

Translation Strategies for Chinese Human Rights Texts: A Big Data Analytical Perspective under Skopos Theory

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Abstract:

With the advent of big data analytics, new possibilities emerge for enhancing the functional adaptation of translations in cross-cultural communication. In the context of the increasingly pluralistic global human rights discourse, the cross-cultural transmission of Chinese human rights texts demands the support of sophisticated and effective strategies. Skopos theory, grounded in the principle of “functional equivalence,” provides a versatile theoretical framework for translation in international communication. This approach shifts the focus from mere linguistic transference to the reception and comprehension of the target audience within their cultural milieu. Given the policy-oriented, ideologically laden, and culturally specific nature of Chinese human rights texts, this study takes the white paper “*Seeking Happiness for the People: 70 Years of Progress on Human Rights in China*” as a case in point. It constructs translation strategies centered on policy and legal adaptation, ideological nuance, and cultural transformation. These strategies aim to mitigate cultural barriers and ensure the accurate transmission of information. Functioning as a cultural bridge in cross-cultural communication, they leverage big data analytics to foster a more nuanced understanding of China’s human rights narrative within the international community, enrich the diversity of global human rights discourse through data-driven insights, and provide a robust framework for addressing the challenges of cross-cultural adaptation in human rights text translation.

Keywords: Skopos theory, Chinese human rights discourse, big data analytics, translation strategies, external communication

INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, the integration of big data analytics into translation studies has revolutionized traditional methodologies, offering new avenues for enhancing the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication. By analyzing extensive corpora of multilingual texts, big data tools enable the identification of patterns in cultural preferences, linguistic variations, and audience expectations. This data-driven approach provides critical insights into refining translation strategies, particularly for ideologically nuanced and culturally specific texts such as Chinese human rights documents. When combined with the principles of Skopos theory, big data analytics offers a dynamic framework to address the complex challenges inherent in cross-cultural adaptation.

As China’s role in international human rights governance continues to grow, the global dissemination of Chinese human rights texts has become increasingly significant. However, the divergence between Chinese and Western perspectives on human rights—shaped by deeply rooted ideological and cultural paradigms—poses substantial challenges to effective international communication. These differences often lead to misinterpretation and cultural friction during the translation process, thereby undermining the acceptance and impact of Chinese human rights discourse in global contexts. Existing research has largely overlooked the potential of integrating functional equivalence and ideological adaptation into translation strategies for such texts. To bridge these gaps, it is essential to examine the functional positioning and cultural characteristics of Chinese human rights documents through the lens of Skopos theory, while leveraging big data analytics to enhance cross-cultural adaptability and audience comprehension. Functionally driven, data-informed translation practices offer a promising pathway to amplify the global reach of Chinese human rights narratives, foster intercultural resonance, and contribute to a more diversified and inclusive international human rights discourse.

SKOPOS THEORY AND ITS APPLICATION IN THE TRANSLATION OF TEXTS FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Skopos Theory, developed in the 1970s by German translation scholar Hans J. Vermeer, represents a paradigm shift in translation studies, offering a purpose-driven framework that redefines the objectives of translation. The

term Skopos, derived from the Greek word σκοπός meaning “purpose[1],” underscores the notion that translation is an intentional act of producing a target text for a specific audience within a defined sociocultural context[2]. By challenging the traditional emphasis on absolute fidelity to the source text, Vermeer’s theory prioritizes the functional and communicative aims of the translation, asserting that the translator’s primary obligation is to fulfill the purpose of the text in its target environment[3].

Texts intended for international communication serve not merely as vehicles for content delivery but as critical tools for shaping and projecting a nation’s image. Their distinctiveness lies in their dual role: disseminating national policies and cultural values while fostering intercultural understanding. This functional orientation demands that translators carefully calibrate the content to meet the linguistic norms and cultural expectations of the target audience. Particularly when translating texts imbued with ideological undertones, it is essential to preserve the integrity of the source text’s core message while ensuring that the translation is culturally sensitive and contextually relevant. Such adaptations are critical to avoiding misinterpretations and minimizing cultural dissonance. As Chang Chenguang aptly highlights, the essence of translating for international communication lies in “effectively telling China’s story.” This entails deploying linguistically sophisticated and culturally nuanced expressions to articulate China’s values, political positions, and cultural identity in a manner that aligns with the interpretive frameworks of global audiences[4]. Therefore, translation practices in this field must be anchored in functionality and intentionality, emphasizing the effective transmission of meaning across cultural divides. The ultimate objective is to produce translations that transcend mere linguistic accuracy, achieving strategic resonance and communicative efficacy within diverse sociocultural landscapes.

Skopos Theory plays a pivotal role in the translation of texts for international communication by emphasizing the functional equivalence of the target text. It provides translators with a flexible framework to adapt translation strategies based on the needs of the target audience, ensuring effective information dissemination across diverse cultural contexts. The three core rules of Skopos Theory—the Skopos Rule, the Coherence Rule, and the Fidelity Rule—offer systematic and explicit theoretical guidance for Chinese translations aimed at international audiences. As the cornerstone of Skopos Theory, the Skopos Rule requires translators to align their work with the overarching purpose of the translation. In the context of international communication, this involves enhancing global understanding of Chinese policy frameworks, promoting the international dissemination of Chinese culture, and shaping a positive national image. Translation strategies must be dynamically adjusted to suit specific communicative scenarios, ensuring that the functional objectives of the text are met effectively. Building on this foundation, the Coherence Rule emphasizes that translations must maintain logical consistency and readability within the cultural context of the target audience. A coherent target text enables readers to comprehend the message seamlessly, which is essential for facilitating effective communication. By adhering to the linguistic conventions and logical norms of the target language, the Coherence Rule ensures the smooth transmission of information. The Fidelity Rule, meanwhile, underscores the importance of accurately reproducing the core content and intended meaning of the source text. While preserving the integrity of the original message, translators must also incorporate appropriate cultural adaptations to enhance the resonance and communicative efficacy of the text within the target cultural context. Together, these three rules form an integrated theoretical framework that underpins translation practices for international communication. The Skopos Rule establishes the strategic orientation, the Coherence Rule ensures fluency and intelligibility, and the Fidelity Rule safeguards the accuracy of information and the preservation of cultural values.

THE FUNCTIONAL POSITIONING AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS TEXTS

As a vital component of external communication, Chinese human rights texts are distinguished by their pronounced policy orientation and ideological nature. Consequently, their translation requires far more than the mere conversion of language, presenting significant complexity and necessitating strategic adaptation. These texts carry the weighty responsibility of presenting China’s human rights perspectives, developmental trajectory, and political positions to a global audience. Translators must navigate the intricate balance between precise linguistic representation and effective cross-cultural communication, ensuring that the texts remain faithful to China’s unique human rights discourse while being comprehensible and acceptable within the international context. Moreover, given that human rights texts frequently address sensitive topics, their translation demands exceptional

flexibility and cultural adaptability to minimize potential misinterpretation and conflict, thereby maximizing the effectiveness of China's human rights discourse in global dissemination.

Functional Positioning of Chinese Human Rights Texts in International Communication

The functional positioning of Chinese human rights texts in international communication encompasses dual objectives: the transmission of state policy and the enhancement of China's discourse power in the global human rights arena. These functional roles can be delineated as follows:

Primarily, Chinese human rights texts play a crucial role in shaping and projecting the national image. Such texts are not merely instruments of policy dissemination but also embody manifestations of soft power, encapsulating the nation's cultural confidence and value system. The translation of these texts, therefore, extends beyond literal fidelity to encompass cultural adaptation, effectively showcasing China's proactive role and unique contributions to global human rights governance. By doing so, these translations aim to bolster China's international discourse power and elevate its national image within the human rights domain.

Secondly, a central function of Chinese human rights texts is their role in conveying China's policies and practical approaches to human rights. As a core component of international communication, these texts go beyond merely summarizing and presenting domestic policies; they function as strategic tools for elucidating China's human rights stance and developmental path to the international community. Through translation, these texts communicate the unique attributes of China's human rights philosophy, "asserting China's human rights position, policies, and safeguards while addressing international concerns regarding China's human rights conditions." [5] In this capacity, they introduce diverse perspectives into the global human rights narrative, enriching the discourse and offering alternative viewpoints.

Thirdly, from the vantage point of cross-cultural communication, another essential objective of Chinese human rights texts is to enhance global understanding and foster recognition of China's human rights philosophy. The fundamental challenge in cross-cultural communication lies in ensuring the effective transmission of information across distinct ideological and cultural contexts. On human rights issues, the ideological divergences and cultural discrepancies between China and the West frequently give rise to misunderstandings or gaps in interpretation. To achieve the intended objectives of external communication, translators must meticulously address the cultural and ideological dimensions inherent in the source text. By employing functional translation strategies, they can adapt China's human rights discourse to resonate with the cultural and linguistic expectations of diverse international audiences. This process not only facilitates the clear and effective transmission of information but also plays a crucial role in shaping positive perceptions of China's human rights philosophy. By bridging ideological divides and overcoming cultural barriers, these translations contribute to fostering a more inclusive, nuanced, and constructive dialogue within the global human rights discourse.

According to Skopos Theory, translation is a goal-oriented human activity, and its methods and strategies should be determined by the function of the target text. The translation of Chinese human rights texts must, therefore, be guided by a clearly defined *Skopos*, which, as outlined above, is the international communication objective of these texts. This purpose dictates the selection and prioritization of translation strategies. Taking *The White Paper on Human Rights in China* as an example, its translation objective can be articulated as "disseminating the achievements and principles of China's human rights development to the international community, thereby fostering a deeper understanding and recognition of China's human rights philosophy." To achieve this, translation strategies must be tailored to the cultural context of the target audience. This involves addressing and mitigating misunderstandings and biases stemming from differences in cultural, historical, and institutional contexts.

Leveraging big data analytics provides an innovative approach to uncovering the nuanced linguistic and cultural characteristics of Chinese human rights texts. Through the analysis of extensive corpora, including multilingual human rights documents and global policy papers, big data tools enable translators to identify patterns of discourse, recurring terminologies, and key ideological differences between Chinese and Western frameworks. Such insights help refine the functional positioning of these texts by aligning them more closely with the expectations and interpretive frameworks of international audiences. For example, sentiment analysis and keyword extraction can reveal how specific terms, such as "socialist rule of law" or "collective rights," are perceived in different cultural contexts, allowing translators to make informed decisions about terminology and phrasing that enhance global

resonance.

Linguistic Characteristics and Translational Challenges of Human Rights Texts

The linguistic features and cultural dimensions of Chinese human rights texts constitute pivotal considerations in their translation process. These texts are characterized by the precise and formalized language of policy and law alongside profound ideological connotations and rich cultural context. Accurately grasping these linguistic nuances and addressing the associated challenges is critical to formulating effective translation strategies and ensuring successful cross-cultural communication.

The intricacy of policy and legal language

The principle of human rights under the rule of law is deeply embedded in China's governance framework, a theme prominently featured in its human rights white papers[6]. The notion of "legal protection of human rights" reflects the intricate interplay between human rights, legislative frameworks, and policy initiatives. For instance, the emphasis on "strengthening the legal protection of human rights" in these white papers reflects the constitutional enshrinement of human rights, which not only shapes legal relationships but also integrates human rights as both political rhetoric and normative discourse[7]. Consequently, Chinese human rights texts exhibit a high degree of policy orientation and legal formality, defined by precision, rigor, and a standardized use of language. They employ extensive official terminology and adhere to structured, authoritative expressions that encapsulate constitutional provisions, policy declarations, and mechanisms for rights protection. The language is succinct yet dense, with a carefully constructed logical framework that emphasizes its normative and authoritative nature. However, the reliance on meticulously crafted official formulations poses considerable challenges for translators. A lack of in-depth understanding of specific legal provisions or policy contexts may hinder the accurate interpretation and reproduction of the original meaning. Moreover, the nuanced distinctions inherent in legal and policy language demand exceptional precision and contextual awareness. Any misinterpretation or misalignment risks distorting the text's intended message, thereby compromising its communicative efficacy.

Ideological encounters

Chinese human rights texts are deeply imbued with the nation's ideological underpinnings. Their language serves not only to articulate policy but also to propagate China's unique human rights philosophy. Terms such as "Socialist Human Rights with Chinese Characteristics," "People-Centered Development," and "Shared Growth" encapsulate China's distinctive stance and values in the realm of human rights. However, these ideological concepts may not resonate with or be fully understood by audiences in Western political and cultural contexts, potentially leading to misinterpretation or distortion during translation. The legitimacy of any human rights framework is intrinsically tied to its ideological foundation. Such legitimacy is inherently recognized only within communities that share a common ideological orientation. For those adhering to differing paradigms, the same framework may appear invalid, as it is assessed against entirely different normative criteria. Consequently, ideological frameworks are inherently context-bound, and their legitimacy diminishes when applied beyond their intended ideological sphere[8]. When translating human rights texts, it becomes imperative for translators to take into account the ideological disposition of the target audience to preempt potential conflicts or misalignments. The core challenge lies in effectively embedding ideological content into the translation while maintaining its original meaning and resonance within the target cultural context. Achieving this requires a nuanced approach that delicately balances ideological fidelity with cultural adaptation, ensuring the ideological essence of the source text is preserved without alienating or confusing the target audience. This careful negotiation is pivotal for safeguarding the text's communicative efficacy and achieving its intended objectives in cross-cultural dialogue.

Cultural barriers

Chinese human rights texts are replete with culturally specific expressions that are deeply rooted in the nation's historical and philosophical traditions, often carrying distinct cultural imagery and value systems. Concepts such as *ren'ai* (benevolence) and *datong* (universal harmony) reflect traditional Chinese philosophical interpretations of social relations and human rights, which differ markedly from those prevalent in Western discourses. The absence of direct equivalents for these culturally laden concepts in Western languages, coupled with their potential ideological divergence from Western human rights frameworks, poses significant challenges for translation. The

linguistic style of Chinese human rights texts reflects the nation's cultural values. For instance, the concept of “*jia guo qing huai*” (a profound sense of familial and national responsibility) serves as a foundational pillar of Chinese social consciousness, with its origins deeply entrenched in Confucian philosophy. This concept underscores the intrinsic interconnectedness of individual, familial, and national well-being, positing that the prosperity of the family and the stability of the nation are mutually dependent. It advocates for individuals to actively contribute to the collective prosperity and stability of the state, embodying a vision of human rights that considers national and collective interests while also valuing individual welfare. Such a perspective stands in stark contrast to the Western liberal tradition, which predominantly emphasizes the primacy of individual rights and personal autonomy as its central tenets. The divergence in these underlying ideological frameworks has resulted in substantial disparities in the interpretation and application of human rights between China and the West. These differences present formidable challenges for translators, who must ensure that Chinese human rights texts achieve cultural intelligibility and ideological acceptance within target audiences.

TRANSLATION STRATEGIES FOR CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS TEXTS UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF SKOPOS THEORY

In the context of globalization, employing Skopos Theory ensures that Chinese human rights texts achieve greater effectiveness and influence in international communication. This, in turn, facilitates a broader understanding and recognition of China's human rights philosophy on a global scale.

The Skopos-Oriented Approach to Translating Chinese Human Rights Texts

The rules of skopos, coherence, and fidelity serve as the foundational pillars of Skopos Theory. Together, these rules establish a systematic and nuanced approach to translation that preserves the textual integrity, enhances cultural resonance, and maximizes the communicative efficacy of Chinese human rights texts in a global context.

The Skopos rule: function-oriented translation

The Skopos Rule underscores that the ultimate goal of translation is to fulfill its predefined communicative purpose, with translation strategies tailored to accommodate the cultural and contextual expectations of the target audience. This concept, encapsulated in the maxim “the end justifies the means[9],” is particularly pertinent to the translation of Chinese human rights texts. Here, the aim extends far beyond mere linguistic conversion; it encompasses ensuring that the translated text effectively fulfills its intended communicative function within the target cultural and political landscape. Chinese human rights texts carry the dual responsibility of articulating the nation's policy positions and showcasing its achievements in human rights development. Within the framework of international discourse, they also seek to convey China's distinctive social development path. Consequently, the translation process must prioritize the accurate transmission of these messages and mitigate potential cultural misunderstandings, rather than rigidly adhering to literal equivalence.

In practice, the Skopos Rule demands a nuanced and purpose-driven approach from translators. They must, on the one hand, ensure the faithful communication of China's policy positions and ideological perspectives; on the other, they must adapt the cultural nuances of the source text to enhance its relevance and intelligibility for the target audience. For instance, Western human rights narratives often emphasize individual freedoms and democratic governance, whereas the Chinese perspective places greater weight on collectivism, social stability, and economic development. Such divergences in ideological and cultural frameworks necessitate a translation approach that transcends linguistic precision, requiring careful adaptation and selective emphasis to ensure the text aligns with its intended purpose. In such scenarios, translators must apply the Skopos Rule with flexibility, employing techniques such as restructuring sentences, replacing terminology, or providing explanatory notes to ensure that the text's functional objectives are met.

The coherence rule: ensuring logical consistency and cultural adaptability

The Coherence Rule mandates that any target text must align with the cultural norms and linguistic conventions of the target language, maintaining logical consistency and cultural appropriateness to facilitate comprehension by its intended audience[1]. In the translation of Chinese human rights texts, the cultural context and value systems of the target audience play a crucial role in shaping the interpretation and acceptance of the text. Therefore,

translators must ensure that while the linguistic forms of the source text are accurately rendered, the translated content achieves cognitive and cultural coherence within the target audience's framework.

Chinese human rights texts often encompass specific political, legal, and social contexts, such as the nation's emphasis on the rule of law, its social security system, and its prioritization of economic development. These aspects may be misunderstood or misconstrued by audiences from different cultural backgrounds. As a result, translators need to carefully structure the text to preserve the original intent while making it accessible and comprehensible to the target audience. For instance, when translating China's interpretation of human rights, direct translation of terms like "collective rights" and "the right to economic development" may not suffice. Instead, translators should incorporate explanatory elements that account for differing Western perspectives on human rights, ensuring these concepts are properly contextualized and accurately understood.

Furthermore, translators must address the discrepancies between Chinese and target-language legal and institutional paradigms. For instance, China's emphasis on "socialist rule of law" reflects a legal philosophy distinct from the Western focus on "democratic rule of law." Translators must adapt the language to reflect these differences without causing interpretative confusion. Supplementary methods, such as footnotes or appendices, can be employed to elucidate the unique cultural and legal nuances underpinning these concepts in the Chinese context. This approach not only enhances the internal coherence of the translated text but also aids in bridging potential cultural and conceptual gaps between the source and target audiences.

The fidelity rule: remaining faithful to the original while achieving cultural reconstruction

As an integral component of Skopos Theory, the Fidelity Rule highlights the necessity of faithfully preserving the core ideas and information of the source text while ensuring their accurate transmission within the cultural framework of the target audience. Given that Chinese human rights texts are imbued with distinct political, cultural, and legal connotations, their translation must not only convey the original content with precision but also facilitate effective communication in the target cultural context, thereby setting higher standards for fidelity in translation.

First and foremost, the translation of Chinese human rights texts must maintain fidelity to the core expressions of the source text to ensure the original policy, legal, and cultural intentions are not diluted in international dissemination. Such fidelity requires translators to thoroughly comprehend the values, policy orientations, and historical and social contexts encapsulated in the text. Only through this deep understanding can translators ensure that the translated text accurately reconstructs the ideological framework and intended messages of the source material. Moreover, the Fidelity Rule emphasizes cultural sensitivity and adaptability during translation. Chinese human rights texts often include expressions and concepts rooted in the nation's unique legal, social, and political traditions, many of which lack direct equivalents in the target language and culture. Translators must, therefore, carefully recontextualize these cultural elements to ensure their meaning is accessible to the target audience. This process requires a nuanced approach: fidelity to the essence of the original content must be preserved while avoiding cultural misinterpretation or distortion in the translation. Lastly, the Fidelity Rule necessitates attention to contextual coherence and the semantic boundaries of the source text's concepts. Translators must ensure that each segment of the text remains consistent with the overall context, faithfully reflecting the core ideas of the source material while maintaining the unity and coherence of the translation. Isolating specific expressions without considering their broader textual context risks undermining the integrity and communicative effectiveness of the entire text.

Translation Strategies

Policy and legal adaptation

(1) In-Depth Understanding of Legal and Policy Contexts: Prior to translating Chinese human rights texts, it is imperative for translators to gain an in-depth understanding of the relevant legal provisions, policy frameworks, and governance systems. This understanding must extend beyond the textual details of specific legal clauses to encompass the broader political intentions and cultural foundations underpinning them. By thoroughly analyzing policy documents and legal texts, translators can accurately capture the intent and core message of the source text, thereby mitigating the risk of errors or misinterpretations arising from incomplete comprehension of legal language.

(2) Precise Selection of Official Terminology: A frequent challenge in legal translation is the potential terminological gap between the source and target languages, where certain concepts lack direct equivalents[10]. Chinese human rights texts, often characterized by rigorously deliberated official terminology, demand particular attention to terminological precision. To address this, translators should establish a comprehensive glossary that includes key terms related to legal frameworks, policy measures, and rights protection, ensuring terminological consistency and accuracy throughout the translation process. In selecting terms, translators must also consider the linguistic conventions and professional norms of the target language to ensure that the translated text is both contextually appropriate and professionally accurate within the legal and policy framework. This methodical approach preserves the integrity of the source text while facilitating the effective communication of its intended meaning within the target cultural and professional context.

In the English translation of the white paper *“Seeking Happiness for the People: 70 Years of Progress on Human Rights in China”* (hereinafter referred to as the “White Paper”), the term “*ren ge quan*” serves as an example of the complexity involved in selecting legal terminology. This challenge arises particularly because the term carries distinct connotations within Chinese and Western legal systems. Precise terminology selection is therefore essential to ensuring the accurate transmission of the original meaning.

Original Text from the White Paper:

Tong guo min fa tong ze he qin quan ze ren fa deng jian li le ren ge quan bao hu ti xi.

English translation:

With the promulgation of the General Principles of the Civil Law and Tort Liability Law, China has established a system of protection for the right to dignity.

In the translation of “*ren ge quan*”, the term “the right to dignity” was selected by the translator. However, this choice warrants further discussion, and it is equally important to consider the alternative term “personality rights.”

On one hand, while “the right to dignity” does not appear as a standalone term in international human rights law, its essence is widely recognized and reflected in key legal instruments. For instance, the *Preamble* to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) references “inherent dignity,” emphasizing that human dignity underpins all human rights[11]. This foundational document provides a critical framework for global human rights protection. Similarly, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) implicitly affirm the importance of dignity, even though the specific term “the right to dignity” is not explicitly used. Dignity serves as a cornerstone of international human rights law, underscoring that the respect and protection of every individual's dignity are paramount. From the perspective of functional translation, the international communication of Chinese human rights texts aims to showcase China's achievements in safeguarding individual dignity and specific rights while addressing potential misunderstandings in the global community. Adopting “the right to dignity” as a translation appears to align with the universal values embedded in the international human rights discourse. This term allows audiences to interpret China's human rights principles within a familiar conceptual framework, thereby enhancing their understanding of the core values underlying China's human rights protections. Since the end of World War II, human dignity has been a fundamental principle in both international human rights law and domestic constitutional provisions. However, despite its widespread recognition, “the right to dignity” is not an established or universally accepted legal term. Its precise meaning and scope remain ambiguous and inconsistent across jurisdictions. While dignity is acknowledged as a foundational principle, there is significant variation in how it is articulated and applied in national constitutional systems, as well as confusion over its implications for legislators and adjudicators[12]. Thus, “the right to dignity” lacks both universal usage and a fixed, stable definition in international law.

On the Other Hand, Article 990 of the *Civil Code of the People's Republic of China* explicitly defines “*ren ge quan*” (personality rights), encompassing a range of specific rights, including the rights to life, bodily integrity, health, name, portraiture, and privacy, etc[13]. This definition extends significantly beyond the scope of “the right to dignity,” reflecting a comprehensive framework for safeguarding individual dignity through a variety of interrelated protections. From the standpoint of legal comprehensiveness, translating “*ren ge quan*” as “personality rights” appears to better align with its intended meaning. Scholarly research further supports this interpretation,

indicating that “personality rights” refer to a set of highly personal and non-proprietary rights closely tied to an individual’s physical, mental, and moral integrity. These rights are inherently non-transferable and non-inheritable, encompassing protections such as the rights to life, bodily integrity, freedom, and dignity. The core objective of personality rights is to ensure individuals are afforded respect and security under the law, shielding them from unlawful infringement or harm[14]. Additionally, dictionary definitions of the “right of personality” describe it as an inherent and inalienable right designed to protect the fundamental attributes of personal identity, such as privacy, likeness, and voice, along with moral integrity. This concept broadly encompasses essential rights linked to personal dignity, physical inviolability, and protection from inhumane treatment. Accordingly, “personality rights” encapsulates a broader spectrum of rights, including life, bodily integrity, and privacy, making it a more accurate reflection of the legal meaning of “*ren ge quan*” as defined in the Civil Code.

According to Skopos Theory, the translation of “*ren ge quan*” in the context of Chinese and English legal systems should prioritize the communicative function of the target text, ensuring that it is both comprehensible and acceptable within the target culture, particularly within the framework of international human rights law. This necessitates a balance between accurately reflecting the comprehensive protections afforded by “*ren ge quan*” under China’s *Civil Code* and aligning with the contextual and terminological standards of international human rights discourse. As the analysis above demonstrates, “the right to dignity” leans toward a broader moral concept, which resonates with the international human rights emphasis on the protection of dignity. However, its scope is limited and fails to encapsulate the specific rights explicitly enumerated in the Civil Code. As a result, this translation risks misrepresenting the comprehensive legal framework underpinning “*ren ge quan*” in Chinese law. In contrast, “personality rights” more accurately captures the legal nature and specific rights encompassed by “*ren ge quan*” within the Chinese legal framework. Moreover, as a widely recognized term in international legal discourse, “personality rights” enhances the clarity and accessibility of the concept for professional audiences in the global legal community. Thus, “personality rights” is recommended as the most suitable translation. This term not only faithfully reflects the comprehensive scope and detailed legal content of “*ren ge quan*” as defined in Chinese law but also ensures consistency with international human rights terminology. By adopting this translation, the target audience can develop a clearer understanding of the extensive legal protections underpinning “*ren ge quan*” in China, while maintaining terminological coherence with international legal discourse.

Big data analytics plays a crucial role in informing translation strategies under the guidance of Skopos theory. For policy and legal adaptation, tools such as natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning algorithms can analyze large datasets of legal and policy texts to identify terminological preferences and syntactic patterns in the target language. This ensures the accurate selection of equivalents for terms like “*ren ge quan*” (personality rights) or “*sheng cun quan*” (right to subsistence), which carry significant legal and cultural connotations. Additionally, predictive models can simulate audience reception, enabling translators to assess the potential effectiveness of various phrasing options. By integrating these insights, translators can enhance both the fidelity and functionality of the target text.

Ensuring Clarity in Logical Structure:

Original Text from the White Paper:

“Yi fa que ding xing zhen quan li jie xian, que li fa wu shou quan bu ke wei de yuan
ze, shi shi quan li qin dan, ze ren qin dan zhi du, jin zhi fa wai she quan, wei fa yong
quan...”

English Translation:

“The state delimits administrative power in accordance with the law. China has established a principle under which administrative bodies should not take any action that is not mandated by law. It has introduced a list of well-defined government powers and a list of responsibilities, and prohibited any power not provided for by law, or any illegal use of power...”

The translator optimized the logical structure of the original text, by focusing on segmenting information and clarifying subjects. While the original presented multiple policy points in a compact form, the English translation divided these points into logically connected sentences, such as “China has established a principle under which

administrative bodies should not take any action that is not mandated by law” and “It has introduced a list of well-defined government powers and a list of responsibilities...”. This approach effectively avoided information overload and enhanced the organization and readability of the translated text.

Additionally, the translator added explicit subjects and verbs to ensure structural clarity. For instance, in “que li fa wu shou quan bu ke wei de yuan ze,” the inclusion of “China has established a principle under which...” created a more complete and coherent sentence structure. Moreover, the careful use of connectors like “and” and “or,” along with appropriate punctuation, clearly delineated the relationships between the clauses, as seen in “a list of well-defined government powers and a list of responsibilities, and prohibited any power not provided for by law, or any illegal use of power.” This strategy not only remained faithful to the original meaning but also enhanced the logical flow of the translation, making it more accessible and comprehensible for international readers.

Ideological expression

Paul Kussmaul, in his explanation of Skopos Theory, asserts that the function of a translation depends on the target audience’s knowledge, expectations, values, and norms, all of which are shaped by their cultural and situational context. These factors determine whether the function of the source text or its elements can be preserved, or whether they require adaptation, or even significant modification[15]. Guided by Skopos Theory, the translation strategies for Chinese human rights texts must carefully account for the expression of ideology. This strategy is critical to effectively conveying China’s human rights perspectives and policy positions within diverse cultural contexts. The effectiveness of ideological expression directly influences the reception and impact of the translation in international discourse. Therefore, translators must pay particular attention to several key aspects during the translation process.

(1) The Essence and Importance of Ideology: Ideology serves not only as a reflection of a nation’s political and cultural framework but also as a deeper manifestation of its social values and belief systems. China’s human rights philosophy, rooted in the principles of socialism with Chinese characteristics, underscores the integration of individual and collective rights, the right to development, and the pursuit of social harmony. Translators must thoroughly understand the historical and cultural foundations of these ideological concepts to ensure that the translation accurately conveys China’s human rights principles and policy positions. A profound understanding of ideology enables translators to preserve the essence of the text while selecting appropriate expressions that facilitate effective communication within the target culture.

(2) Clarity of Communicative Purpose: The effectiveness of ideological expression is intrinsically linked to the clarity of the communicative purpose. During the translation, it is essential for translators to precisely define the purpose of the translated text to ensure both the accuracy and effectiveness of information transmission. For Chinese human rights texts, external communication typically aims to highlight China’s efforts and achievements in the field of human rights, while addressing and dispelling misunderstandings and biases. Translators, therefore, need to align their language choices and strategies with this goal. This purpose-oriented approach enhances the translation’s persuasive power and strengthens its impact in international discourse.

An illustrative example from the white paper is the translation of “*yi ren min wei zhong xin de ren quan li nian*” as “People-centered Approach in Human Rights Protection.” Translating “*yi ren min wei zhong xin*” as “People-centered” preserves the core ideological essence of the original text, while rendering “*ren quan li nian*” as “Approach in Human Rights Protection” transforms the abstract concept into a more natural and contextually aligned English expression. This adaptation facilitates international understanding of the Chinese government’s governance philosophy, effectively linking human rights discourse with the reinforcement of national image. Moreover, it conveys both the policy-driven and practical aspects of China’s human rights approach, ensuring the message resonates with international audiences.

Firstly, the translation adheres to the linguistic conventions of governance discourse in English. The term “Approach” is frequently employed to describe frameworks for governance or policymaking, encapsulating both theoretical perspectives and actionable strategies. For example, terms like “evidence-based approach” or “rights-based approach” emphasize practical methodologies for addressing issues rather than abstract concepts. Translating “*li nian*” as “Concept” or “Idea” would render the term overly theoretical, failing to convey its practical and strategic dimensions. Conversely, “Approach” conveys a sense of applied policy direction, ensuring

the translation communicates that China's "People-centered" philosophy involves specific governance practices and policy measures, rather than remaining an abstract notion. This adaptation ensures the phrase resonates within the English-speaking context while effectively highlighting its operational significance.

Secondly, the translation aids foreign audiences in comprehending the core of China's governance philosophy. By translating "*li nian*" as "Approach," the "People-centered" philosophy is framed not merely as a human rights ideal but as a practical, guiding principle deeply integrated into policymaking. This choice underscores how "*yi ren min wei zhong xin*" is systematically embedded within China's governance structure, emphasizing its role in shaping concrete policy actions. For Western readers, this translation removes the abstraction associated with "*li nian*" and demonstrates how the principle directly informs the implementation of human rights protection measures. By presenting "People-centered Approach" as a combination of philosophy and actionable strategy, the translation aligns with the cognitive and cultural expectations of the target audience. It enables readers to immediately associate the term with practical governance efforts, thereby clarifying the intent behind the policy. Through this nuanced rendering, the translation not only retains the ideological essence of the source text but also effectively conveys its application in governance, reinforcing China's human rights philosophy as a tangible and systematic approach rather than a mere theoretical proposition.

(3) Ideological Adaptability: In light of the pronounced differences between Chinese and Western ideologies and perspectives on human rights, translators of Chinese human rights texts must ensure ideological adaptability to prevent misunderstandings caused by cultural divergences. This necessitates the flexible application of translation strategies to adjust textual expressions in a way that aligns with the cultural expectations of the target audience, all while preserving the original intent. The effectiveness of ideological expression is closely tied to the audience's ideological framework and expectations. Translators must thoroughly understand the background and needs of the target readership to make suitable adjustments. For instance, when translating for Western audiences, it may be necessary to articulate China's human rights policies and their contextual underpinnings more explicitly. Such an approach can help challenge and potentially dispel preconceived notions about China's human rights practices.

Original Text from the White Paper:

"Sheng cun quan, fa zhan quan shi shou yao de ji ben ren quan. Pin qiong shi shi xian ren quan dezui da zhang ai."

English translation:

"The rights to subsistence and development are the primary rights. Poverty is the greatest obstacle to providing human rights."

In this translation, rendering "*shou yao*" as "primary" rather than "fundamental" carries significant semantic implications. This choice, without compromising the essence of China's human rights philosophy, effectively minimizes ideological differences between China and the West, thereby enhancing the translation's communicative impact and making it more accessible to Western audiences. The rationale for this decision is as follows:

In English, the term "primary"—as in "primary education," which refers to compulsory education—conveys a sense of priority or precedence rather than intrinsic foundational significance. Translating "*shou yao de ji ben ren quan*" as "primary rights" emphasizes the precedence of the rights to subsistence and development in China's human rights framework, highlighting their importance. In contrast, "fundamental" emphasizes essential or intrinsic characteristics, often implying that such rights are foundational to all others. Within Western human rights discourse, "fundamental rights" is frequently associated with core civil liberties and political rights, such as the rights to life, freedom of expression, and property. Using "fundamental rights" in this context might mislead Western audiences into assuming that the rights to subsistence and development are positioned as the sole foundation of all other rights, potentially clashing with the Western emphasis on civil and political liberties.

As outlined above, the use of "primary" is more effective in bridging ideological gaps between Chinese and Western perspectives on human rights. In Western discourse, individual freedoms and civil rights are often regarded as fundamental, with the term "fundamental rights" closely linked to civil liberties and political freedoms. Consequently, Western audiences are likely to interpret "fundamental rights" as inherently associated with these

concepts. By contrast, China's human rights philosophy prioritizes the rights to subsistence and development, framing them as prerequisites for realizing other rights. This difference in emphasis could lead to misunderstandings in translation. Employing “fundamental rights” risks misrepresenting China's prioritization of these rights and may provoke ideological resistance by reinforcing a perceived conflict between Chinese and Western human rights paradigms. In contrast, “primary” avoids the absolutist connotations of “fundamental,” emphasizing the prioritization of these rights in the Chinese context without suggesting their exclusivity or foundational status relative to other rights. This nuanced choice highlights the emphasis placed by the Chinese government on subsistence and development rights while steering clear of contentious ideological comparisons. By framing these rights as a policy priority rather than a fundamental value at odds with Western norms, this approach fosters greater acceptance among Western readers, enabling them to view the concept as a reflection of China's human rights policy rather than a confrontation of foundational values.

In summary, opting for “primary rights” instead of “fundamental rights” demonstrates greater adaptability in expression. This choice remains faithful to the original meaning while respecting the differences between Chinese and Western human rights perspectives. It facilitates comprehension among Western audiences, reduces cultural misunderstandings, and achieves effective ideological adaptation in translation.

Under the guidance of Skopos Theory, ideological expression plays a pivotal role in the translation strategies for Chinese human rights texts. Translators must deeply understand the essence of China's human rights philosophy, adapt flexibly to the target culture, and maintain clarity regarding the communicative purpose. Effective international communication of human rights requires acknowledging differences and adopting perspectives and stances that resonate with the audience's cognitive framework and values. As one expert noted, “Adopting a scientific communication approach that understands audience psychology and fosters resonance is the fundamental way to achieve effective communication and improve the quality of positive messaging[16].”

Cultural load and its translation

Cultural load refers to the unique cultural meanings and social values embedded in linguistic expressions. In Chinese human rights texts, numerous terms and phrases are shaped by traditional culture, historical contexts, and societal norms. For example, expressions such as “*he xie*” (harmony) and “*gong ying*” (win-win) not only convey their literal meanings but also encapsulate distinct Chinese cultural philosophies and values. However, such terms often lack direct equivalents in Western cultural frameworks and, in some instances, diverge significantly from Western values. Therefore, translators must first deeply analyze the cultural load of the source text, identifying its underlying cultural implications and significance to achieve precise and meaningful translation. Big data analytics also facilitates the handling of cultural load in translation by providing data-driven insights into cultural perceptions and preferences. For example, sentiment analysis of international social media discussions and policy documents can highlight how Chinese cultural loaded terms are understood across different cultural contexts. Such analyses enable translators to adapt culturally loaded terms with greater precision, ensuring that their translations resonate with the target audience while preserving the ideological essence of the source text.

(1) Cultural Adaptation: In translating cultural load, translators should employ effective strategies to ensure that the cultural connotations of the source text are accurately conveyed and accepted by the target audience. A notable example is the translation of “*xiao kang she hui*” in the white paper as “a moderately prosperous society.” This choice reflects a deliberate cultural adaptation strategy, retaining the core meaning of the original term while presenting it in a manner that aligns with the linguistic and cultural norms of the target audience.

“*Xiao kang she hui*” is a uniquely Chinese concept of political and social development, signifying a state of society that lies between poverty and affluence. It does not merely refer to material sufficiency but encompasses comprehensive development across economic, social, and cultural dimensions, reflecting the Communist Party of China and government's holistic vision for societal progress. Given the term's profound cultural and political significance within the Chinese context, a direct translation such as “well-off society” or “comfortable society” would fail to capture its multidimensional meaning and might confuse readers unfamiliar with its inherent complexity.

To address this challenge, the translator chose “a moderately prosperous society” and, where necessary, supplemented the translation with explanatory notes to clarify its deeper significance. The word “moderately”

effectively conveys the concept of modest affluence inherent in “*xiao kang*”, differentiating it from complete wealth. Meanwhile, “prosperous” reflects not only economic development but also social progress, aligning with the overarching goal of fostering societal well-being as envisioned in the construction of “*xiao kang she hui*”.

This culturally adaptive translation preserves the nuanced connotations of “*xiao kang she hui*” within its original context, enabling the target audience to grasp its broader implications. By framing the term as more than an indicator of economic status, the translation highlights its role as a cultural and political symbol embodying national governance goals and societal aspirations. Through the application of explanatory translation and annotation, the cultural significance embedded in the term is effectively communicated, reducing the risk of misinterpretation in cross-cultural discourse.

(2) Reconstructing Meaning: The translation of cultural load often requires the reconstruction of meaning—reimagining expressions in a way that respects the source text while adapting to the cognitive and cultural frameworks of the target audience. Translators must identify appropriate linguistic equivalents to ensure that traditional cultural concepts resonate with target readers.

Under the guidance of Skopos Theory, cultural adaptation plays a pivotal role in the translation strategies of Chinese human rights texts. Effectively addressing cultural load, particularly traditional cultural elements, is essential for achieving meaningful cross-cultural communication. Translators must deeply engage with the rich cultural connotations of the source text, employing strategies such as amplification, annotation, and paraphrasing to ensure that the translated content is both intelligible and acceptable to the target audience. By incorporating feedback and refining the translation process, translators can continually improve the adaptation of cultural load.

CONCLUSION

The inherent linguistic and cultural disparities in transnational human rights discourse pose substantial barriers and a structural challenge that remains difficult to overcome within the contemporary international human rights framework[17]. In the intricate context of global multiculturalism, the dissemination of China's human rights narratives transcends the mere transfer of ideas, constituting a deliberate effort to foster resonance and construct mutual understanding. Under the guidance of Skopos Theory and the integration of big data analytics, translation moves beyond simple linguistic transformation to act as an essential bridge for connecting cultural connotations and ideological dimensions. Big data analytics provides valuable tools for identifying patterns in audience preferences, linguistic nuances, and cultural expectations, enabling data-driven refinements that enhance the accuracy and adaptability of translation strategies.

The primary aim of translating Chinese human rights texts is to present China's achievements and unique perspectives on human rights development while addressing misunderstandings and biases arising from cultural, historical, and institutional differences. By leveraging insights from big data, translators can better anticipate audience reception and tailor texts to achieve greater resonance and clarity in cross-cultural communication. Through this process, China seeks to redefine the international human rights narrative, challenging the predominance of Western-centric discourse and advancing a more pluralistic framework for global human rights dialogue. A deeper examination of translation strategies for Chinese human rights texts, enhanced by the precision of big data analytics, not only facilitates China's engagement with global discourse but also enriches the international human rights dialogue by introducing diverse and nuanced perspectives. By embracing the complexities of cultural diversity and harnessing data-driven insights, such efforts infuse fresh vitality into the shared pursuit of progress, reinforcing the potential for mutual understanding and collective advancement in a multipolar world.

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