Study on Paratextual Elements in News Transediting: A Case Study on the Transediting Strategies in *Reference News*

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Abstract

Reference News is a state-owned news platform that provides foreign opinions to average Chinese readers. As the only Chinese news platform eligible for publishing articles from the foreign press, it serves as a "corpus" to study news transediting strategies in the context of China. This paper selects sources related to the COVID-19 pandemic from *Reference News* and compares the sources with the transedited articles. The author upholds there are three main paratexts guiding the process of transediting pandemic-themed articles on *Reference News*: reader's value and horizon of expectations, ideology and national emotions, and national interests. It can be concluded that, under the influence of those three paratexts, *Reference News* generally prefers to use four strategies to transedit relevant articles, namely the selection and combination of sources, deletion, addition, and variation. The author hopes that, given the significance and popularity of pandemic-related information and opinions, this paper can enlighten future research on transediting news articles about COVID-19.

Key words: News transediting; *Reference News*; Paratext; COVID-19 pandemic

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INTRODUCTION

Different from the traditionally defined "translation", news translation/transediting requires a number of modifications of the source texts so as to fully adapt them to the new context, which may result in totally different contents in the target text (Bielsa & Bassanett, 2009, p.19). *Reference News*, a state-owned news agency responsible for presenting foreign comments and opinions to Chinese readers, provides numerous materials for studying the transediting strategies in the context of China.

COVID-19 has definitely been the focus of media worldwide since its outbreak. More than a mere topic of public health, coronavirus is also a focus of political concern. When discussing the coronavirus, reports released by distinct news agencies from different countries clearly manifest disparate views, attitudes and ideologies. Therefore, to get news pieces well-understood and accepted by local readers, transediting is definitely in need.

The theory of *paratext,* created by Gérnard Genette, a famous French literary critic, was originally constrained to literature. Later on, it evolved to be applied to non-literary areas with news transediting being one of them. Professor Zhang Meifang summarized three paratextual elements in news translation/transediting, namely reader's value and horizon of expectations, ideology and national emotions, as well as bilateral relations and national interests (2011). Based on those three paratextual elements, the author of this paper mainly takes an interdisciplinary and descriptive approach to check how paratexts guide the choice of transediting strategies through analyzing coronavirus-related news articles collected from *Reference News*. The source text of each article on this news platform can be found at various English news websites, such as *CNN*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The Telegraph* and *Financial Times*. By comparing the original text and the transedited version, the author generalizes the transediting strategies adopted by this platform and digs deeper into the role that paratextual elements play in the whole process.

1. NEWS TRANSEDITING AND THE TRANSEDITING PRACTICE OF *REFERENCE NEWS*

1.1 Previous Studies on News Transediting

Browsing over numerous studies in news transediting through Researchgate, Google Scholar, and CNKI, an online platform designed to present important Chinese knowledge-based information resources, it is found that those essays examined the process from different perspectives. It is also worth noting that "transediting" is sometimes equal to "translation". A brief summary of the previous work on news transediting is presented as follows.

The concept of "transediting", coined by Stetting (1989, p.371, as cited in Bielsa & Bassanett, 2009, p.63), has become popular in news translation/transediting studies later. It explains the complicated relationship between news production and translation.

As Bielsa (2020, p.366) noted, there has been an increasing interest in news translation/transediting since the beginning of this century. Bielsa summarized three relevant aspects of news transediting, namely organizations, agents and texts.

As for organizations, Bielsa (2020, p.366) pointed out that news agencies play the role of multilingual institutions and recruit different language users to cater for the target readership. Those employees, or agents, consider themselves as journalists rather than translators. Their personal styles are always subject to a collectively defined style.

Text, or news discourse, is always the biggest subject when discussing news transediting. Transediting strategy is a frequent topic when it comes to the production of news articles. A combination of journalism and translation methods means that organizations and agents should select the source texts and modify parts of the original pieces during the process of transediting (Valdeón, 2021, pp.24-36). With regard to the following procedures of transediting, Bassnett (2009, p.120) pointed out that acculturation is a general strategy to make news articles suited to the target context. To achieve acculturation, news translation/transediting requires various modifications, such as changes of titles and subtitles, paragraph reordering, addition of information that is relevant, and omission of that is redundant (Biesla, 2020, p.367). Those techniques are widely used for certain desirable outcomes. The famous work *Translation in Global News* (Bassanett & Biesla, 2009, p.64) clarified that "news relevance and background knowledge of the target reader" are two standards of all those alterations involved in transediting. Furthermore, the overall aim of those modifications is to get the transedited news text better-suited to the demand of publication for which it is scheduled, as well as the target readership.

Nonetheless, the current studies in news transediting are not without limitations. One of the biggest issues might be the lack of theories originated from news transediting. Wang (2004, pp.47-50) noted that researches on news transediting have put too much emphasis on skills or strategies and ignore the underlying principle. Wang supported that news transediting should be considered as part of international communication rather than a mere translation activity. More recently, Bielsa (2020, p.370) stated that there is a poor number of studies in the reception of news readers, and studies in news translation/transediting have so far failed to shape methods and theories of translation.

All in all, news translation/transediting has been attracting more attention worldwide. Besides news institutions and news agents, numerous studies are conducted in the transediting strategies of news discources. However, limitations exist, and there is still a huge space for further investigation.

1.2 Previous Studies on the Transediting Practice of *Reference News*

Reference News is a famous Chinese news platform responsible for transediting foreign news on various topics. It serves as a gateway for Chinese people to learn about opinions from without. Since the main audience is Chinese people, a great number of previous studies in the transediting of news articles on *Reference News* are found on CNKI. Above all, some papers, within the framework of a specific theory, analyzed the process of transediting in a case-based approach and detailed the strategies adopted. Others may pay more attention to a single aspect of news transediting. However, the author finds fewer theses about the paratextual elements in news transediting. Furthermore, since the topic of coronavirus is relatively new, only an inadequate number of research papers have made public concerning the transediting of coronavirus-themed news articles.

2. THE THEORY OF PARATEXT AND ITS APPLICATION IN NEWS TRANSEDITING

2.1 Genette's Theory of Paratext

Paratext is, obviously, the central concept in the theory of paratext developed by Gérard Genette, a French literary critic. It was originally a substantial concept in literature that appeared in Genette's 1987 book, *Seuils*. Later, the book was translated into English and published in 1997, entitled *Paratexts: thresholds of interpretation.*

There is not a single and certain definition of paratext in the book, but rather, Genette explained it in multiple ways. Generally, the concept of paratext can be explained as productions that accompany a literary work, to turn a text into a book and to be presented as such to the public (Genette, 1997, p.1).

Peritext and *epitext* are two major types of paratexts. It can be said that "*paratext= peritext + epitext*" (Genette, 1997, p.5).

Genette designated peritext and epitext based on the *location* of those paratextual elements. Titles, prefaces, inserted elements that are within the same volume with the text fall into the first type of "spatial category" and are granted the name *peritext* (Genette, 1997, p.5). In contrast, those distanced elements that are outside the book, "generally with the help of the media (interviews, conversations) or under cover of private communications (letters, diaries, and others)", are granted the name *epitext* (p.5).

To put it in a more specific way, Genette identified every single component of peritext and epitext in his book. For peritext, Publisher's peritext, the name of the author, titles, the please-insert, dedications and inscriptions, epigraphs, the prefatorial situation of communication, the functions of the original preface, other prefaces and functions, inter-titles, and notes are components of peritext. With respect to epitext, it is divided into public one (the publisher's epitext, the semiofficial allographic epitext, and the public authorial epitext), and private one.

2.2 The Application of the Theory of Paratext in News Transediting

Batchelor pointed out (2018, p.8) that *Seuils* is not an uncompromising theory of paratext, and more exploration is expected, which was acknowledged by Genette. Genette hoped that further researches could go beyond French literature and embrace other cultural domains. The openness of Genette's theory, to a large extent, appeals a great number of translation scholars to build their own concepts on the original framework (Batchelor, 2018; Yu, Zhu & Dong, 2019).

Batchelor (2018, p.25) revealed that a majority of scholars still focused on literature, in accordance to the concentration of Genette. Even so, there has been many studies gradually going beyond the border of linguistics and literature and digging deeper into Genette's theory of paratexts in an interdisciplinary approach. The rapidly digitalized world prepares ground for a more intensive adaptation of Genette's framework. As Batchelor noted (2018, p. 46), the openness of Genette's theory "has allowed scholars to adapt Genette's framework to the digital era as well as to other kind of texts, notably film, television and videogames, and, to a lesser extent, news."

News translation/transediting, the theme of this paper, provides an excellent playground for studying the political aspect of paratextual elements. Zhang Meifang (2011), a professor from the University of Macau, summarized three major paratextual elements in news transediting after analyzing five cases, namely reader's value and horizon of expectations, ideology and national emotions, and bilateral relations and national interests. The following case analysis founds on the three paratexts proposed by Zhang, with

minor modifications. The author deletes bilateral relations from the third paratext, because the COVID-19 pandemic is an international issue, and in the majority of cases, Chinese journalists are trying to build up a positive international image rather than taking into account two-way relations. Therefore, the author mainly focuses on reader's value and horizon of expectations, ideology and national emotions, as well as national interests to examine how those paratexts guide transeditors to choose transediting strategies.

All in all, paratext has evolved from being a primarily verbal term to one that also includes non-verbal elements, and it has been put in a more diversified context of translation studies. The openness of Genette's theory of paratexts has created tremendous possibility and potential for further research.

3. CASE ANALYSIS

In this part, the author of this paper collects and examines twenty news articles under the theme of the coronavirus from the platform *Reference News*. In Section 3.1, the author elaborates on three major paratextual elements that dominate the news transediting procedures. In Section 3.2, four transediting strategies guided by the three paratextual elements are put forward. Section 3.1 aims at clarifying the concrete connotation and application of the three paratexts in coronavirus-themed news articles cited from *Reference News*, which prepares ground for the analysis of how those paratexts guide transeditors to select strategies in Section 3.2. In addition, the use of marks in the following two section should be explained. The corresponding parts are underscored in the source and target texts, and the delet-ed parts in the source texts are bracketed. It is also worth mentioning that all those articles are all transedited based on truth, without any huge deviation from the sources.

3.1 Major Paratextual Elements in News Transediting

As elaborated before, Genette created the concept of paratext, which latterly extends in types and scope of application. Based on those three paratexts summarized by Zhang, the author of this paper specifically focuses on reader's value and horizon of expectations, ideology and national emotions, as well as national interests after analyzing all those articles collected.

Reader's Value and Horizon of Expectations

The term *reader's horizon of expectations* is a critical concept in Reception theory put forward by Jauss. Specifically, it refers to a standard by which readers will understand, evaluate, and judge the text. Readers are reading a text with their preexisting values, which decides the importance of considering the true expectation of audiences, as well as the interaction between the text and audiences when creating the work.

Similarly, in news transediting, the expectation of readers is an important paratext, which decides whether

the news articles could arouse the interests and meet the demand of target audiences, and whether the opinions shared by the articles can be accepted by them. Here are two quick examples further explaining what reader's value and horizon of expectations refer to.

Example 1:

What Past Crises Tell Us About the Coronavirus Overreaction, overconfidence and confusion have damaged previous public health efforts (*Wall Street Journal*, January 31, 2020)	美媒总结美国疫情史给中国的启示：反应过度也有坏处 (*Reference News*, February 1, 2020)

The original article, entitled *What Past Crises Tell Us About the Coronavirus*

Overreaction, overconfidence and confusion have damaged previous public health efforts, was released during the deepest days of the epidemic in China. Back then, people were still caught in shock and worried about what was going to happen. As shown in example 1, the transeditor reconstructed the meaning of the primary title by, particularly, changing the target audience from "us" to "中国（人）" and only preserving the "overreaction", or "反应过度" in the transedited version. In this way, when Chinese people were worried about the rapidly rising cases, this article, with its content briefly illustrated in the title, was definitely what was in need and expected by the target readership then.

The paratext reader's value and horizon of expectations is a major paratext of news transediting. In many cases, whether the criteria of readers are met can influence their choice of continuing to skim through the article or abandon reading. Thus, this is an element worth minding by news transeditors.

Ideology and National Emotions

Ideology refers to *a systematic body of concepts, especially those of a particular group or political party* (American Psychological Association, n.d.; Merriam-Webster, n.d.). *National emotions* can be interpreted as a people's strong belief and love of nearly every aspect, such as culture, history, fellow members, and future development, of the nation. China is such a country where common belief and emotions are deeply rooted. To put that under a specific context, as a socialist society, solidarity is what every Chinese citizen pursues in the face of risks. During the pandemic, especially when the virus first emerged, there are many news pieces that encourage the unity in strength and eulogize the great efforts made by Chinese volunteers, medical professionals and other relevant workers. Transeditors from *Reference News*, obviously, have thought over the paratext of ideology and national emotions when producing the transedited version.

Example 2:

A New Generation of Volunteers Emerges in the Chinese City at the Epicenter of the Coronavirus Crisis (TIME, February 24, 2020)	"我知道，如果我不帮忙，我会后悔的" (Reference News, February 26, 2020))

The title of the source text, *A New Generation of Volunteers Emerges in the Chinese City at the Epicenter of*

the Coronavirus Crisis, depicts the personal actions taken by Wuhan citizens and oversea Chinese who volunteered to help the then virus-stricken city. In this report, a bar owner told the journalists that he knew he would regret it if he didn't help. Even though the original text precisely describes what was happening then, it is too objective to make people feel empathetic. As a result, the transeditors chose to use the words of the bar owner as the headline, which not only implicitly shows that volunteers are the lead roles of this article, but also strikes a chord in the heart of the readers.

A successful news article, while delivering the essential information, should also resonate with the emotions of the target audiences. Undoubtedly, dominant ideology in a country and national emotions serve as a paratext that guides transeditors to complete their work for Chinese audiences against the backdrop of the epidemic.

National Interests

National interests are definitely what a state-owned media should defend. Given the disparate positions of western countries and China, and the escalating tensions between nations during the outbreak of the pandemic, news transeditors need to thoroughly examine the source text and scrutinize any improper information or opinions.

Example 3:

(China deserves censure for not squelching the novel coronavirus when it started in Wuhan, but since then) it has fought a successful battle using tools such as lockdowns, social distancing, contact tracing, mask-wearing and isolation of patients. Some of the things that China has done would be considered too heavy-handed for the United States. (Washington Post, Oct 20, 2020)	中国通过采取封闭措施、保持社交距离、接触者追踪、佩戴口罩和隔离患者等手段，打了一场成功的战役。中国的一些措施在美国看来可能过于"苛刻"。 (Reference News, October 21, 2020)

We can see two major edits between the original paragraph and the transedited part. First, the transeditor deleted the beginning of this paragraph, which criticizes China for failing to contain the outbreak of the epidemic in Wuhan. However, the truth is that Chinese authorities took quick actions as soon as possible when the existence of the coronavirus was finally identified and shared information without reservation with WHO to help contain the virus. Therefore, the negative and ungrounded accusation is deleted in the final version. Second, the transeditor softened the tone of "heavy-handed", by enclosing the translated word "苛刻" with double quotation marks. Western media has long been advocating how "undemocratic" Chinese authorities are when combating against the epidemic. Such difference originates from disparate cultural background and ideologies. Thus, in order to uphold the decision made by Chinese authorities, the transeditor decided to change the tone of it.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, China has become the target of attacks by foreign media. Major accusations that are negative for China's national interests

mainly center around the failure of containment, the overwhelmingly tough measures, the concealing of data related to the virus and vaccine and so forth. In the face of those aggressive and inaccurate criticism, Chinese journalists from *Reference News* equipped themselves with their pens to uphold national interests.

3.2 Transediting Strategies of *Reference News* Guided by Paratextual Elements

When producing news discourses with foreign source, transeditors always take various paratextual elements into account. News transeditors are responsible for the selection and the following transediting of news articles. After analyzing the articles related to the COVID-19 pandemic on *Reference News* in detail, the author summarizes some major strategies adopted by transeditors at macro and micro levels. On a macro term, phasing out improper source texts and combining multiple sources in one article are two important strategies employed; on a micro term, deletion, addition and variation of certain words, sentences and even paragraphs can be frequently discovered.

3.2.1 Transediting Strategies on a Macro Level
The author finds that transeditors are cautious and considerate when selecting source texts. Two major strategies are unfolded in this section: screening source texts and combining multiple source texts into one article.

Screening Source Texts
Screening source texts is the first step that transeditors need to complete when transediting news articles. Transditors need to avoid adopting those articles that completely deviate from what is acceptable and promoted in China.

Citing the coverage of the visit of an expert team from WHO to Wuhan on January 14, 2021 as an example. Multiple pieces on *Reference News* have reported this event. For instance, a piece released on January 17, 2021 entitled 世卫组织：溯源研究十分艰难 感谢中方大力支持 can be sourced back to the regular press conference held by WHO on January 15, 2021. During that conference, Dr. Michael J. Ryan expressed his sincere gratitude to the support and enthusiasm from Chinese government, people and Wuhan authorities. He also noted that the trip aimed to trace the origin of the virus, but it might be fruitless since the whole process might be tough.

Nevertheless, it is inevitable that there are some negative voices showing irrational and deep-seated prejudice against the virus-sourcing trip of WHO to China. The *Wall Street Journal* published an article with the title *What WHO Won't Learn From China* on January 15, 2021. In this article, it is alleged that China delayed the beginning of WHO's trip while cascading words from the top to the grass-root level in order to hide the truth from experts.

The first source is not only more official and persuasive but is also coherent with the expectation of target readers and China's national interests. By contrast, the second source is baseless, since the alleged "delay" is just the quarantine regulations that everyone should obey, even if they are experts from WHO. Such a baseless and absurd opinion dominating the article is poisonous to the national image of China.

This is a single example among many. In a word, choosing the proper source text is the basis for the following transediting work. It is the responsibility of transeditors to learn about the latest events while considering the appetites of readers and the interests of their nation.

Combination of Multiple Source Texts
An abundant amount of previous research has shown that news reports tend not to have a single source text (Bielsa, 2020: 367). Transeditors often extract selected information from several source pieces and integrate them into a single report. Such a reader-oriented method can serve to emphasize what the report is about and help readers understand the topic better (Wen & Song, 2007, pp.69-70).

One report published on *Reference News* on January 15, 2021 entitled 外媒关注：中国拉响防控散发疫情警报 includes information from five sources: the notification given by China's National Health Commission of confirmed cases on December 29, 2020; a piece released by Reuters on December 28, 2020 concerning the tightening policy on travelling during spring festival issued by Beijing; a report issued by Reuters on December 27, 2020 about the situation, challenges and measures taken by China to prevent and control the epidemic before and during the spring festival; two pieces issued on December 27, 2020 from Spanish media platforms *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* involving detailed measures taken by a residential community, schools, and public places to control the epidemic, as well as suggestions on preventing people from gathering and travelling around during the festival made by the Chinese government.

As illustrated, by selecting contents from multiple sources, the transedited version can get rid of much redundancy and give target readers a comprehensive picture of the topic. In this case, audiences can have a glimpse of what Chinese authorities at all levels did when facing the reemerging cases. This, to a large extent, meets the expectation of the audiences to receive clear and concise information within minutes.

3.2.2 Transediting Strategies on a Micro Level
Deletion
Due to different mindsets, negative and sensitive words are easy to see in foreign news articles. Some of those opinions are false accusations that are deliberately distributed by western media to support its own value and ideologies. Those improper comments and information may displease Chinese readers, and cause damage to China's national interests. As a result, deletion comes out

to be a useful measure to prevent those baseless scandals from circulating in China. *Reference News* is an expert in deleting words, sentences and even paragraphs to keep those unpleasant noises out of the border. In this section, several examples of deleting negative or sensitive comments and information are presented with further elaboration.

A. Deletion of Negative Comments and Information
Negative comments and information are contents that manifest clear disapproval against what Chinese authorities and people uphold and practice. It is not uncommon that western media regards those groundless claims as weapons to attack Chinese people and twist China's image in the international community. Therefore, transeditors from *Reference News* choose deletion as a main strategy to deal with such contents.

Example 4:

Hung said the team had been having regular virtual meetings with Chinese virus researchers over the last few months ahead of the trip. (He said earlier he was "very disappointed" when WHO experts were denied authorisation to enter earlier this month, forcing two members of the team to turn back. China said there had been a "misunderstanding".) (Reuters, January 13, 2021)	越南生物学家阮雄（音）说，此前的几个月里，团队一直在与中国的病毒研究人员定期举行线上会议。 (Reference News, January 15, 2021)

The source report from *Reuters* is about the visit of experts from WHO in search for the origin of the coronavirus pandemic. Earlier in January, two experts in the team dispatched by WHO were refused to enter the border of China because they were tested positive for coronavirus. Obviously, the comment from this Vietnamese expert Hung is a complete prejudice, or "misunderstanding". The deletion of such irresponsible speech aims at defending the regulations made by Chinese authorities.

Example 5:

(The Chinese Communist Party has been singularly successful at stifling infections and vaulting Wuhan back to life faster than any foreign counterparts. But China, too, is singularly powerful at controlling remembrance of disasters, erasing troublesome facts and omitting critical questions from its official narrative.) (*New York Times*, January 22, 2021)	无 (*Reference News*, January 22, 2021)

Numbers of paragraphs may be deleted from the transedited version on *Reference News*. The source article in example 5 depicts the joyous scene in Wuhan after the epidemic is under control. However, despite the great successful containment achieved by China, western media can always find something to criticize China for. In this case, *New York Times* claimed that Chinese people are indifferent to remembering the dead and covering up the truth and doubts. Such a claim, undoubtedly, may not only hurt those Wuhan citizens who have lost their beloved ones, but also twist the fact and challenge China's official statement. Thus, it is reasonable to delete this paragraph.

B. Deletion of Sensitive Comments and Information
Apart from negative comments and information, some news pieces, though don't directly and aggressively make negative accusations, still include various sensitive claims that may erode the interests of China. Transeditors need to be cautious about what is beyond the actual words.

Example 6:

(For Moscow and Beijing, both keen to see their pharmaceutical sectors compete internationally, the sales represent a significant political and commercial coup.) China in particular has made bold promises that, by playing a leading role in the global immunisation drive, its vaccines will deliver a diplomatic win. (*Financial Times*, January 18, 2021)	报道称，中国作出了大胆的承诺，通过在全球免疫行动中发挥领导作用，它的疫苗将取得外交上的胜利。 (*Reference News*, January 20, 2021)

Out of the spirit of humanitarianism, China makes vaccines affordable and available to many developing countries in need. Nevertheless, voices allude to China's "vaccine diplomacy" prevail among western media. As illustrated in the bracketed fragment, *Financial Times* implied that the sales of vaccines can bring political and commercial edge to China and Russia. Though it is not a direct allegation, transeditors still deleted it for its potential meaning.

Background information of international politics is especially essential when transediting news pieces. Transeditors are required to read between lines and be careful about the potential interpretation of the source contents.

Addition
Addition is a common strategy that news transeditors may recourse to. It is employed frequently to clarify relevant information and emphasize a specific aspect of the news article.

A. Addition in Headlines
Headline is, to some extent, the most important component of a news article. Readers can decide whether to spend time on the article depending on the attractiveness of the headlines. On *Reference News*, the headlines will always clarify the source country or region of the article. Additionally, a small summary may be added before the headlines to give readers a first impression of the article.

Example 7:

China is beating the coronavirus while Trump leads America to defeat (*Washington Post*, October 20, 2020)	美媒惊叹中美"战疫"成效迥异："中国正在获胜，美国却走向失败" (*Reference News*, October 21, 2020)

Example 8:

Here in Shanghai, there's finally light at the end of the tunnel (*The Telegraph*, March 24, 2020)	一位英国人眼中的上海抗疫历程："看到了隧道尽头的光亮" (*Reference News*, March 26, 2020)

The up-mentioned two are typical examples of addition in headlines. As showcased in the former case, the transeditor strengthened that American media is shocked

by the great success made by China in the combat against the virus. The simple sentence grants the headline with a sense of national pride, which resonates with the feeling of readers while glorifies the national image of China. With regard to the latter example, the transeditor established the image of a Briton as the person who witnessed everything about epidemic control in Shanghai. This commends the efforts of Shanghai in an indirect, but more objective and persuasive way.

Several similarities can be found between these two transedited headlines. First, a brief summary of the article is placed before the original meaning of the headline. Second, the source country is clarified in the additional portion. Third, with an additional part, the tone of the headline is amplified in a way that caters to China and the Chinese people. By adding relevant information to the headlines, the news articles can better serve the expectation and emotions of the target readers, as well as the interests of China.

B. Addition of Forewords

On Reference News, hardly could people find an article without a foreword. For instance, in the article released on March 23, 2020 entitled 美媒称西方大学对中国学生吸引力降低：抗疫举措不力 种族主义抬头, whose source text was made public by New York Times on March 21, 2020, is added with a foreword as follows:

参考消息网3月23日报道 美国《纽约时报》网站3月21日刊发题为《西方大学依靠中国。新型冠状病毒过后，这种情况可能无法再持续》的文章称，随着旅行禁令的蔓延以及中国学生和家长对于西方对公共健康的放任态度的愤怒与日俱增，未来几年西方大学中国学生的入学率可能会直线下降。现将文章内容摘编如下：
(*Reference News*, March 23, 2020)

The source text, entitled *Western Universities Rely on China. After the Virus, That May Not Last*, mainly talks about the plummeting incomes of universities in English-speaking countries because Chinese parents and students, who account for a large proportion of income for those universities, are disappointed about the inadequate measures taken by western authorities.

Clearly, the foreword briefly illustrates the origin, date, headline and main content of the source text. Though this is only one of many examples, the foreword presented before the article can give readers clear information about the article. This is a considerate method that could bring readers much more convenience, which, of course, serves the expectation of target audiences.

C. Addition in Text

Compared with deletion and variation, there are less cases of addition in the text. Nevertheless, the basic principle for addition is still to provide relevant information and to emphasize the desirable part of the article. It is found that when western media reports information related to China, some content may be simplified. In this case, addition is essential to tell readers the entire and original story.

Example 9:

"We wanted to record the journey of battling against the COVID-19 epidemic via motion picture. Some of the details, including the intense care, anxious waiting, heartbreaking farewells and hopeful rebirths, might strike a chord with viewers," Cao was quoted as saying by state broadcaster CCTV. (*Associated Press*, January 22, 2021)	曹金玲在接受采访时说：“我们想用光影真诚记录这段波澜壮阔的抗疫历程。”曹金玲希望影片中关于紧张的抢救、焦急的等待、令人心碎的告别以及充满希望的新生等细节会打动观众的心。(*Reference News*, January 23, 2021)

As illustrated in example 9, the original essay introduces a Chinese documentary named *Days and Nights in Wuhan*, which records the life of ordinary people in Wuhan during the epidemic. According to the report from *Associated Press*, Cao Jinling, the director of this documentary, told *CCTV*: "We wanted to record the journey of battling against the COVID-19 epidemic via motion picture." If without any addition, the transedited version should be "我们想用光影记录这段抗疫历程". However, as is manifested by *Reference News*, "我们想用光影真诚记录这段波澜壮阔的抗疫历程" is the original words of director Cao. Therefore, while western media is trying to simplify Cao's words, *Reference News* recovers them to their original tone, which can lead readers to have a stronger feeling of empathy for this documentary.

Example 10:

China's 290 million migrant workers, who perform low paying but vital work, are critical drivers of the economy. And authorities in Hubei province, where the virus first broke out, said Tuesday that healthy migrant workers can be taken back to their places of work beginning later this week. (*CNN*, March 24, 2020)	中国2.9亿农民工所从事的工作至关重要，他们是该国经济的重要推动力。湖北省有关部门3月24日说，从3月25日零时起，对持有湖北健康码“绿码”的外出务工人员，经核酸检测合格后，采取“点对点、一站式”的办法集中精准输送，确保安全有序返岗。(*Reference News*, March 26, 2021)

As manifested in the underlined portion, detailed information about the announcement made by the Hubei authorities is added to the transedited version, including the date that the announcement was made, the exact time when the policy took effect, and the formal description of the policy introduced. By expounding on the policy related to Wuhan workers, transeditors from *Reference News* can ensure the accuracy of the news article when reposting the statement from authorities.

VARIATION

In many cases, simple addition or deletion cannot meet the demand of transeditors to adapt the transedited version better to the target context. Thus, variation of the tone and meaning of certain words and sentences may be employed with those three paratextual elements being the main reason for such changes.

A. Adjustment of the Tone

A trivial adjustment in tone can bring about obvious changes. The adjustment is usually made to stress the

negative side of the West based on truth, highlight the positive appraisals of China and reverse the adverse accusations against China.

Example 11:

| This plays to the <u>prejudices</u> of a president who often claims that the more you test, the more cases you have.
……
The president is, researchers at Cornell University found, "the single largest <u>driver</u> of misinformation around COVID."
(*Washington Post*, October 20, 2020) | 这也迎合了总统的谬见，总统经常说，检测得越多，病例就越多。
……
美国康奈尔大学的研究人员认为，总统是"新冠病毒错误信息的最大源头"。
(*Reference News*, October 21, 2020) |

The source fragment comments on the behaviour of Donald Trump, the former U.S. president, in a critical manner. The two underscored words, namely "prejudices" and "driver", are transedited into "谬见" and "源头" respectively. It is not difficult to identify the change of the tone. Naturally, "prejudice" means "偏见" and "driver" should be "驱动力", both of which are relatively softer in tone compared with "谬见" and "源头". Such an adjustment caters to the expectation and value of the targeted readers, since Donald Trump, a China hawk who politicized the virus in a reckless way, has long been considered negatively among Chinese people.

Example 12:

| "The vigorous expansion of the Chinese economy," the New York Times explains, "means that it is set to dominate global growth — accounting for <u>at least</u> 30 percent of the world's economic growth this year and in the years to come."
(*Washington Post*, October 20, 2020) | 《纽约时报》说："中国经济的强劲增长，意味着中国将主导全球增长——今年和今后几年，中国对世界经济增长的贡献率将<u>超过30%</u>。"
(*Reference News*, October 21, 2021) |

Example 12 is a good manifestation of how *Reference News* amplifies the positive information of China given by Western media. The original text commends China for its strong economic growth after putting the virus under control. Literally, the underscored "at least" should be transedited into "至少". However, the transeditor chose to slightly change "至少" to "超过". Such a modification stresses the great contribution that China will make economically, notably, without deviating from its original meaning.

Example 13:

| Chinese state media <u>is amplifying the message that</u> the country can bounce back strongly and that foreign companies and investors shouldn't be scared off, either.
(*CNN*, March 24, 2020) | 中国媒体报道称，中国可以强劲反弹，外企和外资不会被吓跑。
(*Reference News*, March 26, 2021) |

With regard to softening the aggressive tone, example 13 clearly illustrates the adjustment made in the transedited version. The underlined portion "is amplifying the message that" means that *CNN* regards as a boast the confidence of economic recovery shown in the reports released by Chinese media. The transeditor from

Reference News, therefore, softened the tone to "报道称" to defend the reputation of Chinese state media.

B. Reconstruction of the Meaning

The reconstruction of the meaning is usually combined with the deletion and addition of certain discourses. That is to say, the difference between meaning reconstruction and the other two lies in that the former one can change the whole course of the source text, or, at least, unfold a totally different picture before readers. The ultimate goal is always to meet the expectation and emotional demand of readers, as well as to stay in line with national interests.

Example 14:

| The long months of harsh lockdown have faded from view in Wuhan, the first city in the world devastated by the new coronavirus. <u>As residents look to move on, they cite a Chinese saying that warns against "forgetting the pain after a scar heals."</u>
(To many in this central Chinese city, the saying sums up a temptation to let go of the bad memories while reveling in the recovery. To families grieving in the shadows, it means the danger of hastily forgetting without a public reckoning for the lives needlessly lost.
A year ago when Wuhan shut down, it offered the world a forewarning about the dangers of the virus. Now, it heralds a post-pandemic world where the relief at unmasked faces, joyous get-togethers and daily commutes conceals the emotional aftershocks.)
(*New York Times*, January 22, 2021) | 长达数月的严格封闭已经淡出武汉的视野。这是世界上第一个遭受新冠病毒重创的城市。当地人期盼着继续前行。如今，它预示着"后疫情世界"的到来。
(*Reference News*, January 22, 2021) |

The original text in example 14 depicts the joyous scene in Wuhan after the epidemic. Nevertheless, the two following paragraphs (in the brackets) implicitly blame Wuhan people for forgetting their losses and sadness. In order to deliver a more positive picture to the readers, the transeditor reconstructed the underscored sentence in the source text. Literally, the writer of the source article means that "当地人期盼着继续前行，正应了中国一句古话——好了伤疤忘了疼". This, undoubtedly, will hurt the feeling of Chinese readers. Therefore, the transeditor rewrote it into "如今，它预示着'后疫情世界'的到来" and smoothly skipped over the following two paragraphs.

Example 15:

| Outside, <u>maskless partygoers spill onto the streets, smoking and playing street games with toy machine guns and balloons.</u>
(*Reuters*, December 17, 2020) | 户外，<u>社交聚会参加者们在街头涌动。武汉的夜生活正在全面恢复。</u>
(*Reference News*, December 28, 2020) |

The source text in example 15 describes the recovering nightlife of Wuhan citizens. However, words like "maskless", "smoking", or "toy machine guns" depict the overall picture of the post-epidemic nightlife in Wuhan as disordered. Thus, some elements that may trigger misunderstanding are deleted, and a brand-new scene in which partygoers restart to enjoy their nightlife on Wuhan streets is recreated. Thanks to such reconstruction, the image of a dynamic but well-organized post-epidemic life in China is established.

In summary, those three paratexts, namely reader's

value and horizon of expectations, ideology and national emotions, as well as national interests, provide solid ground for transeditors to select and modify news articles.

On a macro level, selecting source texts is the preliminary step for transeditors before proceeding with the following work. Transeditors need to avoid improper sources that are not in line with the value of Chinese people, as well as the ideology and interests of the nation as a whole. A combination of multiple sources is also a considerate method that will give readers a rather comprehensive picture of the events.

On a micro level, the deletion, addition and variation of words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs are all relevant steps to make sure that the transedited articles can get adapted to the new context, be accepted by the target readership and in line with national interests.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing examples concerning COVID-19 from *Reference News*, the author summarizes four major strategies of transediting while considering the three paratextual elements. First, transeditors have to carefully select source texts to avoid those improper materials that may deviate from the value and expectations of readers, or hurt their feelings and undermine national interests. Several sources may also be combined together to give the readers a thorough picture of a specific event. Second, negative and sensitive comments and information are usually deleted from the transedited article to avoid groundless accusations against China and the Chinese people. Third, addition is also employed by the transeditors, namely the addition in headlines and texts, as well as the addition of forewords. Addition can serve as a useful strategy to clarify relevant information and highlight a specific aspect of the article. Last but not least, variation of certain words, sentences and even paragraphs is utilized frequently as a strategy to transedit news pieces. Specifically speaking, the adjustment of the tone, and the reconstruction of the meaning are two major illustrations.

All in all, the author finds that the three paratextual elements are the basis for the reasonable use of those four strategies. The ultimate goal is to serve the target readers, as well as defend the national image and interests.

The significance of this paper lies in that, though there are previous studies on the transediting of *Reference News*, focused studies on transediting strategies of coronavirus-themed articles are still inadequate. Given the fact that the coronavirus pandemic has been nearly the most important topic among media over the past year, the author believes that it is meaningful to preliminarily summarize those strategies in detail.

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