

Assessing Narratives in the Translation of Chinese Political Discourse: A Perspective from the Narrative Paradigm

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Abstract

In the global era, translating Chinese political discourse is key to enhancing international understanding and diplomacy. This research employs the narrative paradigm to assess the translation of Chinese political discourse, with the goal of enhancing the effective narrative comprehension of such translations for international communication. It applies Fisher's narrative paradigm and Baker's assessing narratives to investigate the application and impact of the principles of narrative coherence and fidelity in the translation of Chinese political discourse for international audiences. Employing a qualitative research approach, it conducts an analysis based on translations from volumes III and IV of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, as primary case studies. The research finds that translations of Chinese political discourse face specific challenges and opportunities in maintaining narrative coherence and fidelity. The principle of narrative coherence emphasizes the importance of creating coherent, accessible narrative structures in translation, while the principle of fidelity demands fidelity to the source's cultural information and political connotations, reflecting distinctive Chinese characteristics. Highlighting the significance of adopting the narrative paradigm in the international communication of Chinese political discourse, this research provides theoretical and practical insights for assessing narrative comprehension of Chinese political discourse translation. Moreover, the results offer a new perspective on narrative assessment for comprehension in cross-cultural and international communication, pointing directions for future research.

Keywords: Chinese political discourse, narrative coherence and fidelity, narrative paradigm, international communication, translation

1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, the strategic communication of political discourse beyond borders has become increasingly a key aspect of international relations and diplomacy (Pham, 2023). China, recognizing the power of narrative in shaping global perceptions, has embarked on a concerted effort to articulate its governance model and developmental achievements through the translation of key political discourse (Sun et al., 2018; Xinhua, 2021). The domain of Chinese political discourse translation epitomizes a symbiotic integration of translational activism with political involvement. According to Li and Wang (2023), this specialized field is "committed to fostering international discourse, aiming to bridge communicative gaps between diverse political landscapes" (p. 12). It stresses the strategic role of translation in amplifying cross-cultural understanding and facilitating diplomatic exchanges. Central to this endeavor is *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, a series of books that presents the core of China's political philosophy and policy orientations under the leadership of General Secretary Xi Jinping (Xi, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2021). Despite its widespread translation and distribution, covering over 170 countries in multiple languages (Liu, 2022), the effective conveyance of Chinese political discourse across cultural and linguistic boundaries poses significant challenges.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The challenge of translating Chinese political discourse into English encompasses more than linguistic fidelity; translating involves conveying complex cultural and ideological nuances to international audiences that may not share the same contextual backgrounds (Baker, 2018; Fisher, 1987). This task is further complicated by the need to maintain narrative coherence and fidelity, ensuring that the translated texts resonate with and are understood by global readers. Current research has predominantly focused on the dissemination of Chinese political discourse, with less attention paid to their communication effects by international audiences (Wang, 2022; Zhang,

2021). There is a notable gap in understanding how these narratives are understood by international audiences, particularly through a narrative paradigm perspective (Baker, 2018; Fisher, 1987). This gap highlights a critical need for empirical research into how the translation of Chinese political discourse is assessed and received globally, a crucial aspect for enhancing China's soft power and international image.

1.2 Research Questions

This research aims to address the following research questions:

RQ 1: How do the principles of narrative coherence and fidelity manifest in the English translations of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*?

RQ 2: How do the principles of narrative coherence and fidelity contribute to the assessment of cognitive narrative interpretation for Chinese political discourse translation, specifically assessing whether translators aid target language readers in achieving effective narrative comprehension through framing narratives?

1.3 Significance of the Research

Addressing these questions by assessing narratives in Chinese political discourse translations through the perspective of the narrative paradigm (Baker, 2018; Fisher, 1987) is crucial for several reasons. First, it contributes to the academic dialogue in translation studies and narrative theory, particularly in the context of political discourse translation. Second, it offers insights into the complexities of cross-cultural communication and the role of translation in international relations, providing guidelines for more effective translation practices. Third, by examining the assessing narratives of Chinese political discourse translation, this research sheds light on the broader implications for China's international image and soft power strategy (Guangming Daily, 2022; Yang, 2021). Furthermore, this research aims to provide actionable recommendations for policymakers and translators tasked with navigating the intricate process of presenting China's story to the world, thereby supporting China's efforts to promote a positive international discourse and strengthen its diplomatic strategy in the face of global changes and challenges.

2. Theoretical Review

The translation of political discourse, especially in the context of Chinese political narratives, occupies a critical juncture in translation studies and narrative theory. This section reviews prior research and theoretical foundation that support the research, focusing on the principles of narrative coherence, fidelity, and their roles in assessing narratives within translation studies.

2.1 Narrative and Narrative Paradigm

The act of translation itself is a particular narrative form, constituting a process of renarrativisation of the text. As a post-classical narrative practice, "this kind of renarrativisation, also known as retelling, differs from traditional imitation or replication, as it is far more than the mere reshaping of the model" (Herman et al., 2005, p. 460). Baker (2006, 2018) employs concepts from narrative theory and relevant theories, utilizing frame and framing to connect narrative with translation. This extends traditional narrative text analysis to social and cultural contexts, establishing a grand narrative theory of translation. Within this theoretical framework, narrative implies not only the reconstruction of narratives by translators in the target context but also signifies that "translators intentionally or unintentionally engage in constructing, negotiating, and questioning the social reality during the process of translating texts and discourses" (Baker, 2018, p. 105).

Fisher (1987, 1997), in his Narrative Paradigm theory, regards the principles of coherence and fidelity as the standards for assessing narratives. Humans are essentially storytellers (Fisher, 1985). This constitutes the fundamental philosophical assumption underlying the narrative paradigm. Storytelling stands as the intrinsic characteristic of human beings. The narrative paradigm, as proposed by Fisher (1987), offers a perspective through which to view translation as a narrative act, one that involves not just linguistic but also cultural and ideological transposition. In the context of Chinese political discourse, this paradigm facilitates an understanding of how narratives crafted within one political and cultural background are received in another. The work of Baker (2006, 2018) and the insights of Fisher (1997) emphasize the complexity of translating such narratives, highlighting the importance of strategies that translators employ to navigate these challenges.

Fisher considers reason to be a crucial issue and asserts that "rhetorical reason must be grounded in rhetoric, while in narrative rhetoric, reason is judged according to informal logic and practical reasoning" (Fisher, 1980, p. 123). He argues that mastering the logic of good reason (i.e., the rules of good reason) ensures a person possesses foundational or perhaps optimized knowledge. This knowledge should "inform invention, composition, presentation, and the commenting and interaction of rhetorical information, provided these skills demonstrate

rationality” (Fisher, 1980, p. 122). In other words, the entire rhetorical process—from seeking materials to composing, from delivering speeches to assessing audience responses and taking appropriate measures—should embody the rules of good reason (Cohen, 1998). Rationality, as Fisher defines it, does not depend on a particular form but relies on the application of good reasons. “Good reasons demand that individuals speak truthfully in the rhetorical process, listen to others’ concerns, and be willing to adjust themselves to accommodate others and speech should be grounded and avoid using forced arguments” (Fisher, 1980, p. 121). Therefore, rationality not only implies respecting reasoning but also involves understanding the essence of argumentation issues, knowing the form of the topic, and the methods of testing the topic. Regardless of the nature of interaction, individuals must be aware of the rules constraining specific argumentative interactions. Based on this rationality perspective, Fisher believes that the ability to reason is a fundamental characteristic of rhetorical ability.

2.2 Principles of Narrative Coherence and Fidelity

Narrative rationality consists of two aspects: narrative probability (judging the coherence of the narrative, ultimately depending on people’s judgment of the reliable actions of characters in the story) and narrative fidelity (Warnick, 1987, p. 173). In the context of narrative rationality, the first aspect involves assessing the potentiality of a narrative, relying on people’s judgments of the coherence of the story. This judgment is ultimately determined by the perceived reliability of the actions of characters within the narrative (Warnick, 1987). The second facet of narrative rationality is the fidelity of the narrative. Fidelity refers to the truthfulness or faithfulness of the narrative. It encompasses the commitment to portraying events or information accurately within the narrative framework (Warnick, 1987).

The concept of narrative coherence refers to the internal consistency of a story, how its elements align to form a coherent whole (Baker, 2018). In the translation of political discourse, maintaining coherence is paramount to ensure that the translated narrative remains understandable and persuasive to the target audience. Narrative fidelity, on the other hand, concerns the accuracy with which a translation reflects the source text’s content and intent (Fisher, 1987). These principles are foundational to the narrative paradigm, which posits that all forms of human communication can be viewed as narratives, each assessed for its coherence and fidelity (Fisher, 1997).

Assessing the coherence and fidelity for narratives in translation can ensure that constructive compensations for cognitive gaps in the translated text achieve reliability and validity in cognitive narrative interpretations (Yang, 2015). This means assessing whether the translator’s use of constructive compensation aids readers in achieving an effective narrative understanding. In Fisher’s (1987, 1997) narrative assessing paradigm theory, both the principles of the coherence and the fidelity are considered as evaluation criteria for narratives. Baker (2018), in turn, applies these principles to assess the credibility of the translator’s narrative construction in translation. She extends these concepts into the realm of translation studies, arguing that the essence of translation is renarrative, where the translator’s task is to recreate the narrative in a way that resonates with the target audience while preserving the original’s intent and meaning. The coherence and fidelity principles can also be utilized to assess the validity of cognitive narrative interpretations by target readers, essentially judging whether constructive compensation of framing narratives by the translator aids the readers in obtaining effective narrative interpretations (Yang, 2015, p. 101). This dual focus on coherence and fidelity forms the cornerstone of assessing narratives in translation, particularly for political discourse where the risks of misinterpretation are high.

To summarize, Fisher’s perspective on rationality emphasizes the application of good reasons throughout the rhetorical process, including invention, composition, presentation, and interaction. Additionally, narrative rationality involves evaluating the coherence and fidelity of a narrative. Understanding and embodying these principles contribute to the development of a rational and effective rhetorical ability.

2.3 Empirical Studies on Narrative Reception

Despite the rich theoretical framework provided by narrative theory and translation studies, empirical research on the reception of translated political narratives, particularly Chinese political discourse, remains limited. Studies have begun to explore the dissemination and impact of Chinese political narratives abroad (Liu, 2022; Wang, 2022; Zhang, 2021) but often focus more on the production side than on reception by international audiences. This gap points to the need for research that specifically examines how translated Chinese political narratives are assessed for coherence and fidelity by non-Chinese readers and the implications of these assessments for international communication.

2.4 Cross-Cultural Communication

Translators play a critical role in the process of translating Chinese political discourse for international communication, as they must navigate between preserving the source text’s authenticity (source

language-oriented) and adapting the narrative to meet the target audience's expectations and cultural norms (target language-oriented) (Aina et al., 2022; Sagadiyeva et al., 2021). This balancing act requires a deep understanding of both the source and target cultures, as well as the ability to creatively address the potential cognitive gaps faced by the target audience. Huang and Ding (2021) point out the direction of efforts to enhance the capacity for engaging in international communication. Sun (2023) has significantly invigorated the domain of Chinese political discourse translation studies and advocated the development of innovative cross-cultural communication strategies at a global level. By applying the narrative paradigm to assess narrative coherence and fidelity, this research aims to bridge the gap identified in previous research, offering new insights into the complexities of translating Chinese political discourse for global audiences.

3. Method

This research employs a descriptive qualitative research design to explore the translation of Chinese political discourse into English, with an emphasis on narrative paradigm—principles of narrative coherence and fidelity. The qualitative approach is chosen due to its suitability for in-depth textual analysis and its ability to accommodate the interpretivist perspective (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014) that guides this research.

3.1 Research Design

The descriptive approach in translation studies aims to thoroughly detail the multifaceted nature of translation activities as experienced in real life (Holmes, 2000). Following Holmes's perspective, this approach serves as a foundation for crafting general principles that help explain and foresee translation phenomena. Adopting an interpretivist perspective allows for a nuanced understanding of the complex nature of translation, where meanings are not merely transferred but transformed across cultural and linguistic boundaries. This research design is particularly apt for assessing narratives, as it acknowledges the subjective interpretation of texts by both the translator and the audience.

3.2 Data Collection

The primary source material for this study is Xi Jinping: The Governance of China, a series that provides a comprehensive overview of Chinese political thought and policy under Xi Jinping's leadership. The series was selected due to its significance in China's efforts to communicate its governance model internationally and its availability in multiple languages (Xinhua, 2022), making it an ideal candidate for examining translation methods and their impact on narrative reception.

A purposive sampling technique (Patton, 1990) was employed to select segments from the series that clearly illustrate the principles of narrative coherence and fidelity. This method ensures that the analysis is focused and relevant, allowing for a targeted exploration of how these principles are applied in the translation process and their effect on narrative reception.

3.3 Analytical Approach

The analytical framework of this study is grounded in textual analysis (McKee, 2003), which involves a detailed examination of the selected texts to identify and analyze the application of narrative coherence and fidelity. This includes:

- Identifying instances where translators have employed narrative paradigm to maintain or enhance narrative coherence and fidelity.
- Examining the translation methods used and their effectiveness in conveying the original message to the target audience.
- Assessing narrative interpretation for Chinese political discourse translation, specifically whether translators aiding target language readers in achieving effective narrative comprehension through framing narratives.

The analysis focuses on how translators handle the interplay between source and target texts, potentially reshaping the discourse to align with the expectations and cultural norms of the international audience. This examination sheds light on the translator's role as a narrative agent and the broader implications of translation choices for the international perception of Chinese political discourse.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Given the sensitive nature of political discourse, this research prioritizes the authenticity, objectivity, and validity of the analyzed texts. All source documents are taken from official publications by the Foreign Languages Press, ensuring that the research's data basis is reliable and reflective of the discourse as presented to an international audience. This approach safeguards the integrity of the research results and adheres to ethical standards in

academic research.

4. Results and Data Analysis

Based on narrative paradigm, we find assessing narratives of Chinese political discourse translation is demonstrated under the principles of coherence and fidelity.

Table 1. Narrative Paradigm in translation

Narrative Paradigm	Frequency	Percentage
Principle of Coherence	19	54.3%
Principle of Fidelity	16	45.7%
Total	35	100%

We categorize the data into these two principles, offering insights into the frequency and relative prominence of each principle for assessing narratives, thus enriching our understanding of assessing narratives in the translation of Chinese political discourse. As illustrated in the table, the principles of narrative coherence and fidelity are frequently manifested in the translation. To thoroughly grasp the assessing narratives, some examples are detailed analyzed and interpreted in the following.

4.1 Principle of Narrative Coherence

The principle of narrative coherence involves the internal consistency and integrity of a narrative, suggesting that “the cohesiveness of a story is determined not by its inherent qualities, but by the perception and acceptance of its audience” (Baker, 2018, p. 143). This perspective implies that narratives can be intentionally crafted and portrayed as coherent by individuals for personal, political, or military motives, highlighting the subjective nature of narrative coherence (Baker, 2018, p. 152).

In the context of translation, particularly between Chinese and English, the divergent structural and stylistic norms present unique challenges. Translators are tasked with not merely converting text but reconstructing it in a manner that aligns with the target language’s expectations, thereby creating narratives that resonate with the target audience’s expectations for coherence. For instance:

Example 1:

ST: 中国的昨天已经写在人类的史册上, 中国的今天正在亿万人民手中创造, 中国的明天必将更加美好。(Xi, 2020a, p. 79)

TT: China’s past made its mark on human history; China’s present is being created by the hands of millions of Chinese people; China’s future will be even brighter. (Xi, 2020b, p. 101)

In the provided example, an analysis of both the original text and its translation illustrates a notable linguistic distinction: Chinese frequently employs Structure “比……更加……” to convey comparative meanings, while English predominantly utilizes the comparative forms of adjectives and adverbs. Despite these syntactic differences, both linguistic approaches are fundamentally aligned in their purpose—they crucially contribute to enhancing the principle of narrative coherence, ensuring the narrative remains cohesive and consistent across both languages. The essence of cognitive compensation lies in reconciling potential formal or logical contradictions, aiding TT readers in overcoming cognitive limitations. This kind of structural coherence assists TT readers immersed in the narrative world in making logical judgments about the interconnections of referents in the narrative. It involves assessing whether the narrative exhibits any formal or logical inconsistencies (Baker, 2018, p. 144). This translation process illustrates the dynamic and adaptive nature of translation as a practice that seeks to maintain the narrative’s structural coherence across cultural and linguistic divides.

Example 2:

ST: ①要高度重视并及时阻断不同领域风险的转化通道, ②避免各领域风险产生交叉感染, ③防止非公共性风险扩大为公共性风险、非政治性风险蔓延为政治风险。④要增强斗争精神, ⑤敢于亮剑、敢于斗争, ⑥坚决防止和克服嗅不出敌情、分不清是非、辨不明方向的政治麻痹症。(Xi, 2020a, p. 97)

TT: □Close attention should be paid and prompt action taken to intercept transmission of risks between different sectors. □The goal is to ward off “cross-infection”—preventing non-public risks from growing into public ones and non-political risks from escalating into political ones. □We need to build up our fighting spirit, take an unequivocal stance, and resolutely prevent and overcome political lethargy, which will render us unable to detect hostile moves, distinguish right from wrong, or see the correct direction. (Xi,

2020b, p. 120)

In this example, during the framing process from ST to TT, the active sentence in the source text turns into a passive sentence, and several clauses assemble into a compound sentence as they relate to each other in ST. It is seen that this instance exemplifies causal employment of the narrative feature. Specifically, two short clauses ②③ in ST are combined into one long sentence □ in TT. Translators reorganise three coordinate clauses ④⑤⑥ into an attributive clause □. Translators deconstruct Structure of ST, sort out its semantic relations, and then reframe the narrative to make it coherent and easy to be comprehended by the target readers. This “material coherence” refers to the correlation and similarity between a narrative and other narratives of the same type of material. It examines how the presumed genre conventions and thematic similarities assumed by TT readers contribute to their cognitive interpretation. This is because “all narratives are embedded within other narratives” (Baker, 2018, p. 146).

Moreover, language encompasses a wide spectrum of elements, ranging from morphemes to syntax, phonetics to alphabets, and idioms to proverbs. Chinese idioms, in particular, encapsulate the essence of Chinese culture, mirroring the unique wisdom and experiences of its people. Predominantly derived from ancient Chinese literature, these idioms adhere to the syntactic structures of Classical Chinese, resulting in a higher information density compared to modern vernacular speech. Expressions such as Chinese idioms, ancient poems, prose, folk sayings, proverbs, and metaphors are firmly rooted in specific cultural contexts. This deep cultural embedding often poses challenges for people from other societies in fully grasping the true meanings and nuances of these expressions. Consider the following example:

Example 3:

ST: 所作所为的哪一件没有前车之鉴? (Xi, 2022a, p. 533)

TT: Which mistake have they made does not have a prior example? (Xi, 2022b, p. 620)

The idiom “前车之鉴” translates to “the lesson of a cart ahead,” deriving its origins from the Chinese philosophical classic *Xunzi*, completed in the 3rd century BCE. In this text, there is a notable line: “前车已覆, 后未知更何觉时?” which translates to “The cart in the front has overturned, yet the cart behind remains unaware. When will it awaken to reality?” This was originally intended to persuade emperors to learn from the mistakes of others. As time goes by, this phrase evolved into the concise four-character idiom “前车之鉴,” preserving its essence, which symbolizes learning from others’ errors, akin to lessons drawn from a preceding cart’s mishap. However, for audiences unfamiliar with *Xunzi* or this cultural background, a literal translation as “the lesson of a cart ahead” may not convey the intended meaning, thereby disrupting the Principle of Narrative Coherence. Characterological coherence, introduced by scholars such as Fisher and Baker, is employed to assess how the behaviors and values of narrative characters influence readers’ assessments of narrative reliability. It is equally applicable for assessing whether TT readers can successfully reconcile cognitive dissonances or misinterpretations in their understanding of characterological coherence within specific sociocultural frameworks. This coherence principle suggests that for effective communication, especially across different cultures, idioms should be adapted to maintain their underlying message while being accessible to the target audience.

4.2 Principle of Narrative Fidelity

Fidelity is assessed using the logic of good reasons, which demands assessing a narrative with reference to “the rationality of its reasoning and the value of its values” (Fisher, 1987, p. 88). Reasons are assessed by applying the logic of reasons and values are evaluated by reference to the logic of good reasons. Fisher illustrates how the principle of fidelity functions and how values are involved in the argument and determine its outcome. Values for loyalty to the country and values for moral conscience are context-specific.

Example 4:

ST:不能削足适履。(Xi, 2022a, p. 427)

TT: Cutting your foot to fit a shoe will not work. (Xi, 2022b, p. 497)

The Chinese idiom of “削足适履” literally means “cutting your foot to fit a shoe”, and Chinese people use it to refer to the improper use or mindless retention of something unsuitable. It is derived from the Chinese classic *Huainanzi*. Therefore, it is unlikely that Western readers have background knowledge of the connotation of this expression. Usually, translators tend to avoid this method of literal translation for idioms as it may result in translations lacking any meaning in the target language. However, this term differs from others. It excludes any components with Chinese characteristics, but vividly depicts a dramatic scene. To the target readers, it is

accessible that cutting one's feet to fit shoes is an absurd behaviour for the purpose of wearing shoes unsuitable for one's feet, and thus this idiom makes sense to them in this context. The principle of fidelity can be employed to examine whether the translator's renarrative remains faithful to the narrative structure and cognitive patterns of ST. In view of this, with the use of literal translation, TT shows no less drama than ST, and the target readers can not only get the meaning of this expression, but also appreciate the humour of Chinese. This narrative retains the features of ST and conforms to the principle of fidelity of the narrative paradigm.

Example 5:

ST: “志不强者智不达，言不信者行不果。” (Xi, 2022a, p. 81)

TT: An ancient Chinese philosopher observed, “the weak-minded cannot be wise; the dishonest cannot succeed.” (Xi, 2022b, p. 92)

This statement is derived from *Mozi* and it is intended to promote perseverance and responsibility. The translation criticises the weak-minded and dishonest people in the same way as Mozi addressed. The quotation carries a quite clear political connotation—to shoulder responsibility and forge ahead with the great struggle on the arduous path of development. TT reads in a strong tone resembling an urge to members of the Chinese Communist Party.

The principle of fidelity can be applied to scrutinize whether the translator's renarrative exhibits rigorous reasoning and embodies cognitive values reflective of the original narrative (Baker, 2018, pp. 152–153). The translation given in the example conveys the underlying political information clearly and concisely, and manages to capture the political equivalence of the source text. It embodies the ideas expressed in the source text and retains the underlying political implication.

ST contains two parallel phrases. “志不强者智不达” stresses the connection of ambition or strong determination with intelligence. This implies that those lacking strong determination or ambition will fail to become the wise. The translation effectively conveys this political information with the phrase “the weak-minded cannot be wise”. The phrase “weak-minded” in this context captures the connotation of missing ambition or determination, which is directly related to the political implication of ST.

The second phrase, “言不信者行不果”, emphasises the importance of honesty and credibility in accomplishing success. It indicates that dishonest or untrustworthy individuals will be unable to achieve their goals. The translation puts this idea as “the dishonest cannot succeed”. It provides an accurate reflection of the political sense, highlights the link between dishonesty and failure and aligns with the information in ST.

In the framing narratives, a note needs to be made that political equivalence can be subjective, depending on the particular cultural, social and historical setting within that text. However, given the information provided, it appears that the framing narrative retains the political implication of the source narrative.

ST is a symmetrical structure, and TT retains this structure. In the first half, “志” and “智” pronounce the same. They are translated as “weak-minded” and “wise” in alliteration. In the second half of the quotation, nouns “言” and “行” are translated as “dishonest” and “succeed” respectively. They simply express the original meaning without any particular style.

Overall, translators manage to maintain the political equivalence of the source text while capturing crucial ideas and meanings related to ambition, wisdom, trustworthiness and success. The translation is clear and concise and effectively conveys the political information to the target audience.

Example 6:

ST: 对山水林田湖草沙进行一体化保护和系统治理 (Xi, 2022a, p. 425)

TT: ... carry out holistic conservation and systematic governance of mountains, rivers, farmlands, lakes, grasslands and deserts. (Xi, 2022b, p. 507)

Mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, grasslands, and deserts are pivotal elements constituting China's ecosystem. Embracing the principle of fidelity in translation, to maintain a sense of natural authenticity, the method of direct translation is employed. This method meticulously lists these distinct eco-elements, rather than broadly summarizing them as an ecosystem. Such a method ensures the preservation of the natural essence and vivid details of ST. By translating terms with fidelity like “mountains, rivers, farmlands, lakes, grasslands, and deserts”, the translation upholds the original features and essence. This adherence to the original's characteristics exemplifies the principle of fidelity as well as a source-language oriented translation. Translators try to use literal translation to provide the target readers with a closer understanding of the discourse, in order to convey information, ensure cultural exchange and shape the linguistic style of the narrative.

Translation is a reproduction of the cognitive narrative structure of ST, requiring fidelity to cognitive constructions. The principle of fidelity aids translators in making compensatory decisions, involving considerations such as how implicit information among narrative facts can be recognized by readers, the efficacy of cognitive associations between narrative contents, the acceptability of narrative forms before and after compensation, alignment with readers' pre-existing cognitive experiences and habits, and whether it contributes to the development of readers' cognitive abilities.

5. Discussion

From above analysis, it is evident that assessing narratives of Chinese political discourse translation is demonstrated under the coherence and fidelity principles of the narrative paradigm. The analysis of narrative coherence and fidelity in the English translations of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* reveals the principles of narrative paradigm employed by translators to navigate the complex terrain of political discourse translation, aiding target text readers in achieving effective narrative comprehension through framing narratives. These principles are essential in ensuring that the translations resonate with international audiences while staying true to the source text's intent and cultural context.

On one hand, the emphasis on narrative coherence is essential in making sophisticated political narratives accessible to a global audience. By restructuring and simplifying complex ideas without weakening their meaning, translators facilitate a deeper engagement with the text. This process underscores the importance of coherence not just as a linguistic or narrative necessity but as a bridge to cultural understanding and empathy. The effort to enhance coherence, as observed in the examples analyzed, likely contributes to a more nuanced and positive reception of Chinese political discourse internationally.

On the other hand, maintaining narrative fidelity while adapting to the expectations of the target language audience presents a unique challenge. The fidelity to the source text's cultural and ideological nuances is crucial for authenticity. Translators' approaches, such as the careful handling of idiomatic expressions and culturally specific references, demonstrate a commitment to preserving the source text's integrity. This fidelity is instrumental in offering international readers a genuine insight into Chinese political thought and governance philosophy, fostering a more informed and respectful global discourse around China's role on the world stage.

All in all, assessing narratives in Chinese political discourse translation can involve monitoring constructive compensation in terms of coherence and fidelity, thereby ensuring the reliability and validity of the narratives. Translators emerge from this analysis as critical cultural intermediaries, whose work extends beyond linguistic conversion to include cultural negotiation and mediation. Their choices in maintaining coherence and fidelity highlight the delicate balance of making narratives relatable yet authentic. This role is particularly significant in the context of Chinese political discourse for international communication, where understanding and misinterpretation can have far-reaching implications for international relations and perception.

6. Conclusion

This research embarked on an in-depth exploration of the narrative comprehension of English translations of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China III & IV*, applying Fisher's narrative paradigm and Baker's assessing narratives to assess the narrative coherence and fidelity in Chinese political discourse translation. Through qualitative analysis, this research illuminated the complex interplay between these principles and their impact on the international audience's understanding of Chinese political discourse. It revealed that translators employ narrative paradigm to enhance narrative coherence, making complex political ideologies accessible to international readers while striving to maintain fidelity to the source texts' cultural and ideological nuances. These results demonstrate the translators' essential role as cultural intermediaries, navigating between the preservation of the source text's authenticity and the need to resonate with diverse international audiences.

This research contributes significantly to the fields of translation studies, narrative theory, and international communication by: 1) providing empirical evidence on the application of narrative paradigm—principles of narrative coherence and fidelity in assessing the translation of Chinese political discourse, 2) highlighting the critical role of translation in international diplomacy and cultural exchange, and 3) offering insights into the narrative paradigm translators employ to balance coherence and fidelity, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of translation as a complex, interpretive process. Although Fisher's narrative paradigm is not free of weaknesses, it is necessary to conduct intensive investigations on narrative comprehension and communication effect and carry out large-scale questionnaires for international recipients in future research.

The findings from this research have important implications for the international communication of Chinese political discourse. The detailed understanding of assessing narratives can inform more effective translation

practices, ensuring that Chinese political discourse is not only accurately translated but also culturally and contextually resonant with international audiences. This understanding can aid in refining China's approach to global narrative communication, emphasizing the need for translations that respect cultural differences which bring about mutual respect and understanding.

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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 reviewing and providing feedback on the final version of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the manuscript for publication.

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