

Juan Hu (2022) *Hedges in Chinese-English Conference Interpreting: A Corpus-based Discourse Analysis of Interpreters' Role Deviation*, Singapore: Springer, 129pp. ISBN: 978-981-19-1441-6 (pbk), € 44.99.

The complexity of the interpreters' role is like a multi-faceted diamond that has attracted many scholars to grind it since its inception, marked by R. Bruce W. Anderson's groundbreaking paper *Perspectives on the Role of Interpreter* in 1976. In the past 46 years, conceptual discussions on the name and nature of interpreters' role evolved from negative metaphors such as parrots, conduits, encoders, and decoders, to cultural brokers, communication-facilitator, and multi-party agents. Nevertheless, most of the above-mentioned fit into community settings. In conference settings, due to the ingrained impression of the disembodied presence of interpreters in solemn and formal press conferences, conference interpreters' prescriptive role and absolute invisibility have been enshrined as professional ethics and norm for decades.

Against this backdrop, the book *Hedges in Chinese-English Conference Interpreting: A Corpus-based Discourse Analysis of Interpreters' Role Deviation*, arguing for conference interpreters' role deviation, interestingly kindles t curiosity. This book, written by Juan Hu, an interpreting teacher and researcher from China, specializing in interpreters' roles for nearly a decade, adopted a Python-assisted corpus method, took hedges as the intervening point to delve into interpreters' roles and observed how interpreters had dealt with hedges through the lens of role theory. It is indubitably a creative and courageous attempt at deconstructing absolute invisibility, constructing a theoretical and analytical framework for interpreters' roles based on role theory in sociology, and contributing a methodological synergy with corpus-based discourse analysis and Python programming. It has every reason to be read by researchers or interpreting practitioners who want to follow the latest research trends on this topic.

This volume comprises seven chapters, sequentially delving into the interpreters' role from theoretical, methodological, and empirical aspects. Chapter 1 opens with a brief introduction to the study in this book. Drawing upon theories from sociology,

pragmatics, and cognitive linguistics, this study is an interdisciplinary corpus-based study exploring interpreters' role deviation in interpreting at Chinese government press conferences, with hedges as the intervening point. Next, the author moves to the research impetuses and concisely explains why study interpreters' role and role deviation in conference interpreting, why take hedges as the intervening point to delve into interpreters' role and why select press conferences held by the Chinese government as data source. The rest of this book revolves around three questions: Why can interpreters' roles be perceived through the use of hedges? What are the hedges' distribution and linguistic regularity in Chinese and English corpus? Can role deviation of conference interpreters be perceived using hedges in the corpus?

Chapter 2 presents us with a thorough, albeit not complete, literature review. Given that in this research, the interpreters' role is observed via the use of hedges in a self-built conference interpreting corpus, the review covers three major components: interpreters' role in interpreting studies, hedges in linguistics, translation, and interpreting, and then an overview on studies on interpreters' role through the corpus. Arguably, the chief concerns of theoretical studies are interpreters' role construct and functions, which can be considered as the name and nature of the interpreters' role. The empirical review of the interpreters' role mainly points out the methodological deficiencies, especially the inadequacy of case-based discourse analysis.

Chapter 3 is an instrumental and enlightening part for interpreting researchers and practitioners, because it offers a self-designed theoretical and analytical framework, especially addressing the issue of the interpreters' role. As we all know, when touching upon interpreters' roles, we rarely find any relevant systematic and referential theoretical framework, perhaps due to the complexity and abstractness of role studies. Nevertheless, "theory gives us concepts, provides basic assumptions, directs us to the important questions, and suggests ways to make sense of data" (Neuman, 2000: 60). Theoretical and analytical framework for role deviation in this volume is established on role theory in sociology, to be specific, role behavior and role expectation. This study's

empirical investigation and qualitative analysis are operationalized on this theoretical and analytical framework.

In Chapter 4, the author shows us a fascinating ‘toolkit’: combining the corpus method and Python monogramming. As mentioned by the author, the integration of and interplay between corpus and Python will be a new technical breakthrough in corpus interpreting studies, particularly when looking at interpreters’ roles. Compared with corpus retrieval tools such as Paraconc, Antconc, and Wordsmith, Python has more robust functions in processing natural language texts, pictures, corpus exploration, machine translation, and language emotional analysis. Admittedly, it is a courageous and innovative attempt to use Python in data mining of the frequency and distribution of hedges. Aside from research tools, this chapter covers corpus design and structure, corpus building processes such as transcription, segmentation, annotation, parallel alignment, and Python-coding statistics.

In Chapter 5 and 6, this study really hits its stride. Chapter 5 presents us with corpus-based quantitative analysis on hedges distribution, shifting and shifting regularities. By paired-sample T tests on hedges between 30 transcribed Chinese texts and 30 transcribed English texts, it is demonstrated that there is no significant difference between adapters in the Chinese and English corpus; whereas statistical differences still exist respectively between rounders (C-E), plausibility shields (C-E), and attribution shields (C-E). To take a step further, hedge shifting does occur when hedges are rendered from Chinese to English in the interpreting process. Furthermore, hedge shifting occurs predominately in the aspects of semantic functions and pragmatic functions. In other words, conference interpreters’ role is more than an invisible “middle man” or “conduit.” Actually, conference interpreters silently and secretively step out of their role boundaries to perform some non-prescriptive roles. Chapter 6 moves us into qualitative discourse analysis on conference interpreters’ role deviation in hedges shifting. First based on the self-built theoretical and analytical framework for role deviation, the author ascertains the existence of role deviation of conference

interpreters according to the statistical results of hedges; then, the author exemplifies what roles conference interpreters play in role deviation, that is, conference interpreters have performed as keepers of semantic information through adapters and rounders, regulators of pragmatic tone through plausibility shields, distributors of discourse responsibility through attribution shields and controllers of cognitive resources through adapters.

In the final chapter, this volume concludes that interpreters' role deviation can be perceived using hedges in Chinese government conference interpreting. In addition, the author also briefs her major findings and contributions and acknowledges the limitations of this study.

Arguably, this volume is thought-provoking and sorely needed, especially in the studies on interpreters' roles. As Gile (2001) proposes, research contribution can take three forms: empirical, conceptual (theoretical), and methodological. This study makes considerable contributions on all three levels. At the empirical level, this research reports a set of data on hedges in Chinese-English conference interpreting, which is believed to further the debates over interpreters' role in future studies. The conceptual contributions mainly lie in demonstrating the role deviation of conference interpreters and establishing a theoretical and analytic framework for role analysis. The synergy between corpus-based discourse analysis and the programming language Python should be a courageous and creative attempt in methodology.

Regrettably, in section 3.2.1, the author cannot clearly and convincingly explain why interpreters' roles can be perceived through using hedges. Even though the author tries to make logical reasoning from hedges distribution regularity to semantic and pragmatic function of hedges, then to potential discourse intention for interpreters, and finally to interpreters' role, it seems this part is not well argued and precisely reasoned. After all, expounding such interlocked logical relations from hedges to interpreters' roles is not easy, which requires the art and architecture of academic writing. Apart from this,

examples in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 involve many discourse analyses, from language choice to decision-making for interpreters. Regretfully, by only probing into the reasons why interpreters have made the decision to add, abridge, substitute, and equalize hedges through discourse analysis, the author still can't clearly explain it. It calls for cutting-edge technology, such as functional magnetic resonance image (fMRI), to assist us in finding the possible links between interpreters' language choice, cognitive effort, or pragmatic consideration in some experiments. The interaction among interpreters, interpreting products, and processes will hopefully be a newly emerging entry point into the burgeoning interdisciplinary research. Anyway, the flaw does not detract from the value of this book which stays true to its title. On the contrary, it pushes forward a small step for studies on interpreters' roles.

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Yeqing Yang

Department of English

Guizhou Normal University

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