Hangzhou Municipal Government's Diplomatic Image in English Work Reports: A Diachronic Corpus Approach

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed and interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This article selects the city of Hangzhou as a sample to explore how the China's municipal government established its diplomatic image through discourse features in government English work reports. The research extracts the six years' government's English work reports from Hangzhou government official website to establish the corpus and employs the corpus tool of Antconc to retrieve and collect the data of different word classes. Through comparing and summarizing their changing curves, the discourse features with mostly marked changing characteristics are selected for analysis. Thus, the governance features and the government image established in the discourses are explored. Meanwhile in order to further analyze the governance situation and development in the international environment, *Mayor's State of the City Reports of City of Reading, Pennsylvania* are selected to establish a parallel corpora for comparing the linguistic features of the government reports in China and in US.

Keywords: Municipal government; city of Hangzhou; city of reading; diplomatic image; work report; corpus.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English discourses publicized by Chinese government convey the established international image to the outside world. The existing researches on Chinese government's international discourses are carried out on two aspects. First, Chinese linguistic researchers focus on summarizing the English translation strategies of governments' discourses. For example, Wu proposed the strategy of "rewriting" [1] the original text such as "additions and deletions", and "interpretation" in Chinese government's discourse translations in considering the differences of Chinese and Western cultures, social ideologies and thinking modes. Second, other researches are focused on analyses of discourse features in lexicon, syntax and conversation structure, etc., e.g. Kang obtained two discourse features from the analysis of sentence structures through a case study: "political sensitiveness" [2] and "cultural gap" [2]. Some researches compare discourse features of different texts, e.g. Xu analyzed the wordings and tones in the two English translations of *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*[1] and concluded that "the translation from *Beijing Review*[2] is more in the expression pattern of Chinese and the translation from *Foreign Languages Press*[3] is more in accordance with the English expression" [3]. We retrieved through CNKI [4] for articles on Chinese government's discourses and acquired the statistics that over 96% researches summarize the translation strategies or discourse features by means of case study with individual or subjectively selected discourses which are not objective analysis with complete data in a certain point. Therefore, we decide to adopt the corpus approach to analyze the discourse features in complete quantities of discourses by computer mechanism. For another, the current researches center on national government's publicized

discourses, especially speeches delivered by the national leaders. These data only reflect the macroscopic governance image and features of the country, so this article aims to study the local governance features through the discourses publicized diplomatically by municipal government in China.

2. DATA COLLECTION AND CORPUS CONSTRUCTION

Hangzhou (HZ) is the representative internationalized city in China whose tourism, finance, import and export are closely concerned by the world. The municipal governments' work reports state the development plans and policies of Hangzhou which are closely related to the interests of all international parties. The English version of governments' work reports offer them information of the governance features and changing trends, thus are highly concerned externally. Because up to now the government only publicized its annual government English work reports from 2008 to 2013, we extract the six years' reports(*HR*) from Hangzhou government official website [5] to establish the integrate corpus marked as CHZ08-13 and the five sub-corpus marked as CHZ08, CHZ09, CHZ10, CHZ11, CHZ12, CHZ13 of the annually specific work report. The corpus above is processed through annotation and word segmentation with the annotation system "Tree Tagger". For improving the accurate rate of annotation, the texts are proofread manually. Meanwhile in order to further analyze its governance situation and development in the international environment, parallel corpus of an internationalized government are adopted for a contrast study. As U.S. represents the western governing ideologies and development, the City of Reading in Pennsylvania is selected because it is similar with the city of Hangzhou in various aspects such as economy, tourism, development and international communication and it has work reports similar with *HR* every year published-*Mayor's State of the City Reports of City of Reading, Pennsylvania(RR)*. Thus *RR* is collected to establish a parallel corpus in order to compare the linguistic features of the government reports in China and in U.S.

3. DISCOURSE ANALYTICAL METHOD: A CORPUS APPROACH

Jane Mulderrig presents a computer-aided critical discourse analytical method for analyzing

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[1]*The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping contains forty-three important articles and speeches by Deng Xiaoping from 1938 to 1965, which reflect his important contributions in military affairs, politics, economics and the Party building during the historical periods of the War of Resistance against Japan, the War of Liberation and seventeen years following the founding of the People's Republic of China.*
[2] *Beijing Review is China's only national weekly news magazine encompassing websites in five languages--English, Japanese, French, German and Chinese*
[3] *The Foreign Languages Press (FLP) is an international comprehensive publishing house, specializing in editing, translating and publishing foreign-language books for readers abroad. It also publishes foreign-language textbooks, reference books and books in Chinese.*
[4]*China National Knowledge Infrastructure*

[5]*http://en.gotohz.com/whatishot/bestofhangzhou/touritineraries/#sthash.VEdwmioc.mTsi0OZs.dpbs*

education policy discourse in historical context in the United-kingdom [4]. Her research is "structured around three distinctive but complementary phases of the methodology". [5] "First, corpus linguistic 'keywords' analysis is used to track the historical emergence and subsidence of dominant political themes in policy. Second, 'personalization' involves a more salient role for personal pronouns in constructing an apparently consensual, collectivized representation of policy decisions" [6]. "Third, 'managerialisation' highlights the operation of 'soft power' in contemporary educational governance whereby a particular grammatical transformation constructs an 'enabling' leadership role for the government alongside a form of 'managed autonomy' for citizens" [4]. However, keywords or rhetoric devices may have no distinctions and values for conveying any political signs in discourses with different genres and sources which take on features on other parts of speech. In order to explore those valuable discourse features, we first set overall retrieval conditions for different word classes based on systemic-functional grammar and discourse analysis theory including adjuncts, conjuncts, predictors, references, etc. With the corpus analysis tool AntConc, the data of each retrieval condition in different retrieval functions (frequencies, word lists, concordances, collocates and clusters) of the corpus are collected. We select the retrieval conditions with most marked data changes through six years and summarize the discourse features. Thus, the governance features and the government image established in the discourses are explored. Meanwhile the data in the parallel corpus *RR* is compared to study the differences of municipal governance features and government image in China and in the US.

4. DISCOURSE FEATURES AND GOVERNMENTS EXTERNAL IMAGE

The data show that three word classes are with most marked changes through six years, which are self-reference, nouns of high frequency and model verbs. This part gives detailed analysis of the discourse features in the three word classes through the corpus data and the established government images through the discourse features.

4.1 Self-reference

Self-reference is a linguistic form for speaker referring himself (herself/themselves) for communication needs. It projects the speaker's

emotion, mood, intentions and attitudes in a certain degree. E. Fine-gan thought "the speaker selects self-references based on the perspective of subjective expression and the starting point of subjective narration conditions." [7] Self-reference is usually classified into three types in discourse analysis: first-person self-reference, second-person self-reference and third-person self-reference.

Data retrieved in concordance show self-references in *HR* are all in the first person type which express government's position including four specific references: "We", "City", "Hangzhou", "Government". As discourses of government work reports are made up of statements which are simple declarative sentences with active voice and passive voice, here self-references function as subjects of declarative clauses made by the speaker representative of the government to state the work done in the past year, the current situation and the plans in the coming year. Self-references with modifiers should be counted into the data like "municipal government", "the whole city". While those expressions conceiving the four self-references but not expressing the speaker's position and viewpoint should be excluded, e.g. "E-government", "Hangzhou Art Expo", "City" and "Hangzhou" used as object in the expression: "The ranking of financial total and power put Hangzhou in the fifth place".

The frequency statistics of the four self-reference show their changing trends from 2008 to 2013 differ greatly. (Fig. 1) The curves of "We" and "City" fluctuate most substantially of the four. The frequency curve of "we" performs so dramatically that its word frequencies in the first five years are consistently close to 0 but soars to 224 in 2013 while the data of other three words falls off violently to 0. The frequencies of "City" keep approaching to 0 during the three years before 2011 and begin to rise high with 77 in 2011 and with 116 in 2012, but plunge back to 0 in 2013.

In semantics, "We" is a pronoun used by speaker to divide identity camps. In political speeches, "We" always covers the semantic part---the identity of the government which can be referred to different function departments. However, in different contexts the specific semantic references may change greatly. For example, in the sentence "We will build business circles in Qianjiang New City, Chengdong New City..." (*2012 Hangzhou English Municipal Government Work Report*), "We" refers to City Construction Department and its staff. In "we will carry out the

project of improving Hangzhou farmers' qualities." (*2011 Hangzhou English Municipal Government Work Report*), "We" refer to Agriculture Department and Labor Department. However, the objects of the sentences are always the work items benefiting citizens and the citizens in different professional roles are the ones who actually engage into these work items. Therefore, "We" conveys the connotative meaning that citizens are indispensable part for the government work. The datum of "We" up-rushing in 2013 reflects the citizens' character is included and strengthened in the governance. "City" and "Hangzhou" both cover the references to not only the government departments, also different aspects of the identity of "city" like citizens, construction achievements, etc., but these references are general and abstract concepts. In comparison, "Hangzhou", "City" and "We" all conceive the concept of citizens into the self-reference, but "Government" refers solely to the concept of the organization that is the governing authority of a political unit. Therefore, its constant low frequencies through 6 years avoid rousing the meaning of "government" as a ruling institute with the higher social status against its citizens.

The above linguistic feature analysis can be verified by the policy stated in HR. In 2013 HR first mentions to establish a service-oriented government which regulated in detail as "improve the basic public service system, and greatly improve the quality of life for urban and rural residents." (*2013 Hangzhou English Municipal Government Work Report*) It demonstrates that Hangzhou government began to concern the

citizens' benefits and to improve their central position in the governance. This policy shift of the municipal government in 2013 further verifies the current China's national policy shift. The National government set up the aim to "establish a service-oriented government" (*18th CPC National Congress Report*) in 18th CPC (Communist Party of China National Congress) in 2012.

Though "We" and "City" reach their respective high frequencies and take a big part of the subjects in the statements in specific years, through out 6 years subjects in HR are mostly made up of names of projects, work items or their pronouns such as "the property service(will be upgraded)", "the neutral gas pipes (will be laid)". They are used as subjects in passive voice structures to demonstrate the work has been completed, is underway, or is going to be done. According to "interpersonal functions" interpreted Halliday's Systemic-functional grammar [8], finites of subjects are divided into four tenses: present perfect, simple past, simple present and simple future. Take future tense as example, the occurrence number of "will" in 6 years totals 955. The future passive structure "will be" has the subjects of the names of projects, work items and their pronouns accounts for 56% with 531 occurrences (Fig. 2). This type of subjects lists the governance items clearly, reflecting that Hangzhou government is businesslike consistently. By contrast, "We" and "City" used as subjects emphasize the work carrier as a general unity and do not identify the specific leaders and workers responsible.
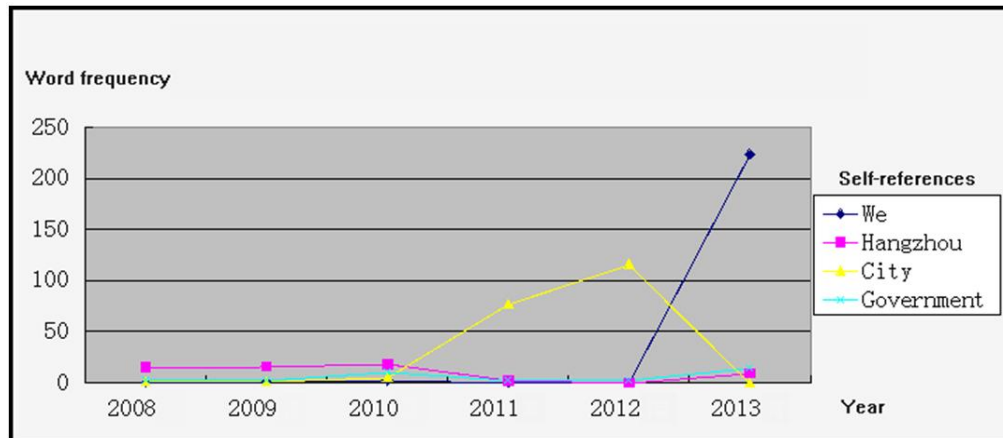

Fig. 1. Frequency trend chart of self-references in 2008-2013 Hangzhou Municipal Government English work reports

Fig. 2. Concordance of "will" in 2008-2013 Hangzhou Municipal Government English work reports

From the analysis of the data above we can see 2013 is the turning point for policy changes of Hangzhou government. For further study of its governance development stage in the international environment, a parallel corpus of 2013 *Mayor's State of the City Reports of City of Reading* (CRR13) is established. Considering the total numbers of words in the two corpuses CRR13 and CHZ13 are not equal, the data of CRR13 are all standardized to the quantity against the total number of words (12662) in CHZ13 in order to make the data comparable. The Word List and Concordance Retrieval show that self-references in CRR13 conceive four types of "self-references" totally-"Reading", "City", "Government", and "We". The word frequency of "Government" is 0 and "City" is the highest. "Reading" as the name reference to the city is similar to "City" as both of them express the general and abstract concept of the City of Reading as an entirety. The occurrences of "Reading" and "City" sum 189（base of 12662）well above the datum of "We". (Fig. 3) On one aspect, high frequencies of "Reading" and "City" emphasize the concept the government as the representative of the entire city. On the other, low frequency of "We" weakens the initiative roles of the citizens as "constructors" and "servers" to the city, but strengthens their roles as the passive receivers and the served from the governance. For another, the government's role as "server" to citizens is strengthened. Thus interpreting the discourses in RR, the municipal government and its citizens are in a relatively reversing relation as the "server" and the "served".
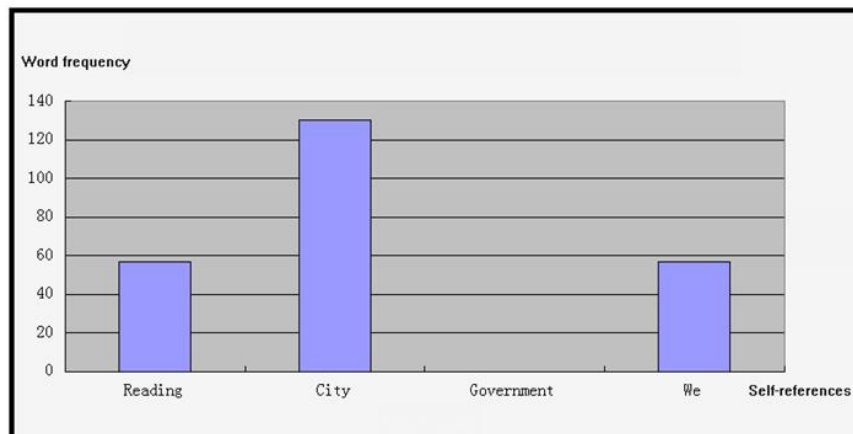

Fig. 3. Frequency statistics of self-references in 2013 Mayor's State of the city reports of city of reading, Pennsylvania

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Based on the data analysis of the self-references in the two corpuses, we can compare the governing concepts of the municipal governments in China and in U.S. According to Liu who first raised the ideology of "service-oriented government" in China, "the transmission of the service-oriented government in HZ is in line with the modern international governance ideology." [9] However, from the relation between the municipal government and its citizens in U.S., we can see that the HZ government builds its role in the transmission different from the "server to citizens" played by U.S. Instead, by extensive use of "We" HZ government includes its citizens into the "self" concept as specific "servers" or "constructors" to the city and establishes the union relation with its citizens. From here we can see that HZ government took in internationalized governance concepts and approaches in the transmission into a service government, but still preserves Chinese traditional governing philosophy which is "the government and the governors are all from citizens". So the two parties are considered as a unity.

4.2 Nouns of High Frequency

In corpus study, "words can be classified based on their occurrence frequencies". [10] HR are government's summary for reviewing works in the past year and planning projects in the coming year, so nouns of high frequencies are the themes or rhemes of the statements which are works centered by the government. In order to analyze the HZ government's focus through its work reports in 5 years, the top ten nouns of high frequencies are retrieved through the Wordlist in Antconc. (See Table 1).

We can see form Table 1 that "project", "development", "construction" and "enterprises" are always at high in frequencies through six years, from which we can infer that HZ government's guide to city construction and economic development are kept as the governance focus. Furthermore, since 2008 to 2009, nouns of economic measurements like "million", "billion", "thousand", "RMB" stay in high frequencies, from which we can infer that the government attach importance to economic indicators during the two years. While from 2010, nouns of economic measurements are depreciating in their frequencies but fresh nouns like "service, "system" and "investment" are taking over the high position instead. The noun frequency changes reflect that since 2010 HZ government converts its focus from simplifying economic indicators and macro construction to diversified economic development fields including "service" and "investment".

For further studying the relation between nouns of high frequency and the government's image, the frequency changing curves of the nouns in Table 1 are compared. Finally "service(s)" and "enterprises" with the most marked variation features are selected to have specific analysis.

From Fig. 4 we can see "service(s)" reaches its frequency summit in 2013 which verifies the conclusion in Part 3.1 that 2013 is the transmission point of service-oriented government. From its overall trend, "service(s)" is rising in its frequencies in 5 years. Therefore, the government's transformation in 2013 is the result of unceasing promotion of its service function for many years.

On the other side, the collocation words (span 1) of "services" retrieved by Concordance function show the project names of the government's services increase substantially in 2013 and emerge these fresh project names: "venture service center", "basic-level social service and management system", etc. This reflects the government's service functions are developing in classified and diversified fields.

Table 1. Top ten nouns of high frequencies in 2008-2013 Hangzhou Municipal Government English work reports

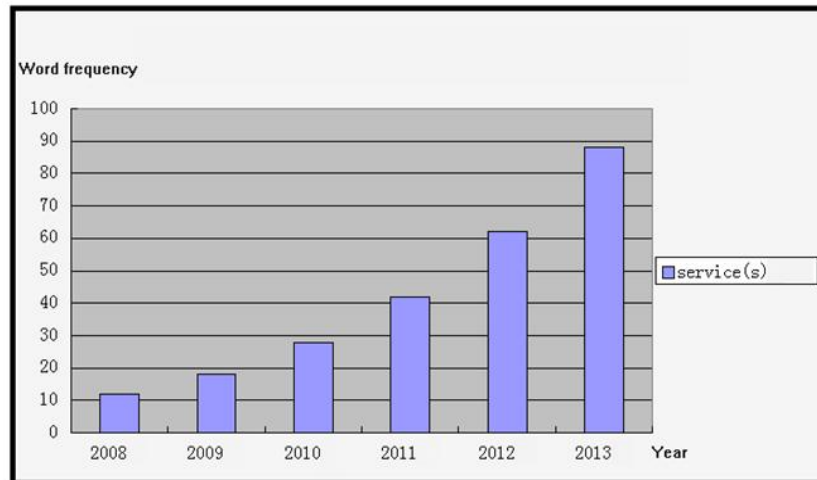| Year	Top ten nouns of high frequencies
2008	Hangzhou,RMB,thousand,China,million,enterprises,project,development, billion, work
2009	RMB, million, project, development, people, enterprises, construction, billion, industries, thousand
2010	Hangzhou, project, development, people, year, city, service, industry, construction, RMB
2011	Hangzhou, service, development, construction, system, projects, industry, investment, industries, cities
2012	City, projects, development, service, construction, system, investment, industries, energy, Hangzhou
2013	We, construction, development, enterprises, city, Hangzhou, service, system, level, government

Fig. 4. Frequency statistics of "service(s)" in 2008-2013 Hangzhou Municipal Government English work reports

"Enterprise(s)" is the most frequently used noun with 70 occurrences in 2013. Its frequency curve shows a rising tendency as a whole through 6 years. Especially since 2011 there is a significant uprising. By retrieving through Concordance, we can see the modified collocations of "enterprise(s)" are increasing in types year by year and each year there are emerging new collocations. (Table 2).

From Table 2 we can see that collocations of "enterprise" are continuously increasing. In 2008, there is only collocations of enterprise scales (large, medium-sized, small) In 2009, collocations of enterprise ownership appears (private-owned). In 2010, collocations of further enterprise classifications emerges including technological contents (high-tech, technologically advanced), demonstrative functions (exemplary), innovative forms (innovative), etc. Since 2009 to 2013, more "enterprise" combinations are newly emerging each year like private enterprises,

high-tech enterprises, innovation/innovative enterprises, service enterprises, Taiwan-Hong Kong enterprises, Macao-enterprises collocated with positive predicates (e.g. promote, support, foster), counts more on technological innovation, service industry and import and export for realizing economic growth. In 2013, new collocations related with environment springs up including paper making, energy and water consuming, polluting, which show that the government begins to supervise different types of enterprises with different policies. For example, the polluting and out-dated enterprises are mostly collocated with predicts "shutting down", "supervise" and "regulate".

For studying the differences of governance focuses of HZ government and the modern internationalized governments, the top ten nouns of high frequencies in CHZ13 and CRR13 are listed and compared.

Table 2. Modified collocations of "enterprise" in 2008-2013 Hangzhou Municipal Government English work reports

Year	Modified collocations
2008	large, medium-sized, small
2009	private-owned, medium-sized, small,
2010	new, innovation, outdated-finished
2011	high-tech, technologically advanced, innovative small/medium-sized, high-tech, leading
2012	service, exemplary, government-run, small/medium-sized, private-owned , Taiwan-Hongkong, Macao- large and leading, large ,e-commerce entering, back-bone, tech, innovative
2013	high-tech, school, private, cooperative, demonstration, state-owned, small/medium-sized, commercial and trade, leading, private, state owned, advantageous, upstream, downstream, innovation, micro, demonstration, cement clinker, paper making(shutting down), energy and water consuming, polluting,

As shown in Table 3, nouns in CHZ13 are with more general concepts like "construction", "enterprises", "system", while nouns in CRR13 are with more concrete concepts and most of them are related with public service affairs like "waste-water", "downtown", "fire", etc. The difference of the top ten nouns of high frequencies of the two governments reflects their current functional differences: HZ government centers on planning and guiding large constructive and economic developments while Reading's government mainly take charge of public services. The current functional differences are determined by different stages of social development in China and U.S. The society of U.S. has realized highly marketization in which public constructions and enterprise developments are currently completed by marketized institutes, and the urbanization in the edge of the city has almost been finished, so the government's main function turned to public service. In comparison, China's marketization is still in the developing stage, thus the urbanization and infrastructure constructions greatly depend on the government's macroscopic guide and control. For another, its service transmission is in the initial stage. So although "service" is in high frequency, most of the nouns with high frequencies are on large constructions and macro-development.

"Service(s)" is the common noun of most high frequencies that can be found in both of the two corpuses which demonstrates that service is the functional center of the two governments. However, in CRR13 there is a verb form "serve" which cannot be found in CHR13. The contexts of the four occurrences of "serve" are listed in Table 4.

Table 3. Top ten nouns of high frequencies in 2013 Hangzhou English Municipal Government work reports and 2013 Mayor's State of the city reports of city of reading, Pennsylvania

Corpus	Top ten nouns of high frequencies
2013 Hangzhou English Municipal Government Work Reports	We, construction, development, enterprises, city, Hangzhou, service, system, level, government
2013 Mayor's State of the City Reports of City of Reading, Pennsylvania	Million, waste-water, officers, public, services, authority, development, downtown, fire

"Serve" as a predict conveys the functions of "actor" and the "goal" in the "material process"

[11] Thus the relation of "the server and the served" is demonstrated, from which we can infer that the Reading government has a clear delineation of responsibilities and powers. On the other hand, governments in U.S. is elected by campaign, so speech to the public is an important way for government to gain recognition and win supports, and the usage of verb "serve" gives listeners a feeling as the beneficiary party. By contrast, in 2013 HR there is only "service(s)" as nouns which functions as subjects of the sentence to list the service items clearly. It reflects that Hangzhou government focuses on detailed service items which are the same with the conclusion in Fig. 2.

Table 4. Collocation contexts of "serve" in 2013 Mayor's State of the city reports of city of reading, Pennsylvania

Numbers	Contexts
1	...we will serve the citizens...
2	...my staff now serves on the Reading Water Authority...
3	...my administration can better serve the people...
4	...today serve on use purpose for asking...

At the same time, the only emphasis of the service items blurs the responsibilities of the specific departments and the responsible persons, which reflects in the current stage the HZ government has less awareness in liability classification in its service department. Considering that HZ government is still in the service-oriented transmission stage concluded in Table 3, the liability classification of the service departments still needs a long way to go. For another, local governments are under assessment system, so the clear list of the service items represents the government's achievements in public service.

4.3 Modal Verbs

Besides nouns of high frequencies analyzed above, modal verbs also show outstanding high frequencies through the 5 years' reports. The most prominent is "will" which is ranking the highest in the frequency of all content words each year in CHZ.

In English modal verbs are in a closed system with limited quantities, so they are easily counted up. It is agreed in linguistics that "modal verbs can be divided into the epistemic and the nonepistemic." Through retrieval and analysis of modal verbs and their contexts in CHZ, it can be

found that the epistemic modal verbs contain "could", "would", "may" and the nonepistemic modal verbs contain "will", "must" and "need". There is no negative forms (e.g. mustn't, can't) and other modal verbs (e.g. Might, shall, dare) in the corpus.

It is shown in Fig. 5 that the nonepistemic type ("will", "must", "need") makes up almost all of the modal verbs and "will" has an overall majority in the nonepistemic modal verbs. Though "will" is usually seen as the auxiliary of future tense, it impasses modality in pragmatic function [12]. Jiehong Bai and Yuzhi Shi [13] pointed that "as future tense is often used for expressing subjective intentions, the marks of future tense derive the function of modality." Therefore, "will" in HZ government's work reports conveys the

government's intention for conducting governance affairs, so it can be counted as modal verbs. Fig. 2 further presents the subjects of "will" are mostly names of projects, work items and their pronouns which will be carried out or completed in the coming year. The features of modal verbs reflect Hangzhou government is master of planning and actions. On the other side, the seldom used epistemic modal verbs in HR demonstrate the government's decisiveness in policies and plan-making.

By contrast, RR boasts modal verbs with more varieties. "Will" is still in the majority and the epistemic modal verbs takes part 24% in the total modal verbs there. (Fig. 6). It delivers the casual tone of the government in stating its plans and establishes its egalitarian image.
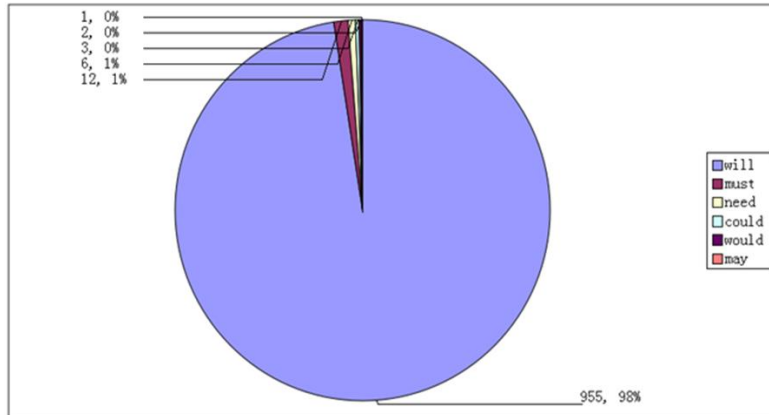

Fig. 5. Frequency statistics and proportion of modal verbs in 2008-2013 Hangzhou Municipal Government English work reports
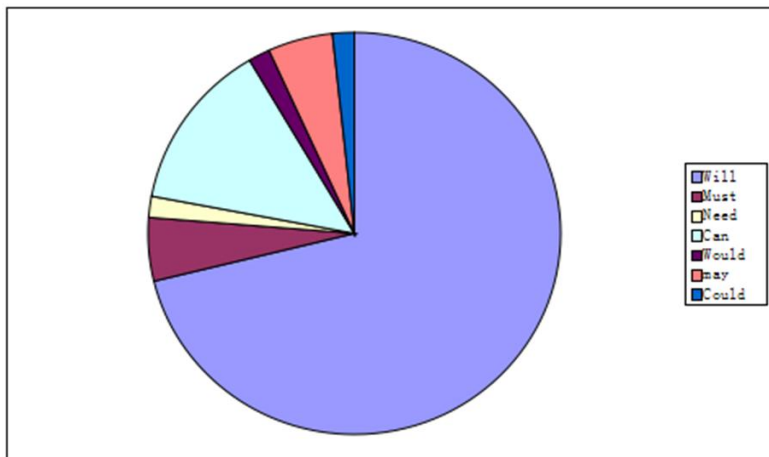

Fig. 6. Frequency statistics and proportion of modal verbs in 2008-2013 Mayor's State of the city reports of city of reading, Pennsylvania

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5. CONCLUSION

HZ municipal government's external image and its changes can be interpreted through the linguistic features in government English work reports. From the analysis of the data, we can conclude in three aspects. First, the government is moving towards internationalization including its service-oriented function transformation and its diversification and classification trend in guiding the city development. Second, in the service-oriented transformation, the government reserves the traditional Chinese governing philosophy-"unity of the government and its citizens", which is different from the modern western governing philosophy. In the current stage, the government functions mainly focus on guiding and programming large construction and economy projects. The public service function is being improved but is still not the main part in the governance functions. Third, the HZ government is always established its diplomatic image with strong plans and solid actions.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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