

Framing Narratives in the Translation of Chinese Political Discourse: Case Examples from *The Governance of China*

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Abstract

The English translation of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* showcases advanced translation practices within Chinese political discourse, crucial for facilitating cross-cultural communication. As a seminal work of 21st-century Marxism and a primary text of Chinese political thought, it represents the principles of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. This paper conducts a detailed textual analysis to examine how four key narrative framing strategies in the translation of Chinese political discourse shape and communicate narratives across cultural boundaries. Drawing on Baker's (2018) pioneering work in social narrative theory, this study illustrates how translators not only convey but also actively shape narratives. The findings reveal distinct employment of these strategies, coupled with diverse translation methods, to accurately convey the original narrative, thereby enhancing China's international communication. This research extends the scope of narrative studies and introduces a novel theoretical lens to the translation of Chinese political discourse. By integrating narrative theory with translation studies, it uncovers new dimensions and paradigms for the translation and interpretation of political discourse, offering critical insights for achieving effective cross-cultural communication in this domain.

Keywords: Chinese political discourse, cross-cultural communication, translation, narrative theory, framing strategies

1. Introduction

Academic perspectives view China's international discourse system as contextually specific within certain socio-cultural frameworks, representing a unique mode of globally articulating China's concepts, perspectives, and expertise (Ali, 2022). This discourse system is a meaningful exercise in interpreting the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics, in telling Chinese story, in shaping national identity and in constructing discursive power on the global stage. In this sense, "China's international discourse system is distinctly political" (Liu, 2022, p. 2). China's policies and stances on global issues have attracted a lot of attention, and these have been largely embedded in political discourse. Chinese political discourse is deeply entrenched in a distinctive cultural context, involving domains such as economy, technology, culture, education, as well as ideological development across various facets (Li & Yang, 2020, p. 98). Such discourse comprehensively interprets the road and the development of China, introducing new concepts and expressions reflective of the Communist Party of China's guidelines and policies (Du & Zhang, 2019).

General Secretary Xi Jinping, distinguished for his narrative prowess in political dialogues, has been instrumental in crafting China's diplomatic strategy, leading national foreign affairs activities, and fostering the theoretical and empirical evolution of China's diplomatic discourse (Zhang, 2016). As the principal pioneer and practitioner of China's diplomatic political discourse, Xi's discourse embodies the diplomatic ethos of socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era, showcasing a unique narrative style in diplomacy (Zhang & Zheng, 2022). Since their initial publication, the first and second volumes of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* in September 2014 and November 2017, respectively, along with their English editions and translations in dozens of languages, have been well-received both in China and internationally (Xinhua, 2020). The latest, the third and fourth volumes, were released in June 2020 and July 2022, respectively, along with their corresponding English editions. As an important conduit to contemporary China for the international community, this book embodies the straightforward, authentic, and modest demeanor of Chinese leadership, presented through clear and succinct

language augmented by illustrative narratives. The availability of this work in multiple languages enables readers worldwide to attain a deeper comprehension of China's development, addressing the international community's interests and concerns effectively (Chinadaily, 2017). These volumes emblematic of the most recent advancements in the contemporary Sinification of Marxism, embodying the latest evolution of Xi Jinping's Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era (Xi, 2020), represent a significant facet of contemporary Chinese political discourse. Departing from traditional expressions of Chinese political discourse, Xi's vernacular—characterized by its relatability, warmth, and accessibility—is highlighted by effective storytelling, extensive quoting from classics, vivid metaphors, and the frequent use of colloquialisms (Dou & Wen, 2015, p. 15). This linguistic approach not only enhances the appeal of the language but also fosters deeper understanding and camaraderie between nations.

Baker (2006; 2018) argues that translation, far beyond mere re-narration of reality, actively constitutes it. She asserts that through translation, individuals engage in framing narratives, employing it as an intentional strategy to shape reality. From this perspective, it makes translation a unique method of framing narratives, both in literal and rhetorical senses. This process is not only linguistic but also holds profound political significance. Specifically, political discourse, as a form of narrative act, uses language among other mediums to represent actions within distinct temporal and spatial contexts (Currie, 2010; Shen & Wang, 2023). In a world marked by conflict and globalization, translation becomes a vital tool for all parties to legitimize their actions, playing a critical role in social and political movements (Baker, 2018, pp. 1–2). Political agents worldwide have historically leveraged narratives for communication purposes. Hagström and Gustafsson (2019) highlight that there has been a marked increase in the recognition of storytelling's potent influence within the field of international politics. Political discourse, inherently designed to articulate political objectives or affirm stances, necessitates translators' fidelity to the original intent, which significantly influences the discourse's impact within the international sphere (Shusharina & Petrunina, 2023). It is imperative for translations to preserve the source text's persuasiveness and expressiveness, ensuring that international audiences grasp Chinese political stance accurately, thereby mitigating potential misunderstandings or ambiguities (Xu, 2023). Baker (2006; 2018) claims translation as a critical site of socio-political engagement and conflict, identifying four main framing strategies in translation: temporal and spatial framing, selective appropriation of textual material, framing by labelling, and repositioning of participants. These strategies highlight the complexity of translation as a form of framing narratives, emphasizing its capacity to influence perception and understanding across cultures and political landscapes.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This research examines the specific framing strategies used to frame narratives in the translation of Chinese political discourse, specifically focusing on Xi Jinping's political discourse. Xi's discourse exemplifies the diplomatic principles of socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era and represents a unique style of diplomatic narrative (Zhang & Zheng, 2022), marking a contemporary adaptation of Marxism to Chinese conditions. By analyzing translation as a form of re-narration, this research aims to understand how translations contribute to the framing of political discourse and influence global perceptions of China's development and international position.

1.2 Research Questions

This research delves into the specific framing strategies employed in constructing narratives in Chinese political discourse translation. It aims to identify, describe, and analyze four narrative framing strategies within this context. It also delineates the specific translation methods employed to implement these framing strategies, providing insights into their role in constructing narratives within Chinese political discourse translation. Guiding this research are the following inquiries:

RQ1: How are these framing strategies manifested in the translation of Chinese political discourse?

RQ2: What translation methods are employed to implement these framing strategies in Chinese political discourse translation?

1.3 Significance of the Research

This research is significant as it provides a comprehensive understanding of how framing strategies contribute to the translation of Chinese political discourse. It is crucial in the context of global communication and international relations, as it addresses the narrative construction and interpretation of China's policies and stances on global issues. The paper aims to deepen the understanding of the role of translation in shaping political narratives, enhancing cross-cultural communication, and bridging gaps in international diplomacy. By analyzing

Xi Jinping's distinctive narrative style and the contemporary Sinification of Marxism, the research contributes to the study on political discourse translation and framing strategies, offering insights for fulfilling translation objectives in Chinese political discourse.

2. Theoretical Review

Effective translation of political literature helps the international community to make sense of China's reform, development and stability, its internal affairs, foreign affairs and national defense, as well as its governance of the Party and the nation and the military, and plays a fundamental role in telling China's story, shaping its national image and building and enhancing its international discursive power (Sun et al., 2018). With the rise of China's comprehensive national strength, the international community has begun to pay more and more attention to Chinese political discourse, and the international community is more eager to deepen its understanding of the expression of Chinese political discourse (Xi, 2014). China needs more than ever to communicate its own voice, tell its own story and build its own political discourse system with Chinese characteristics. In the process of interpretation and construction of an international discourse system, "translation and communication are undoubtedly two core aspects of great significance" (Sun et al., 2018, p. 123). Therefore, it is of great strategic importance and urgent practical significance to conduct research on the translation of Chinese political discourse for international communication in order to build up the image of China, strengthen the construction of the international discourse system.

Baker and Saldanha (2009) posit that if the linguistic and cultural approaches to translation are understood as being purely based on the disciplinary distinctions providing their foundation, then logically, they should be viewed as complementary rather than opposing paradigms. The dichotomy between language and culture methods is an artificial construct, and the language/culture binary is outdated. Traditional theories of translation have shown constraints in fully understanding specific aspects or occurrences in the translation of political discourse (Fu & Yu, 2021). This highlights a pressing requirement to broaden the scope and depth of investigation in this area. The recent advancements in translation studies have benefited from a wider array of scholarly inputs, including sociology and narrative theory, transforming translation and interpretation studies into a genuinely interdisciplinary field.

The thoughts on translation of Mona Baker in *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account* interpret the act of translation from the perspective of framing. She sees translation as narrative and as framing. Translation does not only play a role of communication to reduce and ease conflicts, it also plays the role of segregation, provoking conflicts to wage war. Translation is not only involved in politics, but, especially in today's era of political and economic globalization, translation itself is an integral part of politics (Baker, 2006; Baker, 2018). Her new views on the discipline of translation and her different demonstrative methods are enlightening and instructive for the study of translation theory. She endeavors to work with narrative theory in the study of translation, consistently stressing the vital role of translation in the development of the whole society. Translation is far from being a by-product nor just a result of social and political developments, and not even a by-product of any interaction between texts and people; it is rather "embedded in the process that leads to these developments and movements" (Baker, 2018, p. 7). She introduces narrative theory into translation studies from sociology field and systematically interprets the application of narrative theory in translation, thoroughly manifesting the interdisciplinary nature of translation studies.

As stated by Bennett and Edelman (1985), the recognition that every acceptance of a narrative entails a rejection of others makes the matter politically and personally crucial. Competing narratives derive their significance from their differences. Translating political discourse extends beyond mere linguistic conversion, involving a comprehensive engagement with the source text's political, ideological, theoretical, and semantic layers before reinterpreting and framing it in the target language (Li & Qing, 2021, p. 10). This process is quite like the framing of narrative theory, which is "an active process of giving meaning with active strategies" (Baker, 2018, p. 106).

Baker's narrative theory is distinguished by the systematic model of translation analysis based on framing narratives. For scholars, this model helps them to probe the impact of translation on social development at a macro level, and it also serves to specifically explore how translation frames narratives and how narratives are framed to influence and construct society through narrative features and framing strategies. As a form of re-narration, translation similarly carries political implications. Embracing one narrative inherently dismisses others, sparking a competition among narratives. Thus, translation assumes a vital role in this exchange. Translators, like other societal roles, actively contribute to the narrative domain, framing narratives in diverse ways. Each bears responsibility for the narratives they propagate through their translation and interpretation

efforts. Political discourse demand precision, clarity, accuracy, and sensitivity in translation. Consequently, such translation holds particular importance, demanding cautious handling by translators. Essentially, the translation of political texts also constitutes a form of re-narration, crafting its own narrative. In this light, Baker's narrative theory greatly aids in the examination of the translation of political discourse.

There is considerable scope for combining narratology and translation studies, and many scholars have conducted systematic theoretical studies and practical textual analysis in this field (Zhang, 2022). Fu and Fan (2017) state that "translation is born with narrative characteristics, and translation cannot be detached from the text nor confined to what constitutes its own narrative function" (p. 163), so the combination of narrative theory and translation can not only enrich narratology, but also improve the system of translation studies.

3. Methods

This paper adopts a qualitative research design to explore the translation of Chinese political discourse. Recognizing the complexity of political narratives and their translation, this qualitative research focuses on the interpretivist position in measuring research quality (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014). The aim is to unearth the subtleties and implications of framing strategies used in the translation process, providing insights into how these strategies influence the reception and understanding of Chinese political discourse internationally.

3.1 Data Collection

The primary data for this research is taken from the book *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. The book's wide-ranging discourse offers rich examples of political narratives articulated by a key figure in contemporary Chinese politics. The process of gathering data is executed manually. To ensure a focused and relevant corpus, a purposive sampling method (Patton, 1990) has been utilized to select documents translated from Chinese to English for this research. The extracts reflecting framing strategies as outlined by Baker (2018) are selected as research material. This choice allows for a targeted exploration of how translation practices enact, modify, or reinforce particular narratives within the political discourse.

3.2 Analytical Approach

The research's analytical framework is rooted in textual analysis, a method that facilitates the exploration of texts beyond their superficial meaning to reveal underlying narratives and strategies, uncovering deeper meanings beyond ordinary reading (McKee, 2003). This paper takes Chinese political discourse and its corresponding English translation as the research objects. To be specific, following the narrative theory (Baker, 2018), the occurrence and application of framing strategies in the selected translations will be analyzed. This involves identifying specific instances where translators have employed particular framing strategies to construct the narrative, examining the translation methods used to achieve these effects, and analyzing the resultant narrative impact.

Central to the investigation is the examination of how translators navigate the interplay between source texts and target texts, potentially reshaping the discourse in ways that reflect or adjust to the expectations and norms of the target language audience. This process not only reveals the translators' roles as narrative agents but also illuminates the broader implications of translation choices for the international perception of Chinese political discourse.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

Due to the sensitive nature of political discourse, the research places a premium on the authenticity, objectivity, and validity of the analyzed texts. To this end, all source documents for this research are exclusively sourced from publications by the Foreign Languages Press, an official channel recognized for its authoritative translations of Chinese political materials. This selection criterion ensures that the data basis is both reliable and reflective (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014) of the discourse as presented to an international audience, thereby safeguarding the integrity of the research findings.

4. Results and Data Analysis

Baker (2018) claims that narratives not only can reflect the reality, but also create the reality, with translation acting as framing. According to Baker, framing is "an active strategy through which individuals can take part in reframing the social reality" (p. 106). This involves leveraging a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic resources to influence narrative construction. With some selected representative sentence examples, the following will expound on how translators apply four framing strategies—temporal and spatial framing, selective appropriation of textual material, framing by labelling and repositioning of participants to construct narratives within translations.

4.1 Temporal and Spatial Framing

Temporal and spatial framing involves setting a text within a different temporal and spatial context to give its narrative greater prominence, thereby encouraging readers to connect it with real-life narratives” (Baker, 2018, p. 112). This strategy serves to highlight some elements or some aspects of narratives, reinforce the narrative effect and resonate with the reader. Guided by this narrative framing strategy, in the translation of *The Governance of China*, Xi Jinping refers to elements like many events, figures, personal experiences and utterances from history which help readers to comprehend the profound meaning of the text in different temporal and spatial contexts. However, given no corresponding cultural background, international readers face difficulties in grasping the true meaning of the given text. The following analysis illustrates temporal and spatial framing strategy in the translation.

Example 1:

ST: 让党的创新理论“飞入寻常百姓家”。 (Xi, 2020a, p. 313)

TT: ... to promote our Party’s innovative theories among the people. (Xi, 2020b, p. 365)

The phrase “飞入寻常百姓家” (“flying into the houses of common people”), penned by Liu Yuxi, a distinguished poet of the Tang Dynasty, encapsulates more than its literal depiction of magpies nesting in the humble abodes of the common folk. Historically, the magpie is revered in Chinese culture as a harbinger of joy and good fortune, symbolizing the poet’s commentary on the socio-political shifts of his time. Liu Yuxi’s poetry, therefore, goes beyond mere observation of nature, delving into a profound reflection on the social upheavals and aspirations for egalitarianism.

In modern discourse, as exemplified by President Xi’s reference in the context of Public Communication in the New Era, the phrase undergoes a transformation in meaning, symbolizing the democratization of information and its accessibility to the general populace. This evolution from a literal to a figurative interpretation highlights the adaptability of classical literature in expressing contemporary values and aspirations. President Xi’s invocation of this phrase, with its rich historical and cultural connotations, serves to stress the government’s commitment to ensuring that the benefits of societal advancements are universally accessible, coinciding with the egalitarian spirit Liu Yuxi yearned for.

The challenge of translating such a multifaceted phrase lies in capturing its temporal and spatial cultural layers, while making it resonate with international audiences. Translators address these complexities by integrating the narrative elements of the original context with the current global landscape of accessibility and public engagement. By rendering “飞入寻常百姓家” as “promote among the people”, translators not only preserve the essence of Liu Yuxi’s imagery but also combine it with contemporary discussions on public communication, effectively bridging a millennia-spanning gap.

This dynamic equivalence method to translation reflects the importance of temporal and spatial framing and narrative sensitivity, ensuring that the timeless appeal of Liu Yuxi’s message is both preserved and revitalized for modern readers. Furthermore, it reflects on the ongoing relevance of classical wisdom in guiding current and future policies aimed at fostering an inclusive and informed society.

Example 2:

ST: 我们既要着力扩大需求, 也要注重提高供给质量和水平。 (Xi, 2017a, p. 76)

TT: We must focus on improving the quality and level of supply as well as expanding demand. (Xi, 2017b, p. 78)

In this example, a notable shift in the spatial sequencing of clauses is observed in the translation. In the source narrative, the “expanding demand” precedes discussions on “quality and level of supply”. However, the translated sentence inverts this order. This rearrangement is not arbitrary but serves a specific purpose in the context of the paragraph. It acts as a bridge, linking prior discussions to forthcoming content, with an emphasis on the current priority of enhancing the quality and efficiency of development.

At this juncture, China’s status as a major manufacturing hub is acknowledged, yet it is also recognized that much of its production is low-end, with a limited share in high-technology and high-value-added sectors. Consequently, the primary objective is identified as elevating the quality and standard of supply. Concurrently, expanding demand holds significant importance, given that consumption is a vital driver of economic growth.

This deliberate alteration in the word order by translators is a strategic use of spatial framing. It effectively reorients the target audience’s focus, directing attention to China’s prioritization of development quality and efficiency, and its efforts to balance this with stimulating consumption growth. In essence, this shift in word

order from the source text serves to accentuate China's developmental quality and efficiency, rather than the "demand" aspect emphasized in the source text.

4.2 Selective Appropriation of Textual Material

The selective appropriation of textual material signifies that translators deliberately choose what they want to translate, including text type, author, type of language and culture (Baker, 2018). On most occasions, selective appropriation of textual material is the most prevalent narrative strategy in translation. This framing strategy is primarily used to suppress, emphasize or elaborate the specific elements of the original narrative through the usage of omission and addition. This framing strategy can thus be manifested through two methods: omission and addition. Translators take the above methods to suppress, emphasize or elaborate certain elements of the original narrative, so as to convey the original narrative in an appropriate way with the best communication effect. Therefore, this section will conduct the analysis from the two points.

In order to avoid unnecessary information obscuring important information, translators sometimes omit some elements of the narrative.

Example 3:

ST: 有的拍脑袋决策，搞家长制、“一言堂”。 (Xi, 2020a, p. 502)

TT: Some make ill-considered or purely arbitrary decisions. (Xi, 2020b, p. 582)

In this context, “拍脑袋决策” (“knee-jerk decisions”), “搞家长制” (“patriarchal system”), and “一言堂” (“undemocratic atmosphere”) are three idiomatic Chinese expressions, each carrying significant cultural and political connotations. “拍脑袋决策” refers to decisions made impulsively, based on subjective and baseless opinions. “搞家长制” symbolizes a centralized power structure reminiscent of a feudal patriarchal system, where a single leader wields absolute control. “一言堂”, on the other hand, describes a work environment lacking democracy, where only the leadership team's decisions are valued, while others' suggestions are disregarded.

President Xi, in his address, highlights these expressions to address and critique decision-making practices within the Party. He underscores the emerging issues of formalities and bureaucracy that are impeding the Communist Party of China's (CPC) policy implementation and development. For Xi, it is imperative that Party officials ground their decisions in the social realities and practices at the grassroots level. This approach, he advocates, is crucial for ensuring that policies effectively enhance the well-being of the people.

Interestingly, the use of repetition, a common rhetorical device in Chinese to emphasize or express strong feelings, is evident here. The terms “搞家长制” and “一言堂” essentially convey similar meanings, emphasizing the drawbacks of hasty and autocratic decision-making. However, in the translation process, this repetition is strategically omitted to avoid redundancy and to streamline the narrative. Instead, the translators consolidate the essence of “搞家长制” and “一言堂” into the term “arbitrary decisions”. This choice not only captures the core message succinctly but also ensures clarity and brevity in the target text. While part of the source text is omitted in the TT, the fundamental narrative and its intended impact remain intact.

Additionally, the reason translators selectively add information to their translation is because of the different cultural backgrounds of the target audience.

Example 4:

ST: 处理好改革“最先一公里”和“最后一公里”的关系。 (Xi, 2017a, p. 102)

TT: We must handle well the relationship between “the first kilometer” and “the last kilometer” [the initiation and the implementation] of reform..... (Xi, 2017b, p. 109)

In this instance, the primary translation challenge centers around the Chinese political terms “最先一公里” and “最后一公里”. Translators have rendered these as “the first kilometer” and “the last kilometer”, respectively, with the additional explanatory phrases “the initiation” and “the implementation” included in the target text (TT). This addition is a deliberate strategy to bridge cultural and conceptual gaps between the source and target languages.

The phrases “the first kilometer” and “the last kilometer” are imbued with specific political significance in the Chinese context, symbolizing the commencement and execution phases of reform processes. However, without contextual elaboration, these terms could perplex target readers unfamiliar with Chinese political discourse. In Western contexts, the term “kilometer” does not conventionally modify or describe aspects of “reform”. Therefore, the translators' inclusion of “the initiation and the implementation” provides crucial clarification. It elucidates that these terms are metaphorical, representing the initial and final stages of reform initiatives.

This translation method demonstrates selective appropriation, a technique where aspects of the source text are adapted to enhance comprehension and relevance in the target context. By adding explanatory elements, the translators ensure that the essence and focus of the Chinese reform agenda—its inception and realization—are effectively communicated to an international audience. This addition not only preserves the original narrative's meaning but also makes it accessible and understandable to readers unfamiliar with the original political and cultural context.

4.3 Framing by Labelling

Framing by labelling involves a discursive process that identifies characters, locations, groups, events as well as other key elements in a narrative as a function of the use of words, phrases, or expressions (Baker, 2018, p. 122). It is used to give a descriptive framework to guide or constrain one's understanding of and reaction to the present narrative. In the Chinese version of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, there are many metaphorical words. If translators adopt the method of literal translation, target readers may become confused about them and the meaning or connotation of sentences may be changed in some extent. Therefore, we need to deliberate the English translations of those metaphorical words.

Example 5:

ST: 阵地才守得住，战斗才能打得赢，理想才能不断变为现实。(Xi, 2017a, p. 143)

TT: ...can we hold our ground, achieve success, and turn our ideal. (Xi, 2017b, p. 156)

This sentence, extracted from a discussion on the pivotal role of a county Party secretary, hinges on the metaphorical interpretation of “战斗才能打得赢”. A literal translation of this phrase could inadvertently convey a militaristic or aggressive image of the country, potentially leading to misunderstandings among target readers. It is essential, therefore, to discern and convey the underlying abstract meaning rather than the literal one.

In the source text, “战斗才能打得赢” does not refer to a literal battlefield victory. Instead, it symbolizes “achieving success” in a broader, more abstract sense. This metaphorical usage shifts the focus from a combative interpretation to one that highlights accomplishment and effectiveness. Such a translation reframes the narrative in a way that fosters a positive perception of Chinese county Party secretaries. It not only aligns with the intended information but also sidesteps potential cultural misinterpretations.

The choice to use “achieving success” as a metaphor in the target text is a strategic decision. It encapsulates the essence of the source narrative while mitigating the risk of misrepresenting the country's image. This method underscores the importance of contextual understanding in translation, especially when dealing with idiomatic or culturally specific expressions. By opting for a metaphor that resonates more appropriately with the target audience, the translation maintains the spirit of the original while ensuring clarity and cultural sensitivity.

In addition, President Xi employs some culture-loaded words to share his formative experiences and China's history. Therefore, the translation of these culture-loaded words holds substantial importance. Inaccurate translations can significantly have influence on the narrative framing.

Example 6:

ST: 我才十几岁，就从北京到中国陕西省延安市一个叫梁家河的小村庄插队当农民。(Xi, 2017a, p. 29)

TT: When I was in my teens, I was sent to a small village named Liangjiahe in Yan'an, Shaanxi Province, in western China. (Xi, 2017b, p. p29)

In this instance, the source text contains “插队”, a term deeply embedded in Chinese cultural and historical context. “插队” refers to the practice during the Cultural Revolution where educated urban youth, including President Xi, were sent to live and work in rural and mountainous areas. This practice is closely tied to the “上山下乡” (literally “going to the mountains and countryside”) political movement. While this term is well-understood by those familiar with Chinese history, it poses a significant challenge for translators addressing an audience without this background knowledge.

The English translation simplifies “插队” to “was sent to”, a decision driven by two primary considerations. First, there is no direct equivalent in English that captures the complex historical and cultural nuances of “插队”. A detailed explanation would require extensive historical context, which could detract from the narrative flow and main points of the source text. Second, while “插队” is culturally significant, it is not the central focus of the narrative. An in-depth translation could overshadow the primary message, making it harder for target readers to grasp the intended meaning.

Therefore, the translation opts for a simplification that, while omitting the rich cultural loading of “插队”, allows

the narrative to maintain its focus on President Xi's experiences as a farmer. This method effectively highlights the significance of these experiences in shaping the foundations of China's policies concerning rural areas, agriculture, and farmers. The translation thus navigates the delicate balance between cultural specificity and narrative clarity, ensuring that the core message about President Xi's formative years and their impact on policy development remains accessible to international audiences.

4.4 Repositioning of Participants

Repositioning of participants is a narrative framing strategy derived from relationality, a feature of narrativity involving the position of the participants in the interaction in relation to themselves, to each other and to anyone beyond the immediate event (Baker, 2018, p. 132). Much repositioning in translations is realized within the text or utterance (p. 135). Almost all the textual features can be reconfigured to reposition the relation between the participants within or around the source narrative.

Example 7:

ST: 我反复讲, 鞋子合不合脚, 只有穿的人才知道。(Xi, 2020a, p. 124)

TT: I have often said that only the wearer of the shoes knows if they fit or not. (Xi, 2020b, p. 150)

This sentence, drawn from Wei Yuan's "履不必同, 期于适足; 治不必同, 期于利民" during the Qing Dynasty, encapsulates a profound philosophical concept in a colloquial expression. Literally, it suggests that while shoes vary in size, the crucial aspect is whether they fit the wearer's feet. Similarly, governance methods may differ across countries, but their effectiveness hinges on the benefits they bring to the people. This idea is colloquially known as the "shoe theory". In his speech, President Xi Jinping employs this analogy to highlight the aptness of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for China, underscoring that the right development path is one that best serves its people.

The phrase "鞋子合不合脚, 只有穿的人才知道" (literally, "only the wearer of the shoes knows if they fit or not") is extracted from political texts but is expressed in a highly colloquial manner. By quoting it, Xi narrows the gap between himself and the audience, making his message more relatable and accessible. Translating this phrase poses a challenge: if rendered as "shoe theory", it risks confusing international readers, obscuring the intrinsic meaning. Hence, the translators opt for a literal translation, which not only retains the colloquial charm of the original but also accurately conveys its connotations.

By choosing to translate "鞋子合不合脚, 只有穿的人才知道" as "only the wearer of the shoes knows if they fit or not", the translators achieve a delicate balance. They preserve the source text's informal tone while effectively communicating its deeper philosophical implications. This method demonstrates the translator's sensitivity to both the literal and figurative meanings, ensuring that the essence of President Xi's message is comprehensible to an international audience.

Example 8:

ST: ……为建设科技强国、质量强国、航天强国、网络强国、交通强国、数字中国、智慧社会提供有力支撑。(Xi, 2020a, p. 25)

TT: These efforts will provide powerful support for building China's strength in science and technology, product quality, aerospace, cyberspace, and transport, and for building a digital China a smart society. (Xi, 2020b, p. 33)

In this example, the use of the term "强国" by Xi Jinping serves as a strategic linguistic choice to highlight China's multifaceted achievements. Amidst the deepening interconnectivity fostered by globalization, Xi Jinping's invocation of "强国" aims to boost domestic morale. A direct translation of "强国" to "big power", "strong power", or "great power" could potentially miscommunicate China's intentions to international audiences, especially its neighbors, thereby fostering misconceptions and possibly provoking hostility. Such misinterpretations would be counterproductive to China's efforts to cultivate an image of a nation that is peace-loving, warm, friendly, and a good neighbor.

To mitigate these risks, translators employ strategic framing, opting for a rendition of "强国" as "building China's strength" through liberal translation practices. This method not only circumvents potential diplomatic sensitivities but also supports the construction of a narrative that positions China as a progressively developing force on the global stage. By subtly redefining the reader's perspective, the translators play a crucial role in bridging cultural and linguistic divides. This ensures that the essence and subtleties of the original message are preserved, promoting a more accurate understanding of China's developmental ethos and aspirations among international audiences. Through such deliberate narrative repositioning, translators help to convey the narrative

of the source text in more detail, effectively avoiding the drawbacks of a literal translation and contributing to a more comprehensive global understanding of China.

5. Discussion

Upon analysis of the narrative framing in the translation of *The Governance of China*, it is found that translators frame narratives through temporal and spatial framing, selective appropriation of textual material, framing by labelling and repositioning of participants. As can be seen from the analysis of the examples, translation is the process of reworking narrative framing. A comprehensive account of Baker's narrative theory can be gained in the light of the analysis of the four framing strategies exemplified in the English translation of *The Governance of China*. Given the significance of translating political discourse, translators should be more meticulous in terminology and translation strategies, which will have a significant effect on the construction of the image of President Xi, the image of China and the power of international discourse. Translators can therefore apply these four framing strategies flexibly to political discourses in translation, particularly those associated with President Xi and China's broader international discourse.

To begin with, temporal and spatial framing is employed extensively in the translation of *The Governance of China*. During the translation process, translators do not need to, at a general level, intervene further in the text itself, but rather they only need to frame narratives by dynamic equivalence method or by shifting the word order of the source text. When translators properly apply the strategy of temporal and spatial framing along with the historical background in the translation of political discourse, they can effectively communicate the views, reinforce the narratives and serve the purpose in the narrative competition.

Besides, it can be found that the selective appropriation of textual material in the process of re-narration does occur at the discretion of translators. All the information that is omitted, added and emphasized reflects the function of ideology, under the impact of which translators actively take their subjective initiative and adopt the method of addition and omission to better carry the meaning of the narrative.

In addition, framing by labelling in this part involves two kinds of labelling devices which are metaphorical word and culture-loaded word. That translators employ some translation techniques such as omitting the controversial word or using metaphorical words embodies the strategy of framing by labelling. Translators provide narrative frameworks primarily grounded in the ideology or values of the Chinese government, thus guiding international readers to better appreciate and accept narrative discourses in favor of China.

At last, repositioning of participants is realized by repositioning within the text or utterance. In the translation of *The Governance of China*, translators may utilize either literal or liberal translation method to either preserve or enhance the narrative discourse of the source text. Additionally, shifts in register during the translation process can alter the dynamics among President Xi, the audiences, and the target readers, potentially repositioning their relational context.

6. Conclusion

This investigation has provided a comprehensive textual analysis of the translation practices within *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China II & III*, utilizing Baker's narrative theory as the theoretical underpinning. The findings demonstrate that translators, through active framing, can either reinforce or attenuate the original narrative during the translation process. This is achieved by employing specific framing strategies and corresponding translation methods within these framing narratives.

A significant contribution of this research is the application of Baker's narrative theory to the field of Chinese political discourse translation. It introduces a novel approach and analytical model for the analysis of political discourse translation, emphasizing the concept of "storytelling" in both narratology and the translation of political discourse for international communication. Traditional translation theories have encountered limitations in comprehensively interpreting certain features or phenomena of political discourse translation, indicating an urgent need to expand the depth and breadth of research in this field. This necessity underlines the imperative for both the application and innovation of translation theory. Through the examples analyzed in this research, it becomes evident that narrative theory can empower translators to transcend conventional translation perspectives, offering more natural and reasonable interpretations of political discourse translation phenomena.

In conclusion, this paper unveils a pioneering research perspective in translation studies of Chinese political discourse, asserting that translation transcends mere semiotic or discursive symbol conversion to encompass cultural and ideological recreation. The investigation foregrounds the applicability of narrative theory in political discourse analysis, extending its scope beyond traditional confines and offering fresh insights for future scholarship. This integration not only enriches narrative theory but also equips translators with innovative

strategies for navigating the complexities of political discourse. By advocating for framing narratives in translation, we present a novel paradigm that broadens narrative studies and introduces cutting-edge theoretical perspectives for the translation of Chinese political discourse. This research highlights the critical role of narrative theory in political discourse translation and charts new directions for subsequent inquiries, encouraging scholars to further explore and expand upon these interdisciplinary bridges.

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Authors' contributions

Dong Xu was chiefly responsible for data collection, designing the study, drafting the initial manuscript, and revising it based on feedback. Dr. Mohamed Abdou Moindjie and Dr. Manjet Kaur Mehar Singh contributed by providing feedback on the final version of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the manuscript for publication.

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