# Applying Critical Cognitive Pragmatics to Translation Criticism: A Proximization analysis of The Translation of Chinese National Security Discourse

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***Abstract:*** *This study applies the theoretical framework of Proximization Theory, a model within Critical Cognitive Pragmatics, to the critical analysis of the translation of Chinese national security discourse. Drawing upon the STA model, the paper adopts a qualitative textual analysis method to examine the specific translation strategies, methods and techniques employed in reconstructing the discourse strategies of the source texts within the target texts, and examines the linguistic, social and cultural factors behind the achieved discursive effect through the use of various translation approaches. This study finds that while "literal translation" is most commonly used and generally effective in retaining discursive strategies, techniques like "shift" and "addition" often enhance the original effect, whereas variation and "liberal translation" yield mixed results. The findings advocate for a more nuanced and interdisciplinary approach to translation criticism, with implications for both theoretical advancement and the international communication of national narratives.*

***Keywords:*** *Proximization Theory, translation criticism, Chinese national security discourse, Critical Cognitive Pragmatics*

## I.        INTRODUCTION

As a form of official political discourse, national security discourse articulates security challenges and policy responses from the standpoint of state authorities. It embodies state ideology and serves an important role in shaping the national image. Its core function also lies in "persuasion and the construction of identification" (Xu Lin & Guan Wenjing, 2023:29). Therefore, the translation of national security discourse is not merely a matter of linguistic transfer; it also involves the cross-cultural transmission of the ideology and national image. Research in translation criticism of such discourse thus holds direct and practical significance for the international communication of national security policy and the construction of national image.

The interdisciplinary convergence of cognitive linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has engendered Critical Cognitive Pragmatics (CCP), representing one of the most recent perspectives within critical discourse studies (Hart, 2018; Zhang Hui & Zhang Tianwei, 2022: xviii). As a product of interdisciplinary integration, this research perspective is increasingly characterized by its transdisciplinary nature, with a steadily expanding range of discursive types and disciplines to which it is applied.

Against the backdrop of a perceived "bottleneck" and "loss of voice" in translation criticism (Liu Yunhong & Xu Jun, 2014:8), interdisciplinary borrowing offers a promising avenue for revitalizing the field (Wang Shuhuai, 2023:57). This study selects as its corpus the white papers *China's National Defense in the New Era* and *China's Fight Against Fentanyl-Related Substances*, along with relevant official press conference speeches. Employing the STA model in the theory of proximization from the field of CCP, it conducts a critical analysis of translation with the aim of introducing a new theoretical lens to translation criticism while also contributing to improvements in the quality of national security discourse translation.

## II.        LITERATURE REVIEW ON PROXIMIZATION THEORY

Drawing on Chilton's (2004) Discourse Space Theory, Piotr Cap (2005; 2006) proposed Proximization Theory (PT), which he has progressively refined in subsequent studies (2008; 2010a; 2010b; 2013; 2015; 2022). Over time, PT has developed into a relatively systematic and representative theoretical framework within the domain of CCP, constituting an innovative methodological perspective for discourse analysis. Cap (2013:3) conceptualizes "proximization" as a forced cognitive construal operation. Its function is to induce in the speaker and audience a perception that an external threat is progressively encroaching across spatial, temporal, and axiological (STA) dimensions towards them. This discursive strategy serves to heighten the addressees' sense of vulnerability to potential danger, thereby soliciting from the addressees legitimization for the preemptive measures proposed by the speaker. PT's capacity to pinpoint consistent quantifiable lexico-grammatical items associated with conceptual framing and strategic discourse use and to interpret dynamic interactions among agents in discourse from three dimensions endow it with significant explanatory strength, particularly in the analysis of critical political discourse.

As a theoretical model focused on how discourse constructs the proximity of threats to achieve persuasion and legitimization, PT has been widely applied in studies of diverse discourse genres from multiple disciplines, such as political discourse (Zhao Fengxiu & Song Bingbing, 2023; Yunyou Wang, 2024), media discourse (Zhou Bing, 2021; Yang Wenhui, 2023), immigration discourse (Cap, 2018; Wu Jianguo & Niu Zhenjun, 2018), health discourse (Ke Li & Xiaonan Gong, 2022), and multimodal discourse (Porto & Alonso Belmonte, 2025), etc., demonstrating its strong capacity and practical value.

Proximization Theory has recently been applied to translation studies to explore how translation reconstructs the source language's negative proximity across spatial, temporal, and axiological (STA) dimensions in the target language. There are three pioneering studies in China that have employed PT to analyze translation strategies in political and metaphorical discourse. Cao Jianmin (2021a) examined the translation of the discourse

on "a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind," revealing that English translations used more proximization strategies, particularly spatial and axiological proximization, Translation methods or technique such as amplification and free translation were found to intensify the proximization effect. However, limitations included a lack of inter-coder reliability and insufficient theoretical adaptation for translation analysis. Cao (2021b) analyzed Wang Yi's speech and found similar patterns and shared the same limitations. Li Tingting (2020) applied PT to metaphor translation analysis in China-US trade news, identifying metaphor-specific strategies linked to proximization dimensions. While innovative in connecting PT to metaphor translation, the study struggled with coherence between theoretical framework and practical analysis. Collectively, these studies demonstrate PT's theoretical value in translation research; however, their explanatory power remains underdeveloped due to limited engagement with the social and cognitive dimensions underlying ST-TT differences. This points to the need for more robust frameworks and methodologies for its effective application.

## III.    THE ORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.1 Theoretical Framework: The STA Model

Within the framework of PT, "proximization" and "legitimization" are identified as key conceptual pillars. On the one hand, "proximization" refers to a strategic cognitive-pragmatic discursive mechanism, in which peripheral entities (e.g., external threats, ideological antagonists) are symbolically construed as encroaching upon or affecting the deictic center (i.e., the speaker's and audience's shared space or values (Cap, 2013: 5). On the other hand, "legitimization", within a critical discourse studies and proximization framework, is the socio-linguistic process, in which a speaker discursively constructs their entitlement to be obeyed by an audience (Chilton, 2004). Cap (2013:58) summarized their relationship as "legitimization through proximization, proximization for legitimization." That is to say, proximization and legitimization exist in a mutually constitutive relationship, where each process fundamentally enables and is realized through the other. PT constitutes three dimensions, namely spatial, temporal, and axiological—the STA model, as illustrated in Fig. 1.
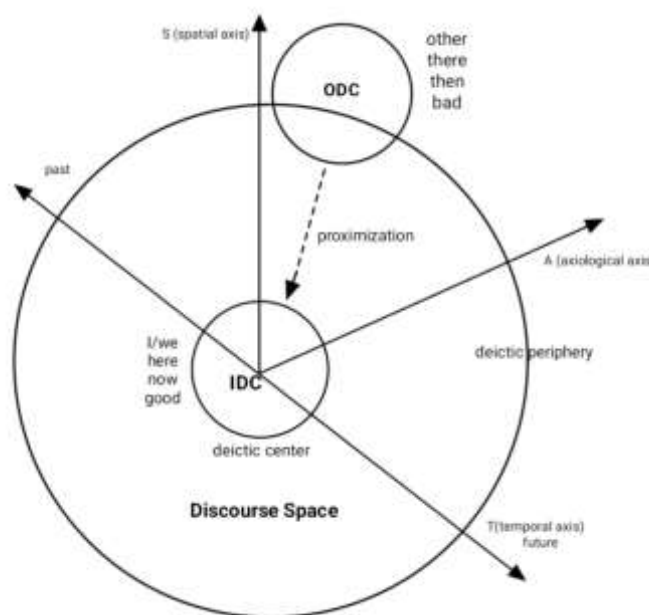
Figure 1. The STA model of Proximization

3.1.1 Spatial proximization

According to Cap (2013:74), Spatial proximization is a discursive strategy that forcibly construes peripheral entities in the Discourse Space (DS)—termed ODC entities, (outside-the-deictic-center)—as physically encroaching upon central entities in the DS—referred to as IDC entities (inside-the-deictic-center). This strategy involves fear appeals and negative other-presentation, which are ideally suited to solicit addressee's legitimization of the speaker's (pre-emptive) policies. To enhance the applicability of PT in translation studies, the lexico-grammatical categories of spatial proximization have been slightly modified, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The categories of lexico-grammatical markers in spatial proximization

| |
|---|
| 1. Noun phrases (NPs) and pronouns (Ps) construed as elements of the deictic center of the DS (IDCs). |
| 2. Noun phrases (NPs) and pronouns (Ps) construed as elements outside the deictic center of the DS (ODSs). |
| 3. Verb phrases (VPs) of motion and directionality construed as markers of movement of ODCs towards the deictic center. |
| 4. Verb phrases (VPs) of action construed as markers of impact of ODCs upon IDCs. |
| 5. Noun phrases (NPs) denoting abstract concepts construed as anticipations of impact of ODCs upon IDCs. |
| 6. Noun phrases (NPs) denoting abstract concepts construed as effects of impact of ODCs upon IDCs. |

3.1.2 Temporal proximization

Temporal proximization forcibly frames the contextual present moment ("now") as the deictic focal point on the cognitive timeline (Cap, 2013:85). This framing symbolically construes past actual events and future potential events as encroaching on IDC entities in "the present"—a discursive strategy that evokes in IDC entities traumatic memories and future worries, prompting them to adopt preemptive actions or accept the speaker's proposals to negate them. As shown in Table 2, two additional categories (No. 6 and 7) have been incorporated into the original lexico-grammatical framework of temporal proximization to better adapt PT to the analysis of Chinese discourse.

Table 2. The categories of lexico-grammatical markers in temporal proximization

| |
|---|
| 1. Noun phrases (NPs) involving indefinite descriptions construing ODC actual impact acts in alternative temporal frames. |
| 2. Discourse forms involving contrastive use of the simple past and the present perfect construing threatening future extending infinitely from a past instant. |
| 3. Noun phrases (NPs) involving nominalizations construing presupposition of conditions for ODC impact to arise anytime in the future. |
| 4. Verb phrases (VPs) involving modal auxiliaries construing conditions for ODC impact as existing continually between the now and the infinite future. |
| 5. Discourse forms involving parallel contrastive construals of oppositional and privileged futures extending from the now. |
| 6. Adjective or adverb phrases (APs) involving temporal dimension construing ODC's immeadiate or looming proximization. |
| 7. The use of continuous tense construed as empower the ODC entities actions with a dynamic sense. |

### 3.1.3 Axiological proximization

Axiological proximization is a forced construal of a mounting ideological conflict in the DS between "home values" of the IDC entities and the alien antagonistic values of the ODC entities. (Cap, 2013:94) The core function of this construal is to project that the fundamental value clash will inevitably, or at least potentially, culminate in a physical clash—the materialization of the ODC ideological threats within the IDC domain (Cap, 2010b:402), thereby "proximizing" the abstract danger. Table 3 shows

Table 3. The categories of lexico-grammatical markers in axiological proximization

| |
|---|
| 1. Noun phrases (NPs) construed as IDC positive values or values sets (ideologies). |
| 2. Noun phrases (NPs) construed as ODC negative values or values sets (ideologies). |
| 3. Discourse forms involving linear arrangement of lexico-grammatical phrases construing materialization in the IDC space of the ODC negative ideologies. |

**3.2 Analytical Framework**

The discourse system, also referred to as discourse practice, encompasses elements such as the discourse subject, discourse purpose, discourse space, and discourse strategies (Zhang Tianwei, 2016:28). In the context of proximization research in translation studies, the discourse space (demarcated by the dotted line) typically involves two or more discourse subjects: the original speaker and the translator. The discourse strategies employed by these subjects span three dimensions—spatial, temporal, and axiological—and are all aimed at achieving the ultimate discourse purpose: forced persuasion or legitimization.

Fig. 2 illustrates the *analytical framework for proximization analysis of translation*, which is adapted from Zhang Tianwei's (2016:28-29) model of relational elements within political discourse systems. First, the speaker engages in discursive practice within the discourse space, employing various proximization strategies to fulfill the intended discourse purpose, thereby producing the source text (ST). Next, the translator undertakes a construal operation on the ST— analyzing the speaker's intent and the discourse strategies employed— and subsequently selects appropriate translation strategies, methods, and techniques to render the source discourse in a way that achieves equivalent discourse effects and fulfills the same communicative purpose in the target text (TT). However, due to the translator's subjectivity, shaped by factors such as cultural background difference, ideological stance, chosen translation approaches, and translation purpose, the discourse strategies used in the TT may not fully align with those in the ST. As a result, the original discourse effect is not always preserved, but may be diminished or intensified in the TT. This variability constitutes the primary focus of the present study, as it reflects linguistics, cognitive, and sociocultural factors that hold significant research value.

Given the ongoing lack of consensus within translation studies regarding the classification and definition of translation strategies, methods, and techniques, this study adopts the framework proposed by Xiong Bing (2014) as an important basis for the proximization analysis of translation.
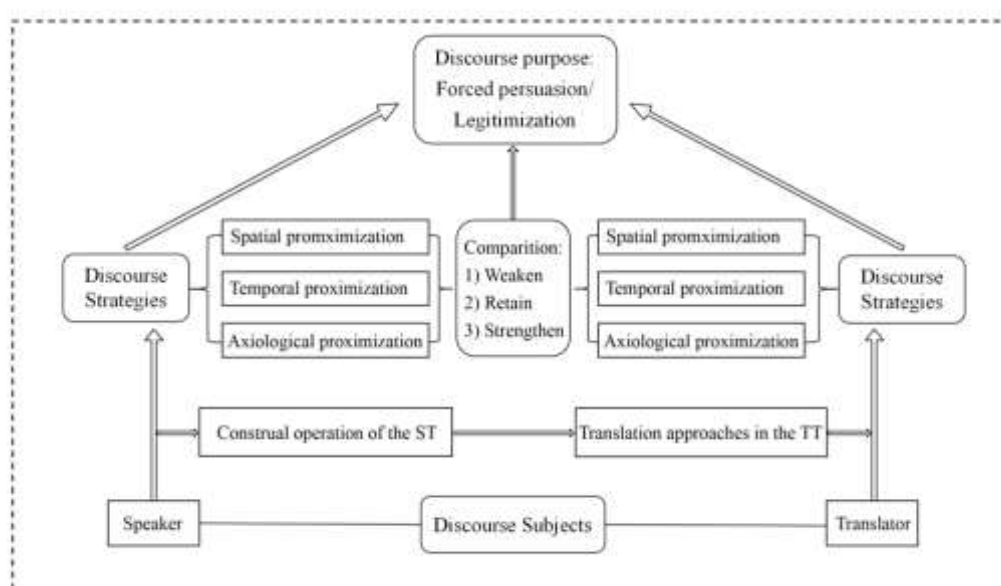
Figure 2. Analytical framework for proximization analysis of translation

## IV.      CASE STUDY

In this part, the selected excerpts from the corpus and their translations will be analyzed through the theoretical frameworks of proximization. The aim is to study the specific translation strategies, methods and techniques employed in reconstructing the discourse strategies of the ST within the TT, as well as to examine the linguistic, social and cultural factors behind the achieved discursive effect through the use of various translation approaches.

4.1 Critical Proximization Analysis of the Translation of National Security Discourse in Spatial Dimension

Example 1[1]

ST: **美国**[ODC1][2]强化亚太军事同盟，加大军事部署和干预力度，给**亚太安全**[IDC1]增添复杂因素[S-4]。**美国**[ODC1]在韩国部署**"萨德"反导系统**[ODC2]，严重破坏[S-4]**地区战略平衡**[IDC2]，严重损害[S-4]**地区国家战略安全利益**[IDC3]。**日本**[ODC3]调整军事安全政策，增加投入，谋求突破"战后体制"，军事外向性增强[S-3]。**澳大利亚**[ODC4]持续[T-6]巩固与**美国**[ODC1]的军事同盟，强化亚太地区军事参与力度[S-3]，试图在安全事务中发挥更大作用。

TT: **The US**[ODC1] is strengthening[T-7] its Asia-Pacific military alliances and reinforcing[T-7] military deployment and intervention[S-3], adding[T-7] complexity to **regional security**[IDC1]. The deployment of **the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system**[ODC2] in the Republic of Korea (ROK) by **the US**[ODC1] has severely undermined[S-4] **the regional strategic balance**[IDC2] and **the strategic security interests of regional countries**[IDC3] In an attempt to circumvent the post-war mechanism, **Japan**[ODC3] has adjusted its military and security policies and increased input accordingly, thus becoming more outward-looking in its military endeavors[S-3]. **Australia**[ODC4] continues to strengthen its military alliance with **the US**[ODC1] and its military engagement in the Asia-Pacific[S-3], seeking a bigger role in security affairs.

Example 1 is excerpted from a white paper titled *China's National Defense in the New Era*, which notes, in the context of the ST's broader discussion, that the Asia-Pacific security situation remains generally stable with regional hotspots and disputes yet to be resolved. Here, a series of US and its allies' military actions and attempts are seen as what generate hotspots and disputes in the region. Therefore, agents such as "the US", "THAAD system", "Japan" and "Australia" in the DS are marked as ODC entities encroaching physically on Asia-Pacific region, or more specifically China. In the ST, regarding to the US's military actions, the verbs used, "强化", "加

大" and "增添", are in their original forms and do not use a specific tense through any lexical or grammatical means. However, the present continuous tense is employed in the TT by using "shift translation" technique on the above-mentioned verbs "strengthening", "reinforcing" and "adding", which enhances the spatial proximization effect by adding a dynamic sense to the physical actions to make them more perceptible and imminent for the IDC entity. The other three lexico-grammatical items of spatial and temporal proximization in the ST are transplanted into the TT. Among them, "军事外向性增强" is translated into "becoming more outward-looking in its military endeavors" by applying "conversion translation". Although there are some variations in the part of speech during the translation process, the semantic and pragmatic sense of the original is preserved in the TT.

Example 2[3]

ST: **中国海外利益**[IDC1]面临[S-3]国际和地区动荡、恐怖主义、海盗活动等**现实威胁**[ODC1]，**驻外机构、海外企业及人员**[IDC2]多次遭到袭击[S-4]。**太空、网络安全威胁**[ODC2]日益[T-6]显现[s3]，自然灾害、重大疫情等**非传统安全问题**[ODC3]的危害上升[S-3]。

TT: **China's overseas interests**[IDC1] are endangered[S-4] by **immediate threats**[ODC1] such as international and regional turmoil, terrorism, and piracy. **Chinese diplomatic missions, enterprises and personnel**[IDC2] around the world have been attacked[S-4] on multiple occasions. **Threats to outer space and cyber security**[ODC2] loom large[S-3] and **the threat of non-traditional security issues**[ODC3] posed by natural disasters and major epidemics is on the rise[S-3].

Although there has been a notable increase in its comprehensive national strength and resilience to risks, China still faces diverse and complex security threats and challenges, home and abroad. Example 2 is mainly about Chinese overseas IDC entities being threatened physically by ODC entities from various areas. Such spatial proximization is intensified in the TT. Firstly, in the first sentence, the verb describing ODC entities' motion "面临" ("face" or "confront") is rendered into "(are) endangered" through the use of "variation translation", which is a much stronger expression that underlines the substantive harm of the threats posed by ODC entities than the static description of the existence of these threats in the ST; and the term "现实威胁" (literally, "actual threats") is translated as "immediate threats", producing a temporal proximization effect that makes the addressees intuitively perceive the threats not merely as a "distant possibility" but as "imminent risks" unfolding in the present. Secondly, the term "日益" in the second sentence means "day by day" or "gradually", and the word it modifies "显现" is equivalent to "appear" or "emerge". When combined, they generate a spatial proximization effect with temporal attributes. This semantic sense is represented by in the TT in a more intense way: using the phrase "loom large" to translate "显现" not only encompasses spatial and temporal dimensions, but also conveys a more prominent, aggressive and worrying undertone. The above translations utilize "variation" and "shift" as translation techniques to achieve a semantic enhancement in the TT. The enhancement effectively serves the discursive purpose of highlighting the severe threats and challenges confronting China's security, while legitimizing China's call to adjust its national defense policy.

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[3] Same with "1"

4.2 Critical Proximization Analysis of the Translation of National Security Discourse in Temporal Dimension

Example 3[4]

ST: **日本军国主义**[A-ODC]<u>曾</u>[T-2]给**中国和亚洲邻国**[IDC1]带来[S-3]<u>深重灾难</u>[S-6]。**日方**[ODC1]非但不认真反省，反而<u>再次表现出强军扩武的危险态势</u>[T-2;S-3]，大幅增加防卫预算，不断放宽武器出口限制，拼凑军事"小圈子"搞阵营对抗，甚至不时冒出修改"无核三原则"的杂音。**这些行径**[ODC2]<u>严重违背</u>[S-4]**日本"和平宪法"和"专守防卫"原则**[IDC2]，<u>严重破坏</u>[S-4]**战后国际秩序**[IDC3]，给**亚太地区和平安宁**[IDC4]带来[S-3]<u>重大挑战</u>[S-5]，<u>已引起</u>[S-4]**亚洲邻国和国际社会**[IDC5]<u>高度警惕和深切担忧</u>[S-5]。

TT: **Japanese militarism**[A-ODC] <u>once inflicted</u>[T-4] <u>profound suffering</u>[S-6] on **China and other Asian neighbors**[IDC1]. Instead of seriously reflecting on its past, **Japan**[ODC1] <u>is once again showing dangerous tendencies towards military expansion</u>[T-2;S-3], significantly increasing its defense budget, steadily loosening restrictions on arms exports, forming small military blocs to promote confrontation, and even suggesting revisions to its Three Non-Nuclear Principles. **These actions**[ODC2] <u>have gravely violated</u>[S-4] **Japan's pacifist constitution and its exclusively defense-oriented policy**[IDC2], <u>severely undermined</u>[S-4] **the post-war international order**[IDC3], and <u>posed</u>[S-4] <u>a serious challenge</u>[S-5] to **peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region**[IDC4]. They <u>have already triggered</u>[S-4] <u>deep concern and heightened vigilance</u>[S-5] among **neighboring Asian countries and the international community**[IDC5].

In World War II, fascist Japan invaded many East and Southeast Asian countries, wreaking havoc across these regions. The ST, with a contrastive use of the simple past tense and the present continuous tense, invokes this shared tragic memory in an attempt to bring the negative past to the speaker's present context, thereby arouse the addressees' fear of a potential recurrence of such catastrophe. Subsequently, the ST suggests that the ODC entity, having once inflicted suffering on IDCs, has shown no remorse or reflection on its past actions, instead exhibiting dispositions towards military expansion. These dangerous tendencies have already begun to manifest themselves (e.g., verbs marked as "S-4"), posing threats to IDC entities and sparking concerns among them. This rhetoric construes an "oppositional future" (Cap, 2022:748), in which another fascist Japan encroaching upon the IDC entities situated at "the present" on the time axis. To prevent such a negative future form befalling, therefore, the IDC entities must be vigilant and take preemptive measures. The discursive strategy is largely retained in the TT through "literal translation", with slight reinforcement achieved in two ways: first, by employing "variation translation" to translate "带给" (literally "bring") as "inflict", which carries a derogatory connotations; second, by applying the present continuous tense to highlight the ODC entity's ongoing harmful actions.

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[4] Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China (2025-07-16), 国防部新闻发言人蒋斌就日本政府 2025 年版《防卫白皮书》答记者问, URL: http://www.mod.gov.cn/gfbw/xwfyr/fyrthhdjzw/16397227.html (Access date: 2025-07-26); Chinese defense spokesperson comments on Japan's 2025 defense white paper, URL: http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/NewsRelease/16397269.html (Access date: 2025-07-26).

Example 4[5]

ST: 当前，**国际毒潮**[ODC1]持续泛滥[T-6;S-3]，**全球毒品种类、产量、滥用人员**[ODC2]不断增多[T-7; S-3]，对**人类生存发展**[IDC1]构成严重威胁[S-5]。近年来，**以芬太尼类物质为代表的合成毒品问题**[ODC3]来势凶猛[S-3]，给**国际社会**[IDC2]带来的危害[S-6]日趋严重[T-6]，给**全球毒品治理**[A-IDC]带来新挑战[S-5]。特别是一些国家因芬太尼失控引发严重社会问题深刻警示，如果对**芬太尼类物质**[ODC3]防范不严、管控不力，导致其泛滥蔓延，将严重危害[T-4]**公众健康**[IDC3]，影响**经济发展和社会稳定**[IDC4][T-5]。

TT: As **international drug abuse and crime**[ODC1] continue to expand[T-6;S-3], **the numbers of drug types, output, and abusers**[ODC2] are increasing[T-7; S-3], posing a grave threat[S-5] to **human life**[IDC1]. In recent years, **synthetic drugs such as fentanyl-related substances**[ODC3] have spread menacingly[T-2; S-3], doing increasing[T-6] harm[S-6] to **the international community**[IDC2] and presenting new challenges[S-5] to **global drug control**[A-IDC]. In particular, the serious social issues in some countries caused by the loss of control over the availability of fentanyl sound a dire warning—unless **fentanyl-related substances**[ODC3] are effectively monitored and controlled, they will spread and spiral[T-4], causing severe damage to **public health**[IDC3], hindering **economic development**[IDC4], and threatening **social stability**[IDC5; T-5].

The ST first indicates the growing drug problems, noting that their severe impact, past and present, on IDC entities extends from the past to the future (framed as "harms", "threats" and "challenges" in the ST) with the use of different time adverbials and tenses. It then constructs an "oppositional future" by employing a conditional structure ("如果") paired with the auxiliary verb "将" ("will"). In this future scenario, should the addressees persist in their inertia of failing to adopt the speaker's proposal—"to effectively prevent and control fentanyl-related substances"—their interests will suffer adverse consequences due to the grave threats posed by the untethered ODC entities. In the TT, the phrase "国际毒潮" (literally, "international drug tide") is rendered specifically as "international drug abuse and crime" by adopting "liberal translation" method. While this approach clarifies the meanings of the original metaphorical expression, it sacrifices the dynamic sense of spread and the connotation of large-scale severity inherent in the ST. Additionally, the ST's conditional structure is reinforced in the TT by using "unless" instead of the more conventional "if". This shift in translation underscores the necessity and urgency of the speaker's proposal, emphasizing the need to prevent a negative future scenario. Therefore, legitimization for the countermeasures proposed by the speaker to govern and control the threatening ODC entities is effectively achieved through this deliberately use of temporal discursive strategy.

## 4.3 Critical Proximization Analysis of the Translation of National Security Discourse in Axiological Dimension

Example 5[6]

ST: **美国**[ODC]调整国家安全战略和国防战略，奉行**单边主义政策**[A-ODC]，挑起和加剧大国竞争[S-6]，大幅增

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[5] The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China (2025-03-04), 《中国的芬太尼类物质管控》白皮书, URL: http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/ndhf/2019n/202207/t20220704_130617.html (Access date: 2025-07-27); the white paper *China's National Defense in the New Era*, URL: http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/ndhf/2019n/202207/t20220704_130616.html (Access date: 2025-07-27).

[6] Same with "1"

加军费投入，加快提升核、太空、网络、导弹防御等领域能力，<u>损害</u>[S-4]**全球战略稳定**[IDC]。

TT: **The US**[ODC] <u>has adjusted</u> its national security and defense strategies, <u>and adopted</u>[T-2] **unilateral policies**[A-ODC]. It[ODC] <u>has provoked and intensified</u>[S-4; T-2] <u>competition among major countries</u>[S-6], significantly increased its defense expenditure, pushed for <u>additional</u>[axiological] capacity in nuclear, outer space, cyber and missile defense, and undermined **global strategic stability**[IDC].

In this case, the ST is suggesting that the US is to blame for the rising international strategic competition and increasing global strategic instability, which are adding pressure to the national defense of China. This specific construal of the ST has been achieved by using, primarily, axiological proximization strategy, where "the US" is identified as an ODC entity, which has adopted the antagonistic value of "unilateralist policies" ("单边主义政策"). Driven by this ideology, the ODC has already inflicted negative effects—by "provoking and intensifying competition between major powers and destabilizing global strategic stability". It also seeks to strengthen its capabilities in multiple domains, such as nuclear, outer space, cyber and missile defense areas, which can evoke insecurity within the IDC camp (security dilemma). The proximization effects in Example 5 are largely retained through using "literal translation" while being partially modified by adopting "variation" and "addition" translation techniques. On the one hand, the TT weakens the axiological proximization effects present in the ST by employing "variation translation". For instance, the phrase "单边主义政策", which would have been rendered as "unilateralist policies" in a literal translation, is instead translated as "unilateral policies" in the TT. The former carries a negative connotation and implies that such policies are implemented under the guidance of unilateralism as an ideological framework; the latter, by contrast, is more of an objective description of formulating policies through one-sided decision-making. In addition, the term "大国", whose most conventional equivalence in English is "major/great power", is instead rendered here as "major country". This translation is much more neutral and less antagonistic than "major power", which connotes a geopolitical sense and reflects the Cold War mindset. On the other hand, the axiological proximization effects are intensified by the application of "addition" technique, which inserts the emotional-laden term "additional" before "capacity" in the TT. This addition suggests that such a growth in ODC entity's capabilities has exceeded the scope of self-defense needs, to the extent that it can arouses suspicion of offensive intent. Through these translation approaches, the TT thus successfully fulfills the discursive goal of the ST: by highlighting the threat posed by the encroaching ODC entity and delegitimizing its actions, it legitimizes the speaker's need to reform China's national defense and armed forces, aiming at better safeguarding its security.

Example 6[7]

ST: **国际军控和裁军**[A-IDC]<u>遭遇挫折</u>[S-4]，**军备竞赛**[A-ODC1]趋势<u>显现</u>[S-3]。防止**大规模杀伤性武器**[ODC1]<u>扩散</u>[S-3]形势错综复杂，**国际防扩散机制**[IDC]受到**实用主义和双重标准**[A-ODC2]<u>危害</u>[S-4]，面临<u>新的挑战</u>[S-5]。**极端主义、恐怖主义**[A-ODC3]<u>不断蔓延</u>[T-6; S-3]，网络安全、生物安全、海盗活动等**非传统安全威胁**[ODC2]<u>日益凸显</u>[T-6; S-3]。

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[7] Same with "1"

TT: **International arms control and disarmament efforts**[A-IDC] have suffered setbacks[S-4], with growing[S-3] signs of **arms races**[A-ODC1]. The non-proliferation of **weapons of mass destruction**[ODC1] remains problematic. **The international non-proliferation regime**[IDC] is compromised[S-4] by **pragmatism and double standards**[A-ODC2], and hence faces new challenges[S-5]. **Extremism and terrorism**[A-ODC3] keep spreading[T-6; S-3]. **Non-traditional security threats**[ODC2] involving cyber security, bio-security and piracy are becoming more pronounced[T-6; S-3].

In example 6, "international arms control and disarmament" ("国际军控和裁军") represents the positive value of peace within the IDC camp, while the term "arms races" ("军备竞赛") embodies the negative value of war within the the ODC camp. These two concepts are framed to stand in conflict in the ST, with the former waning ("suffered setbacks", "遭遇挫折") as the latter waxes ("growing", "趋势显现"). The international non-proliferation regime, an IDC entity, is "endangered" by conflicts with "pragmatism and double standards" ("实用主义和双重标准")—another set of values held by ODC entities, whose harms to it persist into the future (as "new challenges"), reflecting the materialization of the ODC ideologies within IDC spaces. As a result, weapons of mass destruction are more prone to proliferation—a spatial proximization. Meanwhile, the ODC values of "extremism and terrorism" ("极端主义和恐怖主义") "continue to spread" ("不断蔓延") like a virus, eroding IDC spaces. All of this has led to the growth of "non-traditional security threats" ("非传统安全威胁") such as cyber security, bio-security, and piracy, which is again, a manifestation of substantive threats stemming from conflicts between negative antagonistic values. The growing and spreading of the ODC entities, alongside the setbacks, dangers and challenges confronting the IDC entities, invoke an asymmetrical ACTION schema as in Fig. 3 (Hart, 2014:115), which demonstrates that the actions of the ODC entities exert substantive influence (materialization) within the IDC spaces. Through faithful "literal translation", the ST is rendered into a TT that generally preserves its proximization discursive strategies, including the key proximization markers and semantic logic, with one exception. The term "凸显" is translated as "pronounced" in the TT, which loses the spatial connotation inherent in the original. This spatial nuance is crucial as it serves to embody how ODC values encroach upon IDC spaces. To retain the original's subtle connotations, it might be better to render "凸显" as "prominent" or "salient".
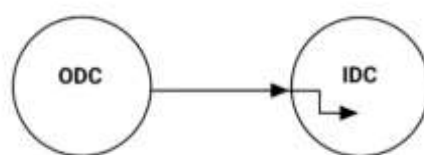


Figure 3. Asymmetrical ACTION schema

## V. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the discourse strategies used in Chinese national security discourse and the translation approaches employed in its translation using Proximization Theory. The findings indicate that the TT generally succeed in achieving the discursive purposes intended in the ST. Specifically, the analysis reveals the followings: first, "literal translation" is the most frequently used method in rendering this type of discourse, and

is generally effective in preserving the effect of the discursive strategies in the original text; second, "shift" and "addition" are two translation techniques that often intensify the original discursive effect; third, "variation translation" is commonly adopted to strengthen discursive effects in the TT, although it can at times result in attenuation; fourth, "liberal translation" tends to reduce the original discursive effect, yet demonstrates potential for amplification under certain conditions.

PT, through its STA model, allows for the precise identification of specific lexico-grammatical linguistic items for the discursive strategies formulated and applied to create conceptual and symbolic movement, which contributes to its strong explanatory power. Given translation can be regarded as the cross-cultural reconstruction of the symbolic distance in the source text, PT provides an effective tool for measuring the distance between and observe the movements and interactive patterns of agents and patients in discourses, thus reflecting the closeness and estrangement between them. This assists translators in identifying the symbolic distance and interaction patterns constructed in the ST, and enables them to accordingly select equivalent or other strategies in the TT based on their subjectivity. However, this study did not adopt a quantitative methodology, which limited the ability to fully demonstrate the STA model's explanatory potential. Future research could extend this work by employing a mixed-methods approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative analysis, and by integrating PT into theories in translation studies for better adaptation.

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