Vocabulary Selection and Translation of China's *Report on the Work of the Government:* A Case Study of "Considerably" "Noticeably" & "Resolutely" from Their Semantic Prosody Performance

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Abstract

This research studied vocabulary selection and translation of China's *Report on the Work of the Government* (RWG) from the perspective of semantic prosody (SP). "noticeably", "considerably" & "resolutely" were adopted to give a case study with the help of corpus tools under the theoretical guidance of Corpus-based Translation Studies (CBTS) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The RWG corpus was compared with the British National Corpus (BNC) in emotion color and pragmatic meaning. Major findings include that there are similarities and conflicts in terms of the SP performance of three adverb words in the two corpora. Instead of following the mainstream SP shown by the BNC, "noticeably" "considerably" & "resolutely" met purposes of language use and political communication, and gave an impact on lexical selection and translation. For political considerations, employed as translation words in the RWG, "noticeably" "considerably" & "resolutely" strongly demonstrate that the Chinese government was dedicated to delivering China's voice and building a good national image in China's *Report on the Work of the Government*.

Keywords: vocabulary selection, political translation, semantic prosody, China's *Report on the Work of the Government*

1. Introduction

China's *Report on the Work of the Government* (RWG) is an official document issued annually by the State Council of the People's Republic of China. It is translated into English each year to facilitate understanding for the international community. Governments at all levels are required to submit this report to the presidium of the congress, the deputies attending the sessions, and the members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) during the annual National People's Congress (NPC) and CPPCC sessions, collectively known as the "Two Sessions." The RWG provides a summary of the government's work over the past year, outlines current initiatives and priorities, and highlights progress in governance and self-improvement. In addition, it presents China's perspectives on politics, diplomacy, and global development. As an official Chinese-English report, the RWG is characterized by concise, objective, and logically structured language, while also reflecting the distinct features of the Chinese linguistic style. The RWG provides insights into China's development in various aspects and the implementation of concrete works, offering a valuable understanding of China's distinct political characteristics.

Semantic prosody is a term in the field of corpus linguistics. Sinclair (1996), often regarded as the father of semantic prosody, defined it as "the initial choice of semantic prosody is the functional choice which connects meaning to purpose; all subsequent choices within the lexical item are related back to the prosody again". Along with collocation, colligation and semantic preference, the study of corpus linguistics has been developed vividly. According to Louw (1993), node words are affected by related collocation words, and their semantic functions are saturated, forming a continuous semantic atmosphere. However, the first discovery of semantic prosody was made by Sinclair (1987), when he studied the phrasal verb "set in" and found that its subject is usually an abstract noun that expresses something negative or bad. Semantic prosody plays a significant role in evaluating and indicating the author's attitude. The study of semantic prosody has reshaped our understanding of the nature of linguistic communication and the fundamental units of meaning. It has also opened new paths in corpus linguistics research, and has had a profound impact on language studies, especially semantic researche (Lu, 2023). It is the result of diachronic linguistic evolution, in which lexical items gradually acquire similar semantic color—either positive or negative, affirming or disapproving, through prolonged exposure to their frequent collocates. At the same time, semantic prosody also plays a crucial role in uncovering meaning within discourse. In essence, within concordance analysis, node words serve as the core elements that, in combination with surrounding words, establish collocational relationships and form complete units of meaning. Driven by corpus data, the collocational patterns and contextual functions of keywords in specific language cases can be generalized as lexical usage tendencies.

In terms of translation practice, accounting for semantic prosody helps accurately reflect the authentic usage of words in the source language, ensuring that the translation aligns more closely with the flavor of the original text. Looking closely at the original text of the

RWG, it is not difficult to find that verbs and adverbs were used frequently, along with a diverse range of expressions. Translators usually adopted a variety of synonyms in their work, so as to avoid repetition of the same or similar vocabulary. Taking verbs as examples: 促进 [cùjìn] / 增强 [zēngqiáng] / 加大 [jiādà] / 深化[shēnhuà], these Chinese words are synonyms, which often were translated into promote/enhance/strengthen/improve and were used interchangeably. Similarly, adverbs that modify verbs to indicate the intensity or degree of an action are frequently used. For instance, the following three adverbs appear in both Chinese and their English versions: 明显 [míngxiǎn]（noticeably）/ 极大[jídà] (resolutely) / 较大 [jiàodà] (considerably).

Compared with studies on the use of verbs in the RWG, this research focuses on the translation of adverbs in the RWG, by taking "considerably" "noticeably" & "resolutely" as examples to analyze the semantic prosody of these adverbs in the RWG translated texts. Meanwhile, the British National Corpus（BNC）is employed as a reference. This study conducts a comparative analysis of semantic prosody variations between official translations and English source texts, aiming to uncover the distinctive features of the RWG, the translator's intent (when choosing proper adverbs for the translation of RWG) as well as reasons why they make decisions that target vocabulary selection and translation.

2. Literature Review

The study of semantic prosody initially focused on the co-occurrence patterns of English vocabulary in linguistics and their contextual meanings. Over time, it has gained attention in the field of translation studies, particularly in relation to translational equivalence, translation strategies, and machine translation. One of the earliest scholars to discuss semantic prosody in translation studies was Baker (1993), who mentioned the concept while emphasizing the significance of corpus-based approaches in translation research. She pointed out the collocational patterns of words across languages and their impact on translation. Kenny (2001) explores the differences in semantic prosody between machine translation and human translation in her book *Lexis and Creativity in Translation: A Corpus-Based Study*. Her research examines how translation influences the preservation or alteration of semantic prosody. In China, Ji and Wu (2000) were the first to introduce semantic prosody into translation studies, exploring its application in translation practice. Qin (2009) conducted a dedicated study on the semantic prosody of the word propaganda in corpora such as Brown and LOB. He emphasized the importance of recognizing differences in semantic prosody in Chinese-English translation practice.

In recent years, with the creation and development of computational linguistics and big data corpus, the application of semantic prosody in translation practice has been further developed. By conducting comparative analyses of bilingual corpora, researchers explore ways to better preserve and reproduce semantic prosody, aiming to enhance the naturalness and readability of translations. Stubbs (1996) classified semantic prosody into three fields: positive, neutral and negative prosody and he argued that the relationship between semantic prosody and collocation is determined by the co-selection of lexis. Semantic prosody research commonly follows these standards to examine the emotional connotations and attitudes conveyed through lexical combinations.

Zhou and Zhang (2020) made a study to explore the semantic prosody of two synonyms: "lead to" and "result in" as nodes based on the British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus. Based on the allocation and concordance of two verb phrases, the study founds out British students tend to use "result in" with neutral words or negative words and "lead to" was more likely to be used with negative words. Previous research on semantic prosody has primarily focused on proper word selection, and has highlighted differences in various aspects of word usage by analyzing the positive and negative semantic prosodies of nodes in corpus data. It also demonstrates that the study of semantic prosody can be applied to language teaching, second language acquisition and other related fields.

Besides, other scholars have explored semantic prosody in the field of translation, particularly in political texts. Mo (2021) studied the semantic prosody in the translation of the RWG with a case study of a Chinese word "大力"[dàlì]. (It means work hard to do something) She found that such a Chinese word was translated by frequently adopting English words "vigorously" and "energetically". These words show positive semantic prosody while showing more negative prosody in the BNC corpus. This study analyzed the translation accuracy, arguing that the use of these two words is not conducive to projecting a positive national image of China due to their semantic prosody conflicts in the RWG and BNC. "Strive to" is much more suitable to express the meaning of "大力" [dàlì]. A similar study made by Cai and Yu (2023) studied semantic prosody in Chinese-English translation. This study explored the translation of the Chinese word "建设" [jiànshè] with four English expressions, namely "build", "develop", "improve", and "construct". Therefore, this study analyzed the part of speech of neighboring collocates and their MI scores to further verify the semantic prosody of these words both in the RWG and COCA corpora. Results indicated that inconsistencies in semantic prosody still exist in word usage across the two corpora. The findings suggest that semantic prosody should be taken into account during the translation process.

The above studies mainly examined semantic prosody in translation from a lexical perspective, while some scholars have approached it from the standpoint of grammatical structure and syntax. Chen and Liu (2023) studied the colligation of "V + reform" and the semantic prosody of "reform" in the corpus of RWG created by themselves from 2013-2022. The reference corpora are BCC corpus (Beijing Language and Culture University Corpus) and COCA corpus. Most notably, this study did not focus on the emotion connotations of semantic prosody (positive, neutral & negative) associated with the word "reform" in the RWG corpus. Instead, it highlighted another aspect of semantic prosody— its pragmatic meaning. Sinclair (2004) proposed that semantic prosody expresses both attitude and pragmatic meaning; It is a combination of form and function.

Building on the above literature review, research on semantic prosody spans multiple fields, including language teaching and learning, translation, second language acquisition and different research perspectives, like lexis, colligation, syntax from emotion attitude to

pragmatic meaning, which also provides some enlightenment for this research. This study continues to explore the semantic study of the translation of words in the RWG with a case study of "noticeably" "considerably" and "resolutely". It not only focuses on their emotional connotations but also takes into account the pragmatic meaning of these adverbs. At the same time, based on their expression of semantic prosody, this study analyzes the rationale behind the translators' chosen strategies and vocabulary selection.

3. Method

3.1 Research Data and Data Collection

Data for this study are from two corpora. The first one is bilingual Chinese-English texts in the RWG corpus (http://corpus.usx.edu.cn/lawcorpus4/) which is the sub-corpus of Pool of Bilingual Parallel Corpora of Chinese classics made by Shao Xing University of China. The corpus includes China's *Report on the Work of the Government*, providing bilingual resources that cover nearly a decade (2001–2010) of Chinese original texts and their corresponding English translations. China's *Report on the Work of the Government* is an essential means by which the Chinese government annually reports to the nation during the "Two Sessions". As an invaluable linguistic resource, China's RWG texts contribute significantly to linguistic research, translation practice, and policy communication. Furthermore, the linguistic data from the British National Corpus (BNC) (http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk) are also necessary for the purpose of comparison. BNC serves as a substantial electronic resource comprising 100 million words derived from diverse sources of both written and spoken language. It holds authoritative significance for English language research.

Additionally, Oxford English Dictionary (https://www.oed.com) is as a reference to clear know the meaning of lexis so as to understand the translator's word selection for the translation of China's RWG.

The research tool for data collection is sketch engine, an online corpus analysis software that offers a wide range of functions for corpus linguistic research. The primary functions utilized in this study include concordance analysis and text type selection. The use of sketch engine allows us to analyze the semantic prosody of the selected keywords by obtaining data on both their emotional color and pragmatic meaning. Besides, conducting searches for the terms "considerably," "noticeably," and "resolutely" on the homepage of the RWG corpus. Once a keyword is entered, the dashboard retrieves specific sentences containing the term, eliminating the need to manually compile a corpus and significantly enhancing research efficiency. With the support of these tools, the semantic prosody of "considerably," "noticeably," and "resolutely" can be analyzed with ease.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

In order to explore translator's considerations on lexical selection and translation of China's RWG based on semantic prosody, Corpus-based Translation Studies (CBTS) is adopted as the main theoretical foundation for result analysis. CBTS, as proposed by Baker (1993) and further developed by Laviosa (2004) and Munday et al. (2022), it does not treat corpus data as merely descriptive. This research aligns with the explanatory dimension of CBTS, which emphasizes understanding the reasonableness behind translation patterns. In this regard, CBTS provides a methodological and theoretical basis for exploring the interaction between the recurrent lexical patterns and their functional meanings in political translation.

Moreover, insights from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are also incorporated so as to address the dimension of power relations behind the semantic prosody in political translation. As Fairclough (2013) believed, language is not merely a reflection of reality but a form of social practice shaped by power structures. In this view, translation is not always neutral, especially in official documents such as the RWG, where lexical choices often serve to legitimize, reinforce, or soften ideological stances.

3.3 Analytical Procedures and Research Questions

This study conducts qualitative research in conjunction with corpus-based analysis tools based on CBTS and CDA. Data from the RWG corpus and the BNC are examined through a comparative approach. Generally, under the guidance of the CBTS, descriptive analysis of collected data on semantic prosody is conducted and considerations on vocabulary selection and translation are analyzed then. Besides, considerations based on power relations are finally explained and supplemented through CDA. The research is structured into several key steps as follows.

First, the study identifies the frequency of occurrence of the three adverbs— "considerably," "noticeably," and "resolutely"—as well as the years in which they appeared in the translated versions of the RWG and BNC. This step provides insights into the usage patterns of these words. Second, the study analyzes the semantic prosody of these adverbs in both corpora from the perspectives of emotional color and pragmatic meaning. Emotional color examines the atmosphere created by these words within their collocational contexts, categorizing them as positive, neutral, or negative. Pragmatic meaning, on the other hand, is assessed based on the tense and modality in which these words are employed—whether referring to a future action (will/may happen), an ongoing action (present), or a completed action (past). This step aims to determine whether any semantic prosody conflicts exist within each corpus. Third, based on the concordance lines in the RWG Corpus, the study observes and summarizes the semantic prosody performance of "considerably," "noticeably," and "resolutely," as well as the vocabulary selection and translation strategies employed in the translated texts. Finally, the study explores the underlying reasons for the adoption of "considerably," "noticeably," and "resolutely" in the translated version of the RWG, shedding light on the linguistic and political considerations influencing translation choices.

Two research questions to be solved are shown below:

1) What's the frequency of "considerably" "noticeably" & "resolutely" and what are the semantic prosodies in the RWG and BNC?

2) How does semantic prosody affect vocabulary selection and translation, and why are "considerably" "noticeably" & "resolutely" employed in the translation version of the RWG?

4. Results

4.1 Statistics of Word Frequency in the RWG and BNC

Table 1. Statistics of noticeably, considerably & resolutely in the RWG

RWG	noticeably	considerably	resolutely
Occurrence	6	9	54
Year appeared	2000 (2) 2001 (3) 2004 (1)	2000 (1) 2001 (2) 2006 (1) 2008 (2) 2009 (1) 2010 (2)	2000 (9) 2001 (2) 2004 (3) 2005 (5) 2006 (5) 2007 (7) 2008 (12) 2009 (7) 2010 (4)

Table 2. Statistics of noticeably, considerably & resolutely in the BNC

BNC	noticeably	considerably	resolutely
Occurrence	16	190	6
Text type	Written books and periodicals	Written books and periodicals	Written books and periodicals
Category	World academic/ political/law/edu	World academic/ political/law/edu	World academic/ political/law/edu

China's *Report on the Work of the Government* is a collection of written government political texts. Based on the CBTS, in order to guarantee data can be collected in an effective and comparative way, this study chooses the occurrence of "noticeably" "considerably" and "resolutely in the written books and periodicals in the BNC and the category is "Word academic/political/law/edu" according to David Lee's classification. This study firstly searched for "noticeably" "considerably" and "resolutely in the RWG corpus online and secondly used the BNC in the sketch engine to retrieve these three words again.

Based on Tables 1 and 2, statistical results have gained below. In light of the fact that the BNC has more than 1 million tokens which is a lot bigger than the RWG corpus, the occurrence of "noticeably" appeared in the RWG does not vary greatly, with "6" and "16" respectively, while "considerably" is much more adopted in the BNC of "190" compared to it of "9" in the RWG corpus. However, "resolutely" is employed 54 times in the RWG and which is only 6 times in the BNC. The analysis reveals that translators tend to favor the use of "resolutely" in the translated version of the RWG, with a notably high frequency. In contrast, "noticeably" and "considerably" appear far less frequently. Regarding the years in which "noticeably," "considerably," and "resolutely" appeared in the RWG corpus, "noticeably" was used only in the early years (2000–2004), whereas "considerably" and "resolutely" were employed consistently throughout the statistical period (2000–2010). Translators of RWG were more likely to use "noticeably" in the initial years, and it was replaced with other vocabularies as time went by.

4.2 Semantic Prosody Performance of Noticeably, Considerably & Resolutely in the RWG and BNC

Table 3. Semantic prosodies of noticeably, considerably & resolutely in the RWG

RWG	noticeably	considerably	resolutely
Occurrence	6	9	54
Emotion color	positive (6) neutral (0) negative (0)	positive (7) neutral (0) negative (2)/	positive (10) neutral (11) negative (33)
Pragmatic meaning (status related)	will do/maybe (1) doing /present (0) done/past (5)	will do/maybe (2) doing/present (1) done/past (6)	will do/maybe (36) doing / present (5) done/past (13)

Table 4. Semantic prosodies of noticeably, considerably & resolutely in the BNC

BNC	noticeably	considerably	resolutely
Occurrence	16	190	6
Emotion color	positive (2) neutral (5) negative (9)	positive (50) neutral (83) negative (57)	positive (0) neutral (0) negative (6)
Pragmatic meaning (status related)	will do/maybe (4) doing/present (2) done/past (10)	will do/maybe (38) doing/present (52) done/past (100)	will do/maybe (1) doing /present (1) done/past (4)

Further steps were made to show the semantic prosody (SP) performance of each word in the two corpora under the guidance of CBTS. This study involves emotion color (positive/neutral/negative) and pragmatic meaning of the node word in the concordances so as to observe demanding results. The tracking of emotional color is determined by analyzing the combination of the node word and its surrounding collocates. The specific searching span was set to 4, which is generally accepted. The space within the searching was put

forward by Sinclair et al. (1970). Thus, collocates in the left position of the node word (-4, -3, -2, -1) and in the right position (+1, +2, +3, +4) were gained. Emotion color drawn by the atmosphere of "noticeably", "considerably" & "resolutely" with their collocates can be available as Table 3 and Table 4 show (specific collocates are discussed in the table 5).

In the RWG corpus, it is clear to see that "noticeably" is 100% of the total 6 to show positive SP. Similar to "considerably", the vast majority of occurrences of this word convey a positive semantic prosody, with only two instances reflecting a negative one. Different from the first two, "resolutely" exhibits a stronger negative semantic prosody, with 33 out of 54 instances classified as negative. Its positive and neutral semantic prosodies are nearly equal, appearing 10 and 11 times, respectively. The emotion color of RWG tells that "noticeably" and "considerably" are often adopted by translators to present the good side of things. Government officials have made, or are making, significant achievements and substantial efforts that benefit both the country and its people. A small percentage shows a gap between the target and what was really done (especially means that there is a long way to go). Meanwhile, "resolutely" is often paired with negative terms to emphasize the government's determination to eradicate various undesirable social phenomena or illegal and criminal activities. In addition, the rest are employed to highlight responsibilities of government officials and their efforts to achieve significant outcomes.

However, from the data of BNC in Table 4, there are some conflicts of semantic prosody in emotion color compared to the RWG. In the BNC corpus, "noticeably" and "resolutely" (especially) are prone to be adopted in the context showing negative SP. "noticeably" is used more to describe notably unoptimistic situations (such as less impact of African Social Studies Programme, less support of curriculum appraisal activity, boy's more aggressive behavior in gender studies). "resolutely" is related to criticism or objection from groups in terms of a rule, or is to express the degree of one's bad personality. The former only presents 2 positive SP and 5 neutral SP and the latter displays no positive and neutral SP. It indicates that these two words are often employed with those collocates express unfavorable meanings. "considerably" occurs repeatedly in the BNC, which displays more neutral SP of 83, positive SP of 50 as well as negative SP of 57. It is primarily used to describe the extent of objects or actions by the government, without conveying a clear preference in attitude (such as current education policy change/ section distinctions in law/ difference in space and time of colonial policies). The rest appear with attitudes of individuals or groups in favor of/dissatisfied with a certain policy, or criticism of actions/policies/bills by national government and bad influences on people's livelihood. Thus, it is evident that this word is widely used across different linguistic contexts, primarily highlighting the importance of objects or actions.

Pragmatic meaning serves as a useful step to clarify the semantic prosody performance of lexical items within a given context. This research divides the usage of "noticeably" "considerably" & "resolutely" into three semantic statuses: will do/maybe, doing/present and done/past. The first one is to show things (actions, measures, policies, rules) government or individuals are going to do or should do or will work hard to make it come true in the future or possible consequence of doing something; the second one describes government or individuals need to continue doing something, results they are doing to come and get or just has a description of things objectively, especially in the simple present tense; the third one aims to describe what has been done/finished by the government or individuals or what happened in the past using these three words.

Since "noticeably" "considerably" & "resolutely" are adverbs indicating the role of modification, their usage will inevitably impact the overall semantic prosody. Based on their pragmatic meaning performance, there are both similarities and differences between their usage in the RWG and BNC. In both corpora "noticeably" and "considerably" are mostly adopted to describe things that have been done and happened in the past, while "considerably" is used infrequently in the RWG, it appears somewhat more commonly in the BNC, often to describe actions being performed or to convey information in the simple present tense. Nevertheless, the usage of "resolutely" follows an opposite pattern, as it serves distinct pragmatic functions in each corpus. In the RWG, it is usually used within a future plan or things will happen possibly while it is used to indicate things that have finished in the past in the BNC. Through the analysis above, the RWG tries to show positive results (generally speaking, good side) that Chinese government and its officials by using "noticeably" and "considerably". Meanwhile, it employs "resolutely" to convey future commitments, whether to accomplish positive goals or eliminate negative issues, depending on the context. As for the BNC, it reflects a substantial number of past accomplishments through the use of "noticeably" "considerably" & "resolutely". Additionally, "considerably" is used sparingly to indicate the extent of an action and the potential for significant impact, while "noticeably" and "resolutely" appear only occasionally in references to future actions.

4.3 Collocates of Noticeably, Considerably & Resolutely in the RWG/BNC

Table 5. Collocation of noticeably, considerably & resolutely in the RWG/BNC

Collocation	noticeably	considerably	resolutely
RWG	6	9	54
Positive	improved/grew/ increased/enhanced/improving	having risen/ rise/ higher/ develop/ raise	enforce/reach/implement/ safeguard/correct/press ahead/adhere to
Neutral			
Negative		short	opposed/stopped/resist/ put an end/ put a stop/ prosecute/defended/ punish/ close down, etc.
BNC	16	190	6
Positive	improved/liberal	great/increase/improve/strengthen/enhance/ expand/grow/help/advance/develop/rise, etc.	
Neutral	time/fast/different/change/in excess of	aged/simplified/vary/local/practice/lasting/differ/hold/change, etc.	
Negative	poor/worse/deviant/tightened/lack/smaller/	affect/less/difficult/deviate/weakened/oppsed/reduce/violence/ worse/exacerbate/risk, etc.	opposed/condemn/against/indolent

Discussion of the semantic prosody has shown the importance of collocates. As the collocates of noticeably, considerably, & resolutely are apparent from the Table 5 (only a few collocates are listed due to limited space). According to Oxford English Dictionary, "noticeably" refers to "perceptibly" and "remarkably"; "considerably" refers to "a considerable degree or extent"; "resolutely" refers to "with fixed purpose, boldly, determinedly". In the RWG, collocates of "resolutely" are all positive words to express something will be better and better (such as improve/enhance/increase/grow), the collocates of "considerably" are mostly positive words (such as rise/raise/develop/higher) and a negative word (short). While the collocates of "resolutely" are partly positive words (like reach/safeguard/correct) and the rest are negative words (like opposed/stopped/defended/punish). And there are no words presenting neutral meanings. As for the BNC, the most impressive is, "resolutely" only appears with negative words (for instance, against/opposed/condemn). "noticeably" and "considerably" all have their collocates regardless of whether they are positive (for example, improve/help/strengthen), neutral (for example, time/vary/differ) and negative (such as less/worse/lack/difficult). With the assistance of these collocates, the semantic prosody of these three words can be more easily identified.

4.4 Translation Consideration with SP of Noticeably, Considerably & Resolutely in the RWG

Table 6. Translation consideration of noticeably, considerably & resolutely in the RWG

RWG (with BNC)	noticeably	considerably	resolutely
SP conflict situation	conflict or not	conflict or not	conflict or not
Emotion color	conflict	conflict	partial conflict
Pragmatic meaning	no conflict	no conflict	conflict
Translation purpose base on SP	positive SP	positive + negative SP	positive + neutral + negative SP + will do/maybe status
Corresponding words in the source text	明显[míngxiǎn] (obviously)	大幅度[dà fú dù] (by a large margin)/ 明 显 [míngxiǎn] (obviously) / 较 大 [jiàodà] (largely) / 不小 [bù xiǎo] (not very small) / 积极 [jījí] (want to do deeply and actively)	坚决 [jiānjué] (stoutly) /果断 地 [guǒ duànde] (boldly) /下决 心 [xiàjuéxīn] (determinedly) / 坚定 [jiān dìng] (stoutly) / 坚 定不移[jiāndìngbù yí] (stoutly) / 坚实 [jiānshí] (stoutly) /锐意 [ruì yì] (determinedly)
Translation method	Literal translation	Literal translation Free translation	Literal translation Free translation

As the SP of "noticeably" "considerably" & "resolutely" have been clearly studied, this research further analyzes the translation consideration of these three words in the RWG corpus through the lens of CBTS. There is a conflict (partial conflict) in emotion color between "noticeably" "considerably" & "resolutely" as used in the RWG and their usage in the BNC. In addition, the pragmatic meaning of "resolutely" also displays a conflict.

Since translators are highly skilled and experienced bilingual professionals who have been responsible for translating the RWG for many years, it is highly unlikely that they would make errors in word choice. But there are indeed some SP conflicts in lexical selection for translation. Observation of the concordances of "noticeably" "considerably" & "resolutely", it is evident that the RWG deliberately uses the positive SP of "noticeably", both the positive and negative SP of "considerably" and the full range of positive, neutral negative SP of "resolutely", along with its pragmatic meaning and pragmatic implication of indicating future actions or possibilities. The RWG tends to choose one or more semantic prosodies of "noticeably" "considerably" & "resolutely" to display the source Chinese text in the translation version. The selection of "noticeably," "considerably," and "resolutely" is not solely based on their dominant semantic prosody as

reflected in the BNC. This suggests that maintaining consistency with the original sentence and context of the source text is crucial. The primary reason for selecting words such as "noticeably," "considerably," and "resolutely" is to reflect the distinctive characteristics of the Chinese language and convey political intentions, given that the RWG is an official political document.

The SP performance has an impact on vocabulary selection and translation method. The selection of "noticeably" "considerably" & "resolutely" presents different SP, therefore they are adopted in the translation with different translation methods. Table 6 demonstrates corresponding words in the source text of "noticeably", "considerably" & "resolutely". For "noticeably", it has been literally translated from a Chinese word "明显" [míngxiǎn], which means "obviously". It aims to show China's rapid development in the different aspects and that achievements are all due to the hard work of the Chinese government. "大幅度" [dàfúdù]/ "明显" [míngxiǎn]/ "较大" [jiàodà]/ "不小" [bùxiǎo] / are synonyms to express the extent of doing something with great efforts in Chinese. However, the Chinese words "积极" [jījí] is freely translated into "considerably". Because "积极" not only contains the meaning of "do something deeply" but also tells "being willing to doing something and very actively". The adoption of "considerably" shows China's gratifying results in agriculture and commerce and its further steps in education, medical care, people's livelihood and its self-examination. It implies the Chinese government can be trusted and is competent. With regard to "resolutely", translators still employ literal translation and free translation. Chinese words "坚决" [jiānjué]/ "下决心" [xiàjuéxīn]/ "坚定"[jiāndìng]/ "坚定不移" [jiān dìngbùyí]/ "坚实" [jiānshí]/ "锐意" [ruìyì] all display the meaning of doing something stoutly and determinedly, while "果断地" [guǒduànde] means doing something boldly, quickly but correctly. Therefore "resolutely" is a reflection of "果断地" to show the meaning of "determinedly" and "boldly". The repeated use of "resolutely" further underscores China's steadfast commitment to addressing social issues and fostering a better society for the well-being of its people.

4.5 Power Relations Consideration with SP of Noticeably, Considerably & Resolutely in the RWG

Table 7. Concordances of noticeably, considerably & resolutely in the RWG (excerpt)

Source text (RWG)	Target text (RWG)
1.国内生产总值增长率达到预期目标，经济结构有所调整，经济效益**明显**改善。[guónèi dóměishēngchǎnzǒngzhí zēngzhǎnglǜ dádào yùqī mùbiāo，jīngjì jiégòu yǒusuǒ tiáozhěng，jīngjì xiàoyì míngxiǎn gǎishàn]	The objective for the growth rate of the gross domestic product was attained; there were structural adjustments in the economy; and economic performance <u>improved</u> ***noticeably***.
2.国家财力**明显**<u>增强</u>。[guójiā cáilì míngxiǎn zēngqiáng]	China's financial strength <u>grew</u> ***noticeably***.
3.但是政府工作与人民的期望还有**较大**<u>差距</u>。[dànshì zhèngfǔ gōngzuò yǔ rénmín de qīwàng hái yǒu jiàodà chājù]	Nevertheless, the government's work still fell ***considerably*** <u>short</u> of public expectations.
4.城乡居民住房、电信和用电等生活条件有**较大**改善。[chéngxiāng jūmín zhùfáng,diànxìn hé yòngdiàn děng shēnghuó tiáojiàn yǒu jiàodà gǎishàn]	Housing, telecommunications, electricity and other aspects of living conditions for both urban and rural residents <u>improved</u> ***considerably***.
5.要**坚决**<u>制止</u>新的毁林毁草开荒。[yào jiānjué zhìzhǐ xīn de huǐlín huǐcǎo kāihuāng]	Any further effort to clear forests and pastures to reclaim land should be ***resolutely*** <u>stopped</u>.
6.一要**坚决**实行开发和节约并举、把节约放在首位的方针。[yī yào jiānjué shíxíng kāifā hé jiéyuē bìngjǔ, bǎ jiéyuē fàng zài shǒuwèi de fāngzhēn]	First, we <u>will</u> ***resolutely*** <u>adhere to</u> the policy of simultaneously developing and conserving energy and resources, giving priority to conservation.
7.建立更加有效的节能环保监督管理体系，**坚决**依法惩处各种违法违规行为。[jiànlì gèngjiā yǒuxiào de jiénéng huánbǎo jiāndū guǎnlǐ tǐxì, jiānjué yīfǎ chéngchǔ gèzhǒng wéifǎ wéiguī xíngwéi]	We <u>will</u> set up a more effective system for overseeing and managing energy conservation and environmental protection and ***resolutely*** <u>punish</u> in accordance with the law all types of actions that violate laws and regulations.
8.针对国有商业银行经营管理不善、金融风险加剧的状况，我们**果断地**<u>推进了改革</u>。[zhēnduì guóyǒu shāngyè yínháng jīngyíng guǎnlǐ bùshàn, jīnróng fēngxiǎn jiājù de zhuàngkuàng, wǒmen guǒduàn de tuījìn le gǎigé]	We ***resolutely*** <u>carried out reform</u> addressing the poor performance and greater financial risks of state-owned commercial banks.

Due to the limited space, this study only presents several typical examples of "noticeably", "considerably" & "resolutely" as shown in Table 7 to have a further discussion on SP in the RWG translation. Guided by the CDA, this section fully explains translators' choice from the perspective of power relations. In terms of the RWG translation, semantic prosody is employed to uncover the attitudinal or ideological tendencies hidden in seemingly neutral adverbs such as "considerably" "noticeably", and "resolutely". When analyzed within the CDA, the translation of such adverbs can be seen as an act of ideological transfer, that is, the evaluative tone of the source text is preserved or adapted to maintain the Chinese government's authoritative voice in English.

In the 7.1 & 7.2, the translation of "明显" [míngxiǎn] as "noticeably" retains the RWG's positive evaluative stance while adding a sense of objectivity, which often associated with empirical observation. From a power relations perspective, the selection of "noticeably" works to naturalize and legitimize China's economic achievements by presenting English readers as evident facts rather than subjective claims. As Fairclough (2013) said, discourse strategies that emphasize obvious facts can work ideologically, cover power and control under the

guise of neutrality. "noticeably", commonly used in the negative mood, is adopted with positive collocates (e.g., improved/grew). It is a typical discourse strategy that aims to express the national achievements with an authoritative color in a neutral but authoritative way. Using noticeably (rather than positive words like "greatly", "significantly") is a prudent expression of power discourse that makes the translation objective and actually positive in an international context.

Similar to the "noticeably", "considerably" is frequently shown its neutral and negative SP in the English context. However, its collocation with negative words—such as "short" in the 7.3—functions not as genuine critique but as a strategic concession within the political discourse. This example reveals that the Chinese government's act of acknowledging existing problems in its governance. It is a strategic form of self-criticism, demonstrating a transparent, open and responsible outstandingness in political discourse. Sometimes "considerably" is with positive SP as 7.4 displays, as the translation of "较大" [jiàodà], it is followed by "improved" to correspond to the Chinese source "改善" [gǎishàn]. Such English translation not only maintains the positive SP of people's wellbeing that Chinese government has made, but also serves to legitimize the government's performance through quantitative amplification. This emphasizes a high-efficiency, responsible image of China, which has made fruitful achievements.

As for "resolutely", according to Table 6, it also presents various SP in the RWG translation compared to the BNC. Firstly, "stopped" "punished" these negative words are collocates of "resolutely" in the 7.5 & 7.7, based on power relations, they imply that China as state enforcer for order, law and ecological protection, has rights and power to crack down negative force (such as lawbreakers, environment destroyers). Meanwhile, China has the ability to restore order and protect the interests of its people. However, in the 7.6 & 7.8, "resolutely" is matched with neutral SP. Different selections of its SP also present the power of politics——The narrative of "the state leading all reforms and progress" has been strengthened in the power structure. The use of neutral or positive SP of "resolutely" plays the role of "stance intensification" before neutral/positive actions and reveals a kind of institutional determination and policy resolve. In addition, examples 7.6 and 7.7 further illustrate that China's RWG places greater emphasis on the specific implementation of its future policies. That is strong evidence to explain the performance of "will do/maybe" status in its pragmatic meaning. RWG not only reports on what the Chinese government has accomplished but also outlines its future plans to further promote China's development and progress. This helps enhance public confidence in the government's governance across various sectors and strengthens the image of the state as one that delivers on its commitments to the people.

5. Discussion

5.1 Translator's Intentions in Employing "noticeably" "considerably" & "resolutely" in the RWG

Building upon the analysis and conclusions presented in Chapter 4 through CBTS & CDA, it becomes evident that the adverbs "noticeably", "considerably" and "resolutely" serve three key functions in the translation of China's RWG. First, by conveying one or more layers of semantic prosody, these words enhance the expressiveness of the RWG while simultaneously help avoid redundancy and repetition. Second, to align with the textual characteristics and structural patterns of Chinese, the use of the adverbs "noticeably", "considerably" & "resolutely" in translation fulfills both the functional and stylistic roles of adverbs in the target text. The sentence structure in Chinese is often characterized by an "adverbial + verb-object phrase" pattern. Based on their semantic prosody performance, the translation reinforces the formality and precision of China's RWG and ultimately contributes to strengthening the international influence of the Chinese language. Thirdly and most importantly, their usage sometimes diverges between the RWG and BNC. Despite these differences, these adverbs are still frequently employed in the translation. Ultimately, their consistent presence serves to reveal the political nature of the RWG. Their usage strategically contributes to shaping a positive image of the Chinese government—one that is trusted and anticipated by RWG readers. These words bear witness to both the Chinese government's brilliant achievements and existing challenges. They also reflect the determination and commitment to further developing and building a better China in the future.

5.2 Potential Influencing Factors for Translation Based on the Semantic Prosody

Existing studies on the translation of China's *Report on the Work of the Government* have largely focused on translation strategies, lexical features, machine translation, and corpus-based analyses. However, systematic research from the perspective of semantic prosody remains relatively scarce. Research from the perspective of semantic prosody tends to approach the subject either by examining emotional color, or by focusing on pragmatic meaning. Compared with existing studies, this research takes a dual approach by considering both the emotional color and pragmatic meaning of semantic prosody. Using the three adverbs— "noticeably", "considerably" & "resolutely"—as examples, it provides an in-depth theoretical analysis of translators' lexical choices and translation considerations through CBTS & CDA.

Based on their semantic prosody, this study identifies and summarizes several potential factors that may influence the translation of political texts. First, translators' linguistic proficiency, translation strategies (methods), and awareness play a crucial role. For instance, non-native English translators may struggle to fully grasp the semantic prosody of certain words, potentially leading to unnatural expressions. Some translators, in pursuit of "faithfulness," may favor a literal translation approach without adjusting the semantic prosody to align with the target language's conventions, which can compromise the overall effectiveness of the translation. However, during the analysis of this study, it reveals that the translators demonstrate strong linguistic competence, employing a combination of literal and free translation methods to achieve a more natural and effective rendering. Secondly, contextual factors are of great importance. In formal texts like government work reports, the semantic prosody typically exhibits a rigorous tone and a positive orientation. Therefore, when selecting vocabulary for translation, it is crucial to consider both the contextual usage of semantic prosody and the functional implications of the chosen words. Thirdly, the characteristics of the text and the influence of political discourse must be taken into account. The

vocabulary used in political texts often carries specific political connotations, maintains a strong official tone, and may even serve a certain degree of political maneuvering. Therefore, in addition to ensuring translation quality, translation must also reflect the intended political message. This is a key factor influencing lexical choices. In this study, while "noticeably", "considerably" & "resolutely" exhibit partial conflict or conflict semantic prosody between the RWG and BNC corpora, they are still deliberately employed in translation, largely due to this very factor.

5.3 Importance of This Study and Implications for Further Translation Studies

This study examines translators' lexical choices and translation considerations in China's *Report on the Work of the Government* from the perspective of semantic prosody. It addresses the limitations of previous research, which primarily focused on emotional connotations, by incorporating an analysis of pragmatic functions. Through this study, the significance of incorporating semantic prosody into the translation process is further underscored, highlighting its crucial role in enhancing translation accuracy. To be specific, examining the semantic prosody of vocabulary can significantly contribute to translation studies. It enables translators to select words that align with the intended semantic differences of the target language, thereby avoiding rigid or unnatural expressions. Additionally, it helps mitigate pragmatic misunderstandings and refine translation strategies to ensure accuracy. Translation is not merely the transmission of information; it also involves conveying emotions, attitudes, and perspectives such as power relations. Thus, semantic prosody plays a crucial role in allowing translators to faithfully reproduce the original text's stance, tone, and ideological orientation. Meanwhile, it also offers a new research perspective and framework for subsequent studies in areas such as translation strategies and methods, translator behavior and awareness, political power in translation, machine translation, and textual comparison. Furthermore, from a methodological standpoint, this study demonstrates that CBTS and CDA as both methodological and interpretive frameworks effectively support translation research by providing scientific and well-founded data analysis.

6. Conclusion

This study gave a brief introduction to China's *Report on the Work of the Government* as well as the semantic prosody which is an important research field in corpus linguistics. Then it summarized some literature related to semantic prosody and translation so as to lay a foundation for this study of the RWG from the perspective of semantic prosody with a case study of "noticeably", "considerably" & "resolutely". With the help of the sketch engine and under the theoretical guidance of CBTS & CDA, this study collected data and made a comparative study of RWG corpus and BNC in semantic prosody, research findings are as follows:1) "noticeably", "considerably" & "resolutely" exhibit both similarities and differences in terms of usage frequency and semantic prosody. 2) From the perspective of SP, the translator's ultimate and most crucial reason for adopting these three words lies in political intent: spreading China's voice and fostering a good national image. 3) The translator's use of these three words reflects the distinction between literal translation and free translation. Their semantic prosody reveals the translator's intentions in lexical choice, which in turn shapes the selection and application of translation strategies. 4) In the political translation, semantic prosody serves as a key reference factor. Effectively managing the context, textual characteristics, and the underlying influence of political discourse can lead to a significant improvement in evaluating translation practices and enhancing translation quality.

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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