreign policies the ‘fundamental objective is to uphold China’s national interests, China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity in particular’.

Prominent items relating to China’s core national interests, particularly sovereignty and territorial integrity, were identified from the wordlist: Hong Kong (308 instances), Taiwan (274 instances), Tibet (51 instances) and Macao (26 instances). The politically sensitive nature of this analytical subcategory inevitably involves a certain degree of justification and defense of China’s national interests, thus making it pertinent to study the interpreters’ ideological alignment. Compared with the previous sections, this section concerns an arguably more direct type of alignment. That is, it explores the extent to which the interpreters might potentially take an explicit stance and align with the government’s official positions when located at the interface between the centrifugal forces represented by the (foreign) journalists and the centripetal forces exerted by Beijing.

4.3.1 Discourse on Hong Kong
Formerly a British colony, Hong Kong was handed over to China in 1997 as a special administrative region (SAR). Described by Premier Wen as ‘a splendid pearl of China’ (2003 press conference), Hong Kong constitutes a frequent topic at these press conferences with almost one question dedicated to it each year. This reflects in itself the Chinese government’s attention to the special administrative region. This section examines China’s discursive (re)presentation of Hong Kong in English and the government-affiliated interpreters’ institutional alignment vis-à-vis Beijing’s discursive articulation on Hong Kong at the following levels:

4.3.1.1 Overall Level of Alignment on Hong Kong
To examine how Hong Kong-related items have been intertextually rendered by interpreters overall, 港 and Hong Kong* were searched in both subcorpora. Statistically, there are 259 instances of Hong Kong-related items in the Chinese ST yet there are 308 instances in the English TT (a noticeable 18.9% increase). Discursively, it should be understood that the more
times Hong Kong-related items are mentioned in the TT, the more visibility the topic enjoys in the interpreted English discourse. As such, the interpreters’ repetitive mentioning of Hong Kong has given the already prominent topic even more primacy in English, thus suggesting an enhanced level of interpreter alignment overall.

4.3.1.2 Fixed Overarching Formulations on Hong Kong

In addition, further comparative investigations were carried out, focusing on fixed overarching concepts and formulations at the heart of Beijing’s policies and positions on Hong Kong since its return in 1997. These core concepts include the ‘Basic Law’, the fundamental constitutional document of Hong Kong, as well as guiding formulations ‘one country, two systems’, ‘Hong Kong people administrating/governing Hong Kong’ and ‘a high degree of autonomy’. These are distillations of Beijing’s official discourse on the Hong Kong SAR. The four overarching concepts were searched and compared in both subcorpora.

As Table 12 suggests, the overarching concepts and formulations are largely well maintained, indicating a general level of interpreter alignment in (re)articulating Beijing’s major formulations regarding Hong Kong.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency in subcorpus A</th>
<th>Frequency in subcorpus B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>基本法 14</td>
<td>basic law 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一国两制 16</td>
<td>one country two systems 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>港人治港 7</td>
<td>Hong Kong people administrating/governing Hong Kong 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>高度自治 6</td>
<td>a high degree of autonomy 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 in total</td>
<td>42 in total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Guiding formulations in subcorpora A and B

4.3.1.3 Collocational Patterns Relating to Hong Kong*

To further investigate China’s discourse on Hong Kong (re)presented in the English interpretation and then the extent to which the interpreters have aligned with China's official positions, more fine-tuned analyses were carried out. To this end, Hong Kong* was first
searched in the English subcorpus. AntConc’s ‘Kwic Sort’ and ‘Collocates’ functions were employed to identify interesting patterns.

A useful concept here is semantic prosody, which according to Louw (1993: 157) refers to a ‘consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates’. Semantic prosody can shed useful light on the writer/speaker’s attitude as well as ideological positioning on certain issues.

As seen in Figure 17, Hong Kong-related concordance lines are mostly in a neutral or positive environment (e.g. Hong Kong is ‘famous’ in various areas, Hong Kong possesses ‘advantages’ and ‘strong points’, Hong Kong has made significant ‘contributions’ to China’s reform and opening-up, Hong Kong ‘enjoys’ various things and is ‘blessed’ with individuals with expertise and Beijing is committed to supporting Hong Kong). This can be viewed as efforts of (positive) engagement on the part of the Chinese government overall.

Other interesting patterns include the fundamental principle of ‘one country two systems’, that is, ‘Hong Kong people administrating/governing Hong Kong’ (6 instances) and Hong Kong’s system (e.g. ‘capital system in Hong Kong’, ‘capitalist system in Hong Kong’). Similarly, ‘Hong Kong SAR’ (11 instances) and ‘Hong Kong SAR government’ (13 instances) are also frequent patterns, which indicate Hong Kong’s status as a special administrative region in China with its own government.

Interestingly, ‘Hong Kong’ is often juxtaposed with Macao, another SAR, as in the binominal construction ‘Hong Kong and Macao’ (17 instances) (see section 4.3.4 for further analysis). Given the limited space, attention is focused on the following salient (collocational) patterns relatively systematically.
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4.3.1.3.1 ‘Hong Kong Is’ and ‘Hong Kong Has’

Attention is first focused on two patterns identified in English: ‘Hong Kong is’ and ‘Hong Kong has’. The concordance lines featuring ‘Hong Kong is’ (Figure 18) mostly highlight Hong Kong’s advantageous status and opportunities (e.g. Hong Kong is ‘blessed with even more opportunities’ in line 1), Hong Kong being a world financial and trade centre (lines 2, 6, 8), Hong Kong being ‘a splendid pearl of China’ (line 5) as well as the honest evaluation of Hong Kong’s current conditions (lines 3, 7, 9, 10). These are accurate (re)presentations of the Chinese ST.
Similarly, the pattern ‘Hong Kong has’ is explored in the English subcorpus. The concordance lines featuring ‘Hong Kong has’ (Figure 19) illustrate what Hong Kong is discursively (re)presented to possess or have achieved in the interpreted discourse.
The concordance lines are mostly positive or neutral semantically. They are mostly concerned with Hong Kong’s advantages, abilities and competitive edges (e.g. lines 1, 2, 6-7, 16-18) as well as Hong Kong’s resilience and achievements with the strong support of the mainland government (e.g. lines 3, 5, 8-15, 19-20).

Comparative analysis in subcorpus C shows that the propositional content is more or less accurate (re)presentation of the Chinese ST, hence a general maintenance of and alignment with the premier’s discursive formation in Chinese. However, there is a tendency across the three administrations for the interpreters to further strengthen the already positive discourse through various linguistic means. This is exemplified in the two extracts below:

Example 17 (2003)

ST: 香港战胜了亚洲风波带来的经济上的困难。
Gloss: Hong Kong overcame the economic difficulties brought about by the Asia (financial) crisis.
TT: Hong Kong has also successfully overcome the economic difficulties caused by Asian financial crisis.

Example 18 (2011)

ST: 香港目前不仅有应对区域竞争和风险的能力，而且也有应对世界竞争和风险的能力。
Gloss: Hong Kong at present not only has the ability to handle regional competition and risks but also has the ability to handle international competition and risks.
TT: I believe Hong Kong has the ability to cope with not only regional competition and risks, but also international competition and risks.

The strengthening of the premier’s discourse is evidenced in the interpreter’s use of the present perfect structure ‘has overcome’ and the addition of the intensifier ‘successfully’ in example 17 (which together highlight emphatically Hong Kong’s achievement with Beijing’s support) as well as the interpreter’s addition of ‘I believe’ in example 18 (which adds an extra level of conviction to the ST).
4.3.1.3.2 Collocation with ‘Mainland’

‘Hong Kong’, unsurprisingly, is closely associated with ‘mainland’ (Figure 20), which is in itself indicative of the close ties between Hong Kong and mainland China in various aspects. The relationship between the two sides is found to be predominantly positive, featuring articulations of close economic ties (lines 3, 8, 14), close economic partnership and agreement (lines 5, 12, 16), close cooperation (lines 10, 17, 19-22 and 25), extensive exchanges (line 23), intensive consultations (line 24), infrastructure development (lines 11 and 18), easier market access to the mainland (lines 6-7 and 26-27), the geographical proximity to the mainland (line 13) and the fact that Hong Kong has the strong backing from the mainland (line 9). These indicate the degree of frequent and sound interactions between the two sides. Comparative analyses in subcorpus C show that the information in the Chinese original is well maintained in the English interpretation.

![Figure 20: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘Hong Kong’ and ‘mainland’ (by collocation)](image-url)
4.3.1.3.3 Collocation with ‘Central Government’

Close examination of the concordance lines also shows that ‘Hong Kong’ frequently co-occurs with ‘central government’ (Figure 21). Interestingly, ‘central government’ featuring the modifier central refers to the Chinese government. It tends to be used in the articulation of Hong Kong discourse to clearly indicate the centre-region hierarchy and the centrality of the Chinese government. The nature of Hong Kong-mainland ties is evidenced in a range of lexical items relating to help (2nd line), assistance (6th line), benefits (4th line) and support (4-5th, 10-11th, 14th and 16th lines), where the central government is discursively (re)presented to be the social actor in a position to provide ‘assistance’ to Hong Kong’s economic development (6th line), bring ‘tangible benefits to Hong Kong’ (4th line) and give ‘stronger support’ (16th line) to the SAR.

In comparison, the Hong Kong SAR government is in a passive and less powerful position to file requests to the central government for approval (1st and 6th lines). As such, the relationship between the two sides is largely one-way in nature, where Hong Kong is dependent on the mainland’s support.

Figure 21: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘Hong Kong’ and ‘central government’ (by collocation)
This lopsided Hong Kong-central government relationship is also clearly indicated in the structure ‘to Hong Kong’ (lines 1-4, 6-7, 11-15) as evidenced in Figure 22. This power asymmetry is exemplified in ‘CEPA was a big gift I had brought to Hong Kong’, ‘with the implementation of the 11th Five-year Plan more room will be given to Hong Kong’.

Figure 22: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘to Hong Kong’ (sorted to the left)

Therefore, the interpreted English discourse largely portrays the central government as the active giver and Hong Kong as the passive recipient/beneficiary. This is more or less an accurate reflection of the ST, hence a general level of interpreter alignment with the Chinese original.

Given the ideologically salient nature of the term ‘central government’, it is further explored in both subcorpora. There are 31 mentions of 中央政府 in Chinese, whereas there are 69 mentions of ‘central government’ in the English interpretation (a noticeable 122.6% increase). Discursively, the interpreters’ proliferated (re)production of ‘central government’ signals their increased alignment with China’s official discourse on Hong Kong, leading to a further strengthening of the discourse that Hong Kong is but a region under the rule, assistance and support of the central government (despite the relative autonomy it enjoys). This is particularly revealing if approached from a diachronic perspective (Table 13).
Table 13: ‘Central government’ in both subcorpora and across the administrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese subcorpus (freq/freq per year)</th>
<th>English subcorpus (freq/freq per year)</th>
<th>Increase (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zhu (1998-2002)</td>
<td>6/1.2 (7082.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>13/2.6 (6101.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>116.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen (2003-2012)</td>
<td>8/0.8 (8614.5 tokens/year)</td>
<td>27/2.7 (7166.3 tokens/year)</td>
<td>237.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li (2013-2017)</td>
<td>17/3.4 (9740.4 tokens/year)</td>
<td>29/5.8 (7698.6 tokens/year)</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>122.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly, in addition to the increased production of ‘central government’ overall between the ST and TT, increased articulation of ‘central government’ can be seen in each period. There have also been increasing mentions of ‘central government’ by the interpreters across the three periods (2.6, 2.7 and 5.8 times per year respectively). Such increasing (re)production can be seen as the interpreters’ increasing (re)affirmation that ‘One Country’ must come before ‘Two Systems’ and, hence, a (re)emphasising on the centrality of the mainland government amidst growing pro-independence and anti-mainland sentiments in Hong Kong much to Beijing’s dismay in recent years (e.g. the Occupy Central movement in 2014 and the Mong Kok Riot in 2016).

Interestingly, during the two sessions in 2017, Premier Li Keqiang mentioned explicitly in his Government Work Report for the first time that Hong Kong independence has no way out and will lead nowhere. He also made clear at the press conference that the ‘One Country, Two Systems’ principle needs to ‘be perceived and implemented in its entirety’ and ‘be steadfastly applied in Hong Kong without being bent or distorted’. From this perspective, the interpreters’ proliferated and increasing use of ‘central government’ works to further foreground the centre-region nexus discursively in English, strengthening the official argument that Hong Kong independence is unrealistic and Hong Kong will not be prosperous without the strong support of the mainland. This, therefore, further strengthens the authority and hegemonic presence of Beijing and signals the interpreters’ increased alignment with Beijing’s official position on an increasingly unruly Hong Kong.
4.3.1.3.4 Collocation with ‘Development’, ‘Prosperity’ and ‘Stability’

‘Hong Kong’ is also found to be strongly associated with ‘development’, ‘prosperity’ and ‘stability’. These collocational patterns are illustrative of Beijing’s focus on Hong Kong’s (economic) development and commitment to a prosperous and stable Hong Kong since the 1997 handover. Figure 23 illustrates how ‘development’ is central to China’s discursive articulation on Hong Kong in English. Similarly, Figure 24 shows the close association between ‘Hong Kong’ and ‘prosperity’. Notably, ‘prosperity’ and ‘stability’ are often juxtaposed with each other. This, cognitively, indicates the close link between Hong Kong’s prosperity and stability, that is, Hong Kong can only develop and prosper if the SAR is stable socially and politically. Comparative analysis between the ST and TT in subcorpus C shows that these patterns are largely accurate reflections of the Chinese discourse, thus pointing to a general degree of interpreter alignment vis-à-vis the premiers’ utterances.

Figure 23: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘Hong Kong’ and ‘development’ (by collocation)
4.3.1.3.5 Collocation with ‘Compatriots’

Furthermore, as illustrated in Figure 25, Hong Kong is frequently collocated with ‘compatriots’ as in ‘Hong Kong compatriots’ (10 instances), ‘compatriots in Hong Kong’ (7 instances) and ‘Hong Kong and Macao compatriots’ (1 instance). The word ‘compatriots’ is highly emotional and evocative in nature, emphasising people’s shared blood and cultural ties.

Further investigation in the Chinese ST confirms that the 18 instances in English are the result of the Chinese equivalent 香港同胞 in subcorpus A. This, therefore, suggests the interpreters’ alignment with the Chinese original. Such active engagement is of particular relevance given that Hong Kong was only returned to China in 1997 as a former UK colony and people in Hong Kong still exhibit a lack of confidence and mistrust in Beijing.

Interestingly, out of the 18 instances of the patterns in English, 8 are associated with the first-person plural ‘our’ (44.44%). Comparative analyses in subcorpus C show that none of the 8 instances featuring the emotional and affectionate ‘our’ was triggered by the Chinese
original, but added in interpreting. Apart from indicating the interpreters’ institutional positioning as part of the government, the repeated additions of ‘our’ have helped foster a heightened sense of togetherness and belonging, thus strengthening the discourse of unity that people in Hong Kong are brothers and sisters despite 155 years of colonial rule.

Figure 25: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘Hong Kong’ and ‘compatriots’ (by collocation)

This can also be construed as the interpreters’ implicit alignment with the government’s overarching ‘One Country, Two Systems’ policy on Hong Kong. The following example is a good case in point, which offers a micro-level snapshot of the interpreter’s repeated additions ‘our’.
Example 19 (2004)

ST: 中央始终不渝地关心香港同胞，为了支持香港的经济发展和复苏，我们在货物贸易和服务贸易方面、金融、自由行和基础设施建设方面采取了许多措施 [...] 香港最近要发行 200 亿港币的债券，中央政府对此持积极的态度。我们的原则是凡是有利于香港繁荣稳定，有利于内地与香港共同发展的事情，我们都会积极去做，全力支持。谈起对香港同胞的希望，我衷心希望广大香港同胞能够以香港的长期繁荣稳定的大局为重，以香港同胞的长远和根本的利益为重，顾全大局、增进团结，坚定信心、努力奋斗，香港明天一定会更加美好，这个信念，我想全中国人民和香港同胞都不会动摇。

Gloss: The central (government) unswervingly cares about the Hong Kong compatriots. To support Hong Kong’s economic development and recovery, we have in the areas of commodities trade and services trade, finance, free travel and infrastructure construction taken many measures [...] Hong Kong recently will issue treasury bonds worth 20 billion HKD. The central government on this takes a positive attitude. Our principle is that for everything that is in the interest of Hong Kong’s prosperity and stability and in the interest of the mainland and Hong Kong’s common development we will actively pursue it with full support. In terms of wishes for Hong Kong compatriots, I sincerely hope that all the Hong Kong compatriots will focus on the big picture of Hong Kong’s long-term prosperity and stability and focus on Hong Kong compatriots’ long-term and fundamental interests, pay attention to the big picture, increase unity, strengthen confidence and work hard. Hong Kong’s tomorrow will surely be better. This conviction, I think the entire Chinese people and Hong Kong compatriots will not yield.

TT: The Central Government as always cares a lot for our Hong Kong compatriots. To support the economic recovery and development in Hong Kong, we have instituted many measures in terms of commodities and service trades, the financial sector, tourism opening and infrastructure projects [...] recently Hong Kong decided to issue treasury bonds worth HK$20 billion. The Central Government is quite positive about that. The principle we always follow is that we will actively undertake and give our full support to whatever is in the interest of the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and common development between the mainland and Hong Kong. In terms of my hopes for our Hong Kong compatriots, I sincerely hope that the broad masses of our Hong Kong compatriots can set store by the interest of long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and the long-term and fundamental interests of our Hong Kong compatriots. I hope they will focus on the interests of the whole nation, strengthen unity and make determined and hard efforts to develop Hong Kong. Hong Kong will surely have a better tomorrow. That is the unswerving conviction held by the entire Chinese people, including our Hong Kong compatriots.

In this extract, the Chinese premier expresses Beijing’s willingness to support Hong Kong’s development and reaffirms its commitment to Hong Kong’s long-term prosperity and stability in response to a question posed by the Hong Kong TVB journalist. The Chinese premier’s
repeated use of the emotional and evocative 香港同胞 or ‘Hong Kong compatriots’ (5 times) can be seen as a conscious effort to appeal to the Hong Kong people. Interestingly, ‘our’ is added in all of the 5 instances in the ST, thus indicating the interpreter’s further alignment with China’s ‘One Country Two Systems’ policy and further positive engagement with the Hong Kong people discursively.

In sum, China’s discursive formation on Hong Kong is characterised by positive engagement overall, emphasising Hong Kong’s various advantages and its unique position as a world financial and trade centre. Discursively, Hong Kong is also (re)presented as the passive recipient, whereas Beijing is (re)presented as the benefactor who supports the SAR. In addition, development, prosperity and stability are greatly emphasised in China’s discourse on Hong Kong, particularly at a time when Hong Kong is becoming increasingly pro-Independence and anti-mainland. In these aspects, the interpreters have aligned with the government’s official discursive articulation in Chinese. Notably, the government-affiliated interpreters have shown even stronger alignment with China’s official ‘one country, two systems’ policy in English through further foregrounding the hierarchised centre-region nexus between Beijing and Hong Kong and the close blood, linguistic and cultural ties between the Hong Kong and mainland Chinese people (e.g. the increased production of ‘central government’ and repeated articulation of ‘our Hong Kong compatriots’/‘our compatriots in Hong Kong’ in English). The interpreters’ such strong level of ideological alignment and reaffirmation seem particularly significant considering the increasing pro-Independence and anti-mainland sentiments in Hong Kong.

4.3.2 Discourse on Taiwan

Ranked 52nd on the Wordlist, ‘Taiwan’ is a frequent topic and a must-ask question at the interpreter-mediated press conference each year. The current Taiwan issue is a legacy of the Chinese civil war between the KMT (Nationalist Party of China) and the CPC (Communist Party of China), an unresolved question left over from history. After the defeat of the Nationalists by the Communists in 1949, the CPC founded the People’s Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland, whereas the KMT fled to Taiwan and started governing itself on the
island. Beijing’s official policies towards Taiwan have undergone several phases of adjustment and transformation since the founding of the PRC in 1949, shifting from Mao’s emphasis on military liberation, to peaceful reunification in Deng’s era, and gradually to a ‘carrot and stick’ approach adopted by the latest administrations.

Taiwan-related issues bear not just on the cross-Strait relations but also constitute a point of tension in the China-US ties. In many ways, the extent to which the Taiwanese leadership in power is willing to honour the ‘One-China Policy’ and the ‘1992 Consensus’ determines the nature (stability or hostility) of the cross-Strait ties. This section explores China’s discursive (re)presentation of Taiwan in English and the interpreters’ alignment with China’s official discourse on Taiwan on various levels.

4.3.2.1 Overall Level of Alignment on Taiwan

For a general idea of the government-affiliated interpreters’ alignment with China’s discourse on Taiwan at a lexical level, 台 and Taiwan* were respectively searched in subcorpus A and B (concordance lines unrelated to Taiwan in Chinese were weeded out). Statistically, there are 223 mentions of 台 (related to Taiwan) in the Chinese subcorpus and 276 mentions of Taiwan* in the English subcorpus (a marked 23.8% increase). Thus, Taiwan* is further foregrounded and rendered more explicit in interpreting as a prominent topic at the core of China’s national interests. Such increased (re)production leads to increased interpreter alignment, thus making it easier to hammer home the intended message in English discursively and rhetorically overall.

4.3.2.2 Fixed Overarching Formulations on Taiwan

Having provided a rough snapshot of how Taiwan-related lexical items are rendered overall, the Beijing’s overarching discursive formulations on Taiwan are examined here. The overarching formulations on Taiwan constitute condensed crystallisations of China’s (shifting) institutional policies and stances on Taiwan, an examination of which can shed useful light on the interpreters’ alignment. This section focuses on the following core formulations essential to China’s policies and positions on Taiwan: ‘One Country Two Systems’, ‘One-China
Policy’ and ‘the 1992 Consensus’. The frequencies of these formulations in Chinese and English are detailed below (Table 14):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency in subcorpus A</th>
<th>Frequency in subcorpus B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>一国两制 7</td>
<td>One Country Two Systems 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一个中国 38</td>
<td>One China 32/ One and (the) Same China 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>九二共识 4</td>
<td>1992 Consensus 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 in total</td>
<td>50 in total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: Overarching formulations on Taiwan in both subcorpora

4.3.2.2.1 ‘One Country Two Systems’
Although adopted subsequently for the return of Hong Kong and Macao, ‘One Country Two Systems’ was initially envisioned by Deng Xiaoping and articulated as a formula for the unification with Taiwan. As seen in Figure 26, the discursive formulation is well maintained in the TT (7 instances in both subcorpora), which points to a general level of interpreter alignment. Clearly, articulations of the formulation are concentrated in the first few years of the press conference data as it is later mostly used on Hong Kong and Macao matters.

Figure 26: Screenshot of the concordance lines featuring ‘one country, two systems’(by year)

4.3.2.2.2 ‘One-China’ Policy
The ‘one-China policy’ is at the heart of the Chinese government’s official position on Taiwan, constituting the fundamental framework that has guided the cross-Strait relations over the past few decades. As seen in Table 14, there are 38 occurrences of ‘一个中国’ in subcorpus A and 37 occurrences of its counterparts in subcorpus B, hence an overall level of interpreter alignment on this particular policy. Figure 27 illustrates some of the concordance
lines relating to the ‘one-China policy’, which is often (re)presented as a precondition for discussion and a principle different sides need to stay committed to. That is, the ‘one-China’ principle or policy is something to be ‘recognised’ and something for different parties to ‘stand for’, ‘adhere to’, ‘come back to’, ‘live by’, ‘stick to’, ‘uphold’ and stay ‘committed to’. Apart from mainland China and Taiwan, other geopolitical actors involved include the United States and Japan (e.g. 2nd and 16th lines).

Figure 27: Screenshot of the concordance lines relating to the ‘one-China’ principle (snapshot)

More specifically, amongst the 37 instances containing this overarching formulation in English, there are 4 instances of ‘one and the same China’ (in 2006, 2008, 2013 and 2016)
and 1 instance of ‘one and same China’ (2017). Put differently, while ‘一个中国’ has been consistently used throughout the press conference data in Chinese, the interpreters have on several occasions adopted the seemingly verbose yet more emphatic ‘one and [the] same China’ (Figure 28), rather than sticking to ‘one China’ consistently.

![Figure 28: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘one and [the] same China’ (by year)](image)

Such tautological language use in the interpreters’ (re)iteration of China’s official position in English is salient ideologically. As Roy (2013: 203) argues, Beijing has ‘moderated its position’ slightly regarding the one-China policy since the 2000s. This is in the sense that ‘during most of the period of the cross-strait standoff, the PRC insisted that Taiwan is part of China and that China is equal to the PRC’. However, concessions were made by Beijing to adopt a more inclusively defined ‘one China’. Unlike the previous position that Taiwan is part of mainland China (PRC), the adjusted position is that there is only one China and both the mainland and Taiwan belong to the same China, which is also known as the ‘1992 Consensus’. Such conciliatory adjustment provides ample leeway for the two sides to have different interpretations with regard to the actual meaning of ‘one China’.

Discursively, compared with the wording ‘一个中国’ (one China) that has remained unchanged over the years in Chinese, ‘one and (the) same China’ is subtle and significantly more emphatic, highlighting a sense of togetherness that the two sides belong to one China. The interpreters’ such emphatic articulation signals that they are highly up-to-date with the government’s latest policies, pointing to their active and responsive positioning with China’s (moderated) position. Given the high-profile and bilingual nature of the discursive event, the
premier’s press conferences are as much about the domestic audience as about the international audience. As mouthpieces of the government, the interpreters shoulder the responsibility of conveying China’s voice to a global audience in an accurate and responsive fashion. The interpreters’ tautological yet emphatic and nuanced English rendition ‘one and (the) same China’ is a typical case of (re)contextualisation, constituting a conscious effort of audience design to better and more accurately spell out China’s position internationally.

4.3.2.2.3 The 1992 Consensus

Closely linked to the one-China policy, the 1992 Consensus has relatively recently been another guiding formulation in the cross-strait ties. This consensus is a tacit understanding reached between semi-official representatives from the mainland and Taiwan that there is only one China in the world. The two sides, however, are permitted to disagree on its meaning with different interpretations, hence ‘One China, Respective Interpretations’ (yige zhongguo gezi biaoshu).

The 1992 Consensus ‘has served as a modus vivendi’ (Metzler 2017: 75) for the maintenance and healthy development of cross-Strait ties, providing a practical framework for both sides to temporarily shelve their differences and move ahead with negotiations and mutually beneficial cooperation. As illustrated in Table 14 above, while there are 4 mentions of the consensus in the ST, there are 6 mentions in the TT (a 50% increase). Despite the small numbers, this suggests the interpreters’ increased alignment with and slight strengthening of the government’s official policy by giving it more primacy in English.

The concordance lines relating to the 1992 Consensus in English are shown in Figure 29 below. The consensus is discursively portrayed as the ‘bedrock’ (line 4) and ‘political foundation’ (lines 5 and 6) of the cross-strait relationship (line 4) and something that ‘embodies one-China principle’ (line 6). Therefore, it is something to adhere to (lines 3-6) and recognise (line 5).
Example 20 below provides a micro-level account of the interpreter’s (increased) alignment vis-a-vis the specific 1992 Consensus, amongst other things.

**Example 20 (2016)**

ST: 两岸关系的和平发展确实是造福了两岸民众，两岸经济社会关系也在不断密切，而且需要良性互动。我记得去年我到福建去考察，曾经开了一个台商的座谈会，不少台商对大陆出的经济举措很敏感，很多人都提出来，担心会不会对台湾投资企业的优惠政策有改变，我们听进去了，回来就发了文件，明确已经有的对台商，台湾投资企业的优惠政策不得改变，要给定心丸啊。那么我们为什么这么作？因为我们是同胞啊。我们还会继续推出有利于两岸经贸合作的举措，当然前提是要保持两岸的和平发展，基石还是“九二共识”。只要遵循这一政治原则共识，大家都认同属于一个中国，可以说什么问题都好谈。

Gloss: The peaceful development of cross-Strait relations has indeed benefited the cross-Strait public. The economic and social ties across the Strait too are continuously becoming close and are in need of healthy interaction. I recall that last year I went to Fujian for an inspection tour and back then had a round-table meeting with Taiwan business people. Quite a few Taiwan business people were rather sensitive about the economic measures put forward by the mainland and many people pointed this out, worrying whether there would be any changes to the preferential policies for Taiwan investment companies. We took it on board, upon return, issued document to make clear that existing preferential policies for Taiwan business people and Taiwan investment companies would not be changed, needed to give them pills of reassurance. So why did we do this? Because we are compatriots. We also will continue to put forward measures conducive to cross-Strait economic and trade cooperation. Of course, the precondition is to maintain the cross-Strait peaceful development and the cornerstone still is the 1992 Consensus. As long as this political principle and consensus is adhered to and everyone identifies with belonging to one China, it can be said that all questions can be discussed.

TT: Peaceful development of cross-Straits relations is in interest of people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits. Economic and social ties between the two sides are also becoming increasingly close, and there needs to be sound interaction between the two sides. Last year, I paid a field trip to Fujian province, where I had a round-table with some Taiwan business people. And many of them were quite sensitive about any economic measures from the mainland and some were considering whether the preferential policy for
Taiwan businesses will be changed. Their point was well taken and we quickly issued a document specifying that all the introduced preferential policies for Taiwan businesses will remain unchanged to make them feel reassured. Why did we do that? Because we are all members of one big family. We will introduce more policies to boost business cooperation between the mainland and Taiwan on the premise that there will be continued peaceful development of cross-Strait relations and the bedrock of it is the 1992 Consensus. As long as one adheres to the political foundation of the 1992 Consensus and recognises it, that both mainland and Taiwan belong to one and the same China, anything can be discussed.

In this example, the interpreter’s institutional alignment and strengthening of the ST manifest themselves in a number of ways. In the ST, the premier emphasises that ‘peaceful development’ is ‘in interest of people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits’. He also mentioned his trip to Fujian where he heard Taiwanese businessmen’s questions and concerns. Upon his return, he issued a document to reassure the people that the preferential policies would not change. Interestingly, ‘quickly’ (untriggered by the ST) is added by the interpreter in English, thus further contributing to the positive image that the mainland government is highly efficient and responsive in dealing with Taiwan-related matters. In explaining the government’s efficient response, the rationale provided by the premier is that ‘we are compatriots’. Such already emotionally charged and evocative language use (emphasising the shared blood and cultural ties) is further strengthened in English as ‘we are all members of one big family’, combining the inclusive ‘all’ with the metaphorised language ‘family’.

Such more emphatic and evocative language use highlights a stronger sense of togetherness and unity that both sides belong to ‘one big family’. Premier Li goes on to stress that the 1992 Consensus is the ‘bedrock’ of ‘continued peaceful development of cross-Strait relations’. Clearly, the ‘1992 Consensus’ is only mentioned once in the ST and in the next sentence the demonstrative pronoun 这一 (‘this’) is used to refer to the 1992 consensus anaphorically. In the TT, however, there are 2 explicit mentions of the understanding, thus rendering the ‘1992 Consensus’ more prominent in English. These together (the metaphoric language use and addition of the consensus) indicate the interpreter’s increased alignment with and further strengthening of China’s official position that there is only one China.
4.3.2.3 Collocational Patterns Relating to Taiwan*

For more detailed and contextualised analysis, Taiwan* was investigated in the English subcorpus using AntConc’s ‘Collocates’ and ‘Kwic Sort’ function. The items closely associated with Taiwan* include the common collocates (e.g. ‘the’, ‘of’, ‘and’, ‘to’ and ‘in’) as well as other expected items. The expected collocates include ‘side’ as in ‘the Taiwan side’, which is used to refer to Taiwan, and ‘mainland’ as in ‘Taiwan and mainland’, which is used when talking about the cross-Strait relationship. Given the limited space, attention is focused particularly on salient patterns of ideological significance as follows:

4.3.2.3.1 Pattern ‘Taiwan is’

The collocation ‘Taiwan is’ is first investigated in the corpus as this can potentially reveal about Beijing’s conceptualisation of and official stance on Taiwan (e.g. its status and importance).

![Concordance Lines](image)

Figure 30: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘Taiwan is’ (by year)

It is clear from the concordance lines (Figure 30) that Taiwan is perceived as China’s ‘treasure island’ (line 9), which the premier wishes to visit. This can be viewed as an act of positive engagement. Furthermore, the Chinese premier also makes explicitly clear that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China’s territory (lines 6, 8) and China’s internal affairs (lines 4-5). Therefore, the Taiwan election is downgraded and regionalised as merely a ‘local election’ (line 2). Comparative analyses in subcorpus C show that the English concordance
lines are accurate (re)presentations of the Chinese ST.

4.3.2.3 Patterns associated with ‘question’

Notably, Taiwan* is also collocated with ‘question’ in English (Figure 31). An investigation of the concordance lines shows that the collocation mostly appears in ‘Taiwan question’ (13 instances) or ‘question of Taiwan’ (8 instances). Comparative analysis in subcorpus C reveals that these patterns are triggered by 台湾问题 in Chinese (literally ‘Taiwan question/issue/problem’).

| 2000 | 2000 |
| 2000 | 2000 |
| 2000 | 2000 |
| 2000 | 2000 |
| 2000 | 2000 |
| 2000 | 2000 |
| 2000 | 2000 |
| 2000 | 2000 |
| 2000 | 2000 |
| 2000 | 2000 |
| 2000 | 2000 |
| 2000 | 2000 |

Figure 31: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘Taiwan’ and ‘question’ (by collocation)

Interestingly, while other mentions of 问题 in Chinese tend to be rendered into English as ‘issue’ (for example ‘peaceful settlement of the Iraqi issue’, ‘nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula’, ‘the issue of climate change’ and ‘the issue of Syria’), the government-affiliated interpreters tend to consistently describe the unresolved issue involving Taiwan as a ‘question’ to draw a clear distinction. A focus on lexical choice is crucial to the analysis of political discourse and its translation (Schäffner 2012: 121). The interpreters’ special,
differentiated and nuanced treatment constitutes an effort of audience accommodation when (re)contextualising China’s official discourse into English. Such an effort indicates their internalised alignment with China’s official ‘one-China’ position and stance on the status of Taiwan, which conveys a sense that Taiwan is strictly a domestic question to be resolved sooner or later (evidenced in ‘settle’ and ‘settlement’ etc.), rather than a disputable issue possibly to be internationalised or Americanised with foreign interference (cf. Wang & Feng 2018 for more in-depth discussions).

4.3.2.3.3 Patterns associated with ‘people’ and ‘compatriots’

This section investigates the collocates ‘people’ and ‘compatriots’ associated with Taiwan*. Attention is focused first on the collocation between Taiwan* and ‘people’. A close examination of the concordance lines (Figure 32) points to a clear distinction between the secessionist pro-Independence forces and the ordinary Taiwan compatriots.
Figure 32: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘Taiwan’ and ‘people’ (by collocation)

Regarding the people seeking independence, the concordance lines exhibit othering discourse (lines 4, 9, 13, 29, 33-34, 47-48), featuring an overwhelmingly negative portrayal. This is evident in ‘firmly oppose’, ‘go against the general aspirations of the entire Chinese people’, ‘undermines the interests of the people in Taiwan’ and ‘the aggressiveness and the arrogance of the pro-Taiwan independence forces’. These suggest the predominantly negative engagement towards the pro-Independence forces in English. In stark contrast, the
concordance lines exhibit a positive attitude of engagement towards the ordinary people in Taiwan. For example, the mainland government has Taiwanese people’s convenience, will and common aspirations in mind and acts in their favour and best interests (lines 3, 7-9, 11-19, 24-28, 30-32, 46-47, 50). The concordance lines also feature other soft approaches to engage with the Taiwanese people, including the premier sending his warm greetings to the Taiwan compatriots (line 51), recounting a moving story (line 52) and promoting various forms of cross-Strait exchanges and contacts (36, 43, 53, 55-57).

Meanwhile, the Chinese premiers have also reached out to the Taiwanese people candidly, clarifying that the anti-secession law is not targeted at the compatriots in Taiwan (lines 37-38, 42) and sincerely advising the Taiwanese people to be vigilant of the Taiwan leadership’s pro-Independence moves (lines 39-40). Notably, in the interpreted English TT, the Taiwanese people are also constructed repeatedly as part of the Chinese people (lines 1, 2, 5, 7-13, 21-22, 31-32), which is evident in ‘our people in Taiwan’, ‘the entire Chinese people, our Taiwan compatriots included’ and ‘Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits’. Comparative analyses in subcorpus C reveal that the positive and negative portrayals are accurate (re)presentations of the Chinese ST overall, thus pointing towards a good level of interpreter alignment.

Interestingly, although ‘Taiwan people’ or ‘people in Taiwan’ are frequently used in the English interpretation, the roughly synonymous ‘Taiwanese’ and ‘Taiwanese people’ are never used by the interpreters. This is ideologically salient and can be viewed as an effort to suppress a distinct ‘Taiwanese’ national identity separated from that of Chinese. Through repeatedly using ‘Taiwan people’ or ‘people in Taiwan’, the government-affiliated interpreters seem to have treated people there merely as Chinese people residing in a specific geographical locale within China just as people in Beijing or Shanghai, hence a subtle alignment with the official ‘one-China’ policy.

Another interesting collocational pattern associated with Taiwan* is that of ‘compatriots’ (Figure 33). There are 23 concordance lines involving the collocation between ‘Taiwan’ and
‘compatriots’ (including 9 instances of ‘compatriots in Taiwan’ and 10 instances of ‘Taiwan compatriots’ respectively). Interestingly, 12 of the 23 concordance lines (52.2%) feature the first-person plural pronoun ‘our’. There are 3 instances of ‘our compatriots in Taiwan’ (lines 13, 14, 21) and 9 instances of ‘our Taiwan compatriots’ (lines 1-5, 11-12, 19, 23). Critical comparative analysis between the ST and TT in subcorpus C shows that none of the 12 instances was triggered by the Chinese ST, but added by the interpreters.

From the perspective of prosody, adding ‘our’ does seem to roll off the tongue slightly better in English. Nevertheless, discursively, the repeated additions of the emotive ‘our’ reflect the interpreters’ effort to further engage with the Taiwanese people, indicating even stronger ties between the two sides. This contributes to the discourse that people in the mainland and Taiwan are flesh-and-blood brothers, thus reinforcing the institutional position that there is only one China and the Taiwanese people are Chinese (hence a nuanced and perhaps internalised way of interpreter alignment with the official ‘one China’ policy). This recurrent pattern also constitutes a micro-level instantiation of the broader WE-ness discussed in the self-referentiality subcategory (section 4.1). The example below is a good case in point.

Figure 33: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘Taiwan’ and ‘compatriots’ (by collocation)
Example 21 (2003)

**ST:** 我愿意通过记者女士向台湾同胞表示亲切的问候。实现祖国的完全统一是包含台湾同胞整个中国人民的共同愿望。

**Gloss:** I would like, through Ms Journalist, to the Taiwan compatriots to express kind greetings. The realisation of the motherland’s complete reunification is, including the Taiwan compatriots, the whole Chinese people’s common wish.

**TT:** Through you, I would like to extend my best regards to our Taiwan compatriots. The achievement of peaceful reunification is the common aspiration of all Chinese people, including our Taiwan compatriots.

In this example, both mentions of 台湾同胞 are interpreted into English with the addition ‘our’. From a product-oriented perspective, the interpreter’s active mediation serves to make China’s discourse more emphatic and appealing, thus adding an extra layer of positive engagement to win the hearts and minds of the Taiwanese people. Such repeated additions also further explicitise Beijing’s stance on Taiwan, foregrounding a sense of belonging and togetherness that there is only one China in the world.

4.3.2.3.4 Patterns associated with ‘authorities’

Another interesting collocate of Taiwan* is ‘authorities’, which appears in the designation ‘Taiwan authorities’. The different designations often reflect different naming strategies. The way of lexicalising things can often shed light on a particular individual or party’s ideological positioning. That is, ‘in the very act of naming things in a particular way, speakers, whether wittingly or unwittingly, are stating their version of’ how the world works (Beaton-Thome 2013: 381). For example, as Kim’s (2013) corpus-based CDA analysis demonstrates, the North Korean leader is frequently addressed as a ‘dictator’ by the US media, while addressed as a ‘great leader’ domestically. As Figure 34 illustrates, ‘Taiwan government’ and ‘Taiwan president’, as might be frequently addressed by Western press, are consistently referred to by the interpreters as the ‘Taiwan authorities’ and ‘leader of the Taiwan authorities’ respectively, thereby without recognising the legitimacy of the government in Taiwan (which the Taiwan side officially calls itself the Republic of China).
Unsurprisingly, the ‘Taiwan authorities’ are often framed in a negative light as part of an othering discourse, which is evidenced in ‘push for a referendum aimed at Taiwan independence’ (line 2), ‘run counter to the general trends of peace’ (line 6), ‘lose all popular support for his unjust cause’ (line 7), ‘block the opening of the three direct links’ (line 3). Comparative analysis in subcorpus C shows that these instances relating to ‘Taiwan authorities’ are accurate rendering of 台湾当局 and 台湾当局领导人 in Chinese. Interestingly, in both subcorpora, the Chinese premiers and interpreters are found to use a serious tone seemingly to blame and warn the Taiwan leaders seeking independence. However, while there are only 6 instances of that designation in Chinese, there are 8 instances in English (hence increased interpreter alignment and further strengthening of the negative portrayal and othering discourse). The interpreter’s addition of the designation is illustrated in the example below.

Example 22 (2006)

**ST:** 台湾当局领导人的这种做法，违背了两岸和平稳定互利双赢的大趋势，也违背了包括台湾同胞在内的全体中国人的愿望，必将落得个失道寡助的下场。

**Gloss:** The leader of the Taiwan authorities’ such acts are against the broad trend of cross-Strait peace, stability, mutual benefit and win-win and are against all the Chinese people’s wish including the Taiwan compatriots and inevitably will end up without others’ support due to his unjust cause.

**TT:** Such acts of the leader of the Taiwan authorities not only run counter to the general trends of peace, stability and seeking mutually beneficial and win-win results across the Taiwan Straits, but also go against the general aspirations of the entire Chinese people, our Taiwan compatriots included. At the end of the day, the leader of the Taiwan authorities will find, will lose all popular support for his unjust cause.
Apart from the ideologically salient use of ‘our Taiwan compatriots’, the interpreter has repeatedly labelled the Taiwan president as ‘the leader of the Taiwan authorities’, which further contributes to the condemnation rhetorically. As such, by not recognising the Taiwan government and calling into question the legitimacy of the Taiwan leader, the interpreter has demonstrated increased alignment with China’s official position that Taiwan is part of China and not an independent country with its government and president.

**4.3.2.3.5 Pattern associated with ‘independence’**

Taiwan* is also found to be strongly associated with ‘independence’ in the English interpretation (21 instances of ‘Taiwan independence’ and 1 instance of ‘Taiwan’s independence’). Further examination of the concordance lines (Figure 35) suggests that there is predominantly negative (re)presentation of Taiwan independence. The negative semantic prosody is evidenced in ‘splittist’, ‘separatist and secessionist plots’, ‘worried’, ‘the aggressiveness and the arrogance of the pro-Taiwan Independence forces’, ‘will never tolerate’, ‘firmly oppose’, ‘will not end up well’, ‘use all these tricks’ and ‘under the pretext of promoting democracy’ and ‘those die-hard elements’ *etc.*

To investigate what was said in the first place in Chinese, the English concordance lines were compared with their Chinese counterparts. Statistically, there is a roughly equal number of ‘Taiwan independence’ in the Chinese ST (4 instances of ‘台湾独立’ and 17 instances of the abbreviated form ‘ 台独’). The overwhelmingly unfavourable portrayal of ‘Taiwan independence’ in English is found to be accurate rendition of the Chinese original. This is unsurprising given Beijing’s consistent and staunch position against Taiwan independence.

Interestingly, however, further sorting of the concordance lines above shows that 6 out of the 22 concordance lines (27.3%) are connected with the modifier ‘so-called’ (lines 5, 6, 7, 10, 13, 14). Further manual analysis of the Taiwan discourse in subcorpus B identifies two more instances where ‘so-called’ is used on actions relating to Taiwan (independence): ‘the so-called constitutional re-engineering’ (2006) and ‘the so-called referendum scheme for Taiwan’s membership in the UN’ (2008). Comparative analysis in subcorpus C shows that
none of the 8 instances of ‘so-called’ in English regarding Taiwan/Taiwan independence was triggered by the Chinese ST but added deliberately by the interpreters (cf. later in this section for the distribution of the interpreters’ use of ‘so-called’ over time). Example 23 illustrates the interpreter’s institutional alignment and safeguarding of China’s core interest through repeatedly adding ‘so-called’.

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**Figure 35:** Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘Taiwan independence’ (sorted to the left)
Example 23 (2006)

ST: 台湾当局领导人[...]公然挑衅一个中国的原则，严重破坏两岸的和平稳定[...]值得警惕的是，他们正在加紧台独分裂活动，推行以法理台独为目标的宪法改造工程。

Gloss: The leader of the Taiwan authorities[...]openly confronted the One-China principle and seriously undermined peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits[...]It is worth staying alert that they are now intensifying efforts to conduct secessionist activities aimed at Taiwan independence, pushing for the constitutional re-engineering project with the goal of de jure Taiwan independence.

TT: The leader of the Taiwan authorities[...]recently provoked the one-China principle and seriously undermined peace and stability in the Taiwan Straits [...] We need to stay alert against the fact that they are now intensifying their efforts to pursue the secessionist activities aimed at the so-called Taiwan independence. They are also going all out to pursue their goal of so-called de jure Taiwan independence through the so-called constitutional re-engineering.

The name-mentioning modifier ‘so-called’ carries negative meaning semantically. ‘So-called’ is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as ‘falsely or improperly so named’. Similarly, ‘so-called’, according to the Oxford dictionary, is ‘used to express one's view that a name or term is inappropriate’. Notably, the ideologically salient ‘so-called’ is often part of the Chinese foreign ministers and foreign ministry spokespersons’ repertoire of language use to rebuff, challenge and dismiss claims. Examples of its extensive use in Chinese diplomats’ parlance include: ‘we firmly oppose attempts by any country or any force to interfere with other countries' internal affairs by using the so-called human rights issues’, ‘the US side shows no respect for sovereignty, security and maritime rights of coastal states and conducts the so-called freedom of navigation operation in other country's territorial waters in violation of international law’ and ‘the so-called ruling it produced [the South China Sea arbitration in 2016 against China] has no authority and credibility to speak of and is invalid and not binding’.

Therefore, by dismissing Taiwan independence as ‘so-called’, the interpreters call into question its validity and show their disapproval that the very idea is unreal and illegitimate. As such, they have distanced themselves from the designation and aligned instead with the government’s official position. The interpreters’ proliferated additions of the attitudinal
epithet (Halliday 1985) ‘so-called’ have, in effect, further strengthened the already tough stance on Taiwan and the negative representation of its efforts to gain independence, thus pointing towards the interpreters’ mediation as active defenders of China’s core interests.

Having illustrated the interpreters’ clear mediation and (further) alignment with China’s carrot-and-stick approach on Taiwan (featuring both positive and negative engagements), it is now interesting to explore this diachronically against a backdrop of sociopolitical changes and shifting cross-Strait ties. The premier’s press conference data (1998-2017) overlaps with four recent administrations in Taiwan: Lee Teng-hui (1988-2000), Chen Shui-bian (2000-2008), Ma Ying-jeou (2008-2016) and Tsai Ing-wen (2016-now).

Lee Teng-hui was in office between 1988 and 2000. Having moved away from Taipei’s long-held ‘one-China’ principle, Lee put forth the controversial ‘two-states theory’ in 1999, emphasising that Taiwan is a separate entity from the mainland. As such, the two sides across the Taiwan Strait have a ‘special state-to-state’ relationship and need to interact with each other on an equal footing. Lee’s remarks were strongly condemned by Beijing and the Chinese premier’s tough position on Taiwan was made explicitly clear at the press conferences.

The interpreters in this period (1998-2000) very much aligned with China’s official position, successfully conveying the premier’s tough stance. Such institutional alignment is evident in ‘Taiwan independence in whatever form will never be acceptable’, ‘whoever pursues Taiwan independence will not end up well’, ‘how can it be possible that we will allow Taiwan, which has been the Chinese territory since ancient times, to be separated from the motherland? Absolutely, we cannot!’ ‘the Taiwan question should not be allowed to drag on indefinitely’, ‘how can it be possible that we will not use force?’ and ‘the Chinese people will use all their blood and even sacrifice their lives to defend the unity of our motherland’36 and also the dignity of the Chinese nation’.

36Interestingly, in China’s discursive articulation on those areas bearing on China’s core national interest (e.g. Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao and Tibet), the emotive and evocative word ‘motherland’ is frequently used in both Chinese and English as a way of positive engagement.
In addition to conveying China’s unequivocal position, the interpreters have also very much aligned with a soft approach adopted by the Chinese premier, appealing to the Taiwan people and stressing that Taiwan independence is against the wishes of people in both the mainland and Taiwan. They have sometimes even strengthened China’s official discourse in English. Examples of this are the pursuit of Taiwan independence ‘will be against the will of the Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits and also against the will of the entire Chinese community in the world’ and ‘these missiles have by no means been targeted at our brothers and sisters in Taiwan’ and ‘there can also be concessions made on our part, but these concessions will be concessions made to our fellow Chinese’ (additions of ‘our’).

Following Lee Teng-hui, Chen Shui-bian, from the traditionally pro-Independence Democratic Progressive Party, was elected into office as the leader of Taiwan. During his administration (2000-2008), Chen took a largely hostile attitude, pursuing relatively provocative policies towards the mainland (e.g. the controversial ‘one country on each side of the Taiwan Strait’ statement in 2002 and the proposed referendum in March 2004 to Beijing’s displeasure). Alarmed and angered by this, China’s National People’s Congress passed the Anti-Secession Law in 2005, stressing that, should Taiwan seek to secede, non-peaceful means and other necessary measures would be adopted to safeguard China’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity. This provided the legal means to prevent Taiwan from pursuing de jure independence. As such, the cross-Strait relations plummeted to a new low in this period.

Notably, the interpreters’ all 8 additions of ‘so-called’ occurred broadly during Taiwan leader Chen’s administration (2000-2008). As Figure 36 suggests, the additions are concentrated in 2006, 2007 and 2008 (5, 2 and 1 instances respectively with a peak in 2006), particularly after Chen’s proposed referendum in Taiwan and the passing of the Anti-Secession Law in mainland China. As such, when the Taiwan strait was once again a major geopolitical flash point, the interpreters showed an increased level of alignment, taking a stern position as guardians of China’s core national interests.
The same period during Chen’s administration also features the interpreters’ further strengthening of Beijing’s positive engagement focusing on the Taiwan people. For example, at the 2005 press conference, Premier Wen explicitly mentioned that the Anti-Secession Law was ‘by no means targeted against the people in Taiwan’ but to ‘oppose and check Taiwan independence forces’. Such positive engagement is also evidenced in the Chinese premier’s repeated use of ‘Taiwan compatriots’. In this period, the interpreters further enhanced the premier’s positive engagement discourse, epitomised in their repeated additions of ‘our’ broadly within Chen’s administration (Figure 37). As such, in line with the government’s carrot-and-stick approach, the interpreters have made the tough position even tougher and, meanwhile, made the discourse of positive engagement even more evocative and appealing.

In 2008, the largely pro-China and pro-Unification Ma Ying-jeou with the KMT party took power in Taiwan. Unlike his predecessors, Ma pledged the ‘Three Nos’ policy (no unification, no independence, and no use of force) and stayed committed to the ‘1992 Consensus’ during his administration (2008-2016). Ma’s position resonated with the mainland’s stance focusing on maintaining the status quo across strait. After Ma took power in 2008, the cross-strait
relationship became less tense, ushering in a period of relative détente.

Unsurprisingly, the interpreters’ strong alignment vis-à-vis China’s position on Taiwan seen in Lee and Chen’s administrations (e.g. the repeated use of the attitude marker ‘so-called’) decreased dramatically since Ma took power in 2008. Similarly, the interpreters’ use of ‘our Taiwan compatriots’/‘our compatriots in Taiwan’ has also become less frequent. The interpreters’ only mentions of the patterns were around 2013 and 2014 when Li Keqiang took office as China’s new premier (presumably to show the new administration’s renewed effort to engage with the Taiwan people). The decline in interpreter alignment can be explained by the decreasing need for them to take a stern stance or make excessive effort to appeal to the Taiwan public as the cross-Strait relationship started to move towards the right track. In May 2016, Tsai Ing-wen from the pro-Independent DPP party was sworn in as the first female president in Taiwan. Until now, Beijing has made clear its position that Taiwan under the DPP must accept the ‘1992 Consensus’ and honour the ‘one China’ policy. Given that there is only one year’s conference data in the CE-PolitDisCorp during Tsai’s period, no pronounced pattern has been found.

Unlike the largely positive discourse on Hong Kong, China’s discursive articulation on Taiwan constitutes a typical carrot-and-stick approach, combining both positive and negative engagements and drawing a clear distinction between the Taiwan people and Taiwan authorities. This approach, on the one hand, features the government’s active charm offensive to win over the Taiwan people and, on the other hand, is characterised by the government’s stern stance on the Taiwan leaders seeking independence. On both fronts, the interpreters have aligned themselves institutionally and often even further strengthened China’s discursive articulation in English. This is achieved through further emphasising people’s blood and cultural ties across strait (additions of ‘our’) and making China’s already staunch position even clearer in safeguarding China’s core national interests (additions of ‘so-called’).
4.3.3 Discourse on Tibet

Currently an autonomous region in China, Tibet represents another sensitive topic central to China’s core national interests. Considered an inseparable part of China since ancient times, Tibet enjoys relative autonomy and people there enjoy relative prosperity and freedoms. The Dalai Lama, according to Beijing, is far from being purely a spiritual and religious figure but a politician with ulterior motives and a hidden agenda. For Beijing, the ‘Dalai clique’ under him is sabotaging the unity of China, seeking to separate Tibet from the ‘motherland’. This section explores China’s discursive (re)presentation of Tibet in English and the interpreters’ alignment vis-à-vis the government’s position at the following levels:

4.3.3.1 Overall Level of Alignment on Tibet

To explore the interpreters’ alignment overall, 藏 and Tibet* were first searched in subcorpus A and B (the instances unrelated to Tibet in the Chinese subcorpus are not counted). Initial observations suggest that, unlike Hong Kong and Taiwan which are frequently featured topics almost every year, Tibet-related issues are addressed sporadically and only became a focus at the 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2012 conferences when major tensions flared up in the autonomous region (e.g. the Tibet unrest around the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and the self-immolation of Buddhist monks a few years later). Statistically, there are 54 and 61 instances of 藏 and Tibet* respectively in both subcorpora (a noticeable 13% increase as a result of interpreting). This demonstrates an increased level of interpreter alignment in general, thus giving Tibet more primacy in the interpreted English discourse.

4.3.3.2 Collocational Patterns Relating to Tibet*

For more in-depth and contextualised analysis, ideologically salient patterns featuring Tibet* are pursued in the data. After sorting the concordance lines to the left and right and exploring the collocates of Tibet*, the following patterns of ideological salience are discussed.

4.3.3.2.1 Pattern ‘Tibet is’

‘Tibet is’ is first explored here, which can potentially reveal China’s official position on Tibet (e.g. its status and current conditions). According to the retrieved concordance lines in
English (Figure 38), Tibet is repeatedly articulated to be ‘an inalienable part of China’s territory’ (lines 1, 3, 5) and ‘an autonomous region of China’ (line 2). Discursively, such repeated mentions of China’s sovereignty over Tibet are of great significance in themselves, considering the growing pro-Independence activities between 2007 and 2009. Other concordance lines focus on the conditions in Tibet: Tibet is in general ‘peaceful and stable’ (line 4) and the socioeconomic development in Tibet is ‘still behind’ central and eastern China (line 6).

![Concordance Hits](image)

Figure 38: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘Tibet is’ (by year)

A critical comparison shows that the concordance lines above are accurate renditions of the Chinese original, thereby pointing towards the interpreters’ overall alignment vis-à-vis the government’s clear-cut position on Tibet. At times, the overall position is even strengthened through the interpreters’ employment of intensifiers. The interpreter’s use of ‘totally and completely’ is illustrated in the extract below, which makes the statement more emphatic and rhetorically forceful.

**Example 24 (2009)**

**ST:** 西藏是中国领土不可分割的部分，涉藏问题纯属中国的内政，不容外国干涉...

**Gloss:** Tibet is an inseparable part of China. Tibet-related issues purely belong to China’s internal affairs and do not permit foreign interference...

**TT:** Tibet is an inalienable part of China’s territory and Tibet-related issues are totally and completely China’s internal affairs and brook no foreign interference...

**4.3.3.2.2 Pattern ‘Tibetan Compatriots’**

There are 2 instances of the pattern ‘Tibetan compatriots’ in subcorpus B: ‘we respect the
freedom of religious belief of Tibetan compatriots and their religious belief is protected by the law’ (2012) and ‘we must treat all our Tibetan compatriots as equals and with respect and make continuous improvement in our work in this area’ (2012). Comparative analyses reveal that the 2 instances were triggered by 西藏同胞 (Tibetan compatriots) and 藏族同胞 (compatriots from the Tibetan ethnic group) respectively in the Chinese ST.

Clearly, the emotive and evocative word ‘compatriot’ is less frequently used in China’s discourse on Tibet than in the cases of Taiwan and Hong Kong. This suggests that, unlike the unresolved question of Taiwan and Hong Kong (which was only returned to China in 1997), Tibet has been a relatively established part of China for quite some time. As such, there is arguably less need to repeatedly refer to the Tibetan people as ‘compatriots’. Nevertheless, the fact that ‘compatriot’ is used at all in describing the Tibetan people shows that Tibet has a unique status in China as the government would not ordinarily refer to people in Beijing or Shanghai as compatriots.

It is worth highlighting that in the second instance the first-person plural ‘our’ has been added by the interpreter (untriggered by the ST). Apart from being a salient marker of the interpreter’s in-group positioning and identification as a member of the Chinese government, the addition ‘our’ can be seen as an extra effort of positive engagement to appeal to the Tibetan people. Discursively, this also conveys a heightened sense of togetherness in line with the official stance that Tibet ‘has been an inalienable part of China’s territory since ancient times’.

4.3.3.2.3 Pattern ‘So-called’

In addition to this small degree of positive engagement, China’s discourse on Tibet is characterised mostly by negative engagement, focusing on the ‘Dalai clique’. A close examination of the concordance lines establishes the adjective ‘so-called’ as being frequently featured in China’s discourse on Tibet (Figure 39). Statistically, there are 6 instances of the attitudinal epithet (cf. Halliday 1985) ‘so-called’ in the English TT, suggesting that the exile government in Dharamsala, Tibet Independence and claims of China’s cultural genocide in
Tibet etc. are illegitimate, non-existent or fake.

Interestingly, comparative manual analyses between the ST and TT in subcorpus C reveal that, out of the 6 concordance lines, 4 are untriggered by the Chinese original but added by the interpreters (66.7%). The additions of ‘so-called’ in English are ‘the Dalai Lama has established a so-called exiled government abroad and he also advocated for a so-called high degree of autonomy for Tibet. In his request, he asked the Dalai Lama to recognize political exile. We have full justification for this position. The so-called exile government situated in Dharamsala is a de facto theocratic government’ (2009).

The interpreters’ additions (4 instances) occurred in 2007, 2008 and 2009, at a time when there were bouts of unrest (riots, protests and demonstrations) in and around Tibet. Through repeatedly adding the attitudinal epithet ‘so-called’, the interpreters have shown their disapproval and distanced themselves from the independence-related separatist activities. As such, by othering such actions as untrue, groundless, illegitimate and perhaps even farcical discursively, the interpreters have intervened in the process and aligned with the government and its stance on Tibet (more discussions on the interpreters’ mediation using ‘so-called’ can be found in 4.3.2.3.5, that is, their rendering of Beijing’s ideological discourse on Taiwan).

4.3.3.2.4 Dalai*

In addition, the Dalai Lama, a central figure in Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism, is found to be a chief actor or ‘mastermind’ behind the Tibet unrest in 2008, plotting separatist movements.
As such, 达赖 and Dalai* (including ‘Dalai’ and the full name ‘Dalai Lama’) were further investigated in both subcorpora. As Figure 40 shows, the retrieved concordance lines in English featuring Dalai* exhibit predominantly negative semantic prosody, demonstrating clear othering discourse. Examples of this are: ‘Dalai Lama is not a simple religious figure’ (line 14), ‘the Dalai Lama has been travelling around the world and he is quite capable of misleading some political figures in other countries’ (line 9), the Dalai Lama is the leader of the ‘Dalai clique’ which ‘masterminded’ Tibet independence activities (line 2) and he is also the one who makes ‘efforts to split the country’ (line 8). The Dalai Lama is also represented as being insincere (line 20) and hypocritical (line 5), hence the need to focus on not just what he says but what he does (lines 4, 24-26, 32).

Figure 40: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘Dalai’ (sorted to the right)
Comparative analysis shows that the unfavourable (re)presentation is more or less accurate reflection of the ST. However, statistically, there are 24 instances of 达赖 in Chinese yet 32 instances of Dalai* in English (a 33.3% increase). Given the overwhelmingly unfavourable portrayal of the Dalai Lama in China’s official discourse, the interpreters’ more frequent lexicalisation of the term (or ‘name’ calling) suggests a further othering of the Dalai Lama in English in an emphatic way. This signals the interpreters’ increased alignment with Beijing’s official position and strengthening of the blaming and accusatory tone.

Since the othering discourse of the Dalai Lama being a hypocritical liar constitutes a recurring theme in the concordance lines (cf. Figure 40), more in-depth analysis is provided here on this particularly salient theme between the ST and TT. Premier Wen is often considered an ‘avuncular’ (Brown 2015: 102) figure with a gentle and mild personality. His use of the unusually (and uncharacteristically) strong language to frame the Dalai Lama in such a negative light is of particular interest as this level of language use is extremely rare even in the case of Taiwan. Detailed comparative analyses in subcorpus C between the ST and TT demonstrate that the premier’s position is further strengthened in the TT, hence an enhanced level of interpreter alignment in English. The examples are discussed below:

Example 25 (2008)

**ST:** 这起事件严重地破坏了拉萨正常的社会秩序，给拉萨市人民群众生命财产带来极大的损失。我们有足够的事实证明，这起事件是由达赖集团有组织、有蓄谋、精心策划和煽动起来的，这就更加暴露了达赖集团一贯标榜的不追求独立、和平对话是一派谎言。伪善的谎言掩盖不了铁的事实[...]我想在这里回答你，从西藏和平解放，实行民主改革到现在，西藏是在进步了，发展了。那种所谓中国政府灭绝西藏文化，完全是一派谎言。

**Gloss:** This incident seriously disrupted Lhasa’s normal social order and brought to the Lhasa public heavy losses in lives and properties. We have sufficient fact to prove that this incident was organized, premeditated, masterminded and incited by the Dalai clique. This lays bear all the more that the Dalai clique’s long trumpeted ‘not seeking independence but peaceful dialogue’ is a load of lies. Hypocritical lies cannot cover ironclad facts[...]I’d like to hereby answer you that, since Tibet’s peaceful liberation, implementation of democratic reforms and up till now, Tibet has been making progress and developing. That so-called Chinese government’s genocide of Tibetan culture is completely a pack of lies.
In this example from 2008, the Chinese premier condemned the violent incident in Lhasa, which seriously disrupted the social order and caused heavy losses, claiming that the incident was deliberately organised, premeditated, masterminded and incited by the ‘Dalai clique’. The government’s tough stance on the Dalai Lama is evidenced in the premier’s repeated articulations that claims made by the Dalai Lama are 一片谎言 (a load of lies), 伪善的谎言 (hypocritical lies) and 一派谎言 (a pack of lies). In the TT, they are respectively interpreted as ‘nothing but lies’, ‘hypocritic lies [sic]’ and ‘nothing but lies’. Rhetorically, the interpreter’s repeated use of the structure ‘nothing but’ is more emphatic and categorical, highlighting the inconsistencies between what the Dalai Lama says and does and a heightened sense of falsehood.

Example 26 (2008)

**ST**: 但是最近发生的事件，恰恰证明在这两个关键性的问题上他的虚伪面目。即使这样，我还想重申，我们原有的主张，说话是算数的，关键是要看他的行动。

**Gloss**: But the things that recently occurred happen to show his hypocritical face/side on these two key issues. Even so, I’d still like to reiterate that our previous proposal and what we said still hold true. The key lies in his action.

**TT**: However, given what has happened recently, we can see clearly that on those two key issues that Dalai is very hypocritic [sic]. Even under these circumstances, I would like to use this occasion to reiterate that our original position remains unchanged, and we mean what we say. And now, what is important is that we need to watch what Dalai does and it's up to his actions.
In this example, the premier says that the recent events have laid bare the Dalai Lama’s 虚伪面目 (hypocritical face/side). This, however, is interpreted as ‘we can see clearly that on those two key issues that Dalai is very hypocritic [sic]’. Evidently, ‘the hypocritical face/side’ of Dalai is rendered more explicit (and in a reductionist manner) as ‘Dalai is very hypocritic’ presumably as a person. Also, the ST is made even more emphatic rhetorically with the addition ‘clearly’ and ‘very’. These, taken together, represent a slight strengthening of the ST.

Example 27 (2009)

ST: 就在前两天，达赖喇嘛[...]提出他从来没有说过让中国的军队从西藏撤出去，让汉人从西藏撤出去。这确实是蛊惑人心的。
Gloss: Just two days ago, the Dalai Lama[...] pointed out that he had never said that he wanted the Chinese troops to withdraw from Tibet and wanted the Han people to leave Tibet. This in fact is deceiving.
TT: Several days ago, Dalai[...] said that he has never asked the central government to withdraw the Chinese troops from Tibet or to remove, move the Han ethnic groups out of Tibet. These are sheer lies.

Similarly, in the 2009 example, the discourse revolving the Dalai Lama being mendacious continues. The Chinese premier dismisses as 蛊惑人心 the claim made by the Dalai Lama. When interpreted into English, 蛐惑人心 (deceiving, confusing or demagogic) is rendered more explicit as ‘sheer lies’ with the emphatic ‘sheer’. Once again, the interpreter resorts to the discourse of the Dalai Lama being a liar full of lies seen in 2008. These examples, however subtle, illustrate the interpreters’ institutional alignment and further strengthening of China’s negative representation of the Dalai Lama discursively.

Interestingly, this overwhelmingly unfavourable representation and othering of the Dalai Lama and the separatist forces are accompanied with the Chinese government’s positive self-representation. The positive self-portrayal is materialised in reiterating Beijing’s consistent position and commitment to having candid open dialogue with the Dalai Lama despite what happened. Examples of this are ‘our door for dialogue with him is wide open’ and ‘even under these circumstances, I would like to use this occasion to reiterate that our original position remains unchanged, and we mean what we say’. The positive self-representation is also evidenced in the articulation of Tibet’s achievements under Beijing
as well as Beijing’s commitment to Tibet’s further development: Tibet ‘has moved forward and Tibet has become more developed’ (2008), Tibet ‘has made significant progress in economic and social development’ (2012), ‘Tibet’s peace and stability and Tibet’s continuous progress have proven that the policies we’ve adopted are right’ (2009), ‘Tibet will remain committed firmly to the policy of opening up, because this meets the needs of Tibet’s own development’ (2009) and ‘we will continue to help Tibet improve the livelihood of people of all ethnic groups’ (2008). The Chinese government is also portrayed to respect and protect Tibetan people’s religious belief and treat them equally: ‘we respect the freedom of religious belief of Tibetan compatriots’, which is ‘protected by the law’ and ‘we must treat all our Tibetan compatriots as equals’ (2012). These create a dichotomy between a just, sincere and capable ‘us’ (Chinese government) and an unjust, hypocritical and separatist ‘them’ (the ‘Dalai clique’) in English, hence a typical case of Van Dijk’s (1997; 2008) ‘ideological square’ (positive self versus negative other). Such (re)presentations are accurate reflections of the Chinese original, thus pointing to the interpreters’ pivotal role in effectively (re)producing the us versus them dichotomy.

To sum up, similar to the case of Taiwan, China’s Tibet discourse follows a carrot-and-stick approach, involving a small degree of positive engagement (e.g. our Tibetan compatriots) and predominantly negative engagement (the othering of the ‘Dalai clique’ and de-legitimising of their separatist activities). In the process, the interpreters have shown increased alignment and (sometimes) further strengthened Beijing’s already tough position on Tibet as active guardians of China’s core national interests.

4.3.4 Discourse on Macao

Having explored the interpreters’ alignment with the government’s official discourse on Hong Kong, Taiwan and Tibet, attention is now focused on Macao, another region central to China’s core national interests. After 442 years of Portuguese rule, Macao was returned to China as a special administrative region (SAR) in 1999, following the ‘one country, two systems’ formula. Once again, China’s discursive (re)presentation of Macao in English and the interpreters’ alignment with the government’s official position are explored at the
following levels:

4.3.4.1 Overall Level of Alignment

For a general understanding of the interpreters’ alignment, 澳 and Macao were respectively searched in subcorpus A and B (instances unrelated to Macao in the Chinese subcorpus were discounted). Statistically, there are 20 mentions of Macao in the ST, whereas there are 26 mentions in the English TT (30% increase). This leads to more visibility of Macao in English, hence an increased level of interpreter alignment on the Macao discourse overall.

4.3.4.2 Collocational Patterns Relating to Macao

For more refined and contextualised analysis, the retrieved concordance lines featuring ‘Macao’ are examined (Figure 41). It is found that Beijing’s discourse on Macao is mostly positive or neutral. This is illustrated in the Chinese government’s efforts to engage with the Macao people (lines 2-3, 13, 16, 22, 23), the conviction that Macao is experienced in and capable of handling financial crisis (lines 6-7), the (re)confirmation of Beijing’s consistent position and commitment to supporting Macao (lines 4, 9-15, 17-19, 21-24) and the important role of Macao (lines 25-26), for example, in helping forge a better relationship between the mainland and Taiwan.

Interestingly, Macao is rarely addressed separately on its own but mentioned in passing and in conjunction with other places central to China’s core national interests. Out of the 26 concordance lines featuring Macao in English (Figure 41), 17 appear in the binomial structure ‘Hong Kong and Macao’ (65.4%), 6 are indirectly associated with Hong Kong (23.1%) and 3 are associated with Taiwan (11.5%). Notably, despite Macao’s relatively recent return to China (2 years after Hong Kong), Macao consistently assumes a secondary position in the binomial pair ‘Hong Kong and Macao’. This is in itself indicative of Beijing’s level of priority between China’s two SARs. Apart from these, no particular prominence was given to Macao in China’s interpreted discourse.
Comparative analysis shows that the trends and patterns identified above are triggered directly by the Chinese original, hence a general level of interpreter alignment. Interestingly, unlike the cases of Taiwan and Tibet, neither explicitly negative portrayal nor particularly telling signs of interpreters’ mediation were found. While the mere mentions of Macao at these high-profile conferences reflect the central government’s attention, the fact that Macao is rarely addressed on its own but juxtaposed with other issues demonstrates that it is perhaps not as high up on the government’s agenda as other issues central to China’s core interests.
This is understandable considering that Macao — unlike the sometimes troublesome Hong Kong (nostalgic for its colonial past, anti-mainland and increasingly independence-seeking) — is generally content with and appreciative of the mainland government since its return. As remarked by Bai Zhijiang, director of the Liaison Office of the Central Government in Macao, Macao has ‘been maintaining China’s core interests and the authority of the central government since its return’ (People’s Daily website). As such, given that Macao is quiet and stable, there arguably is less urgency, discursively, for the premiers and interpreters to repeatedly emphasise that the Macao people are compatriots. Likewise, there is arguably less need for the interpreters to step in, mediate in the process and take a tough position. This presumably explains the relative lack of (active) interpreter agency in (re)articulating the Macao discourse in English.

In sum, focusing on issues central to China’s core national interests (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet and Macao), this section has pointed to the government-affiliated interpreters’ overall (increased) alignment with Beijing and its official positions. More specifically, in relation to Hong Kong, the interpreters have aligned with the government’s approach characterised mostly by positive engagement, further reinforcing Hong Kong and mainland people’s blood ties and the government’s commitment to ‘one country and two systems’. On Taiwan and Tibet, the interpreters have followed a mostly carrot-and-stick approach (a combination of positive and negative engagements) and at times further strengthened China’s official positions. This is achieved through rendering the positive discourse even more evocative and affectionate (e.g. additions of ‘compatriots’ and ‘our’) and, when necessary, making China’s official stance even more clear-cut and forceful acting as guardians of China’s core national interests (e.g. additions of ‘so-called’). In the case of Macao, the interpreters have again shown increased alignment, making Macao more prominent in the TT. Other than this, no salient act of interpreter mediation was detected, given Macao’s relative peace and stability since its return.

The interpreters’ varying degrees of alignment are indicative of the gravity and sensitiveness of issues under discussion (the more pronounced the interpreters’ alignment, the more
sensitive the issue and comparatively ‘corer’ it is to China’s national interests). If the interpreters’ level of mediation is any guide, Taiwan and Tibet are at the top of the government’s agenda, then comes Hong Kong and lastly Macao. Meanwhile, rather than just reflecting the broader sociopolitical reality, the interpreter-mediated English discourse, once televised on TV and re-contextualised on other platforms, potentially can have far-reaching consequences in conveying China’s voice and position and in shaping new reality on a global scale.

4.4 Summary

Given their dynamic and negotiated nature, the premier’s press conferences were conceptualised as a site of dialogised heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1981). The interpreters are, therefore, located between the centripetal forces represented by the Chinese government and the potential centrifugal forces represented, for instance, by journalists from various ideological backgrounds. With this macro-level conceptualisation in mind, the government-affiliated interpreters’ institutional alignment and ideological positioning were explored from different perspectives and at various levels, drawing on corpus-based CDA.

Focusing on ‘self-referentiality’ (section 4.1), the interpreters are found to show (increased) institutional alignment through the proliferated (re)production of various self-referential items. This leads to a strengthening of the government’s institutional presence and hegemony overall and a positive image of the government being omnipresent, effective and in charge. In addition, there is a tendency for the interpreters to foreground the first-person plural WE (we, our* and us) in English proportionately at the expense of other prominent self-referential items (e.g. China/Chinese and government). This not only indicates their in-group identification but also helps forge a sense of ‘collective intentionality’ (Searle 1995: 24-25) discursively. Also, an examination of the prominent themes constitutive of China’s post-1978 reform and opening-up discourse (section 4.2) reveals that the interpreters have demonstrated a general level of alignment and sometimes increased alignment through, for example, the increased (re)production of certain core items (e.g. reform*, econom*, develop*). This reinforces China’s discursive formulations on reform and opening-up and strengthens the
government’s institutional hegemony and ideological discourse in front of an international audience. This is of particular interest considering that reform and opening-up, as an important post-1978 metadiscourse, constitutes a vital source of the government’s legitimacy (along with other more visible and concrete developments). Finally, in section 4.3, attention was focused on key topics central to China’s core national interests (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet and Macao). The interpreters are found to position with China’s official policies and stances overall. At times, when China’s core national interests are at stake, the interpreters tend to intervene and actively safeguard Beijing’s interests.

Admittedly, different factors and variables might have influenced the interpreters’ production of those shifts to varying extents (language difference, explicitation strategies, prosody, interpreting norms, explicit instructions from government trainers, etc.). However, the findings are indeed interesting ideologically, given the focus of this corpus-based CDA study on discursive effect. That is, from a product-oriented perspective, the interpreters have aligned with the government through various discursive means and at different levels. From this perspective, rather than just translating faithfully, the interpreters in this political and institutional setting seem to have assumed a role as spokespersons of China’s official discourse in English and staunch defenders of China’s interests. This is beyond the traditional, de-contextualised and perhaps idealised expectations of interpreters as voice machines seen in prevalent codes of conducts (AIIC and NAATI etc.) that emphasise accuracy and impartiality. This is unsurprising given that quite a few government interpreters affiliated with the FMPRC Department of Translation and Interpretation have gone on to take top positions as government officials and diplomats later in their careers.
Chapter 5 Data Analysis: Interpreters’ (Re)construction of China and the Chinese Government’s Discourse and Image

This chapter addresses the second research question, exploring the government-affiliated interpreters’ (re)construction of China and the Chinese government’s image when (re)contextualising (cf. 2.2.3) Beijing’s discourse into English. The interpreters’ (re)construction of China’s discourse and image is inevitably achieved in multifarious ways. As such, this chapter approaches this question from different perspectives and at various levels, engaging with both linguistic features and the actual propositional contents. Drawing on corpus-based CDA, the subcategories examined are the interpreters’ mediation of China’s discourses on its past actions and achievements (5.1), current conditions (5.2), future actions (5.3) and the interpreters’ mediation of China’s discourse on people (5.4).

5.1 Interpreters’ mediation of China’s Past Actions and Achievements

This section explores China’s discourse on its past actions and achievements, as a continuation of the subcategory ‘self-referentiality’ discussed in Chapter 4. Such a focus promises to shed light on how China’s past actions and achievements are mediated and how a certain image of China and the Chinese government is (re)constructed by the interpreters in English. Since we, China and government were identified as the top self-referential items in the English subcorpus, they are used as the point of departure here for further analysis. A quick sorting of the concordance lines containing these self-referential terms to the right using AntConc’s Kwic Sort function established the present perfect structure [self-referential item+has/have done] and, to a lesser extent, the present perfect continuous structure [self-referential item+has/have+been doing] as prominent patterns worth some further critical investigation.

Based on the distinction made by Huddleston (1984: 158), the simple past tense indicates ‘exclusive past’ (excluding discussions of the present and future), whereas the present perfect (continuous) refers to ‘inclusive past’, expressing a relationship between the past, the present and possibly the future. In other words, compared with the simple past tense, the present perfect (continuous) places more emphasis on a past action’s current (and future) relevance.
In particular, within the tradition of monolingual CDA, the employment of the structure has been discussed as an ideologically salient way of presenting past actions and accomplishments. According to Flowerdew (2012: 77), its use ‘relates past achievements to the present situation and to the future in prospect’. This is exemplified in the last Governor of Hong Kong Chris Patten’s ideological discursive articulation ‘Hong Kong has achieved more than anyone could ever have predicted’ in his 1992 policy speech before the 1997 handover, emphasising Hong Kong’s achievements under the British colonial rule. Attention in this section is, therefore, focused on the pervasive use of the present perfect (continuous) structure in English (which indicates a strong sense of action and achievement) and a comparative ST-TT analysis to determine the extent to which its use is triggered by the Chinese ST.

It is worth noting that, unlike English, Chinese does not have tenses. That is, unlike English where tense is indicated through verb form changes, verb forms stay unchanged in Chinese, regardless of the event. As an aspect language, explicit time adverbs, aspect markers (e.g. le), as well as context need to be extensively invoked (Xiao and Hu 2015: 149) in order to ‘express temporal and aspectual meanings’ in Chinese. The indication of past actions in Chinese is most commonly realised through the aspect marker le. From a cross-linguistic and translation perspective (from Chinese to English), past actions featuring le in Chinese can generally be rendered into English in one of the following three scenarios. Sentences featuring explicit markers such as 在 1998 年 (in 1998), 过去 (in the past), 去年 (last year), 昨天 (yesterday) in Chinese correspond to simple past tense in English. If such explicit markers as 已经 (already), 至今/迄今 (to date/up to now) and 十年来 (over the past ten years) are mentioned, they would point to present perfect in English. In the absence of such explicit markers, the verb + le structure in Chinese is less straightforward and can constitute a fuzzy area. That is, the use of the structure without any explicit markers can potentially be construed as either simple past or present perfect in English based on context and the discretion of the translator, interpreter or researcher on a case-by-case basis.

While completed past actions in Chinese can be rendered into English using the present
perfect in some cases and the past tense in other cases, the Verb+le structure in Chinese, according to Ross (1995: 87), is more ‘often translated into English using past tense’. This observation has been supported empirically in Zhao and Shen’s (1984) corpus-based study. In their study, it is found that, out of a total of 709 sentences in Chinese featuring the aspect marker le, a majority (67%) are translated into English using the simple past tense and only a small minority are translated using the perfect tense. The findings provide empirical evidence that sentences containing the marker le in Chinese mostly correspond to the simple past tense in English, rather than the present perfect. This serves as a general benchmark for comparison in this section.

For the purpose of this chapter, the highly visible structure [self-referential item+has/have done] and, to a lesser extent, the present perfect continuous structure [self-referential item+has/have+been doing] identified in the English subcorpus are compared with their Chinese counterparts on a one-to-one basis37. Regarding the specific criteria used, if explicit markers such as 已经 (already), 至今/迄今为止 (up to now) or 十年来 (over the past ten years) are found in the Chinese ST, these should be considered direct triggers for the use of the present perfect (continuous) in English. Similarly, if explicit simple past markers such as 昨天 (yesterday), 去年 (last year) and 10年前 (10 years ago) are identified, the use of the present perfect (continuous) in English should be deemed untriggered by the Chinese ST. In cases where there are no clear relevant markers, the researcher’s discretion is used based on the specific context. While any changes, for instance, from the simple past to the present perfect (continuous) or vice versa do not automatically indicate any interpreting errors, the way Beijing’s past actions and achievements are (re)presented can nevertheless be revealing in terms of China’s overall image (re)construction cumulatively. More detailed analyses of ‘we have done/being doing’, ‘China has done/being doing’ and ‘government has done/being doing’ are presented below.

37It is worth noting that this way of comparison is consistent with the overall product-oriented view and the methodological approach set out in Chapter 3, that is, to first identify interesting patterns in the English TT and then compare retrospectively with the Chinese ST. To gain a more holistic picture and for a more convincing conclusion, it would also be interesting to explore this ideologically salient category the other way around as a source of future study, that is, to start from the Chinese ST and trace how sentences featuring relevant markers are rendered by the interpreters into English.
5.1.1 We have+done/been doing

Close examination of the concordance lines containing *we* to the right identifies 272 instances of the [we+present perfect (continuous)] structure, constituting 12.9% of a total of 2103 instances of *we* in the English subcorpus. The extensive use of the structure is mostly used to describe the Chinese government’s past actions and achievements on the domestic front. As Figure 42 illustrates, the present perfect (continuous) structures frequently collocate with action verbs, indicating a strong sense of action, efficiency and responsiveness. Some of the action verbs are *abolish, accomplish, achieve, adopt, agree, allocate, decide, fulfill, introduce, establish, launch, gain, maintain, uphold, enter, embark on, enact, control and formulate*. To obtain more detailed insight into the extent to which this particular structure is triggered by the Chinese ST, further comparative analysis is carried out. Given the sheer number of eligible concordance lines retrieved, a sampling of 100 concordance lines (5 lines per year in each of the 20 years) was conducted. The selected concordance lines were then manually compared with their respective STs.
In a sampling of 100 instances, 26 are directly triggered by explicit present perfect markers in the Chinese ST (26%), whereas 74 instances are not directly triggered by the ST (74%). This *pro rata* means that approximately 201 out of the 272 instances of the present perfect (continuous) structure retrieved are not directly triggered by explicit markers in the Chinese ST (approximately 74%). In other words, in (re)presenting China’s past actions and achievements, the government interpreters have shown a clear tendency to use the present perfect (continuous) in the English discourse. To illustrate the interpreters’ frequent use of the structure at a micro level, the following examples are presented (with no explicit markers in the ST).

**Example 28 (1999)**

**ST:** 我们在以江泽民同志为核心的党中央领导下，依靠全国人民的努力。我们站住了。这两个困难我们都挺过去了。

**Gloss:** We, under the leadership of the party Central Committee with comrade Jiang Zemin at its core, relied on the efforts of all the people nationwide. We stood firm. We managed to weather both of the two difficulties.

**TT:** Under the leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China with
comrade Jiang Zemin at its core and with the concerted efforts of the entire Chinese people, 
we have overcome these difficulties and stood rock-solid.

Example 29 (2002)

ST: 本届政府发行了 5100 亿国债，带动了银行资金和其它资金渠道，一共完成了 2 
万亿的工程...包括...5000 公里的干线铁路...那么建设了 95000 万千瓦的电站，全部改 
造了农村的电网...

Gloss: This government issued 510 billion yuan of treasure bonds and mobilised bank 
capitals and capitals from other avenues, and in total completed 2-trillion-RMB-worth of 
projects...including...5,000 kilometres of trunk railways...so built power stations of 95 
million kilowatts and comprehensively upgraded power grids in the countryside...

TT: In this government, we have issued a total of 510 billion yuan of treasury bonds. And 
with issuance of treasury bonds, we have managed to mobilise capital from the banks and 
from other sectors. So as a result over 2 trillion RMB yuan have been spent to undertake 
various kinds of projects...we have also built 5,000 kilometres of trunk railways...we have 
also built 95 million kilowatts of power stations and we have also upgraded the power 
grids throughout the country...

These examples illustrate the interpreters’ tendency to use the present perfect even when there 
are no explicit markers in the ST. This is most saliently evidenced in the second example, 
where the repeated use of the structure appears to be a tally of the government’s 
accomplishments. This contributes to an image of the government being highly efficient and 
effective.

5.1.2 China has+done/been doing

With regard to ‘China has+done/been doing’, a search of China has in the English subcorpus 
established a total of 42 concordance lines relating to the present perfect (continuous) 
structure out of 1076 concordance lines containing China (3.9%). The structure is once again 
collocated with items such as adopt, develop, solve, deploy and propose, thus indicating a 
range of strong actions (Figure 43).

Not surprisingly, unlike the situation in ‘we have+done/been doing’ discussed above 
(focusing on domestic achievements), the [China+present perfect (continuous)] structure is 
more closely associated with China’s actions and achievements internationally (e.g. ‘China 
has not sought hegemonism’, ‘as for the non-traditional security threats as well as the
occurrence of major natural disasters in the world, China has also adopted a cooperative stance’ and ‘concerning China’s position on the G8 meeting, actually China has already made clear its positions”).

With over thirty years of reform and opening up, China has achieved rapid development in its economic and social fields. Foreign policy of peace. On the issue of Ukraine, China has adopted an objective and just position. We respect Ukraine’s cooperation has also been continuously going up. China has all along developed its relations with Russia on the basis of mutual interest. With respect to UN resolutions, China has all along had clear-cut attitude and fully complied with these addressing them. Here I want to emphasise that China had all along and will continue to support a united, prosperous banking and insurance sectors to the outside world. China has already achieved the convertibility of RMB under the current interest from you concerning your salaries. A: In fact, China has already achieved the free convertibility of the renminbi under financial institutions in the real sense. Actually, China has already had the shareholding banks, which mainly was financing China’s position on the G8 meeting, actually China has already made clear its position on many previous occasions, part of the country. Because you all know that now China has already solved its food problem in that we now have an oversupply of the grain as the accumulation of experience in this regard, China has already strengthened its supervision and regulation as well as occurrence of major natural disasters in the world. China has also adopted a cooperative stance. I can give you an example, investment today. As of the end of the year 2005, China has altogether made outbound investment worth 73.3 billion US dollars government. Thank you! A: Political reform in China has always been going on, and it is continuing to develop. But we can see, since the beginning of reform and opening up, China has averaged an annual increase of its GDP by over 9%. In recent years, only declined by 2.2%. From this we can see that China has become an important export market for its neighboring countries. A: The first part of your question about whether China has become the largest economy in the world, actually I have heard it harder to do a good job. Thank you. A: Actually, China has been continuously pushing forward political reform to build a democratic society. A: My understanding is that although the securities market in China has been developing very rapidly achieving a lot of significant results in a word, China will never seek hegemony. Third, China has been steadfast in upholding its sovereignty and territorial integrity in our region and the whole world. Let me say that China has been working with our neighboring countries to advance mutual trust. Fourth, China is a responsible country. China has called for and taken an active part in international cooperation in regional or systemic risks. Thank you. Premier Li: China has championed economic globalisation and free trade. That has been the system of our Party and country. Now reform in China has come to a critical stage. Without a successful political structure
Figure 43: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘China has done/been doing’ (sorted to the right)

The concordance lines in English are then carefully compared with their Chinese counterparts to establish the percentage of the present perfect (continuous) structure that is directly triggered by explicit markers in the Chinese ST. Statistically, only 17 out of 42 instances of the structure are directly triggered by explicit markers in the ST (40.5%). In other words, 59.5% of the eligible concordance lines are not the direct result of the STs. This, once again, shows the interpreters’ preference for the present perfect (continuous) in the English interpretation, at least for the direction examined (see micro-level examples below).

Example 30 (2003)

ST: 我亲眼目睹了在邓小平同志和江泽民同志的领导下中国改革开放和现代化建设所取得的巨大成就，中国面貌发生的历史性变化。

Gloss: I witnessed with my own eyes, under comrade Deng Xiaoping and comrade Jiang Zemin’s leadership, the tremendous achievements in China’s reform and opening-up and modernisation construction and the historic transformation in the face of China.
TT: I’ve seen with my own eyes, under the leadership of comrades Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin, China has made remarkable achievements in its reform and opening-up programmes and China has undergone a historic transformation.

Example 31 (2017)
ST: 中国提出要和欧盟来谈判投资保护协定，希望能够得到积极的回应。
Gloss: China proposed to negotiate with the EU on the Bilateral Investment Treaty, and hoped that (the proposal) would receive a positive response.
TT: China has proposed to the EU that the two sides negotiate and conclude a BIT. We hope that this proposal will receive a positive response.

Example 32 (2010)
ST: 在涉及中国主权和领土完整的重大问题上，即使是中国很穷的时候，我们也是铮铮铁骨。
Gloss: On important issues bearing on China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, even at a time when China was very poor, we were steadfast and unyielding.
TT: China has been steadfast in upholding its sovereignty and territorial integrity, even when it was a very poor country.

Example 33 (2010)
ST: 中国是个负责任的国家，中国主张并积极参与国际合作，解决当前国际经济和政治的重大问题。中国对不发达国家实行的援助是不附加任何条件的。
Gloss: China is a responsible country and China advocates and actively partakes in international cooperation to solve the major current international economic and political issues. China’s assistance to the underdeveloped countries has no strings attached whatsoever.
TT: China is a responsible country. China has called for and taken an active part in international cooperation in addressing the major economic and political issues in our world. We have provided assistance with no strings attached to the underdeveloped countries.

5.1.3 Government has+done/been doing
Similarly, the present perfect (continuous) structure featuring government is investigated. There are 23 instances of the ‘government has done/been doing’ in the English subcorpus out of 512 concordance lines featuring government (4.49 %). As Figure 44 illustrates, the present perfect (continuous) structure is associated with a wide range of actions (e.g. achieve, activate, adopt, arrange, earmark, establish, face up to), showing a strong sense of achievements on the part of the Chinese government.
For detailed comparison, the concordance lines in English were contrasted with their Chinese counterparts. Only 8 out of the 23 instances were directly triggered by explicit present perfect markers in the ST (34.8%). Put differently, of the direction examined, in a majority of cases (65.2%), the interpreters have opted for the present perfect (continuous) in (re)presenting the government’s actions and achievements. This is exemplified in the following bilingual examples as well as Example 2 in Chapter 4.

**Example 34 (2014)**

**ST**: 去年，中央政府是把简政放权作为改革的先手棋，我们确实下了不小的力气。到现在一年的时间，仅中央政府下放取消审批事项就是 416 项。

**Gloss**: Last year, the central government made the streamlining of administration and
delegating of power the top priority for reform. We, indeed, made considerable efforts. Now, within a span of one year, the number of review and approval items delegated and abolished by the central government alone is 416.

**TT:** Last year, the Chinese government took streamlining administration and delegating power as its top priority on the reform agenda. With tremendous efforts, central government has abolished or delegated to lower-level governments 416 items subject to State Council review and approval.

**Example 35 (2004)**

**ST:** 这次中央决定要对中国银行和中国建设银行实行股份制改造，并且注资 450 亿美元。

**Gloss:** This time the central (government) decided to, in the BOC and CCB, conduct shareholding reforms and inject 45 billion USD.

**TT:** The central government has made the decisive move of adopting shareholding reforms in the BOC and the CCB and has injected capital to the amount of 45 billion USD to these banks to that purpose.

**Example 36 (2006)**

**ST:** 中国政府支持互联网的发展和广泛的应用。

**Gloss:** The Chinese government supports the development of the Internet and its extensive application.

**TT:** The Chinese government has all along been supportive of the development and extensive application of the Internet.

In these examples, none of the present perfect (continuous) use in the TTs is triggered by explicit markers in the STs. More specifically, in Example 2 (cf. Chapter 4), the unmarked statement ‘the government’s work went through four years’ in Chinese is rendered into English as ‘this government has been serving the people for four years’, thus explicitly foregrounding the Chinese government as the active agent with concrete institutional presence through interpreting. Noticeably, the concept ‘people’ (untriggered by the ST) is also brought into the equation. Such emphasis on ‘people’ is well aligned with the government’s increasingly people-oriented approach of governance signalled by the reform and opening up in 1978 (see section 5.4 for further discussions on the interpreters’ mediation of China’s people discourse). This also helps (re)create an image of the government being a dedicated ‘servant of the people’. Such service and commitment are (re)presented as a consistent ongoing process which started in the past, is happening now and will continue into the future.
Similarly, in Example 34, the statement ‘the number of review and approval items delegated and abolished by the central government alone is 416’ is rendered into English emphatically as the ‘central government has abolished or delegated to lower-level governments 416 items subject to State Council review and approval’, thus foregrounding Beijing as the chief actor and indicating an image of strong action and efficiency. A similar trend can also be found in Example 35. In Example 36, once again, the unmarked statement that ‘the Chinese government supports’ the development of the Internet has been interpreted into English emphatically as the government ‘has all along been supportive’ of its development. Such (re)construction therefore indicates the government’s long standing support and consistent commitment.

To sum up, given that a large proportion of China’s political discourse at the press conferences involves an articulation of Beijing’s past actions and achievements, attention was focused on the interpreters’ mediation of China’s discourse on its past achievements. With this in mind, comparative analyses between the [self-referential item+present perfect (continuous)] structures in English and their corresponding Chinese STs were carried out in subcorpus C. In the top three self-referential terms examined (we/China/government), approximately only 96 out of a total of 338 concordance lines (28.4%) are directly triggered by relevant markers in Chinese. This, therefore, suggests that present perfect (continuous) is the interpreters’ structure of choice in the (re)presentation of China’s past actions and achievements (71.6%). That is, when confronted with the possibility of choosing between the simple past tense and the present perfect (continuous), the interpreters tend to mostly use the latter.

Compared with the simple past tense, the present perfect (continuous) emphasises the current and future relevance of a past action and is considered to be ‘semantically more loaded’ and thus ‘more complex’ (Davydova 2011: 65). As Kortmann (1995: 194) argues, ‘whenever there is a choice between two forms differing in structural complexity the speaker should choose the structurally simpler form’. However, ‘if the speaker selects the complex form
instead’, then the one who reads or listens to this is ‘entitled to believe that the relevant utterance may conversationally implicate something by virtue of its taking more effort or taking the speaker further out of his way than some alternative utterance’. As such, the interpreters’ frequent use of the present perfect (continuous) structure in English can be seen as of interest ideologically, particularly from the perspective of image (re)construction. Discursively, it helps indicate a stronger sense of accomplishment, forge a more positive image of the government being action-oriented, competent and efficient, and suggest that Beijing’s past actions are of current and future relevance in English.

Interestingly, in taking stock of China’s past accomplishments, it is found that various instances of the present perfect (continuous) structure often occur in the vicinity of each other as if to provide a checklist. This constitutes what I term ‘itemisation’, a frequent feature in presenting and (re)presenting China’s past achievements. Such list-like presentation represents a categorical and authoritative proclamation of truisms and, through accumulation, enhances the rhetorical force of the statement (Flowerdew 2012: 252). As such, the interpreters’ concentrated employment of the structure serves to render Beijing’s achievements more impressive and emphatic in the English discourse. This is evidenced aptly in the following example from 2006. The underlined sections indicate the interpreter’s repeated use of the present perfect structure and the repeated additions of ‘successfully’ untriggered by the ST. The combined use of these forms a parallel structure, thus rendering the accomplishments even more prominent, rhetorically powerful and arguably praiseworthy.

China is already a responsible big country. Number one, through China’s reform and development, we have successfully resolved the problem of feeding 1.3 billion people in the world; we have successfully lifted over 200 million people out of poverty. China’s development and stability in itself constitutes a biggest contribution to peace and prosperity of the world. Number two, through China’s own development and practice in this regard, we have successfully explored a road towards scientific development[...] China’s development will have no adverse impact on the world.

However innocuous and insignificant this might seem, cumulatively, reeling off a list of the missions accomplished by the Chinese government in such a fashion leads to a stronger sense
of national self-glorification (van Dijk 1997) and helps (re)construct a more accentuated and explicit image of the government being highly efficient, committed and competent. This can be discursively vital given the increasingly performance-based legitimacy witnessed in recent decades, where the Chinese government’s accomplishments (e.g. achieving high economic growth, improving people’s livelihood, building a cleaner government) play an important role in legitimating its (continuing) governance. Interestingly, given the mediat(is)ed nature of the discursive event, the impact of the interpreted English discourse often goes beyond the immediate press conference setting, constituting a vital starting point in the entire international news production, dissemination and circulation processes. Figures 45, 46 and 47 are screenshots which showcase the interpreters’ employment of the present perfect (continuous) structure (re)contextualised and quoted verbatim on the Financial Times (UK), the UPI (US) and China Radio International (China) websites.

Figure 45: the interpreted discourse (re)contextualised on the Financial Times website

![Image](https://www.ft.com/content/77c7ce8-cad5-11e4-8ad9-00144feab7de)

In response to suggestions China is exporting deflation to the rest of the world, Mr Li was unequivocal.

"China is not exporting deflation," he said. "The truth is we have been on the receiving end of deflation [through lower commodity prices] ... We are prepared to cope with such a situation and we hope to see a quicker global economic recovery."

The International Monetary Fund recently cut its GDP forecast for China to 6.8 per cent this year and 6.5 per cent in 2016 — the first time in decades that the IMF has predicted lower growth for China than for India.

Figure 46: the interpreted discourse (re)contextualised on the UPI website


China has worked actively to help others and itself to meet the U.N. Millennium Development Goals," he said. "We have cancelled debt worth about $2.5 billion with 44 underdeveloped countries. In the next three years we are going to offer concessional loans worth about $10 billion dollars to some underdeveloped countries."

Wen noted that China’s assistance "has no strings attached."

As for China’s military policy, which has sparked concerns over belligerence, Wen said it remains "for self-defense and (is) defensive in nature.”
5.2 Interpreters’ Mediation of China’s Discourse on Current Conditions

Having examined the representation of China’s past achievements, in this section, I will explore the interpreters’ level of mediation in (re)constructing China’s discourse on its current situation and reality, a subcategory relating to China’s current national conditions (国情 or guoqing in Chinese). This specific subcategory is not only directly connected with the government’s self-presentation of its own image but also can shed useful light on, for instance, how China’s current conditions are used as rationale to justify the government’s official positions, decisions and policies discursively.

With this in mind, the [top three self-referential item+be/have] structures (we are/have, China is/has and government is/has) were respectively searched in the English subcorpus to generate concordance lines. This makes it possible to reveal ideologically interesting collocates and recurring themes in terms of what China/the government portrays itself to be and possess in the interpreted discourse. The results are presented below.

5.2.1 Patterns Related to ‘We are’

A search of ‘we are’ generated 226 concordance lines. Given the nature of this structure, concordance lines retrieved are sorted to the right for the systematic identification of interesting patterns. Firstly, ‘we are’ is found to be closely collocated with adjectives. These include: determined (15), willing (14), opposed to (10), delighted (8), prepared (6), happy (6),
faced (4), able to (4), honoured (3), aware (3), capable (2), confident (2), ready (2), privileged (2), sincere (2), committed (1), resolute and firm (1), justified (1), engaged (1), fortunate (1), greatly saddened (1), not afraid of (1), blessed (1), pleased (1) and conscientious (1). Due to limited space, only the concordance lines featuring the top three adjectives determined, willing and opposed to are presented here to illustrate the range of different attitudinal stances. These lines can respectively indicate what the Chinese government is determined and willing to do and what the government is explicitly and adamantly opposed to.

The concordance lines featuring the adjective determined (Figure 48) are strongly related to the theme of reform (lines 1, 8, 9, 12, 13) and other actions and initiatives, showing a sense of strong resolve. Similarly, the concordance lines featuring the adjective willing (Figure 49) concern the government’s willingness to have consultations and dialogues and solicit views from different sides (lines 1, 2, 4, 9, 12, 13) as well as the willingness to openly engage and work with different countries (lines 5, 6, 14) and learn from different civilisations (lines 7, 8).

Figure 48: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘we are * determined’ (by collocation)
Moving on to the concordance lines featuring *opposed to* (Figure 50), it is found that what the government is strongly against is mostly related to China’s core national interests, that is, Taiwan (lines 1-4 and 6) and Tibet (line 8) amongst others (*cf*. 4.3 for detailed discussions on China’s core national interests and the interpreters’ discursive mediation).
Unsurprisingly, *we are* also appears in the form of [we are+doing] structure, as an indication of what China is currently doing collectively as a country. Examples of this are ‘we are doing our job to protect the human rights of the entire Chinese people every day’, ‘we are improving our legal system and legislative work every day’, ‘we are now closely following the ongoing developments (on the so-called constitutional re-engineering)’, ‘we are upgrading our traditional growth drivers’, ‘we are pursuing scientific development’ and ‘we are doing our best to satisfy their (our people’s) needs’. There are also a few concordance lines featuring ‘we are+noun’ (for instance, the recurring theme ‘we are still a developing country’). In addition, concordance lines featuring ‘we are’ include structures ‘we are going to+verb’ and ‘we are to+verb’. Since these indicate future intentions rather than China’s present, they are not discussed here.

Critical comparative analyses in subcorpus C show that the patterns and propositional contents above are more or less accurate (re)presentations of the STs. However, the interpreters tend to mediate in the process through ideologically salient additions such as *so-called* (e.g. ‘we are opposed to the *so-called* referendum scheme for Taiwan’s membership in the UN’) and the additions of intensifiers such as *fully, always* and *most* (untriggered by the STs). This is exemplified in the following short extracts:

**Example 37 (2007)**

*ST:* 中国主张和平利用太空，反对在太空搞军备竞赛。

*Gloss:* China advocates for the peaceful use of the outer space and is opposed to conducting an arms race in outer space.

*TT:* China *always* advocates for the peaceful utilisation of outer space and *we are always* opposed to arms race in outer space.

**Example 38 (2007)**

*ST:* 我们这个民族啊深知遭受奴役侵略所带来的痛苦。我们坚持走和平发展的道路是真诚的。

*Gloss:* Our nation knows deeply the pain brought about by being enslaved and invaded. Our sticking to the road of peaceful development is sincere.

*TT:* And we the Chinese nation know full well the tremendous sufferings of being enslaved and subjecting to foreign aggression. That’s why *we are most sincere* in our commitment to peaceful development.
Example 39 (2008)

**ST:** 我们不仅有能力维护西藏的稳定和正常的社会秩序，而且要继续支持西藏的经济发展和社会进步...

**Gloss:** We not only have the ability to safeguard Tibet’s stability and normal social order but also will continue to support Tibet’s economic development and social progress...

**TT:** We are fully capable of maintaining stability and normal public order in Tibet and at the same time we will continue to support the efforts of Tibet to develop the economy and make social progress...

Discursively, the additions of these intensifiers serve to strengthen China’s official position and help (re)construct a stronger image for the government. This is particularly interesting considering the observation that (simultaneous) interpreters tend to ‘omit certain peripheral elements (such as intensifiers or relative clauses)’ in the interpreting process (Bartłomiejczyk 2010: 185).

### 5.2.2 Patterns Related to ‘We have’

Having explored the pattern *we are*, attention is now focused on *we have+noun* in the English subcorpus as a way of directly locating what the Chinese government/China portrays itself to possess. As illustrated in Figure 51 below, apart from the presentation of basic information (e.g. ‘we have about 242 million rural migrant workers’, ‘in China we have 1.25 billion people’ or ‘we have 500 extremely large or mega state-owned enterprises’), the abstract nouns that follow can be deemed as of more interest from the perspective of image (re)construction. Based on semantic meaning, the nouns are categorised into the following 4 major semantic groups (Table 15).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Firm position</th>
<th>Confidence and determination</th>
<th>Qualities and capabilities</th>
<th>Possibility and conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. firm position and principle; very firm resolve; resilient and unyielding as well as industrial spirit; full justification; unwavering policy</td>
<td>e.g. optimism; (full/strong) confidence; determination; courage and strength</td>
<td>e.g. ability; the responsibility and the capacity; vision, perseverance and courage; leadership</td>
<td>e.g. possibility; opportunities; (favourable) conditions; (great) leeway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15: Collocates (nouns) to the right side of ‘we have’
Figure 51: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘we have’ (sorted to the right)
The abstract nouns are related to certain positive qualities, thus contributing to the images of the Chinese government being resolute, determined, confident and capable etc. Notably, it is explicitly mentioned that having the leadership of the CPC government is the prerequisite of success discursively: ‘I still have every confidence that as long as we hold high the banner of the Deng Xiaoping theory and as long as we have the leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Jiang Zemin at the core...then the current government will be able to surmount any difficulty and will greet and will usher in success and triumph one after another’. Contrastive analyses suggest that the patterns and image(s) conveyed in English are more or less accurate (re)presentations of the Chinese original.

5.2.3 Patterns Related to ‘China is’

Having discussed we are/have, attention is now focused on the clusters featuring self-referential item China. A search of the cluster China is in the English subcorpus returned a total of 87 concordance lines. For a more refined understanding of the concordance lines, the collocates of China is are explored (Figure 52).

![Figure 52: Top collocates associated with ‘China is’](image)

The collocates country, still and developing are found to be of particular interest in indicating China’s current conditions. Attention is focused first on the collocate country (Figure 53),
which is indicative of exactly what kind of a country the government portrays China to be.

The concordance lines featuring the collocate *country* clearly show China’s unique national conditions (*guoqing*) in various recurring themes. For example, China is represented as an ancient civilisation with a long and rich history (lines 5, 12). Also, China has a huge population of 1.3 billion people (lines 1, 3, 8, 16) and massive land area of 9.6 million square kilometres (lines 4, 19, 21-22). As such, ‘there are, naturally, so many things’ for China to handle (line 21), including the fact that China is prone to natural disasters (line 11). By the same token, given China’s size, it is justified for China to maintain a reasonable level of military expenditure for national defence purposes. Even so, ‘China’s armed forces and China’s military expenditure either in aggregate terms or in relative terms are on a very low level compared with other countries in the world’ (2007 press conference).
Meanwhile, another prominent theme concerns China’s current level of development and progress. That is, China remains a developing country with various imbalances (lines 3, 8, 13-20) and China still has various issues such as housing and social poverty (lines 19-20) and the basic welfare benefits provided are still at a relatively low level (line 18). The theme of China being a developing country is frequently used as a justification in the premier’s answers. For example, in response to the DPA journalist’s question in 2010, the Chinese premier argues that the ‘so-called theory of China’s triumphalism’ is not justified, given that China is still a developing country with imbalances and persistent issues. For the same reason, China should not take the same international responsibility as other developed countries.

Notably, in this example, ‘so-called’ was added in the interpretation, thus showing the interpreter’s disapproval, intervention and institutional alignment in the process (cf. 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 for more detailed discussions of ‘so-called’ as a common strategy of the interpreters’ discursive mediation).

Also, China is portrayed discursively as possessing various positive qualities. That is, China is a country under the rule of law (lines 6-7) and China is a highly responsible country (lines 9-10) and a peaceful nation (lines 25-26). The latter two points are evidenced, for example, in ‘China is the first country to declare that it will not be the first to use nuclear weapons’ (1999). Discursively, these serve to indicate that the common claims of China being irresponsible, not peaceful and not ruled by law in Western media are wrong. In addition, China is also (re)presented as the biggest potential market (line 23) and the fastest growing country in terms of internet development (line 24) in the world in the English discourse.

With regard to the collocates ‘still’ and ‘developing’ (see Figure 54 and 55), a similar range of recurring themes and justificatory discourses can be identified in terms of China’s current conditions. For example, ‘China is still a developing country’ and ‘still the second largest economy in the world’ and ‘is still at the primary stage of development’. As such, further detailed discussions are not provided.
In addition to the direct portrayal regarding what kind of a country China is, ‘China is’ is also closely collocated with a range of adjectives, exhibiting mostly a positive semantic prosody. These include 4 instances of ‘(fully) capable’ (e.g. ‘China is capable and has done a good job’), ‘(firmly) committed’ (2 instances), ‘prepared’ (2 instances), ‘ready’ (2 instances), ‘ever widely open’ (1 instance) and ‘successfully modernised’ (1 instance). Discursively, these indicate a sense of commitment, preparedness and competence on the part of the government.

Detailed comparative analysis suggests that the propositional content identified in the interpreted English discourse so far is triggered by the Chinese original. However, similar to the case of *we are* examined previously, the interpreters tend to add intensifiers to make
China’s discourse stronger and more emphatic. This is illustrated in Example 40.

Example 40 (2010)

**ST:** 第二，中国坚持走和平发展的道路。中国的发展不会影响任何国家，中国不发达的时候不称霸。中国即使发达了，也不称霸，永远不称霸。

**Gloss:** Second, China sticks to the road of peaceful development. China’s development will not affect any country. When China was not developed, it didn’t seek hegemony. Even if China becomes developed, it again will not seek hegemony. It will never seek hegemony.

**TT:** Second, China is firmly committed to peaceful development. China’s development will not affect any country. When China was not developed, it didn’t seek hegemony. Even if China becomes developed, it again will not seek hegemony. It will never seek hegemony.

Detailed comparative analyses also show that still is repeatedly added by the interpreters, thus lending further support to the justificatory discourse that China is still a developing country with a huge population and its own unique domestic conditions and problems (see Examples 41-44). As such, China should only fulfill responsibilities and expectations commensurate with its current level of development.

Example 41 (2015)

**ST:** 如果按照世界银行的标准...中国是实实在在的发展中国家。

**Gloss:** If going by the World Bank standard...China is a real developing country.

**TT:** And by the standard of the World Bank...I can say that China is still a developing country in every sense of this term.

Example 42 (2016)

**ST:** 我们的传统产能还有很大的潜力，因为我们正在工业化，城镇化的推进过程当中。

**Gloss:** Our traditional production capacity still has huge potential because we are in the process of advancing industrialisation and urbanisation.

**TT:** We are upgrading our traditional growth drivers, where there is still much we can do because China is still at a stage of industrialisation and urbanisation.

Example 43 (2014)

**ST:** 因为国力所限，我们基本保障体系的标准还是低水平的。

**Gloss:** Because of the limitation of national power, the standard of our basic welfare system remains to be at a low level.

**TT:** Because China is still a developing country, so this basic welfare benefits we can provide are still quite low.
Example 44 (2015)

**ST**: 因为按照国际权威的统计，中国也就是世界第二大经济体。而且更重要的是，按人均 GDP，我们是在 80 位以后。

**Gloss**: Because according to authoritative international statistics, China is simply the world’s second largest economy. Moreover, more importantly, according to per capita GDP, we are ranked after the eightieth position.

**TT**: Because according to those authoritative standards, China is still the second largest economy in the world and, more importantly, our per capita GDP is still behind about 80 countries in the world.

Clearly, the interpreters’ repeated additions of still further highlight China’s current situation as a developing and industrialising country with inadequacies. This discursively renders the justificatory discourse more compelling and rationalised that China should not feel obligated to meet unwarranted expectations and shoulder the same degree of international responsibility as those fully developed nations.

5.2.4 Patterns Related to ‘China has’

Attention is now focused on the cluster China has in the English subcorpus as a way of directly locating what China is discursively (re)presented to possess. As seen in Figure 56, apart from mentioning that China is a big nation with a large population, China being an ancient country with a history of 5000 years is a frequent theme that is worth some attention.

Close examination suggests that the theme of China having a long history is used (year 1999) to justify that a lot of problems have accumulated over such a long period (e.g. feudal society, dictatorship and semi-colonial period) and, as such, it is unrealistic for the CPC government to solve all the problems within about 50 years since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. Also, the theme of history is used (year 2004) to justify and emphasise that China’s long history of ‘glorious past’ and ‘humiliation and subjugation’ means that China’s rise is the dream of the Chinese people and, because of such history, China understands the crucial importance of its peaceful rise.
Another interesting pattern here is ‘China has no intention’ as in ‘China has no intention to overreach itself/devalue its currency/fight any trade war/deliberately pursue a trade surplus’. Close contextualised examination shows that the 4 instances of the categorical expression come from the 2017 press conference and all 4 instances are related to the journalists’ questions on trade. Interestingly, such categorical and emphatic discursive articulation in the interpreted English discourse has been (re)contextualised and quoted verbatim by a number of major international media outlets such as the Chicago Tribune, the US News, the Associated Press and Daily Mail. This is evidenced in the screenshot taken from the Daily Mail website (Figure 57). Given such global attention, comparative analysis is carried out to show if there might be any shifts between the ST and TT.
Example 45 (2017)

ST: 我们不希望通过贬值来增加出口，这不利于企业转型升级。我们也不希望打贸易战，这不利于国际货币体系的稳定。

Gloss: We don’t wish to increase exports through devaluation. This is not conducive to companies’ transformation and upgrading. We also don’t wish to have trade wars. This is not conducive to the stability of the international currency system.

TT: China has no intention to devalue its currency to boost exports, because that is not good for our companies’ transformation and upgrading. China has no intention to fight any trade war either because that is not good for the stability of the international currency system.

Example 46 (2017)

ST: 关于区域的自由贸易安排，涉及中国的，有条件的，我们持开放态度，愿意去进行推动。我们不会越俎代庖去超越区域，做不是中国要做的事情。

Gloss: Regarding the regional free trade arrangements, (when) China is involved and the conditions are there, we hold an open attitude and are willing to push them forward. We won’t exceed the boundary and do things China does not need to do.

TT: For regional trading arrangements that concerns China and where conditions are in place, we would have an open-mind approach to it and we would be ready to work together with others to push them forward. But China has no intention to overreach itself into areas where its due role is not in place.
In the examples, the softer statements in Chinese are rendered significantly more unequivocal and emphatic by the interpreter using the *China has no intention* structure. Discursively, this (re)constructs an image in English that China is highly committed to what it says. This is of particular interest considering the fact that the interpreted English discourse is often taken for granted as China’s official voice by international media outlets.

5.2.5 Patterns Related to ‘Government is’

Moving on to the next self-referential item, a search of ‘government is’ in the English subcorpus retrieved 27 concordance lines (Figure 58). A close examination of the concordance lines (to the right) shows predominantly positive semantic prosody. This includes that the Chinese government is the people’s government focused on improving people’s lives (lines 1-2 and 24). Also, the Chinese government is found to be closely associated with adjectives such as *prepared* (lines 3 and 16-17), *bestowed* (line 4), *determined* (lines 8-9 and 13), *duty-bound* (line 10), *indispensable* (line 14), *positive* (line 18), *resolved* (line 19) and *steadfast* (line 20).

In addition, Beijing is associated with expressions which indicate achievements and speedy actions: *accomplish* (line 12), *taking serious steps* (line 22), *always respond to the people’s call* (line 24), *ensure* (line 25), *further strengthen and improve* (line 26) and *protect* (line 27). Such direct self-portrayal in the interpreted English discourse (re)presents a positive image of the government being highly responsible, determined and prepared.

In a very small number of cases, there are relatively unfavourable (re)presentations of the government as ‘engaged in so-called cultural genocide’ (line 11) and ‘tightening its policy towards Hong Kong’ (line 23). These, however, are found to be the wordings used in the journalists’ questions, which are respectively dismissed as *claims, so-called, nothing but lies* and something *not necessary* in English.
Close comparative analyses in subcorpus C show that there are no noticeable shifts in the propositional content *per se*. Having said that, the interpreters are, once again, found to further strengthen China’s discourse and (re)construct China’s image through adding a range of intensifiers (e.g. *fully* and *quite*).

**Example 47 (2016)**

**ST:** 所以政府下决心要推进全国医保联网。

**Gloss:** So the government decided to push ahead with the interconnection of medical
insurance web nationwide.

TT: So the Chinese government is fully determined to achieve national portability of medical insurance schemes at a faster pace.

Example 48 (2004)

ST: 我在这里只可以告诉大家一点，就是香港最近要发行 200 亿港币的债券，中央政府对此持积极的态度。

Gloss: I hereby can only tell everybody one thing. That is, Hong Kong recently will issue treasury bonds worth 20 billion HKD. The Central Government holds a positive attitude towards this.

TT: I can tell you one thing that recently Hong Kong decided to issue treasury bonds worth 20 billion HKD. The central government is quite positive about that.

As illustrated in the extracts, the interpreters’ such repeated employment of intensifiers further strengthens China’s discourse and contributes to a more positive image of Beijing cumulatively.

5.2.6 Patterns Related to ‘Government has’

In an attempt to explore what the (Chinese) government portrays itself to possess discursively, the cluster government has is searched in the English subcorpus. Of the eight concordance lines retrieved (Figure 59), government has is collocated with nouns with predominantly positive semantic meaning: (unshakable) resolve, (firm) support, confidence, responsibility, obligation, ability and duty. These constitute the government’s positive self-representation in the interpreted English discourse.

Critical contrastive analyses with the Chinese STs show that the interpreters tend to further enhance the original Chinese discourse through adding intensifiers. This is illustrated in Example 49. The interpreter’s addition of every as in ‘the current government has every resolve’ greatly strengthens the original Chinese discourse, thus (re)constructing an image of the government being more determined to streamline government institutions.
Example 49 (1998)

ST: 本届政府决心精简政府结构。
Gloss: This government decides to streamline government institutions.
TT: The current government has every resolve to streamline and simplify the government institutions.

To sum up, this section has focused on the direct self-representational discourse of China’s current conditions (guoqing), through exploring the clusters we are/ have, China is/ has and government is/ has in the English subcorpus. Various collocates (determination, confidence, ability, capacity and optimism etc.) are identified, leading to a positive self-portrayal of the government in the English discourse. Meanwhile, a number of recurring themes regarding what kind of a country China is (e.g. China is a big country with a huge population and a 5000-year history) and what China/the Chinese government is doing currently (e.g. China is committed to peaceful development and is still industrialising itself) are also identified.

These recurring themes are often associated with Beijing’s justificatory discourse used to explain China’s various sociopolitical issues and rationalise the government’s official positions, decisions and policies discursively. Critical comparisons between the STs and TTs show that, while there is often no major shift in the propositional content under discussion per se, the interpreters tend to repeatedly add intensifiers (e.g. always, fully, firmly, every and still) in English. This is in stark contrast to the observation that (simultaneous) interpreters often ‘omit certain peripheral elements (such as intensifiers or relative clauses)’ in the
interpreting process (Bartłomiejczyk 2010: 185). Such ideologically salient additions serve to bolster the premier’s utterances and make China’s justificatory discourse more convincing. Discursively, it helps (re)construct a more positive image of Beijing being capable, optimistic, committed and, if necessary, adamant and consistent in its official positions. This seems particularly significant given that the interpreted English discourse is often recontextualised and quoted verbatim by international news organisations as a valid source of China’s official voice.

5.3 Interpreters’ Mediation of Future Possibility, Volition, Obligation and Commitment in Chinese Government’s Discourse

Having focused on China’s discourses on past achievements and current situation, this section explores the interpreters’ mediation of modality. Modality can indicate various attitudes and, according to Fairclough (2003: 167), is often employed in constructing power relations in discourse. The decision to focus on modality is the result of close initial examination of the corpus data, which unsurprisingly shows that China’s political discourses in both languages are highly modalised. Also, essentially complicated and fuzzy in nature, modality often signals translators’/interpreters’ subjective agency and ideological intervention, thus constituting one of those ‘critical points’ in translators and interpreters’ decision-making processes (Munday 2012) that is ‘most susceptible to value manipulation’ (ibid: 41).

While this specific semantic-grammatical category has recently attracted some scholarly attention in relation to translation and interpreting in the Chinese context, mostly from the perspectives of systemic functional grammar or social semiosis (cf. Fu 2016; Fu 2017; Li & Hu 2013), no study so far has sufficiently addressed government-affiliated interpreters’ (ideological) mediation of modal resources from the perspective of discourse and image (re)construction. Drawing on corpus-based CDA, this section investigates how the government’s discourse on its future actions and projections (possibility, volition, determination, obligation, conviction and commitment etc.) might be (re)modalised and how certain images might be (re)created in the interpreting process as a result.
5.3.1 Overall Level of Modality Shifts

While modality is a ‘very complex aspect of meaning’ (Fairclough 2003: 168) and discussions of the subject often ‘inevitably’ involve a level of simplification and generalisation (Peyraube and Li 2012: 149), it is necessary to place various modals in groups for a relatively systematic corpus-based analysis. Over time, there have been different classifications for modality. For instance, focusing on modality value, modals, according to Halliday’s (2000: 76) taxonomy, can be grouped into a three-degree system consisting of low, median and high modality values. However, despite its apparent merits, this specific taxonomy is not refined enough in actual application due to a lack of further graduation between low and median modalities and between median and high modalities.

Also, based on semantic meaning and function, modality can be classified as modalisation and modulation, according to the distinction drawn by Halliday (1994: 354-363). Modalisation concerns the negotiation of probability and usuality on a continuum between ‘is’ and ‘isn’t’ (e.g. ‘the weather might improve’ or ‘this could happen very shortly’), whereas modulation indicates the negotiation of inclination and obligation etc. on a scale between ‘do’ and ‘don’t’ (e.g. ‘we should stop doing that’ or ‘you must eat lunch properly’). Similarly, according to Palmer (1990), there are epistemic modality (e.g. ‘the bus might/should/can/will arrive any minute’), deontic modality (e.g. ‘we must/should/shall finish the work today’) and dynamic modality (e.g. ‘the child can jump very fast’ or ‘Tom can speak four languages’). However, such classifications are not particularly helpful as the boundaries between, for instance, the epistemic, deontic and dynamic are not always clear-cut. Examples of such blurred boundaries in the corpus data are ‘I think that this problem [income gap] will be tackled after certain period of time’ (2002), ‘China will not interfere in others’ internal affairs’ (2006) and ‘we will be able to overcome the difficulties and maintain prosperity and stability in Hong Kong’ (2009). This is particularly the case given the political nature of the discourse where the expression of the probability of an action (epistemic) is often inextricably linked with the government’s articulation of will, resolve and conviction (deontic). That is, the government’s assessment and evaluation of a situation are not simply just an estimation of possibility but also an expression of, for instance, the government’s volition and efforts (as
the government is not simply in a position to estimate the likelihood of an event to happen but often has direct control over the results of events. Likewise, the expression of ability (dynamic) can, for instance, also convey a strong likelihood for things to happen (epistemic).

With the above in mind, a new revised taxonomy is proposed here, with the aim of synthesising semantic meaning with modality value. As presented in Table 16 below, this taxonomy consists of the following five major semantic groups (from low to high modality): (1) possibility and tentativeness; (2) ability and competence; (3) volition and inclination (4) necessity (5) obligation and commitment. The five semantic groups can, in turn, be mapped onto a much refined five-degree modality system (low, medium-low, medium, medium-high, and high modality values respectively), which is broadly in line with Halliday’s (2000: 76) graduation of modality (low, median and high values) but is significantly more detailed. Within each semantic group, a subtle level of graduation can also be identified (e.g. ‘will’ indicates a stronger sense of willingness/inclination/possibility than ‘would’ and, similarly, ‘can’ indicates a stronger sense of capability and competence than ‘could’). Admittedly, the boundaries between these semantic groups are not always clear-cut. Also, as with all corpus-based studies, the categorisation of linguistic items per se might affect the conclusion (to a certain degree). Nevertheless, given the specific focus of this section, this significantly more refined taxonomy combining modality values with semantic meanings forms a particularly useful basis for relatively systematic corpus-based comparison in order to trace any potential modality changes between languages.

Modality can be realised in multifarious ways and sometimes even what constitutes modality can vary from grammarian to grammarian. Therefore, for more practical and focused corpus-based analysis in a manageable and systematic manner, attention was focused mostly on what Biber et al. (1999) call ‘core modal verbs’ (e.g. must, should, can, may and will). Core modal verbs are relatively homogeneous and fixed in nature and, according to Fairclough (2003: 168), represent ‘explicit’ and ‘archetypical markers of modality’. Also, as Halliday and McDonald (2004) argue, there is a great level of comparability and applicability between these modal verbs in English and Chinese, thus making a contrastive investigation
possible. The items established in the English subcorpus are mostly core modal verbs (*might, may, would, will, could, can, shall, should, must*) with the inclusion of the semi-modal verb *need* as well as *wish* and *want*. Whilst *wish* and *want* are not typically classified as core modal verbs, they are included as they tend to exhibit similar properties to modal verbs as an explicit indication of willingness. The instances of each item were carefully counted. That is, in arriving at the instances, all concordance lines containing a certain item (e.g. *will*) were closely examined within their respective contexts to determine whether they should be included or not.

Then, their Chinese counterparts are established both from the Wordlist and through close examination of the Chinese data. The eligible items identified in both subcorpora are then respectively placed into the five semantic groups, thus permitting a general guide in terms of how modality is maintained or manipulated after interpreting (Table 16).

Based on the items established in both subcorpora, modality indicating possibility and tentativeness (low modality value) is amongst the least used, whereas modality relating to volition and inclination is the most frequently used, forming the mainstay of modal resources utilised in both Chinese and English. Unsurprisingly, this trend can be explained by the fact that the high-level political press conferences are an unlikely place for the government to show its indecision, uncertainty and caution (when a reliable source of information is expected both by the journalists and the TV viewers). Instead, it is an occasion to demonstrate the government’s willingness and initiative to assume responsibilities and solve China’s pressing problems.

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38For example, in counting the number of eligible concordance lines featuring ‘will’, such instances as ‘a peaceful and stable Middle East will serve the world well’ [2003] and ‘Madame Lauren Cha of Hong Kong Securities and Futures Commission will serve as the vice chairman of China’s securities regulatory commission’ [2001] were not included as they do not immediately concern Beijing’s willingness and volition as an actor and can be understood as indications of future tense. In comparison, ‘China will remain committed to the path of peaceful development’ [2016] constitutes an eligible example, where ‘will’ indicates China’s willingness and volition. In other cases such as ‘China-US business ties will get even closer and it will put the overall China-US relationship on a more solid footing’ [2015] and ‘I have confidence that Hong Kong will keep its competitive edge and maintain prosperity amidst future global competition’ [2014], the use of ‘will’ was counted. That is, although China is not explicitly mentioned as the only actor, Beijing’s willingness, conviction and contribution/involvement are implied and can be considered crucial to the business ties between China and the US and Hong Kong’s prosperity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic category</th>
<th>Eligible items in Chinese ST</th>
<th>Eligible items in English TT</th>
<th>Change (−/+)%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possibility and tentativeness (low modality)</td>
<td>可能 (63); 可以 (204)</td>
<td>might (17); may (97)</td>
<td>-57.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 267 (11.27%)</td>
<td>Total: 114 (3.81%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability and competence (medium-low modality)</td>
<td>能 (114); 能够 (134)</td>
<td>could (33); can (399)</td>
<td>+74.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 248 (10.47%)</td>
<td>Total: 432 (14.45%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volition and inclination (medium modality)</td>
<td>想要 (1); 将要 (5); 将会 (10); 愿意 (54); 将 (119); 想 (201); 要 (799); 会 (280)</td>
<td>Wish (24); want (30); would (316); will (1175)</td>
<td>+5.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 1469 (62%)</td>
<td>Total: 1545 (51.67%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessity (medium-high modality)</td>
<td>需要 (113)</td>
<td>Need (435)</td>
<td>+285%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 113 (4.77%)</td>
<td>Total: 435 (14.55%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation, conviction and commitment (high modality)</td>
<td>应当 (9); 应 (9); 一定 (59); 必须 (90); 应该 (105)</td>
<td>shall (11); must (200); should (253)</td>
<td>+70.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 272 (11.49%)</td>
<td>Total: 464 (15.52%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2369</td>
<td>2990</td>
<td>+26.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16: Items in both subcorpora based on semantic meaning

39 The categorisation of modal verbs might differ from linguist to linguist. The current categorisation focusing on modality value and semantic meaning is based on close examination of the corpus data in both languages and achieved through taking into consideration the political nature and discursive effect of both the ST and TT. It is true that ‘can’ and ‘could’ also indicate possibility. Given that the semantic meaning of ability often presumes the semantic meaning of something being possible in the first place, ‘can’ and ‘could’ are placed within the semantic group ‘ability and competence’. This is confirmed by contextualised examination of the concordance lines containing ‘can’ and ‘could’ in the corpus data.

40 ‘要’ in Chinese might be understood as both 需要 (necessity) and 将 (volition). However, close contextualised examination of the political discourse in the Chinese subcorpus shows that 要 does not just indicate the semantic meaning of something being necessary but tends to emphasise volition. As such, 要 is categorised under ‘volition and inclination’.

41 Similarly, 会 can both indicate possibility, ability and volition. Given the highly political nature of the conferences, 会 is used to indicate a relatively strong level of volition rather than just a mention of something being possible.

42 ‘Will’ tends to indicate willingness and volition for certain plans and actions to take place in the future. Examples of ‘will’ used in the corpus data include ‘we will further improve the social security system’ (2012). Based on semantic meaning, ‘will’ is believed to be of medium modality above items indicating possibility/tentativeness and ability/competence and below items indicating necessity and obligation/commitment.

43 ‘Should’ is categorised as of ‘high modality’ due to the strong sense of duty and commitment conveyed. Examples of this include ‘we should make every effort to improve people’s livelihood’ (2010) and ‘the Chinese government should subject itself to the democratic supervision of the general public’ (2006). As such, discursively and rhetorically, the frequent use of ‘should’ by the Chinese government is more emphatic, for example, than ‘will’ and can indicate a strong sense of obligation beyond merely what it intends or is willing to do.
The interpreted English discourse is considerably more modalised (26.2% increase) overall than the Chinese original. More specifically, items in the semantic category relating to possibility and tentativeness (low modality) have dropped in number in the TT (57.3% decrease). This suggests that the tentative and noncommittal attitude of uncertainty is further mitigated and rendered even less prominent in English by the interpreters. Correspondingly, items in the other four semantic groups featuring higher modality values are given more prominence in the interpreted English discourse to varying degrees, that is, a 74.19% increase for ‘ability and competence’, a 5.17% increase for ‘volition and inclination’, a 285% increase for ‘necessity’ and a 70.59% increase for ‘obligation, conviction and commitment’ respectively. This seems particularly interesting given the availability of roughly equivalent modality markers between Chinese and English (this is exemplified, for example, in the fact that there are 90 instances of ‘必须’ yet 200 instances of ‘must’ in English). As such, the quantitative results above demonstrate how the ST has been (re)modalised by the interpreters. Discursively, the image of the government being cautious and ambiguous is weakened. In turn, through the interpreters’ increased use of higher value modalities, the English discourse is greatly strengthened, thus (re)constructing an overall more positive image of the government being capable, competent, willing, confident, committed and duty-bound (a diachronic analysis of the highest modality verb must is presented later in this section as an example).

To illustrate the interpreters’ micro-level mediation of modality, the following examples are presented. These include the interpreters’ extensive additions of modal verbs in English. As the examples below demonstrate, this usually happens when the Chinese premier enumerates what is to be done in Chinese in a list-like fashion (extensive additions of ‘we need to’ in Example 50 and ‘we should’ in Example 51). In such instances, the additions are not necessarily triggered by elements in the Chinese ST (no explicit modal markers) but might serve to make the English interpretation flow better. This at least partially explains why the interpreted English discourse is considerably more modalised. Discursively and rhetorically, the interpreters’ repeated additions of the (medium) high modal verbs convey a heightened sense of necessity and obligation, thus leading to a more positive image and proactive
persona of the Chinese government overall.

Example 50 (2006)

ST: 第三, 建设社会主义新农村必须坚持两条根本的原则：一是保障农民的民主权利，特别是土地承包经营的自主权，尊重农民的意愿，不搞强迫命令。第二，让农民得到实实在在的利益，要把提高农民的物质文化生活贯彻始终，并且作为检验的标准，讲求实效，不搞形式主义。

Gloss: Thirdly, building socialist new countryside must adhere to two fundamental principles: first is to guarantee farmers’ democratic rights, especially the autonomous rights to contracting and managing lands, and to respect farmers’ will without coercion or using administrative instructions; secondly, let farmers get concrete and tangible benefits, implement (the goal of) improving farmers’ material and cultural lives from the beginning to the end and use it as a standard for evaluation, focus on practical results without going for formalism.

TT: No. 3, to build a new socialist countryside, we must adhere to the following two basic principles. No.1, we need to respect the democratic rights of the farmers, especially their rights to independent farming of their contracted land. We need to respect the will of the people in rural areas, namely, the farmers. In this endeavor, we need to refrain from coercion or using administrative instructions. No.2, we need to deliver tangible benefits to the farmers. We need to materialise our goal of improving the material as well as the cultural lives of the farmers in the countryside. And we need to use this as a yardstick to measure our progress and performance. We need to put emphasis on the practical results rather than go for formalism.

Example 51 (2005)

ST: 第二个阶段就是实行工业反哺农业，城市支持农村的方针，对农民多予少取放活 [...]第二个阶段我们做好四件事情：第一，推进以税费改革为主要内容的农村各项改革。第二，加强以农田水利设施和农业科技推广为主要内容的农村生产力建设。第三，发展农村的教育，科技，文化等各项社会事业。第四，推进以村民自治，村级直接选举和县乡两级政务公开为主要内容的基层民主建设。

Gloss: The second stage is to implement the ‘industry nurturing agriculture and cities supporting the countryside’ policy so as to give more to, take less from and liberalise the farmers[...]At the second stage, we accomplish four things: firstly, to push forward all sorts of rural reforms with the tax and fee reform as the main content; secondly, to strengthen rural productivity construction with building water conservancy projects and promoting wider application of agriculture-related science and technology as the main content; thirdly, to develop rural education, technology, culture and all social undertakings; fourthly, to push forward grass-roots democracy featuring self-governance among villagers, village-level direct elections and openness in government affairs at the county and village levels as the main content.

TT: In the second phase, we should make industry nurture agriculture and cities support the countryside. We should give more, take less and liberalise the countryside[...]We must
accomplish four jobs for the second phase. One is to promote rural reforms with rural tax and administrative fee reform as the central task. Second, we should improve productivity in the countryside by building water conservancy projects and promoting wider application of agriculture-related science and technology. Third, we should develop education, science, technology, culture and other social undertakings in the countryside. Fourth, we should promote primary-level democracy by ways of self-governance among villagers, direct election at village level and greater transparency in government affairs at the county and village levels.

In addition to the tendency to render the English TT more modalised, the interpreters’ mediation of China’s discourse and image also manifests itself, for instance, in upgrading items featuring relatively lower modality to higher modality (e.g. modality value updated to the highest ‘must’ in Examples 52 and 53), thus further strengthening China’s discourse.

**Example 52 (2004)**

**ST**: 从我上任的那一天起，就确立了三个目标。第一，就是要建立科学民主决策的机制 [...] 我们政府还要依法行政，建设法制政府 [...] 诚实守信，责权统一。第三，我们要接受各方面的监督 [...] 听取各方面的意见，包括社会舆论和人民群众的意见。

**Gloss**: From the first day I assumed office, set three goals: firstly, to establish a scientific and democratic decision-making mechanism [...] Our government also will administrate according to the law and establish a government under the rule of law [...] be honest and trustworthy and combine the responsibility and power. Thirdly, we will accept the supervision from all sides [...] listen to the views from all sides, including the social public opinions and people and masses’ views.

**TT**: From the very first day when I assumed my office, I set for myself three objectives. The first was the establishment of a scientific and democratic decision-making mechanism [...] The government must administrate the country according to law and establish a government under the rule of law [...] the government must be clean and honest and honour all its commitments and there must be combination between power and responsibility. Thirdly, the government must be put under the supervision of our people [...] The government must listen to the views of various quarters, including public opinions and views from various people.

**Example 53 (2011)**

**ST**: 我们要充分利用这样一个机会，调整经济结构 [...] 使经济的发展与人口，环境和资源相适应 [...] 谈到就业，我觉得我们应该重视结构调整 [...]。

**Gloss**: We will fully capitalise on such an opportunity to adjust the economic structure [...] make the development of economy compatible with the population, environment and resources. Speaking of employment, I think we should emphasise on structural adjustment...

**TT**: We must seize the current opportunities and make adjustments to China’s economic
structure...and we must strike a balance between economic development and population, environmental protection and resources...With respect to jobs, I would like to say that we must pay close attention to economic restructuring...

The examples have illustrated how the presentation in Chinese is rendered significantly more modalised and with an update in modality value (e.g. to ‘must’). Saliently, the interpreters’ mediation of modality often appears in the form of concentrated additions and replacements (e.g. upgrades in modality value) of modal verbs in parallel structures starting with self-referential items (see section 4.1 for more detailed discussions on self-referentiality). Apart from signalling the interpreters’ institutional identification and alignment, these are of great significance from the vantage point of discourse and image (re)construction (e.g. in indicating a stronger sense of collective will, obligation and commitment rhetorically).

Given the particularly high modality value of must (the highest of all modal verbs) and, as a result, its important role in potential image (re)construction for the international audience, the modal verb must is examined here from a diachronic perspective to identify any trends over the three administrations. The distribution of the interpreters’ employment of must is shown below (Table 17).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6101.6 tokens/year</td>
<td>7166.3 tokens/year</td>
<td>7698.6 tokens/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 instances</td>
<td>133 instances</td>
<td>44 instances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4.6 per year)</td>
<td>(13.3 per year)</td>
<td>(8.8 per year)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17: Distribution of the interpreters’ use of must across administrations

![Figure 60: The distribution of must by year](image-url)
As illustrated in the table and figure above, there is particularly concentrated articulation of *must* by the interpreters during premier Wen’s administration (2003-2012). While this can potentially be explained by a combination of different factors (e.g. the premier and interpreters involved and the questions posed), the trend seems broadly in line with the fact that premier Wen’s administration (2003-2012) was particularly eventful. Although there are inevitably ups and downs in every government administration, the Wen period faced unprecedented difficulties including the outbreak of the SARS epidemic, the Chinese winter storm, instability across the Taiwan strait, Tibet unrest around the Beijing Olympic games, anti-China protests in the Olympic torch relay, the Wenchuan earthquake and finally the global financial crisis. As such, the interpreters’ more concentrated articulation of high-modality *must* in this specific period arguably came at a time when some morale boost was crucial (rhetorically and discursively) in order for China to overcome the multiple challenges. From this perspective, the interpreters’ repeated and concentrated articulation of *must* in the English discourse works to show strong commitment, resilience and resolve of Beijing to the international community.

An example concerning the interpreters’ employment of the high-modality *must* is discussed here to highlight its potential global impact. The highly modalised English interpretation ‘the reform *can* only go forward, the reform *must not* stand still, and still less go backwards because that offers no way out’ extracted from the 2012 press conference was interestingly recontextualised and quoted word-by-word on the FRANCE 24 website as the premier’s own words (Figure 61).

Contrastive analysis suggests that the interpreter’s use of *must not* constitutes a strengthening of the Chinese original 不能停滞 (*cannot* stop). This example points to the discursive significance of the interpreters’ articulation of the high-modality *must* in communicating an extra layer of resolve and commitment and in (re)constructing a more positive image of Beijing to an international audience.
5.3.2 Collocational Patterns of Modal Verbs

Having explored the general trends of macro-level modality shift between the Chinese and English discourses, attempts are made here to establish the collocational patterns of modal verbs in the interpreted English discourse as a product. Close inspections to the left and right of concordance lines containing the eligible modal verbs in English have found a small number of [something + modal verbs (need, should, must etc.) + be done/do] structures in English. To the left of the modal verbs are lexical items such as effort(s), problems, disputes, issue, conditions, price, economic restructuring, reform, debts, objective and steps. To their right are such verbs as handle, release, create, protect, resolve, undertake, obtain, advance, repay, focus on, recognise, enhance, conduct, which indicate a wide range of actions. Examples are ‘responsibility must be matched with powers’ (2016), ‘problems must be addressed appropriately’ (2004), ‘further steps should be taken to reform the international financial system’ (2010).

In addition, the concordance lines featuring modal verbs mostly exhibit the [self-referential item + modal verb + do] patterns. The collocational patterns containing frequent self-referential items I, we, government and China are presented in Table 18 (although there
are other self-referential items such as *our administration* and *government departments*, they are too limited in number to be considered here).

Clearly, in line with the overall statistics presented previously, based on semantic meaning, there are most items in the ‘self-referential item + volition and inclination’ category (753 instances and 53.34% of all) yet fewest items in the ‘self-referential item + possibility and tentativeness’ category (15 instances and 1.06% of all). Notably, amongst all the collocations featuring self-referential items, the pattern [first-person plural *we* + volitive modal verb *will*] significantly outstrips others in number as the structure of choice in China’s interpreted English discourse (354 instances). This is unsurprising considering that the first-person plural *we* is the most frequently used self-referential item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I</th>
<th>we</th>
<th>government</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>may</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>might</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>could</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wish</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>want</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>would (’d)</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will (’ll)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td><strong>354</strong></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>need</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shall</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>must</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>should</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18: Patterns relating to [self-referential item+modal verb]

Figure 62 offers a snapshot of the collocation *we will*, which again is associated with a range of (positive) future actions (e.g. *regulate, improve, protect, handle, achieve, continue, promote, revere, mobilise* and *establish*).

From the perspective of image (re)construction, the sheer presence of ‘we will’ in English indicates a strong sense of inevitability and collective volition, motivation and willingness of China as a country (under the leadership of the CPC government).
Similarly, as illustrated in Table 18, although there are 123 instances of *I would/I’d* as the premier’s (personal) wish for example to address the journalists’ questions, the combined use of *I* and (medium-)high modality *need, must* and *should* is relatively rare. In contrast, *need, must* and *should* are mostly collocated with the first-person plural *we*, again, as an expression of the government’s collective voice regarding what *should, must* and *needs* to be done. This points to the fact that [*we + modal verb*] is a highly frequent collocational feature in the interpreted English discourse (cf. Section 5.3.3 for more focused analysis of the pattern ‘we must’).

### 5.3.3 Collocational Pattern ‘We Must’

As discussed previously, one of the most salient trends identified is the statistical (over)representation of items within the Obligation, Conviction and Commitment category (the highest value modality of all five semantic categories) in the English discourse. Given the limited space and the particularly strong semantic meaning conveyed by *we must* (the most frequent collocational pattern in this semantic category [117 instances] featuring
most frequent self-referential item *we* and the highest value core modal verb *must*), it seems particularly interesting to focus on this pattern (Figure 63).

A close examination of the concordance lines suggests that *we must* is associated with a range of positive action verbs in English including *ensure, obtain, conduct, change, increase, address, maintain, develop, concentrate, accomplish*, thus discursively portraying an image of the government being highly resolute and committed. It seems particularly useful here to trace exactly what triggered the interpreters’ frequent employment of the high-value *we must* structure in English. In an attempt to illustrate the workings of potential shifts, all 117 concordance lines containing *we must* in English are critically compared with their Chinese STs (the results are presented in Table 19).

Figure 63: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘we must’ (snapshot)
Clearly, as illustrated in Table 19, there are only 37 instances of *we must* that are directly triggered by related markers in the Chinese ST. In the other 80 cases (68.4% of all instances), there is a tendency for the interpreters to either upgrade the modality value (e.g. 要) in Chinese to the highest *must* (Example 54) or to add *we must* even when there are no explicit modal markers (Examples 55 and 56) in the Chinese ST.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related markers of ‘must’ in Chinese</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>必须/一定/一定要</td>
<td>要</td>
<td>43 instances (36.75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 instances (31.63%)</td>
<td>应该</td>
<td>3 instances (2.56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatively lower-value modal markers in Chinese</td>
<td>将要</td>
<td>2 instances (1.71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(an upgrade in modality value in English)</td>
<td>需要</td>
<td>2 instances (1.71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53 instances (45.3%)</td>
<td>(不)能/可以</td>
<td>3 instances (2.56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No specific modal triggers in Chinese</td>
<td>Collocational pattern ‘we must’ in English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 instances (23.08%)</td>
<td>(117 instances in total)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19: Instances of the pattern ‘we must’ in English and their Chinese counterparts

**Example 54 (2012)**

**ST:** 我们对藏族同胞[要]采取平等和尊重的态度。
**Gloss:** We, to the Tibetan compatriots, will/need to adopt an attitude of equality and respect.
**TT:** We *must* treat all our Tibetan compatriots as equals and with respect.

**Example 55 (2011)**

**ST:** 第三就是加强地方政府的责任。无论是物价和房价，地方都要切实负起责任来。
**Gloss:** Number three is to increase the local government’s responsibility. Be it consumer prices or housing prices, the local (government) needs to take concrete responsibilities.
**TT:** And third, *we must* intensify the responsibility of local governments’ responsibilities for controlling consumer and housing prices...
Example 56 (2015)

**ST:** 今年的要害就是要严格执行新出台的环境保护法...环保法的执行不是“棉花糖”，是“杀手锏”.

**Gloss:** This year’s focus is to strictly enforce the newly published environmental protection law...The enforcement of the environmental protection law is not a ‘cotton candy’ but a ‘killer move’.

**TT:** This year, our focus will be to ensure the full implementation of the newly revised environmental protection law...We must ensure that the law will work as a powerful and effective tool in fighting pollution instead of being as soft as cotton candy.

Discursively, the interpreters’ repeated articulations of *we must* in English help (re)construct a stronger sense of urgency and obligation and an image of the Chinese government, the chief social actor, being highly dedicated and duty-bound to take action and effect positive change for the country and people. The interpreters also tend to add various intensifiers (e.g. *always, fully, very, never*) in combination with *we must*. Examples of this are ‘we must *always* maintain our open policy and we must *always* develop economic and trade exchanges with all friendly countries’ (2004), ‘we must *stay fully* prepared for the long-term and hard struggle that we are going to enter into’ (2006), ‘we must *pay very* close attention to this problem and take strong steps to address it’ (2011) and ‘to conduct such reform in our big country with 1.3 billion population, we must *always* bear in mind China’s national circumstances and develop our socialist democracy in a step-by-step manner’ (2012). Discursively, the interpreters’ repeated additions of intensifiers lead to a further strengthening of the premier’s discourse, serving to (re)construct an even more resolute image and persona for the Chinese government.

In sum, a contrastive account of modality use (mostly modal verbs) between the ST and TT identifies the interpreters’ (re)construction of China’s discourse at various levels. In terms of the general trends, items relating to possibility and tentativeness are amongst the lowest in number in both discourses, whereas items indicating volition and inclination are the highest in number in both discourses. This can be explained by the political nature of the discursive event that is more about an enumeration of what the government is willing to do than a (tentative) verbalisation of what is (unlikely) to be true. Also, the interpreted English TT is more peppered with modality overall than the Chinese original (26.2% increase). More
specifically, low-modality items indicating possibility and tentativeness (hesitant and non-committal attitude) are significantly under-(re)presented in English statistically (57.3% decrease), whereas other items featuring higher modality values (ability, volition, necessity and obligation) are statistically over-(re)presented as a result of interpreting.

Attention was then focused on the collocational patterns relating to modal verbs. Notably, *we will* is established as the most prevalent structure of choice in (re)presenting the government’s future actions and plans in English, which works to indicate a strong sense of collective volition and inevitability. Other significant recurring patterns include *we need/should/must*. To trace the workings of possible shifts, all 117 concordance lines featuring the high-value *we must* in English are critically compared with their Chinese STs on a one-to-one basis as an illustrative example. It is found that only 32.5% of the 117 instances are triggered directly by related modal markers in Chinese. That is, in the rest of the 77 instances, the interpreters have either added *we must* or upgraded relatively lower modal markers to *we must* in English.

While the modality shifts can potentially be explained by various factors (including ideological factors, language differences and the interpreters’ cognitive load), the government-affiliated interpreters have indeed (re)constructed China’s discourse and image from a product-oriented perspective. That is, while the interpreters’ mediation of modal resources does not necessarily change the propositional content *per se*, it leads to a more positive image and persona of the Chinese government being more competent and capable with a stronger sense of willingness and obligation *vis-à-vis* the Chinese original.

5.4 Interpreters’ Mediation of China’s Discourse on People

Another interesting area to explore the interpreters’ (re)construction of China’s discourse and image is the subcategory of people-related items. This is particularly the case considering that ‘人民’ and ‘people’ are amongst the most frequent lexical items in both subcorpora (ranked 30th and 22nd respectively) and the fact that the Chinese government has adopted an increasingly people-oriented approach over the past few decades. Apart from discursive and image (re)construction, an investigation of this specific subcategory also promises to shed
light on the government-people ties in China in relation to the way people-related items are lexicalised.

5.4.1 Interpreters’ Overall (Re)construction of People-related Items

For a holistic idea of how China’s people discourse is rendered in interpreting, people-related items are identified in both subcorpora using AntConc’s wordlist function. Notably, a wide range of lexical items can be subsumed under the broader concept of people. In terms of selection criteria, the focus is not on just any nouns relating to the physical being of a person or specific occupational/professional groups (e.g. farmers, employees, tourists, pupils, consumers, investors). Instead, people-related items in a philosophical, sociopolitical and legal sense (e.g. people, individuals, citizens, the public, civilians) are of more interest ideologically and are, thus, selected from the frequency lists generated in both subcorpora. The identified items and their frequencies are listed below (Table 20). Given the potentially complex nature of some of the items in Chinese, literal translations are not provided as this is prescriptive and appears to give fluid items fixed translations in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People-related lexical items in the Chinese ST (708 instances in total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>人民 270 (38.1% of all); 大家 147; 群众 91; 同胞 66; 人们 24; 居民 21; 群体 15; 民众 13; 老百姓 11; 公民 11; 平民 7; 公众 6; 个人 6; 众 6; 百姓 5; 个体 5; 万众 3; 大众 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People-related lexical items in the English TT (938 instances in total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>people44 699 (74.5% of all); public 101; compatriot(s) 49; group(s) 32; residents 15; individual(s) 11; person 9; citizen(s) 7; mass(es) 7; crowd 3; civilians 2; nationals 2; folks 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20: Identified people-related items in both subcorpora

In overall terms, lexical labels related to the broad concept of PEOPLE are significantly foregrounded in the English TT (32.5% increase). Given the nature of the press conferences dealing predominantly with the Chinese people and public, the interpreters’ increased production of these items has strengthened China’s discourse, (re)constructing an overall image that the Chinese government is more focused on its people’s concerns and aspirations in English.

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44 Given the nature of the press conferences, the lexical item people refers mostly to the Chinese people as a collective. The few instances where people refers for example to the Indian people or Russian people are discounted. Similarly, the few instances where people refers to China’s ideological other in an accusatory or disapproving manner (e.g. in my opinion, some people in the United States have made two mistakes’) are also excluded from the statistics.
Parallel to this overall trend, there seems to be a shift towards lexical contraction (Beaton-Thome 2013) as a result of interpreting. That is, there are in total 18 lexical items relating to people in Chinese yet 13 in the English TT. This decrease in lexical variety co-occurs with and can be partially explained by the interpreters’ significantly increased and concentrated production of the lexical item people in English. There are 270 instances of 人民 in the ST, yet 699 instances of its equivalent people in the TT, hence a marked 159% increase as a result of interpreting. This, as discussed later, is part of a tendency for the interpreters to opt for more common and core vocabulary in the target language45 (at the expense of other more specialised and culture-specific items), thus discursively further strengthening the common and dominant concepts in the TT.

Given the prominence of people as the most common item (74.5% of all people-related items in English) and the intrinsic challenge to trace the exact dynamics of the shifts for all lexical items between languages, the lexical item people will be the focus of analysis here. In terms of origin, while 人民 (renmin) can be traced back to ancient China, renmin in the more recent and modern sense of ‘people’ was introduced into Chinese via Japanese during a wave of borrowings from Japanese-made Chinese or 和製漢語 (wasei kango), which were themselves mostly Japanese translations or readaptations of key Western concepts such as 民主 (democracy), 社會 (society), 科學 (science) and 實驗 (experiment) using Chinese characters. Since then the meanings of people (renmin in Chinese) have been fluid and subject to sociopolitical and ideological manipulation and (re)definition regarding who are the people (us) and the enemies (other). For instance, during the anti-Japanese war, all the social classes, strata and groups opposed to Japanese invasion were deemed the people. Later, in Chairman Mao Zedong’s era (1949-1976), the idea of people seemed closely linked to the socialist ideology and class struggle. In the speech On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People in 1957, for example, he remarked that in the ‘period of

45A similar trend can be found in public, the second most common item in the English subcorpus. There are 26 items in Chinese directly related to public (民众 13; 公众 6; 众 6; 大众 1) yet 101 instances of public in English. This reflects a convergence towards the general and more neutral item public in interpretation.
building socialism, the classes, strata and social groups which favour, support and work for the cause of socialist construction all come within the category of the people, while the social forces and groups which resist the socialist revolution and are hostile to or sabotage socialist construction are all enemies of the people’. As such, the Chinese population then was divided between the people and non-people (enemies).

Unlike Mao’s period, since the pragmatist reform and opening-up initiated by Deng Xiaoping started in 1978, *people* has become an increasingly positive concept that is more general, inclusive and less class-oriented. As people grow richer, China’s middle class has expanded rapidly over the past few decades. The richer, more vocal and ever expanding middle class is demanding more from the government to satisfy their growing material, economic and cultural needs. As such, the more recent Chinese leaderships are increasingly dependent on performance-based legitimacy (Zhao 2009; Zhu 2011) which hinges on things the government promises to achieve as well as concrete benefits the government is able to deliver to the Chinese people including notably the expanding middle class (e.g. economic development, infrastructure construction, improving people’s livelihoods and meeting people’s growing material and cultural needs). Given this sociopolitical context the premier’s press conferences are firmly embedded in, the interpreters’ repeated and increased articulation of the lexical item *people* in English discursively (re)constructs a more positive image that the government is highly people-oriented and is in a position to meet its people’s needs and expectations to the international community.

Indeed, in many instances, the item *people* with neutral/positive connotations is generally added by the interpreters, even when there are no triggers in the ST. As illustrated in Example 57, the relatively plain unmarked sentence ‘the government’s work went through four years’ is rendered into English as ‘this government *has been serving the people* for four years’. By bringing ‘people’ into the equation, this (re)constructs an image that the government is the dedicated and active servant of the people with great commitment.
In addition to such general additions of *people* untriggered by the ST, the interpreters’ increased (re)production of *people* in the TT can be explained by their active ideological mediation to avoid items that carry negative connotations in English, hence an act of international audience accommodation. This is evidenced notably in the interpreters’ treatment of 群众. There are 91 mentions of 群众 (*qunzhong* or literally *masses*) in Chinese, whereas there are only 7 mentions of ‘mass(es)’ in English. The only few mentions of mass(es) are found in the treatment of fixed slogans/formulations. For example, ‘大众创业, 万众创新’ in the 2015, 2016 and 2017 press conferences is rendered by the interpreter more literally as ‘mass entrepreneurship and innovation’.

The use of *qunzhong* has its unique sociopolitical and historical roots in the Chinese context. Extensively used in Mao’s communist revolution period, *qunzhong* (the masses), as Butsch and Livingstone (2014) observe, are represented somewhat positively and ideologically as a crucial instrument of the ruling Communist Party and a historical force to revolutionise the society. As opposed to *lingdao* (leaders) and social elite, *qunzhong* are typically the bulk of the Chinese populace (including the proletariat and peasants) seen as the vanguard and forces to be mobilised to realise China’s communist revolutionary goals. This is exemplified in the expression *qunzhong luxian* (or ‘mass line’), which involved consulting the masses, interpreting their suggestions within the Marxist-Leninism framework, and enforcing the resulting policies. Such language use still has some currency today as it has filtered into post-reform China as part of China’s political and even everyday parlance with neutral/positive connotations.

However, *qunzhong* (the masses) can have predominantly negative connotations in Western languages and cultures (for example in English), evoking ‘an image of a faceless,
undifferentiated crowd’ (Mason 2016: 22) who play a largely compliant role and possess little identity and agency. This may well explain why the relatively frequently used qunzhong is effectively backshrouded, if not completely suppressed, in the interpreted English discourse as an effort of international audience accommodation. This can be viewed as ideologically salient and is exemplified in the extracts below, where qunzhong (the masses) is (re)constructed as our people in both cases. Notably, the interpreters’ consistent option for the word people in English is often modified by the first-person plural our, thus adding an extra layer of active engagement to the premier’s discourse (more detailed discussions are provided in section 5.4.2.1).

**Example 58 (2015)**

**ST:** 中国政府有保障群众基本居住条件的责任。

**Gloss:** The Chinese government has the responsibility to guarantee the masses’ basic living conditions.

**TT:** The Chinese government has the responsibility to provide for the daily necessities in terms of housing for our people.

**Example 59 (2004)**

**ST:** 我首先要感谢广大群众…他们通过各种渠道向我提出许多问题、意见和建议，使我非常感动。

**Gloss:** I, firstly, want to thank the broad masses… They, through various avenues, offered me a lot of questions, advice and suggestions and made me very touched.

**TT:** First of all, I would like to extend my deep thanks to our people… they have been putting to me a lot of questions, ideas and suggestions through various channels, which moved me greatly.

Also, the interpreters tend to use more general lexical items in English such as people, as opposed to other more specialised items or items with culture-specific meanings. For instance, (老)百姓 or (lao)baixing, literally (old) hundred surnames, is a cultural concept in the Chinese context referring roughly to the ordinary folks. Its culture-specific nature means that there is often no direct equivalent in English. This points to the interpreters’ efforts to

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66This is also evidenced in the interpretation of 公民 into English. Although 公民 (gongmin or literally citizens) might be a slightly contested concept in the contemporary era, the concept represents a typical specialised legal discourse which implies people’s duties and rights. There are 11 mentions of 公民 (gongmin or citizens) in Chinese yet 7 mentions of citizens in English. Such relative backgrounding and downplaying of citizens (indicative of people’s duties and due rights) are in line with the observation that the ‘Chinese government is for the people, but not by the people’ (Zhou 2012: 33). Further related discussions on this observation can be found, for instance, in section 5.4.2.4.
domesticate and opt for other items such as people in the English interpretation. An example of this can be found below (again our is added by the interpreter).

Example 60 (2016)

ST: 这样呢才能够使我们的简政放权，让生产力发展起来，老百姓得到好处。
Gloss: In doing so can it permit our ‘streamlining administration and delegating powers’ efforts to help develop productivity and bring benefits to the laobaixing (ordinary folks).
TT: We hope that throughout this process, we will further boost productivity, and bring more benefits to our people.

To sum up, China’s discourse on people is strengthened by the interpreters on a general level through their increased (re)production of people-related items in the English TT, which (re)constructs an overall image of the government being people-oriented in English. In addition, as a result of interpreting, there is also a noticeable decrease in lexical variety, constituting a case of lexical contraction (Beaton-Thome 2013). As discussed above, such lexical contraction is realised through the interpreters’ option for a few more common and central items (e.g. people), which have neutral/positive meanings and are arguably more entrenched in the Western civilisation and familiar to the target audience. This is achieved at the expense of other relatively more peripheral items with specialised or culture-specific meanings (e.g. baixing/laobaixing or literally old hundred surnames) and items featuring unfavourable connotations (e.g. qunzhong or literally masses) in the target language. Such lexical contraction often leads to relative ‘lexical stability’ and ‘ideological reification’ (Beaton-Thome 2013: 391). Therefore, by foregrounding the more central and dominant lexical item (e.g. people), the interpreters serve to stabilise and further strengthen China’s discursive articulation in English, (re)constructing an image of the government being people-oriented in its governance for an international audience.

Interestingly, as Table 21 shows, there is also a clear tendency that the government-affiliated interpreters progressively (re)produce the (positive) lexical item people across the three administrations. This points to an image that the Chinese government is increasingly focused on its people’s interests and concerns at least discursively over time.
As part of the general trend that the government increasingly seeks to appeal to the people (including China’s expanding middle class) for performance-based legitimacy as discussed above, the interpreters’ increasing production of *people* over the three periods can be explained and supported by major milestones in the government’s official policy and ideals of people-oriented governance. These include the guiding ‘Three Represents’ (*san ge dai biao*) thought officially ratified during the Jiang-Zhu administration in the year 2002, stating that the CPC represents the development trends of China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of China’s advanced culture and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people. Similarly, the concept of ‘putting the people first’ (*yi ren wei ben*) was put forward in the Hu-Wen administration, which, according to Xing (2009), represents an important part of the government’s legitimacy and consensus building through focusing on the people. More recently, in the Xi-Li administration, the concept of ‘Chinese dream’ is greatly emphasised, which once again puts people at the core of the government’s agenda (at least discursively). Without doubt, the ideological message surrounding ‘people’ in English is greatly facilitated (and hammered home) by the interpreters in the process.

### 5.4.2 The Patterns Related to the Item ‘People’ in the English Subcorpus

Having discussed the item *people* in more general terms, let us look more closely at the patternings of *people*. For more contextualised analysis regarding how China’s discourse on people is (re)constructed, the collocates of ‘people’ are examined in the English subcorpus.

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Notably, the third ‘represent’ in the ‘Three Represents’ theory signals a noticeable shift from the Communist party’s previous focus on the proletarian workers and peasants for instance in Mao’s era to one that is more inclusive, hence a broadening of the government’s ‘mass base’ (Shambaugh 2016: 35). Such a (re)definition of people suggests that the party at least discursively represents the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people, including even the private sector entrepreneurs and capitalists who were once despised and denied CPC membership.
through sorting to the left and right. Given the limited space, only the most prominent patterns are discussed here, including, to the left-hand side, ‘our people’, ‘of (the) people’, ‘to/for (the) people’, ‘by (the) people’ and, to the right-hand side, ‘people’s’. These patterns are of particular interest and can potentially shed light on China’s government-people ties.

5.4.2.1 Pattern ‘Our People’

*Our people* featuring the first-person plural pronoun is identified as a recurrent pattern (70 instances) in the English subcorpus (Figure 64). To understand the extent to which the pattern is triggered by the Chinese ST, the 70 instances of *our people* are manually compared with their Chinese counterparts on a one-to-one basis.

![Figure 64: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring 'our people' (snapshot)]
Statistically, the pronoun *our* is not triggered by the ST but added by the interpreters in English in 66 out of the 70 instances (94.3%). This is highly salient ideologically. Such additions constitute a case of repetition, representing an additional effort of positive engagement with the people in English. Discursively, this (re)creates and strikes home a more positive image of the government being the dedicated servant of the people internationally. Notably, apart from fostering such an affectionate people-oriented image, it also implies a sense that the government occupies a hegemonic leadership position to rule the people. That is, the repeated use of *our people* seemingly makes the ordinary Chinese people further ‘interpellated’ or ‘recruited’ (Althusser 1971: 174) into a subject and passive position in the English discourse perhaps unknowingly. As such, by repeatedly articulating *our people*, the government-affiliated interpreters cumulatively contribute to Beijing’s hegemony and consensual rule through the manufacture of consent (Gramsci 1971).

From a diachronic perspective, the interpreters’ 66 additions of *our* are investigated across the three administrations. As Table 22 shows, the interpreters have played an increasingly active mediation role through adding *our* (4000% increase from 0.2 to 8.2 instances per year across the administrations) in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrations</th>
<th>Instances added</th>
<th>instances per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zhu (1998-2002)</strong>&lt;br&gt;6101.6 tokens/year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wen (2003-2012)</strong>&lt;br&gt;7166.3 tokens/year</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Li (2013-2017)</strong>&lt;br&gt;7698.6 tokens/year</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22: The interpreters’ additions of ‘our’ across the administrations

This seemingly contributes to an image that the Chinese government is increasingly focused on its people in front of a global audience. Apart from such an exponentially increased people-oriented image, it also facilitates Beijing’s growing hegemonic rule. This is compatible with and lends further support to the prior observations that there seems to be an increasing need for the government to address the people (including notably China’s growing
middle class) at least discursively as China’s reform and opening-up deepens. From such a perspective, the interpreters’ repeated and increasing (re)production of *our people* can be deemed necessary, given that hegemonic rule is a ‘dynamic’ and ongoing process that needs to be sustained, reproduced and constantly renewed (Zhang 2011: 25). Figure 65 showcases the more concentrated mentions of *our people* during Premier Li’s administration so far (2013-2017). The interpreters’ frequent additions of *our* in English are illustrated in the following examples.

![Figure 65: The concentrated articulations of ‘our people’ in the latest administration in English](image-url)
Example 61 (2004)

ST: 我和我的同事们愿意接受人民的监督，因为在我的脑子里，有着群众欢乐的笑容...我想我们政府一定要勇往直前，永不动摇，不畏艰险，为人民的利益，献出我们全部的精力和热血。

Gloss: I and my colleagues are willing to accept people’s supervision, because in my mind, there are the masses’ happy smiles...I think our government must forge ahead, be unswerving and unafraid of difficulty and danger in devoting our complete energy and hot blood for the people’s interests.

TT: My colleagues and I readily submit ourselves to the supervision of our people. In my mind I can see happy and smiling faces of our people...So we as government must always forge ahead and make unswerving efforts despite of difficulties and hardships and that we as government must devote all our energy, commitment and hard work for the interests of our people.

Example 62 (2014)

ST: 我说要向雾霾等污染宣战，这是因为这是社会关注的焦点问题。许多人早晨起来，一打开手机就查看这个 PM2.5 的数值，这已经成为重大的民生问题了。

Gloss: I said (I) will declare war against pollution like smog. This is because this is a focal issue that the society focuses on. Many people wake up in the morning and check this PM2.5 index as soon as they turn on their mobile phones. This has already become a major livelihood problem.

TT: I said the government will declare a war against smog pollution as a whole, because this has become a serious issue on the top of minds of our people. For many people, the first thing they do after getting up in the day is to check the PM2.5 figure. This has become a major issue that concerns our people’s lives.

Example 63 (2016)

ST: 我们执政的目的为什么？落脚点还是为了改善民生，就是要让群众对民生的呼声要求，来倒逼我们的发展，推动和检验我们的改革。

Gloss: What is the aim of our administration? The departure point is to improve livelihood, that is, to let the masses’ wishes and demands for livelihood force our development and push forward and test our reform.

TT: All the government’s work is to improve the well-being of our people. So we need to use the concrete wishes for a better life by our people to drive our development and reform and test the results of our reform.

As demonstrated in the examples, the interpreters’ repeated use of ‘our people’ serves to make the original Chinese discourse more affectionate and engaging to the Chinese public. This helps foster a closer affinity between the government and people, (re)constructing an image of the Chinese government as the people’s government. The ideologically salient additions are also indicative of the nature of the government-people nexus. Discursively, it constitutes a (re)affirmation of the reality that the Chinese people are under the direct
governance of and are reliant on the CPC-led government. Such interpreter mediation cumulatively leads to a stronger level of hegemony for the ruling CPC government.

5.4.2.2 Pattern ‘Of * People’

Having discussed ‘our people’, attention is now focused on the frequent patterns featuring the association of ‘people’ with the preposition ‘of’. There are in total 127 instances of ‘of * people’ in the English subcorpus, including ‘of people’ (35 instances), ‘of the people’ (48 instances), ‘of our people’ (26 instances) amongst others. The collocates of this structure were examined on both sides. No particularly interesting pattern was identified on its right. On its left, however, interesting collocates have been identified and regrouped based on semantic meaning (Table 23).

| Life, livelihood and well-being                      | well-being (3); lives (3); livelihood(s) (3); living standards (2); working and living conditions (1); livelihood and the safety (1) |
| Needs, will, wishes, interests, benefits, concerns, expectations, dreams and satisfaction etc. | interest(s) (16); will (5); expectation(s) (3); concern(s) (2); increasing material and cultural needs (2); pride (1); dreams (1); common wish (1); common aspiration (1); rights and interests (1); convenience (1); feelings (1); dignity (1); basic necessities (1); employment (1); special needs (1); pockets (1) |
| Requirements on the people (e.g. qualities and proactive involvement) | supervision (4); entrepreneurship (2); enthusiasm and creativity (2); hard work (2); full involvement (1); efforts (1); creativity and entrepreneurial enthusiasm (1); wisdom and ability (1); competence (1); initiative and creativity (1); trust (1); wisdom (1); joint efforts (1); independent thinking (1); understanding (1); views (1) |
Miscellaneous rights

freedom(s) and rights (2); rights (1); freedom, property and safety (1); welfare (1); legal private assets (1); life and property (1)

Other related collocates

minds (4); improvement (3); hearts (3); smiles (2); representatives (1); government (1); service (1); hearts and minds (1); happy and smiling faces (1)

Table 23: The collocates to the left of ‘of * people’

The above collocates (nouns) to the left of ‘of * people’ contain a list of items which are on the government’s agenda. In other words, China’s people discourse revolves around such areas as people’s well-being and livelihood, the realisation of people’s dreams and the fulfillment of people’s expectations etc. Notably, it is explicitly mentioned at the 2006 press conference that ‘our government is a government of the people’. This can in itself be important as it shows the heightened political and ideological need for the government to address China’s ever-expanding middle class discursively. Interestingly, however, the people are portrayed to be highly dependent on the government to have their livelihood needs, interests, expectations, concerns and various rights fulfilled and met (a weaker and passive position). In contrast, the people’s contributions in return are mostly entrepreneurship, enthusiasm, hard work and creativity etc., which seem to be relatively vague formulations and are mostly restricted to the non-political sphere (e.g. economy and business). Notably, however, the only area related to the political arena is the role of people in supervising the government that is already elected and in place. Comparative analyses in subcorpus C show that these collocates are largely accurate reflections of the Chinese STs.

5.4.2.3 Pattern ‘To/for (the) People’

Attention is now focused on ‘to/for * people’ in the corpus data. The concordance lines featuring ‘to * people’ are first generated. As illustrated in the concordance lines (Figure 66), ‘benefit(s)’, for example, is a frequent collocate to the left of the construction under investigation, along with other lexical items such as ‘service(s)’. This indirectly constructs a
positive and active image of the government being the benefactor and servant to the Chinese people (the government is in a position to ‘deliver’, ‘bring’, ‘achieve’, ‘give’ and ‘devote’).

Figure 66: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘to * people’ (sorted to the left)
The ordinary people, in comparison, are (re)presented to be in a passive and recipient position and need to, for example, rely on the government to provide services and bring benefits to them. Even in cases where people’s agency is needed (e.g. people’s call, people’s independent thinking) the government is still very much in a position to ‘respond to’ people’s call and ‘give full play’ to people’s independent thinking.

Regarding the concordance lines featuring ‘for * people’ (Figure 67), the construction is collocated with strong action verbs such as create, provide, eliminate, pave the way, bring, achieve, promote, make, ensure to the left. Once again, the government is (re)constructed as the chief social actor and benefactor acting in the best interests of the people (who, for example, provides adequate housing, creates an enabling environment, raises the living standards, provides new jobs and brings out initiative for the people).
To sum up, an examination of ‘to * people’ and ‘for * people’ in the English subcorpus shows that the Chinese government is (re)presented as the benefactor and servant to the Chinese people. In contrast, the people are portrayed to be in a passive position as recipients of the government’s actions. Comparative analysis suggests that these are more or less accurate renditions of the Chinese original.

5.4.2.4 Pattern ‘By * People’

In this section, attention is focused on ‘by * people’, which can shed light on the level of initiative and active role played by the ordinary people in the Chinese context. A close examination of the concordance lines featuring ‘by * people’ (Figure 68) shows that there is a particularly frequent pattern relating to people’s monitoring, supervision and oversight over the government (6th, 9th, 11th, 12th lines) where the people’s agency is seemingly restricted to commenting or asking questions, for instance, on the Internet (2nd, 5th, 10th lines). Other concordance lines include people’s wishes (7th line) as well as the generic and vague articulation that ‘history is created by people and written by the people’ (1st and 15th lines) yet without mentioning how. That is, there is a lack of mentions in terms of whether the leadership is directly elected by the people in a Western sense. Instead, the power of the government is simply ‘bestowed’ by the people (13th line).

Purely for the sake of comparison, it seems that government in the Chinese context cannot be deemed as one that is ‘by the people’ in the idealised and perhaps reductionist sense of...
Western democracy, which is crystallised in Abraham Lincoln’s famous lines regarding building a ‘government of the people, by the people, for the people’. As Wright (2015: 29) and Tang (2017: 58) observe, the leadership election and decision-making processes are essentially ‘rubber-stamped’ in the Chinese context. As such, it seems that people’s level of agency rests mostly on their supervisory role by asking questions and expressing concerns on the internet etc. For example, there have sometimes been online surveys launched by China’s mainstream media and websites before China’s annual two sessions. This has – at least in name – enabled the public to voice concerns relating to income distribution, corruption, commodity prices, equal access to education, health care reform, housing price control, social security, agricultural issues and food safety for the government to consider. Contrastive analysis shows that this is very much an accurate reflection of the ST.

![Figure 68: Screenshot of concordance lines featuring ‘by * people’ (sorted to the left)](image)
5.4.2.5 Pattern ‘People’s’

Another frequent identified pattern is ‘people’s’. The combined use of ‘people’ and the apostrophe (‘) is potentially revealing in terms of what specific aspects of the ordinary people represent the focus of the government’s attention. In total, there are 116 instances of ‘people’s’ in the English subcorpus. Further sorting to the right retrieves the following collocates, which are categorised semantically and presented below (Table 24).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People’s</th>
<th>Other collocates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People’s well-being, livelihood needs and rights</td>
<td>lives (10); livelihood (8); (basic) health care/housing/living/growing cultural needs (8); well-being (7); income (5); welfare (1); quality of life and health (1); subsistence right (1); medical care (1); life (1); living standards (1); housing demand (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s expectations, wishes and interests</td>
<td>Expectations (3); interest(s)(2); wish (1); grievances (1); satisfaction (1); minds (1); call (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements on the people’s proactive involvement</td>
<td>understanding (2); ability (1); awareness (1); effectiveness (1), enterprising spirit (1); enthusiasm (1); role (1); support (1); trust (1); initiative (1); hard work (1); independent thinking and creativity (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other collocates</td>
<td>government (2); money (1); power (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 24: Collocates of ‘people’s’ to the right

A close examination of the collocates to the right of ‘people’s’ shows that the government pays great attention to people’s livelihood and various needs and bears the people’s interests and expectations in mind. At the same time, the people’s proactive involvement is required, which seems to be restricted to their initiative, hard work, independent thinking and creativity etc. As such, similar to the previous discussion, explicit mentions of people’s agency or participation of any kind in the political arena are conspicuously absent. Comparative analysis between the ST and TT in subcorpus C shows that the propositional content is largely triggered by the Chinese original.

To sum up, the choice made in lexicalising a ‘certain entity is not neutral but is a means of
allocating it a certain value’ (Beaton-Thome 2013: 393-394). Through the proliferated production of people-related items in general terms and the foregrounding of the specific lexical item people, the interpreters have strengthened China’s discourse on people. Discursively, this further (re)constructs a favourable image that the government is people-oriented, thus leading to an added degree of performance-based legitimacy overall. More contextualised analysis focusing on the collocations of people establishes the interpreters’ tendency to use our people as a particularly recurrent pattern untriggered by the Chinese ST. The interpreters’ repeated articulation of our people seems to constitute an interesting site of hegemonic consensus building. This seemingly represents the interpreters’ attempt to further appeal to the people and seek people’s consent and support, which discursively helps (re)construct an image of positive engagement. Further attention on the constructions ‘of/to/for/by * people’ and ‘people’s’ reveals a list of collocates, which are indicative of the government-people ties in China. The collocates examined in the English interpretation provide interesting textual and discursive evidence for the observation that, generally speaking, the Chinese government ‘is for the people, but not by the people’ (Zhou 2012: 33) in the sense of Western democracy. It seems that the interpreters’ mediation of the people discourse can be profitably understood using the distinction between naturalising and naturalising by Wang (2017: 425). According to him, ‘to naturalise something is to attach certain ideologies with the nature of a chosen social actor, while to naturalize something is to make some associations’ appear natural. As such, the government-affiliated interpreters play a vital role in both naturalising, that is to (re)construct an image that the government is by nature people’s government, and in naturalising, that is to render unchallenged the government’s hegemonic and consensual rule. This is of particularly significance given that China is increasingly ‘moving away from totalitarianism towards hegemonic rule’ (Zhang 2011: 21).

5.5 Summary

Drawing on corpus-based CDA, this chapter has investigated the government-affiliated interpreters’ discursive (re)construction of China and the Chinese government’s image at various levels and from different perspectives when (re)contextualising (cf. 2.2.3) Beijing’s
discourse into English. The interpreters are found to proliferate the use of the present perfect (continuous) structures in English, which discursively leads to a more pronounced sense of accomplishment and an image of the government being highly capable, effective and responsive. Also, through various discursive and linguistic means (e.g. the additions of intensifiers), the interpreters have rendered China’s justificatory discourse on its current conditions (guoqing) more emphatic, compelling and convincing. Regarding the interpreters’ mediation of China’s future actions, attention was focused on modality. It is found that the English TT is significantly more modalised than the Chinese original. In particular, low-modality items are statistically under-(re)presented, whereas items featuring higher modality values (ability, volition, necessity and obligation) are over-(re)presented in interpreting. From a product-oriented perspective, a more positive image and persona of the Chinese government being competent and capable are (re)constructed with a stronger sense of willingness and obligation. The interpreters’ discursive (re)construction of the government’s image is also visible in their treatment of people-related lexical items. Through increased production of people-related items overall and, notably, the concentrated articulation of the lexical item people in English, the interpreters have (re)constructed a more favourable image of the government being people-oriented.

Again, admittedly, different factors and variables might have influenced the interpreters’ production of those shifts to varying extents (language difference, cognitive reasons, explicitation strategies, explicit instructions from government trainers, etc.). However, given the focus of this corpus-based CDA study on discursive effect, the interpreters’ (re)construction of China’s discourse and image is highly interesting from a product-oriented perspective, no matter how the salient shifts were arrived at. Such interpreter mediation is of great significance, especially given the high-profile and televised nature of the press conferences and the fact that the interpreters’ utterances tend to be further (re)contextualised and invoked by major international media outlets in a verbatim manner. At a time when Beijing is seeking to enhance its discursive power and ‘have the Chinese story properly told’, the interpreters’ discursive mediation points to their vital role as (re)tellers of the Chinese story in an increasingly globalised and connected world.
Chapter 6 Conclusions

Having presented the two data analysis chapters, this chapter revisits the objectives of the study (section 6.1), discusses its main findings (section 6.2), re-evaluates the theoretical framework and methodology (section 6.3), and details its scholarly contributions (section 6.4), before outlining its limitations and providing suggestions for future research (section 6.5).

6.1 Objectives Revisited

Considering that interpreting studies (IS) research has traditionally focused on the different processes and facets of conference interpreting (e.g. cognitive issues, note-taking, working memory) and relatively more recently on the various aspects (e.g. interactional and contextual) of public service interpreting/community interpreting (cf. Tipton 2014; 2017; Valero-Garcés 2005; Wadensjö 1992; 2001), this study aimed to investigate the under-explored area relating to political interpreters’ possible agency. Particular attention was focused on the premier’s press conferences, a typical discursive event which enables the Chinese premier to articulate China’s official policies and positions to a global audience. Given the televised, highly institutional(ised) and interpreter-mediated nature of the press conferences, the government-affiliated interpreters’ agency was examined as part of a very limited but growing body of work investigating the various sociopolitical and cultural issues relating to ideology and power. With this in mind, the overarching question and the more specific sub-questions set out in Chapter 1 were:

Overarching question:

What insights can be gained regarding government-affiliated interpreters’ institutional alignment and (re)construction of China’s political discourse and image, through corpus-based CDA?

To answer the overarching question, two more specific and interconnected research questions were formulated:
To what extent do the interpreters, as civil servants and members of China’s ruling elite, align themselves institutionally and strengthen, maintain or weaken the government’s ideological discourse?

How might these interpreters serve to (re)construct the Chinese government’s discourse and image in the interpreting process?

These questions were addressed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 respectively. This corpus-based CDA analysis has led to the following findings as discussed in section 6.2 below.

6.2 Main Findings

Benefitting from a large corpus consisting of 20 years’ Premier-Meets-the-Press conference data covering three administrations (1998-2017), I examined the interpreters’ institutional alignment and discursive (re)construction of the government’s image from different angles and at various levels. In investigating the interpreters’ institutional alignment (research question 1), attention was focused on their mediation of institutional self-referentiality (4.1), key themes central to China’s reform and opening-up discourse (4.2), and issues relating to China’s core national interests (4.3).

Focusing on ‘self-referentiality’ (4.1), the interpreters are found to show (stronger) institutional alignment in English through the increased (re)production of various self-referential items (e.g. we and its related forms, China/Chinese and government). Compared with the scenario discussed in 4.3 regarding China’s core national interests, this constitutes a general and less noticeable way of alignment, leading to a strengthening of the government’s institutional presence and hegemony overall and forging a positive image of the government being omnipresent, effective and in charge. Also, from a relational perspective, the interpreters tend to foreground the first-person plural WE (we and its related forms) in English proportionately at the expense of other prominent self-referential items (e.g. China/Chinese and government). This not only signals the interpreters’ in-group identification as part of China’s ruling elite but also helps forge a sense of ‘collective intentionality’ (Searle
1995: 24-25). Discursively, this contributes to the collective voice of China, the Chinese people and the Chinese civilisation under the leadership of the CPC government.

An examination of the prominent themes constitutive of China’s post-1978 reform and opening-up discourse (4.2) reveals the interpreters’ general alignment and sometimes increased alignment through their increased (re)production of certain lexical items (e.g. reform*/restructur*, econom* and develop*), among other things. This reinforces China’s discursive formulations on reform and opening-up and strengthens the government’s ideology and institutional hegemony, indirectly (re)constructing an image that Beijing is highly reform-minded, committed to development, globally oriented and attentive to stability. Interestingly, despite the articulations of China’s reform and opening-up discourse, China’s (economic) reforms are represented as socialist in nature (evidenced in recurring patterns such as ‘socialist market economy’ and ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’). Furthermore, various core concepts (e.g. development, prosperity, reform, harmony and stability) are often juxtaposed with each other, indicating discursively and cognitively the interconnected and mutually enhancing nature of these elements essential to China’s reform and opening-up.

Finally, attention was focused on the interpreters’ mediation of key topics central to China’s core national interests (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet and Macao) in 4.3. The interpreters have been shown to align with China’s official policies and stances overall and tend to intervene and actively safeguard China’s core national interests when they are potentially at stake (which constitutes a strong form of mediation). More specifically, the interpreters show (increased) alignment with Beijing’s discourse on Hong Kong and further strengthen Beijing’s positive engagement with the Hong Kong people through repeatedly articulating ‘our Hong Kong compatriots’ and ‘our compatriots in Hong Kong’. In rendering Beijing’s discourse on Taiwan, the interpreters have further facilitated Beijing’s carrot-and-stick approach, contributing to an additional level of positive engagement to appeal to the Taiwanese people (e.g. our Taiwan compatriots) and, meanwhile, negative engagement to further other the pro-Independence forces in Taiwan (e.g. so-called Taiwan independence). In
the interpreters’ mediation of China’s discourse on Tibet, a similar trend was identified (e.g. our Tibetan compatriots; so-called exile government situated in Dharamsala). Regarding the interpreters’ rendering of Beijing’s discourse on Macao, no particularly salient signs of interpreter mediation were found, despite its relatively recent handover to Chinese rule in 1999. This arguably is because the Macao SAR has been relatively stable and peaceful since its return (unlike the situations in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Tibet).

Regarding the interpreters’ discursive (re)construction of Beijing’s image (research question 2), attention was focused on their mediation of China’s discourse on its past actions and achievements (5.1), current conditions (5.2), future actions (5.3) and the interpreters’ mediation of China’s discourse on ‘people’ (5.4). In 5.1, the interpreters are found to proliferate the use of the present perfect (continuous) structures in English, which leads to a more pronounced sense of accomplishment and an image of the government being highly capable, effective and responsive. Discursively, such emphatic (re)presentation of government achievements contributes to Beijing’s performance-based legitimacy, as demonstrated in recent leaderships.

In 5.2, attention was focused on Beijing’s discourse on its current national conditions (guoqing). Corpus-based analysis focusing on the [self-referential item + be (is/are) + noun] and [self-referential item + has/have + noun] constructions found recurring patterns relating to what China and the government portray themselves to be or possess (e.g. China is still a developing country and China is an ancient civilisation with a history of 5000 years). Comparative analyses show that the interpreters make China’s justificatory discourse on current conditions more emphatic, compelling and convincing through various discursive and linguistic means (e.g. the repeated additions of such intensifiers as firmly, still, fully and quite).

Regarding the interpreters’ mediation of China’s future actions (5.3), attention was focused on modality. It is found that the English TT is significantly more modalised than the Chinese original (26.2% increase in modal verb use). In particular, low-modality items indicating
possibility and tentativeness are statistically under-(re)presented, whereas items featuring higher modality values (ability, volition, necessity and obligation) are statistically over-(re)presented in interpreting. From a product-oriented perspective, a more positive image and persona of the Chinese government being competent, capable and committed are (re)constructed, resulting in a stronger sense of willingness and obligation. Regarding collocational patterns, ‘we will’ was identified as the most prevalent structure in English, indicating a strong sense of inevitability and collective volition, amongst other recurring patterns ‘we need/should/must’. Due to its particularly strong modality, attention was focused on the pattern ‘we must’ (117 instances). Contrastive analysis shows that the interpreters tend to add we must or upgrade relatively lower modal markers to we must in the English interpretation (in 67.5% of all 117 instances).

The interpreters’ discursive (re)construction of Beijing’s image is also visible in their treatment of people-related items (5.4). Through the increased (re)production of people-related lexical items overall and the concentrated articulation of the specific and more central item people in English (at the expense of other culture-specific items or items with unfavourable semantic meaning), the interpreters have (re)constructed a more favourable image of Beijing being people-oriented in front of the international audience. Focusing on collocational patterns, the interpreters tend to repeatedly use ‘our people’ (untriggered by the ST). This effectively (re)constructs a more positive image of Beijing as the servant of the people and further contributes to the government’s legitimacy and hegemonic rule discursively. In addition, other salient patterns of/to/for/by * people and people’s were also examined, which are indicative of the government-citizen ties in China.

Such discursive mediation shows that, when located in the ideological ‘tug-of-war’ between the government and the journalists, the interpreters predominantly act in the interests of the former. Therefore, rather than just translating like a translation machine, the interpreters in China’s political setting seem to assume a role as institutional spokespersons of China’s official English discourse and staunch defenders of Beijing’s positions and interests. Such ideological mediation can be viewed as of strategic significance, especially given China’s
increasingly active global diplomacy, the high-profile and televised nature of the press conferences and the fact that the interpreters’ utterances are often further (re)contextualised and invoked by major international media outlets in a verbatim manner (Figures 45-47, 57 and 61 illustrate the interpreted discourse (re)contextualised for example on the Financial Times, Daily Mail and France 24 websites).

The interpreters’ demonstrated institutional alignment and (re)construction of China’s discourse and image⁴⁸ highlight the agency-structure dialectic as argued by Giddens (1984, 1987). This is in the sense that, although the interpreters are subject to various structural and institutional constraints, they, as agents, also enjoy a degree of freedom in actively mediating China’s political discourse and even effecting change on a global scale. As such, in many ways, the seemingly contradictory official FMPRC meta-discourse indicating the government interpreters’ role requirements has provided some institutional leeway for interpreter discretion and room for their ideological mediation. This level of agency in the Chinese context goes beyond the traditional, de-contextualised and perhaps idealised expectations/portrayal of interpreters being agentless conduits seen in the prevalent prescriptive professional metadiscourses (e.g. the AIIC and NAATI codes of conduct) emphasising accuracy and impartiality. This is unsurprising given that quite a few government translators and interpreters affiliated with the FMPRC Department of Translation and Interpretation have gone on to take top positions as government officials and diplomats later in their careers.

6.3 Theoretical Framework and Methodology Revisited

This section reflectively evaluates the theoretical framework and methodology used in this study and revisits the concept of ‘ideology’ formulated in Chapter 2. Considering the nature of

⁴⁸A corpus linguistics approach to discourse analysis, according to Partington (2017), is notoriously prone to the ‘curse of hindsight post-dictability’. That is, once an extensive corpus-based study is complete, the readers might sometimes be left underwhelmed by the molehill of a conclusion despite the mountain of research undertaken. While the findings of this corpus-based study are not entirely surprising, apart from confirming the interpreters’ agency and active mediation, the overriding values of this study lie in that I have demonstrated the myriad discursive and linguistic means of their mediation and highlighted the crucial global ramifications of such mediation in an increasingly mediat(is)ed and (re)mediat(is)ed world. See 6.4 for detailed discussions regarding its scholarly contributions.
the project dealing with issues of power and ideology embedded in the interpreted political discourse, CDA and, more specifically, Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework were adopted. His particular model approaches discourse from the dimensions of text, discursive practice and social practice, thereby providing a general and useful framework to examine the different aspects of the interpreters’ discursive mediation.

Transdisciplinary and flexible in nature, Fairclough’s model welcomes ‘dialogues’ between disciplines, theories and frameworks (Fairclough 2010: 4). Given the interpreter-mediated and necessarily negotiated nature of the press conferences, Bakhtin’s concept of *dialogised heteroglossia* was introduced into Fairclough’s framework to account for this dynamic and bilingual discursive event. The incorporation of the Bakhtinian concept has permitted an investigation of the interpreters’ agency in a situation where they are located between the centripetal force exerted by their institutional employer (the Chinese government) and the centrifugal force exerted by the (foreign) journalists seeking to pull away from the unitary, that is, China’s official narratives. Also, the interpreting process was conceptualised as a form of (re)contextualisation, which potentially contains numerous instances of micro-level decision-making, stance-taking, and ideologically salient shifts when rendering information into the sociopolitical and cultural context of the TT. Such macro-level conceptualisations permit a bilingual CDA analysis, focusing on ST-TT shifts.

For more systematic analysis, corpus-based CDA was employed in this study to reduce researcher bias and produce more valid results as a ‘useful methodological synergy’ (Baker et al. 2008), triangulating between the qualitative and quantitative. As such, drawing on the CE-PolitDisCorp corpus consisting of 20 years of the Premier-Meets-the-Press conference data (1998–2017) spanning three administrations (1998-2017), a corpus-based CDA approach was operationalised to examine various themes and topics (e.g. China’s reform and opening-up discourse, Taiwan, Tibet, and people) as well as different linguistic categories and features (e.g. self-referential items, repetition, the present perfect (continuous) structures and modality). The various tools and functions afforded by the corpus linguistics software (e.g. frequency list, concordancing tool, Kwic sort and collocates tool) made it possible to gain
useful statistical information and identify interesting (collocational) patterns that would not have been possible using the naked eye and through manual analysis.

Rather than a wholesale imposition of Fairclough’s framework, in carrying out the actual corpus-based CDA analysis, attention was focused on the identification of interesting patterns in the English subcorpus and a critical comparison with their Chinese counterparts to detect ideologically salient shifts. The identified shifts on a textual level were then discussed in relation to their discursive effects vis-à-vis the broader sociopolitical background. Ideology and power enacted in discourse are multifaceted in nature and realised through various means with many permutations (Strowe 2016). Reflexively, while Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework has provided a robust general framework (relatively comprehensive coverage of discourse at different levels), the linguistic/discursive features and categories included in the canonical Faircloughian framework — such as transitivity, nominalisation and passivisation (heavily influenced by Halliday’s SFL) — do not always account for the intricate interplay of power and ideology that is manifested in discourse in myriad ways. Therefore, apart from using the analytical devices (e.g. repetition, foregrounding and backgrounding) and other important concepts (e.g. from Foucault and Gramsci) part and parcel of Fairclough’s framework, where appropriate, useful concepts from other CDA approaches (e.g. van Dijk) and works in Chinese studies, political science, media studies and linguistics as a whole have also been invoked to better engage with the power and ideology embedded in interpreting and to deliver richer analysis for this interdisciplinary project. Reflexively, it seems that Fairclough’s CDA framework, enriched by various linguistic/discursive analytical categories and notions in the political and social sciences, promises to offer a widely applicable framework for a variety of studies focusing on translation/interpreting, power, ideology and (political) discourse in principle.

Despite the robustness of this methodological approach (which led to interesting findings at various levels), it is worth pointing out that the comparison of ideologically salient patterns between the ST and TT in a corpus-based manner was by no means straightforward. Although both corpus linguistics and CDA are of great usefulness in investigating monolingual
discourses, it is challenging to harness this mixed-methods approach in engaging with the propositional content and units beyond a lexical level from a bilingual and comparative perspective. That is, while it is relatively easy to identify salient patterns in both subcorpora in their own right, it can be a challenge to marry up the results systematically to highlight the interpreters’ mediating role. China’s press conference interpreting is essentially a form of institutional self-translation (where the ideological discourse is already articulated by the Chinese premier). This and the fact that the interpreters are competent and well-trained mean that the ST-TT differences can sometimes be subtle and nuanced.

As such, while direct lexical level comparisons are relatively easy between the ST and TT, a direct comparison of linguistic and discursive features beyond a lexical level is difficult. Therefore, when analysing larger units (e.g. collocational patterns), it has proven a workable solution to use various CL tools as a starting point or ‘way in’ to identify interesting patterns in one language and then compare them with their counterparts in the other language on a one-to-one basis (as demonstrated in this explorative study). From this perspective, a certain degree of manual analysis seems more than necessary in the ST-TT comparison process and subsequently in discussing the illustrative examples. This brings us back to the topic of objectivity in (critical) discourse analysis. It seems that the incorporation of corpus linguistics has indeed proven a great addition to the otherwise purely manual and qualitative analysis, thus leading to more objective and systematic research and more confident claims (as also demonstrated in Kim 2017; Wang & Feng 2018).

However, absolute objectivity devoid of researcher involvement is still impossible to achieve. This is because conscious decisions have to be made every step of the way in terms of what data to include in the corpus (and for how long), whether or not to tag the data, what corpus linguistics software to use and how to use it and, given the space and time constraints, what specific aspects of the data to focus on. More importantly, perhaps as with all research in humanities and the social sciences, critical readings of the data cannot be completely objective. This is for the simple reason that without any familiarity with the corpus data and a reasonable amount of prior knowledge regarding China’s broader sociopolitical context and
historical background, meaningful analysis cannot begin to take place. As such, a small degree of researcher involvement might constitute a kind of ‘acceptable bias’ (Baker 2012) after adopting the triangulated corpus-based CDA approach.

Also, it is worth pointing out that the interpreter-mediated press conferences are multimodal in essence, featuring various multisemiotic elements. However, methodologically, despite its usefulness, a corpus-based CDA approach tends to focus predominantly on transcribed verbal data and it has proven difficult to process and account for the para-verbal/para-linguistic and non-verbal and non-textual elements using corpus linguistics (CL) tools. As Pérez-González (2014) observes, there is still a lack of theoretical and methodological concepts and analytical tools to systematically explore such semiotic resources as facial expressions and gestures in translation and interpreting studies. However, despite such challenges, ‘the view that para-verbal and non-verbal semiotic resources are considered ancillary to verbal semiotic resources is changing’ (Wang 2018) and there is an increasing recognition that the various multimodal and semiotic elements form an integrated system and should thus be investigated as a whole in order to gain a more holistic understanding of interpreter-mediated interaction. As a major step forward, Gao and Wang (2018) propose a multilayer framework of multimodal analysis, integrating a multimodal approach into dialogue interpreting in the Chinese context. Therefore, it would certainly be interesting to further explore the multimodal elements to complement the current corpus-based CDA analysis and gain a deeper and richer understanding of the government-affiliated interpreters’ ideological mediation (see 6.5 for more details).

Having revisited the theoretical framework and methodological approach, some attention is focused on the definition of ‘ideology’ here. After critical discussions of the various definitions of ideology, a working definition was formulated in Chapter 2, namely ‘a temporarily stable set of socially and historically shaped values and beliefs held by social or political group member(s) that is aimed at certain goals and interests, usually embedded and enacted in discourse, often mediat(is)ed by various agents and on different platforms, and can potentially contribute to the maintenance or shifting of power relations’. Such a definition is neither unduly broad nor reified and narrow. Instead, it emphasises the social, dynamic,
purpose and interest driven, mediat(is)ed and diachronic dimensions of the concept, which is also closely linked with other ‘moments’ (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999) such as power and discourse (whether one group ends up being dominated, exploited or otherwise). Therefore, once articulated, ideology can have potential discursive ramifications and can (at least partially) be gauged and judged by its discursive effects. As the corpus-based findings have illustrated, such a definition has proven useful and, I would argue, adequate. The strong focus on the potential goals, interests and purposes as a defining feature of ‘ideology’ in this study manifests itself in the interpreters’ institutional alignment to strengthen China’s ideological discourse and official positions and their discursive (re)construction of Beijing’s image in front of the international audience. Also, this definition has taken into account the increasingly mediat(is)ed nature of ideology in recent decades, as this study has shown in a political and institutional setting (on TV, by the interpreter and subsequently on various media outlets and platforms).

6.4 Scholarly Contributions

Interdisciplinary in nature, this corpus-based CDA study has, first and foremost, contributed to interpreting studies (IS). Representing a typical observational study based on the distinction made by Gile (1998) between the observational and experimental strands in IS, this project has treated the interpreting product as discourse and China’s international voice that is capable of effecting change in its own right. Focusing on discursive effect, this study has contributed to a growing body of product-oriented research in interpreting studies (Beaton-Thome 2010; 2013; Schöffner 2012; Wadensjö 2001; Wang & Feng 2018). More specifically, following the so-called ‘cultural turn’ (Cronin 2002) in IS, this study has explored issues of power and ideology in interpreting and highlighted that interpreting is a social practice with various sociopolitical dimensions and even international ramifications, rather than purely a closed and self-contained practice.

Focusing on interpreters’ agency in a political and institutional setting, this study has illustrated the nature and scope of their institutional alignment and (re)construction of China’s discourse and image through various linguistic and discursive means. Such mediation leads to
a strengthening of Beijing’s official ideology and discourse, from the perspective of discursive effect. This points to the fact that the government-affiliated interpreters are active agents and important co-constructors of China’s political discursive articulation. Therefore, this study constitutes one of the first studies to further challenge the perception of interpreters being conduits or voice machines featuring no agency or subjectivity in political/conference interpreting, beyond a PSI setting.

The interpreters’ general strengthening of the institution’s overall ideological presence is in line with the findings of Sun’s (2012) and Beaton’s (2007) studies. Largely qualitative in nature, their studies have respectively examined China’s press conference interpreting (consecutive) during the SARS epidemic (drawing on Goffman’s participation framework) and simultaneous interpreting in the European Parliament setting (taking a discourse analytical approach). Relatively systematically, the present corpus-based CDA study has demonstrated a wide range of linguistic and discursive strategies (e.g. repetition, institutional self-referentiality, intensifiers, modality, the use of the present perfect (continuous) structures, foregrounding/backgrounding) and a number of thematic categories (e.g. China’s discourses on reform and opening-up, Hong Kong, Tibet, Taiwan, people and its current conditions) which are indicative of the interpreters’ discursive mediation.

In particular, given the highly political and sensitive topics covered at the premier’s conferences (in contrast to the more specialised one-off SARS press conferences featuring lower level officials), the current study has illustrated the interpreters’ (sometimes) strong ideological intervention and active safeguarding of their institutional employer when China’s core national interests are at stake (e.g. the repeated additions of the attitudinal epithet so-called and strong utterances such as ‘we can see clearly that on those two key issues that Dalai is very hypocritic [sic]’). This therefore constitutes an arguably more overt and strong type of interpreter mediation compared, for example, with that in the EU setting as demonstrated in Beaton’s studies (which is in many ways a more general strengthening of the EU’s institutional hegemony for instance through using conceptual metaphor strings and personal pronouns). This is because the government-affiliated interpreters in the Chinese
context have acted as mouthpieces of their institutional employer to defend Beijing’s interests and facilitate China’s global (diplomatic) engagement as evidenced in the official prescriptive metadiscourse and as the present study has shown empirically. As such, according to the categories mentioned in Wang (2018), this study, which engaged with power and ideology in interpreter-mediated political discourse, can be seen as taking a ‘sociocultural approach’ to interpreting studies out of four major categories and perspectives in IS research (the other three are a ‘cognitive approach’, a ‘linguistic and structural approach’ and a ‘pragmatic and communicative approach’). This corpus-based CDA study also represents a solid contribution to the relatively nascent area referred to as ‘critical translation studies’ (Hu & Meng 2017; Wang & Feng 2018), an area which explores the interaction between translation and ideology through integrating the methodological strengths of descriptive translation studies and critical discourse analysis (CDA).

Furthermore, this corpus-based CDA study has also contributed greatly to the growing area of corpus-based interpreting studies (CIS), which came as an offshoot (Shlesinger 1998) of the considerably more developed corpus-based translation studies pioneered by Mona Baker in the early 1990s (cf. Baker 1993; Laviosa 1998; Olohan 2004). Now approximately 20 years since Shlesinger’s seminal paper, although CIS is rapidly coming of age as a research paradigm, it notably is still faced with various challenges. These include the laborious and time-consuming nature of data collection and preparation, and the fact that it sometimes might still be considered a ‘cottage industry’ (Setton 2011: 38) featuring the labour of individual researchers in a ‘do-it-yourself and keep-it-for-yourself’ fashion (Bendazzoli 2018: 7), despite signs of increasingly coordinated efforts by researchers within universities and research institutes (e.g. the FOOTIE corpus created at the UNINT University in Rome, the EPIC corpus developed at the University of Bologna, and the EPICG corpus from the University of Ghent). Nevertheless, benefitting from a large corpus (20 years) containing naturally occurring language from real-life event (as opposed to transcripts of interpreters’ performance in an artificial and controlled experimental setting), this study of the interpreters’ discursive mediation has taken CIS forward by examining the under-explored issues of power and ideology and through making use of the technological affordances of various corpus
linguistics tools and functions (concordancing, Kwic sorting, frequency list, collocates tool etc.). This is particularly significant considering that early researchers in CIS have traditionally carried out more manual analyses based on a relatively small interpreting corpus without taking advantage of computational linguistics or corpus linguistics methods (Bendazzoli and Sandrelli 2009). The adoption of a CDA approach in CIS has also responded to the call by Setton (2011: 66) that CIS ‘need not compete with other methodologies but may usefully be combined with’ various methodological approaches.

Interestingly, the study has examined the interpreters’ varying levels of mediation as corresponding to major sociopolitical changes diachronically across the three administrations (e.g. the use of we, items such as reform*/restructur* and econom*, so-called, our people, and high-modality verb must). More importantly, this study has highlighted the potentially far-reaching discursive impact of interpreter mediation on a global scale beyond the immediate hic-et-nunc setting of the press conference hall (e.g. the interpreting product is re-mediatised by various international media outlets) thanks to technological developments (Strowe 2013). As such, this product-oriented study has contributed to a deeper understanding of interpreter agency and, ultimately, to the existing accounts of the role played by political and diplomatic translators and interpreters over time (cf. Delisle & Woodsworth 2012; Roland 1999).

Regarding its theoretical and methodological contributions, this mixed-methods corpus-based CDA approach, described as a ‘useful methodological synergy’ (Baker et al. 2008) in monolingual discourse analysis, has enabled me to, in a relatively systematic way, engage with both the interpreters’ mediation of different themes and topics and their mediation and employment of various linguistic categories irrespective of the propositional content involved. Given the range of issues and categories examined, this study constitutes one of the first attempts to develop this corpus-based CDA approach in investigating the interpreters’ agency and ideological mediation with some systematicity. It therefore makes a solid contribution to the application of the approach in bilingual/multilingual discursive communication and the critical comparison of languages. Broadly speaking, it also contributes to the approach of
Corpus-assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) (Partington 2006; Partington et al. 2013; Partington 2017).

What is more, traditionally, monolingual CDA has focused on the discursive articulations of various sociopolitical actors within relatively closed circles (e.g. certain political and religious groups, geographic regions or professions). This study has contributed to CDA through illustrating how the discourse of China as one nation state can impact and contribute to the broader international discourse production/dissemination and knowledge construction through interpretation. On a related note, whilst China’s (interpreted) discourse is inevitably ideological and manipulative in nature, it represents in itself the English voice of the world’s largest developing country and thus a force of resistance to counter and challenge the dominant and naturalised hegemonic discourse in the West. As such, interestingly, in keeping with CDA’s overarching emancipatory and empowering agenda, this study has shown how ideologically motivated discursive articulation can in itself play a part in challenging another more dominant ideological discourse and possibly effect change as a result. Regarding its contribution to corpus linguistics (CL), despite the practical difficulties involved (cf. Section 6.3), this study represents a modest attempt to engage with the actual discourse and contents (e.g. ideologically salient patterns on the concordance lines) cross linguistically beyond single lexical items and (semi-) fixed structures (e.g. cohesive devices such as for example, therefore and so that) as the units of analysis.

Going beyond interpreting studies, CDA and corpus linguistics, this interdisciplinary study has also demonstrated relevance to political and social sciences, Chinese studies and communication/media studies. Traditionally, researchers in political science and Chinese studies have focused on various political systems, government policies and positions, activities and the role of important powerful actors (e.g. countries, political parties and leaders) in legitimating themselves and effecting change (cf. Fewsmith 2010; Wang 1994). Following the linguistic and discursive turn in the social and political sciences (cf. Carver 2002; Onuf 1989; Shapiro 1984), this corpus-based CDA study has highlighted the vital role of interpreting in conveying a country’s official policies and ideological positions,
contributing to a government’s institutional hegemony, helping further manufacture consent, and in legitimating its dominant leadership position and sustained rule. From this perspective, this study contributes to a growing body of research taking corpus approaches to social sciences/CASS (cf. Baker et al., 2008; Baker et al., 2013). This area helps inject fresh perspectives into such topics as politics, international relations, gender, the discursive representations of various sociopolitical groups (e.g. immigrants, the LGBT community, and different religious and ethnic groups).

Similarly, in communication, journalism and media studies, scholars have explored aspects of journalistic and communicative practices of various genres and in different settings (cf. Clayman & Heritage 2002; Drew & Heritage 1992; Eriksson & Östman 2013). In recent years, while China’s political press conferences have been increasingly examined, attention so far has largely been paid to the two-way interactions between the politicians and journalists (cf. Wu & Zhao 2016) and the various aspects (e.g. institutionalisation and structure) of the communicative practice per se (Yi & Chang 2012; Yi 2016). As such, this study has clearly contributed to communication and media studies by highlighting the indispensable yet often ignored role of interpreting in the political discursive communication process. As illustrated in this study, the interpreters’ institutional alignment and discursive (re)construction of China’s image have greatly facilitated the communication of China’s discursive formation (official positions and policies). These therefore point to the vital importance of the interpreter-mediated communicative practice as a pivotal instrument in conveying China’s voice and projecting Beijing’s image internationally.

This seems particularly the case as Beijing is increasingly focused on its soft power and discursive power in the international arena, which is evidenced in the official slogan ‘tell the China story well, spread the Chinese voice well’ (Jianghao Zhongguo Gushi, Chuanbohao Zhongguo Shengyin) put forward in recent years. From this perspective, the government-affiliated interpreters have served as vital (re)tellers of China’s story to an international audience and contributed to China’s discursive communication on a global scale. As such, interpreter-mediated communication can be viewed as of particular relevance
considering the increasingly mediat(is)ed and (re)mediat(is)ed world we live in and the fact that the interpretation (into English) often represents an important starting point in the entire global news and knowledge production, dissemination and circulation processes.

6.5 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This corpus-based CDA analysis constitutes a relatively systematic attempt to study interpreters’ agency and ideological mediation. Despite the contributions of the current research project, it inevitably has its limitations. This section reflects on its limitations and highlights some avenues for future research.

First and foremost, featuring the presence of the Chinese premier (ranked 2\textsuperscript{nd} in China’s political hierarchy), the Premier-Meets-the-Press conferences are arguably the most high-profile sessions of their kind, which have attracted widespread international media attention. However, these are not the only press conferences in mainland China. For a more holistic picture, it might be useful to further increase the corpus size and include other less high-profile press conference sessions featuring for example the foreign minister, commerce minister or environmental protection minister. Also, the findings of the study are only valid within the span of the CE-PolitDisCorp press conference data examined (1998-2017). Just as ideology is subject to constant negotiation and historical (re)definition, China’s discursive formulations and official policies and positions are also likely to undergo changes over time. This highlights the future need to further enlarge the corpus so that the interpreters’ agency can be explored from a diachronic perspective accordingly as China’s official discourses and positions change.

Notably, each subcategory examined in this study could potentially have been investigated in itself as a doctoral project. However, given the aims of this study and the various limits and constraints (e.g. time and word limit), each subcategory has only been examined to the extent that the research questions are sufficiently addressed. The subcategories examined in this study can be viewed as some of the ‘critical points’ (Munday 2012) where the interpreters’ level of mediation is most salient in the negotiated process, that is, political interpreting...
(issues relating to China’s core national interests such as Taiwan and Tibet, China’s reform and opening-up discourse, China’s discourse on people and modality etc.). Yet, given the limited space and time, the analysis is by no means comprehensive, as, admittedly, the interpreters’ agency might manifest itself in other ways. Therefore, it might be interesting to explore other discourses and themes such as international relations (e.g. China’s bilateral ties with Japan, Russia and the US, China’s official positions on Syria and the Korean peninsula and China’s discourse on Africa) and domestic topics such as corruption, China’s countryside and policies on farming and the farmers as well as China’s national defense and military development. These promise to add further insights to our understanding of the interpreters’ agency.

Apart from these themes, it would be of interest to investigate other linguistic categories, for instance, the interpreters’ employment of metadiscourse (e.g. the fact that, in fact, actually, in reality, indeed, really and as a matter of fact) and see how this might help strengthen China’s discourse and (re)construct China’s image. An initial examination in the corpus data shows that the interpreters tend to add various metadiscursive expressions (cf. Hyland 1998; Hyland 2005; Jiang & Hyland 2016) semantically related to fact, truth and reality. Examples of this are: (1) ‘A very important contributing factor (to China’s remarkable achievements) is the fact that we have always upheld unity of the Party and safeguarded social and political stability’ (2004); (2) ‘I was deeply impressed by the fact that Hong Kong was brimming with vitality under One Country, Two Systems’ (2013); (3) ‘Now the main problems in China-Japan relations lie in the fact that some leaders in Japan keep on visiting the Yasukuni Shrine’ (2004); (4) ‘You also asked about hacker attacks. This is a worldwide problem. And in fact, China itself is a main target of such attacks’ (2013). The interpreters’ repeated additions of these metadiscursive expressions enhance the truth value of the government’s claims in English, thereby adding an extra layer of authority and factualness to its justificatory discourse and (re)constructing an image of Beijing being truthful. This seems particularly salient given that political discourse is essentially about presenting a certain desired version of truth, fact and reality.
Also, while this study has pointed to general trends of the interpreters’ agency, it is worth noting that there are different dimensions to the corpus data. For example, it would be interesting to explore the data from a multimodal perspective and see how the interpreters might harness the various multisemiotic resources (facial expressions, voice volume, pitch and body language etc.) in aligning institutionally and strengthening Beijing’s discourse, or otherwise. Similarly, it would be interesting to approach the data from the perspective of gender and see how male and female interpreters might mediate China’s discourse differently. Also, a relevant direction for future research is to track and account for each individual interpreter’s performance and investigate their differences in style over time.

Beyond the main body of the corpus data (the premier’s Chinese originals and English interpretations), the section involving the interpreters’ rendering of journalists’ challenging and face-threatening questions seems particularly dynamic, negotiated and multivoiced in nature, featuring different voices and ideological beliefs. Therefore, it would be interesting to explore the interpreters’ ideological mediation and level of alignment in interpreting journalists’ questions. An initial examination does indeed suggest that the interpreters tend to align predominantly with the government’s official stances and positions and safeguard the face and image of Beijing when located at the interface between the Chinese government and the journalists through various linguistic and discursive means (e.g. foregrounding the positive elements about the government in journalists’ questions while downplaying the sensitive and face-threatening elements through ideologically salient omissions or hedges). As such, critical analysis on this particular section (possibly in a manual manner) promises to further complement the study and lead to more confident claims.

Of course, the corpus data could be used to explore other aspects of interpreting and interpreters based on different research questions. For example, it is found that the interpreters tend to demonstrate (increased) institutional alignment through, for instance, the increased production of self-referential items (e.g. the various forms of the first-person plural ‘we’, China/Chinese and government) as well as lexical items essential to China’s reform and opening-up discourse (e.g. reform*, econom* and develop*). Explicitation has been
identified as one of the common features in translation, which is the tendency for translators to ‘spell things out rather than leave them implicit’ (Baker 1996: 180). Studies on explicitation have so far focused on the optional reporting that (Olohan and Baker 2000), conjunctions (Chen 2004) and connectives (Chen 2006) in written translation and more recently on consecutive interpreting (Tang 2018). It would be interesting to explore whether the interpreters’ increased production of important items in this study might be a relatively common feature in interpreting and constitute a case of explicitation at a lexical level (which cuts across different modes and languages).

As a source of future study, it also seems interesting to explore the interpreters’ agency in the Chinese context from a Bourdieusian perspective to complement the CDA analysis. Initial observation seems to suggest that the interpreters’ agency and mediation can be profitably explained using Bourdieu’s core concepts habitus, field, capital and doxa (1977; 1990). That is, such continuous socialisation processes as the government interpreters’ initial selection, recruitment and training have made them gradually internalise the various habitualised institutional practices, subscribe to the government’s official discourses and ideological positions, and conform to the doxa (or the unspoken ‘rules of the game’) in the field of political interpreting in China. As such, aligning with the Chinese government and adequately following the doxa have gradually become part of the interpreters’ habitus, which can afford them myriad forms of capital (financial, symbolic, cultural and social). These entail being closely associated with China’s top leadership and other important persons (e.g. global business leaders and foreign heads of state) and the promotion opportunities to move up the hierarchical ladder institutionally as China’s future diplomats and politicians. This is not to mention the benefits of widespread social recognition and the quasi-celebrity status they enjoy as people’s role models and patriots fighting at the forefront of the motherland’s diplomatic work (receiving widespread public attention and getting invited to give lectures and talks at universities etc.). For example, senior interpreter Ms Zhang Lu with the Department of Translation and Interpretation has been invited to give public lectures about China’s diplomatic interpreting as guest speaker at the Beijing International Studies University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, amongst other universities.
Failing to live up to the expected standard or seeking to openly question or challenge the official doxa (an act termed by Bourdieu as ‘heterodoxy’) may threaten the field (Bourdieu 1977: 159) of China’s political and diplomatic interpreting and jeopardise China’s interests. Perhaps most importantly, failing to show allegiance, the government interpreters, as individuals, risk forfeiting all the capital associated with their privileged position and can in all likelihood be removed from the foreign ministry, if not severely punished. From this perspective, there exists a symbiotic two-way relationship between the interpreters and their institutional employer. That is, the government seems to rely on the interpreters to convey its message in the desired manner and have China’s voice heard globally, whereas the interpreters need the government both to gain a variety of capitals and for their very survival at the very least. This might tentatively explain the interpreters’ (active) institutional alignment and (re)construction of the government’s image, thus offering additional sociological insights into their mediation.

On a final note, I would like to highlight a few things relating to methodology. It is worth noting that, as with most studies in CDA and corpus linguistics, attention in this study has focused on naturally occurring language use in the form of transcription. While the corpus-based CDA approach has proven powerful in identifying the interplay of power and ideologies enacted in discourse, this approach certainly has its limitations. An issue to bear in mind is the interpreters’ command of language and the quality of their output. Methodologically, the reliance on transcribed data as the ‘product’ seems to assume that the speakers (e.g. the Chinese premiers and interpreters) are ideal individuals with a next-to-perfect command of their respective languages and are able to express precisely what is on their minds error-free. Interestingly, in real-life situations, although the government-affiliated interpreters are highly proficient users of both languages and arguably represent China’s interpreting at the highest possible level, their linguistic output can on rare occasions involve uncommon vocabulary and their interpreting product is not always free from (grammatical) mistakes. Examples of this are: ‘their hypocritie lies cannot cover the ironclad facts’ (2008) and ‘the Chinese people have already rose and we have already stood up’ (2000). While these occasional minor lapses do not affect the results of my study, it is at
least something to bear in mind.

Additionally, the consecutively interpreted nature of the press conferences means that there are complicated processes in the actual interpreting (listening comprehension, note-taking, reading from the notes and speech production etc.). As such, the predominantly product-oriented approach focusing on discursive effect does not adequately answer questions regarding the interpreters’ discursive mediation from a process-oriented perspective. That is, the (discourse) analytical approach has proven adequate in indicating the ‘if’, ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions relating to the government-affiliated interpreters’ ideological alignment and discursive (re)construction. However, although the overall scenario might be tentatively explained using Bourdieu’s core concepts habitus, field, doxa and capital as discussed above, the corpus-based CDA method *per se* cannot always provide the full picture in terms of why they made the micro-level choices they made in the interpreting process. As observed by Straniero Sergio & Falbo (2012: 22), ‘corpora findings may tell us how translators translate, but not why they translate the way they do’. As such, an ethnographic approach or an interview with the interpreters would be highly useful to gain a fuller picture of their agency (if they could still accurately recall their decisions made several years ago).

This, however, is difficult to materialise given the sensitive nature of political interpreting in the highly institutional setting and the fact that the interpreters are subject to rigorous routine training and need to conduct various high-level interpreting tasks (e.g. political press conferences, state visits and diplomatic trips abroad). Interestingly, some of them are no longer interpreters and have further progressed in their careers as China’s diplomats, politicians and government officials. For example, Mr Fei Shengchao who had interpreted for the premier’s press conferences (2006-2009) has later served as political counsellor of the Chinese Embassy to the Republic of Cyprus and deputy director-general of China Foreign Ministry’s Department of Translation and Interpretation. Nevertheless, this is at least something worth considering as a source for future research.
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## Appendix 1: Composition of Each Year’s Press Conference Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Premier</th>
<th>Chinese ST/English TT (tokens)</th>
<th>ST+TT (tokens)</th>
<th>Interpreter</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Zhu Rongji</td>
<td>6402/5296</td>
<td>11698</td>
<td>Zhu Tong</td>
<td>1h 23m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Zhu Rongji</td>
<td>6408/5170</td>
<td>11578</td>
<td>Zhu Tong</td>
<td>1h 25m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Zhu Rongji</td>
<td>6524/6984</td>
<td>13508</td>
<td>Xu Hui</td>
<td>1h 39m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Zhu Rongji</td>
<td>9924/8269</td>
<td>18193</td>
<td>Zhang Jianmin</td>
<td>1h 03m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Zhu Rongji</td>
<td>6155/4789</td>
<td>10944</td>
<td>Zhang Jianmin</td>
<td>1h 15m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Wen Jiabao</td>
<td>8540/6832</td>
<td>15372</td>
<td>Zhang Jianmin</td>
<td>1h 50m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Wen Jiabao</td>
<td>7199/6056</td>
<td>13255</td>
<td>Dai Qingli</td>
<td>1h 47m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Wen Jiabao</td>
<td>6937/5553</td>
<td>12490</td>
<td>Lei Ning</td>
<td>1h 03m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Wen Jiabao</td>
<td>9360/7488</td>
<td>16848</td>
<td>Fei Shengchao</td>
<td>2h 09m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Wen Jiabao</td>
<td>6564/6624</td>
<td>13188</td>
<td>Fei Shengchao</td>
<td>1h 56m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Wen Jiabao</td>
<td>10201/8161</td>
<td>18362</td>
<td>Fei Shengchao</td>
<td>2h 21m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Wen Jiabao</td>
<td>8181/7360</td>
<td>15541</td>
<td>Fei Shengchao</td>
<td>2h 22m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Wen Jiabao</td>
<td>9419/7535</td>
<td>16954</td>
<td>Zhang Lu</td>
<td>2h 20m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Wen Jiabao</td>
<td>10433/8347</td>
<td>18780</td>
<td>Zhang Lu</td>
<td>2h 41m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Wen Jiabao</td>
<td>9311/7707</td>
<td>17018</td>
<td>Zhang Lu</td>
<td>3h 03m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Li Keqiang</td>
<td>8200/6362</td>
<td>14562</td>
<td>Sun Ning</td>
<td>1h 48m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Li Keqiang</td>
<td>8878/6832</td>
<td>15710</td>
<td>Zhang Lu</td>
<td>1h 49m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Li Keqiang</td>
<td>10067/8053</td>
<td>18120</td>
<td>Zhang Lu</td>
<td>1h 25m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Li Keqiang</td>
<td>10173/8139</td>
<td>18312</td>
<td>Zhang Lu</td>
<td>2h 08m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Li Keqiang</td>
<td>11384/9107</td>
<td>20491</td>
<td>Zhang Lu</td>
<td>2h 15m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>170260/140664</td>
<td>310924</td>
<td></td>
<td>37h 42m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 2: Breakdown of Each Year’s Conference by Media Outlet and Topic

**1998 Premier Zhu Rongji** (Interpreted by Zhu Tong; Duration 01:23:00)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Agencies</th>
<th>Topics Covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TIME magazine (US)</td>
<td>The premier’s personal opinion on the democratic system of electing leaders at a village level and beyond at a national level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCTV (mainland China)</td>
<td>The most pressing and challenging issues; the premier’s style of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Monde (France)</td>
<td>State-owned enterprise reform in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVB (Hong Kong)</td>
<td>Beijing’s position on the 4th June incident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayak (Russia)</td>
<td>Policy towards China-Russia relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix TV (Hong Kong)</td>
<td>Beijing’s measures in helping Hong Kong tackle economic issues; the premier’s personal experience in the journey of China’s reforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikkei Shimbun (Japan)</td>
<td>Asian financial crisis; financial system reform; convertibility of RMB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xinhua News Agency (mainland China)</td>
<td>Potential of China’s market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Times (UK)</td>
<td>China’s entry into the WTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China Times (Taiwan)</td>
<td>Economic and trade ties between mainland China and Taiwan; Mr Koo Chen-fu’s visit to the mainland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsweek (US)</td>
<td>The influence of the premier’s previous experience on his political outlook now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press Trust India (India)</td>
<td>The Chinese premier’s message to the newly elected Indian prime minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Agencies</td>
<td>Topics Covered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il Sole 24 (Italy)</td>
<td>Possibility of the RMB becoming a major currency in the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCTV (mainland China)</td>
<td>The premier’s reflections on and assessment of the past year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Magazine (US)</td>
<td>Anti-China sentiments in Washington and the premier’s reactions to various accusations against Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan’s Human Rights News Agency (Taiwan)</td>
<td>China’s macro control efforts and the premier’s views on human rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyodo News (Japan)</td>
<td>TMD and China-Japan relations; credit ratings for China; the premier’s first visit to Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Paper (Russia)</td>
<td>Possibility of China and Russia getting closer to each other in international affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix TV (Hong Kong)</td>
<td>Increasing competition in China’s telecommunications sector to lower fees and improve services; opening up RMB business to foreign banks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Times (UK)</td>
<td>Chances of China and the US reaching an agreement on China’s entry into the WTO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2000 Premier Zhu Rongji (Interpreted by Xu Hui; Duration 01:39:00)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Agencies</th>
<th>Topics Covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xinhua News Agency (mainland China)</td>
<td>Development of China’s west</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix TV (Hong Kong)</td>
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2014 **Premier Li Keqiang** (Interpreted by **Zhang Lu**; Duration: 01:49:00)

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