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The Reception of Translated Foreign-Affairs Discourse: China's International Communication System

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Abstract

Although we know that national image can be highly dependent on the way a country's foreign-affairs discourse is translated, the communicative effect of translations on real target readers has rarely undergone empirical scrutiny.

This research reports on a quasi-experiment where 22 Australian readers were asked to rank different degrees of translator intervention in texts selected from Chinese foreign-affairs discourse. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to examine the readers' textual comprehension, image of China and reading satisfaction. The readers' evaluations were then compared with similar evaluations made by 14 Chinese institutional translators.

One major finding is that there are major gaps between the communicative effects the translators *think* they are offering and what their real readers *actually* receive. The study suggests that reception is a matter of degree: the acceptance of a translation is a complex continuum rather than a simple binary opposition of absolute consensus vs. completed refusal. The readers appear to distinguish ways of legitimizing an "ethically acceptable" translation and they seem disposed to compromise and "satisfice" – i.e. accept translations that they know might be inadequate in terms of linguistic proficiency. Ethical criteria such as perceived accountability, neutrality, and transparency have priority over language-specific solutions that simply conform to target conventions.

A trade-off model is proposed in order to explain how a translation is ultimately accepted or refused. The study shows that the readers' expectations are diverse and sometimes incompatible. This is because when reading a translation, readers are consciously or unconsciously calculating risks and effort at each decision-point. In order to reduce the risks (e.g. of being manipulated or of communicative failures), the readers weigh up the costs and benefits, usually investing more effort in high-risk situations. This study suggests that *trust* is a powerful mechanism in helping achieve trade-offs and promote cost-effective communication. This is because *trust* can significantly reduce receptive effort: if the translator is trusted to be "neutral," "accountable," or "faithful," the acceptance of any translator intervention will be much higher. This also explains why a one-size-fits-all translation is neither realistic nor necessary: for different readers, the ways they prioritize risks and make a compromise are different.

By analyzing a range of explanatory variables including familiarity with the start culture and the ideological conflicts that might impinge on the reader's decisions, the study concludes that *trust* plays a powerful role in reception and can offset various risks involved in translational communication.

Thesis declaration

I declare that:

(i) The thesis comprises only my original work towards the except where indicated in the preface;
(ii) Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used;
(iii) The thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit (100,000 words) in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Name of Student: Bei Hu
Date: 11 December 2019

Preface

Parts of the Chapter 4 “Production side analysis” I have published as “How are translation norms negotiated? A case study of risk management in Chinese institutional translation.” in the journal *Target*: *International Journal of Translation Studies* in 2020.

I gratefully acknowledge the funding received towards my PhD from Melbourne Research Scholarship, University of Melbourne. I am also grateful to the funding received through the Graduate Research in Arts Travel Scholarship to undertake my project.

Acknowledgements

This doctoral thesis has benefited from the expertise, advice and intellectual generosity of many people.

I would like to extend my gratitude to my principal supervisor Professor Anthony Pym, to whom I am indebted for his perceptive comments and countless suggestions on my hesitant drafts. His generosity in offering timely feedback on my manuscripts can never be sufficiently acknowledged. I am grateful not only for the painstaking reading, but also for spurring me to explore the open spaces of a discipline based on the virtues of empiricism rather quick opinions, standard interpretations or “correct” thinking.

My sincere thanks go to my co-supervisor Associate Professor Luo Yongxian for providing effective and thoughtful guidance throughout my work. Further thanks are due to the chair of my advisory committee Professor Adrian Hearn, whose encouragement has always given me confidence. I have great respect for Professor John Minford and Ms. Juliet Zhao, who were my translation and interpreting teachers when I was a Master’s student in Melbourne. Warm thanks go to many local colleagues, especially Dr. Delia Lin and Dr. Craig Smith, who have added some extremely valuable insights during the final stages of writing.

For fruitful discussions, critical feedback and warm friendships formed, I owe enormous debts of gratitude to many people in Translation Studies – colleagues met at the CETRA Research Summer School in Antwerp, at the 9th EST Congress in Stellenbosch, at the China Translation Association’s annual conferences in Beijing, at the seminars organized by Professor Pym in Melbourne, and others.

Of all these, I owe particular gratitude to the 2018 CETRA Summer School, where a number of leading academics have given their expertise to help me improve my ongoing project. I would like to thank Sandra Halverson, Dirk Delabastita and Haidee Kotze, all of whom have given me invaluable advice on research design and methodological adjustments; Christina Schäffner, whose work on norms and institutional translation has been a constant source of intellectual stimulation; Dilek Dizdar, whose insights on *Skopos* theory and functionalism have provided a theoretical reference and whose passion for deconstruction has made me fall under the spell of Derrida; Leo Tak-hung Chan, who has kindly shared with me his research on receptions in the English-Chinese context; Daniel Gile, who has given a detailed bird’s eye perspective on the issue of self-reflexivity; Franz Pöchhacker, whose untiring commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration has been a great source of inspiration and will be for a long time to come.

My special thanks go to Professor Andrew Chesterman, whose work has been a lasting stimulus; he first made me intrigued with translation norms and ethics, and in a critical way of thinking about research methodology. I had the opportunity to discuss my thesis with him during his short visit to Melbourne in early 2019. He is a role model for asking straightforward “so what?” questions and for critical reflection on epistemological skepticism, which has helped me find my way through uncharted terrain when travelling on the road of research.

My thanks go to many Ph.D. fellows in the discipline, locally and internationally: we have commented on each other’s work to some extent, arguing, debating, exchanging readings and talking about ideas, either face-to-face or through correspondence. Many of us attended a CETRA summer school, albeit in different years. I am proud that we have created a strong sense of research community: a very young one, but rather tightly knitted.

Between 2018 and 2019, I worked as a tutor and research assistant for a dozen subjects in an MA-level Translation program at the University of Melbourne, where I had the opportunity to discuss theories, methods and translation solutions contained in this thesis with numerous students. Working with them has been a great learning experience, making me believe that research and practice are indispensable: a translation classroom is an ideal place, where different kinds of hypotheses and speculations can be tested by trial-and-error, empirically.

This study could not have been undertaken without the willingness of a number of Chinese institutional translators and Australian readers who participated in experiments to share their experiences and opinions with me. To all of them, my sincere gratitude. The financial assistance of a postgraduate research grant from the University of Melbourne is gratefully acknowledged.

Finally, my boundless thanks to my parents, for tolerating their only child spending long periods away studying and living in another country. My father was a professor of materials science before his retirement, and my mother is still teaching chemistry at a university in China. I am the only one in the humanities, which occasionally makes it hard for me to join in the “scientific” dinner conversations at home. My father completed his doctoral thesis in Amsterdam in the late-1990s. When I was nine, he gave me a copy of his thesis and said that one day I would be able to read the English text and begin a thesis of my own in Europe – my dad has nostalgia for the Low Countries. I have never really understood his thesis on nanotechnology and much of my thesis was done in Australia, but I have always known my parents’ confidence in me unwavering. I am incredibly proud to be their daughter: they not only share and understand my passion for academic work, but also give me unconditional love and trust, supporting many of my postmodern choices.

In retrospect, drawing on many enjoyable and thought-provoking readings and conversations along the way, one of the most important things I have learned from my professors, mentors, colleagues, students, friends and family is that “people” should not be excluded from the world of research. To understand complex and heterogeneous phenomena such as translational communication, our ultimate focus of attention should remain human rather than texts: the translators and readers with purposes, subjectivity and creativity deserve priority. I have been inspired by *people* – my love, loyalty and commitment are to the people. In that sense, as Jean-Paul Sartre puts it, “my life and my philosophy are one and the same.”

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1. Introduction

Chinese premier Li Keqiang was taken to watch an Australian Football League (AFL) match with the then Australian prime minister Malcolm Turnbull during their trade talks in early 2017. The next day, the page of *The Australian* featured a photograph of the Chinese premier wearing two footy scarves – Sydney Swans' and Port Adelaide's – together, smiling ear to ear.

When I saw the picture, I was just starting my doctoral studies at the University of Melbourne, after finishing my two-year graduate training in translation there. Without many metatheoretical yardsticks at hand, my MA thesis was no more than a text-based analysis, comparing the Chinese and English versions of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA). Surprising as it may seem, I found a good deal of translation mistakes caused by literalism in the Chinese official version: it seems that priority was given to formal sameness rather than effect on the Australian readers. Although both documents claimed to be equally authentic and equivalent, asymmetries on many levels existed. If any trade dispute occurred in the future, one could imagine that these kinds of textual discrepancies could turn into high-risk problems. I suspect that one reason why the translators appear to submit themselves to the yoke of the source text is that the readers in the target community hardly entered the picture. For the translators, the risk of losing linguistic fidelity was their more immediate concern, while receiving the feedback on actual communication efficacy on the reception side would have taken much longer. Recall Kaisa Koskinen's (2008) study of translation practices in the European Commission: institutional translations might be translated merely because they have to exist, for legal or administrative reasons, not because they are going to be read or (instantly) used.

This doctoral project began with self-reflexive enquiry. The picture of the laughing premier made me wonder about the effects of translational interaction in more immediate, everyday circumstances, expanding from a textual focus to a communicative one. According to the news release, the Chinese premier insisted on wearing two scarves to show his impartiality. Imagine an Australian family enjoying their morning coffees before work and school: how would they understand and respond to the image of the foreign politician showing support to two rival football teams? Is it "normal" in Australia to support both football teams? Does it matter? Would they see the Chinese premier's diplomatic tactics as a sign of indifference at best and perhaps ignorance at worst?

Interestingly enough, when the same event was reported by Chinese media, premier Li was photographed shaking hands with AFL players. He looked suave, without wearing any scarf, smiling slightly – a typical image of a high-ranking Chinese leader I was more familiar with. Presumably, that is the saintly image that China wants to spread over the world. The two photos, nevertheless, point to a seemingly unbridgeable gap between what the Chinese side intends to present and what the Australian side is interested in — after all, the two-scarved Chinese premier appeared in the Australian national media for a reason.

As a linguistic and cultural option, translation is one of the main forms in which communications are promoted, conceived and received. This hermeneutic view of translation strongly stimulated me to speculate about the intricate ways different cultures perceive others. The Australian media underscored the scarf choice of the Chinese premier, but how ordinary Australian readers would interpret the striking image and China as a whole remains unknown. On the other hand, it is readily apparent that the Chinese government wants to hedge its bets by 'translating' its political leader's image in a more conservative manner. But does breaking a convention always provoke negative reactions? Is there a chance that some readers might want to venture beyond common practice and take risks of seeing something unconventional? If so, what works and at what cost? These questions hint at the competitive struggle between the acceptance of foreignness and proximity, which needs to be assessed, empirically.

The crucial issue is that there are few attempts to crystalize the actual communicative effects of the different ways of translating on receivers. We know little about how rewarding could it be for translators to take the risk of making changes, i.e. "translator intervention." Reflecting on my own academic background and experience, I realized that, in most cases, the feedback I received from target readers was scant. Nor did I usually have a clear picture of the prospective readership. I was then intrigued to find out to what extent readers, the ones with flesh, blood and subjectivity, might construct different translation solutions that range from a safest, literal rendering to a radical rewriting.

In hindsight, this curiosity led me to undertake this empirical study on how the readers in Australia respond to various ways of translating Chinese foreign-affairs discourse. What I went looking for are the connections, bonds and, perhaps, gaps between *people*, which together might have something to say about the fundamental risks and benefits underlying translational communication: a common ground that can be clung to as something permanent amid the flux of reception.

Here I shall start from a perspective of Translation Studies, working first from the question "what potential effects have been neglected by translators?", and then from "why does the reception side matter?", in order to conceive of translational communication as a continuum in which it is possible to identify lacunae on both sides. It is hoped that some general insights on the functional role of translation might also be gleaned.

1.1 Why reception matters

Translation Studies has long focused on translation quality and describing how translators (ought to) work. That descriptive-explanatory endeavour is an attempt to achieve idealised, optimum translation, albeit applying various criteria (i.e. servile adherence to the original or satisfying a different *Skopos*).

It is tempting to say that good translators are simply expected to alleviate "communicative suffering" (cf. Chesterman, 1997/2016): they make changes (interventions) in the most literal rendering in order to avoid misunderstanding on the part of readers. Be that as it may, sometimes translators themselves might not recognize that their solution is incapable of making messages crossing language and culture boundaries. The end result is that we know quite a lot about the way translations are produced, revised, edited, and improved, but we know relatively little about the grounds on which any of these prescriptive statements can be empirically justifiable. It might also explain why the traditional metaphor of viewing the translator as a bridge-builder between cultures has been questioned: translation could lead to destructive ends rather than result in mutual understanding (see Pym, 1998a, especially p. 124). Indeed, there is no shortage of arguments stating that translation might create destructive misunderstanding, either intentionally or accidentally (Chesterman & Baker, 2008; Baker 2006).

One possible reason for any unnoticed communicative suffering is that we have become accustomed to seeing the world from our own positions. And this is where the problem begins: how translators tacitly *assume* that one thing should be well accepted hinges on their own subjective perceptions and perhaps rarely escapes the limits of the translation tradition of the start culture. The production side might not always be aware of how hard-and-fast translation solutions used will fit together in the mind of the reader. In this sense, to understand why good (or bad, perhaps) translations happen in cross-cultural communication, we have to *inter alia* look at the role of people on the reception side. This makes the *reception* of the various kinds of intervention an important issue. Translational communication is not complete once the translator has finished. As Michel de Montaigne (1965, p. 834) puts it, “speech belongs half to the speaker, half to the listener.” Texts and discourses are there to be recreated every time they are received and interpreted by readers, in a constant process of meaning making (Iser, 1978). And these processes are inextricably bound up with wider social structures and ideological contexts (cf. Schäffner, 2004). On this view, the reception of translation is a conceptually and pragmatically important tool for measuring the success of translational communication. In order to investigate under what conditions translation fails and what factors might affect the communicative effect, we should try to look at the world through the eyes of the receivers before we agree to any essentialist claim to identify “good translation” in an eternal sense.

It might be a truism to say that Translation Studies has incredibly shifted from conceptualizing translation as linguistic transfer to viewing it as a target-oriented communicative act. The general concept of start-priority has been toppled off its pedestal. I went on to revisit German functionalists — whose *Skopos* theory I had learned during my undergraduate years. I now read those German-speaking scholars’ target-oriented works again. Then came Gideon Toury on norm theory, Ian Mason on audience design inspired by Allan Bell’s sociolinguistic work, and Andrew Chesterman on the ethics of communication. As I read, I was amazed afresh at how often translation scholars emphasize the complexity and uncertainties on the reception side, albeit some in an implicit way.

Presuppositions about readers permeate much of the literature. Reception studies on literary works appear to have been a fruitful area of research, nevertheless, primarily using qualitative approaches to look at literary criticism, intertextuality and censorship. With the development of technology, some recent empirical studies have been done under the head of cognitive research, focusing on the effects of translation measured by the cognitive effort involved in the individual reader’s reception (e.g., Kruger, 2012; Walker, 2018).

However, outside the realm of literary and audiovisual translation, although Jelle Stegeman’s (1991) arousing call for verifiable studies on reception could date back to almost three decades ago, the systematic empirical testing of “real readers” is still scant. Indeed, most previous research on reception tends to conceptualize the target readership as a homogeneous set. Another putative deficiency is that there seem to be few empirical investigations on the factors that underpin, predetermine and structure the readers’ reception. Chesterman (1998) underlines the fact that research on how translation effects are received is commonly encumbered by untested hypotheses concerning the identities of the target audience, the degree of acceptability, and the effects of give translation solutions.

1.2 This study

Against this background, this thesis offers an empirical study on the reception of Chinese foreign-affairs discourse, in which English translations of Chinese official discourse is taken as a case study. Translators in the start culture and readers in the target culture were asked to rank and evaluate various translations that have different degrees of translator intervention, from minimal-intervention literalism to greatest-intervention rewritings. My intention is to indicate the conditions affecting the acceptance of different translation solutions and to closely examine how this acceptance is subject to different textual and extra-textual constraints.

In a wide sense, as Cheyfitz (1991) proposes, translation can be considered as a kind of foreign policy. Here the concept of “foreign-affairs discourse” is circumscribed in a particular way: it is understood as a country’s official discourse on its political agendas, produced for both domestic and international readerships. It includes government reports, official speeches, publicity materials and state media commentaries. All these text types are tested in this study. Nevertheless, the subject matter might not be directly concerned with "policy-like politics": as Schäffner (2004, p. 119) points out, the recent symbiosis of politics and entertainment expands the concept of political texts to include any genre to "sell politics." What is deemed "political" relies on the agents in the communication. Here the participants denote the Chinese institutional translators and prospective readers on both the production and reception sides.

Since China's 'reform and opening up' policy in 1978, the development Chinese translated foreign-affairs discourse has experienced two stages (Huang, 2018; He, 2008). In the early 1980s, translations (particularly from English into Chinese) were expected to bring about change by introducing Western ideas into the modernization of China, providing advanced technologies for a weak nation-state recovering from the Cultural Revolution (McDougall, 2011). At that time, Chinese translated foreign-affairs discourse to the outside world mainly focused on cultural exchange, which is evident in the fact that enormous translations of travel brochures about China's cultural and natural sites were produced by institutional translators in the Foreign Languages Press (FLP) (Huang, 2018). Since the first decade of the millennium, the second heyday of Chinese translated foreign-affairs discourse has come on the heels of the country's economic boom. As the world's second-largest economy, China's rapid growth and growing openness have led to a substantial potential for intercultural communication. In the eyes of the Chinese government, translation plays a pivotal role in its international communication, going beyond cultural exchange. The demand for national image-building overseas is perceived to be higher than ever (Huang, 2018; Guo, 2017; Liu, 2015).

Nevertheless, two characteristic features of Chinese translated foreign-affairs discourse have remained unchanged over the past forty years. First, it has long been a highly norm-governed, top-down-organized translation practice. Recalling her days as a foreign in-house translator in the FLP dating back to the early 1980s, McDougall (2011, p. 9) describes her translation practice as a kind of "state-sponsored" undertaking. Interestingly enough, when I recommended the memoir-like monograph to several current Chinese staff translators, many of them said, "almost like a picture of today." Indeed, the purpose of politically-motivated international communication has been glossed by the Chinese president Xi Jinping in his 2014 speech at the 60th anniversary of China's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) in the following way: "[The Chinese government] should spread China's message, share China's story, and present to the world a true, multi-dimensional and full picture of China" (Xi, 2014a). During his visit to Australia in 2014, President Xi published an article in *The Australian Financial Review* stating *inter alia* that "[it] is important to […] tell the China story and Australia story well so that the China-Australia friendship will take root deep in the hearts of our people" (Xi, 2014b). In an attempt to "tell the China story well," significant administrative resources have been invested in Chinese institutional translation services in a top-down way. For instance, the updated government-led Database of Standardized Translations of Key Chinese Foreign-affairs Terms (my translation)[1] has provided more than 20,000 official translations of Chinese political terminology in at least nine languages since it was launched in 2018.

The ostensible purpose of Chinese institutional translation is to reach a wide international audience in a controlled way. However, in such a norm-dominant circumstance, do the Chinese translators always adopt the official translations without any hesitation? And

[1] 中国重要政治词汇对外翻译标准化专题库. http://210.72.20.108/special/class3/search.jsp (accessed November 6, 2019).

if they do, how does the target reader construe the translations? The actual reception of the translation practices remains in dire need of empirical evidence.

A second feature of Chinese translated foreign-affairs discourse is that the identity of the target reader is considered not be absolute, invariant or clear-cut, making the reception fairly obscure. Admittedly, because of the expansion of multilingualization and globalization, China has conducted routine translation practice to meet multilingual needs of international communication. Nevertheless, in order to reach a wider global audience, translation into English understandably has played a dominant role in the agenda of Chinese translated official discourse. More often than not, the target readership is found to be oversimplified, idealized as a homogeneous set of Western readers. Besides, as "a complex form of human activity" (Schäffner & Bassnett, 2010, p. 2), political discourse can be categorized into two genres: first, the instrumental texts used in policy-making by addressing internal politicians; second, the texts that aim to communicate, explain and justify political decisions for the general public. In the case of China, however, the boundaries between internal users and external users are blurred (cf. Xu, 2014). The internal texts that aim to address Chinese politicians or Communist Party members have been largely translated into target languages, making no watertight separation between the two types of receivers.

Mindful of these problems, by examining how actual readers engaged with the different interventions of Chinese translated foreign-affairs discourse, the thesis has two main aims. The first is theoretical, an attempt to generalize beyond the case study itself. I suggest, in effect, that translation reception can be conceptualized in terms of a trust-based model of communication: *trust* functions as a premise to rational cross-cultural communication, without which a translation cannot be accepted. By exploring how translator intervention is contemplated and received by the readers in Australia, this study illustrates how the readers' trust can be affected by various translation-specific risks. It suggests a conceptual risk-management framework within which there is a constant interplay between various and competing expectations that might determine ultimate receptions.

The second aim is methodological. In order to specify the conditions for successful communication, the thesis presents a quasi-experimental study that empirically investigates non-standard, invented cases and translation effects. The study attempts to explore how readers' underlying expectancy norms are reflected in the ways they make compromises and reach consensus. The population of the diverse readerships are recruited through convenience sampling, volunteer sampling, networking sampling and snowballing sampling. The analyses of target-language readers' reported receptions are then linked to receptions on the production side by translators in China. Triangulating the quantitative and qualitative evidence offers a way of looking for possible connections or correlations. Tentative explanations of the panorama of receptions are thus generated: the study is bottom-up, not top-down.

One may argue that the reception of Chinese translated foreign-affairs discourse remains a single case. Nevertheless, only by focusing on and then generalizing the similarities between single cases can we make "predictions concerning future or unstudied cases" (Chesterman, 2004, p. 33). On the other hand, what appears to be a particular translational practice that takes place in a highly regulated environment is in fact not an isolated case. Many, if not all governments produce such translated foreign-affairs discourse and all (should) have an interest in how it is received.

All in all, my motive in studying translation reception is to view translator interventions as causes: I set out to show how translators' decisions influence the people that read and receive them, and thus affect intercultural relations more widely (cf. Chesterman, 1998).

1.3 Thesis structure

The thesis consists of seven chapters.

The literature review introduces the major theoretical underpinnings, mapping out some shared ground in the research done on reception in two dimensions: the conceptual framework and empirical work. The emphasis of the conceptual branch is on target-oriented paradigms, in which reception theory, *Skopos* theory, audience design, and norm theory are discussed in detail. The risk-management model is foregrounded, serving as an explanatory instrument when dealing with uncertainties in translational communication. On the other hand, I discuss some highlights and focal points of empirical research on reception to date, focusing on the state of the art in the domains of interpreting and audiovisual translation.

The methodology chapter explains how this study is designed and carried out. The research questions, hypotheses, and instruments are sketched out, along with an introduction to the pilot study in which the methodological adjustments are tested.

Chapters 4 and 5 together present a comprehensive investigation of the ways in which different levels of translator intervention are received by the production and the reception sides respectively. By combining empirical findings and conceptual analyses, my purpose is to give an overall picture of the reception of Chinese foreign-affairs discourse.

Chapter 4 examines the possible principles governing the production side. Drawing on how the translators evaluate the translation tasks, what makes them like or dislike a translation, how much freedom to intervene they feel they could have, and what risks they would face if they broke norms, this chapter outlines the underlying production norms by identifying plausible links between recurring patterns and evidence of normative power in a bottom-up way.

How do we assess the effects of norms? Chapter 5 presents the results of the experiment on the reception side, showing how various readerships respond to different degrees of intervention. An initial section is devoted to tentative quantitative analyses, including a comparative view of the underlying variables that might affect the readers' acceptance; this is followed by an inclusive qualitative discussion of the readers' arguments, with special emphasis on the common ground that the readers share and the conflicting statements they make. As such, a complex continuum of reader expectations is illustrated. The remainder of the chapter highlights the risks that might account for misunderstanding in intercultural communication.

The discussion chapter presents justifications for the various conflicting claims that emerge from the study by giving tentative interpretations of the observably heterogeneous expectations of both sides. Explanations for the risks involved in receiving translations are provided, along with an analytical discussion of readers' tolerance of foreignness. A trade-off model of acceptance is proposed, which explains a set of various ways of managing risks associated with translation reception. At the end of the chapter, I propose that trust is the prime value affecting translation reception.

The last chapter concludes the thesis by providing a brief reflection on the key results, focusing on the study's contributions and limitations, along with suggestions of new avenues for future investigation.

2. Literature review

In this chapter I review some previous and current research on the reception of translations. I will do so from two perspectives: theoretical discussions and empirical studies. Section 2.1 will look at various theoretical frameworks within which reception is given weight. In Translation Studies there is no shortage of theoretical thinking within target-side oriented paradigms such as *Skopos* theory, audience design, and translation norms, albeit sometimes without the names. The notion of risk management is introduced as a useful conceptual tool for explaining the uncertainties involved in reception. Section 2.2 will explore the relatively small number of empirical studies found on actual receptions of translations, notably in the field of interpreting and audiovisual translation. Their conceptual and methodological contributions are summarized.

2.1 Theoretical studies on reception

2.1.1 Reception theory

The classical discussion of reception involved from the start a strong literary theory that stresses the aesthetic value of literary works. The classical conceptualization of reception has two main branches: a European tradition and an American one (cf. Brems & Ramos Pinto, 2013).

The European development of reception aesthetics dates back to German scholar Hans Robert Jauss, whose concept of the reader's "horizon of expectation" is generally grounded in phenomenology and hermeneutics. For Jauss (1982), a literary work awakens memories of what has been already read. The other influential Europe-based concept is Wolfgang Iser's (1978) *Leerstelle* (textual gaps), which states that the receiver should fill in the unexplained gaps in the text and construes the meaning in a subjective way. In this sense, texts are open to interpretive variation.

In the 1970s, Reader Response Criticism in the United States similarly shifted the focus from the text to readers. Stanley Fish (1980) states that there is no meaning outside of cultural assumptions. This suggests that one individual's "horizon of expectation" is in fact collective and constrained by multifarious socio-cultural factors. Another strand that has had an impact is Holub's *Reception Theory* (1984), which further describes the reception approach as "a general shift in concern from the author and the work to the text and the reader" (p. xii). Here Holub argues that reception theory is a cohesive, conscious and collective undertaking.

Since the idea of reception was introduced into literary studies in the 1960s, its connection with Translation Studies is historical. Unsurprisingly, many reception studies on translation have preserved the heritage of literary aesthetics by focusing on the reception of the classics. For example, Kujamäki's (2001, p. 65) study of German retranslations of the Finnish novel *Seitsemän veljestä* by Aleksis Kivi examines the historical reception of literary works, concluding that retranslations are governed by "the context of time-bound normative conditions," In that case, it refers to how German readers receive Finland's changing, ideological image. Another line of research concerns the ways the target audience can achieve full enjoyment of a classic dramatic work. The links between translation for the stage and socio-cultural contexts have received close attention. Aaltonen's *Time-Sharing on Stage: Drama Translation in Theatre and Society* (2000) investigates the reception of the translation into English of modern European playwrights. In the same vein, cross-cultural reception is a major theme in Anderman's (2005) discussion of translation and theatre. However, for these studies, less weight is given to idiosyncratic perceptions of actual receivers than to indirect evidence such as reviews and repeat performances.

Note that there is an affinity with reception theory in the development of translation criticism. Drawing on the ideas from Jauss (1982), Brown (1994) links the circulation of texts to the reception of a given translation by stressing the role of reviews in preparing the readership for the work. By looking at the reviews of a translation, Brown examines how the readers' aesthetic "horizon of expectation" is challenged or disappointed. This is reminiscent of Venuti's (1998) argument that literary reviews can be used to assess the reception of translations.

Another interesting comparison can be made with the application of Fillmore's (1977) scenes-and-frames semantics in Translation Studies. A frame is considered as a set of textual features that form a semantic scene in the mind of target receivers (Snell-Hornby, 2005). This contributes to the establishment of expectancy norms: what the readers expect a translation should be like is partly governed by the dominant, sociocultural references in the given community (cf. Chesterman, 1997/2016).

Nevertheless, as Arnoux-Farnoux and Hermetet (2009) point out, these conceptual or textual analyses of reception are largely genre-specific: they tend to see reception as being solely decided on the basis of aesthetic values and do not explicitly take into account the specificity of translations. Curiously, the analysis of the possible causes (personal, cultural, historical) of why *people* construct meaning and perceive translations differently is absent.

Against this background, Haidee Kruger (2011) proposes that reception studies should take into account two agent-oriented dimensions. The first concerns textual features and attemps to identify the shifts of translation ssolutions that can be associated with the translator's mental image of the receivers and the function of translation. The second dimension stresses the ways readers respond to textual quality. The latter deserves more attention as it extends analyses to the empirical way readers respond to texts, which I will take up later (see 2.2 below).

2.1.2 *Skopos* theory

Not directly inspired by literary theory, a prominent paradigm in Translation Studies that focuses on reception dates back to 1984 when German scholars Hans Vermeer and Katarina Reiss (Reiss & Vermeer, 2013[1984]) broke with the essentialist notion of start-oriented equivalence by giving priority to the prospective function or purpose (*Skopos*) of translation. In this section, I present the fundemental concepts of the target-oriented paradigm and the various ways *Skopos* theory and similar "functionalist" approaches have influenced subsequent reception studies.

2.1.2.1 From start text to purpose[2]

A traditional definition of translation relies on the idea of equivalence: the original and the translation should have the same value (or the same worth of function), on one level or another. The equivalence paradigm assumes that the notion of stable values between texts should be created and protected as the specificity of translational communication (cf. Pym, 2010/2014). The insistence of linguistic equivalence as the quality yardstick, particularly in

[2] I refer to the "start text" (ST) as the text the translator translates from, and to the "target text" (TT) as the translated text produced throughout the thesis. This terminological choice is based on the fact that the Chinese institutional translators heavily rely on glossaries to translate and obey the conventions of previous translations: their 'source' is not only a text but also an elaborate database and set of guidelines.

translation classrooms, was rarely challenged until Vermeer proposed a purpose-oriented paradigm (Nord, 2010). In the co-authored book (2013[1984]) with Reiss that laid the foundation for *Skopos* theory, Vermeer suggests that the *Skopos* (a Greek word for *aim, purpose*) of the translation should be regarded as the decisive factor in the translator's decision making, eclipsing other considerations.

The other co-author of the book, Reiss, was working on a less radical model based on correlations of text types and translation methods. Reiss proposes that the way to translate is dependent on the function of the original. Her main point is that different text types should lead to different kinds of translation solutions. Reiss's position on text types and their corresponding translation methods has been called "functionalist." Other functionalist approaches more or less share the concept of defining translation as a purposeful activity: the basic underlying claim is that one should achieve the *functions* of the texts for readers, not the actual words on the page.

A distinction between the general functionalist paradigm and *Skopos* theory should be made here. The way the functionalists see the role of the start text "is radically different from earlier linguistic or equivalence-based theories" (Nord, 1997/2018, p. 25). Nevertheless, functionalism is not completely "new" (cf. Pym, 2010/2014, p. 48): the target-oriented idea can be observed throughout history. In the classical discussion of translation, St. Jerome introduced a "sense for sense (*sensum de sensu*)" approach (cf. Malmkjær, 2005, p. 3), in the sense that adapting the text to the acceptability standards of the target reader. In Eugene Nida's (1964) dichotomy, the idea of "dynamic equivalence" also refers to an equivalence of communicative effect. Newmark's (1988) notion of pragmatic translation similarly argues that translators "must take into account all aspects involving readership sensitivity in order to stimulate the appropriate frame of mind in the reader" (pp. 133–134).

Nevertheless, although the effect of reception is taken into consideration, as one kind of equivalence, the start-text functionalism cannot explain why different translations can be produced of the same text and why a translator might want to change the function of the text. But Vermeer's concept of *Skopos*, "as a particular type of general functional theory" (Chesterman, 2010, p. 225), provided a new way of thinking. *Skopos* theory can be explained in two ways: the way one translates depends on the reasons why the translation has been commissioned (by the client) or the translator could also deduce that the dominant purpose is what is expected from a translation (by the reader). Neither of these is on the side of the profoundly historical paradigm of equivalence, in which the start text is regarded as a guide and a major, if not a sole constraint. Vermeer is clear on this point: the highest dominant factor influencing the translator's decisions is always, and can only be "the purpose, the *Skopos* of the communication in a given situation" (Vermeer, 1989/2012, p. 222).

Given the vital role of the *Skopos*, Vermeer's radical functionalism shifts the focus from the start to the target, making the start text of secondary importance. In Vermeer's words, the start text is "dethroned" (Vermeer, 1986, p. 42). This new paradigm is thus revolutionary in nature: since the start text is downgraded and subordinated to its purpose, *Skopos* theory invites translators to assess the start text critically.

Around the same time, drawing on a general theory of social action (cf. Von Wright, 1968), Justa Holz-Mänttäri's (1984) functionalism that deems translator here stands at the center of "a communicative chain" has much shared ground with Vermeer's target-side rule (Chesterman, 1997/2016, p. 31). Within this frame, the translator is understdood as an independent expert who mediates between cultures by giving advice about whether a given start text is suitable, or even rewriting the original on the basis of information provided by the client. In this sense, the translator has "the authority to carry responsibility" for target readers (Chesterman, 1997/2016, p. 31). Holz-Mänttäri's approach challenges the prevailing notion that a translation has to be a faithful imitation of the start text, and is even more radical than that of Vermeer. For Holz-Mänttäri, repeating the function of the start text is just one possible goal; the translator can legitimately to do much more than translate (cf. Pym, 2010/2014). There is not just one perfect translation; one text can always be translated differetnly, as long as the translator or client sees fit.

2.1.2.2 Who has the final say?

The mainstream *Skopos* proponents justify the target-side paradigm as being to develop a true-to-life way of combining translation teaching and practice. Many attempts have been made to show how functional approaches generate appropriate solutions to translation problems (e.g., Hönig & Kussmaul, 1982/1996; Nord, 1988/1991). Nevertheless, the idea of "purpose" itself is not explicitly defined. As Chesterman (2010, p. 212) aptly points out, even the core concept could be glossed as "intended effect." The next question would still be: effect on whom and intended by whom?

There seems to be a lack of agreement even among the German-speaking scholars of functionalism. For Nord, a key factor in deciding how to translate is what the client or commissioner expects of the translation: she appears to prioritize the client's instructions in the translator's decision making. Nord insists that the purpose remains subject to the clients and "not to the discretion of the translator" (1988/1991, p. 9).

Although an ethical dimension is not welcomed by Vermeer (1996) who believes that *Skopos* should be as "value-free" as any other scientific theory (p. 107), Nord (1997/2018) introduced the idea of "loyalty" as ethical compatibility on the interpersonal level (e.g., clients, readers and authors). In view of the criticisms directed against the totalitarian implications of *Skopos* theory, Prunč (1997) expands the translators' loyalty to themselves: translators have a moral responsibility to justify their strategies in order to ensure that a translation is compatible with the intentions of the original and not to deceive their readers.

Nord (1997/2018) also argues that the purpose of a translation exists by virtue of its intended readers. The function of a text is not linguistic but determined by "the addressee," who is the intended user of the translation with their cultural-specific expectations (1997/2018, p. 12). Since it may be difficult for translators to identify what receivers exactly expect of a translation, the scant feedback from their clients and readers becomes the prime focus in translational interaction. Seen in this way, the client's instructions are suggested to accompany every translation task and define "the conditions under which the target text should carry out its particular function" (Nord, 1997/2018, p. 59).

Along with the emphasis on communicative needs, Holz-Mänttäri (1984) claims that the professional translator is sovereign in translatorial action, albeit working alongside experts in other fields. Vermeer (1989/2012) argues that translated texts should fulfill their intention, which is "negotiated with the client who commissions the action" (p. 221). Since the *intention* of a commissioner has been criticized as difficult to ascertain, Vermeer explicitly states that the intention he refers to should be interpreted by the translators, who offer "as much information as they think is necessary in a form which they consider to be appropriate in view of the expectations of the target recipients" (Reiss & Vermeer, 2013[1984], p. 114).

Applying this functionalist view to conference interpreting, Pöchhacker (1995) argues that the purpose is "largely constrained by the target-culture recipients" (p. 34). In essence, the target rendering "must 'make sense' within its communication situation and culture (p. 34). In Pöchhacker (1995), as a communicative interplay of "here and now" speaker(s) and listener(s), the conference can be viewed as a "hypertext" (p. 35). It is the "hypertext skopos" (p. 35), i.e. the holistic "communicative context" (p. 37), that governs the interpreter's action.

In general, most target-oriented functionalists tend to place special emphasis on the effect of reception (cf. Snell-Hornby, 1988). As House (2016) points out, the concept of "function" in the writing of *Skopos* scholars is similar to what in speech act theory is referred to as perlocution, the function "with the real-world effect of a text" (p. 22). One straightforward model of such functionalism is proposed by Hans Hönig and Paul Kussmaul (1982/1996), who take a highly pragmatic view of translation, formulating the "maxim of the necessary degree of precision (or Good Enough Theory)" (as cited in Nord, 1997/2018, p. 13). This "information offer" concept suggests that the appropriate amount of information is determined by what the receiver needs in communication. This role of the start and target texts relation is strikingly weak, giving receivers a more prominent position than in any other notions of functionalism. The translator should adjust the text in accordance with the information that the receiver of the translation really needs. As Hönig (1997) puts it, "there has to be a cut-off point where translators can safely say: 'This is all my readers have to know in this context'" (p. 11). Note that a similarly user-centered approach is formulated by like-minded researchers Suojanen, Koskinen, and Tuominen (2015) within the framework of usability studies, which suggests that translators should collect "empirical proof of actual readers and their needs and preferences" in order to optimize the translation (p. 2). Likewise, Wehrmeyer's (2014) usability model further integrates functionalist and descriptivist notions (e.g., translation conventions and norms).

Within this framework, where importance is attached to reception, *Skopos* theory has proved to be of use in translation pedagogy. A feature common to these *Skopos* trainers is that, unlike equivalence proponents, they pay special attention to the communicative effect of translation, emphasizing the nature of translation as a purposeful activity as opposed to language-independent factors, and giving importance to the way translations are received (cf. Pym, 2010/2014). Apart from its pedagogical virtues, the target-oriented *Skopos* theory has also proposed "a more differentiated conceptualization of the agents" (cf. Chesterman, 2010, p. 214): it has brought in pragmatic awareness of the role of clients, of the different expectations of potential readers, of audiences, and of the general principle that translation is a complex transcultural action or communication across cultural barriers. According to *Skopos* paradigm, rather than working alone, the translator is an active partner interacting with beneficiaries in complex cross-cultural communication. These emergent target-oriented perspectives constituted both a new perspective for translation practice and an underlying shift towards a more sociological approach in the discipline of translation studies.

Nevertheless, some reservations need to be made. The revolutionary *Skopos* theory allows translators to have great liberty. It works well as long as different social agents have a clear agreement on the exact function of the translation. However, if the client and readers have *different* expectations about the translation, how should the translator make purpose-adequate decisions? Epistemological priority is accorded to the target side, but the *Skopos* rule does not say how conflicting purposes can be adequately addressed (cf. Pym, 2010/2014). The possible ways to measure heterogeneous purposes are not clear in the paradigm, leaving many questions unanswered. As a number of overt or covert criticisms (e.g., Toury, 1995/2012, pp. 10–20; Pym, 2010/2014, pp. 53–55; Chesterman 2010) point out that, if the start text is no longer the king, numerous possible social agents enter the field: the translator, the initiator, the client, editors, end-users or readers of the translation. The hierarchal power relations between the different agents is then too complicated to be properly tackled by any prescriptive statement.

Critics also reproach the purpose-oriented approach for producing "mercenary" professionals who, in fact, are "only interested in pleasing" their clients and other receivers in order to gain pay (e.g., Pym, 1996, p. 338). At present, few of the attempts to counter such criticisms are based on irrefutable empirical evidence.

Perhaps the most serious problem of *Skopos* paradigm remains to be its ontological status: its underlying assumption of optimality prescriptively suggests that translators are essentially rational and always act optimally (Chesterman, 2010). *Skopos* has been criticized as a narrow, theoretical-speculative approach that excludes non-optimal translations and empirical investigations on various expectations of the potentially heterogenous readerships (Koller, 1995, p. 215; Pym, 1996, p. 338; see also Chesterman, 2010). As Chesterman (2010) notes, Vermeer's *Skopos* theory starts with inductive generalization but proceeds deductively, without empirical observations.

Skopos theory is considered as pedagogically invaluable, but the prescriptive paradigm (the part that advises translators how to act) is fraught with many issues of validity: there is still limited irrefutable empirical evidence that shows how the actual reception of target readers may, in the real world, influence the translator's cognitive frame of the audience, and how this could ultimately affect translation solutions (cf. Kruger & Kruger, 2017).

2.1.3 Audience design

Given the paucity of empirical work on translation reception, one cannot overlook the attempts that have been made outside Translation Studies to identify the audience based on textual analysis.

In his book *Publics and Counterpublics* (2002), American literary critic and social theorist Michael Warner innovatively proposes a classification of audiences by redefining the audience in terms of publics and their interrelation. Despite not dealing with translation but mainly concerning contemporary literary works, this is precisely the type of consideration that involves not theorizing the audience in an abstract realm, but rather an explicit clarification of what constitutes receivers.

In Warner's classification of addressees in the reception process, the audience of a text is "always yet to be realized" (2002, p. 55). In some situations, the text has a clear addressee: in personal correspondence or the reports and memos disseminated by governments, the referent can be easily understood and identified. But for other genres of discourse, such as literary works, fiction, drama or media publications, the audiences are fundamentally unpredictable or imaginary. This does mean that these audiences are close to myths. They are all "real publics", but they are "in principle open-ended…[and] exist[ing] by virtue of their address" (Warner, 2002, p. 54). Further, what constitutes a text is the relation among strangers. Although all addressees share some social basis, the text also openly addresses people who are "identified primarily through their participation in the discourse and who therefore cannot be known in advance" (Warner, 2002, p. 55). According to Warner, a text can be taken in three ways: as addressed to a clear referent, to an imaginary audience, and as addressed to strangers.

Whereas Warner's view invites analysis to define the nature of the audience, the theory of "audience design," dating from the sociolinguist Allan Bell (1984, 2002) and notably drawing on Goffman (1981), proposes that text producers should tailor their style to suit to particular kinds of audiences. Bell's (1984, 2002) concept of audience design was originally conceived as a way of analyzing public speech. It is based on the idea that speakers, or authors of texts, regulate their way and style of rendering according to the public that they are addressing and the kind of reception their discourse is receiving.

Bell (1984) posits that a speaker's utterance is hugely influenced by attempts to accommodate to the receivers and to other hearers engaged (cf. Tagg & Seargeant, 2014). For Bell, the recipients of a speech event are explicitly divided into five categories from the perspective of the speaker, as follows:

- Addressees, whom the speaker directly addresses;
- Auditors, to whom the message is not specifically aimed but are ratified by the speaker;
- Overhearers, of whom the speaker is aware but has not ratified;
- Eavesdroppers, who are non-ratified and unknown to the speaker;
- Referees, who the speaker particularly respects or with whom the speaker can identify.

Bell's audience design focuses on contextual constraints on reception and can be described as a reader-oriented approach, where start text producers adjust their style to suit particular kinds of audience.

Although Warner's and Bell's classifications of receivers were not initially developed for the study of translation, their models of prospective audience hold for translation. As Warner (2002) puts it, communication exists whenever the message can be received and understood by its intended addressees. In this sense, only those who can understand the translated message can be its target addresses, or even its eavesdroppers. Even the question of whether some message should be translated into another language cannot be properly understood without reference to the imagined audience (cf. Schäffner, 2010a). In this sense, a translated text might not become a legitimate "translation" in the absence of *real* readers.

Since the late 1990s, there have been a few attempts to apply Bell's notion to translation. Scattered individual articles have appeared (Mason, 2000; Hatim & Mason, 1997; Schubert, 2005) and audience design seems to be an essential element of *Skopos* (purpose) theory (Hatim & Mason, 1997). Principally drawing on Bell's (1984) audience design and aspects of linguistic politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987), Hatim and Mason (1997) analyze translated film dialogues and suggest that audience design is an initiative of the communicator rather than a response to the audience. The translator, functioning as a communicator, forms a mental representation of a given socio-cultural community that could be the imagined receivers. By analyzing the translator's translation solutions, Hatim and Mason (1997) find that ensuring readability for the receivers (e.g., cinema audience) is given priority by the translator; some information in the start text (e.g., a conversation between fictional characters on screen) is knowingly sacrificed.

Interestingly enough, Hatim and Mason (1997) propose a dynamic hierarchy of readerships. For instance, the style of subtitling translation is more subject to be shaped by the auditors (e.g., the cinema audience) than by the immediate addressees on screen (e.g., characters in the fictional world). That is, sometimes the auditors might be a more important factor in the translator's decision-making than the direct addressee of the text.

Take a diplomatic press conference held by the Chinese government as an example. The direct addressees are foreign journalists who are supposed to be motivated to write a news story in order to make the translated message and the event be heard by the world. The auditors also include the Chinese spokesperson and diplomats present at the conference, some of whom will be checking that the communication is in accordance with norms. And then there are likely to be China watchers and others who will be interested in following what is happening within China. This might explain why literalism seems to be a prevailing norm in these cases: for the interpreters, although their direct addresses should be non-Chinese speaking journalists on the spot who might benefit from. Nevertheless, the Chinese bilingual officials and other colleagues are regarded as the most important receivers for the interpreters. Faithfulness to the start side is notable.

The idea of audience design enables translators to distinguish their primary receivers in which the translation is to operate. With reference to the reception of translation, Mason (2000) argues that audience design explicitly illustrates Vermeer's *Skopos* paradigm:

translators design translations for various “possible receivers and with target language referee groups in mind” (p. 18). Mason’s analysis of audience design also has much in common with Suojanen et al.’s “user-centered translation” approach (2015), which points out that the target readers may be unclear or have multiple purposes, but the typology still has “potential as a tool that clarifies the target audience” (p. 69).

Another classification of “implied receivers” is proposed by Pym (1992): the ostensible reason for translating a text is to tackle the exclusion of implied receivers. However, a translated text can change an *excluded* receiver into either an *observational* receiver (who can understand it) or a *participative* receiver (who also engage with it within its time frame) (pp. 176–177). The results of the actual reception depend not just on the start text or the translators, but more directly on “the real-world conditions of material transfer” (Pym, 1992, p. 178). Mason (2000) comments that this perspective from the situation of social reception is of great significance in order to apply the notion of audience design in the field of translation.

Similar to *Skopos* theory, the concept of audience design describes an ideal world of prescriptive optimal cases: the main assumption in its application is that translators should know, and sometimes can know, who the target-text users are and what their situations are, and hence ensure the translations are produced accordingly. In the real world, a translation is rarely targeted at just one flesh-and-blood reader who can be clearly identified by the translator. Since receivers are not identical and sometimes cannot be specifically categorized in advance, these audience-oriented approaches seem to boast a definite profile of readers whose purposes could be completely anticipated. The audience-design approach is only justifiable to the extent that we can indeed identify the different expectations of different kinds of readers and then tailor translations to meet their particular needs.

Although the audience has played a crucial and ever-growing role in translation theories, scant empirical research has been done on the way receivers actually participate in translated communication. It is assumed that various kinds of translated texts should be provided for different kinds of readers, but at present few of these assumptions are based on irrefutable empirical data.

In sum, the notion of audience classification encourages translation scholars and practitioners to look beyond target receivers as a faceless, anonymous group. And we need more empirical studies on the validity of these models to further explore the impact of different types of audiences on the translator’s ultimate solutions.

2.1.4 Norm theory

The notion of “norms” was first introduced by Gideon Toury in the late 1970s as the normative forces that regulate translation behavior in a specific sociocultural situation (Toury, 1995). Over the past few decades or so, scholarly work on translation norms has aroused a good deal of debate (see Shlesinger, 1989; Harris, 1990; Hermans, 1991, 1998; Chesterman, 1993, 1997/2016, 2006a; Toury, 1995/2012; Schäffner, 1998, 2010b; Sela-Sheffy, 2005 and others). It has been said that Toury’s pioneering work on norms prepared the ground for research into the social aspects of translation (Schäffner, 2010). It made contemporary Translation Studies much wider than the narrow textual relations to contexts of all kinds (Chesterman, 2006b).

Translation norms can be discovered by looking at two kinds of sources: primary text (in this case translations), to see what translators have actually done, and secondary (theoretical or critical) statements about what translators are expected to do (Pym, 1998/2014; Baker, 1998). From both sources, researchers have sought to define, categorize and explain translation norms from a sociological perspective, which indicates a clear swing from a start-text orientated approach to one that is prospective, functional and oriented towards the target side (Snell-Hornby, 2018).

In this section, by briefly sketching out the history of research on norms, my focus is mainly on one fundamental feature inherent in norm theory: the research on norms is primarily target-oriented. What interests me here is how a target-enrichment norm theory can serve as an explanatory concept in studying what translation is expected to be and how it is received.

2.1.4.1 Target-oriented norm theory

The impetus of Toury's concept came from Even-Zohar's polysystem approach proposed in the early 1970s, who proposed that studying translation involves not a merely evaluative comparison between start and target texts, but a sociological understanding of how translations function in a given target culture (see Even-Zohar, 1979/1990 and 2005). For norm theory, more often than not, research priority is given to the target side and underlines the relevance of reception for Translation Studies (cf. Brems & Ramos Pinto, 2013).

Rather than attempt to merely evaluate linguistic features, Toury made statements about what translational behavior consists of and envisaged an innovatively target-oriented approach to translation. Recall Toury's sociological position (1995/2012) on norms: as a general idea shared by a community, norms are acquired during an individual's socialization, functioning as a value-judgment, deciding what is right or wrong, adequate or not. Norm scholars thus examine textual relations in order to identify regularities and patterns that might serve as causal or explanatory claims about translators' choices (e.g., Ben-Ari, 1992). Considering that it must be others who evaluate the behavior, Toury explicitly states that his discussion about the role of norms is "within a target-oriented version of DTS" (1995/2012, p. 79). One of the most controversial claims made by Toury (1980, see also 1995) was that translation is a norm-governed activity and what is considered to be a translation is determined by the target culture. The target culture expectations are pinned to Toury's formulation: for him, translators "operate first and foremost in the interest of the culture into which they are translating" (1995/2012, p. 6). At its core is explicitly the argument that whether a translation is acceptable is determined "in the use of the target language and appropriate in view of text norms or genre conventions" (Schäffner, 2010b, p. 237).

According to Toury (1995/2012), the idea of "norms" during the act of translation can be conceptualized as two basic categories: *preliminary norms* and *operational norms*. Preliminary norms allow researchers to list solutions that are available to translators in a given socio-cultural context, often being influenced by translation policies and the dominant directionality of translation within a certain time. Operational norms reflect the solutions that translators opt for in practice, primarily concerning production norms that regulate the textual linguistic form of a translation as a final product in the target culture. Notice that Toury (1995/2012, p. 79) postulates a type of norm that he calls "initial norm," which refers to a binary choice between two extreme orientations: leaning on the start text, which leads to an *adequate* translation, or adhering to the target-language norms, which determines an *acceptable* translation (cf. Chesterman 1997/2016, pp. 61–62). The latter is particularly concerned with the reception of the translations in a target culture. Toury clarifies that shifts from the start text "are to be expected even in the most extreme adequacy-oriented translation," making target-oriented patterns an inevitable "distinctive feature of translation" (1995/2012, p. 80). In this sense, the focus on start-culture norms is somehow secondary.

Taking his cue from Toury, Chesterman (1993) redefines norms as professional or expectancy norms, corresponding to the translation process and the translation product, respectively. For Chesterman (1997/2016), expectancy norms are established by receivers' expectations of "what a translation (of a given type) should be like" (p. 64). The readers may include the translators' clients, who may have expectations about factors such as lexical choices, text types and discourse conventions in the target language, but also expectations determined by the prevalent translation tradition in their culture, such as start-text-oriented renditions or target-culture adaptations. Chesterman also notes that economic or ideological factors between cultures can influence expectancy norms. Since readers may have different expectations from various angles, a "single correct translation" (Chesterman, 1997/2016, p. 62) does not exist. Texts can thus be translated in a variety of ways to achieve what is expected of them. These target-oriented norms also help to make evaluative judgments about translations, within which may be seen more or less "appropriate" or "acceptable" from the receivers' perspective. In this sense, Chesterman (1993) refers to Toury's notion of acceptability to drive the target-oriented point home: expectancy norms, or the expected receptions by the receivers on the reception side, dominate the production of translations.

Chesterman's second category, professional norms, are in effect start-culture norms that govern the translation solutions chosen by competent professional translators. The professional norms take into account the expectancy norms, since "any process norm is determined by the nature of the end-product which it is designed to lead to" (Chesterman, 1997/2016, p. 65). They can be subdivided into three major types: *accountability norms* are established in codes of ethics for professionals; *communication norms* emphasize the function of the translator as an independent expert in intercultural interaction; *relation norms* can be linked to functionalist approaches that require the translator to achieve "relevant similarity" between the start and target text based on the prospective readership or intended purpose of the translation. For Chesterman, it is the judgment of translators, including translation policies, translation traditions (in the target culture) and (target-side) readership expectations across time and space that influence the formulation of various translation norms.

2.1.4.2 Norms are validated by people

Part of the problem in target-focused norm theory is this: the dichotomy of start and target normative forces perpetuates a binary opposition that the two kinds of norms seem to be validated separately; there is not much analysis of the negotiation between the two sides. To put it simply, who sets norms? If conflicts happen, whose voice prevails, and why? How do different agents agree to arbitration in cases of dispute (if any sort of arbitration is available)? Toury himself was acutely aware that the role of "different agents in the overall dynamics of translational norms is still largely a matter of conjecture" (1995/2012, p. 86). For Chesterman (1993), professional norms are largely established by authorities, understood in a wide sense as "professionals," including translation educators, critics, and internal reviewers who check the translation product and the actual practice of translators. On the other hand, expectancy norms are validated on the target side by "the receivers" (Chesterman 1993, p. 9). Note that although Chesterman uses the term "receivers," the corresponding expectations ensue from a generalized assumption of what a translation ought to be like in a somehow homogeneous target system — for example, a definitively collective desire for "overt" or "covert" translation (House, 1981) in a given target-language community (e.g., Chesterman 1997/2016, p. 63). Underlying this claim seems to be an assumption that the "translation tradition in the target culture" (Chesterman 1993, p. 9) is a consensus forged by the community. How the different agents on the target side negotiate and the potential clashes concerned seem to fall outside the main focus of Chesterman's norm system.

With respect to the examples concerning translation and interpreting in institutional settings, counter-evidence has been uncovered in some empirical studies. A notable example is Koskinen's (2000) ethnographic study of European Commission translation. As Koskinen

(2000) argues, part of institutional translation is characterized by “existential equivalence” (p. 49), due to the fact that EU translations are produced for institutional needs rather than for the general public in a target culture. Similar evidence is also found in the domain of community interpreting, particularly in legal and healthcare settings where the start-side authority tends to be of rather more weight (e.g., Bolden, 2000; Anderson, 1976/2002; Pöllabauer, 2004; Kolb & Pöchhacker, 2008). Such works draw attention to interpreters’ strategies that are directly influenced by the start culture senders’ expectations (e.g., asylum officers or healthcare professionals) rather than by the target-culture users. All these cases suggest that belief in a dominant (target) side might be an ideal, not a factual relation.

Some translation scholars also argue that there is no reason why translation norms should be constrained to one culture only and throughout that culture, since a particular translation is scarcely representative of any general norm and no empirical studies have tested these claims (cf. Pym, 1998b). In addition, although many scholars stress that norms are influenced by political and economic differences across cultural boundaries, as Pym (1998b) points out, little research has been able to say *what* they are actually constraining in terms of social factors and power relations.

A point of departure to revisit norm theory is the observable “facts of real life” (Toury, 1995/2012, p. xi) and the social confrontations in which norms are, indeed, validated by people (Pym, 1998b). Rather than simply look at a translation tradition that leads to dominant norms as a homogeneous set, we need to consider how the expectations of different agents might clash with those of others and in what ways the potential competing norms can (or cannot) be brought into agreement.

It is my contention that the target-oriented focus in norm theory is rather questionable given the fact that the real, individual participant is beyond the ambit of analysis. What happens after a norm is broken by *people* and how one norm takes precedence over others through negotiation by different human agents might deserve greater attention than it has hitherto received. In view of this, norm theory can probably be taken further by exposing it to the risk of being tested empirically and falsified, so as to turn conjectures and speculation into knowledge.

2.1.5 Risk management

Drawing on general risk-management theory, risk analysis is increasingly being investigated as a dynamic feature that is deeply entrenched in the translator’s decision-making. Several views of risk management have been proposed by Pym (2005, 2008a, 2015), Wilss (2005), Akbari (2009), Lammers (2011), Matsushita (2015, 2016) and Canfora and Ottmann (2015, 2016). Some of these analyses (e.g., Akbari, 2009; Lammers, 2011; Canfora & Ottmann, 2015, 2016) perceive translation as just another kind of social action, paying less attention to the specificity of translating, while others (e.g., Pym, 2008a, 2015; Matsushita, 2015, 2016) suggest that risk management is intrinsic to the process of translating itself.

According to Pym (2008a), all possible translation solutions (e.g., Toury’s laws of standardization and interference, House’s covert and overt translation, or Venuti’s domestication and foreignization) are legitimate risk-management strategies. The translator takes account of the presence or absence of rewards when they are deciding whether to take risks. For example, if the start text is regarded as “authoritative or prestigious”, then the safest bet for translators is to “allow that authority or prestige to absorb risk” (thus producing what Toury calls “interference”) (Pym, 2008a, p. 325).

Here we see the implications of this approach for the reception of translations. This can be explained from the classification of translation risks. According to Pym (2015), one prominent risk is the probability that the translator loses a kind of translation-specific trust;

this can be called "credibility risk." For Pym (2015), between the translator, client, and receiver, trust is the prime concern that enables a kind of agreement of mutual interest. In this sense, the translator's credibility prominently depends on reception: translators seek to gain trust from their clients and end-users, trying to maintain credibility with these receivers. The need to maintain trust and reduce credibility risk can also explain the solutions the translators adopt, particularly in high-sensitive contexts. Takeda's (2009) study on the International Military Tribunal for the Far East shows that extra-linguistic dimensions such as trust, power, and control are key in this hierarchical structure. The trustworthiness of the interpreter (in this case the interpreters who were American citizens with limited Japanese) may override the quality of interpreting in such political settings.

The second kind of risk concerns the translator's cognitive decision-making and can be called "uncertainty risk" (Pym, 2005). The idea is simple: when translators confront uncertainty in a text, they have to guess to some extent and thus take the corresponding risks. Although it appears that the translator is uncertain with the content of the start text, the uncertainty indeed comes from not knowing how their receivers will respond to the translation. For example, experienced translators are more likely than novices to incorporate clients into the translation process in order to mitigate potential uncertainty risk (Künzli, 2004).

When applying risk analysis to high-stakes political translation, Pym and Matsushita (2016) argue that the translator's decisions can be legitimate as long as they seek to avoid communicative failure from the perspective of reception. This "communicative risk" is a third kind of risk and concerns the way the start text is understood and rendered, where some items are high-risk because they determine the success of communication (Pym, 2015). This sense of risk, which particularly takes account of reception, indicates "a rationalist model of translators' decisions and effort distributions", positing that more effort needs to be distributed in texts with higher communicative risk (Pym, 2015, p. 67).

Risk management is not merely a matter of guesswork; it should be more positive by affirming the nature of translation as cooperation, as a cost-effective mechanism for reducing systemic complexity on the reception side, and as a way of increasing mutual benefits (Pym, 2015). Risk-taking can be viewed as an "active positive option, corresponding to possible enhanced social rewards" based on the expectancy of receivers (Pym, 2015, p. 71). For risk management, there are four strategies that translators can apply: avoid risk, transfer it, mitigate it or assume it (see Pym, 2015; Pym & Matsushita, 2016). All are concerned with the anticipated ways that a translated text might be received.

The idea of risk management can be seen as a framework that can provide an existentialist view of translation as a reception-focused activity: translators are "self-aware" (Chesterman, 1997/2016, p. 39), who are always weighing up the costs and benefits of each decision taken. Although Pym and Matsushita (2016) report an interview with a Japanese interpreter on the ways risk management related to her decision-making when working on high-risk political discourse, no study to date on risk management has included empirical work on reception.

2.2 Empirical studies on reception

The study of translational reception should be distinguished from the study of receptions of translations. The former focuses on a more phenomenological conception of reception and falls within the framework of "aesthetic response" (Iser, 1978, p. x), whereas the latter is more empirically oriented.

Despite the importance of understanding the communicative effects shared by different paradigms, it is obvious that the literature discussed in the foregoing section (see 2.1) primarily concerns theoretical frameworks and speculations. There have been comparatively few attempts to theorize translation reception based on empirical results (Kruger & Kruger, 2017).

Two prominent exceptional fields are identified. An important branch of empirical studies, usually focusing on user expectations, has been interpreting. Focusing on quality-related expectations among users (mainly fellow interpreters), interpreting researchers use questionnaires, surveys, interviews and experimental designs to explore various expectations of different users in different settings. Recent research on audiovisual translation has also evidently undertaken empirical investigations of audience reactions, particularly using eye-tracking to measure readers' processing capacity.

As Schrøder et al. (2003) outline in their book on *Researching Audiences*, there are four solutions to empirical target-oriented research: ethnography, reception research, audience surveys, and experimental studies. All four approaches have been used in the empirical studies done on audiovisual translation and interpreting. Rather than provide a detalied review of all and any empirical reception studies, the following section aims to sketch out various methods and research designs with reference to some exemplary studies in the two domains.

2.2.1 Quality-oriented reception studies in interpreting

The study of user expectations has been particularly fruitful in interpreting research. Researchers have been keen to outline the quality needs of receivers, i.e. measuring "objective" features of the interpreter's verbal output rather than the receiver's subjective attitudes and judgements (see Bühler, 1986; Kurz, 1993a, 1993b; Kurz & Pöchhacker, 1995; Mack & Cattaruzza, 1995; Moser, 1996; Collados Aís, 1998/2002; Chiaro, 2002; Russo, 2005; Zwischenberger, 2010). Either in studies done in conference/community interpreting (e.g., Bühler, 1986; Kurz, 1993; Kurz & Pöchhacker, 1995; Wehrmeyer, 2015) or in sign language interpreting (Xiao & Li, 2013; Xiao et al., 2015), criteria that were ranked highly (e.g., accuracy, completeness and logical cohesion) are heavily associated with (textual-)quality-related expectations. This is partly because the pioneering survey-based studies were primarily interested in the qualifications of a "good interpreter" and thus designed textual criteria based on top-down mapping. The category of users tended to include clients and interpreters, the so-called "untypical readers" (Chesterman, 1999/2017, p. 52), who usually fall outside the scope of reception studies in other fields (e.g., Hearn, 1981; Bühler, 1986; Kurz & Pöchhacker, 1995; Mesa, 1997).

Not very surprisingly, generic audience expectations ensue from a top-down quality-oriented design. Russo (2005) reports survey results of audience's quality-related judgements on two international film festivals. This kind of general audience expectations seem homogeneous, with clear preferences for information completion, fluency and coherence. Methodologically, this makes sense: if asked about, higher quality is always desired.

On the other hand, the *in situ* end-user is usually absent in these quality-oriented studies on reception. In Kurz's (1993a) survey in media interpreting, her eight-item questionnaire was sent to media professionals who worked with interpreters. The ultimate target-language users (e.g., patients) are also missing in both Pöchhacker's (2000) and Mesa's (1997, as cited in Pöchhacker, 2001) studies in healthcare interpreting. Strictly speaking, when researchers (e.g., Kopczynski, 1994) argued that higher intervention could be accepted, the hypothesis was only empirically held by start-culture users. There is little empirical evidence about whether all target-culture users would happily accept high-level intervention without any hesitation.

It seems that the concept of receivers itself is either defined arbitrarily or is not defined at all. At first sight, the lack of real target-language users is a methodological problem: the general idea of a "fuzzy, remote, virtual audience" seems too large to be representative (Kurz, 2007, p. 70). For interpreting audience-based studies, access to "present and now" users appears much more difficult, so participants are usually recruited for experimental screenings. One experimental example is Elsagir's (1999, as cited in Pöchhacker, 2018) survey of TV viewers, which moves toward the experimental user-response approach. Nevertheless, her study still aims to evaluate responses to actual interpreting performances and elicit generic expectations (cf. Pöchhacker, 2018). As Pöchhacker (2018) points out, recent reception studies in interpreting have shown a trend towards involving authentic users.

In terms of receiver's profiles, some scholars have been aware that different user roles are distinct in nature, and that this might result in various expectations, especially in terms of high-intervention solutions. Kopczynski (1994) made a distinction between the preferences of users as "speakers" vs. "listeners" in a conference setting. While speakers tended to tolerate "high intervention by the interpreter" (as cited in Pöchhacker, 2011, p. 415), listeners showed an evident preference for the invisible "ghost role" of the interpreter and tended to choose a close, even flawed version of the speaker's words. Another example can be found in Mesa's (1997) account of healthcare-provider expectations. The survey shows that expectations among different users within the same institution might vary significantly. The service providers' expectation that cultural knowledge should be explained ranked lower than quality-bound criteria such as start-text comprehension, and even lower expectation for receiving cultural explanations from the interpreter. Similarly, Pöchhacker's (2000) analysis of healthcare and social workers indicates that the four professional groups (doctors, nurses, therapists and social workers) had significantly different expectations. In line with the study by Mesa (1997), the interpreters themselves tended to take risks: interpreters were found to feel much more strongly than healthcare professionals about the need to explicitate (83% vs. 59%).

A noteworthy study on signed language interpreting done by Steiner (1998) sheds some light on the impact of the heterogeneity of the target audience upon reception. By testing the target groups' comprehension of British Sign Language (BSL), Steiner's experimental study indicates that the deaf receiver's level of education, the target-language competence, degree of hearing loss, and preferred mode of communication are all observed as important variables. The study by Steiner (1998) is significant not only in pointing out the complexity of the audience but also in showing an innovative way forward for experimental research in testing communicative effectiveness on the reception side.

Until recently, the bottom-up approach has been adopted to identify relevant issues and variables that might affect the receiver's preferences. In a preliminary survey, Wehrmeyer (2015) used open-ended questions to explore which interpreted renderings 44 deaf subjects could understand and why they did not understand particular interpreted parts. Wehrmeyer (2015) concludes that the audience's incompressibility is due to policy constraints and social inequality: most subjects were unfamiliar with the variety of South African Sign Language (SASL) seen on TV.

As Tuominen (2018) points out, it is difficult to account for all potentially consequential variables when researching on authentic receptions. When the effects of start-language proficiency on the understanding of cultural knowledge are tested, the education background of the participants may influence the testing of start-language proficiency on the understanding of cultural knowledge. Given that the uncertain subjectivity and individuality of the reception experience, how much a heterogeneous group can represent real-life scenarios in question is still in doubt.

It is assumed that in order to avoid "the risk of a systematic personal or contextual bias in the responses" (cf. Gile, 1998, p. 74), many of the mainstays of reception studies in interpreting still tend to adopt established lists of performance-based prerequisites. A non-quality, interpersonal dimension (e.g., ethical consideration and trustworthiness) that might affect audience perceptions is usually overlooked or sidelined. And it seems that interpreting reception research has not developed much in this line. One exception is Chiaro's study (2002) that compares how 80 undergraduate translation/interpreting students and 30 laypersons evaluated a TV talk show host's performance and trustworthiness as an interpreter. Chiaro observes that both the students and laypersons were influenced by the charisma of the TV host and were thus more tolerant than would be expected of his evident shortcomings and genuine mistakes.

To sum up, although meeting user expectations tends to be a criterion for a "'good interpreter' and desirable interpreter behavior" (Pöchhacker, 2004/2016, p. 175), these studies warrant a more detailed investigation on the possible methods for reception studies. This might outline the future of establishing some shared conceptual and/or methodological ground between studying the reception of different forms of translation. For instance, the inclusion of "untypical readers" such as interpreters and clients helps narrow down the gap between the expectations of the production and the reception sides. By reviewing the literature on user expectations in interpreting, the combination of corpus-based approaches, survey research (questionnaires and interviews) and controlled experiments provides a holistic view on establishing better realistic methods of reception assessment. On the other hand, the "shared" methodological problems indicated by interpreting scholars also face the researcher in other domains (Pöchhacker, 2001, p. 422): the insufficient number of survey responses and the unauthentic reception data collected in an experimental setting. Empirical research on reception has been fraught with many issues of validity, which calls for further careful thinking.

2.2.2 Methodological development in written/audiovisual translation

Outside the domain of interpreting, reception studies in translation have increasingly concerned aspects related to the receiver's cognitive process and reading behavior, showing a shift from indirect and reporting-based methods to (quasi-)experimental designs (Kruger & Kruger, 2017).

Qualitative research on the reception of written translation has largely focused on culture-bound items, as in readers' responses to (binary) translation solutions to literary works. An earlier study was done by Leppihalme (1997), who used open-ended questionnaires to look at how Finnish readers understood literally translated cultural allusions. Liang (2007) carried out a survey of Taiwanese children's responses to different solutions to translating Harry Potter book series and found that foreignized items were less acceptable than domesticated content. Some research takes the "acceptability" of translation as the object of study. Puurtinen (1994) was one of the earliest studies to make the link between the translation style and the reception of readers, particularly examining the acceptability of two Finnish translations of *The Wizard of Oz*. Cognitive-linguistic methods are used to investigate similar questions e.g., the adequacy of translation. Zasyekin (2010) argues that different syntactic and semantic translation strategies lead to readers' different semantic responses to prose and poetry texts. Similar results are reported by Kenesei (2010), who finds that readers' receptions vary according to the ways in which poems are translated.

Some empirical results suggest that different solutions scarcely affect readers' receptions of the original and its translations. An earlier example of this kind of empirical study is Jelle Stegeman (1991) (as cited in Hermans, 2014, p. 22), which sets out to test how actual readers respond to different literary translations as opposed to their originals. Stegeman examined the differences between source-reader response to Multatuli's *Max Havelaar* and target-reader perceptions of its several German translations (cf. Koster, 1993). Stegeman used laboratory-type tests and questionnaires to measure the various responses, which were then analyzed statistically. He finds no significant difference between the receptions of the original and the translations.

Another study similarly suggests that different translation strategies may rarely affect the reception by the target readers. Zhong (2014) conducted a study in three Chinese cities, with a total of 143 readers responding to two translations of Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind*. The study uses these two translations to represent distinct translation strategies because a previous study conducted by Wen and Gao (2003) (as cited in Zhong, 2014; see also Zhong & Lin, 2007) stated that these two translations were "typical examples of foreignization and domestication" (Zhong, 2014, p. 262). Questionnaires and interviews were used to measure the participants' perceptions of each translation. However, to the researcher's surprise, the results showed no statistically significant difference between the receptions of the translations. Zhong (2014) therefore concluded that since readers could understand both the foreignized and the domesticated texts, "a foreign-looking language" might also be acceptable, and "there was no need to foreground foreign elements" (p. 273).

All these studies largely depend on indirect and reporting-based methods. In contrast, Kruger (2012, 2013) adopted quasi-experimental, mixed-methods, combining eye-tracking technology with comprehension and attitude tests to compare Afrikaans children's and adult readers' cognitive processing of cultural items that are either adapted or literally rendered. She found that both children and adults invested more cognitive efforts to understand culturally unfamiliar items.

Note that the above reception studies on the effects of translation strategies tend to broadly dichotomize the solutions into foreignizing vs. domesticating (or free vs. literal). In Zhong (2014), the researcher does not convincingly explain why the two translated texts can be called "foreignization" and "domestication," apart from one previous study saying so. Readers might respond differently as long as they are asked to read something *really* different. On the other hand, this oversimplified dichotomy might neglect the possibility that what makes readers accept or refuse a text might not be a general translation solution but very specific, personal concerns.

In studies on audiovisual translation, more experimental-based studies have been carried out. (Kruger & Kruger, 2017). As early as in 1980s, Belgian psychologist Géry d'Ydewalle conducted an experimental test on the reception of subtitles of films, investigating the cognitive way viewers process the subtitles. D'Ydewalle and his colleagues' later studies extended their focus to the nature of subtitle reading, analyzing unconscious reading patterns when watching television (d'Ydewalle et al., 1991).

The pedagogical function of subtitles in second-language acquisition also received considerable attention, which helps broaden the understanding of various readerships. D'Ydewalle and Van de Poel (1999) *inter alia* focused on how children incidentally learned a foreign language by watching subtitled television. Jensema, El Sharkawy, Sarma Danturthi, Burch and Hsu (2000) carried out experiments to analyze the ways subtitle speeds influence hearing and deaf users' cognitive processes. Jensema, Sarma Danturthi, and Burch (2000) studied the time that the audience spent viewing subtitles. Winke, Gass, and Syderenko (2013) conducted eye-movement studies to compare how second-language learners processed subtitles. They find that reading time on subtitles varies according to different language pairs (e.g., Arabic-speaking learners had to spend significantly more time reading subtitles than Russian- and Spanish-speaking learners).

In terms of methods, eye-tracking methodologies and other "real-time" cognitive methods are widely used to investigate how viewers process linguistic features of subtitles. D'Ydewalle, Rensbergen and Pollet (1987) conducted one of the earliest eye-tracking studies to explore subtitle reception. D'Ydewalle and de Bruycker's (2007) more recent study compares the eye movements while reading two different kinds of television subtitles. Bisson et al. (2012) used eye-tracking to analyze how users incidentally acquired foreign vocabulary when reading subtitles. Caffrey (2008) analyzed the effects of subtitles on viewers' reading behaviors when watching subtitled Japanese anime. Perego et al. (2010) study the effectiveness of processing subtitles and conclude that the audience's comprehension of subtitled films does not correlate with line segmentation. In Perego's (2012) edited volume, Ghia (2012) uses eye-tracking tests to investigate the impact of translation solutions on the viewers, examining how Italian intermediate learners read translated English subtitles. Moran (2012) attempts to measure the impact of linguistic variation on subtitle reception. Kruger, Hefer, and Matthew (2013) use eye-tracking technology, self-assessment of users, and comprehension surveys to assess the impact of subtitling on readers' cognitive processes. In another study, after tracking eye movements and using comprehension experiments, Kruger and Steyn (2014) conclude that reading subtitles can improve students' academic performance.

A few empirical studies suggest that different subtitling solutions affect user satisfaction. Orrego-Carmona (2015) uses eye tracking to compare the receptions of professional and fan-made subtitles and finds that the professional subtitles are received with shorter reading fixations. In his study, although there is no significant difference between the users' comprehension with the professional and the Latin-American fan-made translations, participants do have lower scores of understanding for the Iberian fan-produced version.

Some empirical studies claim that the quality of the translation may hardly affect reception at all. In Künzli and Ehrensberger-Dow's (2011) experimental study, the researchers compare the comprehension of movie subtitles and find no significant difference in terms of comprehension between standard subtitles and innovative subtitles.

A couple of studies shift the focus from the quality of translation to the profiles and reading patterns of readers. In Kruger and Steyn (2014), the researchers found that the more the students understood the subtitles, the better they performed in a comprehension test. Choi (2015) looks at how different reading purposes affect reading patterns, taking a translated webpage from Apple as an example. She examines the way reading patterns differ between translators and non-translators when reading, and also between those groups when reading with different purposes. To test how readers might perceive translation errors and to explore the relations between the reading patterns and the reading purposes, different types of translation errors were planted on the web page. In terms of reading patterns, Choi finds that ordinary readers do not read the details of a web page in most cases, even when they have to read the content for a specific purpose. From the perspective of reception of translation strategies, Choi concludes that readers tend to be less engaged when more literal translations are produced which disregard the natural and common structures of the target language. What this research suggests is that if the translated content in a web page does not submit to the expectations of users, the content will easily be overlooked.

At present, most empirical studies on reception concern the general translation strategies and reading experience of written/audiovisual texts rather than the perceptions of an individual reader of specific content. Some will also be surprised to find the limited substantial treatment of empirical research on how political, ideological and cultural factors affect the reception of non-literary, audiovisual materials (e.g., foreign-affairs discourse). The ways different translations might raise readers' ethical concerns have received only sporadic scholarly attention.

My contention is that future empirical reception studies on high-sensitive content will benefit from adopting an integrated, interdisciplinary view – across modalities and conceptual dimensions.

3. Methodology

Translation scholars have argued that translations can affect readers in multiple ways: translations are assumed to affect target and also start cultures, and they are supposed to affect intercultural relations and perceptions (cf. Chesterman, 1999/2017). To test such claims, I set out this quasi-experimental study to examine how translations are received by readers and in what ways they have effects on the target culture, taking different English translations of Chinese foreign-affairs discourse as a case study.

In order to investigate what actions can succeed and what might cause misunderstanding or lead to communicative failure in translation reception, I link the data from the production side to the reception side. My initial purpose is to examine how translators' solutions might influence the way readers perceive the start culture.

The study is thus divided into two parts. On the production side, I initially ask what kind of receivers the translators *think* they are communicating with, and how this mental image of the receiver is affected by translation norms and determines the translators' judgements. On the reception side, the various target readers are assumed to have different expectations of translations. Reading satisfaction is perceived to largely depend on who the receivers are and how familiar they are with the start culture. I am also particularly interested in what determines readers to accept or refuse a certain translation solution and whether the underlying rationale might change with respect to the readers' different points of focus. For this second endeavor, I ask to what degree receptions of different kinds of translations vary with the audience's relative familiarity with the start culture. Other variables, including age, gender, education, target language proficiency and length of exposure to the start culture, are also taken into account.

In this chapter my research questions and hypotheses will be presented, followed by an analytical discussion of research design. A pilot study will be reported on, the results of which will lead to methodological adjustments in the main experiment.

3.1 Research questions and hypotheses

In search of a model that hopefully maximizes communicative effect and reduces communicative loss, I propose using translator intervention as a controllable, non-binary variable: intervention is measurable in degrees, in the sense that there are more than two ways to manage cultural distance. Translator intervention is hereby used as an umbrella concept that denotes a wide range of translator options, from literalism (i.e. low-level intervention) to radical adaptation (i.e. high-level intervention). Logically speaking, the more the translator intervention is being made, the less literal the translation appears to be. Note that the levels of translator intervention are always relative, contingent on comparison. I thus examine how different receivers on the production (e.g. the official translators) and the reception sides (e.g. various categories of target readers) engage with certain levels of translator intervention in Chinese foreign-affairs discourse. Specifically, this study attempts to answer the following set of questions:

1. How do comprehension and image-formation relate to the receiver's prior familiarity with the start culture?
2. What kinds of translations maximize both comprehension and positive image-formation?
3. Are rewritings or adaptations required for some receivers?

4. Can production norms be better adapted to suit actual reception patterns?

In view of the above research questions, my initial hypotheses are as follows:

- H_1: The more literal the translation, the more negative the effect on the receiver's *comprehension* of the information.
- H_2: The more literal the translation, the more negative the effect on the receiver's *image* of the start culture.
- H_3: The more literal the translation, the more acceptable it is to target-side receivers.
- H_4: The more literal the translation, the more acceptable it is *to official translators*.

The two main variables in this study are the level of translator intervention and the receivers' familiarity with Chinese culture. Translator intervention is a concept that covers a wide range of translation solutions, from word-for-word, to close translation to radical rewriting. Literalism is regarded as low translator intervention. For example, a word-for-word translation of a Chinese policy (e.g., "four-pronged strategy") is regarded as a low-degree translator intervention. Any attempt to explicitate or summarize the meaning of the jargon is considered as higher intervention. Logically speaking, the more translator intervention is being made, the less literal the translation is.

"Familiarity" is understood as a) knowledge of Chinese foreign-affairs discourse and b) interaction with China, measured in terms of the length of stay in China and the proficiency in Chinese. A familiarity survey is designed to quantitatively measure the receiver's pre-understanding of the Chinese context.

Note that the hypotheses are quantitively formulated, but they are tested and then analyzed on the basis of qualitative data. The reason is that the qualitative data are clearly different on both the production and reception sides so there is no real need to convert the hypotheses into quantities in a controlled way.

3.2 Research design

Rather than rely on prescriptive speculation, this study focuses on data derived from direct observation and experimental investigation of how actual readers engage with different translator interventions.

The study is empirically conducted. Empirical research can be categorized in different ways. Qualitative and quantitative approaches should be distinguished (Künzli, 2013). The ultimate purpose of conducting empirical studies on translation has been aptly outlined by Toury (1995/2012): to describe particular phenomena and to establish general principles that can be explained and predicted. In this sense, the rivalry between quantitative and qualitative approaches seems unnecessary (Han, 2018): qualitative research focuses on achieving an in-depth understanding of the study of the object, while quantitative research, on the other hand, yields results that provide more focused information and may lend themselves to generalizable explanations (Künzli, 2013).

In order to account for the complexity in how participants respond to translations of China's foreign-affairs discourse, a mixed-methods research design that combines qualitative and quantitative analyses is considered an appropriate methodology. In discussions of research methods in Translation Studies (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013; Hale & Napier, 2013), mixed-method research has been acknowledged as an important way to overcome the dichotomy of qualitative and quantitative approaches so as to enable both explanation and understanding. After all, there is no such thing as "natural data" (Pöchhacker, 2004/2016, p.

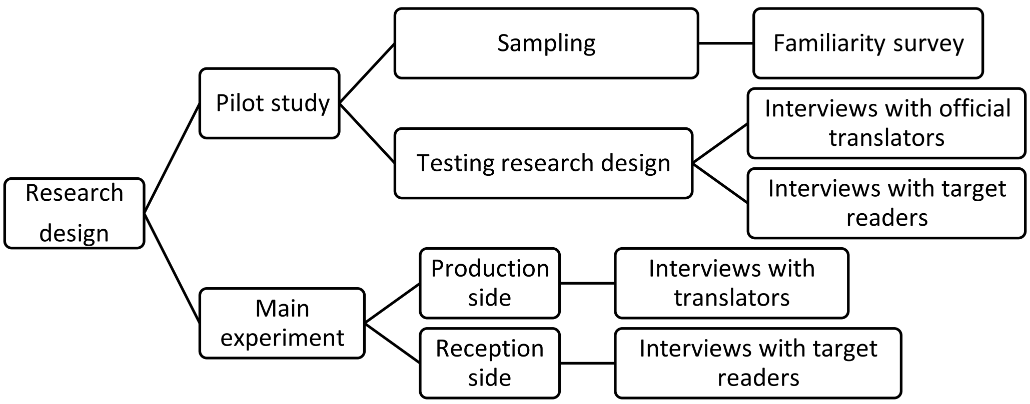
65). As Chesterman and Arrojo (2000, p.152) argue, empirical data are not a given, but are essentially “taken” by the researcher who has a particular interest or agenda in mind. Here the impact on “researcher personal attribute effect” (Saldanha & O’Brien, 2013) participants’ responses will be analyzed in 7.3.2 below.

Four main sampling techniques are adopted in this study, namely convenience sampling, volunteer sampling, networking sampling and snowballing sampling. On the production side, most participants were recruited through convenience sampling, since I would need to develop contacts and trustworthy relationships with the specific group of institutional translators in order to invite them to evaluate the relatively sensitive foreign-affairs discourse. The remaining five subjects were approached through a non-probability technique i.e. networking sampling. On the reception side, the population was recruited through convenience sampling, volunteer sampling, and snowballing sampling. To identify the expectations of the various target readerships, I used an initial, self-report multiple-choice survey to collect demographic data about the receivers. The survey was delivered via e-mail to potential participants aged 18–52 years who were engaged in Australian university-level. The recruitment information was also published on a website called Notice Online Platform with a link to the online questionnaire. Several participants were later recruited through snowballing sampling to enrich the diversity of the population. The participants in a specific ‘expert’ group were approached through convenience sampling.

By analyzing the multifactorial quantitative data of the survey, the subjects on the reception side were categorized into different groups in terms of their profiles. Followed by area sampling, selected subjects from each profile group were interviewed, during which time they completed the four ranking-translation tasks. The ranking results and interview data are analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively in search of the receiver’s behavioural patterns, habits, and preferences. The same ranking-translation tasks and follow-up interviews are also conducted with selected translators on the production side, in the hope that the production norms identified could be linked to the communitive effect on the reception side.

The research works on qualitative and quantitative data from a sample of 51 subjects in total who participated in the ranking translation tasks and interviews of the pilot study and the main experiment. The study is carried out in two stages (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Structure of research design



In the pilot study a familiarity survey was used as a purposive sampling technique to select participants for the main experiment. Semi-structured interviews with seven Chinese translators and eight Australian readers were then conducted to test the feasibility of the ranking tasks that would be used in the future experiment. The methodological adjustments based on the results generated and observations made in the pilot study are discussed in detail in 3.3.1.4 (production side) and 3.3.2.3 (reception side) below.

The main experiment consisted of two parts: the production side and the reception side. In terms of sampling, the production side comprised Chinese translators who had worked with the Chinese government; the target readerships were classified according to their familiarity scores and degrees of interaction with China (see 3.3.2.2). The classification of the subjects participating in the ranking-translation tasks and interviews in the main experiment is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Classification of the translators and receivers who ranked translations and were interviewed

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">Subjects who know Chinese</td><td colspan="3">Subjects who do not know Chinese</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Within translation community</td><td colspan="3">Outside translation community</td><td rowspan="3">Never been to China</td><td rowspan="3">Have been to China but for less than three months</td><td rowspan="3">Have been to China for more than three months</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Chinese official translators</td><td rowspan="2">L1 English Translation students/scholars</td><td rowspan="2">Readers receiving education in mainland China</td><td colspan="2">Readers receiving education outside mainland China</td></tr>
<tr><td>Non-Chinese speakers</td><td>Chinese diaspora</td></tr>
<tr><td>Production side</td><td colspan="7">Reception side</td></tr>
</table>

On the production side, 14 Chinese translators were invited to evaluate four translation tasks into English, each of a different text in Chinese. The texts in Chinese were selected in order to typify the main linguistic and stylistic features of Chinese foreign-affairs discourse. In each task, the lowest-intervention translation is based on an authentic translation published by the Chinese government, slightly adapted. Only minor changes have been made due to the occasional need for grammatical correction. The other two alternative translations in each task were produced by me. Since the norm for Chinese institutional translation is to be primarily done L2 speakers, the fact that I produced the texts could help add authenticity and ecological validity to the documents.

A post-reading interview was then conducted to investigate what norms govern translators' judgments and how their expectations of the prospective readership might affect their evaluations.

On the reception side, the 22 selected participants were asked to read the same translation tasks that the translators had evaluated, followed by individual and focus-group interviews to explore how they understood and engaged with the texts.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the means of collecting data in light of two primary considerations. First, this approach enables probing for more information and specification of answers when complex and sensitive questions are asked. Second, the varied professional, educational and personal backgrounds of the sample group precluded the use of a standardized interview schedule (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Considering that the heterogeneous readership participating in this study was being asked questions regarding their own experience and reflections on Chinese political culture, semi-structured interviews were preferred rather than standardized or unstructured interviews. In the interviews, open-ended questions were asked with a focus on how readers perceive translator interventions made in different text types.

Before each interview, the interviewee was asked to read a Plain Language Statement that explained the purpose of the research, how the information was to be used and the voluntary nature of participation. They then signed an ethics consent form agreeing to participate in the study. With their permission, all the spoken parts of the experiment sessions were audio-recorded and then transcribed and anonymized, in accordance with the principles of human research ethics and integrity at the University of Melbourne.

The results of the main experiment are discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 5. The next section will discuss the pilot study, in which the rationale of sampling and recruiting participants is discussed, and some methodological adjustments are justified.

3.3 Pilot Study

The purpose of carrying out the pilot study was to validate the feasibility of the research design for the main experiment. The pilot study focused on three aims: 1) to sample and categorize readers on the reception side; 2) to test the relative effectiveness of the ranking-translation tasks and interview protocols used on both sides, and 3) to provide a preliminary glimpse into the reception process.

Overall, the research design worked as expected. Several minor changes pertaining to methodological validity and reliability were nevertheless identified, in particular with regard to clarifying the method of sampling, the formulation of questionnaires, and the ways to use prompt questions to elicit reader's feedback in interviews. Reflections and solutions with a view to enhancing the full experiment are illustrated in the following sections.

3.3.1 Production side

My prime concern in this section is with ways of testing the sampling techniques, the feasibility of the ranking translation tasks and the suitability of a coding method to process and analyze the interview data collected.

3.3.1.1 Sampling

The pilot study required interviewees with experience of working with the Chinese government. This was in order to explore the working protocols of institutional translation, in the hope that I could get insights into the production norms for translating China's foreign-affairs discourse. Statistical processing was not envisaged at this stage; stratified purposeful convenience sampling and networking sampling approaches were preferred. The purposeful sampling techniques allowed me to non-randomly select interviewees to represent the diversity of the Chinese official translators' community of practice. The choice to recruit interviewees in Guangzhou was conditioned by my professional experience as a graduate from one of China's leading translation programs based in Guangzhou and as a freelance translator and interpreter working in the region over several years. The interviewees were my former teachers, fellow graduates and colleagues who were active professionals in the region.

The interviews were conducted in Guangzhou in December 2017 and January 2018. Seven professional translators were selected on the basis of their expertise and experience. The criteria to be met for recruitment were, first, that their working languages had to include Chinese and English, and second, that they had a minimum of three years' experience in specializing in translating China's foreign-affairs discourse. Among the participants, there were six in-house translators affiliated to different institutions, who were considered to be institutional translators, and one freelancer, who had considerable experience working with Chinese officials from local to ministerial levels. The background of the six in-house translators was diverse: two from different foreign-affairs offices in provincial and local governments, three from universities, and one from a state-owned bank. Figure 3 shows the general demographic data and professional features of the pilot study interviewees.

Figure 3. Production-side interviewees: gender, age, education, and length of study in a foreign country

Interview type	Coding	Gender	Age	Education	Overseas study (years)
Individual	INM41	M	41	Ph.D.	1
Individual	INF27	F	27	MA	1
Individual	INF31	F	31	MA	None
Individual	INF43	F	43	MA	1
Individual	INF33	F	33	MA	None
Focus-group	FGF27	F	27	MA	1
Focus-group	FGF26	F	26	MA	2

The interviewees are referred to using codes consisting of the type of interview, gender and age. For example, a male subject aged 41 who participated in an individual interview is coded as "INM41." Of the seven interviewees, all except one were female, and all were Chinese. Their ages varied from 26 to 43, but most of the interviewees were in their late twenties or early thirties, with an average age of 33. All of them also self-reported as interpreters even though their main duties were to provide written translation services. The interviewees had a high level of education: six had a Master's degree and one had a Ph.D. Five of the seven had had more than one year of overseas study experience.

The pilot study comprised five semi-structured individual interviews and one focus-group interview with two participants. The individual interviews took approximately 30 minutes on average, while the focus-group interview lasted one and a half hours, as more questions ensued from the conversation. The participants completed the interviews in their first language (L1) and I translated the transcripts of the interviews that were analyzed and discussed.

3.3.1.2 Ranking translation tasks and instructions

The Chinese translators first read three Chinese start texts and were then asked, for each start text, to rank three different translations in order of preference. After ranking the nine translations, the participants were encouraged to explain their reasons, share their translation suggestions based on their own on-the-job experiences and comment freely on each text. The aim of the interviews was to find the optimal ways of obtaining qualitative data on the official translators' attitudes towards various solutions, their perceptions of the imagined readers, as well as the production norms they adhered to.

The three start texts (STs, coded as P-ST_1, P-ST_2 and P-ST_3) used in the pilot study were selected from official websites and formal publications of the Chinese government. P-ST_1 was an excerpt from the keynote speech delivered by Chinese president Xi Jinping at the 19_{th} National Congress of the Communist Party on October 18, 2017. P-ST_2 was selected from president Xi's speech at the opening ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation on May 14, 2017. P-ST_3 was a news report about Chinese premier Li Keqiang's visit to an Australian Football League (AFL) match during his trip to Australia in March 2017, published on the English website of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These three Chinese texts cover the important topics of Chinese foreign-affairs discourse such as politics, international cooperation and cultural exchange, which was the main reason I decided to use them.

Each start text used in the pilot study was accompanied by three translations, representing different degrees of translator intervention, from low to high: 1) a literal, foreignizing translation (coded as LIT), which is assumed to be the translation closest to the original; 2) a domesticating translation (coded as DOM), taking into account the reading habits of potential target-language readers; and 3) a rewriting (coded as RE), radically altering the content for certain purposes, e.g. removing start-culture ideology. Each translation was then coded in alphabetical order (from A to I in total). For example, a literal translation of the start text in Task 3 of the pilot study was coded as P-G-LIT. Note that I changed the way of coding the texts in the main experiment: the dichotomy of domestication vs. foreignization was later modified and the level of translator intervention was used instead (see 3.3.1.4.5, for further discussion).

An oral description of each start text was provided before each ranking task. This included background information about the start text, the speaker, the context and the publishing dates. To avoid the subjects trying to comply with the researcher's wishes and expectations, the assumed target readership and the genre of the translations were not indicated in the descriptions.

To illustrate how the ranking-translation task is designed, Task 3 in the pilot study is shown in Figure 4. Tasks 1 and 2 can be found in Appendix A.

Figure 4. P-ST3 and its three translations

P-ST_3	两队球员代表分别把各自球队的围巾送给李克强，热烈欢迎中国总理前来观赛。李克强特意把两队的围巾系在一起戴上，并风趣地说，虽然现在悉尼天气仍然有些热，但我还是把两队的围巾一起戴上，表明我对两支球队乃至澳大利亚所有球队都喜欢、都支持。不管今天的“强强对决”谁最终获胜，我都会欢呼喝彩。……赛场的气氛紧张激烈，中澳友好的气氛更是温馨热烈。
P-G-LIT	The players from the two teams presented their scarves to Li Keqiang, and warmly welcomed the Chinese Premier to watch the game. Li Keqiang specially tied the two scarves together and said with humor: “Although it is still hot in Sydney, I still wear both scarves to show my love and support for the two teams and even all the teams in Australia. No matter who wins in today's great match, I will cheer and applaud for him.” …As the atmosphere of the stadium went intense, the friendly atmosphere between China and Australia went warmer and sweeter.
P-H-DOM	The Chinese premier Li Keqiang received a warm welcome from the players, with both teams handing their scarves to the premier before the game. Li Keqiang wore the two scarves together and said: “although the weather is hot in Sydney, I still wear both scarves to show my support for both sides and Australian football. No matter which team wins, I will cheer for them.” …In the end, the players from both sides gave a wonderful display for everyone's enjoyment, cultivating a good atmosphere between the Chinese and the Australian audience.
P-I-RE	Wanting to stay impartial, Chinese premier Li Keqiang insisted on wearing the footy scarves of both teams. “Wearing two scarves in summer is a bit much, but I want to wish both teams the best of luck and extend congratulations to the AFL,” he said. Premier Li's visit to the AFL match was a great success.

Semi-structured interviews were used in the pilot study. An interview schedule was followed, but most of the questions were open-ended. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), open-ended questions allow researchers to use predetermined categories or scales to collect qualitative data. In the pilot study the translators were asked the following open-ended questions and there was some flexibility to allow variation in the order and the formulation of the questions asked:

- What are the procedures when translating for the Chinese government?
- What are the important principles for translating China's foreign-affairs texts?
- What will not be accepted when translating China's foreign-affairs texts?
- What conventions do you adhere to when translating other types of texts? Do you think they could be different from translating foreign-affairs texts?
- Who do you think will be the target audience of the translations?

- Do you usually have a picture of the readers in your mind when you translate foreign-affairs texts?
- Have you received any feedback from official employers or institutional revisers when you translate for the Chinese government?
- Do you think they are readers of your translations?

The translators were encouraged to comment on any other issues that arose during the discussion, particularly concerning their experiences working with government clients. This was in the hope that I would gain as much insight as possible into the range of the production norms for Chinese institutional translation. Here the translators provided information mainly concerning the translations, but the questions did not restrict their opinions. The responses I noted ranged from expressions of frustration to outright sarcasm, as the translators recalled experiences of trying to avoid awkward, literal translation but being criticized by their colleagues for being “unfaithful.” This helped to formulate the risk-management questions later used in the main experiment.

3.3.1.3 Coding and data-processing

I decided to transcribe the spoken data recorded during the experiments. There were three reasons for this. First, for the readers of the thesis, the analysis of written quotations would be needed eventually. Second, the selection and analysis of coded audio files would be more time-consuming than on written transcripts. Finally, the concern for interviewee’s anonymity was essential for the study. Identification would still be possible on the basis of oral data, even if the participants’ voices were digitally altered. Therefore, data from the interviews were fully transcribed by an online transcription service called Xunfei Tingjian and then all the transcribed quotations used in the thesis were translated into English by me. All interviewees are referred to by pseudonyms throughout the study. Figure 5 shows the key to the conventions used in the interview transcripts, which is adapted from Duflou’s protocols (2016).

Figure 5. Conventions used in the interview transcripts

“I” followed by a colon (e.g. I:)	Introduces interviewer’s turn
Pseudonym of interviewee followed by a colon (e.g. Grace:)	Introduced interviewee’s turn
(( ))	Description of non-verbal feedback of the interviewee, e.g. ((laughter))
[ ]	Words added by me to clarify the information

To analyze the transcribed data, I adopted a bottom-up approach: QSR International’s (2018) NVivo 2 qualitative data analysis software was used to code the most important and commonly recurring patterns in the interviewees’ answers, generating a multi-layer coding typology. In the analysis, six translation solutions, seven translation principles, six groups of prospective readerships, two kinds of translation risks, and two risk management strategies were identified. Note that the typology primarily reflects the recurring patterns found in the interviews rather than any attempt to cover a complete spectrum of each category. Figure 6 shows the typology, consisting of the 23 codes in total.

Figure 6. Coding typology for recurring patterns in the interviews

Categories	Recurring patterns	Terms used by interviewees
Translation solutions	Literal translation	“直译” (*zhi yi,* word-for-word, literal)
	Sense-for-sense translation	“意译” (*yi yi*, sense-for-sense translation)
	Domestication	“本地化” (*ben di hua*, localized) “地道” (*di dao*, natural and authentic)
	Explanation	“解释” (*jie shi*, explanation)
	Addition	“补充” (*bu chong*, placing complementary items) “加信息” (*jia xing xi,* adding information)
	Summarizing	“高度概括” (*gao du gai kuo*, extremely summarize)
Translation principles	Faithful	“忠实” (*zhong shi*, be fidelity the original) “尊重领导的意思” (*zun zhong ling dao de yi si*, respect the [Chinese] speaker’s intention)
	Accurate	“准确” (*zhun que*, correct and precise) “完整” (*wan zheng*, completeness)
	Fluent	“流利” (*liu li*, smoothly) “不停顿” (*bu ting dun*, without pauses)
	Readable	看得懂 (*kan de dong*, can be understandable)
	Formal	“正式” (*zheng shi*, formal) “官方” (*guan fang*, official)
	With Chinese characteristics	“有中国特色”(*you zhong guo te se,* have Chinese charaterestics)
	With a pedagogical purpose	强调我们的文化色彩 (qiang diao wo men de wen hua se cai, stressing our culture) 文化宣传 (*wen hua xuan chuan*, disseminate [Chinese] culture)
Prospective readers	Chinese internal reviewers	领导 (*ling dao*, boss, senior officials) 同事 (*tong shi*, colleagues)
	The general public in a foreign country	普罗大众 (*pu luo da zhong*, ordinary people) 普通读者 (*pu tong du zhe*, general readers)
	Language learners	外语学习者 (*wai yu xue xi zhe*, foreign-language learners) 翻译学生 (*fan yi xue sheng*, students majoring in Translation)
	China watchers	对中国感兴趣的 (*dui zhong guo gan xing qu de*, people who are interested in China) 澳洲企业家 (*ao zhou qi ye jia*, Australian investors)
	Foreign media	媒体 (*mei ti*, media)
	Foreign addressees	外方 (wai fang, foreign side)
Translation risks	Communicative risk	“自说自话 (*zi shuo zi hua*, talk in ways that only insiders can understand)” “达不到沟通效果” (*da bu dao gou tong xiao guo*, fail to achieve communication on the target side)
	Credibility risk	“被批评的风险” (*bei pi ping de feng xian*, the risk of being criticized by the sending side)
Risk-management strategies	Risk transfer	“用外交部版本” (*yong wai jiao bu ban ben*, use an official translated version by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
	Risk mitigation	“避免后面再聊到” (*bi mian hou mian zai liao dao*, explain an item in case the speaker mentions it again)

Based on the typology, I reformulated the semi-structured interview questions that would be used in the main experiment, particularly adding new questions concerning translation risks (e.g., “Why do you think rewriting is dangerous?”).

As Chesterman (2016) suggests, as "a collection of instances whose similarities are taken to be more salient for a given purpose than their differences," the whole point of any category is "to allow generalization" (p. 132). The validity and reliability of the categorized translation principles and the profiles of prospective readers are retested in the main experiment in order to examine whether these recurring patterns are universally agreed upon by Chinese official translators.

3.3.1.4 Methodological adjustments

Some methodological problems were identified on the production side, covering four aspects: 1) interview models, 2) interview instructions, 3) interview questions, and 4) the design of translated texts used in the ranking tasks. The improvements of each aspect will be discussed below.

3.3.1.4.1 Using focus groups rather than individual interviews

After testing and comparing two different ways of conducting in-depth research interviews with Chinese official translators, I decided to use more focus groups than individual interviews in the main experiment. There were two reasons for this.

First, as in-depth research interviews are not a matter of routine of China's official translators' daily work, it seems that not all translators were used to speaking for themselves. On the other hand, since some interview questions concerned the ideological elements involved in the production of politically sensitive translations, the quality of individual interviews in the pilot study varied according to how much the translators trusted the researcher. As mentioned above (see 3.3.1.1), the focus-group interview with two subjects lasted nearly three times longer than the average time of the five individual interviews. Compared with individual interviews, the focus group interview seemed more likely to give access to the translator's thoughts and opinions: more information was given in terms of the types of translation problems the professionals encountered in their daily work, the solutions they adopted to address the problems, and what risks they had to deal with. I noticed that the two subjects were evidently at ease when exchanging their ideas and debating with each other. This shows that the focus-group interview created a more trusting environment where subjects could somehow express themselves freely. Most of the time, the two subjects were asking questions to their colleague in a natural way and discussing the translations together. The presence of the researcher became less visible.

Second, considering that the interviews were designed to explore potential production norms based on collective views rather than personal opinions, a focus group interview would better suit the particular research purpose under study. According to Barbour and Morgan (2017), focus groups enable researchers to elicit data that illuminate the processes of interaction and negotiation between participants, affording a unique window on how participants co-construct their shared ideas. Here, focus groups could help to identify norms that are not peculiar to a single individual translator. To some extent, the approach also helps to illuminate the processes of interaction and collaboration between the translators in their real workplace.

In the main experiment, I thus attempted, to the extent possible, to conduct focus-group interviews with translators in order to yield efficiently valid and reliable norm-focused qualitative data.

3.3.1.4.2 Working mode might affect production norms

Interestingly enough, the pilot study found that the interviewees' views on the ranking texts were radically different when they spoke as translators or interpreters. Since no clear instruction regarding the modality of the texts had been given, the interviewees were confused and their answers often mixed written and oral criteria.

In Task 2, for example, INF31 asked whether she should evaluate the text as a written translation or an interpreting transcript. She explained that if it was an interpreting task, a rewriting as F-RE was more acceptable in terms of its concision. On the other hand, since faithfulness to the linguistic characteristics of the original was considered to be the overarching principle, she would rank F-RE as the least acceptable. The subject then suggested different solutions for dealing with translation and interpreting respectively:

INF31: If I am doing interpreting, I prefer [P-F-RE], which is more expressive. It uses an adverbial time clause and avoids repeating the phrase '*belt and road.'* [P-D-DOM] is too close to the original. Even the word "construction" is translated literally.

I: Do you think the word "construction" should be omitted?

INF31: It could be unnecessary if it is an interpreting transcript. But if it is a written translation, I would use the word "*development*" instead, which is easier for the foreign reader to understand.

In some cases, subjects used interpreting criteria for evaluating the alternative texts. When evaluating Task 3, FGF27 believed that P-G-LIT was supposed to be a transcript of simultaneous interpreting as it "used simple words" and was "following the speaker very closely." FGF27 further asked whether it was a transcript of conferencing interpreting. In her view, simultaneous interpreting should have been clearer and more concise. P-H-DOM, which repeated the phrase "China's socialist" three times, would then be unacceptable.

For the purpose of the study, I focus mainly on the reception of written translation. In the main experiment I thus indicated clearly that interviewees should first evaluate the tasks from the perspective of a *written* text, although they would be welcome to propose other solutions with an eye to interpreting. It would be interesting to examine the situations under which the translators tended to adopt different production norms for different modes: whether they, for example, agreed on more freedom in interpreting.

3.3.1.4.3 Investigating established norms through norm-breaking

The pilot study shows that it was difficult for the translators to name many explicit norms when asked "what are the important principles for translating Chinese foreign-affairs texts?" This might be partly because norms are not absolute, objective and enforced by an authority like mandatory laws (cf. Chesterman, 1997/2016); instead, norms are internalized by individuals in different ways and might change with contexts and text type, since the interviewees' answers were found to vary greatly when evaluating different subject matters. A further difficulty is a possibility that the professionals might wish to save face when reflecting on their work. I noticed that when asked "Do you remember if any of your colleagues were criticized for their work and why?", interviewees were more likely to share stories about others who had made mistakes but not about themselves.

In order to investigate which norms regulate the translator's work, in the main experiment the questions are reformulated in a hypothetical way, focusing on how norms could be broken and what potential risks might ensue, rather than me directly exploiting what happened in the translator's "real" personal experience. Even indirect questions can give rise to interesting findings: when answering the questions concerning norms, either descriptively or prescriptively, what the Chinese translators say could suggest what they *think* they should do or what translations *should be* like. It might not be exactly what *is* happening, but the answers can indeed illustrate what prevailing norms are operating and are internalized by the professionals.

Instead of trying to identify one universal norm for translating official discourse, I decided to focus on exploring the various possible situations of norm-breaking by asking staff translators, "Will translators be punished if they rewrite the original?". Using a negative question could help me to better understand what the dominant paradigm might be. The relation between norms and norm-breaking is in line with the thoughts of political science scholars Schmitt (2005) and Agamben (2005). For them, norms are negatively characterized by their opposite, namely a situation of exception that highlights what is comprised within the realm of a norm. That is, when norm-breaking is recognized, it reveals the boundaries within which a dominant norm is defined.

3.3.1.4.4 Moving beyond quality-oriented reception

When the subjects voiced their general preference for a target text, most of them mentioned a particular like or dislike for certain words or phrases in each text. They pointed out that there was not a "perfect" translation for each task. At first glance, I assumed this was because the translations used in the pilot study were of variable quality, which was somehow misleading the translators' judgments. For example, INF43 pointed out that P-B-DOM used in Task 1 overlooked some important information in the start text:

INF43: I like [B-DOM]. But there is an obvious error in the text: there should have been five aspects of China's national strategy but only four were translated.

This kind of observation is interesting but not germane to my research purposes. Designed to explore how receivers engage with different translation solutions, this study nevertheless aims to focus on the possible *ways of translating* rather than assessing the translation quality of given texts. For example, although Task 2 aimed to test how various readers responded to different solutions for translating the culture-bound elements, some participants' attention was distracted from this. Although a few readers preferred a particular solution in a translated text, they were not satisfied with the rest of the text in terms of language quality. Therefore, in the main experiment, for each translation task I only test one variable (e.g., culture-bound items or ideological differences) at a time and control other variables by keeping the rest of the texts the same. All translations were more carefully designed and proofread by senior Chinese and English-speaking translators in order to reduce undesired distractions.

Based on the findings of the pilot study, Task 2 and Task 3 were retained for the main study, with some corrections to word choices and stylistic features. In the main experiment, Task 1 would be replaced by a new start text giving a better representation of Chinese political jargon. It was observed from the pilot study that readers' perceptions of a start culture could be affected by ideology-bound concepts in translations. Seeing that no text in the pilot study specifically tested the relation between ideological components and the perceptions of the readers, a text discussing how the Communist Party of China (CPC) supported the China–Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) was added as Task 4. The four translation tasks used in the main experiment can be found in Appendix B.

3.3.1.4.5 Translator intervention rather than a simple binary strategy

Another important methodical issue identified is the fuzzy borderline between domesticating translation vs. radical rewriting.

In the pilot study the three translations in each task were categorized as three solution types, labelled as literal translation, domesticating translation and rewriting. My initial position was that in the domesticating translation, start-culture specific terms are adapted to target-culture conventions, while in the rewriting, the content is largely altered to suit a certain purpose. Nevertheless, the pilot study showed a confusing mass of overlapping solutions, making it difficult to distinguish the two strategies clearly. One can easily argue that a domesticating translation is indeed a form of "rewriting," and vice versa.

A sterile dichotomy of strategies thus seemed to imply an oversimplified picture of reception: the underlying assumption of making readers choose between specific solutions could be that there is supposed to be an optimal, once-and-for-all translation strategy. In order to avoid misleading the analysis in this way, the viable of *translator intervention* has been introduced. The three translations in each task in the main experiment are thus categorised according to the level of translator intervention, from high to low. The degree of intervention is measured by the syntactic distance from a word-for-word rendering of the start text, i.e. the lowest intervention, (coded as -INT) of the start text. The second version is the medium-intervention translation (coded as +INT) and the third version is the highest-intervention translation, (coded as ++INT). The goal of the study is thus reoriented to investigate to what extent the target reader might accept a certain degree of translator intervention. If (not) so, what are their main concerns? By investigating these questions, it is hoped that more underlying reasons that affect reception will be unfolded.

The different degrees of intervention are comparably measured within each task and further validated by syntactic/semantic similarity tests. In each task, -INT translation is regarded as the benchmark text since it is the closest to the original. By using an online tool call Cortical.io Retina that is designed for plagiarism comparison, I compared +INT and ++INT translations to -INT version respectively. The results show that in all four tasks, ++INT translations are less similar to -INT translations than +INT texts with to syntactic/semantic difference.

3.3.2 Reception side

The purpose of conducting a pilot study on the reception side is threefold: 1) to use a familiarity survey to examine the correlation between readers' pre-knowledge of the start culture and their reading comprehension, 2) to sample for the main experiment, and 3) to test the appropriateness of the interview protocol for target readers.

3.3.2.1 Familiarity survey

I assumed that the receivers' comprehension and image-formation would be related to their prior familiarity with the start culture. I thus designed a preliminary survey to test the target reader's familiarity with Chinese political discourse, using an online survey instrument called Easygoing Survey. Along with the demographic information thus collected, this enabled me to examine the correlation between readers' contextual knowledge and reading comprehension. The familiarity survey could thus be used to select participants for the main experiment. In the pilot study I assessed the strength of two types of familiarity surveys: a self-reported questionnaire and a multiple-choice questionnaire. The two surveys will be discussed in the following sections.

3.3.2.1.1 Self-evaluation

The first version of the familiarity survey had two parts. Part 1 consisted of eight questions about the subject's personal details, including gender, age, education, nationality and occupation, along with two specific questions asking about their engagement with China. Part 2 used a self-evaluation test in which subjects were asked to rate their familiarity with Chinese political phrases on a 5-point Likert scale (1=no idea to 5=very familiar). Ten political phrases were used to measure the familiarity level, all of which were selected from the China Keywords Database sponsored by one of the major translation department, the China International Publishing Group (CIPG). The ten items were deemed to cover basic knowledge of China's foreign policy, political structures, national strategies and historical events. They were as follows:

- Communist Party of China (中国共产党)
- One-China principle (一个中国原则)
- Nanjing Massacre (南京大屠杀)
- Belt and Road Initiative (一带一路倡议)
- Reform and Opening up (改革开放)
- Chinese Dream (中国梦)
- Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (亚洲基础设施投资银行)
- Dealing with both "tigers" and "flies" (老虎苍蝇一起打)
- Two Centenary Goals (两个百年奋斗目标)
- Core Values of Chinese socialism (社会主义核心价值观).

A group of eight subjects (hereafter referred as "Group A") who were studying at the University of Melbourne was selected with reference to their origin and L1s: three from Australia, two from the mainland of China, one from Iraq, one from New Zealand and one from Hong Kong. The demographic diversity was assumed to represent the diversity of possible readers of the translated discourse. Seven of eight subjects in Group A had graduated from or were studying in a translation program. The one exception was HKF27, who was doing a Ph.D. in Sociology at the time. The subjects are referred to using codes consisting of their nationality, gender and age. For example, an Australian male in his 30 was coded as "AUM30." Figure 7 shows the general demographical information and professional features of Group A, with the codes attributed to each interviewee.

Figure 7. Code, pseudonym, L1, gender, age, education, length of stay in mainland China and the self-evaluation familiarity score of Group A

Code	Nationality	Strongest language	Gender	Age	Stay in mainland China	Familiarity score
AUM30	Australian	English	M	30	1-3 Years	49
AUM41	Australian	English	M	41	1-3 Years	40
AUF25	Australian	English	F	25	1-3 Years	37
NZF30	New Zealand	English	F	33	<3 Months	33
IRNF30	Iranian	Persian	F	30	Never	2
CHM27	Chinese	Mandarin	M	27	N/A	41
CHM26	Chinese	Mandarin	M	26	N/A	43
HKF27	Chinese (Hong Kong)	Cantonese	F	27	Never	26

After the self-report familiarity survey, all subjects in Group A were invited to complete the ranking-translation tasks that had been used for the translators in the pilot study (see example in 3.3.1.2). During the interviews, some methodological problems regarding the research design of the survey were identified.

First, there was a terminological problem in the survey language. In Translation Studies, a person's language of habitual use (most commonly the native language) can be called a "first language (L1)," "working language" or "A language" (Laver & Mason, 2018). The last-mentioned is more frequently used in Interpreting Studies. Considering that most subjects participating in the familiarity survey would not be very familiar with the technical terms, in the survey I had asked participants to state their *mother language* in order to measure their language capability. I received feedback from NZF30EN that the term "mother language" was not clear to her, as her mother language should be Chinese as she was born in Taiwan, but her English was much better because her family later migrated to New Zealand when she was a child. The participant therefore listed both English and Chinese. Since this study includes members of the Chinese diaspora as readers, and they might have similar doubts, I decided to ask participants about their *strongest language* in the later questionnaires and interviews, to avoid any misunderstanding.

Second, there was a problem in the reliability of self-reporting method. Some subjects who had given themselves high scores in the familiarity survey failed to exhibit the corresponding familiarity or did not possess the same understanding of China's foreign-affairs language as they had stated. For instance, when I tried to ensure to what extent the high-scoring participants in the self-reported familiarity survey understood Chinese foreign-affairs discourse, I asked questions about their understanding of China's specific policies (e.g., the Belt and Road Initiative), which had appeared in the familiarity survey. Some of the participants could not give a definitive answer and showed limited knowledge regarding the term. The results were thus compromised not particularly because some subjects might lie but because a self-reported assessment is by its very nature subjective: a subject can be very sure they are right but still be wrong. In addition, although the sample size was small, I was aware of the impact of gender and cultural background on the propensity for self-confidence: it seems that the male participants were more confident than the females, and Chinese-background participants tended to be humbler than others. It was thus decided that people's familiarity should be tested by using a more rigorous and sensitive method than a self-report one.

3.3.2.1.2 Multiple-choice questions

In order to ensure greater objectivity in the familiarity survey, I designed a multiple-choice question (MCQ) test based on the previous self-reporting survey in order to measure how various readerships comprehended Chinese political discourse (see Appendix C). Each multiple-choice question was designed to test the reader's understanding of one of the ten Chinese political terms. The survey included ten items, each of which comprised two parts: a stem that identified the concept, and a set of alternatives or possible answers that contained a key that was the best answer to the concept, plus a number of distractors that were plausible but incorrect.

Here is one multiple-choice question I used in the pilot study:

In the phrase "dealing with both 'tigers' and flies（老虎苍蝇一起打）," the "tigers and flies" refer to:

☐ China's major and minor environmental problems
☐ China's high-level and low-level corrupt officials
☐ China's severe and minor criminal offences
☐ China's immediate and future economic, social and political challenges

In the example, the phrase "dealing with both 'tigers' and 'flies'" was proposed by Chinese president Xi Jinping in his campaign against corruption and officialdom. The president used the terms "tiger" and "flies" to refer to both corrupt state officials and low bureaucrats. So the correct answer was "China's high-level and low-level corrupt officials."

Subjects in Group A were also invited to test the feasibility of the multiple-choice survey. Since the size of Group A was small (n=8), I tested the multiple-choice questions with another wider group of 17 subjects (hereafter referred to Group B). The total of 25 subjects was further divided into three sub-groups based on their interaction with China ("Never been to China," "Have been to China for 3 months or less," and "L1 Chinese speakers including Chinese diaspora"). The interviewees would answer ten multiple-choice questions to test their knowledge of Chinese political language. Each question was accompanied by the compulsory-response confidence question: "Are you confident about your choice?"

The statistical results show that for the groups of "Never been to China" and "Have been to China for 3 months or less," the correlations between the self-confidence rating and multiple-choice results were not strong ("Never been to China": $r(9)=0.175$, $p=0.652$; "Have been to China for 3 months or less": $r(5)=0.470$, $p=0.424$), with the exception of the group of L1 Chinese speakers ($r(5)=0.965$, $p=0.008$). That is, only subjects who were L1 Chinese speakers had a reasonable self-awareness of their knowledge of Chinese political language. Considering that the majority of the readerships involved in the experiment would be non-Chinese English-speaking participants, a multiple-choice familiarity survey was deemed to be a more appropriate and rigorous way of sampling the subjects who would be interviewed in the main experiment.

3.3.2.2 Sampling criteria

The preliminary questionnaire with the multiple-choice familiarity survey (hereafter: familiarity survey) was not only used to select participants for the main experiment but also provided statistical results to further categorize the potential readership.

Prior to commencing the pilot study, I envisaged that the participants could be divided into four groups in terms of the combination of their familiarity scores and the type of interactions with China (visits, business deals, language learning) as follows:

- Group 1: Subjects who are not at all familiar with Chinese culture
- Group 2: Subjects who are familiar with Chinese culture but do not interact with China
- Group 3: Subjects who are familiar with Chinese culture and interact with China
- Group 4: Subjects who are familiar with Chinese culture and who have Chinese citizenship but are staying in Australia.

In April 2018 the familiarity survey was sent to 226 first-year undergraduate students who were studying at the University of Melbourne, most of whom were majoring in Languages and Linguistics. These students were targeted mainly because they were presumably committed to language learning and might be regarded as one of the major future opinion-leader groups that China's international communication should aim to reach. Opinion leaders are individuals whose behavior will be emulated by others and whose advice will tend to be taken (Hansen & Hallum-Hansen, 2005). Acting as gatekeepers, they can block or promote the adoption of innovative ideas, so they play a crucial role in communicating (Valente, 2010). Since opinion leaders are considered to have serious influence on others who share some common ground with them, a country's international communication might want to consider focusing on influencing this type of readership. The other reason is more practical. The University of Melbourne where I located this representative sample is where I was working as a tutor when the thesis was carried out. This made administrative and human resources available. Scientific research is "opportunistic," as Gile (2001, p. 4) argues, given that its objectives and approaches more or less adapt to what is feasible, and existing constraints have to be taken on board. Nevertheless, the limitations in terms of the generalizability of the sample are acknowledged and discussed in section 7.3.2.

A total of 165 responses were received; 115 of them were regarded as valid (hereafter referred to "Group C"). The response rate was 51%, which is regarded as relatively high, since "25% is typical for a postal questionnaire", according to Matthews and Ross (2010, p. 215). This high response rate might be partly because of the practically "opportunistic" reason discussed above.

Nearly 90 percent of the 115 respondents were women. The subjects consisted of speakers of three different L1s: English (71%), Chinese (27%) and Indonesian (2%). The ages ranged from 18 to 26, with most respondents in their early twenties (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Distribution of Group C by their origin and the length of stay in China (111 women and 12 men, aged 18 to 26)

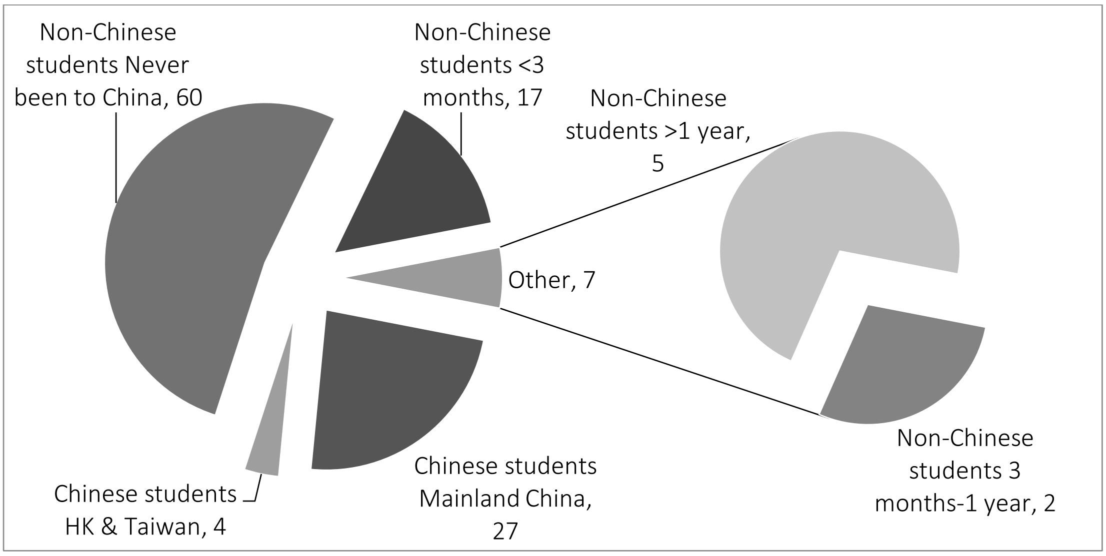
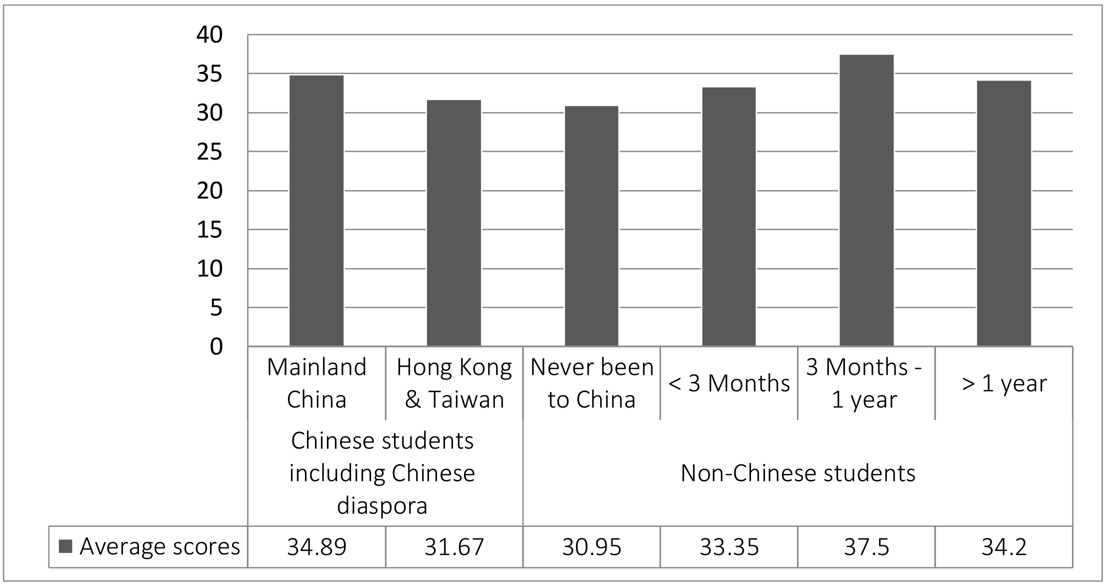


Figure 9 indicates that the subjects from the mainland of China were more familiar with Chinese political discourse than those from Hong Kong or Taiwan. The subjects who had never been to China were the least familiar with Chinese political discourse. However, the 17 non-Chinese subjects who had stayed in China for between three months and one year showed even better comprehension of Chinese political language than did the native Chinese subjects. Strangely enough, the familiarity was lower among the five subjects who had stayed in China for longer than one year.

Figure 9. Mean familiarity-survey scores of responses by origin and length of stay in China



I used an independent-samples (two-tailed) t-test and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to investigate the relationship between the dependent variables for the non-Chinese students. The t-test showed a statistically significant difference between *Never been China* (*M*= 30.95, *SD*=88) and *Have been to China but less than 3 months* (*M*=33.35, *SD*=3.64), *t* (75)=2.26, *p*=0.0251. Comparing *Never* with the sum of those who had spent more than 3 months but less than a year in China also gave a significant difference (*M*=35.14, *SD*=2.19, *p*=0.0068).

On the other hand, there was no significant difference between those who had been in China for more than one year and those who had been there between three months and one year (two-tailed t-test *p*=0.812). Although this is almost certainly because the sample size of the two groups was small (n_1=2, n_2=5), the latter group is not used as a proxy variable in my analysis; it is included in the category "who had been to China for more than three months."

I thus divided the sample of target-culture readers into *three* groups: 1) those who had never been to China, 2) those who had been there for less than three months, and 3) those who had been there for more than three months. Analysis of variance shows that the mean familiarity scores for these groups were 30.95, 33.35 and 35.154 respectively and indicated a statistically significant difference at the $p<0.05$ level in familiarity scores for the three independent variables (*F*=5.83848, *p*=0.00427).

Similarly, on the reception side, I used semi-structured interviews to obtain in-depth examinations of the readers' responses to different translations, combining the use of open-ended questions with a broad framework for questioning. Prior to the interviews, I produced an interview guide in order to maintain a certain focus on translation comprehension and acceptance. The following predetermined open-ended questions were asked, following up with probes that attempted to elicit additional in-depth information about the readers' judgment:

- How do you understand the Chinese translated idiom?
- How do you understand the translated Chinese policy?
- Do you think the Chinese premier enjoyed the AFL match? Why?
- Which translation do you like the most? Why?
- What do you like least about the translation?
- Do you like to read a longer text or a shorter one?

3.3.2.3 Methodological adjustments

In the pilot study, I interviewed the eight subjects in Group A individually to test the feasibility of the ranking translation tasks and gather data to design semi-structured interview questions for the main experiment. Minor changes were then made to the ranking translation tasks and the classification of the readerships, which will be discussed in the sections below.

3.3.2.3.1 Textual improvement made to the translations

In Task 3, I wanted to test whether China and Australia had different views on "being impartial" when watching sports. I hypothesized that Chinese premier Li Keqiang, who insisted on wearing the scarves of both opposing AFL teams, was more acceptable for Chinese readers, since they might find it easier to interpret his words as a friendly diplomatic gesture. On the other hand, for the Australian audience, politicians might be expected to take a clear position at an AFL match.

Some readers in the pilot study gave suggestions on how to best address the cultural difference. For example, AUF25 suggested that the premier's message could be translated as "may the best team win," which is more idiomatic in Australian sports culture:

AUF25: I find that phrase [No matter which team wins, I will cheer for them] more awkward than the one before it [show my support for both sides]. I didn't have an issue with "support for both sides." But the first 'no matter' one means that I only cheer for whoever ends up winning ((laughter)). We would usually say like "may the best team win" or something like that.

For the main experiment I adopted AUF25's advice and reformulated the three translations used in Task 3: the first would retain a word-for-word rendering of the Chinese premier's remarks; the second would conform to the target culture conventions, translating the primer's message as "may the best team win" as AUF25 suggested; the third would be more radically altered to sound like a sports news item reported by the Australian media.

3.3.2.3.2 Redesign the classification of the readerships

When evaluating different solutions, I found that the interviewees who were majoring in translation or used to study translation were more concerned with fidelity to the original than with the fluency or the readability of the target text. It seems that these translation students, no matter what first language they speak, are generally highly sensitized to issues of "faithfulness."

For example, some L1 English interviewees who were in a translation program emphasized the principle of "faithfulness," in the sense of a literal translation. They tended to give priority to the original and were reluctant to accept non-literal versions as legitimate "translations":

AUM41: I think you can't go too far away from the start text and lose the original meaning completely.
I: We need to have a balance.
AUM41: It's a hard balance. Because you know in China there's a lot of political slogans, a lot of which you need to understand the background to in order to understand it. So I think it's important for an Australian if they're reading a newspaper article to understand it's a Chinese political slogan, but they also need to understand what it means and what the content is.

AUF25: I like the first one [the literal translation] because it's the most faithful.

One interviewee also stressed the importance of ensuring "the completeness of information":

AUF25: I don't really like [C-RE]. Because I don't think it goes to the links, like [B-DOM] makes extra effort to tell you what each part of it is. I feel like [C-RE] doesn't do that so completely. But it's not faithful either.

Although she admitted that the rewriting C-RE reads better in English, since it deleted some content of the start text and thus provided less information, AUF25 nevertheless preferred a more faithful B-DOM:

AUF25: Probably [B-DOM]. I mean, [C-RE] is fine, but it doesn't tell me anything extra. Like, if I read that one, okay, that's nice. But I still don't know what a lot of these terms are, if I don't have a background in Chinese.

When asked whether she could understand the faithful translation “five-sphere integrated plan” in A-LIT, NZF30 said that “a lot of guesswork was happening there.” However, the translation student argued that since the start text did not explain the political jargon, the literal translation should be deemed an acceptable, faithful reproduction:

NZF30: I mean, it heads towards Chinglish territory, you can see that’s like… I don’t know. It’s a… yeah… ok, a plan with five different parts. You can get that from the English. But there is no explanation as to what their plan entails. But there isn’t any in the start text either.

Another L1 English interviewee argued that formal correspondence has functional value, since it helps readers refer back to where an idea comes from:

I: Some suggest that people don’t really need to adapt Chinese texts to fluent English. You can keep some Chinese characteristics in the translation. But, as we discussed, readers are more likely to read something natural and familiar. So how should that be balanced?

AUM41: Yes. I think it’s a balance. For example, [Task 1] talked about the four strategies. I think you can’t ignore the fact that it’s four something. You have got to translate some of it at least, because otherwise, the foreign reader, English speaker, they won’t understand it is a Chinese political plan. When they see it elsewhere and in newspapers, they won’t understand it’s the same thing.

Apart from the insistence on equivalence, some translation students asked questions about the objective or purpose of the translation. This might reflect that some translation theories indeed have evident pedagogical implications: *Skopos* theory had been presented in their training. The following example shows how a student interviewee allocated different translations to various imaged target readers:

AUF25: I think it would come down to purpose. Because if this is for a bunch of foreigners that need to know stuff about China, then [B-DOM] is great.

I: So who do you think will be the target reader of [A-LIT]?

AUF25: He is studying, or very familiar with China’s political background and wants to read what’s written. [B-DOM] is more for somebody who needs extra help or is trying to bridge the gap culturally.

These translation students also preferred longer texts in which more explanations were given. This is something that can perhaps be explained in terms of an explicitation hypothesis: translators tend to explicate what was implicit in the start text (see Blum-Kulka, 1986), which is a feature that most readers who are not translators probably do not advocate.

It seems that once people have been trained to be professionals, it is hard to switch hats. When I asked one translation student to judge the translated texts based on his own experience, he evaluated the texts mainly from the perspective of the profession rather than as an L1 English reader:

AUM41: I like the second translation the best for two main reasons. It is written in fluent and idiomatic English, but also it explains the Chinese terms *wu wei yi ti* [five strategic principles] and *si ge quan mian* [four reform aspects]. Foreigners will have no idea what they are. So I think it's very important that the translation explains those terms, and I think it's done quite well.

I: But is it because you know Chinese and you know what was talked about in the start text? If it's not a translation but a text, which one do you like the most?

AUM41: A text? ((hesitation)) The third one is probably the best then, in terms of English writing. Because the second one, although it's an improvement on the first one, is still quite full of Chinese political terms.

Prior to the pilot study, I had assumed that English L1 speakers, even if they had been trained to be translators, would naturally prefer a more readable, domesticating or rewritten text. However, the interviews indicated that the subjects with formal translator training experience were more open to foreignness in the text and unfamiliarity; perhaps they were used to encountering cultural differences and more likely to pay attention to translation faithfulness. This identity problem has been identified by Chesterman (1999/2017): professionals, critics and scholars are not "typical readers" (p. 52). They usually have (some) proficiency in both languages. So their (sometimes unconscious) purpose in reading a translated text is usually to analyze or check it, "not simply to receive and understand the message conveyed" (Chesterman, 1998, p. 225). The untypical readers' judgements of a translation are more likely to be constrained by translation conventions or pedological values. In light of this, I decided to distinguish English-as-L1 translators from the general English-language readers in the main experiment.

3.4 Summary

This chapter has presented a framework of research questions, hypotheses and the methodology of the thesis.

The research questions started from the simple assumption that what *actual* readers construe out of translations might not necessarily be the same as what translators assume to convey. This is then seen as a problem of indeterminism in reception, in the sense that readers are more complicated than the production side might envisage. Seen in this way, I have identified two variables that possibly affect various readers' perceptions of a translation: the degree of translator intervention (the production side) and the familiarity with the start culture (reception side).

In order to investigate the reception gaps between both sides, a mixed-methods design is used to analyze the categorized readerships, the production norms adhered to by the translators and the ways various readers respond to different translation solutions.

In light of the pilot study, some methodological changes to the process of semi-structured interviews, sampling approach and the instruments used have been clarified and discussed.

4. Production analysis

By examining how the translators responded to different translator interventions, my main purpose in the experiment undertaken on the production side is to look at what underlying production norms the translator internalized when translating Chinese foreign-affairs discourse. Rather than merely provide speculative explanations of regularities observed in texts, this chapter uses a mixed-methods approach to empirically examine any prevailing norm for the translators: it quantitatively examines the recurring patterns in the translators' evaluations of different translation solutions, and it works from semi-structured interviews to qualitatively analyze the underlying rationales and shared values behind their justifications. This bottom-up method is close in spirit to Toury's (1998) careful distinction between norms and regularity: regularities can be identified in text data, whereas norms as "psycho-social entities" are not palpable and are "still to be extracted" (p. 15), i.e. from the translator's real-life practice and interaction with others.

This quasi-experiment on the production side does not directly observe or describe the day-to-day routines of Chinese institutional translators. Rather, the identification of what the translators deem to be "normal" or "the right thing to do" reveals how norms are operating and why prevailing norms could have come about. Either descriptively or prescriptively, what the Chinese translators *want to say* demonstrates what they think they *should do* or what a good translation *should be like*. The actual arguments of the interviewed translators shed light on socio-cultural factors that condition the formulation of norms.

This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative results of the main experiment on the production side. The mixed-method analysis of the translators' judgements illustrates how norms are simultaneously internalized and creatively managed according to the translators' perceptions of personal and professional risks.

4.1 Methods

A quasi-experiment was conducted to look for connections or correlations between different kinds of normative forces. This study is referred to as quasi-experimental design because not all of the variables (e.g. the sample size in each category and a balanced gender mix) have been completely controlled in a strict sense (cf. Hale & Napier, 2013). Chesterman's (2006a) suggestions about how best to look for the evidence of norms are adopted as a methodological framework. As Chesterman suggests, norms may come in three forms: 1) norm statements, as an official statement issued by a norm authority in an implicit or explicit way; 2) belief statements, referring to translators' justifications of their solutions; and 3) explicit criticism, defining as norm-breaking those behaviors that do not conform to a given norm. Here I examined the three forms in the following way. First, I elicited a belief statement: I asked the institutional translators whether it was true that a given observed regularity in Chinese official translation (e.g., literal translation) is an established norm. Second, I report counter-evidence: based on the translators' replies, competing norms (e.g., faithfulness vs. readability) are discussed. Third, I test norm-breaking: given that literalism is the prevalent practice in Chinese institutional translation (cf. Xu, 2014), translator intervention is regarded as a potential indicator of norm-breaking. Translations with different levels of intervention were thus evaluated in order to see whether the norm-breaking might provoke criticism or sanction.

The quasi-experiment is divided into two parts: ranking translation tasks and follow-up interviews. Prior to the experiment, the participants were asked to read a Plain Language

Statement that explained the purpose of the study, how the collected information was to be used and the voluntary nature of participation. They then signed an ethics consent form agreeing to participate, in accordance with the principles of human research ethics and integrity at the University of Melbourne.

A group of Chinese translators was recruited through convenience sampling and networking sampling methods to rank four Chinese-to-English translation tasks in terms of their expected working norms. In each ranking task, a Chinese start text was provided, along with three English translations. The translations were designed to demonstrate different levels of translator intervention, from low to high: a low-intervention, word-for-word translation (coded as -INT), a medium-intervention translation that conforms to target conventions (coded as +INT) and a high-intervention, radical rewriting (coded as ++INT). The translators were first asked, for each start text, to rank the three translations in order of preference. To analyze the ranking results, I use a three-point rating scale to measure the translators' evaluation of the translations: the most preferred (3 points), the second preferred (2 points), and the least preferred (1 point).

After ranking the nine translations, the participants were interviewed by me using semi-structured questions. During the interviews, I encouraged the participants to indicate what they liked or disliked in each alternative translation, particularly focusing on how the translators responded to norm-specific opinion questions. Here I was more concerned with the extent to which normative forces might affect the translators' responses to intervention and in what situations the translators might want to take the risk to challenge the established norms and do the opposite.

The participants completed the interviews in their L1 (Chinese) and all the spoken parts of the experiment sessions were audio-recorded and then transcribed. The transcripts that are quoted and analyzed in the study were translated into English by me. All interviewees were given coded names according to the sequence and the type of the interviews, gender and age. For example, a 34-year-old female subject who participated in the first focus-group interview was coded as "FG1F34" (Focus Group 1, Female, aged 34).

Mixed-methods are used to analyze the possible correlation between normative forces and the translators' tolerance of intervention: the quantitative results from respondents' ranking tasks are qualitatively compared to their attitudes towards the presumed norms and norm-breaking.

4.2 Participants

The ranking translation tasks followed by semi-structured interviews with 14 Chinese translators were conducted between February and June 2018 in three cities in China. Four were semi-structured focus-group interviews with ten subjects, and the other four were individual interviews. The participants were purposefully selected from government foreign-affairs offices, the translation industry and higher education institutions. Ten of them are (or were) linked to university-level formal translator or interpreter training programs. As can be seen in Figure 10, of the total 14 interviewees, all except one were female, and all were Chinese L1 speakers. Their ages varied from 26 to 43, but most of the interviewees were in their mid-thirties, with an average age of 35. Half of them self-reported as interpreters but their main duties also included providing written translation services. The interviewees had a high level of education: twelve had a Master's degree and two had a Ph.D. Half of them had had at least one year of overseas study experience. Each focus-group interview took approximately one and a half hours and the average length of individual interviews was 50 minutes.

Figure 10. Production-side interviewees in the main experiment: gender, age, education, length of study in an English-speaking country and the agencies they belong to.

Interview	Type	Coding	Gender	Age	Education	Overseas study (year)	Agencies
1	Focus-group	FG1M41	M	41	Ph.D	1	University
		FG1F34	F	34	Ph.D	1	University
2	Focus-group	FG2F43	F	43	MA	1	University
		FG2F35	F	35	MA	None	University
		FG2F33	F	32	MA	None	University
3	Focus-group	FG3F42	F	42	MA	1	University
		FG3F41	F	41	MA	None	University
4	Focus-group	FG4F26-1	F	26	MA	1	Government
		FG4F26-2	F	26	MA	2	In-house
		FG4F27	F	27	MA	1	In-house
5	Individual	IN5F32	F	32	MA	None	Government
6	Individual	IN6F31	F	31	MA	None	Government
7	Individual	IN7F49	F	32	MA	None	Industry
8	Individual	IN8F33	F	33	MA	None	Freelancer

This sample is suited to the aims of this study for two reasons: (1) since all the subjects had extensive experience working with the Chinese government, they were representative of active agents engaging in the validation of translation norms, albeit in different ways and to different extents; and (2) the subjects with diverse professional identities might have different attitudes to norms, which can help manifest how normative forces are operating in different levels.

With respect to professional identities, in the case of China, most in-house government translators and/or interpreters are employed as civil servants, but they are only responsible for part of institutional language services. The majority of written translation work is usually outsourced to translation companies. To enrich the data, I interviewed the manager of a translation company that had translated government reports for the Guangzhou foreign-affairs office in the previous few years. Further, for occasional government-organized conference interpreting tasks, the local offices normally recruit senior conference interpreters, most of whom are working as full-time university teachers. This group is also included in the sample. I am interested in whether these various professional identities attach different values to start-culture norms.

According to Chesterman (1993), norm authorities, understood in a wide sense as “professionals” *par excellence,* include trainers, critics, and internal reviewers. Translation teachers are regarded as “implicit norm-authorities” (p. 9) who at least in part validate professional norms. The number of translation programs and textbooks has increased dramatically in the past few years in China (Translator Association of China, 2018). Nevertheless, the linkage between prescriptively pedagogical values and translation practice has been given less prominent attention. If professional translators, in-house reviewers and translation teachers are all legitimate norm authorities, then which group is most influential in setting up norms? By investigating the constant interplay between different authorities, it might be easier to say how prevailing norms are adopted and adapted.

4.3 Quantitative results

The quantitative analysis uses the results of the translation ranking task in an attempt to answer the sub-question that “Is there a dominant norm in Chinese institutional translation?”

It does so by examining whether there exist observable behavioral tendencies or regularities at a general level on the production side. The answer to this sub-question should deepen our understanding of the first research question (see 3.1) in the sense that the institutional translators with good familiarity with the start culture might have different attitudes towards translator intervention, compared to the reception side.

For each task, participants were asked to rank the three translations from 1 (most favorable) to 3 (least favorable). Figure 11 shows the total score of each translation for the four tasks.

Figure 11. Total score of each translation in each task

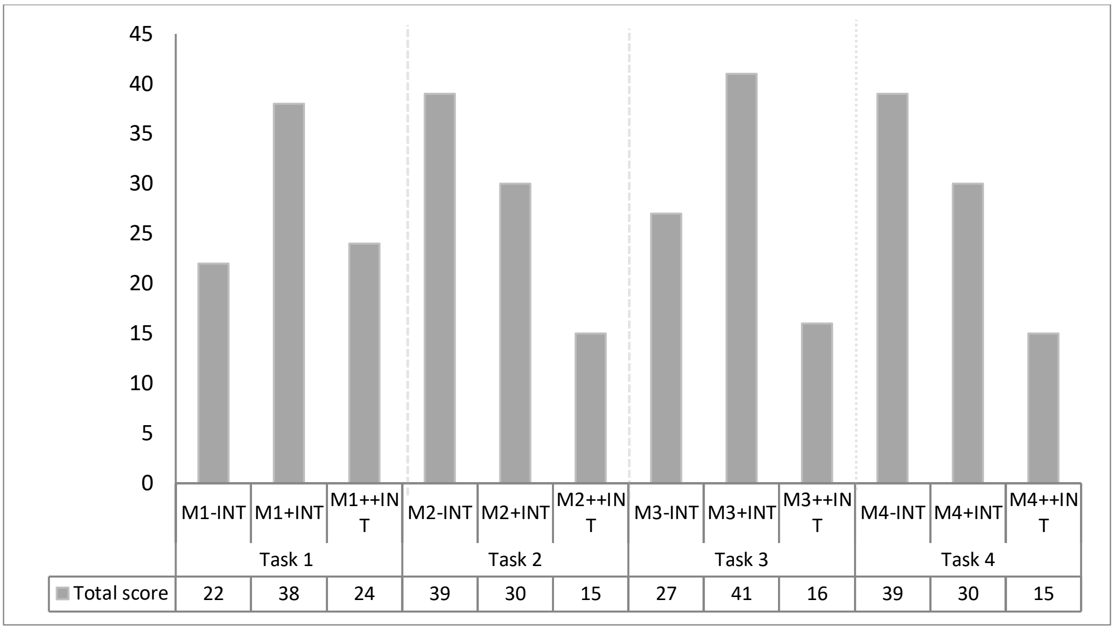
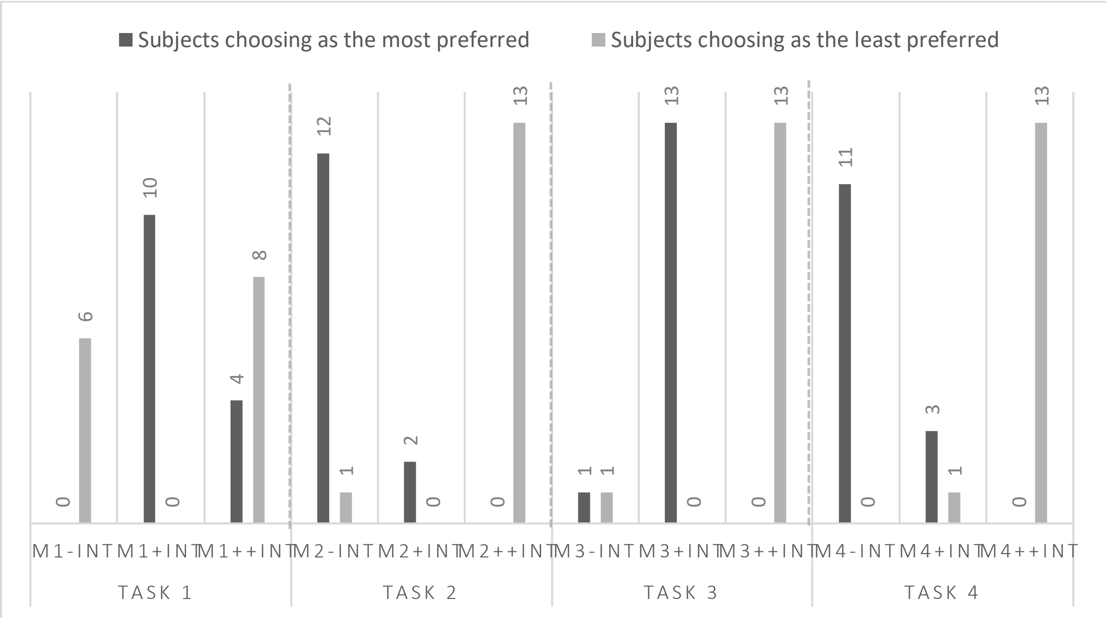


Figure 12 shows how many times each translation was chosen as the subjects' most or least preferred translation in each task.

Figure 12. “Most preferred” and “least preferred” evaluations of the translations



In general, a striking similarity is evident in the translators’ preferences for the most and least preferred translations. This suggests that the Chinese translators shared strong agreements on certain translation solutions. In terms of the degrees of acceptance of a specific solution, the translators’ preferences varied depending on which start text they were evaluating. The findings show that in Tasks 1 and 3, a clear majority of the translators favored the translations with *medium* intervention (M1+INT and M2+INT), while in Tasks 2 and 4, the translations with *minimal* intervention (M2-INT and M4-INT) were the most preferred. One possible reason is that subject matter might affect the translators’ decisions. This has been confirmed by cross-checking them with the interview data, which will be discussed below (see 4.1.2.2.3.2). As can been seen in Figure 2, although the participants’ attitudes towards translations with the minimal and medium intervention varied in accordance with different start texts, there was a general consensus that the translations with the greatest intervention were the least acceptable in all tasks.

Although the quantitative data suggest that tendencies do indeed exist, to say that the regularities definitively reveal a general norm is no more than a heuristic proposal. First, the translators’ tolerance of intervention might vary according to the subject matter of the text. The varied nature of the responses makes it evident that we should take account of other factors beyond a single dominant norm: several complementary norms are involved. Second, we cannot be sure that the voices that are outside the consensus manifest the ubiquity of competing norms.

4.4 Qualitative results

Although the Chinese translator participants in this study did show a degree of consensus in their choices, they explained their own rules from various perspectives in the interviews. The proposed explanations may not necessarily be complete, or adequate, or even true, but to some extent they help show relations of generalization, causality or unification with the phenomena (Chesterman, 2007a). Here the qualitative analysis is an explanation-seeking endeavor, aimed at interpreting the occurrence of facts by providing an underlying rationale for how various normative forces may affect the translator's judgment.

The discussions of the interviews will be divided into two parts: the first part attempts to give an overview of how each translation task was judged by the official translators, underlining the potential reasons why the translators accept or refuse certain interventions; the second part will discuss three variables that are found to affect the translators' solutions. Given that quantitative recurring patterns does not necessarily mean a norm, this bottom-up analysis of the respondents' arguments can be viewed as a set of inductive explanations, helping to explain where and how normative force may operate.

4.4.1 Analyzing ranking translation tasks

4.4.1.1 Task 1

The start text in Task 1 is an excerpt from a Chinese government report, in which a number of policies are listed, with lingo and jargon that might be difficult for any outsider to decipher. Conscious that a word-for-word translation might confuse foreign readers, most translators regarded M1-INT as the least acceptable. For example, FG3F41 pointed out that M1-INT required the target reader to have a high degree of background knowledge about China. As the translator pointed out, unless they have had rich experience of engaging with Chinese affairs, foreign readers would fail to understand the political jargon. IN5F32 argued that it was difficult for *her* to grasp the meaning of the Chinese start text, let alone a literal translation of it for outsiders. In this regard, the translator preferred the more explanatory M1+INT:

IN5F32: I don't like [M1-INT]. I can't understand it. What does the 'five-sphered integrated plan' mean? I like [M1+INT]. It explains everything very clearly.

Four of the 14 translators ranked M1++INT as their favorite translation. The main reason for this is their perception of target readerships. FG2F35 suggested that the explicit M1+INT was good for experts e.g., China watchers, but a more concise, summarized version like M1++INT would better suit a wider public:

FG2F35: For those who know Chinese well and who want to learn more about China, I think [M1+INT] is a good choice, as it explains our national strategies in great detail. But maybe there's too much detail. So, for the general public, [M1++INT] is more suitable. There is no way [M1-INT] will work. Nobody can understand it.

This justification of the highest degree of intervention reveals the weight of a functionalist approach. FG2F32 argued that although M1++INT did not translate "every single word" of the start text, the highest intervention still had the capacity to convey the original message to the reader. For these translators, retaining formal correspondence to the start text was an unnecessary burden: many, if not most, foreign readers would not have much interest in the linguistic features of Chinese political discourse:

FG2F32: [M1++INT] summarizes the meaning of the political jargon instead of translating it. It may look unfaithful. But I think the political slogans are made for our domestic readers rather than an international audience. Foreigners don't need to realize they're slogans, do they?

Yet M1++INT was criticized by over half the translators as "overgeneralized" and suffering a loss of "fidelity" to the original. For them, functional pragmatic equivalence is subordinate to the completeness of information. This recalls the point McDougall (2011, p. 3) made about the practice of Chinese institutional translation – accuracy is applauded, but creativity is not:

FG3F42： I don't like [M1++INT] because some information is missing in the translation. For example, where are the "four Comprehensive Strategies?" Imagine if you are asked to translate 'grass carp (草鱼, *cao yu*)' into English, but you can only give a translation like 'it's fish.' That's not good. You can't overgeneralize the start text like this.

Aside from the debate about the very nature of "equivalence," the translators gave different weights to stylistic profiles of the text, in other words, the rhetorical effects of the translation. FG2F35 referred to Chinese scholar Yan Fu's famous translation principles of "faithfulness, comprehensibility and elegance" (信达雅, *xin da ya*) and argued that as a more fluent and "elegant" translation, M1++INT should win out over the others. In her opinion, M1+INT put too much effort into explaining the implicit information in the start text, which inevitably led to a "clumsy" translation.

Nevertheless, in the same focus group, FG2F43 disagreed with her colleague and suggested that since the goal of Chinese international communication was to "send our [Chinese] voice" to the outside world, the principle of "faithfulness" to the information was far more important than being "elegant":

FG2F43: I think the priority of our government's international communication is to let other people know what we are talking about. I agree that the English of [M1++INT] is much more beautiful than [M1+INT]. But when translating our official documents, I don't think language is the most important consideration. The point is to convey the message.

Several supporters of M1-INT shared similar reasons: the literal translation was acceptable if this was in an interpreting setting, given that time pressure is a reality that should be considered. When the participants put themselves in the interpreter's shoes, it seemed to be reasonable to choose a more "concise" version.

4.4.1.2 Task 2

The start text is selected from president Xi's speech on the Belt and Road Initiative, in which the president quotes a Chinese idiom ("peaches and plums do not speak") to call for international cooperation. At first sight, the debate on how to deal with cultural specificity is couched in terms of domesticating vs. foreignizing solutions. FG2F35 believed that M2+INT, which naturalizes the Chinese idiom, gave more weight to pragmatic, functional reasons in that the intended foreign readers could understand the text more easily:

FG2F35: I choose [M2+INT], the one that translates the Chinese idiom as 'actions speak louder than words.'

FG2F43: Really? Why?

FG2F35: Because the translation is meant to be received by the Western audience. If you translate it literally, you are requesting your readers to know a lot about Chinese culture. But if you translate the Chinese proverb as an English idiom, they will get your point faster and better.

Yet 12 of the 14 translators viewed the literal, foreignized M2-INT as their favorite. For some of them, the pedagogical value of foreignizing translation is a prime concern of Chinese foreign-affairs discourse: one of the very purposes of translating the texts is to educate the target-language readers:

FG2F43: Disseminating our Chinese culture is also one of the purposes of our government's international communication. So we should highlight our Chinese elements in the translation. I think a better way to do this is to give a foreignizing translation first, and then explain it by providing a corresponding English idiom. The foreigners then will learn that, in fact, in our Chinese culture, we have a similar saying.

Another reason concerns the delimitation of the concepts of "insider" vs. "outsider." For example, FG2F43 were worried that a domesticating strategy like M2+INT might run the risk of losing Chinese identity:

FG2F43: I think when we translate for the global audience, we have a special responsibility to disseminate our Chinese culture to the outside world. If we just use their [target-language] idiom, we will lose our identity.

This translator suggested that the English idiom "actions speak louder than words" in M2+INT could be followed by a literal translation of "peaches and plums" as an additional explanation. Therefore, an optimal balance of readability and cultural specificity would be achieved.

FG2F43 used the translation of "Belt and Road Initiative" as an example to argue that the start culture has its own linguistic peculiarities which should be manifest in the translation. In her view, the foreignizing translation "Belt and Road Initiative" stood as a model of both maintaining distinctive Chinese features and engaging foreign readers.

Some reservations might need to be made here. FG2F43 seems to be over-optimistic: when I used the term "Belt and Road Initiative" in the familiarity survey on the reception side, very few English speakers could understand what the "belt" and "road" referred to (see 5.2.3.4.1). Although the translator *thinks* a foreignizing translation can provide an optimal balance, to what extent it can *actually* be accepted is in doubt.

It should be noted that the basic assumption beneath such a preference for a foreignizing solution is that the production side assumes foreign readers *could* understand the literally translated Chinese idiom. Almost every translator, it seems, had no hesitation about the readability of a literal translation of the idiom (M2-INT):

FG1M41: I think foreign readers can understand it [M2-INT]. The metaphor is quite straightforward and pretty well accepted. It's not hard to interpret because there is little cultural-specific symbolic meaning. 'Peaches and plums' are just common fruits. So I think a literal translation like text D [M2-INT] is totally acceptable.

Do the readers also think the literal translation is "quite straightforward?" To allay suspense, in the reception section I will show that, contrary to the translator's prediction, readers rarely understood the literal translation (see 5.2.3.4.2). One might wonder whether there is a way to explain the translators' confident prescriptive assumption: "I know they can understand it, because I do." Only a handful of translators suspected that the foreignization approach might fail to communicate:

IN7F35: [M2-INT] is translated *word-for-word*. Because of the cultural difference, I don't think it can be understood by the [foreign] reader.

FG2F43 held a similar doubt, suggesting that readers without the relevant cultural context would be incapable of dealing with such culture-bound expressions:

FG2F43: The expression "peaches and plums do not speak" is very clear to our Chinese people, because we can understand the cultural connotation. For example, as Chinese, we have different feelings from foreigners when we see the moon. We may think of Li Bai's poems but they won't. So I think foreign readers can guess but I suppose many will guess wrong.

In this respect, the idealistic binary division between foreignizing and domesticating solutions no longer applies and probably never did. The translators' justification of translation solutions was largely dependent on speculations, but with limited empirical evidence. How actual readers received the foreignness is the question to which I will turn below in the analysis of the reception side (see 5.2.3.4).

4.4.1.3 Task 3

The start text is a news report about Chinese premier Li Keqiang's two-scarves choice. In this task, M3+INT, the medium intervention translation, won out easily. All except one of the translators selected it as their favorite translation. This preference implies a balance of start- and target-oriented approaches that somehow resists rather than encourages radical translation intervention:

FG1M41 : [M3+INT] is half in earnest, half in jest. I feel it's a good balance. The literal translation [M3-INT] is a bit hard to read. [M3++INT] rewrites too much. That's unacceptable.

Only translator FG2F35 regarded M3++INT as acceptable in terms of genre. Knowing that the start text was a news report that had been published on the website of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FG2F35 pointed out that only M3++INT sounded like "an English journalism piece" that could successfully create functional equivalence to the original. In her view, the functions of the translations "no matter who wins I will support them" in M3-INT and "may the best team win" in M3+INT were equal to each other: to send the Chinese premier's friendly message to the Australian AFL community. For the translator, adapting the original words to an English proverb was a legitimate solution to cultural relativity:

> FG2F35: I don't think every single word [in the start text] really matters so much. We need to consider the cultural difference. For example, British people like to talk about the weather. We Chinese like to greet people by asking 'Have you eaten yet?' Maybe it doesn't really mean anything but it starts a conversation.

Nevertheless, it seems that the majority of the translators were less than convinced by this argument. They saw little reason to take the apparent risk of moving away from the start text and into the realm of radical adaption.

The question is what *risks* could the translators face if they adapted the original? First, the intention of accommodating a Chinese political item to the local conditions of the receiving culture was deemed to be suspicious. The solution would simply create a risk of credibility. For instance, FG2F43 argued that M3++INT seemed to be produced by their foreign counterparts, in which Western ideological values were purposely put in:

> FG2F43: I think [M3++INT] was translated by foreign journalists. They use an English phrase 'may the best team win' in the translation, which does not exist in the Chinese start text. They put their Western ideology into it. If the text was produced by us, I don't think we would translate it like this.

The translator, therefore, preferred a more "faithful translation" like M3-INT. Her main reason was that the translator should "respect the speaker" by rendering his thoughts faithfully rather than make one's own interpretation:

> FG2F43: I think we need to respect the speaker, especially when he's our premier. I mean, we need to translate his message faithfully. There must be a reason why he said that. He didn't say 'I support the best team' but no matter who wins he will support them. So you can't adapt it as 'may the best team win.' I think that's what the premier really wanted to say and that's what we should translate.

Another problem was the lack of general agreement about the definition of "translation" itself. Can a radical rewriting be legitimately justified as "translation?" The answer might depend on who you are asking. Some translation scholars may have their say (e.g., Lefevere, 1992a, who regarded all translation as "rewriting"). But for most of the official translators participating in the experiment, the answer to this question was clearly "no." One possible reason concerns the criteria that we can apply to radical rewriting:

> INTF37: It's not a translation but a rewriting. The last one [M2++INT] even adds new information that is not in the start text. So how can I evaluate it without reference to an original?

To avoid the heightened risk of uncertainty, in the eyes of the translators, apparently, the easiest path is to close the door to any high-degree translator intervention.

4.4.1.4 Task 4

The start text introduces the implementation of China–Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA). The majority of the translators chose M4-INT as their first preference, but they made their points quite clear: it was not because of how good M4-INT was, but because of how unsatisfied they were with the other two:

FG1M41：	I have no choice but to pick [M4-INT]. It’s not perfect but both [M4+INT] and [M4++INT] are departing too far away from the original.

M4-INT is a literal translation of how the Chinese government has made concerted efforts to promoted ChAFTA over the years, rendering the whole ideology-bound passage quite precisely. M4+INT leaves out the Communist content and M4+INT radically rewrites the text to make it sound like a statement given by the Australian government.

It is evident that for most translators there was no reason to work that hard – high-level translator intervention might cause undesired risks and the reward is not clear so far. One of their main points is with reference to information completeness. The translators argued that the Communist content highlighted the Chinese government “endorsement” of ChAFTA, which was indeed important to boost the confidence of the Australian investors and could not be omitted:

FG1M41：	The whole text is an endorsement. That means the trade agreement has received ((hesitation)).
FG1F34:	It has received the bilateral support of both governments.
FG1M41：	It indicates that the agreement is a national-level initiative.

A similar argument was proposed by FG2F43, who indicated that the part about China’s State Council could have helped investors understand the background and history of ChAFTA:

FG2F43：	[M4-INT] mentions the endeavor of our State Council so it provides a clear picture of what we’ve done to achieve the free trade agreement. But from the second one [M4+INT], readers can’t get the information.

Others made claims that exporting Chinese Communist “ideology” (意识形态, *yi shi xing tai*) to the rest of the world should be indeed one of the goals of China’s international communication:

FG2F43：	I think we should help the international audience know how the Party Centre Committee and the State Council have promoted ChAFTA. I think the start text has this purpose. Because it’s international communication [宣传, *xuan chuan*]. That should include our ideology [意识形态, *yi shi xing tai*].

Apart from the criticisms of lacking textual faithfulness, there are also identity risks involved, especially for the translators working with the Chinese government. These official translations address not only target-language readers but also members of their own community, whose ideological identity is supposed to be present in some ways in the translated text. The translators believed they must thus show their fidelity to the original, both textually and ideologically.

For instance, FG1M41 argued that M4++INT was regarded as a shift to a "reporting discourse," aiming to describe the trade agreement rather than directly speak for the position of the Chinese government:

FG1M41： The start text states the position and attitude of the government clearly. But [M4++INT] seems to be a report, like a criticism given by a third party.

Therefore, understandably, for the translators, political positioning (政治立场, in FG1F34's words, *zheng zhi li chan*g) should prevail over other considerations when translating Chinese political discourse:

FG1F34： You [as an official translator] need to be very clear on what political opinions are held by the start text. After all, it's a government political discourse, and it must represent our national attitude. So the translator needs to make sure the political views of translations are consistent with the original.

Here the claim resonates with the translation of religious texts, where official translators deemed themselves as ideological gatekeepers when performing their professional role. The foreign text returns, guiding the translator's choice as a ghost spirit (for more on "spirit channeling," cf. Robinson, 2001). Divine loyalty oriented their words, just as Communist values do here.

4.4.2 Analysis of production norms

The bottom-up qualitative analysis of the interviews in this section identifies some common threads in how the Chinese translators justify themselves when evaluating different degrees of intervention. Three lead-in questions preface each section as headings, involving three factors that may affect the official translators' justifications: 1) (implicitly) normative principles, 2) the perceptions of the prospective readership, and 3) the tolerance of translation intervention. When explaining their views, the translators responded to the questions about their personal experience, yielding interesting insights into their values and beliefs on production norms. Since no final, definitive or determinate norms were acknowledged, such bottom-up analysis of the respondents' statements can be viewed as inductive explanations, helping to construct a multi-layered representation of the translation norms of Chinese foreign-affairs discourse.

4.4.2.1 Question: "Have you ever received any clear guidance as to how to translate official documents?"

This section reviews the major arguments about the underlying institutional norms, mainly responding to the question "Have you ever received any guidance to translate?" in order to illustrate the complex interplay of various normative forces.

4.4.2.1.1 Answer: "It's my strategy. But it's not a written rule."

It is perhaps not surprising that no axiom-like, or overall norm was overtly claimed by the interviewees. For example, IN7F49, a freelancer and translation manager, when asked whether she received any explicit instructions from her government clients, indicated that specific translation guidance had rarely been given by the Guangzhou foreign-affairs office that her company worked for:

IN7F49:	Not really ((hesitation)). Actually no. We learn from experience when we work with them.

Rather than explicit written guidance, the translation traditions seem to be a rule of thumb. When asked if they would use an official or "authentic" translation if available, most translators agreed that they would indeed adopt an existing official version, but they also admitted that there was no mandatory rule about that:

FG1F34:	Yes, it's my strategy. But I haven't received any clear instruction saying that I must use the [Chinese] Ministry of Foreign Affairs' translations.

4.4.2.1.2 Answer: "As an official translator, I prefer a faithful translation."

Although the translators had only rarely received specific guidance on how to translate China's political discourse, the idea of being "faithful" was mentioned frequently, seemingly serving as a mental image of what a "good translation" is in practice:

IN7F49:	The first thing is faithfulness. As a translator, you can't rewrite the text. You are not entitled to do that.

One conclusion to be drawn here is that the norm of "faithfulness" seems to concern general professional ethics: as a translator, your role is restricted. At first glance, the insistence is a start-oriented defense: the original is considered as a fixed text, as some sacred object that is untouchable. However, answers from other interviewees suggest that attempts to preserve a visible echo of the original also concerned identity shifts. The adherence to the default norm is thus largely motivated by an ideological stance, which might lead to censorship:

FG1F34:	What is the most important translation principle? It depends on what status you have.
I:	How about from the staff translators' status?
FG1F34:	As an official translator, I prefer a faithful translation.

This shift of "status" is a sign of a hierarchy of norms: when translating Chinese political discourse, the identity of the institutional translator has priority over other ethical considerations, and this unsurprisingly results in restrictions on translatorial freedom. As institutional translators, the interviewees are subject to constraints imposed by power relations of various kinds. For them, it would be dangerously heretical to intervene in the original.

4.4.2.1.3 Answer: "It depends on what kind of faithfulness you want to pursue."

Most of the interviewees noted the heuristic value of "faithfulness," but there was little agreement on how the term should be defined. Perhaps the concept itself is messy, mixed up with beliefs about formal correspondence, emphasis on functional equivalence, and insistence on the author's intention – all these interpretations are competing for space and prestige. Some translators, but not all, were aware of the co-existence of contradictory definitions of the "faithfulness" principle:

I:	Do you think faithfulness is the most important principle for translating China's political discourse?
FG1M41:	It actually depends on what kind of faithfulness you want to pursue. I think probably sending a message efficiently is most important. The meaning should be faithful. But that doesn't mean you need to be faithful to all kinds of linguistic features in the original.

Here communicative effects challenge the prevailing norm of faithfulness in a formal sense. The translator points out that the idea of calling a representation *in toto* true is itself questionable: the relative status of originals and translations should be considered. FG1M41 also suggests that, at the very least, norms should be made sensitive to reception. On this view, a literal translation like M1-INT is inaccessible to foreign readers:

FG1M41:	If you are going to translate word-for-word as [M1-INT], you are really expecting too much of foreign readers. I don't think it's possible for them to understand.

Besides, IN7F49 recognized that faithfulness could be applied in a strict or loose sense, depending on the purpose of the start text – a view that recalls functional equivalence. For relatively low-sensitive topics, omission sounds acceptable:

IN7F49:	If the leader is talking about local cuisine or something like that, you can adapt it as you like. You don't need to copy the Chinese syntax strictly. But if he's talking about the government's development strategy, you can't omit anything. You need to be faithful to the original and translate exactly what he says.

What can we conclude from these examples? First of all, it seems that most Chinese translators ostensibly regard "faithfulness" as the dominant norm, as a part of ideological fidelity or translator ethics. Second, the nature of "faithfulness" is far from clear, making the idea of "being faithful" a matter of degree. This is not very surprising, owing to the pragmatic considerations associated with linguistic or cultural differences. In fact, rather than arbitrarily classifying faithfulness as falling into one camp or another (e.g., formal correspondence vs. functional equivalence), we might also think of how the ambiguity of the norm *de facto* allows translators to make interventions. When the Chinese translators justify solutions such as omissions in opposition to literalism, the intrinsic ambiguity in the norm can account for functional appropriateness, expanding the concept to include the translator's fidelity to communicative effects. In this sense, norms themselves are not something absolutely standard but are open to being interpreted by *human agents*.

4.4.2.1.4 Answer: "The translation should sound 'formal.'"

According to McDougall (2011, p. 7), Chinese institutional translation is traditionally "highly organized, and its product correspondingly formal", albeit "mostly mediocre" (p. 39). Making a translation sound "formal" is indeed observed as a prevailing norm, evident in the translators' stylistic preferences for neutralizing colloquial expressions:

FG1F34：	[M3++INT] seems quite low [in style]. In the translation, he [Chinese Premier Li Keqiang] doesn't sound like a premier.
I:	What do you mean, he doesn't sound like a premier?
FG1F34：	How could it be possible for a [Chinese] premier to say something like 'wearing two scarves is a bit much?'
FG1M41:	It's too colloquial.
FG1F34：	Yeah, right.

This argument sounds like Toury's (1995/2012) "law of standardization." Nevertheless, in Toury's definition, standardization happens when the text is translated into a target culture where the translation (or translation in general) is given relatively less priority (cf. Pym, 2008b). But do the Chinese translators really think the status of their translations is peripheral in the target culture? I suggest that the standardizing is possibly due to the "rhetorical salience threshold" postulated by Chesterman (2007b): rhetorical adjustments are made to "tone down" or "tone up" the salience between the start and target languages to avoid the undesired effects perceived by the translator.

In the same vein, target-language proficiency is given weight, in the sense of the translation having to be "well-written English." IN7F35, reflecting on the feedback received from her government clients, argues that translators must pay careful attention to stylistic register:

IN7F49:	I feel what they [the Guangzhou office] really care about is the language. They would say 'don't translate too vulgar' [太土, *tai tu*] ((laughter)).
I:	What do you mean by 'vulgar'[太土, *tai tu*]?
IN7F49:	I think it means 'Chinglish.' They want the translation to sound like well-written English.

IN7F49 suggested that the requirement for high language quality was a sign of the government's target-side awareness, i.e. the responses of the "international readers":

IN7F49:	Maybe English speakers can understand literal translations. They can understand what you're talking about, but they won't feel good about it. So the Guangzhou office wants the translation to sound 'international' [国际化, *guo ji hua*]. I feel they have quite high standards for the language of translations.

The translators' understanding of "being formal" offers some interesting asides. One interviewee suggested that she would want Chinese political leaders' translated speeches to sound more like Barack Obama than Donald Trump. The translator hence tended to omit traces of exoticism and avoid "vulgar" expressions, for fear that the target-language readers might not be able to cope or may not like the style.

On the one hand, the Chinese translators tend to "internationalize" their outputs. The attempt to standardize the text is in line with the features of institutional translation identified by Schäffner et al. (2014, p. 494) as "collective, anonymous and standardized." However, the demand for a high-register target text might not be regarded as a case of expectancy norms in Chesterman's sense. The peculiar emphasis on stylistic preferences suggests that a given translation is presumed to have the same effect on all target-language readers: everybody will agree that the more formal English the political leaders speak, the more respectable they will appear. But how valid might this be in all target cultures? Will American, British and Australian readers trust the Chinese premier less if he sounds "colloquial?" Since there is little empirical evidence for such a claim, attempts to level out the register might become rather futile.

4.4.2.1.5 Answer: "Different foreign-affairs offices do things differently."

It seems that start-culture norms, and consequently the degrees of flexibility that the translators are granted, vary significantly between different institutions. IN5F32 was working as a senior translator in the same local-government foreign-affairs office that IN7F49 and her translation company were working with. During the interview, IN5F49 reiterated that the local foreign-affairs office paid serious attention to the readability and proficiency of their translations. In a later interview with IN5F32, I had the opportunity to ask whether a target-oriented attitude could lead to new norms for translating China's political discourse:

I:	[IN7F49] told me that they think the foreign-affairs office wants translations to sound well written, international and not Chinglish. She has the impression that the office is becoming more 'flexible': you no longer require strict linguistic equivalence between the start and target texts. Is that true?
IN5F32:	I think it depends on who in our office is working and communicating with them.

IN5F32 explained that she was part of a group of translators at the Guangzhou foreign-affairs office who had a similar education background and agreed "on the very nature of translating." This team was responsible for doing the majority of the in-house translation work and for proofreading large translation projects such as the annual government reports outsourced to translation companies:

I:	So you are the one who liaises with the translation company?
IN5F32:	Not only me but I have four or five colleagues. I can say together we are doing 95% of the translation and interpreting for the foreign-affairs office. We have a similar education background: most of us graduated from Guangwai, Shangwai, or Beiwai [the top three translation programs in China]; we all did a Master's in Translation and Interpreting. We have good academic records. Based on what we have learned from our teachers, we think the target readers and the purposes of translation are important. So when we work with translation companies, we pay attention to readability.

However, IN5F32 suggested that, to her knowledge, different foreign-affairs offices had different norm priorities. Apart from the profiles of the translators, interpersonal factors at the management level also affect norms and sometimes might exert a decisive influence. In the case of the Guangzhou office, the emphasis on communicative effects was attributed to the heads of the local government:

IN5F32:	First, our office has a long tradition of valuing translation quality. I can tell you not every foreign-affairs office does. Second, the current mayor and other leaders speak very good English. The mayor reads *The Wall Street Journal* every day. And they like to check our translation work. This puts some pressure on us if we can't do our job well.

Rather than any actual demand made by the target-language readership, the translators' tendency to improve language quality is somehow determined by internal criticism on the start side. Recall Chesterman's argument: "Norms are not personal" (2006a, p. 15). However, the hierarchical relation of a norm authority implies that a higher-ranking individual's personal preference can heavily influence a general translation practice. Here, pragmatism replaces dogmatic defenses of fidelity to the original as a new norm, thanks to the influence of an individual on management. Personal opinions feed into norms, reflecting them and affecting them. In this sense, norms can indeed be "personal" to a degree, and we see how norms are negotiated between agents: the translators can educate their clients (or vice versa); one might even suggest that more enlightened clients contribute to better translations and new norms (cf. Chesterman, 1999/2017, especially p. 54).

This may also partly explain why the language quality of Chinese institutional translations varies between agencies: although the expectations of the foreign reader probably remain the same, the organizing codes of the institutional settings might be different, and norms thus vary. Nevertheless, given the marked scantiness of empirical data related to state-level translators, this hypothesis is worthy of further exploration.

4.4.2.1.6 Answer: "After we have worked together for a long while, my leaders no longer correct me in front of others."

Translator intervention can also be considered in terms of communicative cooperation: when translators are more trusted, their credibility is stable, and they will thus have more reason to invest high effort in intervention. IN5F32 explained that, after building trust with the Chinese leaders she worked for, she was no longer criticized by the leaders and they were happy to take her advice:

I:	Did you get feedback from the mayor and other leaders?
IN5F32:	Absolutely. Especially when you make mistakes ((laughter)). But I feel that as we work together longer and get familiar with each other, they begin to recognize us as professionals and trust us more. So now my leaders won't criticize my job in front of others.

IN5F32 was one of the very few interviewees to show positive attitudes towards high-degree translator intervention. This interpersonal trust is a rational trade-off. Since the translator did not need to worry about losing credibility anymore, she was less bound by start-text faithfulness. It might then be posited that the more trust the translator is granted, the more translator intervention is possible, and the more target-oriented approaches can be expected.

This Guangzhou local office example shows the beginnings of a target-oriented model applied in Chinese foreign-affairs discourse. Its greater implementation over time may build trust and cooperation where they are needed: vertically between translation authorities and translators, and horizontally between message senders (the production side) and readers (the reception side).

4.4.2.2 Question: "Have you considered who will read this?"

In order to investigate to what extent the target-oriented norms, i.e. expectancy norms might affect the translators' behaviors, I start by asking who the prospective readership is and where they might be located.

4.4.2.2.1 Answer: "It depends on where you want to use the translation."

It would be quite naïve to suggest that institutional translators have no awareness of reception at all. A target-oriented approach starts to appear when the Chinese translators take a utilitarian view of translation. One frequent question I was asked during these interviews was, "Where do you want to use this translation?" This implies that the translators have a mental image of possible prospective readers, stimulating a forward-looking orientation with respect to reception conditions, albeit limited.

This functionalist awareness might motivate the translators to adopt different solutions rather than to stay close to the start text. Hermans (1998) suggests that the translation system distinguishes between a valid or a non-valid representation of the start text. However, what regulates the Chinese translators here is not whether a faithful representation of the start text is *possible*, but whether it is *necessary* based on the translators' perceptions of the target side. IN7F49 said that she would change the register of the original to suit the target conventions. For instance, she would translate the English phrase "best wishes" as "顺颂商祺 (*shun song shang qi*)," a classical Chinese idiom meaning "best wishes to someone's business" – "Our Chinese people are more formal," the translator added. This kind of "minor change" (IN7F49's words) in the register was justified in order to create similar contextual effects on the part of the target-side addressees, minimizing any potential misunderstanding. In another example, IN7F49 argued that when encountering cultural differences, translators should take readers' "feelings" into consideration:

> IN7F49: Westerners like to start their letters with 'I am excited about the project.' But that does not sound reliable or mature enough for our Chinese people. Why get so excited? So we translate it as something like 我很荣幸 [it is my great honor].

It seems that the professionals indeed have an awareness of different readerships and their very different expectations about what a translation should be like. However, the issue of directionality may affect the translators' predictions of communicative effects: both examples here were translated *into* the translator's L1. There is little evidence that the translators would have the same confidence to radically adapt the original when the direction changes, even when they are aware of the importance of reception.

Now, if it is true that most translators more or less give importance to the target side, who are the receivers that they are thinking about?

4.4.2.2.2 Answer: "There are two sorts of readers."

In dealing with political jargon, FG2F35 roughly categorized the intended readers into two groups: the general target public and the readers who "already have some basic knowledge" of Chinese political discourse:

FG2F35:	If I need to pick one between [M1+INT] and [M1++INT], I need to know who my readers are. There are two groups [of readers]. For example, if the readers already have some basic knowledge of what the 五位一体 [*wu wei yi ti,* five-sphere integrated plan] is, I may go for [M1++INT]. But if I am translating the original for the general public, this may be the first time for them to hear the words, so I prefer [M1-INT], because that one gives more explanations.

This is a simplified, idealized classification of two possible target-culture readerships: for "a general public," literalism tends to be less acceptable than if the translation is designed for experts such as China watchers. Hence, explicitation seems to be considered as an efficient, cost-effective solution to offset the negative impact of literal translation: more explicit information may break contextual constraints in a general sense.

Let's put the experts aside for a moment and ask what is considered a "general public?"

4.4.2.2.3 Answer: "It doesn't matter whether the reader is male or female."

When asked whether the translators had any socio-demographic profiles of the general readership in mind, most translators were confused and hesitated to answer:

I:	Do you have an image in your mind about the target reader? For example, do you think the target reader is male? What country does he or she come from?
FG1M41:	Because these texts are translated into English, the target readership must be the English-speaking population. Talking about gender and background…((hesitation)) I don't think that matters. If the readers do not specialize in Chinese affairs, they can't understand stuff like a five-sphere integrated plan or a four-pronged comprehensive strategy, no matter what their education or gender.

The gender question was designed to elicit whether the translators were aware of the different types of target readers, in the sense that even a general public might not be homogeneous: different profiles of readerships could have different expectations. This might remind us of Chesterman's "homogenous readership fallacy" (1997/2016, p. 33). Yet the translator's response here brings home a valid point for rethinking the status of the target side: for the Chinese translators, the readers are expected to be active in gaining access to the translations, rather than the other way around. This can be interestingly linked to Schleiermacher's two mutually exclusive translation methods. Schleiermacher argued that translators should either domesticate the foreign text *or* retain its foreignness by "leave[ing] the writer in peace, as much as possible, and mov[ing] the reader toward him" (translated in Lefevere, 1992a, p. 49). Schleiermacher clearly favors the second method, as he regards foreignization as a tool to educate and build up German culture. Make the reader work! If the receivers are considered as a kind of "stakeholder" in the communicative event (Pöchhacker 2004/2016, p. 178), some basic motivation to comprehend the start culture is presupposed.

For the Chinese translators, the real or at least more accessible readers are not an abstract, imaginary general public but a visible group whom the translators can confidently recognize and effectively address. When asked, "Who are the important receivers for Chinese political discourse?", expert readers come to the surface:

FG3F41: Maybe foreign journalists.
FG3F42: I think most readers are journalists, consular staff and anyone interested in China. Because if they don't have an interest, they won't go to find these translations to read, right?

In the end, a general readership may be no more than an illusion, since there has been no real attempt to identify their needs. The translators seem to be neither interested nor motivated to walk across the minefield: the general readers' various expectations are deemed to be too complicated to be met by one translation, making the communicative effect difficult, if not impossible, to gauge.

4.4.2.2.4 Answer: "It depends on whom I am going to work for."

Another way of classifying the readership is into external and internal modalities. This leads to the distinction between start-language and target-language readers, which challenges the idea that an assumed "target reader" is always from "the target culture." That is, the addressees of the translated Chinese political discourse are not only external (e.g., target-language-speaking readers) but also internal (e.g., the Chinese government clients, professionals, and reviewers). Of these two, the internal readership sometimes overrides the translators' attempts to conform to target-culture norms. For example, FG4F26 argues that the foreign reader who is directly addressed is not the most important receiver, let alone the only one – how her boss will receive and judge her translations is what ultimately counts, rather than any external readership *per se*:

FG4F26: My strategies depend on whom I am going to work for. If I work for the Chinese government, I will translate proverbs faithfully because my boss wants me to retain the originally cultural features. But if I am working for foreign clients, they are more likely to want the information to be as simple as possible.

The underlying idea here is that the translators presuppose a simple binary difference in expectations on the start and target sides. For the translators, since their Chinese boss would usually give more weight to formal equivalence than to contextual and pragmatic considerations, any special effort beyond that internal expectation is deemed unnecessary, since little appreciable gain will result. This reliance on a top-down management to guide translation practices can be problematic, especially when the translators' boss or editorial staff who initiate and dominate institutional translation projects usually have "little if any knowledge of foreign language or cultures" (McDougall, 2011, p. 51).

4.4.2.2.5 Answer: "'Sounding local' is not always positive."

What happens if even the translators realize that their external readers might not fully understand the translation because of foreign elements? A striking response is that "it doesn't matter." Some translators argue that "sounding local," in the sense of naturalizing the start language to target conventions, should not be a universal norm:

FG1F34:	We have different cultures. If we totally adapt ourselves to American culture, where is our selling point? Sometimes the difference can be good. And 'sounding local' [地道, *di dao*] is not always positive. You don't always need to do that.
FG1M41	Agreed.

One fair explanation for the refusal lurks at the roots of Chinese institutional translation: losing start-culture identity is a serious risk. For example, one translator points out that there is no reason to naturalize the Chinese leader's words to make him sound like his Western counterparts:

FG1F34:	[Chinese premier] Li Keqiang should be Li Keqiang himself. I don't see the reason why his words need to be westernized.

It would be unjustified to see the emphasis on constructing a national identity or retaining an original voice merely as assuming cultural superiority. For the Chinese translators, since each culture has its personality and uniqueness, keeping those foreign references in place may help to attract interest, which also resonates with the agenda of the state's international communication policy – to export Chinese culture to a wider readership. Seen in this light, the Chinese translators ostensibly have good reason to claim that target-culture traditions are secondary and that the start culture's own voice is primary; in fact, this priority leads to the optimistic and ambitious view that translations can have effects on a wider target culture via "individual cognitive, emotional or aesthetic reactions" (Chesterman, 2002, p. 151).

Quite a number of scholars might applaud this position for giving more power to translation and the profession (cf. Chesterman & Baker, 2008; Dam & Zethsen, 2009). Nevertheless, if there is no empirical evidence to show that the exposure to others as others is well-received by the target-side readers, such a view would probably be mere wishful thinking.

4.4.2.2.6 Answer: "People expect you to speak with an accent."

What is more interesting, perhaps, is that the lack of interest in gaining naturalism depends in part on the anticipation of possible reception effects:

FGIM41:	So even if sometimes translations sound like Chinglish or translationese, I think it's okay. The readers know it's a speech translated from a Chinese leader. It would sound strange if the Chinese leader said something like 'wearing two scarves is a bit much.' When you close your eyes, it's hard to imagine it would come from a Chinese politician. So I think if the speaker is Chinese, people expect you to speak with an accent and have your characteristics. I don't think it's necessary to domesticate the translation too much.

This perspective on reception reconstructs the very foundations of the long-standing debate about foreignization vs. domestication. Naturalized translations are criticized here not because they are too free, too natural or merely because they risk losing original message – all these kinds of inordinate freedom are read from a textual level. The underlying reason here is that the translators see foreignness as a precondition expected by the target-language readers: since they know they are reading a translation, what could go wrong if a foreign tongue shines through?

4.4.2.2.7 Answer: "Foreign investors are happy to use Chinese official translations."

Some reported experience supports foreignization solutions, where the translators noticed that the target readers had already more or less accepted official Chinese translations:

FG3F41:	From my observation, I think foreign investors actually like to use Chinese concepts when they meet with the government staff. Even though sometimes the expressions sound clichéd in Chinese.
I:	You mean they like to use Chinese official translations?
FG3F41:	Yes. For example, they would use phrases like 精准扶贫 [*jing zhun fu pin,* official translation: *targeted measures in poverty alleviation*]. I notice that they learn these phrases quite quickly. When talking to the Chinese government, they are happy to use these official translations. So I think it's good to retain our characteristics in international communication: that's how Chinese people talk.

It seems that pragmatism is given more weight than the relative status of originals and translations. Such a point of view manifests what Chesterman calls "hypothesis of cause and effect" in that "translations themselves change things, and so translators themselves are also agents of change, not just of preservation" (1998, p. 161). As FG3F41 puts it, since the Chinese characteristics have been accepted happily by certain target readers, tolerance of foreignness may have become a new target-side norm:

FG3F41:	I think the important thing is they will accept this [official translation] as a prominent feature of China's political language. So they will realize if they use this tone to talk with Chinese people, we will better understand each other and the communication will become much smoother. I think it's their decision to actively learn to use such official language.

At first sight, the foreignization solution makes intuitive sense: the foreign readers "actively learn" literal translations of Chinese political jargon for their own good. But can the degree of acceptance maximize the communication effect? Even the translator admitted that the foreign readers would not use the official translations when communicating with their fellows within the target culture community:

FG3F41:	If you remove these characteristics from translations, the target reader will never know Chinese people like to use slogans in their speech. They won't have such an experience.
I:	But do you think knowing that Chinese people like to use slogans will make foreign investors more like to invest in China?

FG3F41:	((Laughter)) Maybe not. But this knowledge will help them communicate with Chinese officials.

One's own experience may suggest that the concerns of foreignization have converged to some degree, but there is scant evidence for the argument that foreignness necessarily helps increase the target reader's trust and likability of the start culture. The communicative risk in question still exists somewhere.

4.4.2.2.8 Answer: "Nobody would read it."

One of my suspicions was corroborated by the interviewees: not every institutional translation has or needs to have a real reader. When evaluating Task 3, FG3F41 argued that M3-INT seemed to be a quintessentially official translation published on the Chinese government website. As an answer to the question, "Why are there so many literal translations around?", the lack of real readership provides a causal explanation. The translators further suggest that the high number of translations published on the government website mainly underscores that "nobody would read it." So how to remedy the situation? Rather than address the need for any real target reader or real use, sometimes the institutional translations are translated for the sake of being translated, functioning as symbolic rather than pragmatic practices:

FG3F41:	Putting it on the website of the Chinese Foreign-affairs Department merely means nobody will read it.
FG3F42:	And that's why they don't care about the translation quality.
I:	So why did the government translate these texts into English?
FG3F41:	I think mainly because we need to make them available, in theory.

Apart from the possible lack of a real readership, the nature of institutional translation makes it hard to give target-culture traditions priority over authoritative identity:

FG2F 43:	But we still need to consider the [translation] policy and disciplines, right?
FG2F 35:	Absolutely. So…((hesitation)) There's really a contradiction out there. If the translation is for the government's international communication [外宣, *wai xuan*], our ideology must be highlighted. To be honest, whether the foreign readers like it or not, this is the way we're doing things.

This offers quite cogent arguments. For institutional translators, it is not always the target-language reader's views that prevail or even matter; the authorities cannot be wrong. As Koskinen ironically remarks on the European Commission translation services, "[s]ometimes the primary function of the translation of a particular official document is simply to be there, to exist" (2000, p. 51). In this case, the institutional component seems to be particularly marked in this "existential equivalence" (p. 51); it raises the question of whether the apparently poor-quality literalist translations can really be separated, not just from conceptual debate about the virtues of foreignization, but also from the conspicuous absence of any real target-culture demand. If the external, target-language reader does not exist, whether the translation should adhere to target conventions is a moot point.

So if the external readership seems to be illusory, we might need to consider how target-culture norms could have a reasonably direct bearing on translation solutions.

4.4.2.2.9 Answer: "No matter whether the foreign readers like it or not, this is the way we're doing things."

If the translators have tried every solution but there is still a lack of rapport with the reader, where should they look next? Despite some agreement on target-oriented functionalism, the actual practice suggests that official translators are reluctant to move too far from the authoritative start text:

FG2F35:	[M3++INT] seems to be suited to the taste of the Western reader. It's more eye-catching. [M3+INT] is a typical official translation. The reader will think it's just a piece of propaganda. I think [M3++INT] will be more attractive for the target reader.
FG2F43:	But we still need to consider the [translation] policy and disciplines, right?
FG2F35:	Absolutely. So…((hesitation)) There's really a contradiction out there. If the translation is for the government's international communication [外宣, *wai xuan*], our ideology must be highlighted. To be honest, no matter whether the foreign readers like it or not, this is the way we're doing things.

This makes some sense. It is not always the readers' views that prevail; the authorities cannot be wrong, since the state-sponsored translation means that they are also the ones paying for the translation (cf. McDougall, 2011). For the translators, institutional translation is perceived to be semiotically consumed. But this antidote to any dissatisfaction and misunderstanding risks inculcating a closed essentialist discourse that might shun the grounds for any kind of discussion, dialogue and communication.

4.4.2.2.10 Answer: "interpreting is different."

Different translation modes seem to affect the ways the prevailing norm is validated. Before evaluating the tasks, similar in the pilot study (see 3.3.1.4.2), many subjects asked whether the texts were written translations or transcripts of (conference) interpreting. These interviewees self-reported that they work in both modes. Interestingly enough, the professionals clearly distinguished between what "interpreting" pursues and what a "written translation" is for:

FG2F32:	For example, if I am doing conference interpreting, I will translate it another way. It will not be the same as what I translate for the government's international communication, [because] the requirements are different.

In their view, the norms that regulate interpreting should be different from those governing written translations. In this (over)simplified dichotomy, a communicative function is important for interpreting, but written translation should be rendered as closely to the original as possible.

There are at least three reasons why different norm priorities are given to written translation and interpreting. First, the reliance on linguistic faithfulness could be loosened in interpreting settings, given that the time constraints on working memory make a full representation less possible and it allows limited capacity for many explanations (cf. Gile, 2009, especially p. 42).

Second, in most cases, the conference interpreter's audience is more visible (remote interpreting might be an exception). Compared to their translator counterparts, interpreters tend to have a clearer picture of who their "here and now" receivers could be and what they would expect:

FG2F32: If people come to a conference, they should have some basic knowledge about the topic. The audience is not the general public. For example, if president Xi is giving a speech at a conference on the Belt and Road Initiative in Beijing, of course, the audience, who I suppose are foreign politicians, must know something about our Chinese culture. So I think a faithful translation works.

That is, the audience coming to an interpreted event is more likely to be a uniform group, in the sense of being motivated by similar purposes. The identifiable profiles of the audience resonate with what Pöchhacker (1995, p. 49) calls the "cultural common ground" that is shared by the participants in (conference) interpreting settings. In terms of the pre-familiarity with the subject matter of the communicative event, the interpreting audience is by nature more homogeneous; there are fewer cultural barriers actually separating them. This might make it easier for interpreters to adapt the message in view of the receivers' comprehension levels and expectations.

Third, some clues are found in the pedagogical ideology of interpreting. More than a few interviewees use the term 脱去语言外壳 (deverbalization) to justify their preference for freer renderings as in interpreting transcripts. For them, a literal written translation is taken as "normal," if not expected to be "formally faithful, and hard-to-read," while an interpreting performance must "make sense." The emphasis on decoding rather than transcoding harks back to Seleskovitch, who advocated that conveying intended meaning (or *vouloir dire*) rather than linguistic features should be the main component of the interpreter's work (cited in Pöchhacker 2004/2016, p. 59). For trained interpreters, communicative success is determined by target-side response. Thus, in order to produce acceptable target-language utterances, "some deviation from linguistic equivalence" is inevitable, and "filtering" to enhance the communicative impact of the text is necessary (Gile 1992, p. 188). In this sense, interpreters tend to give priority to the needs of their audience rather than to the strict form of the original. Here we see that trainers (and textbooks, perhaps) are indeed powerful norm authorities, as they not only issue norms but also provide professionals with a metalanguage to justify their solutions in their real-life work.

However, a prescriptive idealization of target-oriented norms is not rare in translator training, especially within *Skopos* theory. So why do interpreters still appear to be relatively free from the constraints of the start text? Here the causality of norms works from the other direction: the professionals consciously or unconsciously *choose* the norms in terms of how well they are compatible with their interests, i.e. legitimating the translators' solutions and reducing the actual risks involved.

4.4.2.3 Question: "Do you tend to rewrite the start text? If not, why not?"

In this section, I venture some predictive hypotheses concerning the reasons behind norm-breaking. If the notion of "faithfulness" is the most frequently mentioned norm for translating Chinese political discourse, any major translator intervention can be regarded as a potential indicator of norm-breaking. It is a little too easy to assume that institutional translation means total literalism and institutional translators always tend to translate with minimal intervention, as the quantitative results show that not every -INT translations wins out in the ranking tasks.

So, under what conditions do translators tend to challenge the dominant norm of faithfulness? What would be the potential rewards to be gained from intervention? In order to answer these questions properly, we need to know what serves as a reward (or punishment) for norm-breaking.

4.4.2.3.1 Answer: "Trust me, there are many worse start texts than this."

When do translators willingly change the way the start text is expressed? One immediate answer is, "when the original is bad." Perhaps surprisingly, the Chinese translators do not shirk from criticizing the quality of the Chinese start text. In Task 3, the start text describes Chinese Premier Li insisting on wearing two footy scarves, one for each of the opposing Australian football teams. The Chinese text indicates that the premier "said with humor" when explaining his purpose – even though the weather was hot, the premier wanted to show his support for both sides by still wearing two scarves. When asked which translation made them think that the premier had a better sense of humor, no one even thought that the start-text joke was funny. Some translators suggested an ironic attitude towards the poorly written start text. The political joke was not successful even in the original, leaving translators little scope to render it literally:

I: Which translation do you think makes the premier have a sense of humor?
FG3F42: A sense of humor?!
FG3F41: I don't see any humor at all ((laughter)).
FG3F42: Me neither. How can these translations be humorous?
I: But the Chinese start text says, 'the premier said with humor…'[总理幽默地说]
FG3F41: Yes, that's what it said. But I still feel it's not funny.
FG3F42: The start text is so awkward.

Aside from politicians' occasionally unfunny jokes, as IN7F49 pointed out, Chinese political discourse is conventionally imbued with linguistic and semantic ambiguity, making its meaning sometimes hard to grasp. IN7F49 said that she was familiar with this dilemma:

IN7F49: Yes. We have translated this kind of text a lot. Trust me, there are many worse start texts than [M4-ST]. At least the paragraph has been divided into three sentences. Many Chinese texts we have to translate are full of run-on sentences. No full stop at all. You need to figure out how to cut it up.

When asked whether the translator would adapt an existing official translation, IN7F35 said she was "flexible" enough to offer explanations "if necessary":

I: If the Ministry of Foreign-affairs has an official translation, such as the 'five-sphere integrated plan,' do you tend to use it directly?
IN7F35: Well, it really depends. I mean, I am *flexible* enough to add some explanations if necessary. For example, the official translation of 三个代表 [*san ge dai biao*] is 'Three Representatives.' We use it all the time. But sometimes we need to provide an explanation in brackets,

since even most Chinese people don't really know what the jargon means, not to mention foreigners.

The axiomatic superiority of the start text is here shaken by its own deficient quality, leaving room for the translator to justify the "necessity" of norm-breaking.

4.4.2.3.2 Answer: "The premier just wanted to amuse his audience."

A second parameter is the intended function of the start text. When reflecting on how to translate premier Li's greeting to a full-stadium Australian audience, the translators believe that some freedom of choice should be allowed. The underlying idea is that, since promoting an understanding of China's ideals is the main impetus for this cultural diplomacy, the communicative effect should have more weight:

IN7F49: The premier was telling a joke. In such a casual situation, he just wanted to amuse the audience. So I think 'may the best team win' sounds more appropriate. It's what people expected in the stadium.

For the translators, breaking with start-text faithfulness sometimes has a problem-solving function if there is no symmetry between linguistic forms. If an adaptation is deemed compatible with the communicative intention of the start text, the attempt to intervene is seen as being fairly acceptable for professionals.

For example, FG1M41 suggested that it was unnecessary to retain the comparison of the stadium atmosphere and Sino-Australian friendship in the translation:

FG1M41: I think it's quite a common Chinese rhetorical device. Talking about the atmosphere is to "set the scene" [original in English] of the event. What the start text really wants to stress is that the bilateral relationship between China and Australia has strengthened. So I think the information on the atmosphere of the stadium is not very important.

Nevertheless, it appears to be unreasonable to speak about great freedom in highly sensitive texts. The translators tend to justify intervention in terms of cultural and linguistic relativity, basically when they believe that a given formal feature (tautology, say) may have different effects on the readers in another culture. However, once a given formal feature is linked with the start-side ideological agenda, intervention suddenly becomes a "no-go" zone. When asked whether the translation of a Chinese leader's speech was allowed to be adapted to local cultural conventions, IN7F49 said that if the speech was about Communist ideology, the answer should be "no":

IN7F35: It depends on text types. If it's a matter of [ideological] principle, I mean, if the start text is talking about our state policy or other politically sensitive issues, you need to follow the original as closely as possible. But if it's not a serious topic, the more important thing is to convey the message.

For IN7F49, risks have a hierarchy of sorts: for a lower-risk culture-specific topic, communicative effects have priority over literalism; for translations of ideology-bound content, the virtues of linguistic loyalty are strongly highlighted, shunning any attempts to intervene. As McDougall (2011, p. 58) notes, it is customary that Chinese institutional translator's "personal reliability (or sanity)" is given priority. This explains why the system tends to shun the use of foreign translators, since there might be a conflict of loyalty.

4.4.2.3.3 Answer: "The more you say, the less they understand."

Compared to a fairly flexible rule of translating culture-bound items, the translators apparently take an overtly conservative attitude to political contents and indeed to Chinese Communist ideology:

FG2F35:	The reason why the Chinese start text explains everything in detail is that the target reader is our own people. But sometimes, however hard you try to explain it, something very Chinese is still hard for foreigners to understand. The more you say, the less they understand.

This observation brings us back to the fuzzy border between foreignization and domestication. Target-language readers are presumed to be fascinated at seeing a new culture, but any attempt to highlight a foreign ideology could scare them away. In this sense, neither foreignization nor domestication is the prevailing norm; they are both legitimate risk-management strategies, and their status largely depends on how many rewards might be granted by the target readers or the institutional employers. If there are no substantial rewards, then there is little reason to take risks.

4.4.2.3.4 Answer: "I was asked to translate the title as 'Governor' rather than 'Secretary of the Provincial Party Committee.'"

Another impetus for breaking norms could lie in national image-building as one of the very purposes of institutional translation. At the individual level, when literalism is equated with negative effects on the national image, the translators are more self-confident about legitimating intervention:

FG1F34:	[M1-INT] is very difficult to understand and it doesn't make sense at all. People who read these vague slogans will think China likes playing a political bluffing game.

As mentioned, the translators make conscious efforts to faithfully and truly retain original ideology in high-risk texts, like a good mirror. On the other hand, the norms authority seems to grant translators some freedom to play down ideological differences for the sake of a better national image. When evaluating M3-INT, many translators disliked the literal "Chinglish" translation because it made the Chinese premier sound "aloof":

FG1M41:	[M3-INT] is too literal. I have to say it's too *Chinglish*.
FG1F34:	There is a lack of a human element [人性] in the translation.
FG1M41:	Yes. It sounds strange. It even may build a wall between the target reader and the story.
FG1F34：	It makes the premier seem insincere.

FG2M42 suggested that the local government she worked with somehow did not want to remind foreign investors that they were doing business with a country with a different political ideology. FG2M42's client, the Guangzhou foreign-affairs office, fearing that the interpreting audience might react negatively to ideological alterity, gave her a clear instruction to "weaken the Communist Party's color" by *not* interpreting the leaders' Communist Party titles when introducing them to foreign investors:

FG2M42: I've come across this situation several times. If the meeting was about economic cooperation, the staff from the foreign-affairs office would ask me to interpret the title of the leader as 'Governor' rather than 'Secretary of the Provincial Party Committee.'

This is somewhat paradoxical, though, as it seems that the authority makes a distinction between pragmatic expediency and a lasting written record: they are aware that ideological alterity may have a negative impact on the target-culture side, so when engaging with the "on site" investors, they tend to eliminate or minimize the ideological element for immediate use, whereas the Communist values are left unchanged in written translations, where future checks are hard to control.

4.4.2.3.5 Answer: "I definitely won't rewrite the text."

We might safely conclude that intervention takes place when translating Chinese political discourse, albeit in a varied and limited sense. But do the translators appreciate being granted creative license? Not much, it seems. To talk about what affects the translators' motivation to break norms is to consider where the limits of translator intervention lie. I suggest that the translator's primary concern is the translation-specific risk of losing credibility (cf. Pym 2008a, 2015). This can be interpreted in two senses: professional and personal.

Professional credibility concerns all legitimate matters pertaining to a prescriptive statement of what a "translation" is. Some translators refuse high-level intervention since they think the result would no longer be a "translation" but a "rewriting":

FG1M41: I don't like [M1-INT] because it's a rewriting [改写, *gai xie*]. It rewrites almost all the context. I definitely won't do that. The political concepts in the start text are integrated into the translation. You can't find the original words anymore, such as four-comprehensive plans. I feel it's too domesticating [original in English].

Such creativity lays itself open to the translator's criticism, as it seems to allow the concept of translation to expand too far. So what could go wrong if a text is translated in too naturalized a way, too freely, or too innovatively? In the eyes of the translators, a rewriting means nothing but a loss of original information, which is overtly dangerous. For FG1M41, the rewriting in M3++INT risks losing the premier's exact words:

FG1M41:	I think [M3++INT] is an editorial translation. It is a…((hesitation))
FG1F34:	It's editing news [编译, *bian yi*].
FG1M41:	Right! So if you are editing the text for the media, I think it's okay, as it is close to the habits of the target-text-reading public. But since the start text is talking about…
FG1F34:	Our leaders.
FG1M41:	Yes, our government leaders. So it's inappropriate. Also the translation [M3++INT] does more than translate. It reformulates the event. But we already have an official start text there! So I think it's not good to paraphrase the premier's words. *What if* the target reader wants to know exactly what the premier said?

Along this route, we find the traditional focus on loss and betrayal: translated texts are relegated to secondary status and the originals are primary. The opposition to intervention in the rewriting sense also seems to mean that the translators want to trim the edges of a translation, frame it and give it neat and clear borders, so that nothing except original messages remains within its margins.

Yet there has been a long history of conceptual debate on the fuzzy nature of translation, when contemporary Translation Studies scholars have proposed various ways to legitimate translation (cf. Chesterman & Arrojo, 2000). One can imagine Lefevere arguing that rewriting is indeed a kind of translation, highlighting translation's similarity with anthologizing, paraphrasing and summarizing (cf. Lefevere, 1992b). The Chinese case seems to suggest that a more conservative view is prevalent among practitioners. The notion of what Newmark (1988, p. 204) called the "authoritative text" that "[translators] have no right to improve" is still fairly influential.

Apart from fidelity to the start text, what else could be sacrificed when translator intervention goes too far? For FG1F34, the answer is "our collective voice":

FG1F34:	There is too much work here. The translator was too creative. They are explaining the start text [M1-ST1] in their own way. If the translation is for China's international communication, we need to use our collective voice to send our image to the general foreign public. In this case, a rewriting is reckless.

This interpretation has serious practical virtues: institutional translator behavior is constrained and regulated. This resonates with the definition of institutional translation offered by Schäffner et al. (2014, p. 494) as a "collective [and] anonymous" activity. In the case of institution settings, translators' individual styles are both practically unnecessary and politically risky. Any high-degree intervention is perceived to be unrewarding, making further efforts simply not worth the time.

4.4.2.3.6 Answer: "Literalism is a safer choice for official translators."

The second concern is the translator's personal credibility. An example is omission. As might be imagined, since anyone on the start-culture side could compare the original with the translation and note the absence, the translators have to make an extra effort to justify the necessity of their intervention:

FG3F41: I remember an example of Qian Qichen, the former Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs. He once quoted a classical idiom 山不再高，有仙则灵 [literal translation: a mountain is not famous for its height but for the gods who live on it]. His interpreter didn't translate word-for-word but tried to summarize the meaning. But Qian was not happy about the omission. He knew some English. He wanted to hear the English words 'mountain' and 'gods' in the translation. So I think a safe way for our staff translators is to translate literally.

Given that the potential risks of losing the start-side trust are more palpable, low intervention is usually perceived by the translators as the "safest" choice, albeit while creating "mediocre" translations (cf. McDougall, 2011, p. 39). This recalls Toury's formulation of "environmental feedback" (1995/2012, p. 285): the feedback the translators receive is not only from the target recipients but also from those on the start culture. This feedback is normative in its very essence. The elaborate result of such a personalized social and cultural experience is the translator's habitus. The norms that are embodied explicitly or implicitly prescribe what is supposed to be done. In other words, the decisive factor for breaking or adhering to certain norms is the translator's habitual risk management. The translator adheres to a prevailing norm because that is what others typically do, and hence it is a safe solution; the motivation underlying a translator's choice of norm-breaking derives a real risk (or a reward) perceived in a given situation.

4.4.2.3.7 Answer: "As a translator, you don't have the right to omit information."

The third branch is related to professional ethics, particularly with respect to the traditional ethics of sameness. When evaluating Task 4, IN7F49 expressed her surprise that M4+INT could radically omit information about how the Chinese government promoted ChAFTA. For M4+INT, a translator cannot add or omit any content:

IN7F49: I think, from the perspective of translation, a translator does not have the right to omit information. In my practice, yes, it's unnecessary to translate every word in the original, but at least the message should be conveyed. You don't have the right to add or omit content. Otherwise, it's an omission [漏译, *lou yi*].

Similarly, when I asked IN7F35, the translation manager, whether she would permit radical rewritings like M4++INT, she said the answer was an absolute "no":

IN7F35: Texts K [M4+INT] and L [M4++INT] were absolutely unacceptable. No matter how good the language in the text is, if the information is not complete, then it's a bad translation. Omission is a significant mistake.

IN7F35 further stressed that she viewed herself as a "translator" rather than a "reviser":

IN7F35: We are translators, not revisers. If you tell me to rewrite the original, maybe I can do that too. But it rarely happens.

Here the imagined enemy is neither a picky client nor an unsatisfied reader but the fear of losing professional identity: if we are translators, the ethical imperative asks us to do no more than translate.

4.4.2.3.8 Answer: "It's dangerous to make decisions for the readers."

Apart from faithfulness in a textual sense, another ethical issue concerns impartiality. How much degree of precision should the translator guarantee? Is it possible to give the details that the reader needs, which may be more than those in the start text, or less? In light of the interviews, the answer is rarely "yes."

In Task 3, the major difference between M3-INT and M3+INT is that M3-INT translates the Chinese premier's words for the two AFL teams literally as "no matter who wins, I will cheer and applaud for them," which is replaced by an English idiom "may the best team win" in M3+INT. FG3F42 claimed that M3+INT makes the intervention because of cultural relativism:

FG3F42:	I do think it's because different cultures have different views of competition. We prefer to avoid stressing competition, but Western culture is inherently competition-oriented. So I think that's why the translator adapts the expression, making it sound more aggressive.

Nevertheless, when asked whether FG3F42 herself would prefer to adapt the message in this way, it seems that the translator was less enthusiastic:

I:	If you were the translator, would you translate it literally?
FG3F42:	I think I would translate exactly what the premier said. I will let the audience deal with the culture shock. I won't decide for them. I don't think that as translators we have the right to help the readers make decisions.

This argument can be validated by the inherent indeterminacy of readership. Obviously, no two readers have the same cognitive ability and preconception, so different receivers with different expectations may understand a translation in different ways. It is unrealistic to ensure that every reader will be happy with the same degree of accuracy, therefore the easiest way is not to "decide for them" but to transfer the risk to the audience, making them interpret a less-intervened text.

4.5 Summary

The quantitative results of the ranking tasks show that the translations with the highest degree of intervention were the least preferred by the Chinese translators. The qualitative interview data then provide some explanatory orientations for the translators' low intolerance of intervention: the translators apparently have few reasons to run the risks associated with high intervention, since there is no obvious reward in sight for violating common practices.

The frequently mentioned notion of "faithfulness" seems to serve as a prevailing translation norm of translations of Chinese foreign-affairs discourse. This is evident in the relatively high acceptance of literalism in the ranking tasks and is highlighted in many of the arguments made by the translators. Nevertheless, the various ways the translators interpreted the term "faithful" reveals that a production norm is not a given, but must be validated in different contexts and situations by the translator's internalization and is subject to change.

The validation itself can be viewed as a matter of compromise, in which the translator selects one norm among a range of competing normative forces by managing various risks (e.g., communicative failure or loss of credibility). The rationales of the translators' risk management will be further discussed in sections 6.1.2 and 6.3.1.2 below.

5. Reception analysis

This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative results of the quasi-experiment on the reception side, showing how various readerships ranked, evaluated and responded to different translator interventions. My focus is primarily qualitative: the explanatory variables that I tested in this study were mainly drawn from a bottom-up approach, considering the absence of an overarching theoretical framework for reception theory in general.

This chapter is structured as follows: an initial section is devoted to tentative quantitative analyses, including a comparative view of the underlying variables that might affect the readers' acceptance of different degrees of intervention; this is followed by detailed qualitative analyses of the readers' judgements, with special emphasis on the common ground that the readers shared and the conflicting statements they made; the logic of a trade-off model pertaining to the readers' decision-making is then illustrated. The remainder of the chapter will analyze the diverse reader expectations, highlighting the ethical and sociological factors that may account for translation reception.

5.1 Quantitative analysis of translation receptions

5.1.1 Participants and sampling

Seventeen interviews with a total of 22 readers were conducted between June and December 2018 in Melbourne, Australia. Three were semi-structured focus-group interviews with seventeen subjects; the other four were individual interviews. In order to cover a wide range of potential target readers of China's translated international communication as possible, an *a priori* classification of six readerships was designed in terms of subjects' engagement with China (see 3.2 and 3.3.2.3.2).

Potential subjects were identified and recruited via a number of avenues. Ten participants were purposefully selected based on the demographic information and results of the familiarity survey done in the pilot study. Information regarding the research was also distributed using the University of Melbourne's Notice Online Platform and through snowball sampling. Most participants were thus linked to university-level programs in Australia. A report by the Australian Parliament (Hazel & Sherrell, 2019) indicates that education is Australia's largest service export and China has become the top market for international enrolments. Against this background, people in education sector play a key role in China's interaction with the Australian community. The selected subjects had study and work experiences in Australian prestige undergraduate and post-undergraduate programs, so they may be regarded as active participants and potential opinion leaders in China-Australian international communication. According to their origins, length of stay in China and other demographic information, this group of subjects was further divided into five sub-groups. The two subjects in the "experts" category were purposefully selected: both of them had over twenty years' experience in China-Australia affairs.

Of the total 22 interviewees, six were male. Their ages varied from 19 to 52, with an average age of 26. The interviewees had a high level of education: all had (or were studying) a Bachelor's degree; seven had a Master's degree; four had a Ph.D. All interviewees were given coded names according to the sequence and the type of the interviews, gender, age and the readership category they belong to. For example, a 19-year-old male subject who participated in the first individual interview in the "Never-been-to-China" group was coded as "IN1M19N" (the first individual interview, male, aged 19, "Never-been-to-China").

All participants are given two scores: *Knowledge of Chinese* and *Knowledge of China*. The familiarity survey was used to measure the subjects' level of *Knowledge of China*. Subjects were evaluated with scores between 31 and 40 (full mark). Logically speaking, higher scores correspond to greater familiarity with China's political discourse. The familiarity survey showed that some non-native Chinese speakers in this study could understand Chinese, albeit at different levels. Thus, *Knowledge of Chinese* is postulated as another variable that might affect the readers' preferences for translations. The interviewees' *Knowledge of Chinese* was rated by me, ranging from "none" (0) to "L1 level" (4). The scores were given based on my direct observation during the interviews.

The subjects' demographic information and the scores of *Knowledge of Chinese* and *Knowledge of China* can be seen in Figure 13.

Figure 13. Reception-side interviewees in the main experiment

Readership category	Code	Nationality	First language (L1)	Knowledge of Chinese	Knowledge of China
Never been to China	FG1F19N-a	Australian	English	0	34
	FG1F22N	Australian	English	0	33
	FG1F19N-b	Indian	English	0	31
	FG2F19N	Australian	English	0	33
	FG2M52N	Australian	English	0	31
	IN1M19N	Australian	English	1	33
	IN2F24N	Australian	English	0	34
Less than 3 months	IN1F19L3	Australian	English	0	33
	In2F19L3	Australian	English	0	36
	IN3F25L3	Australian	English	0	33
More than 3 months	IN1F24M3	Australian	English	3	37
	IN2F26M3	Australian	English	2	37
	IN3F25M3	Australian	English	1	37
Chinese Diaspora	FG1F20D	Singaporean	English	3	35
	FG1M22D	Malaysian	Malay	2	37
	IN1F34D	Singaporean	Hakka	3	37
Experts	IN1M41EX	Australian	Chinese	4	40
	IN2F51EX	Australian	Chinese	4	39
Students from mainland China	IN1M25C	Chinese	Chinese	4	37
	IN3M26C	Chinese	Chinese	4	38
	IN3F26C	Chinese	Chinese	4	37
	IN3F27C	Chinese	Chinese	4	38

Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Prior to each interview, each subject was asked to read a Plain Language Statement that explained the purpose of the research, how the information was to be used and the voluntary nature of participation. They then signed an ethics consent form agreeing to participate, in accordance with the principles of human research ethics and integrity at the University of Melbourne. With the participants' permission, all the spoken parts of the experiment sessions were audio-recorded.

Each focus-group interview took approximately one hour; the average length of the individual interviews was over one and a half hours. The participants completed the interviews in their preferred language: all in English, except IN2F51EX and the four subjects in the "students from mainland China" category who preferred being interviewed in Chinese.

The recorded materials were then fully transcribed by an online transcription service called Xunfei Tingjian. The transcript that is quoted and analyzed in the thesis was translated into English by me.

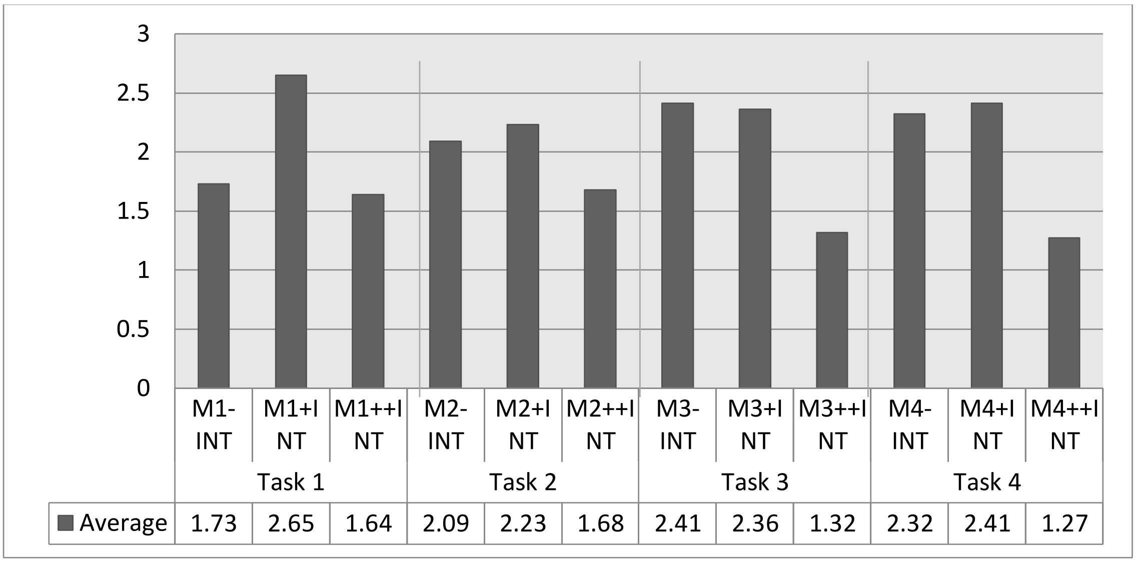
5.1.2 Quantitative results

5.1.2.1 Overview results

For each task, participants were asked to rank the three translations from 1 (most favorable) to 3 (least favorable). Figure 1 shows the participants' ranking scores for each translation in the four tasks.

A comparative view of the average ranking scores of each translation by the readers is shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14. Mean scores of each translation in each task



Notwithstanding the diversity in terms of different translation tasks, some general trends can be detected. In terms of the mean scores obtained for the 22 readers, the translations with medium translator intervention (+INT) were the most preferred, except for M3+INT, which was only slightly less favored than M3-INT. Notably, the translations with the greatest translator intervention (++INT) were the least preferred in all four tasks.

To investigate to what extent the underlying parameters might correlate with translation receptions, seven potentially explanatory variables (in italics) were tested quantitatively. In the following section, the results for each viable will be discussed.

5.1.2.2 Gender

The mean scores and SD for two gender groups (female vs. male) are shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15. Mean scores for *Gender*

	-INT		+INT		++INT	
	Female (n=16)	Male (n=6)	Female (n=16)	Male (n=6)	Female (n=16)	Male (n=6)
Mean	2.11	1.17	2.39	2.42	1.47	1.42
SD	0.46	0.47	0.32	0.26	0.36	0.38
P-value	0.80		0.86		0.77	

For each level of the translator intervention, the average scores by female and male participants were similar. An unpaired t-test confirms that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups for the three levels of translator intervention. This means that gender did not affect the readers' acceptance of translations in this study. Note that *Gender* is not balanced in the sample, since only six male subjects participated. The result might thus not be conclusive in this respect.

5.1.2.3 Age

As shown in Figure 16, a linear correlation test suggested that there was no significant correlation between the *Age* of the participants and their preference for degrees of translator intervention. In this study, *Age* does not seem to play a meaningful role in the reader's judgment of translator intervention. Nevertheless, as the impact of *Age* upon reception was not the main concern of the study, the limited age range of the sample should be noted.

Figure 16.Correlation between *Age* and average scores of different level translator-intervention translations

	-INT	+INT	++INT
Correlation with age (r)	0.1238	0.0038	-0.1299
P-value	0.58	0.99	0.57

5.1.2.4 Education

The subjects were categorized into three groups in terms of their highest education level obtained: Bachelors (n=11), Masters (n=7) and PhDs (n=4). A one-way ANOVA did not indicate any significant differences between the groups (see Figure 17). The results indicated that education level did not affect the readers' translation preferences.

Figure 17. Mean and SD for *Education*

		-INT			+INT			++INT	
Nationality	Bachelors (n=11)	Masters (n=7)	PhDs (n=4)	Bachelors (n=11)	Masters (n=7)	PhDs (n=4)	Bachelors (n=11)	Masters (n=7)	PhDs (n=4)
Mean	2.05	2.39	1.52	2.21	2.32	1.46	2.19	2.56	1.44
SD	0.46	0.31	0.29	0.34	0.22	0.34	0.48	0.27	0.25
P-value		0.72			0.54			0.90	

5.1.2.5 Nationality

The discontinuous variable *Nationality* is arranged into three groups: Australian, Chinese and Others. As can be seen in Figure 18, a one-way ANOVAs showed that for low-intervention translations (-INT), the ranking scores were significantly affected by *Nationality*, F(2, 19) = 3.75, p=0.04. For moderate-intervention translations (+INT), ANOVAs also revealed that the ranking scores were statistically significant, F(2, 19) = 4.473, p =0 .003. There was no significance between the three nationality groups on greatest-intervention translations.

Figure 18. Means, standard deviations by *Nationality* and different-level translator interventions

		-INT*			+INT*			++INT	
Nationality	Australian (n=15)	Chinese (n=4)	Others (n=3)	Australian (n=15)	Chinese (n=4)	Others (n=3)	Australian (n=15)	Chinese (n=4)	Others (n=3)
Mean	1.97	2.50	2.42	2.48	2.38	2.00	1.57	1.13	1.58
SD	0.43	0.18	0.24	0.27	0.22	0.00	0.33	0.13	0.24
P-value		0.04			0.02			0.06	

Note. *p <0 .05.

The ANOVAs suggest that the low-intervention translations were most preferred by Chinese (M=2.50, SD=0.18, p=0.04), followed by Others (M=2.42, SD=0.24, p=0.04). The acceptance of these translations by these two groups was much higher than that by Australians (M=1.97, SD=0.43, p=0.02). The medium-intervention translations were most favorable for Australians (M=2.48, SD=0.27, p=0.02), followed by Chinese (M=2.38, SD=0.22) and the readers from other countries (SD=2.00, SD=0). On the other hand, for greatest-intervention translations, the readers' preferences were fairly stable and remain unaffected by their nationalities (p=0.06).

5.1.2.6 First language (L1)

A two-tailed t-test was carried out to test the differences between the readers with Chinese as their *first language* (L1) and the rest. The results (see Figure 19) indicate that L1-Chinese speakers gave higher scores for low-intervention translations (M=2.50, SD=0.22) than for the other translations (M=1.98, SD=0.43), p= 0.01. Those who were not L1-Chinese speakers (M=1.58, SD=0.34) preferred greatest-intervention translations slightly more than the L1-Chinese speakers did (M=1.25, SD=0.27), p=0.04. No significant correlations were found with respect to the moderate-intervention translations.

Figure 19. Mean and SD for *L1*

	-INT*		+INT		++INT*	
A language	Chinese (n=6)	Non-Chinese (n=16)	Chinese (n=6)	Non-Chinese (n=16)	Chinese (n=6)	Non-Chinese (n=16)
Mean	2.50	1.98	2.38	2.43	1.25	1.58
SD	0.22	0.43	0.21	0.32	0.27	0.34
P-value.	0.01		0.69		0.04	

Note. *p <0 .05.

5.1.2.7 Knowledge of Chinese

In terms of *Knowledge of Chinese*, the readers were accordingly classified into five groups: No Chinese (n = 9), Basic Chinese (n = 2), Intermediate Chinese (n = 2), Advanced Chinese (n = 3) and Chinese as L1 (n=6). One-way ANOVAs (see Figure 20) showed that –INT scores, F(4,83) = 5.392, p=0.0049, were significantly different within the five groups. In the cases of +INT and ++INT, no significant difference was found with respect to the reader's start-language proficiency.

At first glance, the readers with greater knowledge of Chinese were more likely to prefer literalist translations and less likely to accept greatest-intervention translations, as would be suggested by 5.1.2.6 above.

Figure 20. Mean scores for different degrees of Translator intervention, Knowledge of Chinese

Knowledge of Chinese	-INT*		+INT		++INT	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
No	1.89	0.74	2.38	0.27	1.80	0.51
Basic Chinese	1.50	0.50	2.75	0	1.75	0
Intermediate Chinese	2.38	0.70	2.125	0.18	1.38	0.53
Advanced Chinese	2.50	0.50	2.33	0.58	1.33	0.38
Chinese as A language	2.46	0.64	2.33	0.21	1.25	0.27
P-value	0.0049		0.35		0.14	

Note. *p <0 .05.

5.1.2.8 Knowledge of China

The participants' *Knowledge of China* is defined as extra-linguistic knowledge, i.e. their familiarity with China's political context. As shown in Figure 21, there was a positive correlation between the readers' acceptance of literal translations (-INT) and their *Knowledge of China*, r =0.50, p=0.02. No significant correlation of the participants' background knowledge of China with their preferences for +INT and ++INT translations was observed.

Figure 21. Correlation between *Knowledge of China* and mean scores of different level translator-intervention translations

	-INT*	+INT	++INT
Correlation with Knowledge of China (r)	0.50	-0.17	-0.30
P-value	0.02	0.45	0.17

Note. *p <0 .05.

5.1.2.9 Knowledge of Chinese vs. Knowledge of China

A simple linear regression was calculated to predict the readers' *Knowledge of China* based on their *Knowledge of Chinese*. A significant regression equation was found (r=0.84, R^2=0.70, p<0.001). The result suggests that readers' *Knowledge of China* correlates with their *Knowledge of Chinese*.

5.1.3 Discussion of quantitative results

The correlations between the target readers' ranking scores and the seven variables show that the four variables *Nationality*, *L1*, *Knowledge of Chinese* and *Knowledge of China* correlate significantly with the readers' receptions of translator intervention. The other three variables *Gender*, *Age* and *Education* do not appear to be predictive, in part because these were not preliminarily designed to be tested in the study. Hence the limitations in sample size and sample balance for these variables should be noted.

According to the quantitative findings, the readers' receptions are both bound by the subject matter of the translation (the four different tasks have different themes), the reader's start-culture language proficiency and their familiarity with the start culture. However, it remains unclear to what extent and for what reasons there is such considerable variation in readers' acceptance of different levels of translator intervention.

Nevertheless, one can attempt to give tentative explanations of the differences by integrating a qualitative, bottom-up approach in order to analyze how individual readers make sense of their ultimate choices. This will be pursued in the following sections.

5.2 Qualitative analysis of translation receptions

A bottom-up qualitative analysis of the interviews will be presented in this section, in an attempt to investigate how various readers evaluated the translations. The focus will be on the underlying reasons for the varied and sometimes conflicting arguments the readers made.

Factors that affect the readers' receptions are observed to differ and might be incompatible with respect to various kinds of communicative situations. In view of the constant interplay between factors, this section will first discuss the acceptance levels of specific translation solutions that can be categorized in terms of the different degrees of translator intervention. Further analysis of the complexity of the reader profiles will provide alternative explanations, emphasizing the heterogeneity, hybridity and diversity of the readership.

5.2.1 Translator intervention solutions

Is translator intervention necessarily useful, or even obligatory, all the time? That is, is there a guarantee that the target readers always appreciate the extra efforts translators make? In this section, my primary focus is on investigating under what conditions, for what reasons, with what considerations readers accept or refuse a certain degree of translator intervention. Logically speaking, the greater the intervention the translator makes, the less literal the translation appears to be, and the more translator effort (and translation risk) may be involved. Translation solutions are therefore classified into a simple binary typology: 1) low-intervention, basically literalism, as close to the start text as possible, and 2) high-intervention, including everything from rephrasing to a radical adaptation or rewriting. Both levels will be analyzed in greater detail in the following sections with regard to the readers' arguments about the possible success or failure of the intervention.

5.2.1.1 Low-intervention solutions and their effects

Given that structural and linguistic differences between Chinese and English do not always occur, it is not surprising that low-effort literalism might fail to communicate. Nevertheless, literal translations have certainly existed and can be accepted in some situations. Here I am not attempting to draw a hard line between the virtuous and vicious use of literalism: my primary focus is how the target readers manifest their attitudes towards low-intervention translations, and how their concerns about underlying communicative risks could be identified.

5.2.1.1.1 Deficient language quality

The most overt deficiency of excessive literalism is poor language quality. Commenting on the word choice and textual syntax of M3-INT, IN1M19N argued: "no one says that." For IN1M19N, the literal translation is "stilted" and "weird"; its quality made the interviewee suspect that the translation might have been done by Google Translate:

IN1M19N	Like 'as the atmosphere, this stadium was getting exciting. The friendly atmosphere is getting warmer and sweeter' tends to be a little weird. I mean the word choice there.

Copying structure is a typical feature of low-intervention translations. And when an unusual syntactic pattern is brought into the target language, readability comes under threat. Both IN3F25L3 and IN2F24N argue that M1-INT has "lots of commas" whereas bullet points would be better:

IN3F25L3	[M4-INT] is my least favorite. The sentence is just too long, and I have to read it and then read over it again to separate the different things by the comma and think about it. So [M4-INT] will be my last one, because the sentence is just too long and it doesn't flow very well.
IN2F24N	You should list in bullet points instead of lots of commas.

Literalism may also cause a negative *de dicto* effect upon target-language proficiency due to linguistic asymmetries: something typical in Chinese might sound strange in English when every single word in the start text is rendered literally. FG2F19N views M3-INT as a "clumsy and a little bit funny" translation:

FG2F19N	I thought [M3-INT] was kind of a clumsy translation, kind of a little bit funny. Like 'as the atmosphere of the weather was getting exciting, the friendly atmosphere between China and Australia became warmer and sweeter.' I can see the link and I try to stretch it as a metaphor, but it's done with a way like 'Hmmm?' ((laughter)). I know what you're trying to say but [it's not correct].

A more serious problem of literalism is the risk that inadequate quality might have a marked impact on the translator's credibility. The readers lost trust when they thought that the translations were done by unqualified translators with poor language competence. FG2M52N speaks of the correlation between literalism and trustworthiness:

FG2M52N	[When reading M1-INT] you probably just more prone to think, 'well, are they just translating words?', which might make you think that it's less trustworthy.

IN1M41EX argued that the quality of current Chinese official translations is far from satisfactory. For this expert, regrettably, hardly any of China's official translations were well received, mainly because of their apparent lack of expertise and target-language proficiency:

IN1M41EX	So once I read the Chinese Constitution, I looked at the English [and found] they don't seem to coincide the way I would translate or what I understood in terms of the Chinese one.
I	Do you think it is because of the language competency of the translator?
IN1M41EX	It could be the competency of the translator. I used to make this comment that the translation of China's 1954 Constitution was perfect. Okay? You look at the two together and you see the meaning being transferred literally to the English. But the 1975 Constitution's translation was horrible. The 1977's translation was really, really bad. And even the 1984 one is just far from what I like. Okay, it has to do with the competency. I think in the earlier days, China sent a lot of people overseas to learn the language. Okay, but when Mao took power, there's a lack of language competency. Okay. Then slowly you see how the language has deteriorated over time.

All in all, as a kind of linguistic transcoding, literalism has negatively affected the language quality of the translation.

5.2.1.1.2 Incomprehensibility

A traditional insistence on formal equivalence may enable us to explain why literal translation is as it is, and why it exists: the literal translation is assumed to function in the same way as it does in the start text. The bilingual reader IN2F34D does indeed admit that "in the Chinese, it sounds perfectly reasonable":

IN2F34D It's really weird. That's why I thought it [M3-INT] is very strange. But in the Chinese, it sounds perfectly reasonable.

In Task 1, M1-INT rendered the Chinese five-aspect strategy literally as "a five-sphere integrated plan," which is an official translation provided by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, without context, this literal translation seems to mean very little to non-Chinese readers, no matter how long they have stayed in China. Here the dire risk of literalism is to "not make sense":

FG2F19N I can't understand. It's like a buzzword. I have no idea of what the 'five-sphered integrated plan.' And 'four-pronged?' It's just not a phrase I've heard.

IN2F24N I have no idea what that means. ((Um)), It's like a plan that has five different points. And then another one has four different points, but I don't really know.

IN1F19L3 [M4-INT] feels out of place. And it doesn't make sense.

IN2F26M3 [M1-INT] is a direct translation basically from Chinese and it just is very Chinese when you read it. It's so Chinese. To a Chinese person, the phrase like 'five-sphere integrated plan' means something; to a Westerner or non-Chinese person, it means nothing at all.

IN2F26D [M1-INT] looks like the most literal translation. It translates word-for-word what the Chinese said, but unless you already know what the 'five-sphere-integrated-plan' and what all these things refer to, it's actually very difficult to know the true meaning of the statement. So I think, if I were someone who was familiar already, if I knew what the Chinese government has already done, then [M1-INT] would be the fastest way of knowing it. If I don't really know, then either [M1+INT] or [M1++INT] would be a better description.

Similarly, without contextual information, when responding to the literal rendering "four-pronged comprehensive strategy" in M4-INT, IN2F24N thought the ambiguous slogan sounded "superficial":

IN2F24N: [M1-INT] is like sort of skimming the surface. It's a bit less complicated.
I: What do you mean by 'less complicated?'
IN2F24N I guess just because it's shorter and not as in detail.

What happens when a literal translation is not understandable? One obvious answer is that the translation starts losing its readers:

IN2F24N	See, I don't know [what] any of that is [M1-INT]. So when I start seeing one of that, then I start glazing over, stopping paying attention almost, just because it starts to lose me because I don't know what they are. (hesitation)) So yeah, it's kind of like slang or it's more like jargon that I don't know so I can't relate to.

This limitation is problematic because it may have consequences ranging from negative feedback from critics or losing trust in the translator, through to rejection of the translation by the readers.

5.2.1.1.3 Misunderstanding

Another negative consequence of literalism can be a good deal of misunderstanding and hence, disagreement. For IN2F24N, the literal translation of China's four-component strategy as "four-pronged strategy" made her wonder about the possibility of four overlapping strategies:

IN2F24N	I don't know what the 'four-pronged' means.
I	Is it a common phrase?
IN2F24N	No. I mean, you could say I have a two-pronged strategy, but usually a 'prong' is in terms of things like a fork. It's kind of a bit odd. ((Um)), also 'the five-sphere integrated plan' is like…((hesitation)) 'a sphere' is… ((hesitation)) I thought that was strange, because I was trying to imagine like a bowl, you know, like a sphere, so it has integrated. Is it supposed to be like all overlapping?
I	I think the Chinese text is trying to say five components.
IN2F24N	Yeah, I get that. Like you're saying that there're five different points to it. But what that sentence creates is kind of odd.

Another issue is whether the Chinese premier is allowed to "love" Australian football teams. In the start text, when talking about his support of the teams, the premier uses the word 喜欢 (*xi huan*), which can be literally translated as "love" in English and this was exactly the translation published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign-affairs of China. M1-INT adopts this literal translation; nevertheless, it seems that the word choice merely causes unwanted confusion. IN2F26M3 suggests that the word "love" is too strong to be appropriate:

IN2F26M3	I quite liked the first one, except that it says, 'I still wear two scarves to show my love and support.' No, I wouldn't agree with the translation as 'love.' I would never put that in there.
I	Is it too strong?
IN2F26M3	Much too strong. I would say just 'my support' or 'my appreciation.' Not 'love.'

IN2F18L3 points out that the word "love" makes the Chinese premier look "insincere" and "fake": how could it be possible that a foreign politician "loves" two never-before-seen Australian football teams?

IN2F18L3	It comes off as a bit insincere. If he [the premier] used to live in Australia or if he had a big connection to Australia, then it would be seen as more genuine. But because he is a politician from China and he's visiting. And then he's saying all his 'love and support' seems a bit fake.

Here we need to consider the unexpected but perhaps not entirely illusory effects that literal translation may cause. The target readers who felt the Chinese premier was less than genuine did not realize that this impression was made by a word-for-word translation, nor, presumably, did the translator recognize that this low-effort intervention would run the risk of being misunderstood. Languages can shape the way people perceive each other, even when the linguistic differences are not noticed or wanted. In this sense, misunderstanding might be more dangerous than non-understanding. Communication might move forward if non-understanding occurs, but misunderstanding can send the message in unexpected directions: translators know little about where their readers will be going.

5.2.1.1.4 Literalism has its virtues

However, it would be naïve and unjustified to overlook the practical logic of literalism. Not only do many translators presume a kind of traditional ethics of sameness, but the target reader also seems to expect to read a translation as "close" as possible to the start text:

FG1F20D	I like [M3-INT]. It's also like a sentence-by-sentence translation. This [M3-INT] is close.

Here the "direct translation" is used by the reader as a compliment, as a model that corresponds to the reader's expectations for accuracy:

IN1F24M3	So the reason I've chosen [M1-INT] as the first one is because it's a direct translation. I also think that it's the most accurate and specific.

Another positive effect of literalism is the completeness of information. Literalism highlights the notion of invariance, albeit in a mechanical sense; many other strategies, on the other hand, imply change or underlying uncertainty. For any reader who wants to know more about the start context, literalism can be presumed to be the safest and the most reliable reference available:

IN2F26M3	I think [M4-INT] helps. It gives you the official things, like 'the Party Central Committee.' Okay, it's the state council, which means that if I didn't know, I could go online and figure out what that is. I can do this because I've actually got the names of it. In [M4+INT], it doesn't really tell me who or what is involved. It just says, okay, it's cooperation between two countries, but it doesn't tell you who's organizing this. [M4-INT] is very clear saying that it's Central Committee and the State Council. It's much more informative. I have more information and of course, it's more accurate.

Literalism might also be understood as a compromise that is born and becomes necessary due to linguistic and cultural untranslatability, as in the case of humor:

IN1M41EX	No. I think humor cannot be translated in this sense. For me, I don't see how that translation is humorous in the English context. So I would rather translate what he [the Premier] is trying to say literally and makes it clearer to the the readers.

On the practical level, this solution recalls Nord's (1997/2018, p. 46) taxonomy of "documentary" and "instrumental" translations: if the translation cannot re-enact the communicative function (as an "instrument"), it at least can serve as a faithful representation of the original (and thus as a "document").

What is more interesting, perhaps, is that sometimes literalism creates unintentional or accidentally desirable effects. In M3-INT, 热烈欢迎 (*re lie huan ying*) was literally rendered as "warmly welcome," indicating that the Chinese premier's visit was well received by the Australian audience. During the interviews on the production side, many Chinese translators argued that the literal translation of the empty Chinese cliché is semantically redundant, if not awkward. Surprisingly, the Australian readers suggest that the translation highlights "geniality behind both sides":

FG1F19N-a	I quite like the fact that they said that they warmly welcome the Chinese premier. That's hospitable. You know, we were treating him well.
FG2F19L3	Yeah. That was a really big difference between the impressions you get from [M3++INT] and [M3-INT], even [M3++INT] is a bit better. Like 'warm welcome,' I can sense geniality behind both sides.

Another example in M3-INT is the literal translation saying that "the atmosphere between China and Australia is getting warmer and sweeter" as the football match went on. Again, the word-for-word rendering was disdained by most Chinese translators, since it was deemed to be "too stiff." Surprisingly, some English-speaking readers regarded the literal translation as "purposeful" and "careful placed," even "lovely":

FG1F19N-a	I think that's a very carefully placed sentence. I don't think it's a translation. Well, obviously, it's a translation, but it's a purposeful translation.
IN1F19L3	[In M3++INT it says] 'The friendly atmosphere was getting warmer and sweeter.' So it sounds almost like a couple watching the football together. It's like very ((ah)), you know, very lovely.

Similarly, when the Chinese premier's message was literally translated as "no matter who wins today's match, I will cheer and applaud for them," INF24N feels that the premier sounds "cute":

INF24N	I prefer [M3-INT]. I don't know if like this is a direct quote. Like he actually said this, but the way that he said it was, I like it. It's cute. I don't know. I like this.
I:	It's cute because it said, 'no matter who wins today's match?'
INF24N	Yeah. I like 'I will cheer and applaud for them' [in M3-INT] because this is not a serious topic. It's like a feel-good article. And if he [the Chinese premier] actually said, 'I'm wearing both scarves to show my love and support for the two teams and even all the teams in Australia,' and then you see that photo and he's smiling. It's cool. I like that.

Yes, literalism might (occasionally) create effective communication. But does it achieve the effect purposefully? On what grounds can we claim that such communicative success is attained under the translator's control and not by accident? The incomprehension risk caused by literalism seems to be easier to be hurtling out of control and overrides its accidental virtues.

After all, a literal translation is usually a very low-effort result, making its linguistic quality vary significantly. For IN2F19L3, the first part of the literal M3-INT sounds "affectionate," but the second part is nevertheless "apathetic":

IN2F19L3	I think 'I still wear both scarves to show my love and support' sounds like a father watching his children playing. It's very affectionate, like he wants to hug them. So that's why [M3-INT] is a bit poetic. And with 'no matter who wins in today's team,' I think that can be apathetic.

To conclude, we should note that what the target readers probably desire in these cases is not literalism as a translation solution but values such as authenticity, generosity and informativeness, or even linguistic fidelity, if they know the start language and prioritize a "documentary" function, in the sense described by Nord (1997/2018).

5.2.1.2 High-intervention solutions and their effects

One of my initial assumptions was that the less the reader is familiar with the start culture, the greater their acceptance of high-level translator intervention. The logic is simple: a high-intervention translation usually seeks to eliminate or play down cultural and linguistic differences by any means possible, i.e. minimizing the marks of foreignness. In some cases, the effort is indeed appreciated by readers:

IN2F24N	[M4++INT] is just kind of getting rid of the whole confusion thing and it just says these things are happening and have got a lot of support. I like that.

A high-intervention translation also tends to be written clearly, shedding light on an obscure, if not unreadable, start text. In terms of better readability, high intervention can be welcomed and regarded as "the most useful":

IN1F25M3 In terms of [M2-INT] and [M2++INT], I rank [M2++INT] first, simply because I think it's best to explain what these types of metaphors actually mean as opposed to just providing the translation. So there's probably a lot of people who wouldn't necessarily understand what that means. So I think that [M2+INT] is the most useful translation.

On the other hand, high intervention raises the question of "unfaithfulness." Nevertheless, the ways the readers define "faithfulness" are different. For IN2F18L3, a translator should "translate what's actually there, instead of speaking on behalf of the author." Interestingly, this is exactly the reason why she favored a radical high-intervention translation M1++INT rather than a literal translation M1-INT:

IN2F18L3 I think if you're translating, then you want to translate what's actually there, instead of speaking on behalf of the author. And so for me, [M1-INT] is a bit limited. I don't really like [M1-INT] or [M1+INT] but I do like [M1++INT]. I think it's a good amount of information.

One possible reason is that the interviewee did not speak the start language, so for her, faithfulness means readability in the sense of comprehensibility. This might be seen as a successful case of high intervention that achieves communicative effects.

High intervention may also mean higher target-language quality by obeying target conventions. This seems to be well received:

IN3F25M3 [M3+INT] is also okay ((hesitation)). It's a bit jarring in the way that is constructed. It doesn't sound as good as [M3++INT].

IN3F25M3 I think [M3++INT] did the best job. It expresses the meaning accurately and also in a way that sounds good in English. I think it's interesting that they put the quote at the start, but I think it works really well in English. Whoever translated this had creative license to do that.

Nevertheless, high intervention can involve ethical concerns. The possibility of losing information is where some worries set in:

IN2F18L3 I think when it's word-for-word, there can be setbacks. But at the same time, if you're expanding too much, you're just kind of writing your own definition rather than taking what's actually there.

IN2F18L3 I like [M2++INT] the least out of all three because it's kind of trying to summarize everything too much.

Some readers argue that high-intervention translations change the originally intended meaning or the start-text function, which is considered absolutely unacceptable:

INM41EX [M2++INT] doesn't capture the essence of the language in a sense. Because when Chinese leaders use certain terms or certain phrases from the classics, analects or from whatever, they want to convey something more than words. Otherwise, why didn't they use layman languages? They want to choose a phrase from the classics.

INM41EX It’s not whether I like it or not. Right? I think they have a purpose when all these slogans have been put up. They are conveyed within the Chinese-language context. Okay. People are general masses and the public who are able to consume this kind of slogan with very clear ideas of what they are, because they are good references. But these references are different for those people who are from a different language. So for political slogans, I think in Chinese they make sense, for English speakers and English readers, it doesn’t. So when you translate those contexts, you need to convey the ideas into a different language. I don’t think it’s a matter of whether I like it or not, but that is the political situation in China.

For INM41EX, a general assumption is that a translation should be rendered in a way that functions precisely the same as the start text did to the start-culture readers. If the Chinese leader purposefully uses an idiom, then the target reader has the right to be aware of that.

Another risk is an ethical issue. For some readers, the creativity of the translators should be restricted:

FG1F19N-a I think [M1++INT] is the least desirable translation. ((Um)), I don’t like the final sentence. I think that it oversteps the translation and interprets too much. I think [M1+INT] is useful if you want to give people more detail. But I think for the most accurate translation, it would be [M1-INT].

Why does the reader expect the translator to do no more than translate? The criticism may boil down to presumed impartiality. As we have seen, one might more readily suspect that manipulation exists in high-intervention translations:

IN2F26M3 I don’t agree with [M4++INT] because it says, ‘the Chinese government believes in the benefits of free trade, and it is committed to robust trade relationships with other nations that value fairness and reciprocity.’ I don’t know how I feel about that statement. It’s not really what he said in the Chinese, and I wouldn’t even say that that’s accurate. So because [M4++INT] to me is inaccurate, it’s the last one.

FG1F19N-a [M1++INT] does seem more biased. [M1-INT] is more objective, I guess, because it’s not saying that the government has really done these things. It just says they’re doing it, while [M1++INT] says they ‘made great strides’ and there’s been lots of success. And you think, well, what is the evidence for that?

If the readers feel they are manipulated by a translator who obviously has a different political position from theirs, the risk of losing their trust will be much greater:

IN3F25M3 Yeah, [M4++INT] is definitely written from the Chinese government perspective.

FG2F19N	I think I’m supporting [M4-INT] because it had fewer buzzwords and the other two, like [M4+INT] spoke about ‘economic advantages’ and ‘comprehensively enhance.’ It sounds like you’re trying to impress me, but I actually don’t know what you’re saying.

What we are touching on here, not instead of but in addition to different degrees of translator intervention, is what counts as an acceptable translation. Acceptance was not solely determined by a single translation solution, where both low-intervention and high-intervention translations have their virtues and weaknesses. Indeed, we find that there is little evidence that a certain level of intervention can bring about absolute acceptance of a given translation.

For the question “what is at stake in those constantly shifting attitudes to translator interventions?”, the answer may exist beyond the realm of specific translation solutions but in the complexity of reader expectations.

5.2.2 Reader expectations

When readers’ various expectations come into play, on the theoretical level, I am interested in the expectation hierarchy: to what extent are different kinds of expectations (in)compatible or have different ranges of application in different situations? Say, for what reasons may readability be given more weight than a traditional ethics of sameness, or under what circumstances do readers refuse a translation, even when it is deemed to be “faithful” and is loosely glossed as “accurate?”

With these questions in mind, I aim to examine how conflicts between various expectations can be resolved. In the following section, by taking a bottom-up approach to identifying the underlying causes, I will illustrate four pairs of mutually contradictory principles of reader expectations. They are formulated as follows: (1) concision vs. informativeness; (2) faithfulness vs. fluency; (3) neutrality vs. authenticity, and (4) distance vs. proximity.

5.2.2.1 Concision vs. informativeness

On the one hand, many readers state clearly that a concise translation is desired, as it is easy to digest. On the other, informative translations are well received in almost all situations, in the sense that explicitation can fill in contextual gaps.

5.2.2.1.1 “I like it because it was more succinct and dense.”

Many readers seemed to prefer a “succinct,” “concise” and “dense” translation:

IN1F19L3	I like [M3++INT] because it was more succinct and denser.
FG2F22D	Even if I didn’t know about this one [the original text], and I just saw [M3+INT] in the news, I would be able to quickly get the context and everything as opposed to [M3-INT].
FG2F19N	I probably lean side towards [M2+INT] just because it’s a bit more concise.

The value of concision is also evident in IN2F34D's ironic comments on China's translated foreign-affairs discourse as being "clumsy":

IN2F18L3 Okay. Essentially, my way of telling whether something has been translated or not is whether it sounds very clumsy ((laughter)). [If so,] clearly it was something that was originally in Chinese that they had to turn into English so that people will understand what's going on.

This criterion justifies the sacrifice of formal equivalence. Even those who notice that some information has been altered still tend to prefer a more readable version:

IN1F24M3 I think [M4+INT] is the most succinct. I think that it accurately translates, but also summarizes a lot of what's in there. There are certainly bits missing. ((Um)), but I don't necessarily think that they're all that important. So for instance, the bits about the Central Party Committee and State Council, etc. I don't think that part necessarily needs to be included.

Some may see summarizing as a weakness, a mark of risky intervention, but this risk is apparently offset by its advantages. It seems that readers can 'compromise,' by accepting the translations that are useful enough, but not absolutely perfect.

5.2.2.1.2 "It's very well explained and clear."

If there is very little the translator can do about the reader's initial familiarity with the start or target culture, providing contextual information and explicating the start text seems to be a cost-effective way to address comprehension problems.

Research has indicated that translators generally tend to explicitate, albeit sometimes unnecessarily (see Blum-Kulka, 1986; Pápai, 2004; Chesterman, 2013). Translators are more likely to make implicit relations explicit by giving extra information. The good news is that the target readers seem to express a similar desire for explicitation, making the translator's effort worthwhile. Many readers argue that they prefer more informative, elaborate and precise translations:

FG1F20D If it's just to understand that text, I'll probably go with [M1+INT] as my first one, just because it actually lists all that [information]. And it talks about the time frame, whereas [M1++INT] does not. It's very general.

FG1F19N-a Personally, I found [M1+INT] was the most elaborate.

This sounds neatly logical, even commonsensical. More explicit information may break through contextual constraints and thus enhance readability and fluency in a general sense:

FG1F19N-a I like [M1+INT] because it is very clear. And then it gives extra information that as a non-Chinese person I don't have. For example, it has dates, which is important, and it also explains what the 'five' means in the original. It's very well-explained. And it's really clear.

Lack of context is indeed one of the most common complaints made by the readers:

IN1F19L3 I really had a very little context for [M1-INT].

IN3F25M3 The [‘five-sphere integrated plan’] is strange. If it explained what that was afterwards, it would be better. It just seems a very direct translation with no context.

The effect of a literal translation upon the target-language receivers who know nothing about the context will probably be distancing or alienating. The demand for explicitation is partly explained by the reader’s psychologically precarious state. Without explicit information, readers typically felt the translation was “annoying”:

IN1M19N So it’s something to do with ‘five,’ ok, yeah. ((Um)), but then [M1-INT] doesn’t give me anything else. And that’s annoying.

IN3F25L3 [M1-INT] does not really give me a lot of information. And there’s a lot of jargon that I’m not too familiar with. For example, the ‘five-sphere integrated plan.’ I don’t know what that is, what it comprises of, or what the aim of it. So I feel like there’s not a lot of information given here. So [M1-INT] is my least preference. [M1+INT] and [M1++INT] are both very clear. I understand what it’s saying, but I prefer B [M1+INT] because it’s just more information.

For IN2F26M3, the ethics of sameness can give way to informativeness. Extra information provided in M1+INT is deemed added value, making the text “an enhanced translation”:

IN2F26M3 [M1+INT] adds information. So it’s not a direct translation. It’s an enhanced translation, but I think it’s the best one for a reader.

This kind of functional desire for explicitation is shared by expert readers too, not only by the general public. For INM41EX, an explicit translation provides some “reminders,” making the text become useful references. In this sense, explicitation is helpful and often necessary:

INM41EX: Even from my own expertise, I would like to have some reminders. I’ll prefer some reminders. There are so many political slogans in China that people lost track of what’s going on… Even for researchers, it is important to have all this kind of reminders when we write our thesis or an article. Even if for experts like us, we want to be very careful about noting everything.

An emphasis on explicitation might seem to contradict the expectations of concision. Yet the reader’s response to “Do you like to read a longer text or a shorter one?” suggests that there is always a trade-off of effort. The readers might be fearful of losing potentially important information, and therefore ask for more explicitation; but if the not-very-important text is too long, they might lose their attention. Reader’s attentional resources are limited, after all – explicitation seems more welcome in high-risk text.

For FG2M52N, the shorter M1++INT was “probably a little more digestible” because it was “a bit focused”:

FG2M52N I don't really like any of them. In the end, I think I just put the [M4++INT] first because it was shorter. That in my brain was like, 'yeah, that's less sort of to go through.'

FG1F19N-a I think if it's like a sentence, it's almost like, all right, I feel like I'm missing out on something. But yeah, if it says like this size [M4-INT] in comparison to that size [M4++INT] people gonna probably go straight to the shorter one [M4++INT].

The China-Australia expert IN1M41EX argued that the "five-sphere integrated plan" was an "interesting translation," while without "any context," the general English public would fail to understand the word-for-word translation:

INM41EX: [M1-INT] … ((hesitation)) basically I wouldn't do it. [M1-INT] is a literal translation without any content at all except for the terms. So [M1-INT] is definitely out. The websites are not just for people like me. They are made for people who are general English speakers and they [the translators] need to understand that laymen have no idea of what these political terms are.

INM41EX further suggests that the literal translation should be put in brackets followed by an explanation. For the expert, giving context is not only unavoidable but also highly desirable.

The lack of contextual information is not only blamed for comprehension challenges but also threatens the credibility of the translation. For IN1F19L3, the lack of context means a lack of proof:

IN1F19L3 I wouldn't say [M1-INT] is odd. It's a little bit abstract. This reads like someone has given you the information, but none of the context. So it doesn't support what the text says.

It appears that offering information and giving specifications that are implicit in the start text might resolve most comprehension problems. However, as interviewees IN1M31EX and IN2F26M3 suggest, the translator cannot merely provide explanations of "what was in the text": the implication of the word-choices for readers who belong to another cultural system should also be taken into account. That is, whether the English translation can carry exactly the same contextual meaning as the Chinese remains in doubt. Explicitation can be risky: the more you explain, the more underlying contextual knowledge might be required and the more unknown effects there may be upon readers:

IN1M41EX When Mao [Zedong] said '一边倒' [lean to one side], it makes sense in the Chinese political context, because of the publicity, no, the propaganda, because of all the repeated learning process and everything, they are properly referenced within the [Chinese] language and social context.

IN2F26M3	I prefer [M1+INT]. But I mean there are still some areas of knowledge that you have to have. For example, what is a socialist society? It means something different for a Chinese person than a Western person. If I think of socialism, I don't think of what exists in China, even though that's what Chinese people call socialism. There would be a place for this, not that it's translated wrong. It's just we understand the meaning differently.

There is nevertheless a certain discrepancy in comprehension between different readers, largely due to the fact that readers have various degrees of familiarity with the subject matter and the start culture. One possible approach is certainly to provide contextual knowledge to save the reader's cognitive processing effort. Nevertheless, explicitation is not the antidote to every translation problem. Mistrust and more misunderstanding may arise from these kinds of interventions. In this sense, neither concision nor informativeness is the once-and-for-all solution. So if the existing information is not convincing enough, explicitation is required; if the context is easy to understand, a concise version is desirable to save the readers' processing effort.

Interestingly enough, in the production-side experiment, FG2F35, a Chinese translator, had previously proposed a similar argument: "the more you say, the less they [readers] understand" (see 4.4.2.3.3). What is at stake in translating is thus the need to identify the possible factors that cause mistrust among diverse readerships.

5.2.2.2 Faithfulness vs. fluency

One point was made clear by many readers: they wanted to read a "faithful" translation, a text that is considered as an exact representation of the original. This might be what Chesterman (1998) calls the "*de re* effect" of a translation, referring to the effect of the message itself. On the other hand, the readers also gave their attention to the *de dicto* effects of the text – that is, the readability level of the message. In some cases, these two effects might not readily be able to co-exist, if "faithful" is loosely understood as "literal" What interests me here is how the readers prioritize one over the other.

5.2.2.2.1 Unfaithful is unethical

The readers' calls for "faithfulness" can be understood in various ways. First would be the completeness of information. The insistence on linguistic sameness is obviously stronger for readers with start-language proficiency than for those without. FG1M22D admits that M1-INT, which provides explanations for political jargon, is easier to follow. However, she still argues that adding "extra stuff" is unforgivable:

FG1M22D	For [M1+INT], there's nothing with 'achieving any goals by 2021 or 'moderately prosperous society,' which I don't see anywhere in this text [the Chinese original]. This last sentence [of M1+INT] basically makes it the least preferred one because it contains extra stuff that's not mentioned in the original Chinese text.
FG1M22D	[M1+INT] has included a bit of extra stuff that's not included in the original text.

A faithful rendering can also be deemed "accurate." This emphasis on "accurate" translations in the sense that they are literal nevertheless seems to be rather at odds with the way a literal translation can actually go against readability: although a high-intervention translation was admitted to be "the easiest to read," IN1F34D still believed that the literal rendering should be the most "accurate." Nevertheless, this preference for faithfulness somehow overlooks the illusory nature of formal equivalence, which seems to confuse the reader himself:

IN1F34D This one [M4++INT] is the easiest to read. So I don't quite know how to rank it because for me, I feel that accuracy is important. So that's why I like this [M4-INT], which is the most accurate. And if I didn't have the original text, I'll be like, 'oh this [M4++INT] the easiest to read.'

However, the insistence on "sameness" can be problematic: sometimes it is accused of overlooking the asymmetric power relations between languages, since the equal status of languages does not exist and probably never did (Pym, 2016). As Nord (2001, p. 185) indicates, "faithful" translations "often risk betraying the communicative intentions" of the start text. In order to bridge linguistic asymmetries, translators might thus be entitled to adapt texts, provide explanations and add content if necessary. If a "faithful" translation is the opposite of an "understandable" one, it becomes difficult to legitimate the value of being "faithful."

Admittedly, this might be a methodological problem that arose only because the readers had to read the three alternative translations before they ranked them. This means that they might have been able to find differences between the three versions and make a choice on that basis:

FG1F19N-a I choose [M2+INT] as my preference because it is an English saying. So for me, I understand better with that. Then I choose [M2-INT] as my second preference because they totally eliminated the saying in [M3-INT].

Since FG1F19N-a did not speak Chinese, the only way she could find out that M3-INT had eliminated the Chinese saying is because she was presented with three alternatives together. In such a quasi-experiment environment, many readers tended to compare three versions to find a presumed "close" translation, making the principle of faithfulness to the original hold sway for a while. In the absence of other translations, the degree to which the target readers would have made the same decision remains unknown.

So why is faithfulness given so much attention even when it can involve sacrificing readability? One answer is that the notion of faithfulness is tacitly considered valid by virtue of its presumed elimination of high-risk distortions: a faithful translation may come close to the start message, it may seem to be more "truthlike," but at bottom it is a play-safe option: a faithful translation is less risky than a radical rewriting, which can be done but it seems hardly worthwhile. For IN2F26M3, adapting the premier's words is much more dangerous than giving a faithful, literal translation:

IN2F26M3	The idiom [in M2+INT] is not quite right. But it's also kind of maybe [the premier] did mean that as well. But then I also think it's dangerous if you start assuming that someone meant something, especially with politics. You want to be very clear that they said this or they did not say this. It's very, very important. Again, it's maybe different if you're translating a fictional book, and it doesn't matter. But for politics, I think it matters a lot, just as it would for science. For example, if you were translating something for science, and you want to make sure that it's very accurate, otherwise the information is wrong; it's not true; it's not factual.

Close attention to faithfulness can be traced back a traditional ethics of translation: the freedom of translators should be carefully constrained:

FG1F19N-a:	((Uh)), the last one, I don't know what he [the premier] said exactly. Like 'wearing two scarves in summer is a bit much,' I am not sure whether that is actually during summer or not, ((Um)), and whether he said that because [M3++INT] is different from what these two have said.
IN2F18L3	I feel like [M4++INT] is saying things that aren't in there. Again, I think what's happened with [M4++INT] is a kind of taken the liberty to interpret more from the text.

These target readers deem the high-intervention translations M3++INT and M4++INT possibly unfaithful because there seems to be a difference between the start text and the target text. Note that neither FG1F19N-a nor IN2F18L3 speak Chinese but they still could sense that the translation is "unfaithful." One possible reason for their doubts is that high-intervention translations conform to target norms, not only linguistically but also culturally, which in turn leads to the skepticism that they have been manipulated. As IN1F34D put it, "None of this [M3++INT] is true":

IN1F34D	I don't think [M4++INT] is a good translation. Saying that 'the Chinese government believes in the benefits of free trade.' That's not something that appeared in the original.
IN1F34D	[M3++INT] was just rubbish. None of this is true.

This consideration goes back to the idea of an "ethics of representation." For a good translator, the ethical imperative is to represent the start text "accurately, without adding, omitting or changing anything" (Chesterman, 2001, p. 139). Otherwise, it is perceived as a distorted, biased and unethical rendering (Chesterman, 2001). This explains why, although IN1F24M3 regards M1++INT as "certainly the most positive" translation, she dislikes it the most, as it inaccurately represents the original:

IN1F24M3 [M1++INT] is certainly the most positive. It's a bit more positive than the other two and tries to paint this strategy in a really positive way.

I But you don't like it.

IN1F24M3 I just don't think it's very accurate. Yeah, I think that it draws too much from the translation. I think the specific words in terms of, you know, 'has made great strides,' 'wellbeing of Chinese families' and 'taken major steps.' ((Um)), I just started to think whether that's an accurate reflection of what is in that translation.

IN1M41EX's reservation is with translators' ethical imperative as incumbents of their particular role. In his view, there is no doubt that the translator does not have any right to change the start text for whatever purpose:

IN1M41EX But that is what the original texts say. You know, as a translator, you don't make the judgment, right? Am I right to say that?

IN1M41EX You don't change the content for the audience. I don't think as a translator, there should be that kind of attempts. This is exactly what the [original] says.

INM41EX: I think in this case that's why I prefer [M2+INT]; it is clearer. And then [M2++INT] doesn't really translate that phrase at all. As a translator, I think they missed out a very important part of the translation.

Nevertheless, what IN1M41EX really insists on is not the relative status of originals and translations. What matters here are the readers' own interests and particular purposes for reading Chinese translated foreign-affairs texts and the potential risks that may be incurred for them if the start text is radically altered by the translator. Translators may tend to adapt culture-bound items or ideological differences, for fear that receivers will not be able to understand. Yet for IN1M41EX, what the expert expects to find are exactly the traces of alterity:

IN1M41EX When we translate the speeches of leaders, you cannot just… For example, the first starting paragraph of all leaders' speeches, they'll always refer back to Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, etc. Can you just condense these? You can't do this.

Apart from the functional perspective, start-language proficiency obviously plays a part in judging whether a translation is "accurate." Since IN1F24M3 could read the Chinese original, she compared the start and target text and asked why such an intervention should be a necessary choice:

IN1F24M3 I think [M3++INT] is the least accurate, especially because of the final sentence. It's not reflected in that. ((Um)), it also kind of reminds me of a translation that all I can accept that is taken from like a tabloid newspaper like *The Daily Telegraph* or something like that. They tend to be more jovial and have less accurate information. But in terms of what this actually says, I don't think it reflects it.

Similarly, the reason why IN1M19N preferred the literalist translation is because only M1-INT faithfully renders some Chinese characters e.g. 四 (*si*, four), 五 (*wu*, five) and 两个 (*liang ge*, two) that he had identified in the start text. However, when asked how the reader understood the literal translation "five-sphere integrated plan," IN1M19N admitted that he had no idea at all:

I:	So why do you choose [M1-INT]?
IN1M19N	I chose it because it's the closest translation.

What is obvious here is that the ethical emphasis on faithfulness to some extent overrides any textual quality e.g. readability and comprehensibility.

5.2.2.2.2 Absolutely faithful?

In some cases, the notion of faithfulness leads to a new consensus, mainly for a practical reason (e.g., fluency). When asked whether premier Li's words should be rendered literally, IN3F25M3 suggested that some changes were acceptable as linguistic adjustments. For the interviewee, rather than seeking formal equivalence, faithfulness to the original *message* is fairly justified:

IN1M19N	Yes, that [M3-INT] is what he [the premier] says. But the way you say one thing in Chinese can mean another thing in English. I think it's okay to change that to stretch the meaning a little bit.

The strength of the principle of strict faithfulness varies under different communicative conditions, and is perceived differently according to different readerships:

IN1M41EX	I prefer [M2+INT] because it literally translates what the phrase means. [M2-INT] also translates the phrase but it doesn't really explain what that phrase means. It's without clearly explaining what that phrase means.

By focusing on accessibility, IN2F18L3 argues that faithfulness is a matter of degree. In different situations, any "accurate translation" may turn out to be inadequate or simply inappropriate:

IN2F18L3	I think that [M4-INT] is more accurate, but also this is on a website, so I think [M4+INT] might be better because it's just giving a brief outline, I think [M4-INT] sounds a bit like a court document or legislation. It's very long. It's talking about all of these very specific things.

For those who have some prior knowledge of the start culture, their acceptability of "inaccuracy" is much higher than that of the readers without contextual knowledge:

IN3F25L3: It doesn't bother me because I understand what sort of contexts it's talking about. But I guess in terms of understanding for the general population, it might be a bit too difficult. So you'll have to translate that into layman terms more. So it's similar to what we do in science. Sometimes when we're explaining scientific terminology to a layman person, they wouldn't understand what it is.

Meanwhile, another point made by the readers is the need for a fluent translation, i.e. high target-language text-linguistic quality. A translation with a deplorable form will undermine the readers' trust in the translator's competence, and hence the trustworthiness of the translated text itself:

IN3F25L3 I think what made me choose [M3+INT] over [M3-INT] is the last sentence. That just sounds a bit weird. They [M3-INT] used the same word 'atmosphere' twice in a sentence, and it just didn't sound right.

IN3F25L3 And then the last line, 'as the atmosphere of the stadium was getting exciting.' That's not accurate English. I'm a bit jarred by that. I mean like, okay, and I think an Aussie reader would just be like, 'oh, clearly a Chinese person like this, and by extension not take it seriously to that.' I understand that 'exciting' or 'excited' is basically the same word in Chinese. But for like a non-Chinese speaking Australian then just be like 'oh, they didn't even check their work.' This is not written by someone who speaks English and it would be discounted very quickly, which is unfortunate. But for Chinese translators they have to be extra careful that their English should be a hundred percent accurate. Otherwise, the entire thing gets written off and I know how hard that is.

Again, if a translation turns out to be deficient, the readers pause and wonder whether they can still trust the translator or the translation as having the status of being a "professional."

5.2.2.3 Neutrality vs. authenticity

A good illustration of the problem of incompatible expectations can be found in how the readers balance the values of neutrality vs. authenticity. Here "neutrality" echoes the receivers' calls for an "unbiased," "ideology-free" translation, while the notion of "authenticity' is proposed by expert readers, referring to a translation that is officially endorsed by the Chinese government.

5.2.2.3.1 Overly emotive

The first issue is a psychological one: emotivity is identified as a major factor that undermines the perceived neutrality of a translation. In M2++INT, China's Belt and Road Initiative is described as having "received overwhelming support from the international community." Many Australian readers argued that the translation was emotive, making it sound too subjective and impressionistic:

IN1F19L3	It's a bit emotive, if that makes sense.
I	You mean, you'd rather it did not say how good the project is?
IN1F19L3	Well, I feel like it's not necessary. In my writing, I would try and avoid using that and use something like 'to a great extent.' Like [I would say] 'we have received international support to a great extent,' and then demonstrate that extent.

It seems that if strongly emotive expressions appear, the general effect on the target reader is less likely to be positive. For IN3F25L3, M2++INT is trying to "exaggerative the fact," making the translation sound "overly enthusiastic":

IN3F25L3	For [M2++INT], it says that this initiative 'received overwhelmingly international support.' I feel like the first part of the sentence itself is …((hesitation)). ((Um)), how should I say this?
I	Biased?
IN3F25L3	They're not biased, but it's sort of like, ((um))…
I	Exaggerative?
IN3F25L3	Yeah. That's what I feel like. It's a little bit exaggerating the fact, although I'm not sure what he [president Xi] said exactly. But it does feel a little bit saturated.

IN1F24M3	I think [M2++INT] is just trying to say it a bit too much. It's too overly enthusiastic. Like the 'overwhelming international support' and 'it has achieved significant process progress.'

One may suggest that these examples are cases where the start text is focusing on promoting a Chinese-initiated project, which might be naturally resisted by non-Chinese readers. However, even when the start text attempts to praise the Australia-China relationship, it seems that the Australian reader still reacts against any emotive hyperbole:

IN3F25M3	I don't like the word 'warmer and sweeter.' It's strange. I think it's emblematic of a lot of the language that's used in Chinese translations. It kind of hypes the relationships or processes or whatever.

What is at stake is that emotive expressions are interpreted by the readers as hyping the results without any evidence. Thus, one putative solution to removing the underlying sources of doubt suggested by some readers is to provide evidence as much as humanly possible:

IN3F25M3	When it says, 'enormous benefits,' 'enormous' is like a hyperbole that might happen. You need to prove that it's going to do that.

IN1F19L3	[You can say] it [the Belt and Road initiative] has achieved significant outcomes. You can then go on to list what happened. 'Overwhelming support' seems more subjective.

This can be a corollary of Chesterman's (2007b) argument about the rhetorical salience threshold. The threshold denotes the point at which a salient item is judged to be worth expressing in a different culture. In translations, if the start and target languages have different salience thresholds, rhetorical adjustments are needed in order to tone down or tone up the salience. Such rhetorical compensation helps avoid the risk that a translation sounds either "too pompous" or "a bit pathetic" (p. 213). Here the underlying idea is that one language's signifiers are intrinsically more salient than those of another's. For instance, Chesterman suggests that the threshold "is lower in English than in Finnish" (p. 215). But should we simply give a prescriptive statement that you should tone down when translating into English, and tone up when translating into Finnish? Can it be applied to every text type and every situation?

Here I propose another way of seeing the salience threshold: what really matters is whether your readers *trust* the rhetoric you use. The success depends on whether the rhetoric can justify itself in the given context. Providing explanations to convince the readers might be a more cost-effective and less mechanical solution.

5.2.2.3.2 Contradiction and intervention

The neutrality of a translation also looks doubtful in the face of contradictory logic in the text; that is, when there is an internal contradiction. As FG1F19N-a indicates, if the Belt and Road Initiative was "overwhelmingly" supported by other countries, it "would have already succeeded" and then there would be no need to go further:

FG1F19N-a The bias thing we were talking about is with [M2++INT]. And also [for the] 'overwhelming international support,' if it was overwhelming, it would have already succeeded.

Ironically, the literal translation M1-INT is deemed to be more sincere than any high-intervention attempts. Admittedly, high-intervention translations easily run into logical difficulties, as the start text is deconstructed and needs to be reconstructed in some way. In M3+INT, to make the Chinese premier's message sound natural in English, his words are adapted into an English idiom as "May the best team win!" Yet, as FG1F19N and IN3F25M3 pointed out, the meaning of the idiom seems to contradict the fact that the premier was actually wearing two footy scarves:

FG2F19N I definitely prefer [M3-INT] because you just wanted to wear both scarves, so you don't want to go for a team. But when you [in M3+INT] say 'good luck and may the best team win,' now [you said] 'one of them is the best.'

IN3F25M3 I don't like [M3++INT] because here it says that [the premier] is saying that 'wearing two scarves is too much for this weather.' In the next sentence or two, he actually says here that he insisted on wearing the scarf. So that's a bit contradictory.

A somewhat similar argument is given by IN1M19N and IN2F24N, both of whom argue that the "moderately prosperous society" in M2+INT is logically preposterous:

IN1M19N That doesn't really make much sense because it's like saying, 'oh, you know, we set a reasonable goal.' [but] you haven't told me what makes this so reasonable. So 'moderately prosperous' in comparison to what? Zimbabwe where they can't use their own currency? In that regard, you're really prosperous. But you know, even compared to the

United States, people in China are very prosperous, so what is moderately prosperous? And so by the time they get to 2021, they can probably just say, 'Well, we did create a moderately prosperous society. Good job us by virtue of our unclear terminology.'

IN2F24N I guess some of the language [and] some of the adjectives a little bit struck me. Things like saying 'moderately prosperous.' Why wouldn't you just say 'prosperous' if the aim of achieving the strategy is to increase prosperity, why would you only want a "moderately prosperous society?" …. Some of the words [M1+INT] uses kind of undermine the points.

At first sight, the lack of trust here applies to the author of the start text (the original message itself), not to the translator. However, the internal contradiction is intensified by translator intervention, albeit heading in two opposite directions: both high-intention or low-intention can be risky.

In the case of the two-scarves competition, the start text clearly indicates that the Chinese premier would like to support both teams by wearing two scarves. M3++INT is designed to adapt the premier's "I-want-both-sides-happy" intention in order to avoid making the target readers see the no-position premier as a glib politician. However, this intervention nevertheless makes what the premier said contradict what he actually did (the interviewees were presented with a photo of the premier wearing two scarves). One might argue that intervention on its own is not bad, but bad intervention is destructive. But it should be noted that high intervention usually suggests high risks, since intervention might cause underlying uncertainty.

In the second example, the "moderately prosperous society" in M1-INT, the low-intervention literal translation overlooks the existence of linguistic asymmetry: there are degrees of Chinese intrinsically conservative political rhetoric that have no counterpart in English. For the Chinese government, there are three stages to improving people's living standards: 1) 温饱 (*wen bao*), officially translated as "the most basic needs," 2) 小康 (*xiao kang*), officially as "moderately prosperous," and 3) 富裕 (*fu yu*), officially as "well-off." The second stage 小康 in the start text literally means "small-scale prosperity," which nevertheless makes much more sense in Chinese rather than in English. Here the logical contradiction in the English target text is caused by low translator intervention, since it is precarious to assume that exactly the same values are in play in asymmetrical languages.

Another example concerns doubts about the underlying purpose of the start text. For target readers, the more a translation involves a distinct political ideology or possible propagandistic intention, the more suspicion is perpetuated. That is, if the intention of the translation is considered as kind of propaganda, the text will by no means be accepted:

FG1F19N-a The last one was very similar to [M4+INT], but it once again brought back to the point that the Chinese government believes that it will do good. It almost again felt sort of political.

Here again we meet the ethical question of neutrality. Neutrality here means "ideology-free." On the surface, the distrust appears to be of the content, not of the translation solution. This, nevertheless, might be considered a methodological problem: since each alternative translation has a different degree of translator intervention, the readers are able to tell which one is more "neutral" and hence "trustworthy." Trust is not only in the original message, but also in the way the information is delivered, and to which extent intervention can be functionally accepted.

In the following example, what the reader distrusts is not the ChAFTA itself, but the way the trade agreement is described, since all three translations try to promote the free trade agreement. M1+INT is deemed “objective” and “neutral”; M1++INT is not:

IN2F25M3	I think [M1+INT] is the most ((um)) objective. It’s more professional to me. And it feels like something on a website or in the news. You know, it doesn’t take one side. I feel [M1++INT] is also good. But I think it’s favoring... And I think it, ((um)), it’s really like, yeah, it seems to be written from a Chinese perspective, whereas [M1+INT] is more neutral. Trying to think of the right word to describe it…
I:	Not biased?
IN2F25M3	Yeah, not biased.

FG2M52	[M4++INT] is almost a propaganda statement saying the Chinese government believes in free trade.

The plausible link between narratives and intervention can constitute a minefield for the classical debates between rhetoric and ethics. Nevertheless, the more useful question would be to ask what kind of translation is regarded by the target readers as being natural, objective and bias-free.

5.2.2.3.3 “Judge on one’s own.”

The target readers are not willing to (easily) take any tendentious claims for granted; what they seek is the impression that they can make their judgments based on the factual information provided. Both FG1F19N-b and IN3F25M3 mention that they prefer to read a text that can allow the reader to “judge on one’s own”:

IN3F25M3	Being told the facts rather than being told to believe one and other definitely makes you feel more comfortable reading it.
IN3F25L3	[M2+INT] is very clear. There’s no bias in at all. It tells you the facts, and that’s it. Yeah, it’s just giving you the facts. It’s not adding. It didn’t add additional words to make the initiative sound better [or] cooler.

The readers do not like to be “pushed” to accept anything; they ask for the freedom to make their own decisions:

FG1F19-a	[M4++INT] definitely seems like someone from a governmental position trying to push forward that it’s [ChAFTA] a good idea.

This in turn explains why the target readers desire a more explicit, informative and explanatory translation. A translation that simply provides the “facts” is more likely to be trusted than those that do not. For the readers, there should be no pretense that the translation is telling the “truth”:

FG1F19N-a I don't have the background knowledge to [judge]. I know there are claims of the Communist elements of China's policies. But at the same time, I don't wanna just believe that, just because that's what you hear. I need to actually learn more about it, before I have my judgment.

IN1F19L3 Yeah, [M1++INT] does seem more biased because like [M1+INT] is more objective, I guess because it's not saying that the government has really done these things. Its just says they're doing it where this [M1++INT] says they 'made great strides' and there's been lots of success. And you think, well, what is the evidence for that?

More exactly, the expectations underlying the demand for "facts" constitute a desire for neutrality in the sense of transparency:

IN3F25L3 By facts, I mean, obviously for one country, they probably don't want to highlight things that need improvement or things that are not so good. So they don't want to highlight those, which I understand. But at the same time try not to like hide it. Keep it open in conversation.

It is interesting to compare this argument to the interviewed Chinese translators who argued that a neutral translation is something that "sounds official" (see 4.4.2.1.4). For the Australian readers, a typical bureaucratic text that heavily involves Communist ideology is of little help to enhance its accountability. Here the problem is that the production and reception sides may share some ground with respect to the expectations of a "good" translation e.g. neutrality, but apparently it is not clear enough what is meant by "neutrality" on both sides.

5.2.2.3.4 Opaqueness is meaningless

The general preference for a univocal translation is obvious. For FG1F19N-a, the reason why the literal translation M1-INT and the greatest-intervention M1++INT are unacceptable is one and the same – both translations are deemed opaque:

FG1F19N-a: I thought [M1-INT] was a bit vague and I didn't really know what it was referring to. I put [M1+INT] as the first order of preference because I think it was the most meaningful, like sort of policies.
I How about [M1++INT]?
FG1F19N-a: ((Um)), I thought it was like, again, a bit vague. It just says they have made 'great strides' in past years and remains committed, but it doesn't really say how and why they're committed.

The low tolerance of vagueness also explains the readers' expectations of a more explicit translation:

FG2M52N: As soon as you get a number like five something, then you expect to see an enumeration of what those five things are. And then if it doesn't follow…

So what could go wrong if a translation is vague? One simple answer is that low information density means very little to the reader:

IN2F26M3 For me, [M2+INT] is kind of a bit vague. And then [M2++INT] is also quite vague. I mean, I don't like vague translations. I think, what's the point of me reading this, if this doesn't mean anything?

What is happening here: the vaguer the text, the less convincing it is for the readers. The translator (or the translation) should be able to justify the decision taken, to provide proof of credibility:

FG2F19N: It's just like when they [M1++INT] say 'work wholeheartedly to achieve,' they're just saying this and there's no justification for why.

FG2F19N: It would be better to use the China free trade agreement as evidence of China's ongoing attempts to expand its trade internationally. That would be the ideal way.

In Task 1, the start text merely lists the names of China's national strategies without further explanation, a typical feature that characterizes Chinese foreign-affairs discourse. It is not very surprising that the seemingly ungrounded, literal translation M1-INT fails to be trusted:

FG1M22D Sometimes just by saying something does not mean actually achieving anything. You have to do something to prove your work.

Another example of the same logic is found in M2-INT. FG2F19N argues that the literal translation M2-INT is logically ambiguous:

FG2F19N: [M2-INT] mentions that the saying is a Chinese saying [but] it hasn't really explained that. They just sort of assume that we understand the significance of the initiative they are talking about, ((um)), which I suppose people wouldn't understand. But for someone who has the context of Chinese politics, um, [maybe they can understand]. I didn't really understand the relevance.

M1++INT boldly summaries the strategies in order to reduce the reader's cognitive effort. Nevertheless, the high intervention text seems to be unacceptable to the readers. This is also due to lack of evidence:

IN2F24N: It [M1++INT] is a very typical government speaking where it says a lot without saying much. Like there're lots of words without really saying anything. It's not very detailed.

In sum, the objection to opaqueness is justifiable on two counts. First, the target readers need to get returns on the time and effort they invest. If the readers are only given the linguistic surface, more cognitive effort is needed to process the message to reach the underlying meaning of the text. Second, the issue of opaqueness returns us to the problem of cultural relativity, in which one culture may be more in favor of explicit language than others. Chinese political discourse is characterized by implicitness. So when dealing with Chinese political jargon that is less context-independent and more context-bound, an English literal translation does not always provide the same amount of contextual meaning as the Chinese original does. In this sense, a high intervention that attempts to summarize the start text might also be regarded as "vague" by English-speaking readers if no convincing explicit evidence has been provided.

5.2.2.3.5 Honesty

For some readers, being neutral implies a moral obligation: "honesty" is of vital importance in the target (Australian) culture. If a translation is deemed less honest, however "accurate" the information is, it is hardly going to be accepted:

> IN2F18L3 Perhaps [M3+INT] is more accurate but I still prefer [M3++INT]. It [M3+INT] sounds weird, like 'the close friendship that China and Australia share' at the end seems like a façade.

Paradoxically, the reader here appears to have a fairly idiosyncratic take on accuracy. If M3+INT is more "accurate" than other alternatives, why does IN2F18L3 still believe the translation is less honest?

One possible reason lies in the concept of accuracy is that the notion itself is too fuzzy, comprising so many interpretations and variations. For IN2F18L3, accuracy means the completeness of information. Textual criteria such as accuracy are very important, but it seems that they can never compete with the principle of honesty, particularly in the moral sense of ethical neutrality.

Similarly, FG2F19N argues that the image of the Chinese premier in M3++INT seems to be more "aloof," "colder" and less positive than in other translations:

> FG2F19N My response as a reader is similar for the first two [M3-INT and M3+INT]. In [M3++INT], the premier, he comes across kind of a bit like aloof. ((Um)), sort of neutral, maybe a bit colder. But the first two you really sort of get the sense. It is like he's having a good time.

Interestingly enough, the expectation for honesty is rarely mentioned on the production side. It seems that this ethical virtue is more influential in the receiving (Australian) culture than in the Chinese community, at least when dealing with political discourse. As IN2F18L3 and IN2F26M3 indicate, "being honest" is deeply rooted in Australian culture:

> IN2F18L3 I think Aussies have a big issue with acting, like two-faced. You want to be like always the same. You want to be consistent or authentic. In Australian society being authentic or real true is very important. Whereas in Chinese society it's more about 'giving face' to the other person. In the Australian culture, it's like, if I don't like you, I'm not really going to pretend anything. I'm not gonna go out of my way to be nice. So that's a big cultural difference.

IN2F26M3 In the Australian culture, authenticity is really important. And honesty, it's really, really important. And fairness is really, really important. And honesty is the whole thing. The culture has been like a Christian culture – 'don't lie; don't steal; don't take from others; and don't betray.' We've got the ten commandments and [the religion] very strong. So being honest is a very, very Australian thing. In China, honesty doesn't have such a high premium because what's important is 'face.' And 'face' and 'honesty' are not compatible.

The differences embedded in political systems might also explain why people in the start and target cultures have strikingly different expectations of political language conventions. In the Australian electoral system, it is conventional that a politician needs to behave and as a genuine, ordinary and even down-to-earth, person-in-the-street to gain the trust and vote of the public. On the other hand, Chinese officials are traditionally expected to act with authority; their words should sound "formal" and "official." The underlying differences in personal beliefs, ideological values, cognitive states and life experiences make people react distinctively even to texts that are not translations.

5.2.2.3.6 Authentic to what?

For expert readers, at first glance, the principle of authenticity seems to overlap with faithfulness. However, the initial point of departure does not concern any ethical consideration. What IN1M41EX requires is an authentic translation that is endorsed by the Chinese government and thus functions as a reliable reference:

IN1M41EX But it is also time for China to start translating them [political documents]. I think the state has a responsibility to translate them in a proper way. All these important documents can relate themselves to the outside world. Chinese has a lot of hidden meanings. The poor translations don't translate hidden meanings. There is hidden content in the original text. So it's time for them to start reviewing all those important documents, not just the Constitution but all policy texts and legal texts. You know, most of the legal texts are not available in English.

For IN1M41EX, only an official translation that is produced once-and-for-all can be regarded as a "real" or "proper" translation – there is no reason to suppose that a start text can be translated in different ways: a definitive, official translation seems to be the only version that can be trusted. We get the impression that only one kind of explanation would suffice to account for all the complexities of translation – others are simply wrong:

IN1M41EX It doesn't matter whether it is translated by the state or by academics, as long as the state is comfortable and confident enough to endorse the translation. I think that's the important thing. So that we all know that we can have one set of translations that we can trust. Okay? It also helps researchers who are not Chinese-speaking.

Here any creative license means not only betraying or potentially distorting the start text, but also risking indeterminacy. IN1M41EX further suggests a determinist concept of "original translation," on the grounds that the one utterance should have only one legitimate equivalent:

> IN1M41EX But as an original translation, it should be something that's as close to the original as possible. You know, if you want to have other readers to come in, the readers are in the downstream processes. It's not something that should be the first priority.

> IN1M41EX I think at the state level, they should have one official translation of legal documents, policy and of whatever governmental publications.

This is particularly evident in the legal translation:

> IN1M41EX It is a very serious matter and you can just say PKU [a Chinese website providing bilingual legal documents] did it so it must be all right. When a lawyer goes to the court, they need to have a real translation to understand the legal code. They cannot just show this is a translation from PKU, the courts are not going to accept them. Then they [legal professionals] say okay we'll still use the Chinese version. So it's important for them to have official translations in that sense.

The argument is fair enough: the principle of the authorized translation operates in the legal system of many countries e.g. sworn translators in Spain, where authenticity is granted by the authorizing authority (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), not the translator (cf. Pym, Grin, Sfreddo & Chan, 2013). This is also in line with Koskinen's study on EU translation arguing that "the voice that is to be heard is that of the translating institution" (Koskinen, 2008, p. 22). IN1M41EX's idea does indeed explain why a collective voice for institutional translation is important: an authoritative voice is presumably recognized in terms of a unique interpretation. It is not translation quality that legitimates the translation but the exclusive status of the translation itself.

So why do people ask for a collective voice? Here a hierarchical relationship is at stake, in which the valid interpretation of a start text is waiting to be offered by the experts, not by the translators:

> IN1M41EX I prefer that I put in my interpretation than to rely on a translator to put in their own interpretation. Okay? Because it reflects how I read the text. How I translate reflects how I read the text.

For the expert, a literal translation should be the default prototype concept of translation. The primary, if not the sole function of a translation is to work as a faithful reference to the original so that the experts *par excellent* can bring out multiple potential meanings.

All in all, the expectations of neutrality and authenticity could seem paradoxical, since authenticity values zero-intervention to the start text, while a literal translation of political discourse can rarely be deemed as "neutral" in the sense of ideology-free.

Nevertheless, we found that the target reader's focus on trustworthiness underscored both expectations. On the one hand, many readers tend to trust a translation that sounds sincere, objective and bias-free in order to avoid any possibility of being manipulated. On the other hand, the desire for an authentic translation is closely bound up with the fear that the indeterminacy in translator intervention is risk-laden, and perhaps not to be trusted.

5.2.2.4 Distance vs. proximity

Dichotomies in translation solutions can be traced back to Cicero e.g. literal vs. free translations (as noted in Pym, 2016). Perhaps the best-known opposition is that proposed by Schleiermacher (2012[1813]) who argued that a translation should be either foreignizing or domesticating. The binary solution has been particularly used to address translation dilemmas involving culture-bound items. The underlying logic of the insistence of binary belonging is that readers will only accept one side or the other.

In this study, task 2 was particularly designed to test the readers' responses to two extreme solutions. The Chinese idiom "桃李不言, 下自成蹊 (*tao li bu yan, xia zi cheng xi*)" is translated as "peaches and plums do not speak, but they are so attractive that a path is formed below the trees" in M2-INT. This can be regarded as a foreignizing translation that maintains distance. On the other hand, the phrase "actions speak louder than words" used in M2+INT can be deemed a domesticating translation that attempts to show proximity.

The following section will analyze how the two opposing solutions were received by the target readers.

5.2.2.4.1 Distance excludes readers

It has been argued that translation should be produced for an implied reader who in some ways is "excluded from the non-translational text" (Pym, 1992/2010, 59). In this sense, the more a reader feels excluded from the text, the more doubts might be raised about the value of the translation as a whole. Remember that the readers from the "expert" group called for a literal and "close" translation of the original jargon. For the expert, "foreignness" is not a problem but seems to make a virtue of translational fidelity. Nevertheless, beyond the expert coterie, a completely foreignizing translation might make general readers feel they are alienated from the communication.

There are at least two reasons for the sense of distance: the lack of socio-cultural context affecting comprehension and a kind of skepticism that concerns not being viewed as the intended end-users of the translation:

FG1F19N-a	I'm assuming that [M4-INT] is more like a literal translation of the Chinese and written for somebody who already knows what it is about and what is happening and what these things mean.
IN1M19N	I thought that's just my broad thing for all countries on the earth. ((Um)), Macron comes to Australia what he did is, ((um)) he used French terms. That's fine, as long as he makes sure that we understand what he's talking about. It's like, if you associate with scientists and they're just gabbling on science terms then [I would say]: 'excuse me, I don't understand. Can you please explain?'

FG2M52N suggested that as soon as he saw the phrase "the Party Central Committee and the State Council," he suspected the text was written for the Chinese audience:

FG2M52N	And then you sort of think, 'well, it's speaking to the Chinese audience.'
FG2F19N	Yeah, and the reference like, 'committee and the sessions' and everything. That's not something that would have much meaning to the Australian audience.

FG2F19N I guess [M4-INT] is outlining benefits directly for China. So if you're an Australian investor, [the translation has] no appeal to you.

If the Australian reader feels "alienated," it may induce a critical attitude towards China's bureaucracy and the intended propaganda agenda of the translation:

IN2F18L3 I think if I were a non-Chinese-speaking Australian reader, I would feel very alienated by [M1-INT] because it's like words that I can't understand. And so if you can't understand something, you feel very uncomfortable.

IN2F18L3 I think if I were a non-Chinese-speaking Australian reader, I would feel very alienated by a [M1-INT] because it's like words that I can't understand. And so if you can't understand something, you feel very uncomfortable. Whereas if I am an Australian reading [M1+INT], I finished reading this like, 'ah, yes, I understand.' Of course, it doesn't tell me exactly how they are going to promote the overall plan. It doesn't say we will do task A, task B, and task C. But it already gives me a better explanation that these are the five areas of politics life.

So is the ideal translation the one that represents no distance? That is, should "the implied receiver ideally be unconcerned by the actual distance covered by the act of transfer" (Pym, 1992/2010, p. 67)? The distance between a start text and the target reader is not entirely affected by linguistic or cultural differences, but also by internal, subjective factors such as the reader's own interests, values, attitudes and personality. There is always some degree of intersubjective disturbance or conflict involved. For example, IN2F34D is from Singapore. The strangeness of the foreign in the translation reminds them that they might not be the *target* reader It seems that no translation solution could change the reader's mind that "Singapore is not the target reader of China's Belt and Road Initiative, neither am I":

IN2F34D I think it's a good idea for Singapore to join the initiative. I think we're supportive, but I don't think we are the focus of this 'Belt and Road Initiative' because we're fairly well-developed and China needs to invest and build the infrastructure to connect all the way down to the south, right? So I think that they're more focused on the slightly less developed countries.

IN2F34D I guess I wouldn't understand myself how attractive it [the initiative] is because maybe I'm not the target reader. Probably, I imagine if you were a business person, or you are identified very strongly with China, they might understand how attractive the initiative is.

Recall Pym's (1992) three receptive positions: in this case, the *excluded* receivers are those for whom the English translation was done for, the *participative* receivers are presumably engaging with China's Belt and Road Initiative, and the *observational* receivers are those who have no real interest in the information transfer. Although not excluded, the Singapore reader is not properly *participative*: she did not feel the English translation is *for* her.

5.2.2.4.2 Some readers enjoy decoding foreignness

One might assume that the acceptance of foreignness would have been on the basis of the premise that the target reader can (almost) correctly understand the foreign elements – we like things we can understand:

IN1F19L3: The idiom probably has greater cultural connotations than I understand. But I mean, saying something like the fruits of your labors is quite common in English. So it can make sense to me. I mean if you wanted to use more literary language to capture attention, it seems like a good way to do it.

However, it is found that some target-language readers who do indeed prefer a foreignizing translation might not necessarily fully understand the text. Some rank the foreignizing translation of "peaches and plums" idiom as their first preference; nevertheless, there is no guarantee that their understanding was clear and correct. When asked how FG1F19N-a understood the literal translation of the Chinese idiom that she had ranked as her "favorite," the reader hesitated:

FG1F19N-a ((Um)), I think it's almost... ((hesitation))... I don't know... ((hesitation))... It's almost like... ((hesitation))... It's... It's something that it can't speak for itself, but still affects people who look for them.

A couple of readers who ranked the foreignizing translation first gave some interesting guesses. For FG1F22N, the peach and plum trees are so beautiful that people "go and walk to them" not only for the beauty of the trees and the fresh fruits, but also "for the shade." The connotation of "tree shade" might not exist in the original text, but the Chinese president does use the idiom as a metaphor, perhaps construing the Belt and Road Initiative as an umbrella to share and protect interests of the countries who are willing to participate. This interpretation might be more enlightened than the literal translation.

For FG1F19-a, the desire for unfamiliarity boils down to personal preference for cultural diversity:

FG1F19-a I would prefer to hear a native idiom. I think if it is directly affecting China, then why not focus on the Chinese population, especially considering that, ((um)), there are so many different types of idioms. And if you think about it enough, you can relate it back like to one that you understand.

Here the interviewee suggests that "if you think about it enough" and relate the unknown to the known, a foreignizing translation can work. This cognitive requirement is deemed to be especially rewarding when the readers believe that the translation helps them seek more world than they know:

IN2F18L3 I like China because I like the culture [which] is so different from our culture. It's something completely different from anything I've experienced. So I like learning new things. And when I learn a new word or I try new food, it's a really nice experience, whereas maybe other Western cultures I'm very familiar with. It's not boring. It's just, ((um)), I don't have the same enjoyment learning about new Western cultures.

FG2M52N That's interesting. I don't really understand what the saying means but I like having the saying there because it created a bit of imagery to it. My interests about the Chinese itself giving me something inside which I previously didn't have, even if I don't understand what these are. I think, alright, so maybe there's a different way of thinking that I don't understand. But it still seems to me to be a nice introduction.

As FG2M52N indicates, she likes the fact that "the [foreignizing translation] is rounded out at the end, like a reference back to the start." Here, the last sentence of the translation states that the Belt and Road Initiative has achieved "real fruit," echoing the "peaches and plums" at the beginning of the text. The conventional expression "fruitful results" refers back to the unfamiliar "peaches and plums" idiom, making the reader seek something new while not being completely excluded from the start culture and ending up as an outsider.

Interestingly enough, most readers who ranked the foreignizing translation as their first preference seemed to be more readily interested in a foreign culture. Nevertheless, the acceptance of a foreignizing translation is both the result of the readers' personal desire for distance and the ability of the translation to maintain a certain degree of proximity. What makes the reader accept the translation is not the exoticism shown in the text or its resistance to target stylistic norms, but the fact that readers can catch a glimpse of a balance between accessibility and the pleasure of learning new things.

5.2.2.4.3 Foreignness should be understandable

If someone has a strong interest in exploring foreign elements, they may be more willing to invest extra cognitive effort in decoding an obscure text. However, for the more general readership, whether the foreignizing translation is "making sense" is often construed as a basic question:

IN2F24N I mean, it is kind of nice to have some sort of quotes or some sort of proverbs. But it has to be one that would make sense to someone who has not heard it before in their life.

FG1F19N-a Well, if someone from China or Xi Jinping himself comes to Australia and he was to make a speech, I understand that if he wants to use Chinese terms, because he's Chinese, ((um)), but as long as he understands that, we probably wouldn't understand at all.

FG1F19N-a But I think that, you know, there're ancient Japanese proverbs and Chinese ones, but some of them make more sense, like without a full explanation. I've heard some before, you just think, 'yeah, that makes sense.' But I guess some of them require too much context. Like this one [M2-INT] is a bit too abstract to understand without having a full explanation. But if it could be translated in a way that people could understand it instantly without further explanation, I think it would be kind of cool.

As FG2F19N suggests, the cost of cognitive effort and the pleasure of the exposure to foreign-culture should be carefully calculated. That is, the effort to understand a foreignizing translation should be less than the positive values generated by exoticism:

FG2F19N I think having the element of foreign[ness] is good, because people like something different and it'll catch their attention. But if you base too much on that... you lose people. So maybe it's like a balance between the two.

Cultural distance is not a black-and-white affair. What really matters is the degree. Here a proposal for "moderate foreignness" merits some attention. The readers might make an appeal to read the translation if the foreignness controlled is at a reasonable level:

FG2F19N [If there are a lot foreignizing idioms], you gotta stop because you're losing me. But if it happened like once, that means 'let's google it' because it's kind of interesting.

FG2M52N I suppose that it depends on the individual's knowledge. I don't have that much knowledge about China. But I find they're some interesting ideas even now I might not know about them. So a little introduction to that is good rather than just hearing something the same from anybody else. And I suppose the metaphor is really a good one.

So the next question is how to analyze the fuzzy boundary between distance and proximity. IN2F24N proposes a solution: the more "shared ground" the target reader can find in a foreignizing translation, the more possible it is for them to accept the text. There is some little irony in the fact that a very fundamental difference can rarely be accepted: what the readers desire to map out is something foreign that, nevertheless, resonates in the target culture:

IN2F24N So I guess, it's appealing to people because it's something new, like a new idea that you can align it with something that's already accepted in our society.

IN2F26M3: At the end of the paragraph, they say 'it has started to bear real fruit.' And I think this is really well done because the [Chinese] saying talks about fruit. And in the end there's an English expression that also makes sense. So clearly the translator has done a good job here and I know that the Chinese has the word 'fruit' in it. It's cool that the English translation also has the word fruit in it.

A foreignizing translation here functions as a mirror reflection of the substance of the target culture. For IN2F26M3, engaging with foreign elements helps consolidate her own (implicitly) cultural identity:

IN2F26M3 And I think it's important for Australians to figure out what our values are. I think we know them, but maybe more implicitly. And let's try and understand other cultures and what their values are.

The translations of the Australian AFL culture not only inform the foreigner but can also shape the image and boundaries of Australian culture itself.

From a slightly different and less sedentary perspective, IN1M19N suggested that "as you get more experience of [foreignness], you are fine with it." As the interviewee puts it, "people need to be a bit more literate with these terms." In this way, a foreignizing translation can help bridge some of the gaps between the start and target communities. It also means that translation is waiting there to be exploited for the benefit of the receivers. Translation may challenge the notion of sedentary cultures and probably blur the cut-off point between start and target cultures by prompting rapport and intercultural understanding.

5.2.2.4.4 Is proximity all goodness?

How would people in a foreign culture react if you could obey their rules? This is a question raised by Chesterman (2006a) in a call for more empirical research on norm-conforming. Here we can offer some tentative answers by comparing how the target readers respond to the proximity that is represented by domesticating translation.

One response is clear enough: many readers appreciate the translator conforming to their norms:

FG1F20D	I think it's okay to use a Chinese idiom, but they should understand that it's hard to translate. [The message] might not come across. Maybe they could be saying 'there's a Chinese saying' something like that, which is fine, because that's their culture. But it would also show appreciation if they use an idiom from Australian culture.

I	Do you think using local idioms can help to communicate with the audience?
IN3F25M3	Yes, I think so, because [Australian] politicians go to China and they learn one sentence in Chinese. And that's really received well. I think that shows they're putting in effort, but I haven't seen many examples of that the other way around.

One main reason is that a domesticating translation (e.g., "actions speak louder than words") sounds "familiar" to target readers, making "incomprehensible cultural specificity" easier for target readers (Pym, 1992/2010, p. 35):

IN2F18L3	I like 'actions speak louder than words' because that kind of helps me understand what the text said.

FG2M52N	Probably because of that first sentence ['actions speak louder than words'] grabs your attention.
FG2F19N	Like it is a cliché, but it's really familiar. So I think in the context after reading the first one where I was thinking like what was it talking about. My brain is kind of latched on it. Oh, yeah, I know what you're trying to say.

This cultural familiarity recalls what Chesterman's calls "norm-based ethics" (2001, p. 141). One of the key values underlying this ethical principle is the virtue of predictability: if a translation is done in norm-obeying ways, it will be easier to trust, since it is more predictable.

In Task 3, many readers preferred to see premier Li's message be adapted into "May the best team win!" in M3+INT rather than be literally translated as "I will cheer and support both teams" in M3-INT:

IN2F24N I guess I put [M3+INT] first because it is a more generic idiom. 'May the best team' is a typical thing in any Western culture and it doesn't feel like he [the premier] is necessarily being styled here. Like he's been translated in a way that someone as an English speaker will readily understand. But at the same time, it's not pandering to a specific audience.

With the assistance of the domesticating translation, the premier's image seems to be more friendly:

IN3F25M3 It ['may the best team win'] gives him more personality, I guess.

FG2F19N And like this, 'I want to wish both teams the best of luck and extend my best wishes to the entire AFL community.' It's very formal and like rehearsed on, which again seems insincere. And if the point of it is to be genuine, I think [M3+INT] was better.

IN1M19N G [M3-INT] sounds a bit, ((um)) like a politician. But H [M3+INT] sounds more friendly. And he [the premier] has a soul. It sounds more like he's at a football game.

Fidelity to the original does not seem to worry some readers too much. IN1M19N argues that translations "[could] take a bit of liberty with as long as this sort of ideas come across." For him, "I will cheer and applaud" in M3-INT and "may the best team win" in M3+INT are "the same sort of message":

IN1M19N 'Good luck and may the best team win!' can also mean, 'I don't know which team is the best one.' Yeah, I could see that.

That is, these two expressions are formally different but fulfill the same function. In this case, conforming to the target norm does not harm.

The translator's credibility might also increase if the norm-conforming is read as showing "a really good understanding" of the target culture:

INM41EX: I think that's why E [M2+INT] is the most useful. And it kind of demonstrates as well a really good understanding of the English language.

When reading a domesticating translation, the reader's processing effort will be less. For IN2F18L3, this solution shows the translator's underlying intention to "reach out" to the target reader. To support this argument, he quotes Nelson Mandela's famous saying, "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart":

IN2F18L3 It's always nice when they try to use a Western phrase, because it really shows you're trying to connect with the people. You really reach out to people.

IN2F24N This ['may the best team win'] is kind of generic. That kind of expression has been in a lot of Western literature. So it shows he is trying to just communicate to us in a way we would understand.

However, there always remains a degree of doubt in terms of the translatability of cultural-specific items into a given target language. When asked whether IN1F24M3 would prefer the original Chinese idiom being replaced by an established English proverb, the interviewee's answer is "not really":

IN1F24M3: I mean I have two giant books at home that are full of Chinese idioms, and it's just… there's so many of them and they're sort of hard to understand. And I'm not sure that they can be really translated in an English context. You know, there are a lot of phrases that we use in English that don't necessarily translate either.

More strikingly, in some cases, conforming to target norms can be viewed as neither necessary nor desirable. This is justifiable on two counts. First, trying to adapt start-culture items risks making mistakes. For IN1F19L3, doing nothing is better than doing something wrong:

IN1F19L3 I wouldn't expect him to use [an English idiom], because I feel, well, this might just be me, but some people might feel pandered to. And there's always a risk: if you're not a native to the culture, you might misuse the cultural idioms or use it in a way that delights some people and offends other people. That's incredibly risky… And even if you correctly use the cultural reference, at the same time it may show that you're out of touch or alienate your audience.

I That's dangerous?

IN1F19L3 Yeah. If you're speaking a language that's not your native language, or speaking to a culture that's not your native culture, there are things you could say accidentally that could be offensive or have particular meanings that you have no understanding of.

The next question would be, if the translator does not wrongly use target-culture references and obeys target rules appropriately, is the intervention accepted? For IN1F19L3, the answer is clearly "no":

IN1F19L3	So the reason I didn't like ['wearing two footy scarves'] was that it was someone putting Australian language in [the premier's] mouth. It's not what he said.
I	But if I hadn't shown you the first two translations, would you still feel this way?
IN1F19L3	But I would still be skeptical because it's very Australian. Like 'wearing two footy scarves,' it's a very Australian kind of low-key way of saying something. And I would be very surprised to hear anyone who wasn't Australian middle class [say this].
I	So it's a middle-class language?
IN1F19L3	Well, it depends. I mean it's traditionally lower class, but a lot of people from the middle [class], like my mom, like there are a lot of people from a working-class would speak like this. So I put that one [M3++INT] last because that annoyed me.

The reader's disdain for the translator's use of a "very Aussie" term might provide some evidence for the "unique items hypothesis": translation researchers find that translations tend to normalize the text and contain fewer linguistic items that uniquely belong to the target language than do comparable non-translated texts. One possible reason is that less frequent unique items would suggest that a translated text are not 'normal' (cf. Chesterman, 2007c).

So what would go wrong if a translation is deemed to be abnormal? My preliminary answer is that it raises ethical issues concerning transparency. For the Australian readers, if the Chinese premier's message were purposefully tailored, they naturally suspect what the initial purpose of the premier would have been. As Chesterman (2001) explains, the notion of transparency claims that the original should be clearly visible in the translation. That is, ethical translators should make the other present in an undistorted way. So the absence of a projected foreign other is a sign that can easily be interpreted as representing the loss of the start-text completeness: an implicit meaning or an internal identity is not delivered by the translation.

For IN2F24N, seeing Australian slang in a foreign politician's speech is "weird," "unnatural" and "insincere":

IN2F24N	I think it would be really weird if someone from another country came to Australia and gave a speech and used Australian slang. It would be weird. I think they'd be trying too hard. It almost seems insincere because it doesn't seem natural for that…. Maybe it's just me, but I find that weird. Stop trying so hard.

If the reader interprets the intervention of narrowing down cultural distance as kind of manipulation, the possibility of accepting the text is even lower:

IN2F24N	The reason why it is odd is not because I think it's funny. It's [because] I think that if it's like someone who's just trying to please you to get what they want, but they don't believe it almost. And that would make me distrust that person, because it's just like 'I'm just telling you what you want to hear almost, but I don't actually believe that you believe it.'

For example, FGM52N believes that some phrases like "implement strategic plan" were written by "competent" translators but nevertheless make him suspect that the translation is purposefully tailored to the English-speaking audience:

FGM52N	I actually got the sense that [M1+INT] had been tailored to the English-speaking audience and tried to make sense to them... It seems it was written by somebody who is very competent in English.
FGF19N	But is that the reason why that's a bad translation?
FGM52N	No, no really ((hesitation)).

FG1F19N-a	But what I found interesting was that [M3++INT] seemed very Australian. It seemed very focused on Australian readers... just the way, like "wearing two fully scarves in the summer" and just using the words that Australians would use.

Now, why do some readers not appreciate being purposefully catered to? In other words, what are the risks if translators try to fully use the linguistic resources of the target culture? It may be because the high intervention is perceived by the reader as an untrustworthy intruder into the target culture. For IN1F24M3, if a foreigner (in this case, the Chinese premier) tried so hard to sound like an Australian, "it would only annoy [Australian] people":

IN1F24M3	[The premier sounds like] 'I'm trying to be one of you.' When there's a point that he could never be. He hasn't grown up in the [Australian] culture. So if he actually tried to speak like this, it would only annoy people.
IN3F25M3	This [M3++INT] is a very Australian thing to say. Like it's a bit of a joke. Yeah, it's a bit of like a laugh and Aussie politicians would do that. And Aussies would do that as well. It sounds very Australian, which is why I would doubt that the Chinese premier would have said that. It sounds too Australian. So the Australian politician would have said that, of course, or a Kiwi politician who would have made a bit of a joke about it. And it would have been funny, but not from a Chinese politician. That's my take on it.

This is parallel to Parson's (1953) sociological theory of "boundary-maintaining systems": systems maintain their demarcation by distinguishing between cultural insiders and outsiders. The more a translation involves proximity, the more marked this particular sociocultural boundary. The "very Aussie thing" caused by high intervention is perceived as a "cultureme" (Nord, 1997/2018, p. 32), a cultural reference that uniquely roots in culture A but not lie in culture B. It seems that some target readers remain strongly skeptical about seeing their culturemes in a translation.

5.2.2.4.5 As a stranger?

If target readers view a domesticating translation as suspicious, if not entirely untrustworthy, what kind of translation solutions are they looking for? The answer refers back to the criterion of "objectivity." FG2M52N believes that readers are "always looking for the neutral voice" and that, in order to achieve that voice, the speaker should give the message "in their own words":

FG2M52N	Then you might think, well, the Chinese premier he's not gonna say that. You know, so it loses its reliability as well.
FG2F19N	Yeah, because you think if they've constrained this, what else have they constrained?
FG2M52N	Yeah, probably that's why it's more convincing when it's in his own words. You are happier to take something, which doesn't quite make sense if it's a quote.

We cannot simply categorize "speaking in one's own words" as a "foreignizing translation" or a "start-text oriented approach." The notions of proximity and distance interact in a quite subtle and complementary way. For example, IN2F18L3 and IN2F34D suggest that a combination of both solutions could help increase translation reliability:

IN2F18L3	They can probably use a bit of both. If someone was making a speech, they [could] use some traditional Chinese phrases and some Western phrases. It's good because they're recognizing their culture and recognizing the other culture.
IN2F34D	So if I have a choice, I'll probably combine [M2+INT] and [M2-INT]. For example, 'actions speak louder than words' and then I'll use brackets to explain the meaning literally or add a footnote. Okay, that is what a translator probably should be doing. But of the two, I still prefer [M2+INT] over [M2-INT] because [M2+INT] literally translates the phrase clearly to an English speaker. Convey the meaning of it.

As Chesterman (2004b) argues, all translations are considered as being deficient in some way. This is justified not only because of the traditional tropes of loss and betrayal, or of nearness or distance, but because in some situations a once-and-for-all translation might not be able to meet the whole set of expectations of the entire prospective readerships.

But is communication really destined to fail if the reader's expectations cannot be fully met? As IN2F18L3 indicates, both domesticating and foreignizing translations are possibly acceptable:

IN2F18L3	I think I like [M2-INT] the most, because it's a speech, right? And so when it's a speech, you can use a bit more things to try and engage people like 'as the Chinese saying goes.' So I think that might be important. But I still like 'actions speak louder than words' [in M2+INT] because that kind of helps understand what the text said.

It is traditionally assumed that foreignizing and domesticating are two incompatible, neatly separated solutions. For instance, Berman (1984/1992) insists that integrating a start text into the target-culture sense only leads to unethical ethnocentric translation. The foreign text thus should not be adapted but maintain cultural distance. As Berman (1985/1999, p. 74) puts it, "the ethical act consists in recognizing and receiving the Other as Other" (translated by Pym, 2010/2014, p. 100). This classic start-text priority is directly challenged by subsequent target-oriented paradigms.

Nevertheless, as we have discussed above, the acceptable boundary between proximity and distance is much more blurred than assumed. When a translation tries to follow the target norms, it risks being seen as a suspicious intruder showing an inadequate understanding of the receiving culture. Besides, the virtues of maintaining distance merit serious attention. It is not only because it shows linguistic fidelity to the start text, nor is it because it is a prescriptive pronouncement of translation ethics. It has more to do with the ways the target reader trusts a translation: in some situations, a translation that makes the other appear as other is valued as authentic and transparent.

Readers' expectations not merely as a list of possibilities or directives, but as a dynamic process in two senses: first, expectations can be contradictory and mutually exclusive in several respects; second, expectations are not static but are always in a state of flux.

There is no suggestion of expectation determinism here: one can hardly claim every reader will always prefer a concise or precise translation. In accordance with various text types or different communicative situations, the trade-off model posits that a certain amount of virtue A is perceived to be balanced with a certain amount of contradictory virtue B. The logic of the compromise may help us redefine ideal "acceptability" by examining how readers calculate the possibilities of loss and gain. This approach is thus distinct from a traditional notion of expectancy norms that are "highly sensitive to text-type" (Chesterman, 1997/2016, p. 65). The model attempts to emphasize the interplay of the conflicting expectations in a bottom-up way. The acceptability of a translation is a range rather than a fixed point; what the target reader can possibly accept is a *set* of options that are deemed trustworthy.

5.2.3 Diversity and complexity in readership

Readers are not a homogeneous set: they naturally have very different and sometimes incompatible expectations. Meanwhile, readers do not read a translation in a vacuum but read in the way they *have learned* to read. With different cultural horizons, they might respond differently. The complicated nature of readers accounts for the differences, disagreements, and clashing expectations shown in the readers' various degrees of the acceptance of translation interventions.

I propose that the complexity of readership can be illustrated by four general factors: 1) familiarity with the subject matter, 2) readers' positions, 3) reading purposes, and 4) reading habits.

5.2.3.1 Familiarity

5.2.3.1.1 Different degrees of familiarity with the start culture

The familiarity survey shows that that the readerships had different degrees of familiarity with the start culture (see 3.3.2.1); the quantitative results of the readers' *Knowledge of China* (see 5.1.2.8) suggest that the reader's familiarity with the start culture significantly correlates with their translation preferences. Here the qualitative interview data also support this argument.

My initial surprise was that some readers' familiarity with China was very limited:

IN2F24N	So the Republic of China has been around since 1949?
I:	Is it younger than you thought?
IN2F24N	Yeah, it's younger. I mean, obviously, China has been around forever. You know, the Chinese culture goes back thousands of years, so what was before?

Many Australian readers never heard about the “peaches and plums” idiom, let alone comprehending the literal translation of it:

> IN1F19L3: I’m sure that if I knew the history of the idiom [the ‘peaches and plums’], I would completely understand where it was coming from. But I don’t know.

> IN2F24N So is it [‘peaches and plums’ idiom] like an ancient Chinese proverb or something, or did he just make it up?

The resulting comprehension difficulty partly explains why IN2F24N ranks the literalist translation of the Chinese idiom as her least favorite. As the interviewee argues, “the average non-Chinese person wouldn’t understand” (IN2F24N):

> IN2F24N I don’t really understand that. ((Hesitation)) The first sentence with that Chinese saying I don’t really know what it means. I guess it means ‘actions speak louder than words,’ but I don’t really see that.

In contrast, the readers in the “Chinese diaspora” group seem to be much more familiar with the start culture, mainly because of cultural and geopolitical proximity:

> IN1F34D It’s because it [the ‘Belt and Road Initiative’] shows up in the newspapers quite a lot. It’s on the front page of the newspaper. You have to be trying really hard not to see this. And also maybe because it also affects Singapore and this part of the world.

Another factor is language proficiency. These linguistic-quality concerns confirm the quantitative results that *Knowledge of Chinese* significantly correlates with the readers’ acceptance of translations (see 5.1.2.7). When asked whether “no matter who wins the match, I will cheer and applaud for him” in Task 3 would convey an unwanted, negative meaning, INM41EX said that he had no problem with either the Chinese original or the translation simply because he was a Chinese-English bilingual:

> INM41EX: Maybe I’m bilingual. That’s why I can understand that here. You know, I could make the same kind of translation if I were translating this piece.

This seems to be a conceptual taxonomic problem. INM41EX categorizes himself as a “bilingual” reader; it seems that he does not think of himself as a typical reader. Start- and target-language proficiency indeed influences how the readers respond to translations. As Chesterman (1999/2017) suggests, unlike the typical readers who are the prospective target-language receivers of a translation, untypical readers (e.g., teachers, translation scholars and critics) usually have some levels of proficiency in both the start and target languages, which in turn affects their judgments:

> INM41EX: I mean I’m bilingual; that’s why it’s a bit difficult for me to judge. I don’t think general English speakers will understand it or to make sense of it.

Similarly, regardless of readability problems, FG1F20D from the "Chinese diaspora" group ranked M1-INT as her favorite, mainly because by comparing the translated text with the original he found that the literal translation was "the closest":

I:	So [M1-INT] is your favorite one?
FG1F20D	Yeah, I think it's like a more direct interpretation. The rest, ((um)), goes further to describe.
I	If you read just the first one [M1-INT], can you understand the five-sphere integrated plan?
FG1F20D	Oh, if I just read it, yeah, I wouldn't know what it refers to. But I think it's the closest. Like if you just want to translate that sentence, it's the closest translation to that sentence.

The readers' engagement with China is considered as another indication of their familiarity with the start culture. When asked whether it seemed natural to wear two footy scarves, IN2F26M3 argued that she could fully understand and agree with the Chinese premier's choice because her long-term stay in China had made her aware of the cultural differences between China and Australia:

IN2F26M3	I think because I've spent so much time in China, this is what I think. And I assume that with other people you've spoken to, anyone who's probably quite familiar with China would probably agree with what I say. Anyone who's not would probably say, 'Why not just pick a team?'

With different degrees of familiarity with the start culture, the target readers' tolerance of translator intervention varies widely. This is especially obvious in evaluating the translated of asymmetrical knowledge between the two languages, such as culture-bound terms, different political systems, and ideological conflicts.

5.2.3.1.2 Different degrees of familiarity with the target culture

It is relatively easy, perhaps commonsensical, to reckon that the target readers have different degrees of familiarity with the start culture. Here I come up against an oversimplified view of a target culture's perceptions as a fairly homogeneous set.

One example is how Australians perceive the Australian Football League (AFL) culture in Task 3. Before ranking the translations, every participant was asked the same question: "Are you a fan of AFL?". Some said "yes":

FG2F19N	All my male cousins have been reserves for various first-grade teams throughout their adult lives. So I should be, but I'm not. Ah, I have no idea about the rules of the game, but I have quite a good understanding of the culture around it.
IN1F24M3	Oh, yes and no. I watch it. I don't really understand it. ((Um)), and I watched the grand final last weekend. It was very exciting. I mean I understand most of the rules that but I'm not necessarily a fan.

Most female interviewees admit that they are "not necessarily a fan." This less-than-enthusiastic attitude to AFL culture make these readers more readily accept a literal translation like M3-INT, in which the Chinese premier insists on wearing two footy scarves to support both teams:

I:	Maybe he [the Chinese premier] is unfamiliar with AFL.
IN2F24N	I'm unfamiliar with AFL ((laughter)). I've never watched football games. I found them boring. ((Um)), so I think like that's probably the most appropriate response and it seems genuine.

FG2F19	He [the Chinese premier] has done this in a humorous way. I don't think people expect him to be a diehard fan of one. People kind of understand it.

When the readers were asked the question, "Can people wear two footy scarves when they watch an AFL game?", the less familiar the reader is with sports, the more tolerant and empathetic they are towards the Chinese premier's careful choice:

FG2F19N	He looks so happy.
IN2F24N	Well, that's kind of cute.

These readers tend to interpret and understand the Chinese premier's gesture as a thoughtful, diplomatic tactic:

IN2F26M3:	Oh, wow, yeah ((laughter)). I think that's very diplomatic of him. Extremely diplomatic of him here. Extremely careful. And I think, to be honest, if I was in his position, I would have done the same thing.

In comparison, some die-hard football fans have no trouble indicating their clear expectations of the translations about AFL:

IN1M19N	Well, I have done it [wearing two scarves] before, my dad's side is the Hawthorn side, and my mom's side is the Bulldogs side. I'm a Bulldog. ((Um)), if it's Bulldogs and Hawthorn, I'll wear both. But if my brother brings his girlfriend along and she goes for another team and it's against Hawthorn or Bulldogs, [I will say], 'well, I'm not gonna wear their color and he is gonna say, 'shut up. Go away.'
IN1M19N	So it's Australian football. Like we might not care about our politics, but we care about football.

FG2M52N believed that if it was "something about sports and football," he would expect to read a certain voice that was "more casual rather than political":

FG2M52N	He can't support both. It's football, you gotta take a side. And so normally the thing would be... Well, it's more striking in the photo. That's you know the fact that he's got the two scarves. The natural thing is that rivalry is important. So the other leader should take the other team.

The varying acceptance of cultural differences works dependently on the target readers' perceptions of their own culture. If one believes that "an Aussie would never wear two scarves," the reader's view towards the two-scarves-better-than-one Chinese premier is hard to be positive:

IN2F26M3	An Aussie would want to publicize, 'Oh, I back this team.' And an Aussie would never wear two scarves. You know, you would never wear two scarves. And like our prime ministers have no issue with wearing their team's like, 'okay, yes, maybe I'm prime minister, but I support my team.' AFL is very important in Australian and Melbourne culture and people don't have an issue with that. You may be the prime minister of the country, but you can still have your footy team. And it's not a problem.

Very few discussions on target-culture conventions have tried to account for the divergent perceptions of the target culture on the reception side: the degree of cultural homogeneity among the target readers remains shrouded in uncertainty. There is no evidence that the entire target readership would somehow respond similarly, legislating a norm that translators must conform to, let alone promulgating a once-for-all translation solution to meet their diverse underlying expectations.

5.2.3.1.3 Intrinsic cultural differences

Another reason for the readers' more or less uneven familiarity with the subject matter is that cultural difference is always at stake. In this section, I present four aspects of cultural difference between Chinese and Australian foreign-affairs discourses, focusing on the most commonly reported comprehension-related problems.

5.2.3.1.3.1 Slogans

When asked whether Australian politicians used slogans that are similar to the Chinese slogans in Task 1, IN2F26M3 argued that slogans are "a very Chinese thing," somehow one of the intrinsic elements of ancient Chinese language and Communist politics:

IN2F26M3	Sometimes. But slogans are a very Chinese thing. I mean, a lot of the Communist countries have slogans. Like Mao Zedong used slogans all the time. And Chinese always has the four-character things. It always has compact phrases. And that's part of the history of the Chinese language and the political history of China as well. But in Australia or in English, we don't really have that.

However, the rejection of slogans is not taken on board by everyone. People's willingness and ability to understand a different culture should not be underestimated. For example, IN2F19L3 suggested that Western leaders also use (short) slogans, although the slogans did not "necessarily have a very typical format":

IN2F19L3	One slogan that I don't like but we have and maybe you've heard it is 'Stop the Boats.' It was a racist anti-immigration policy. So that's a slogan, but it doesn't necessarily have a very typical format. It's short. That's it. In America, for example, you probably heard about Trump's

‘Make America Great Again,’ that’s a slogan. Obama had ‘Yes we can,’ but they’re not the same. They just articulate a meaning or a sentiment, but that’s all, whereas Chinese ones often mean more. It’s four characters put together, but it means so much more.

IN1F24M3 argues here that Australian politicians also use slogans e.g. former prime minister of Australia Tony Abbot’s refugee policy “Stop the Boats!” What makes the translation problematic, however, is the syntactic feature of Chinese – if an implicit Chinese four-character slogan condenses what is a whole narrative in English, a linguistically equivalent translation is hard to make sense of:

IN1F24M3 The only thing I can think of is Tony Abbott. He was always like [saying] ‘Stop the Boats.’ It’s his kind of slogan. It’s not very catchy, I guess ((laughter)). But I do think Chinese slogans are more... ((hesitation)). Well, it’s kind of different in the way they are created, because you can have the meaning of the characters and artistic meaning as well, whereas in English, you can’t really have that as much.

FG2F24N gave another example of the Australian government’s “Reconciliation” plan, suggesting that, as discourse rhetoric, political slogans are common enough. But how much readers can understand depends largely on the individual’s contextual knowledge:

IN2F24N I mean they [the Australian government] have names of things like the anniversary for the apology to the indigenous people, and it’s called ‘Reconciliation.’ I guess if someone put a press report saying ‘Reconciliation Week in Australia,’ people would not know what that meant. They don’t know the context of it. So I guess it’s a similar sort of thing. I suppose every country would have like these sorts of things.

In sum, some forms of political discourse are more culture-bound than others. Perhaps what is at fault is not so much the idea of using slogans. Perhaps the problem is with the ambiguity of the language-unique and culture-specific items themselves, which is hard to convey well by literalism. Any literal translation of the context-bound connotations of slogans only can be understood by the readers who are familiar with the implicit context to which the slogans belong. And they may not be the main target readers.

5.2.3.1.3.2 Dates

In Task 1, M1+INT explicitates the meaning of the term “Two Centenary Goals” by illustrating the Chinese government’s plan to create “a moderately prosperous society by 2021 and build China into a modernized socialist society by 2049.” For IN1M19N, apparently, only Socialist states would foresee any success on an exact date:

IN1M19N I think the main difference is they give actual dates and that’s very socialist of them. But you know, [in] other countries, we know that the economy is going to go up and down and not everything is going to go to plan. So you would say, ‘in about five years, we hope to see this’ instead of say, ‘by 2049, we will be a socialist society.’

Similarly, IN2F19L3 argues that the overly assertive dates merely reveal the fact that China has a centrally planned economy, whose structure is unfamiliar and sometimes alarming to the target readers:

IN2F19L3: Well, you can give approximate values. But you know that the system is different. You know that China is a very structured economy, whereas we have plans, but you know we let the economy do its thing.

The apparently abusive use of dates in the Chinese context could be highly marked. It also raises a major question of trust, precisely because such a projection arouses readers' suspicions and doubts. N1M19N argues that he would prefer to hear something like "this may not happen, but we are hoping it will happen":

IN1M19N That's why I'm always a bit wary of politicians saying that 'this budget cut will do this or that.' Or 'we will see economic growth or something.' I mean, are you sure about that?

Without explanations, a literal translation may fail in its communicative function; but at the same time, providing explicit information might not always be convincing. Giving specific dates in policy-making is a conventional norm in the Chinese context; it is less frequently used in free-market economies. Here we have moved beyond the conventional discussion of translation quality: an underlying ideological difference between Chinese and Western political discourse is highlighted, revealing broader and more complex possibilities that underpin translation reception.

5.2.3.1.3.3 Names

Chinese political plans or national initiatives are usually given special names e.g. Belt and Road Initiative. Some readers see the literal translations of the names as "very symbolic," "hard-to-understand" and "tedious." For IN2F19L3, a literal translation of name magnifies a "culture shock":

IN2F19L3: I think it's more of a cultural thing because in Australia most of the time [we have] our new economic policy, but we don't have a technical name for it. We might have 'Gonski,' but that's not like "Rebuild the School Initiative" or something like that.

IN1M19N indicated that he was aware that Chinese political discourse was historically "riddled with names." The interviewee gave two examples that were not included in our own ranking translations: the Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Great Leap Forward, both proposed by Mao Zedong in the 1960s:

IN1M19N: I know that Chinese history is just riddled with names that don't make [sense], like the 'One Hundred Flowers Campaign.' If I didn't know anything about that one, I might think. 'Is it something to do with flowers?' It does not have anything to do with flowers. Or 'The Great Leap Forward.' You know, I don't know what that means by itself. I don't know that it's an economic policy designed to do whatever.

The literal translations of the names lead to comprehension problems. Nevertheless, when asked whether it was necessary to retain the foreign element of the names, surprisingly, IN1M19N's answer was "yes," although he also suggested, "an explanation [should] be given with them." IN1M19N then commented that his interests in Chinese and China's modern history were indeed triggered by the names:

IN1M19N:	The names like 'Great Leap Forward' and 'Hundred Flowers' that criticize Confucius sound very funny. It sounds very odd, you know, and so I did a little bit of research into the names. [And I felt], 'oh, that's cool.' I should learn Chinese because I want to know a lot about the history.

In this case, literalism is not just a choice; it is an option with pedagogical underpinnings, and those virtues are worth having, even if only for some readers.

5.2.3.1.3.4 Quotes

Another striking feature of Chinese political discourse is the frequent use of quotes by politicians. INM41EX suggested that one possible reason for this is that Chinese leaders resort to established knowledge to "convey legitimacy," with special reference to Chinese classics:

INM41EX	My hypothesis is that they [the Chinese leaders] need to draw on the wisdom of traditional Chinese classics to convey legitimacy to what they're trying to say. It's the same as referencing in English academic writing. We need to reference established knowledge to create a foundation and settings for what I'm going to talk about.

For INM41EX, Chinese politicians quote much more frequently than their Western counterparts usually do. The fairly ubiquitous appearance of quotes is deemed to help Chinese leaders appear to be the ultimate authority by mustering the legacies of their ancestors:

INM41EX:	I think they [Chinese leaders] do more than the West. I think there is a need there. They tend to over-quote a little bit, but I think it's because of the need to build the linkage that connects between who they are and what came before them. So they see themselves as a part of the lineage of knowledge and they convey that wisdom. Like it's not my wisdom but it is everyone's wisdom that is lasting for thousands of years.

A similar point is made by IN2F26M3, who emphasizes that using cultural references assumes high degrees of identity agreement, ethical bonding and cultural cohesion, helping Chinese political discourse be better received within the start-culture community:

IN2F26M3	The leaders of China don't just talk about today's politics. They talk about Chinese identity and Chinese history. For example, Chinese people, I think, really enjoy and respect it when someone uses poetry in a speech, because it shows that they're educated or cultivated. And

it reminds everybody, ‘if I understand this piece of poetry and you understand this piece of poetry, we are from the same culture.’

This gives rise to two questions. First, is the target community accustomed to seeing this Chinese historical tradition? For some readers, quoting classics in political speech creates nothing but distance and arrogance, making the speaker seem disingenuous:

IN2F24N I think if the Australian prime minister was quoting Shakespeare or just like some random philosophers, people would [think], ‘you're not one of us.’ And then [it] feels like they're trying too hard to seem smarter and therefore they are unreliable.

IN2F34D Sometimes it really depends on who says it as well. Because for some people, they think, ‘you're trying too hard.’ Or like you're representing yourself as an everyday person. They use these local idioms in a way that doesn't feel genuine.

Second, if using cultural references is to resonate with the start-culture readers, is it possible for the translation to have the same semantic or pragmatic effects upon target readers? The views of the interviewees varied widely on this point. For IN3F25M3, some culture-specific terms are impossible to render in other languages:

I Do you think it's important to translate an original idiom?
IN3F25M3 That is a good question. Because that [idiom] is not something that would happen in English. Like if this is a political text, I don't think we would use something like that in English.

Does this mean that the presence of cultural untranslatables gives one language more value than another? For IN2F26M3, the foreign element should be retained, since it can help non-Chinese readers realize that they are engaging with a different culture:

IN2F26M3 I think why I prefer transition [M2-INT] is because it actually has translated the idiom, or the line of poetry. When Chinese leaders make speeches, they don't just use modern Chinese. They use a lot of old poetry, songs, sayings, idioms, much more than Western leaders do. And I think that's really important for non-Chinese people to realize that it's not just China as a country, but it's China as a culture.

This reminds us of Philip E. Lewis's (1985/2012) insistence on making the other appear as other. His so-called “abusive fidelity” values “strong” translations that stand against the target-culture norms and calls for translations that follow the start text as closely as possible (see also Chesterman, 1997/2016, p. 26), even if the resulting texts sound strange to most readers (cf. Pym 2010/2014, especially p. 108).

IN2F26M3 went on to suggest another view of a readership that would be more sophisticated than a binary opposition of domestic insiders vs. foreign outsiders. A literal translation of the start-culture idiom means that migrants or diasporic subjects, or people who wander around the edges of cultural-group membership, no longer remain an entirely marginal category:

IN2F26M3	I think that Chinese leaders do this very well. For them, the border of China is not just the border of China. Wherever there are Chinese people, that is part of China. I think that's probably how they think about it. And so they are talking about Chinese culture to bring everyone together. So I think it's important to include the quotes in the translation. So in every political speech, there is an idiom. You know, in every political speech, they talk about a poem or a historical figure or legend. I think that's important.

Interestingly enough, the quantitative results show that all three subjects in the "Chinese diaspora" group ranked M2-INT, the literal translation of the idiom, as their first or second preference. Apart from language proficiency and background knowledge, the qualitative data offer some clues as to how a sense of cultural belonging might influence translation reception.

If the foreignizing translation creates a new readership between cultural insiders and outsiders, will it somehow exclude the target-language receivers who share little common cultural ground with the start-culture community? IN2F26M3 believes there is no real risk of alienating these people:

I	Do you think the English audience will feel excluded by reading the Chinese components?
IN2F26M3	No necessarily. I don't think they would feel excluded. They'll just feel, 'Oh, okay. I didn't know that.' I think lots of people like poetry. Lots of people like quotes. Like lots of people will say that 'Confucius says this.' Even English speakers will say that. And even in English speeches, they'll use that. So it doesn't make them feel alienated, I don't think.

What we can see from the literalist translation of culture-bound quotes here is that a foreignizing translation of a culture-bound item is justified not merely by creating possibly desired effects upon the target reader, but by functioning as a way of expanding the readership and revealing start-culture specificity. On the theoretical level, discussion of the function of literalist translation thus requires new attention to the meaning of cultural boundaries and the categories of target readers.

5.2.3.1.3.5 Ideological and institutional structures

One of the most difficult, if not unsolvable translation challenges concerns the different ways of thinking that operate in different cultures, particularly with respect to ideological and institutional structures. In Task 1, M1+INT explicitated what China's four-strategy plan, e.g. achieving "the rule of law" and strengthening "Party discipline." For IN2F19L3, the notion of the "rule of law" should be a self-evident, fundamental feature of any civil society. This in turn means that any attempt to underscore the need to "strengthen Party discipline" and "promote the rule of law" in a general national plan merely raises a presumption with regard to Party corruption and social turbulence:

IN2F19L3	The fact that it's talking about strengthening 'party discipline' implies there's an issue with the party discipline. I mean, obviously, there have been many corruption scandals in Australia. If it's immediately after someone said we need to look at party discipline completely, I would understand that it's in a specific context. But the fact is that it's [M1+INT] an overall context, so it seems like it's an issue.

IN1F19L3's main argument is that if dealing with corruption is one of the major goals for a government, it implies that corruption has been a big issue:

IN1F19L3	I can't remember the name of the court. But there is a special court in Australia. So it's assumed that you're not constantly looking for it, but if you find it, then it's something that will be dealt with. And there's a mechanism in place. And if you find corruption, you deal with it. But at the same time, it's not a focus.

China is obviously not the only country dealing with corruption and anti-corruption campaigns have been a defining aspect of Xi Jinping's presidency. M1+INT provides the correct facts; nevertheless, how well target readers in other sociocultural systems receive the facts is perhaps less obvious. The concepts operative in the reader's own culture usually become touchstones for the perception of otherness. Here the underlying difference is partly institutional, concerning the premises about how a government should function:

IN1F19L3	But I would be struck and concerned if I saw something like that coming from the Australian government, because I would think, well, 'why do we need to strengthen party discipline?' There must be something wrong if they need to.

Since translators are subject to complex political and ideological constraints, their role is constantly in need of negotiation. At first glance, there seems no space for the translator to maneuver: you cannot change the Chinese government's national agenda and entirely alter the start text so as to achieve the aspiration of the Western audience. One apparent solution is to explain the background story. However, since the underlying values and ideologies are different, sometimes the more clearly you explain, the more obvious the difference, thus the less likely the text is to be liked.

One answer to the paradoxical difficulty could be the "principle of the necessary degree of precision" proposed by Hönig and Kussmaul (1982/1996, noted in Pym, 2010/2014, especially pp. 51–52), which proposes that the appropriate amount of information is decided by the required function of the translated text. In this "good enough" theory, the translator should give the details that are good enough for the reader, "which may be more than those in the start text, or less" (Pym, 2010/2014, p. 44). However, the pertinent question is how we can know when the information is good enough for the reader. The need for reception research is evident: the more we understand the readers, the better chance we have of predicting the communicative effects.

5.2.3.2 Readers' positions

A translation can hardly be deemed to be bias-free if the message itself is contradictory to the reader's prior knowledge of the start culture. IN1M19N regards M4++INT as his least trustworthy translation mainly because he does not believe that China as a Communist country can support "free trade," as M4++INT claims. The high-intervention translation thus contradicts the reader's ostensible prior knowledge and is seen as lacking honesty:

IN1M19N	[M4++INT] says 'the government believes in the benefits of the free trade.' But it's still talking about implementing requirements of the economy. And that doesn't really sound like free trade necessarily. That still sounds like a planned economy. [It] just sort of contradicts [the facts] a little bit, if you have that sort of background knowledge.
I	Do you mean people won't believe China believes in free trade?
IN1M19N	((Um)), well, we call it a Communist country. And then you talk about free trade. So are you Communists? Just be honest with us, please. You know, [things like] Marxism, socialism [are] very difficult to wrap my mind around. Even most people who are not politically minded, they know that Communism does not involve free trade.

IN1M19N	I don't believe you because you've said something that contradicts your entire [ideology]… like are you Communist or only in name? It's just a contradiction. You can't be extolling the virtue of free trade and still call yourself a Communist. It doesn't sound honest.

Could we claim that readers' perceptions can be changed by translation alone? Hardly. In this case, what decides whether the reader trusts a translation is firmly rooted within the reader's own ideological position. M4++INT was the least preferred by IN2F34D because the reader believed that the translated information went against the grain of common sense:

IN2F34D	It seems a little ironic for me that it [M4++INT] says 'it [China] is committed to trade relationships with other nations that value fairness and reciprocity.' I don't feel like China is a country that really values fairness. I don't know. Just for me that seems a bit hollow, like a false statement because they are not fair to a lot of people in other countries.

IN2F18L3	I think it [M4++INT] has a lot of bias if you don't like the Chinese government. So I think J [M4-INT] and K [M4+INT] are a bit more neutral.

Note that target readers themselves are not value-free. That is, the readers tend to have a broad perception of the start culture as a whole before they engage with any translation of it. IN2F18L3 ranked M1++INT as her favorite, although she pointed out that the translation was not neutral as there was indeed a tendency to "say something good" about China. Nevertheless, the interviewee indicated that her feelings for Chinese culture made her happily accept the "bias":

IN2F18L3	I do think it [M1++INT] is trying to say something good, maybe because I have my own bias. I really like China. So that could be one thing. I think B [M1+INT] could be a little bit biased. It's about achieving a prosperous society. I think A [M1-INT] is the least biased.

On the other hand, IN1F24M3 has a rather more radical proposition that trust between two cultures can only be described as illusory and deceptive:

IN1F24M3	Australians don't trust Chinese people, generally. Australians trust Australian-born-Chinese, because they're Australians. But I think that the erosion of trust between Australia as a country and China as a country is quite strong for many reasons. I think it's unfortunate for a lot of people that are caught in the crossfire.

These distinct, opposing perceptions held by different readers explain why the ideology-related content has received very diverse receptions. In Task 4, the start text introduces the ChAFTA supported by the Chinese government. M4-INT literally translates the ways the Chinese Communist Party implements the free-trade agreement. M4+INT omits all the Communist-related information and M4++INT adapts its linguistic style so that the target readership might be more familiar with it. When asked whether the Communist content should be retained, the readers' responses appear to be varied.

For a reader who presumably wishes to understand "the spirit of" the original, removing the ideological context risks losing important information:

IN1M19N	I can see why people say, 'oh, this [M4++INT] is a lie.' [M4++INT] is the easiest to read in terms of the language used, whereas I don't think it really captures the spirit of the original text.

For some, retaining the Communist-specific content is "fine" because such knowledge is in line with the reader's prior understanding of China. It is fairly easy to recognize and receive the foreignness:

IN2F26M3	I think it's fine because we all know that it's the Chinese Communist Party. Everybody knows that. So it's not weird.

For others, Communist support is functionally relevant because the Chinese government's endorsement seems to give an authorized voice to the free-trade agreement:

FG1F19N-b	I guess for me, it's a bit more important. If you're bringing in the Committee and the Council rather than just being sort of a public service announcement, it shows 'what we're doing at the moment will be good for you.'

Paradoxically, while IN1F41EX regarded the Communist information as "confusing", the expert argued that "that information is there for a reason":

IN1F41EX	It's confusing. Even for China watcher, it's confusing. But you need to have that information. For me, I'll skip certain things. Okay? I wouldn't read those things unless I require that information. But that information is there for a reason. I will skip them, but it doesn't mean that they are not important.

Nevertheless, it seems that the completeness of information is given rather less attention by the general readership. For IN3F25M3, this contextual confusion is likely to ensue from institutional differences: China has a party-dominated regime that Australia does not have, making the ideological content difficult to digest:

IN3F25M3	Yeah, it is because we don't have that [Communist] system in Australia so it's hard for us to [understand].

Miscomprehension is not the highest risk; mistrust is. If special weight is given to ideological values, the target reader would feel "instantly skeptical":

IN2F18L3	I think [M4-INT] focuses too much on the Party.
IN1M19N	When I read any of them [M4-INT], the businessman side of me goes 'what's the catch?'[...] Especially [when you read something] like 'an important decision of the Party Central Committee,' you feel, 'okay so it's political stuff,' and that makes me instantly skeptical. Communist? ((sneer)) No offence.

Although the readers are evidently in favor of a more informative text, if the content is regarded as being less trustworthy, they are less likely to put their finger on what is missing. FG1F19N-a argues that she feels even "stressed" when reading the "very rigid" Communist-bound M4-INT:

FG1F19N-a	I think [M4-INT] would work well on a political website, but I personally found [M4+INT] to be the easiest to understand only because it sort of took out the very...((um))...
I:	The State Council part.
FG1F19N-a	Yeah, I was also a bit stressed out when reading it because I felt like I really had to believe in it. And ((um)) like it was very rigid. And [M4-INT wants to say] this is a good thing, whereas the other one [M4+INT] sort of [says] this is what we will do.

IN1M19N also points out that "a lot of references" to Communist ideology do not help to build trust between the text and its readership:

IN2F19L3	You don't necessarily want to emphasize that if you want to work with non-Communist countries which will probably be unnecessarily paranoid.
IN1M19N	I suppose that if they [Chinese translators] were trying to reach out to certain audiences, they would have to be careful about using Communist language like that [M4-INT].

As discussed above, the Communist context is functional: the official endorsement is assumed to help boost market confidence in the government-led agreement:

FG1F19N-b	It's just because [M4-INT shows] it's...((um))... government-supported. And it really sounds very professional. And it makes you [think]: 'Okay, so they've really thought out what they have to say here,' whereas the others [M4+INT and M4++INT] are more like 'this is what it is.'

Yet many Australian readers have doubts regarding the ideological slant that is overtly different from that of theirs. So the Communist endorsement merely generates unnecessary risks of trust. A major reason for this failure is the readers' prior perception of the start culture:

IN2F18L3	I think it would make investors trustless, because I think that Western investors have a degree of bias against the [Chinese] body. So I think if they read [M4+INT], they're just looking at the agreement. And they're assessing how strong the trade agreement is. But I think if they look at [M4-INT], they might be thinking that, 'Oh, it's not performing as well as the [Chinese] government might say it is.'
I	Why would they think like that?
IN2F18L3	From what I've seen, there's a lot of media out there that say that the Chinese government tries to promote their successes and so it doesn't accurately report when policies aren't going well. I think that investors might not trust it as much.

For IN2F24N, the emphasis on the government as the backbone of the free trade agreement weakens the connection between the economic initiative and the public interest, making him question the purpose of the agreement:

IN2F24N	[M4-INT] is very, ((um)), again, very wordy. It's very literal and also it has a lot of references to the Central Committee and the State Council. But I think that's just because, you know, ((um)), they love talking about themselves, whereas in Australia you have to say this is a very important decision for society.

For IN2F24N and IN3F24M3, the bureaucratic phrases shown in the translation are regarded as less trustworthy buzzwords:

IN2F24N	Something like 'it's an important solid step to implement the requirements of the third and fourth and plenary session' just makes you feel, 'go on and talk about how cool you are.'
IN3F24M3	I usually find that, this stuff, you know, like the 'Central Party Committee,' is just not relevant to the rest of what's in the document.

In terms of the potential functional values of the ideological content, IN3F25L3 makes a valid point: since the agreement has already been signed by both governments, there is no need for excessive work to underline the authoritative support:

IN3F25L3	ChAFTA itself already said it's a China-Australia free trade agreement. So it's kind of a given that it's run by very important people with authority in both of the countries already. So that part is irrelevant information, which is also why I lean towards [M4++INT].

For the target reader, they may make sense of something foreign in terms of something more familiar (Chesterman, 2007a). Any kind of prior knowledge is thus a condition, existing prior to reception, which largely affects the reader's cognitive process. In this case, the Communist content is easily associated with a certain readership's negative view of China:

IN2F34D	I can understand if I were China, I probably wanted to influence and got support. ((Um)), but as a person who is not Chinese, I'm very, very concerned about the influence and the pressures they're putting on eastern Asian sovereign countries.

IN1F19L3 hinted at a similar experience when she argued that "the idea of 'party discipline' [in M1+INT] probably immediately" made her "have negative associations" with her knowledge of Taiwan during the Cold War:

IN1F19L3	I've studied the Cold War, and in particular the incidents in Taiwan during the wartime. And just the idea of 'party discipline' [in M1+INT] probably immediately made me have negative associations with that one.
I	You mean, when you read things like 'socializing,' you get a negative impression?
IN1F19L3	Yeah, I mean, that struck me straight away. Whereas this one is kind of, it reads, it works like propaganda. Government propaganda.

The influence of the target reader's prior knowledge is not limited to ideological content. Some values are strikingly target-culture-specific. IN2F24N argued that she did not like the idea of "flow of funds," which all appeared in M4-INT, M4+INT and M4++INT because the notion is interpreted as an element of neo-imperialism:

IN2F24N	Like the 'flow of funds,' I just don't like that. I know that the whole thing is about making money. But when you say it like that, then it's like, which direction is the funds flowing? Australians? Do I like the idea that other countries get our stuff?

As an Australian graduate student in Agriculture Science, IN2F24N argued that globalization and the "flow of funds" made it more difficult for Australians to consume their local products:

IN2F24N So I'm in Agriculture Science. Yes, we need to sell all of our stuff to China and to Asia because they will pay more for it. There's a saying that they're all for free trade and everything. But the actual Australian people don't like the fact that our best quality stuff is being sent to other countries. The best seafood is sent to like Japan because they will pay more for it. This is a really big issue. People wanna be eating the local stuff from the farms, you know, outside the city, but they don't get that stuff. Eating locally is not really a reality. And if you want to eat locally, you have to pay more for it, which doesn't really make sense.

IN2F24N comes up with a fairly convincing point that meanings are inherently unstable, and they are interpreted differently by individuals:

IN2F24N There's a bit of difference in opinion about trade between the average Australian, the public and in the government's Ministry of Trade. So yeah, we talk a lot about the flowing of funds and business. But the average person I think would be a bit suspicious of that.

IN2F24N suggests that if the translation talks about creating more jobs rather than flows of capital, it would seem to be "more positive." Nevertheless, she notes that "creating more jobs" could raise the Australians' concerns about the issue of migrant labor:

IN2F24N Then you think, okay, there's gonna be more jobs for more Chinese workers going to come and steal our jobs. Australians are very historically afraid of other cultures coming in and stealing their jobs.

It seems that the role of the translator is strictly limited here: the translator may remove ideological references in order to mitigate any risk of mistrust, but it is impossible to please a whole heterogeneous readership with so much cultural and personal variation. Gaining one hundred percent satisfaction for a translation seems to be a chimera.

5.2.3.3 Reading purposes

Fortunately, some of the target readers are open to negotiation. Readers too need to compromise and 'satisfice,' albeit to varying degrees. The criteria for acceptability vary in terms of the readers' different purposes:

FG1F20D If translating for immediate understanding, I guess [M2++INT] would be better. So people can just ignore [M2-INT] and actually get to the actual simplified definition of this one. Yeah, but I would like it if they explain.

This functional preference is particularly evident in the compromise of informative vs. concise translations (see 5.2.2.1). The readers naturally assume that their cognitive effort should be correlated with given reading purposes:

IN1M19N Shall I try to understand the policy? Because like between these two [M1+INT and [M1++INT], [M1+INT] has obviously more information, whereas this one is shorter and less informative. ((Um)), so I guess if I was supposed to be trying to understand what the whole policy was trying to achieve, I pick this one [M1+INT]. But if I just went through, I think that one [M1++INT].

IN1F34D And I see that [M1+INT] is the most detailed one. ((Um)), but it is really very detailed. If I only want to know what the general idea is, I think [M1++INT] is a good balance between [M1+INT] and [M1-INT]. I would imagine if I wanted just to get a quick use, an overview of what was being talked about, then this [M1+INT] would be useful. But if I really wanted to go into great detail, then I actually feel that maybe a combination of [M1-INT] and [M1+INT] might be better, because then I would know the name of the plan with the details of the plan.

Purposes may move beyond a reader's interest in the start culture and take a more practical view of the usefulness of a translation. Here IN1F34D distinguishes between two possible kinds of purpose: reading a translation for professional needs or simply for casual reading pleasure:

IN1F34D So if I come across these phrases [in M1+INT] again, I would know what it's referring to. For me, it's useful to know a little bit about this because I work for the [Singapore] government, so it's always useful to know what China is doing. But like if it wasn't for the work…

The practical benefits normally override personal preferences. Although there still remain some doubts about the readability of the literal translation M4-INT, explicitation is readily prompted by IN1M19N:

IN1M19N I feel [M4-INT] is the most accurate translation of it. It has the most details, but it is the hardest to understand because of all the 'CPC and Party Committee.' ((Um)), but if I were interested in China affairs and I really need to understand the words they say, then I would say [M4-INT] is the best representation of what the Chinese text is trying to say.

Similarly, IN1M41EX justifies the most literal translation M4-INT in preference to those more readable alternatives based on practical use:

IN1M41EX I prefer [M4-INT], because it has more details. It's a more literal translation of what it means. To someone who is a China watcher, this information is important.

IN1M41EX Let's say, if you're translating something for Xi Jinping, to speak to a different audience, you may need to simplify some of those things. But if you are translating what he has said as a record or as a transcript of what he has said, you have to do it word-for-word, okay? All the crucial information should be in there. Because for observers, some of this information could be important.

Interestingly enough, N1M41EX, the foreign-affairs expert, proposes a hierarchy of readerships, where target readers are categorized in terms of two types in terms of reading purpose: the "advanced" reader (e.g., China watchers) and the "lower," "laymen" reader (e.g., the general public). If the expert demands a linguistically faithful translation, any attempt to rewrite the text seems to be unnecessary:

IN1M41EX I mean, you can always have a few different versions of translations if you want. ((hesitation)) No, I don't think you need to do that, because it's China's peculiarity. If laymen want to read about this, they have to learn how to read it as well. But you cannot expect everyone to understand. I mean, like for what we call 'English classics and literature,' sometimes they have a brief version, right? Sometimes for junior readers, we have a very simple version, but for advanced readers, you had the original one. It could be something like that. But when it comes to translation, especially in a more official setting, you need to translate everything.

This purpose-oriented perspective sheds interesting light on the expectation for an "optimal translation" on the reception side. For some readers, "the best translation" may boil down to no more than idealism. In other words, the acceptance of a translation comes not from any stable criteria, but because of practical reasons. The solution in question is not faithfulness or not; as Hermans (1991, p. 166) puts it, the "correct" translation is the one that can be regarded by the target reader "as correct for a given communicative situation":

IN1F34D I can't say for sure whether or not it's the best translation. It really depends on what your purpose is, because unless they're Chinese or they are doing foreign affairs, I don't think most people want to know all these, like who did what and said what.

This argument also seems to verify *Skopos* theory, which argues what makes a translation adequate is whether it has optimal functionality for target-culture addressees. Depending on personal viewpoints and different circumstances, the readers may perceive translations to be either "more" or "less" acceptable.

On the other hand, the rationale of being "adequate" deserves serious attention. For Nida ([1989]1969, p. 94), the role of the receiver is crucial, "for a translation can be judged as adequate only if the response of the intended receptor is satisfactory." Nevertheless, do the mentioned readers *like* those translations? I doubt it. It seems that the intended reader does not necessarily have to enjoy or even agree with the message of a translation in order to accept it; in some cases, the translation is adequate and accepted because it is deemed pragmatically useful.

5.2.3.4 Different reading habits

To say that individuals have different reading habits appears to be a truism. Nevertheless, the magnitude of intrinsic complexity contributes to diverse real-life receptions. Some readers are more critical than others; some show higher tolerance of linguistic errors and defects; some are more sensitive to a given topic.

For example, the sensitive Communist-related content in M4-INT did not affect In325L3:

IN3F25L3 So I'm not too big on politics, I wouldn't say I don't care but it doesn't bother me too much because they're not affecting me.

When asked whether she would think high-intervention translations have "biases" as other readers pointed out, IN3F25L3 again expressed her indifference toward politics:

IN3F25L3: ((Um)), well, I did notice it, but I didn't really care. Well, I wasn't sure what the aim of this task was. And you just asked me to rank in terms of my preference.

This kind of attitude is more subjective, different from an objective level of familiarity with subject matters, and usually associated with the individual's background experience. IN3F25L3, as a doctoral student in Science, appears to be more critical of contextual logic than of political issues:

IN3F25L3: Yeah, for my work, I'm very critical when I read. So when I read articles, I like [asking], 'well, what's your control? What do you compare with? Is this a valid control?' So it sort of makes you think a bit broader.

Reading habits should also be noted. FG1F19N-a attributed her better understanding of foreign elements in the translations to her training in literary studies:

FGF19N-a: I personally understood it [the 'peaches and plums' idiom] a bit better because I've done a lot of reading.
I: About China?
FGF19N-a: No, just in general. And [I] have that more creative outlook on what it could mean rather than just seeing it as 'peaches and plums.' I don't think it's just talking about the fruit. You sort of trained to think like that.

This critical reading habit helps this reader be one of the few who noticed that at the end of M2-INT, the phrase "bear real fruit" alluded to the "peaches and plums" metaphor in the beginning. It seems that once readers could link the idiom to the rest of the text, the translation gained a higher degree of acceptance:

FGF19N-a: And I think it's also good, because at the end, it talks about 'starting to bear real fruit.' So the rest of the text that makes sense with the first sentence and then with the English phrase 'bearing real fruit,' like progress is being made.

Some readers are more tolerant of the foreignness in a translation:

IN2F24N That's the thing: when you read the translation, you know it's a translation. You know some things are not gonna come across in the same way and some things might sound a bit odd, but you can just have to accept that.

IN3F25L3 Yeah, ‘creating a moderately prosperous society’ is a bit of a mouthful. But I understand what it’s trying to say: the goal is to build China into a modernized socialist society.

For FG2M52, although G3-INT sounds “a little bit awful,” the contextual knowledge is enough for the reader to comprehend the key information:

FG2M52 And if he [the Chinese Premier] is talking about social events, then it doesn’t really matter whether the English is exactly right there, like in the first one [M3-INT], because it’s a little bit awful. But it doesn’t really matter. You can sort of get the G [M3-INT] of what it is saying.

This can be linked to Nord’s statement that the target reader “tends to have a certain natural tolerance of people who do not speak their language perfectly” (1997/2018, p. 73). Nord suggests that the target community would not expect a foreigner to conform to conventions or social norms exactly or perfectly all the time; the target readers are assumed to be happy to explain their culture to foreigners and they easily forgive occasional mistakes. It seems true when IN2F24N comments that she might “just giggle at” but excuses occasional awkward linguistic defects:

IN2F24N Yeah, it’s weird ((laughter)). Um, like you know, it sounds like talking about people falling in love, and it’s strange. But you know, I would just giggle at that, but I wouldn’t think too much of it… It’s a bit weird. But I can excuse it because I like the rest of it.

Similarly, IN2F26M3 believed that it is unnatural to wear two footy scarves, but she could understand the Chinese premier’s choice as a strategic move:

IN2F26M3 People probably are like, ‘Come on, mate! It’s not that much of a big deal.’ Like, you know, it’s a bit ridiculous to discuss the hot weather, which is really why it was on the news. But for me, I think that is the best thing to do. It is the most tactful and strategic thing to do to wear both.

However, little empirical evidence has been shown along this prescriptively optimistic line. It is problematic to generalize all target readers as having a natural tolerance of linguistic inadequacy. This study shows that some target readers are clearly irritated by translation errors and defects. For IN1F24M3, it is the foreigner’s responsibility to convey their message clearly and properly:

IN1F24M3 I think for a lot of international students who are so nice but they can’t really make friends [in Australia]. But also sometimes they don’t really speak English very well, which shouldn’t be accepted. If you study in Australia, you should speak good English. And they also often just only have Chinese friends and they don’t really try and make Australian friends, which I think is a pity.

Apparently, it is still possible for one to be overtly unsympathetic to the cultural other. When evaluating Task 3, some readers believed that it was “normal” for a foreign politician to be unfamiliar with Australian football culture, and thus it was fairly understandable why the Chinese premier decided not to pick a side:

I	Do you think the premier was indifferent when he said, 'no matter who wins today's match, I will cheer for them?'
INF24N	No, I don't think so. It's because he [the premier] is not too familiar with AFL. And he probably doesn't follow the teams. So it's hard to decide which team you want to go for. Yeah, I think saying that ['no matter who wins'] is normal.

I	Do you think 'no matter who wins' will make you think that the premier doesn't care?
FG2F19	He doesn't care. You know what I mean? He's going to watch one random game and he's being forced to watch this one because apparently Malcolm Turnbull is for Sydney Swans. He probably doesn't even care about sports.

In contrast, IN1F24M3 is offended by the premier's apathy to Australian football culture, even though it is understandable:

IN1F24M3	I think, by saying, 'no matter who wins,' it shows that he [the premier] probably doesn't really know what's going on. I mean, he probably did. The poor guy. But I think H [M3+INT] is the best because it shows kind of that impartiality where he's saying that, you know, 'it's gonna be a good game. I hope that both teams play really well and may the best team win,' as opposed to J [M3-INT] that implies that he doesn't really know or understand or even care what's going to be the outcome.

It is slightly comic that despite translation scholars more or less expecting the target community to have relatively homogeneous reactions (cf. Chesterman, 2006a), target readers clearly argue that "others" would respond to a translation differently from themselves. Several interviewees suggested, for example, that "although I prefer A, I guess other people e.g. my mom would prefer B":

FGF19N-a	I prefer [M3-INT] in general, but I can see why for the general Australian, like for people who didn't know, say, the back-story, would prefer [M3++INT]. I know that China has close trade ties with Australia. But, for instance, my mom and dad would prefer [M3++INT] because they would understand it.

Note, surprisingly, many L1 English speakers who were critical about potential bias being hidden in high-intervention translations assumed that other readers would be less critical and would prefer domesticating alternatives because of better readability:

IN3F25L3:	It doesn't bother me, because I understand what sort of contexts it's [M4-INT] talking about. But I guess, for the general population, in terms of understanding, it might be a bit too difficult. So you'll have to translate that into layman terms more. So it's similar to what we do in Science. Sometimes when we're explaining scientific terminology to a layman person, otherwise they wouldn't understand what it is. The point is that you're trying to make the message come across.
IN2F26M3	I think a non-Chinese speaker would prefer 'actions speak louder than words.' That's an idiom that everybody knows. And it's a good idiom.

Again, the traditional way we define the target readership as a homogeneous set is in doubt. An associated issue is to decide who is the most important receiver in a given translation activity. On the other hand, the readers show varying tolerance for translator intervention, reflecting the highly fragmented nature of readers' expectations as they associate with personal values and ideologies. Nevertheless, one thing that remains relatively stable and unaffected is the desire for trustworthy communication.

5.3 Summary

This chapter started by presenting the quantitative results of the ranking translation tasks on the reception side. The statistical results show that there is general opposition to greatest-intervention translations, regardless of the subject matter of the text. Four variables are found to significantly affect the readers' receptions: (1) *Nationality*, (2) *L1*, (3) *Knowledge of Chinese* and (4) *Knowledge of China*. Qualitative analysis of the interviews has provided tentative explanations for how the relevant factors might affect receptions. I have argued that the reader's acceptance of translator intervention is not necessarily linear: both high-intervention and low-intervention translations have their own merits and limits. I have indicated that the readers' expectations are not only diverse but sometimes contradictory. The chapter nevertheless finishes with a rather post-structuralist view: the variability of quality-related expectations among different readerships suggests that there is no such thing as a fixed, once-and-for-all expectation that can always prevail. We have seen that reception is not a black-and-white affair: the readers can make a compromise, in the sense that ethical considerations usually override concerns about text-linguistic details. Indeed, the acceptance of a translation has the most to do with the perceived trustworthiness of the translation. At the same time, the way a text is seen as "trustworthy" may vary widely according to the reader's ideological position, reading purpose and pre-knowledge of the start culture.

6. Discussion

The analysis of the ranking tasks reflects how different degrees of translator intervention are received on both sides. I have discovered regularities and tendencies in the quantifiable ranking results, which have shown some common ground in the acceptance of intervention by different readerships. Nevertheless, the qualitative narratives suggest that simple causes are not available and competing rationales might exist. Drawing on both qualitative and quantitative results, I attempt to integrate the various underlying variables into a coherent whole, as a general reflection on translation reception.

In this chapter, I will examine the various and sometime mutually exclusive claims that have been made, by analyzing the observably heterogenous expectations of participants on both sides. I will then consider the issue of trust involved in receiving translations, along with a discussion of target readers' tolerance of foreignness. My building-blocks are the notions of risk management, based on which a tentative trade-off model of acceptance will be proposed.

First I shall start from comparing the production and reception groups, focusing especially on the unexpected similarities and variantions between and within the production and reception sides.

6.1 Comparison of the production and reception sides

6.1.1 Heterogeneity of groups

The individual participants' evaluation of the translation tasks has been analyzed quantitatively on both sides (see 4.3 and 5.1.2). While significant differences in receptions were found on the reception side among different readerships, the previous discussion in Chapter 4 analyzed the production side as a whole. Here I recategorize both sides according to the different socio-cultural roles of the participants in order to see, apart from quantifiable variables (e.g., language proficiency), how a receiver's identity might affect their perceptions of translator intervention. This new typology of users is also inspired by observations drawn from the qualitative findings. For instance, although the production side was initially generalized as Chinese institutional translators, the interview data show that the subjects at the Guangzhou foreign-affairs office are a notable exception, since they are observed to obey different production norms.

The reception side is recategorized in accordance with the subject's cultural belonging rather than physically geographical position. There are two types: 1) the target-language users, which included the readers who have been to China, the readers who have never been to China, and the "experts" groups; and 2) the start-language users, who are Chinese international students based in Australia.

By analyzing how the new classification of readerships responds to different translator interventions, first, there is a similarity between the production side and reception side with respect to intolerance of the highest translator interventions (++INT): both the production and reception sides ranked ++INT as the *least* preferred in each task (see 4.3 and 5.1.2.1).

By comparing the results of the two sides, not very surprisingly, a two-tailed t-test demonstrates that the average acceptance of highest-intervention on the production side is significantly lower than that of the reception side: means of 1.25 (SD=0.29) and 1.49 (SD=0.35) respectively, t(36) = 2.12, p = 0.004. The different average acceptance scores of highest-intervention (INT++) are shown in Figure 22.

Figure 22. Average acceptance scores of highest-intervention (INT++) on the production and reception sides

	Production side		Reception side			
Role users	Guangzhou Foreign-affairs office translators	Other Institutional translators	Target-language readers			Start-language readers
			Have been to China	Never been to China	Experts	Chinese international students
Average group scores	1.67	1.14	1.61	1.56	1.5	1.13
Average scores	1.25		1.49			
P value	0.04					

Within the production side, the numbers suggest that the responses of the translators from Guangzhou foreign-affairs office and other institutions are significantly different (means 1.14 (SD=0.21) and 1.67 (SD=0.15) respectively, t(14) = 4.15, p =0.04). Note, however, that I only surveyed three translators in this category. Despite the small size of the sample, the Guangzhou translators seem to accept high-intervention translations much more readily than their counterparts in other institutions.

This quantitative tendency suggests that production norms might vary significantly from institution to institution. This has been confirmed by the interview data: the interventionists at the Guangzhou office clearly indicated that the high-ranking officials in the local government paid serious attention to the readability of translations (see 4.4.2.1.4). Here the pendulum swings toward the reception side. This target-oriented approach might explain why high intervention can be readily accepted by this group, as communicative effect is given more weight. On the other hand, the notion of faithfulness is generally claimed and accepted as the dominant norm without challenges by staff translators in other institutions, while the Guangzhou translators show a flexible attitude to the doctrine. IN7F49, the translation company manager who worked closely with the Guangzhou office argues that faithfulness could be applied in a strict or loose sense, depending on the function of the start text: if the start text aims to introduce local culture (e.g., Guangzhou cuisine), the translators "can translate it as [they] like" rather than "copy the Chinese syntax strictly" (see 4.4.2.1.3). For the interventionists, faithfulness has become a matter of degree. In fact, when they justified the high-intervention solutions such as explicitation in opposition to low-intervention literalism, the built-in vagueness of faithfulness becomes functional: it can account for functional equivalence, referring to the translator's fidelity to communicative effects.

On the reception side, there seems to be no significant difference between the varying social role of the users within the target-culture groups. Note that the Chinese international students who belong to the start culture share a striking similarity on the low-acceptance of ++INT with the general institutional translators on the production side. That is, the only readership that shares similar expectations with the mainstream production side in the target-culture camp, and they come from the start culture. Although INT++ is the least preferred solution by both sides, this suggests that there is indeed a gap between how most Chinese staff translators' perceived translations could be received and the actual reception by real target-culture readers.

Second, as the most acceptable solution by all interviewees (see 4.3 and 5.1.2), the results of a one-way ANOVA test reveal that the medium-intervention (INT+) translations are received without statistically significant differences between the production and reception sides (p=0.39) (see Figure 23). This indicates that INT+ causes the least controversy among readers, no matter what socio-cultural identity they have.

Figure 23. Average acceptance scores of medium-intervention (INT+) on the production and reception sides

<table>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="2">Production side</th><th colspan="4">Reception side</th></tr>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Role users</th><th rowspan="2">Guangzhou Foreign-affairs office translators</th><th rowspan="2">Other Institutional translators</th><th colspan="3">Target-culture users</th><th>Start-culture users</th></tr>
<tr><th>Have been to China</th><th>Never been to China</th><th>Experts</th><th>Chinese international students</th></tr>
<tr><td>Average group scores</td><td>2.13</td><td>2.5</td><td>2.5</td><td>2.33</td><td>2.38</td><td>2.38</td></tr>
<tr><td>Average scores</td><td colspan="2">2.48</td><td colspan="4">2.4</td></tr>
<tr><td>P value</td><td colspan="6">0.39</td></tr>
</table>

Third, in terms of the average acceptance of the low-intervention (INT-), a two-tailed t-test gives no significant difference between the production and reception sides on acceptance (p = 0.32) (see Figure 24). Nevertheless, a one-way ANOVA shows that there is a statistically significant difference in average scores between the six readership sub-groups across both sides (F(5,30)=3.56, p = 0.012). The subjects in the "Never been to China" group are the most unlikely to accept INT- (mean=1.86), followed by Guangzhou translators (mean=1.92). Interestingly enough, a one-way ANOVA reveals that there is no statistically significant difference between "other institutional translators," "experts," and "Chinese institutional translators" groups (p = 0.67). This suggests that there is some common ground in the tolerance of low-intervention, which is shared by participants on both sides.

Figure 24. Average acceptance scores of low-intervention (INT-) on the production and reception sides

	Production side		Reception side			
Role users	Guangzhou Foreign-affairs office translators	Other Institutional translators	Target-culture users			Start-culture users
			Have been to China	Never been to China	Experts	Chinese international students
Average group scores	1.92	2.36	1.86	2.08	2.5	2.5
Average scores	2.27		2.13			
P value	0.32					

Three points can be made here. First, the production and reception sides are not sensitive to every translation solution. Indeed, only the acceptance of the highest-intervention (++INT) is statistically different (p=0.04) (see Figure 22). Therefore, although ++INT is generally the least acceptable solution on both the production and reception sides, the preferences on the production side are significantly lower than the reception side. Meanwhile, the acceptance of +INT and -INT is fairly homogeneous on both sides.

Second, on the production side, the acceptance of ++INT is largely affected by the translator's workplace constraints, implying that various production norms might exist. The underlying rationale behind the different translators' risk management will be discussed in detail later (see 6.3 below). On the reception side, the resistance to high intervention is obvious and commonly shared by the readerships within the target-culture community, no matter what kind of interaction with China they have. This tendency might underscore that even with different degrees of start-language proficiency, the target readerships have the ability to detect high-degree manipulation in a communicative situation and deem it undesired and unacceptable.

Third, perhaps the most interesting finding is that the actual receptions break with a simple linear conceptualization and indicate no general causality between the degree of translator intervention and translation acceptance (see 4.3 and 5.1.2.1). This can be seen in two ways. First, on both sides, the average acceptance of translator intervention from high to low is medium-intervention (+INT), low-intervention (-INT) and highest-intervention (++INT). This suggests that a single solution to increase or decrease the level of intervention appears not to be enough to satisfy all practical needs. Second, to each solution, either on the production or on the reception side, readers with different identities might have disparate responses. No translation solution will ever be definite or universally acceptable, let alone be able to please everyone. Translation reception is a set of subjective and differentiated understandings of a given translation phenomenon.

6.1.2 What might be wrong in the translators' perceptions of readers?

If high intervention is deemed to be norm-breaking, a kind of risk-taking by the translator, a more serious problem arises, one that cannot be overlooked: how do we measure the gain and loss? This is a question of knowing the motivation of translators for adopting different solutions. The answer mainly lies in the translator's perception of the future reaction on the reception side. Nevertheless, the possible discrepancy between the effects of high-intervention assumed by the translators and the effects actually received by the readers should be noted. As shown in Figure 22 and supported by the interview data, most Chinese institutional translators *underestimated* the target readers' acceptance of INT++; however, the translators at the Guangzhou office seemed to be too optimistic.

On the first point, one strikingly qualitative argument is that most Chinese institutional translators believe that translations should sound "formal" (see 4.4.2.1.4). Standardization is observed as a prevalent production norm, evident in the translators' preference for neutralizing colloquial expressions and formalizing the target language for potential "international readers" (see 4.4.2.1.4). The underlying assumption is that peculiar features might not be appreciated on the reception side and that a standardized text is more readily acceptable than an "everyday" discursive register in any receiving culture. So for the translators, it seems simply not worth making extra effort to make the text sound interesting. The Chinese originals are almost like religious texts: the leader's words are too divine to be tampered with and should not be translated into vernacular language.

This sounds like nothing more than Toury's (1995/2012) law of standardization: specific features pertaining to the start text tend to be replaced by the target-language genre and become more habitual. As suggested by the translators, they would want their political leaders to sound more like Barack Obama than Donald Trump in the target language (see 4.4.2.1.4). The translators tend to omit traces of exoticism and avoid "vulgar" expressions, for fear that the target-language readers might ponder the peculiarities and tend to dislike them.

Another reason might be found in the "dual mission" of Chinese institutional translation: 1) to monopolize the release of information about China, and 2) to present a (coherent) image of China for outside consumption (McDougall, 2011, p. 29). Underlying the prevalent use of standardized translation is the attempt to regulate and control.

The standardizing solution follows from these premises, but since there is no empirical evidence for the argument that any kind of foreignness would be totally refused by the target side, one may wonder why these premises have not been questioned.

As we have seen, on the reception side, some readers did indeed expect "local color," as they knew the text was not written in English originally (see 5.2.2.4.2). The target readers also made scant mention of anything even remotely similar to an appreciation of "standardized" or "internationalized language." Moreover, the readers indicate that a relatively formal, literary translation of Chinese premier Li's words to the Australian football fans merely makes the leader "aloof," "cold," "lacking personality" and is generally less positive than other informal alternatives (see 5.2.2.3.5).

For the Guangzhou translators, high intervention is seen in a (sometimes naïvely) optimistic way. In evaluating M3++INT, IN7F35 believes that using the English idiom "May the best team win!" to replace the Chinese premier's original words is “appropriate” as it would be “what people expected in a stadium” (see 4.4.2.3.2). The analysis on the reception side shows that the cultural adaptation can be acceptable, if the adaptation is considered as an improvement to the text in terms of readability.

Nevertheless, some readers point out that the meaning of the idiom strikingly contradicts the fact that the premier was actually wearing two scarves. This makes them suspect that the high-intervention translation was “not true,” hence untrustworthy (see 5.2.2.2.1). If high intervention is made, high risks might ensue, causing an unnecessarily negative effect. This shows that the production-side reservations about high intervention are not ungrounded.

On balance, when the translators envisaged their receivers, they tended to oversimplify the *actual* receptions, particularly regarding how the target-language readers would respond to the high intervention into cultural and ideological contents. By way of illustration, although most Chinese translators were afraid that foreign elements would often have an undesired effect in reception (see 4.4.2.3.1), the study shows that a certain degree of foreignness was indeed welcomed by some target-language readers (see 5.2.2.4.2 and 5.2.3.4). On the other hand, literalism is favored by the translators, because of both the cognitive costs of translation decisions and the production norms operating on their working procedures. However, the low intervention solution, with few exceptions (see 5.2.1.1.4), seems to cause a great deal of communicative suffering on the reception side, leading to huge misunderstanding (see 5.2.1.1.3) and a loss of the trust in translators (see 5.2.2.2).

On the whole, the quantitative data make it clear that the perceptions and opinions of the translators do not coincide with the actual receptions one hundred per cent. One main reason for this perception gap can be ascribed to the diversity of reader expectations. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

6.2 Reader expectations revisited

In deciding which translation to accept, neither the translators nor the start- and target-culture readers were choosing an “optimal” text, since they more or less criticized each alternative when evaluating; what they seem to firstly exclude is the most unacceptable one (see 5.2.2.2.1). This can be explained by the Cannikin Law, often known as Wooden Bucket Theory: the bucket’s capacity is determined by the shortest stave. So, how might the reader define the cut-off point where one feature is deemed to be the fatal defect, making the whole text unacceptable? The bottom-up analysis suggests that the answer primarily lies in the way individuals conceptualize what an optimal translation should be. Whether a text that is considered acceptable is not determined by its good points; the refusal to accept a translation is decided by one feature or another of the text that challenges the legitimacy of the status of the rendering as translation. This kind of evaluation has two basic modalities: language quality and ethical principles.

6.2.1 Language quality matters

If we can conceptualize translation as a form of linguistic behavior (Chesterman, 2018a), a text-bound activity, it comes as no surprise that language quality accounts for many of the effects of translation reception.

This study shows that target-language receivers are indeed sensitive to language errors. What happens after an error is observed? The literal transitions are commonly criticized as "stilted," "weird," "clumsy" or are suspected of having been done by Google Translate (see 5.2.1.1.1).

Poor target-language quality has at least two drawbacks. First, it leads to incomprehensibility. Without sufficient context, a literal translation seems to mean very little to most target-culture readers. Many readers criticized the word-for-word translation of the Chinese political slogan "five-sphere integrated plan" in M1-INT as "making no sense" (see 5.2.1.1.2).

Language quality can also be inadequate by giving rise to a good deal of misunderstanding. Here the idea of language quality goes beyond stylistic and semantic nuances and includes contextual adequacy. For example, the literal translation of China's four-component strategy as a "four-pronged strategy" made some Australian readers wonder about the possibility of four overlapping strategies, which is, unfortunately, the opposite of the original meaning (see 5.2.1.1.3). Another example is the literal translation of the idiom "peaches and plums." In the pilot study, one Australian reader who was passionate about Chinese classics suggested that the Chinese president Xi intentionally compared Chinese "Belt and Road initiatives" with "young, sexy women" here, since the "peaches and plums" metaphor in the reader's view should symbolize young beauty. What we see here, empirically, is the undesired result of misunderstanding caused by low-intervention translations.

Deplorable language quality is problematic because it not only leads to stylistic awkwardness but also downright unintelligibility. It may have consequences ranging from negative feedback to losing the reader's attention (see 5.2.2.1.2) or questioning the translator's competence (see 5.2.2.2.2), through to outright rejection of the translation by readers (see 5.2.1.1.2).

6.2.2 Ethical translation is desired

One thing is clear enough: both the translators and the readers demonstrate a shared resistance to the highest-intervention translations (see 4.3 and 5.1). This finding partly goes against my initial hypothesis that the less the target-language readers are familiar with the start culture, the higher their acceptance of higher-intervention translations.

If language quality were the only factor that affects translation reception, it would be hard to explain why high-intervention translations that adhere to target norms and are often of better language proficiency are also subject to refusal. I suggest that the reason should be related to the difficulty and complexity of how the receivers define translation. In this study, one of the most frequent statements delegitimizing a translation, made by both the translators and the receivers, is "this is not a translation" (see 4.4.1.3 and 5.2.2.2.1). Of course, the interviewees should have been aware that each text they evaluated had been "translated" from a start text, albeit some in a radical way. Nevertheless, many translators asserted that as a high-intervention text, "rewriting is not translation" (see 4.4.1.3). On the reception side, the general expectations seem to be fairly homogeneous, with criteria such as trustworthiness prioritized over linguistic strategies that simply conform to the target norms (see 5.2.2.3). This suggests that what the readers really question is the ethical legitimacy of the text. The inherently heterogeneous and hybrid target readerships gave more weight to ethical considerations rather than purely textlinguistic quality, although an "ethical" translation might also be defined differently by different readers in different circumstances.

This section will discuss the underlying rationales of legitimizing an ethical translation held by the production and reception sides, along with an attempt to analyze some deficiencies reoccurring within the seemingly solid ethical desire.

6.2.2.1 Professional ethics

On the production side, the ethical concern is twofold: one is an essentialist position in which translation (and the translator) must be faithful to the original; the other is existentialist, where, practically speaking, one needs to be responsible for the results of a translatorial action.

The principle of being "faithful" to the original was mentioned frequently, seemingly serving as a mental image of "an ideal translation" for the professionals. This shows that the staff translators clearly link ethical translation to the notion of faithfulness: as an ethical translator, you should come up with a fairly convincing equivalent. The fear of loss and betrayal obviously functions inherently in their practice. For example, omission is held to be appalling: IN7F49 claimed that she and her team would never make "unprofessional translation mistakes such as omissions" (see 4.4.2.1.3). This explains why high-intervention translations are alarming for the translators, as intervention implies that something in the original has indeed been changed, something that is presumably pertinent to the start text has been wrongly distorted or even lost.

At first glance, this way of defining translation reminds us of the "ethics of representation" (Chesterman, 2001, p. 139). One goes back to the traditional idealism of linguistic and contextual equivalence: the start text's information must be represented accurately, without changing, omitting or altering anything. Note that this kind of faithfulness seems to focus more squarely on the text, rather than on the author. In the case of Chinese institutional translation, there is a real concern with losing the start culture's alterity and risking a tendency toward the loss of ideological identity. There seem to be hidden meanings, but also intrinsically syntactic and rhetorical forms of the original that are intended and created by the authors.
For the institutional translators, what comes to the fore is the danger of "losing premier Li's own voice" in high-intervention translation (see 4.4.2.2.5). In this sense, the ethics of representing the original is not merely semiotic but also has functional virtues in drawing the boundaries of cultural and ideological differences. This is shown most strikingly in the translators' relative indifference to the reception side: as FG2F35 provocatively claimed, "our ideology must be highlighted. […] To be honest, no matter whether the foreign readers like it or not, this is the way we're doing things" (see 4.4.2.2.8). Since faithfulness is the prevailing norm in most cases, the target-language reader's acceptance is ready to be sacrificed.

Another ethical concern is with the translator's self-perceived professional role. As IN7F49 indicated, translators "are not entitled to rewrite the text" (see 4.4.2.1.2). This kind of faithfulness emphasizes people, which can be explained by Nord's (1997/2018) notion of "loyalty," denoting a moral principle of responsibility that has something to say about the general expectation of translators: as a translator, your role is restricted. Dealing with highly sensitive foreign-affairs discourse, the Chinese translators must show their loyalty to the people (e.g., authors, reviewers and colleagues) involved in the process of translation production. As McDougall (2011, p. 10) points out, Chinese translation agencies' executive powers recognized "the strategic importance of supervision and control over the loyalty and reliability of translators."

Institutional translations address not only target-language readers but will also be reviewed by the officials within the system. Any change in the target text, even at the linguistic level, might possibly be interpreted as a dangerous betrayal of the original ideology. Behind the unwillingness, perhaps fear, to do more than translate, there are the translator's identity concerns. The translators must show their fidelity to the original, both textually and ideologically, for very practical reasons.

So is this "ethics of representation" the only principle regulating the translator's behavior? In fact, the translators consciously and unconsciously defined faithfulness differently according to text type and working mode.

In terms of levels of intervention, the production sides seem to make a clear distinction between different text types. IN7F35 suggested that a certain degree of translatorial freedom was acceptable when dealing with cultural and linguistic differences; however, if the start text is linked with an ideological agenda, i.e. Communist values, any change is forbidden (see 4.4.1.2 and 4.4.2.2.1). That is, for less sensitive content (e.g., local cuisine, see 4.4.2.1.3), the ethics of communication might exceed formal faithfulness; for ideology-sensitive texts, the virtues of linguistic faithfulness are given priority, shunning any risk of intervention.

The ethics of communication becomes more evident when the interviewees think they are reflecting on a non-written-translation mode, i.e. an interpreting transcript, in which the reliance on fidelity (e.g., formal equivalence) could be loosened (see 4.4.2.2.10) Before ranking the tasks, many asked questions about whether the texts were written translations or transcripts of interpreting (see 3.3.1.4.2 and 4.4.2.2.10). In their view, the criteria for interpreting should be fundamentally different from written translation. A high-intervention output might be deemed a betrayal if it is written, but it can easily be acceptable in an interpreting setting (see 4.4.2.2.10). For the professionals, in an interpreting setting, it is imperative to help the audience avoid immediate "communicative suffering" (Chesterman, 1997/2016, p. 182). In the eyes of the institutional translators, a literal written translation is expected to be "literal, formally faithful, and no-easy-to read," while an interpreting performance must "make sense" (see 4.4.2.2.10).

Here the two kinds of ethical principles are equally validated. Both low-intervention (e.g., a literal translation representing the original) and high-intervention (e.g., a radical rewriting reducing communicative suffering) can be legitimately viewed as ethical.

If ethics can be optional, surely the translator's choice of adopting one solution over another is always driven by an abstract moral value of "pursuing the highest good" or "best practices?" I posit that rather than being regulated by ethical principles, the translator's decision-making is largely affected by the prediction of any undesired consequence they might be facing e.g. criticism from clients, or the refusal of the translation by *the most important* readers.

No matter how much the interviewees' statements sound ethics-based, there is not a prescriptive ethical principle working alone. True, we can encourage translators to "strive for excellence" (Chesterman, 2001, p. 145), but empirical evidence has shown that highest-translator interventions can be high-risk, and not always rewarded. On the other hand, on what grounds can we claim that those translators who prefer to play it safe by sticking to literal translation are completely unethical, since they can be justified in terms of the ethics of representation?

If the translators refer to contradictory models of ethics, we might need to look somewhere else to find the tipping point that triggers translators to make a decision. We will come back to the ethical conflicts with risk analysis latter (see 6.3 below).

6.2.2.2 Reception ethics

On the reception side, high-intervention translations are often refused because they are perceived as "unethical" in some way, but there is a rather more complicated story to tell.

The idea of "a translation-should-be-faithful" is observed to have taken root in the target readers' minds, albeit sometimes in slightly different guises (see 5.2.2.1). Contrary to what I initially hypothesized, regardless of flawed language proficiency, low-intervention translations could be accepted as long as they are deemed to be "close" and "accurate," in the sense of having a kind of sameness of the original (see 5.2.1.1.4). Linguistic faithfulness is favored because it represents the start text as a truth: since it is visibly closer to the original, a low-intervention translation is perceived as more "truthlike" (see 5.2.2.2.1). This underlying essentialist view in turn explains why the readers regard high interventions as "insincere" "untrustworthy" or "fake." Or as IN1F34D puts it, "None of this [M3++INT] is true" (see 5.2.2.2.1). This kind of ethics of representation would be nothing new, but it is the reason why textlinguistic quality is made to appear secondary for readers. For instance, although IN1F24M3 regarded M1++INT as "certainly the most readable" translation, she disliked it the most, as she regarded it as an inaccurate representation of the original (see 5.2.2.2.1).

So why do the target readers insist that the translation must faithfully represent the original in every sense, since they apparently should not have reason to maintain start-culture ideological faithfulness as the translators do? The main reason is that any attempt to betray the original is deemed to be suspicious; the readers naturally trust a translation that sounds sincere, objective, and bias-free in order to avoid any possibility of being manipulated (see 5.2.2.3.3).

This suspicion is evident in the readers' refusal of the translations that are intentionally adapted to the target culture. When Chesterman (2006a) called for more empirical studies on the reception of norm-conforming in an attempt to answer the question at issue, "how do people in a foreign culture react if you try to follow their norms?" (p. 191), what he probably expected is that conforming to the target-behavior norm would be applauded. Chesterman gives an example where a western journalist became the only person being allowed to participate in a Hindu religious rite because, unlike other western journalists, she behaved like a local believer. Looked at empirically, at least in the case of institutional translation, the target readers seemed to have many doubts about norm-conforming translations. For instance, when the Chinese premier's words were radically adapted to an English idiom, the readers questioned its accuracy, arguing that "it was someone putting Australian language in his [the Chinese premier] mouth" (see 5.2.2.4.4). The readers clearly stated that they were "always looking for a neutral voice" and in order to achieve that, as FG2M52N suggested, the speaker was expected to give the message "in his own words" (see 5.2.2.4.5). The "neutral voice" here does not mean a formal, standardized text but a faithful rendering of the start text. The start-text message is supposed to have a factual existence, making any intervention an unethical distortion.

However, in the high-intervention text M3++INT, the premier's original words were deliberately adapted to English conventions, in the hope that this editing could smooth communication by producing a fluent native style. So why did the readers apparently not appreciate or *trust* the effort the translator invested in reducing such "communicative suffering?"

In order to answer this question properly, we need to clarify the exact nature of the transfer pertinent to intercultural communication. Translation solutions such as explicitation and contextualization are therefore readily accepted, on the assumption that the more information the reader knows about the text, the easier the text is to comprehend (see 5.2.2.1.2). Nevertheless, if the density of information were the dominant consideration, there would be rare resistance to intervention, since providing more contextual knowledge would be the antidote to most translation problems.

There are at least two reasons why the reader's suspicion cannot be completely offset by explicitation alone. First, what really upsets the readers is that they can hardly be sure of what the purpose of translator intervention is. When the readers feel that a norm-conforming translation is deliberately "trying to please you" (IN2F24N's words), the purposeful intervention seems to be overtly suspicious (see 5.2.2.4.4).

Second, any omission or rewriting caused by high intervention makes the readers wonder, "if [the translators] have constrained this, what else have they constrained?" (see 5.2.2.4.5). Again, underlying the feeling of insecurity is an insistence of an ethical equivalence relationship. Pym (1998/2014, p. 157) argues that nothing readers "recognize as translational communication can function without the belief that the translation can be received as if it were the [original]". The equivalence relation is not only between an original and a translation, but also between the translation and the reader who is prepared to "believe and trust its status" as an equivalent of an unseen original (see Pym, 2010/2014, p. 107). In this sense, the equivalence idealism is an efficient social "illusion" (Pym, 2010/2014, p. 37). The relation need not entail strict equivalence; it can be understood as a weaker degree of equivalence such as Holmes' (1988) matching, Toury's (1980, p. 18) "family resemblance," or "similarity" (Chesterman, 1996, 2005). But the translation can only be *ethically legitimated* if the target readers accept that a kind of sameness has been established, no matter how tenuous it is. When the readers felt they were being led away from the start text by high-intervention translations, their trust in the communication was challenged, not only because the domesticating information itself (e.g., "May the best team win!") was untrustworthy, but because the way the translation presented the information was deemed unfaithful, hence unethical.

The fear of being manipulated is also evident in the readers' preferences for an "objective" translation, which makes high-intervention greatly unappreciated (see 5.2.1.2 and 5.2.2.3.2). The readers' doubt does not concern the translators' attempts to reduce their cognitive effort, but is with regard to the possible change of information density between the start text and the target text. This might justify why some target readers with limited knowledge of Chinese would prefer an obscure, literalist translation than a fluent adaptation (see 5.2.1.1.4).

For translation scholars, this is somewhat paradoxical. When Holz-Mänttäri (1984, as cited in Pym 2010/2014), Vermeer (1998) and like-minded functionalists see an ideal translator as an expert trained to make decisions, who should work as a consultant and advisor on cross-cultural communication, nevertheless, the (Australian) readers seem to make their point quite clearly: "[I want to] judge on my own" (IN3F25M3's words) (see 5.2.2.3.3). Interestingly enough, omission or rewriting is easily deemed unethical, but explicitation can be fairly tolerant (see 5.2.2.1.2). It seems that readers indeed want to work more: editing out is alarming, as people are aware that they are missing information, while more explicit information may break contextual constraints and thus enhance transparency in the translational act in a general sense. The readers would rather *trust* their own judgements by reading longer, more explicit texts than entirely rely on a translator's interpretation.

As Chesterman (2001) proposes, the predominant principle of ethics is always a negative one: do no harm. That is, avoid harmful effects. I suggest that these negative effects can be conceptualized as *risks*. In cases of ethical conflicts, the rationales pertaining to various receptions, to be discussed below, are usually based on people's risk management.

6.3 Risks of indeterminacy

6.3.1 Risks on both sides

My contention here is that whether accepting a high-intervention translation is a risk-management strategy and that status as a legitimately acceptable translation depends on the potential rewards for taking risks by the translators and the readers. In this light, the rationales of whether a given translation is accepted can be identified in the dynamics of risk management. Here the notion of "indeterminacy" accounts for those uncertainties and guesswork inherent on both the production and the reception sides.

6.3.1.1 Credibility risks for translators

On the production side, the translators admitted that the criticisms they could possibly receive are normally on the production side, including from start-text authors, reviewers, colleagues, and the translators' immediate supervisors within the institution. It thus makes much sense to say that the actual risks facing them come from the production side itself (see 4.4.2.2.4).

For the Chinese translators, the first and foremost risk is to lose their credibility. Since internal users on the production side are able to compare the start text with the translation and note any absence or addition, the translator has to make an extra effort to justify the motivations behind any intervention (see 4.4.2.3.6). Low intervention is thus usually perceived by the staff translators as the most cost-effective solution, reducing their personal risk burden. Many translators are unwilling to take on communicative risks in their own name.

Chinese institutional translation is more than a single case. As noted by Koskinen (2008), institutional translators in the European Union also prefer low-risk literal translation, although the translators have to experience a gap between the ideal professional ethics e.g. pursuing excellent communicative effects, as justified by functional theories they have learned, and their real-life work and the real risks faced.

The claim made by the Chinese translators with alarming certitude that "no matter whether the foreign readers like it or not, this is the way we're doing things" should be noted here once again (see 4.4.2.2.9). The current administrative organization and working procedures of Chinese institutional translation make it hard to encourage translators to pay more attention to long-term communicative risks: since their immediate credibility risks are at stake, many translators are blissfully ignorant of any potentially devastating consequence of literalism. On the other hand, the official translators usually only have an obscure image of their readers in the target community (see 4.4.2.2.2). Since the receivers on the reception side are less visible than those on the production side, the eclipse of target-oriented norms seems to be inevitable. Rather than lose imagined target-language readers, the loss of trust by the clients is deemed to be more real and severe.

6.3.1.2 Target-language readers are facing uncertainties

On the reception side, the main risk is that the readers can never be sure about the intended purpose of translator intervention. This might explain why the target-language readers seem to have a clear moral requirement for translation: a text, usually a high-intervention one, is refused because it does not sound “sincere” or “genuine”; it seems to be “fake” (see 5.2.1.1.3). When the target reader lacks sufficient start-text proficiency or the start text is simply unavailable, they need to deal with uncertainty: how can I be sure I am not being misled? This suspicion might be easily interpreted as “to what extent can I trust the translation?” The underlying logic is nevertheless rather intricate.

I posit that the intolerance of high intervention is primarily due to the asymmetry in terms of information between the production and the reception sides. The readers in the receiving community usually do not have the same information about the start text as the translators do, so they are put in a rather more passive position than the translator in the communicative act. Although the ultimate purpose of intervention might be justified as ethically seeking a better communicative effect, it reveals some aspects that have been left out of consideration or sidelined in most discussions of the nature of translation: translational communication is by no means symmetrical, or fair. The translator usually knows more about the start language than the target-side reader does – if not, the necessity of using a translator is questionable. In this sense, the reception side is at the mercy of the production side. Willing or not, it is indeed up to the translator to decide how to give *adequate* details that the reader *needs* to know.

This explains why the target-language readers have reason to be suspicious of radical interventions and fear that the original information has been hidden, distorted or omitted (see 5.2.2.4.4). This uncertainty about the intention of translator intervention also explains why the principle of faithfulness, which is usually used as an umbrella-idea, is their prominent expectation of translation (see 5.2.2.2.1). The notion of faithfulness is evidently reflected in the readers’ calls for a close, equivalent translation. Equivalence might not be absolutely attained, but readers need to hold on to the belief in order to continuously trust the communication. High-level intervention is unlikely to be accepted because it has too many signs of changes, which makes the reader aware of the possibly unknown direction they are being led in. For the readers, the logic is simple: in some cases, if something in the translation is deemed to have been changed or hidden, they will naturally be worried about the possibility of risky manipulation being involved (see 5.2.2.4.5).

Interestingly, although Hönig and Kussmaul (1982/1996) state in their “good enough” theory that the target reader should only need to know “enough” information and only be given the necessary degree of precision, as selected and filtered by the translator, we see a clear demand for explicitation on the reception side (see 5.2.2.1.2 and 5.2.2.3.4). Although both explicitation and omission can be defined as high-intervention, explicitation is apparently much more acceptable than omission (see 5.2.2.1.2). The difference between the two strategies is the density of information, which might signal the asymmetrical relation between the production and reception sides: for the readers, omission could be risky, since it implies that some information is missing; on the other hand, explicitation implies transparency. This reminds us of Walter Benjamin’s ([1923]1963) idealism: a true translation should be transparent, preserving a visible echo of the start text. What the readers distrust is not “change” or “intervention” as such, but the translator’s unknown motivations behind that (e.g.

blocking the light of the start text). That is why the readers would rather work more – more information means more transparency in this respect.

6.3.2 More trust, less risk?

The different modes of indeterminacy on the production and reception sides create different risks that are likely to affect translation acceptance. If indeterminacy and the asymmetric relation can never go away completely, does that mean that there is no possibility of establishing communication?

We might need to ask if there are ways of reducing the risks of indeterminacy on both sides, if only to some extent.

On the production side, the major risk is the institutional translators losing their credibility, which is the reason why literal rendering is prevalently used as a relatively play-safe strategy, in cases where translators stress closeness to the original form, in an attempt to avoid being criticized as unfaithful by internal reviewers (see 4.4.2.3.6).

Logically speaking, only when the translator feels their credibility is not at stake can they give some weight to communicative efficacy. One possible solution can be found in IN5F32's argument. As a senior translator working at Guangzhou foreign-affairs office, she is one of the very few who felt at ease to choose high-intervention translations – "If I were the translator, I would do this" (see 4.4.2.1.5). IN5F32 explained that she and her team had built up a strong trust relationship with the officials they worked with. Such personal and professional trust presupposes that translators have more leeway to make special efforts to enhance communicative effects: they are more willing to take risks, trying any possible intervention solutions. IN5F32 claimed that they did more than translate: sometimes they served as speechwriters for the officials when they needed to give speeches overseas (see 4.4.2.1.4). In that case, there are no "originals." Here translation is expanding to a broader sense, close to what Wolf (1997) calls "cultural textualization" (p. 123). Seen from this perspective, only when the credibility risk is minimized can the production side give higher priority to target-oriented functions.

When Vermeer proposes that translators should be trained as "management assistants" or "consultants" (1998, p. 62) or Holz-Mänttäri (1984) argues that translators are experts trained to rewrite or to give advice as well as translate, the ideal translator would be a cross-cultural communication consultant, able to advise clients about how to present themselves in a different culture (cf. Pym, 2010/2014). Here we see that a few attempts on the production side have started to answer the theoretical call, albeit at a slow pace.

On the other hand, if more empirical evidence on the actual reception of literalism on the reception side can be provided, the production side will gradually realize that staying with low intervention is not as cost-effective as it might appear to be; with time, the cost of long-term communicative suffering, i.e. misunderstanding and non-understanding, could be more expensive. If the translator's clients are aware of the logic behind the "play-safe" literalism, they might be willing to trust the translators to resort to higher-intervention solutions. In that sense, more enlightened clients may contribute towards better translations, if they reward risk-takers in some way.

On the reception side, in most cases, the failure of a translation is due to a lack of trust. The possible sources of distrust are at least threefold. First, the poor language proficiency of translations will undermine the reader's confidence in the translator's competence, and also the trustworthiness of the translated text itself (see 5.2.1.1.1).

This is again a textlinguistic matter. If the translation is too difficult to read, talking about the reader's acceptance is like building utopian castles in the air. Second, a translation might look doubtful if the textual logic contradicts the reader's pre-understanding of the content (see 5.2.2.3.2). And third, if the readers believe that they have been "manipulated" by the translation (usually by feeling that the translation intentionally tries to please them), they will become suspicious and not trust the translator (see 5.2.2.4.4).

For the last point, it should be admitted that in some cases the reasons why the readers withdraw their trust are because they misunderstand the message, or they misjudge the intention of the translator. The unfortunate consequences are partly due to the readers' inadequate knowledge of the start culture. In this sense, the efforts put into more communication, participation and dialogue made by both sides can be regarded as a remedy. After all, trust is not given but earned.

In sum, the risk of indeterminacy on both sides means that translators and readers are still subject to guesswork to some extent, since the nature of communication is characterized by multifaceted, complicated variables. The way ahead is to gather more information, i.e. a better understanding of both sides, to make a better guess. Trust can keep growing: although there is some uncertainty, or trial-and-error, we try different solutions until both sides decide to agree on some common grounds in the communication; more transparency and trustworthiness should ensue due to cumulative effects.

6.4 Acceptance of foreignness

Translation reception primarily depends on how the reader responds to the foreignness of the text. In the ranking tasks, various translation solutions for culture-bound items are used in order to adjust the cultural distance from the start culture. The results show that the readers made their evaluations based on specific linguistic features (e.g., "peaches and plums" makes little sense) or psychological sense (e.g., the modifier "overwhelming" sounds too exaggerated to be true) rather than by any general strategy (see 5.2.2.3.1). The mixed responses and the very heterogeneous expectations of foreignness are all about the reversal of the traditional binary dichotomies according to which translation should be either domesticated or foreignized. After all, there is no such thing as a definitive translation solution.

6.4.1 How much foreignness is good enough?

The binary theory might be best known in the version put forward by Venuti (1991, 1995/2012, 1998), who uses foreignizing translation as a tool to fight against the monocultural homogeneity of hegemonic cultures. The underlying rationale seems to be that a target community is going to be upset by the presence of the foreign. The assumption of the domestication vs. foreignization dichotomy appears to be that we are all constantly prepared to say that foreignness is negative, but we rarely stop to ask whether foreignness is indeed firmly resisted by any target reader. In fact, there is scant empirical evidence for the argument that alterity is permanently refused (Stegeman, 1991; Zhong, 2014).

The statistical results of this study show that foreignness might be recognized as a distanced concept, but it is certainly not entirely unacceptable (see 5.2.2.4.2). A good deal of empirical counter-evidence at many points indicates that some Australian readers were happy to experience foreign flavors in translations, as long as foreignness was valued as positive exoticism (see 5.2.2.4.2) or perceived as a result of an “untranslatable unknown” (see 5.2.1.1.4).

The reader’s low degree of familiarity with the start culture might not necessarily be a problem for accepting foreignness. In dealing with the translated Chinese idiom “peaches and plums” in Task 2, many Australian readers favored a low-intervention literal translation, in which the culture-specific item was not translated at all but was summarized instead (see 5.1.2). Perhaps surprisingly, when an opinion question was asked to test whether the readers could accurately understand the literal version of “peaches and plums,” it turned out that the readers’ comprehension was relatively low: some even admitted that they had no idea of what the literal translation meant (see 5.2.1.1.2). Some readers provided their own interpretations of the Chinese idiom, which might not be correct but were surprisingly creative. For instance, FG1F22N believes that the “peaches and plums” idiom in M2-INT refers to a shade that attracts countries to cooperate together (see 5.2.2.4.2). The connotation of “tree shade” certainly is not seen in the Chinese original, but the interpretation fits the context where the Chinese president uses the idiom to describe the Belt and Road Initiative as a platform to share and protect the interests of the countries who are willing to participate in it. This example of a multiplicity of interpretations of a foreign element reveals a positive function of translation: translation can add value to the start culture, by “adding readers of its ideas, adding further interpretations and so on” (cf. Chesterman, 1997/2016, p. 4)

This positive response suggests that a foreign element might cultivate an interest in the other. Exoticism can arouse curiosity and even admiration. FG1F19N-a attributed her enthusiasm for reading foreign elements to her training in active reading, e.g. of 18th-century English literature. For her, the literal translation of “peaches and plums” could not be as simple as it sounded – “I don’t think it’s just talking about the fruit.” Foreignness creates some degree of involvement or even passion, making the readers who wanted to know “what it could mean” rank the literal translation as their favorite (see 5.2.3.4). Here we see the possibility of “superiority of the unknown” (Pym, 1992/2010, p. 149).

This might also concord with Toury’s (1995) law of interference, which goes beyond the level of linguistic variables and attaches attention to social factors. Since “interference” means imitating the foreign, it is subject to social conditions “in a probabilistic manner” (Pym, 2008b, p. 320). As Toury (1995/2012) argues, the tolerance of interference tends to “increase when translation is carried out from a ‘major’ or highly prestigious language/culture” (p. 278).

On the surface, this passion might be simply relegated to personal preferences and reading habits, as some readers are more open-minded and critical than others when engaging with the unknown. However, as IN2F26M3 pointed out, “people need to be a bit more literate with” the foreign elements (see 5.2.2.4.3). With the inevitable increase in cross-cultural communication, dealing with differences has been considered not only a desirable option but also a necessity. As Nida put it, a target language “must be able to admit new knowledge and new organization knowledge” (Nida, 1964. p. 3). Translation can be viewed as a tool to grow the target culture: interference might be used to “impose new lexical items and syntactic structures on the receiver” (Pym, 2008b, p. 324).

Seen in this pedagogical light, the exposure to foreignness through translation bridges the gap that separates one culture from another. A translation not merely attempts to conserve something but to spread something, and even develop it. As Julio Casares (1956, cited in Nida, 1964, p. 3) puts it, “translation is a customs house through which passes, if the customs officers are not alert, more smuggled goods of foreign idioms than through any other linguistic frontier.” Translation can help challenge the notion of closed cultures and lead to the gradual blurring of the borderlines of differences. As IN2F26M3 argues, engaging with foreign elements helps consolidate her own (implicit) cultural identity: the more she engages with a foreign culture, the more she reaffirms “our Australian values” (see 5.2.2.4.3).

Another observation of the acceptance of foreignness is that no matter what initial position the readers have, they are spontaneously looking for “shared ground” in a translation (see 5.2.2.4.3). For example, IN2F26M3 pointed out that slogans, as commonplaces and topoi in Chinese political discourse, should be “a very Chinese thing” (see 5.2.3.1.3.1). Nevertheless, when asked whether the readers would see translations of political slogans as negative, most readers said “no” and showed their understanding by giving similar examples of jargon used in Australian politics (see 5.2.3.1.3.1). The Australian readers also correlated the translated Chinese political slogans with the concepts they were familiar with. For instance, to understand the political agenda of China’s “four comprehensives,” the readers might have difficulties in making sense of some context-sensitive and culture-bound particularistic meanings such as “building a moderately prosperous society,” but most of them had no problem with universalistic concepts such as “achieving the rule of law” and “deepening reform” (see 5.2.3.1.3.5).

The acceptance of foreignness might be broader and more common than the traditional binary oppositions assume. The fact that we do not locate ourselves within completely isolated cultures and our own one has been in a constant flux of engaged exchange with other cultures is rather a precondition for communication. As Pym (1992/2010) puts it, “[i]f there are any closed cultures, we know nothing about them” (p. 1). What makes the reader willing to read is not any resistance to target stylistic norms or completely unknown concepts in the text, but the fact that they can catch a glimpse of similarities between “us” and “them.” In this sense, the readers seek a balance between the interest in exoticism on the one hand and some shared ground on the other. They generally seek out mutual understanding beyond differences in and through the texts. This provides us a new perspective for revisiting one’s pre-knowledge: the preconceptions that limit us can be the very same ones that bind us to the world and give us scope for direction and perception.

6.4.2 Do not hide differences

In exploring possible ways of receiving ideological context, apart from rendering a low-intervention literal translation of the start text (e.g. M1-INT and M4-INT), this study provides alternative translations that use various tentative solutions such as explicitation (explaining the information e.g. M1+INT), omission (erase the trace of Communist colors e.g. M1++INT) and adaptation (replace the Communist jargon by similar Western concepts e.g. M4++INT) for the target readers to evaluate.

Not very surprisingly, the readers have every reason to respond to a foreign ideology differently from the way people in the start-culture community do. For example, almost every Chinese translator agreed that the detailed description of how the Chinese government and the Communist Party carried out the ChAFTA trade agreement was “necessary and important” (see 4.4.1.4). Unfortunately, the Communism-bound text was merely deemed to be “awkward”, “too long”, “jaw-dropping” and even “alarming” by the target-culture readers (see 5.2.2.3.3). For IN3F25M3, contextual confusion seems more likely to ensue from structural differences: China has a Party-dominated regime that Australia does not have, making the ideological information difficult to digest (see 5.2.3.2).

Apart from a comprehension problem, exposure to foreignness can cause severe distrust, particularly when fundamentally ideological conflicts occur. IN1M19N indicated that reading the phrase "an important decision of the Party Central Committee" in M4-INT made him "instantly skeptical." Similarly, FG1F19N-a argued that she felt even "stressed" when reading the "very rigid" literal translation of Communist-bound M4-INT (see 5.2.3.2). The ways the readers respond to the ideology-bound text are associated with their own position and with their prior perceptions of the context (see 5.2.3.3.5). The readers are not merely reflecting on the ideology-bound text but on their perceived image of China. This resonates with contemporary theories of reading that see textual schemata as interacting with the reader's mental schemata, such that meaning is actively created from the experience that readers interpret and bring to the text. The resistance to foreign ideology is firmly rooted in the reader's own ideological position, which seems to be less likely to be changed by translation alone.

There seems no doubt that a low-intervention literal translation of foreign ideology can lead to undesired effects. However, does this mean that simply omitting the ideology is the best way to avoid the risk of communicative failure? When asked if the reader preferred to read a "value-free" translation rather than a faithful rendering, the answer is nevertheless "no" (see 5.2.3.1.1 and 5.2.2.4.5).

Three arguments are made here. First, omission is deemed to be an unethical distortion. For the reader who presumably wishes to understand "the spirit of the original," removing the ideological context is a betrayal (see 5.2.3.2). Second, at least for a certain readership, the start-text ideology has a functional value, e.g. for reference. Although IN1F41EX regarded the Communist information in M1-INT as "confusing," the expert argued that "those kinds of information are there for a reason" (see 5.2.3.2). Third, and perhaps the most comforting argument, for some readers, the Communist-specific content is "fine" (IN2F26M3's word) because such knowledge is closely bound up with the reader's prior understanding of China. Here, the exposure to others as others does not necessarily mean the target readership *likes* the context, but they would rather *accept* a faithful, trustworthy representation than a deceptive omission.

Explicitation seems to be an efficient tool for offsetting the negative impact of a high-risk ideology-related context, since many readers have shown their preferences for more informative, elaborate and precise translations (see 5.2.3.1.2). This sounds neatly logical, even commonsensical, since textual explicitness can be understood as contextual completeness, as an ideal pursuit for ultimate transparency.

Nevertheless, there are certain practical limits to explicitation with regard to ideological context. First, we should give some importance to the pragmatic constraints of the translational activity, and excessive textual density or length might go beyond those constraints (Pym, 1992/2010). As IN3F25L3 indicated, M4-INT, which aims to explicitate every implicit detail of the Chinese political agenda, is deemed to be "too long." The reader complained that she had "to read it and then read over it again to separate the different things by the comma and think about it" (see 5.2.1.1.1). Second, as we discussed above, information is not the only determinant on translative processes, nor on the acceptance of translations: if the sensitive Communist sources are explained in detail, the readers simply become less favorable to the very different ideology (see 5.2.3.1.3.5). Textual explicitness is by no means able to wipe out any ideological distance. In this case, the solution is presumably considered not necessary or sufficient. Instead, the solution highlights untransferable sociolinguistic and cultural differences. This explains why the Chinese translators carefully analyzed the loss and gain of excessive explicitation: the added quantity should be "just enough" for the readers. The translators are clearly aware that sometimes the more you explain, the more likely the target readers will realize how different we are (see 4.4.2.3.3).

Here we see that the comprehension problem of foreignness is not the highest risk, but mistrust of it is. This is why the high-intervention translation M4++INT, which replaces Chinese Communist jargon "reforming and opening up" with the similar Western idea of "free trade," is strongly resisted by some Australian readers. The readers ranked the adaptation as their "least trustworthy" text (see 5.2.3.2). IN1M19N argued that he did not believe that as a Communist country, China could support "free trade" as M4++INT claimed (see 5.2.3.2). In this case, the high-intervention translation contradicts the reader's prior knowledge and is regarded as lacking honesty (see 5.2.3.3.5). Admittedly, though, this ideology-laden attitude is not shared by all Australian interviewees. Suspicions are not caused directly by a text but emerge from the complex interactions of many different factors (readership profiles, ideologies and pre-knowledge, etc.), making each reception of a translation a unique occurrence. Rather than naively trying to hide the existence and implications of difference (e.g., by completely conforming to the target norms), we might need to reconceptualize difference as one of the intrinsic elements of communication.

6.4.3 Ideological conflicts are inevitable

The challenges of translating ideology-related texts merit our attention. Placing an emphasis on conceptual alterity, ideology stands as an example of showing differences, as it is evidently manifested in shaping the sense of identity, culturally and politically. Conflicts of ideology are inevitable, especially when a socially dominant group attempts to impose their beliefs on others, or else groups challenge mainstream social values (van Dijk, 1998). If we agree that translation is ultimately produced in the contact zones *between* different cultures (cf. Wolf, 2010), it is indeed exposed to different constellations of ideological beliefs, making differences an inevitable feature.

The position of being impartially and neutrally "in between" (cf. Tymoczko, 2003; Pöchhacker, 2006) is traditionally regarded as a defining feature of the translator (and interpreter), both in its conceptual framework and real-world practice. Nevertheless, it seems difficult to argue that translators are meant to work only *between* (or at least untainted by) the various powers; instead, translators (consciously or not) may work *for* one particular culturally hegemonic and prestige side (cf. Cronin, 2002).

In this study, the Chinese translators argued that their translation solution "depends on whom I am going to work for" (see 4.1.2.2.2.4). Here the translators agree that the person directly addressed (e.g., a prospective target-language reader) is not considered the most important receiver, let alone the only one – how their boss will perceive and judge their translations ultimately counts, rather than anyone in the target culture per se (see 4.1.2.2.3.4). The idea of the ideologically non-involved translator is illusory: various agendas, political positions and connections to power relations seem to be inevitable.

A high-intervention solution (e.g., a translation purposefully conforming to target norms) is easily viewed as a biased manipulation. But this does not mean that a low-intervention translation (e.g., foreignizing translation) is relatively less ideology-bound. For the Chinese institutional translators, although low-intervention literalism surely aims to preserve the start-culture Communist ideology, a radical adaptation conforming to an acceptable target norm might also have its own ideological agenda – selling a good image of China to the rest of world (see 4.1.2.2.3.2). This bears some resemblance to Lefevere's (1992a) model.

On the reception side, although the readers commonly state that they desire "transparent," "objective," and "unbiased" translations, their inferred intentions and expectations nevertheless rarely go beyond their own ideological positions (see 5.2.3.2). As Chesterman (2013) argues, people "do not see with innocent eyes" but in the ways they have *learned to* understand (p. 30). Note that all the alternative translations the readers evaluated in this study are designed in accordance with the same purpose: to explore how Chinese political discourse can be successfully accepted. This ideological agenda had already been embedded in the process of translating. No matter which text the reader actually chose and deemed as "most neutral," in theory there was no value-free translation. After all, "translation is manipulation": translated texts more or less manipulate the target reader's perceptions of the start culture (Chesterman, 1997/2016, p. 36). So how could the target readers still confidently believe that one translation was felt to be less manipulated than others?

Two angles are offered here. First, although the readers claim that their criteria for translation acceptance hinge on "neutrality", the guiding principle for how a text can be justified as neutral is usually subjectively constructed. The readers' responses to different translations are inevitably inscribed in their culture and their *a priori* positions. For example, IN2F18L3 and IN2F26M3 indicated that "being honest" should be rooted in Australian Christian culture and was deemed to be lacking in Chinese discourse (see 5.2.3.3.5). It might be true, since no interviewed translator mentioned "being honest" as a key criterion for translation assessment. But does that mean Chinese people are less honest than Australians?

This leads to the second point. With priority given to the communicative effects by the target side, a relatively small body of literature has pointed out the pessimistic fact that the judgements made by target readers are not always solid, objective or rationale (e.g., Gile, 2003). The reasons might include their lack of familiarity with the start culture (see 5.2.2.4.2) and an absence of interest in close reading (see 5.2.3.4). The readers' judgements of whether the context is biased largely depend on their personal experience and ideological agenda (see 5.2.1.2) and the varying expectations which are closely associated with different reading purposes (see 5.2.2.2.1).

In short, if we have been aware that the production side can hardly be value-free, pretending that all receivers can always justify their stances and there is no power relation engaged would become pointless. After all, differences are inevitable. Translation is never entirely neutral, so the idea of impartiality is a red herring, in that it cannot be absolutely attainable (Chesterman, 2018a). On the other hand, ideological differences or conflicts are inevitable, but it does not mean that translation is impossible. In this study, we have seen that the readers could accept a translation as functionally trustworthy without any full agreement with its content: say, some readers preferred an explicit translation of China's political agenda in the sense that the translation was useful for them to refer back to the original. Communication is always possible and usually brooks compromise.

6.5 Acceptance as a trade-off

On the whole, the empirical data have revealed the readers' varying, ambivalent and contingent responses to various translation solutions, prompting us to reconceptualize the phenomenon of translation reception without falling into the zero-sum trap. We have seen that the generic reader expectations are full of antagonistic contradictions, i.e. concision vs. informativeness, faithfulness vs. fluency, and neutrality vs. authenticity (see 5.2.3). The readers' expectations are not governed by a single variable but are formulated as a dynamic hierarchy of values. This makes a one-size-fits-all translation nothing more than a full-blown idealism. One translation might satisfy one group of readers while upsetting others.

I suggest that translation reception is not an issue of polarized opposites, but a matter of degree. By breaking a bivalent logic, the idea of continuum echoes Toury's (1995/2012) concept of translatability: in the same spirit, the reception of translation is an intermediate state, located anywhere between "non-existent and absolute, without ever coinciding with either of the two extremes" (p. 38).

The idea of reception as a continuum has two main causes: one is purpose-based and the other is individual-based.

With respect to the first cause, it makes good sense that different receivers have different priorities. A formal-equivalent, literal translation received fewer favourable quality judgments by many target-language readers whose main purpose was to quickly understand what was happening (see 5.2.1.1.1). In these readers' views, a literal translation has little contextual effect: they have to spend more cognitive effort to grasp the meaning than they wish to. For them, the low-degree interventions are usually "vague," "Chinglish," or "meaningless" (see 5.2.2.3.4). On the other hand, the experts preferred a linguistically faithful translation not because it reads well but because the literal translation works maximally as a close version, helping the experts refer back toward the original if needed (see 5.2.2.2.1). In this sense, literalism is by no means absolutely "bad translation" – under certain conditions, for certain readers, it can be useful.

As for the second cause, on the individual level, one's reception of translation solutions is not a single, fixed statement either. The same reader reacts differently when engaging with different subject matters (see 5.2.3). For example, for the sake of knowledge comprehension, FG1F19N-a preferred the explicited M1+INT as it is "very clear" and it "gives extra information" that as a non-Chinese person she did not have (see 5.2.3.1.2). When the same reader responded to the Communist-bound Task 4, she refused the full-of-detail M4+INT and complained that the explicitation was lengthy and the explicit Communist-related information made her feel "stressed" (see 5.2.3.2). Similarly, IN2F18L3 argued that the explanations for the Chinese government's policies were too much – "it's [M4-INT] talking about all of these very specific things" (see 5.2.3.1.2). Meanwhile, she disliked a concise M2++INT because "it's kind of trying to summarize everything too much" (see 5.2.3.1.2).

There is no suggestion of expectation determinism here: one can hardly claim a reader will *always* prefer a concise or precise translation under any situation (see 5.2.3.3). First, depending on various text types or different communicative situations, a certain amount of virtue A is perceived to be balanced with a certain amount of virtue B. Second, when engaging with a translation, readers give priority to one expectation over another. Be that as it may, although we see the readers criticise linguistic inaccuracies in translations (e.g., "too long," "too vague," "too many explanations," or "too literal"), they ultimately reach a decision about which translation is deemed to maximize their benefits, and hence be "acceptable."

On the theoretical level, I am interested precisely in this expectation hierarchy: for what reasons can readability be at a premium and have priority over a traditional idealism of strict sameness, and under what circumstances do readers refuse a translation, even when it shows faithfulness to the start text and is deemed "accurate?" That is, to what extent are different kinds of expectations incompatible, in the sense that they may have different ranges of application in various situations?

With these questions in mind, my argument is that readers' expectations are not merely a list of possibilities or directives, but can be understood as a dynamic process in two ways: first, expectations are not an absolute black-and-white affair but are always in a state of flux; second, seemingly incompatible expectations ensue from the readers' various purposes or individual differences.

When the readers have a clear purpose (e.g. of using the translation to get access to the start text/culture), they tend to be more tolerant of a translation that is literal, strange or foreign. Here the readers favor formal equivalence at the expense of readability. On the other hand, for most general readers who usually do not have a predetermined assumption of "an expected translation," the responses to translation solutions seem to be more spontaneous. Interestingly, this can be associated with a "cruise-bump mode" of solution types proposed by Pym (2016, p. 220): cruising translators need no special solution from a typology if there is one clear, normal solution to each problem; if the translator enters "bump" mode (e.g. confronting a difficult problem), a choice then has to be made so they resort to some specific solutions. Déjà vu: in most cases, readers read a translation in "cruise" mode. They tend to prefer a shorter, more concise, fluent, and thus less-effortful translation, even when they are aware that there might exist asymmetries between the start and target texts. If the readers sense that there might be some serious problems (e.g. the difficulty of gauging a literal term, or a need to know what is exactly said in the original), they are willing to work more by asking for explicitation or requiring for a word-for-word translation. Such extra effort can repair most innocuous bumps. But if the readers meet too many "bump-moments" or one of the bumps is deemed to be fatal (e.g. a local flavor is perceived to be a suspicious, unethical manipulation), a misfire may occur in the communication – the readers may refuse to accept the translation or give up reading it by losing patience.

Here the two variables are interactional: some readers have a consistent purpose (and thus a relatively coherent expectation) in mind when reading a translation, in which compromises are made in order to fulfill that purpose; for other readers, their expectation priorities are also changed when their purposes (i.e. different perceived gains) vary.

If we then ask what reasons readers have for deciding their purposes, how they change their purposes to sacrifice one expectation for another and why, the answer is: the compromise is a trade-off of the way risk correlates with effort (cf. Pym, 2015).

I propose to conceptualize a real-life reception in terms of a trade-off model, in which the readers consciously or unconsciously calculate the possibility of gain in order to offset a loss. Efforts are thus distributed by managing different kinds of risks perceived by different readers corresponding to different communicative situations.

In the eyes of the experts who have a clear purpose, "faithfulness" is given priority because the main risk for them is the loss of authentic reference to the original (see 5.2.3.3). For the experts, the legitimacy of high-intervention translation is questioned: a rewriting is too free and it thus does not deserve to be called a "translation." For other readers, readability is highlighted, particularly with respect to less-sensitive culture-bound texts, as in this case the main risk here is to spend too much cognitive effort reading a literal translation without obvious reward (see 5.2.1.1.1). But sometimes readers might change their mind to prefer reading an explicit translation or are willing to invest extra effort to understand foreignness: they are only ready to work harder when they have a strong will or a real interest in doing so, say, to avoid the risk of misunderstanding the perceived important or interesting content. The readers are not choosing a translation according to neat, fixed criteria but are making their decisions by managing a balance of gain and loss.

In light of this, we should break with the naïve assumption that acceptance equals "likes." For the foreign-affairs experts, the reason why they ranked literal solutions rather high is not primarily because they *like* the word-for-word translation but because the notable faithfulness to the form of the original is deemed to be useful (see 5.2.2.2.1). For the other readers, when they choose a slightly awkward word-for-word translation rather than a fluent rewriting, there is apparently no way that they *like* literalism but because, unlike the suspicious rewriting, traces of alterity are assumed to be more authentic.

In this rather relativist view, nothing is absolutely acceptable or not: the readers judge a translation in a kind of self-serving, risk-averse way. The compromise-based, risk-management view might help us weave various strands of reader expectations into a coherent whole and move beyond the prime fallacy of zero-sum thinking: the belief that there is a definitive solution to a translation problem. All I want to foreground, therefore, is that, first, some solutions in some certain situations involve more risk than others for some readers, and second, some translations ask readers to invest more effort than others.

Note that *trust* plays an important role in the trade-off model: trade-offs can be achieved more easily by investing more trust in the translator. In this sense, trust is a powerful tool to reduce receptive effort. If a translator is trusted as being "neutral," "accountable" or "faithful," any translator intervention is likely to be accepted. Seen in this light, the more trust, the less risk is perceived, and the less effort the reader makes – so a more cost-effective communication may result.

6.6 Summary

All in all, the three reception variables discussed throughout this chapter — familiarity with the start culture, the textual quality of the translation, and the reader's purpose-oriented interest — should be viewed as interrelated. Compared to the other two variables, since it is less likely to be changed by a single translation. Such ideas seem compatible with a postmodern approach to intertextuality: readers are not reading original texts, in that all texts are derived from previous texts and readers understand texts by borrowing from previous experience and linking them up in the global textual web. In this sense, one's prior understanding is something that is shaped not just during the communication process itself but also by all previous communication.

However, with increased exchanges generated by communicative needs, often achieved through translations, different cultures might become more familiar with each other in the long term. Any future communication is not transitory but cumulative. Familiarity and trust we have of another culture is composed of experience of all the previous interaction. In this sense, how we translate might have future effects for relations between cultures.

If we want to maximize the possibility of acceptance, what the translator can do is to enhance textual quality (e.g., TL proficiency) on the one hand and, to the degree possible, be aware of the importance of the target reader's purpose-based interest (e.g., adjusting solutions for different text types and readerships) on the other.

7. Conclusions

For decades, translation scholars wishing to conduct reception studies have spelled out its challenges: the nature of readers is, as Adrian Athique (2016, p. 6) puts it, “notoriously elusive.” This has posed the perennial challenge of defining readers, then clarifying their expectations and responses to different translation solutions.
To tackle the intrinsic opacity of readerships, I have presented multifaceted explanatory accounts of how readerships of various kinds receive translated Chinese foreign-affairs discourse in a quasi-experimental setting. This study is relatively innovative in the sense that its integrative experimental approach goes against the grain of much traditional scholarship in reception studies, which often tend to be descriptive, evaluative and interpretative. Instead, this study has first compared *how* various types of readers perceive the risks caused by translator interventions, then attempted to explain *why* there exist contradictory expectations about translation and *what* impact the expectations may have on reception. This study is therefore not attempting to formulate prescriptive norms for how to translate, nor in narrowly evaluating audience responses to linguistic solutions, but rather in exploring the contours of reception as it presents.

To do so, I have conducted semi-structured interviews and ranking tasks with 51 subjects (15 in the pilot study and 36 in the main experiment). The subjects comprise institutional translators on the production side and experts, members of Chinese diasporas, Chinese overseas students based in Australia and Australian readers on the reception side. The diverse profiles of the readers are identified to offer a selective and critical panorama of agents in the construction of the meaning of translated foreign-affairs discourse. The analysis of the empirical results has been supplemented by a detailed discussion of incompatible expectations about translation, with an attempt to investigate the constant interplay between translator interventions and diversified and heterogeneous receptions.

The investigation is linked by the continuous implementation of a risk-oriented approach on both the production and reception sides, stressing a dynamic rather than static orientation. This asking of *how* translators’ interventions are interpreted by the receivers has been combined with an attempt to postulate theoretical tentative answers about *why* translation is (mis)trusted and thus (not) accepted. A theoretical analysis of the risk management on both sides has been sketched, which has managed to substantiate a compromise model of acceptance.

Methodologically, I have proposed intervention-oriented, interrelated and corroborated hypotheses and tested them against empirical evidence drawn from both the Chinese production side and the Australian reception side. The hypotheses then generate some conceptual tendencies that might regulate and govern translation reception. This study thus broadly attempts to fulfil the three major aims that Chesterman (2000) has called for in (empirical) Translation Studies: to describe, to explain, and to predict.

This last chapter shows a broad synthesis of the findings. I will review the hypotheses first, then I offer a brief reflection on the key results – the study’s contributions and its limitations, along with suggestions of new avenues for any future investigation.

7.1 Testing of hypotheses

In order to examine how the Chinese production and Australian reception sides respond to different degrees of translator intervention, four intervention-related hypotheses have been generated. The following section will consider how the hypotheses have been supported or refuted. They are empirical in the standard sense, as Chesterman (1997/2016) would argue: they are designed to be tested, using data as the basis for predictions.

7.1.1 H1: The more literal the translation, the more negative the effect on the receiver's comprehension of the information.

To answer the question (Q_1) of 'To what extent can comprehension and image-formation relate to the receiver's prior familiarity with the start culture?', I qualitatively analyzed the receiver's comprehension of the translations through the semi-structured interviews. Interviewees on both the production and reception sides were asked to explain or guess the meaning of some items (e.g., "four-pronged strategy") in the lowest-intervention translations.

Not very surprisingly, H_1 does not stand on the production side, since all the Chinese translators could read the start text and were generally very familiar with the contextual knowledge. Nevertheless, the high-level familiarity itself could be potentially destructive: due to the asymmetry of language proficiency, the start-culture translators might easily neglect the negative effect of literalism on the target-culture readers. This is salient enough, for instance, in the literal rendering of the "peaches plums" idiom: most translators overestimated the target reader's ability to understand the low-intervention translation.

On the reception side, the comprehension problem of low intervention is serious. Almost none of the Australian readers understood the literal translations of Chinese political jargon or culture-specific idioms; even guesswork was difficult. Measured in this way, this hypothesis holds water on the reception side, as literalism clearly hinders target readers' comprehension.

7.1.2 H2: The more literal the translation, the more negative the effect on the receiver's image of the country.

To answer research question (Q_2) on how to maximize both comprehension and positive image-formation, we need to look at both sides. On the production side, although the Chinese translators appeared to have a higher tolerance of literalism than the target-language readers did, they expressed some reservations with respect to low-intervention translation (literalism) in terms of national image-building. Some translators were concerned that a literal translation of Chinese political policies that are riddled with political newspeak and abstract ideas might sound "too bureaucratic" and make the government look out of touch. The production side thus spoke in favor of an "internationalized" translation in the sense that it should be written in fluent English.

More surprisingly, for the target-culture readers, although a word-for-word translation of ideology-bound content was undesired as expected, the literal translation of the Chinese premier's joke was deemed to be "sincere," "cute," and "genuine," and was much better received than the higher-intervention translations. In some cases, a literal translation could be interpreted as "authentic," approaching "truthfulness." This suggests that the target-language readers' emotional reactions might not have a causal relationship with literalism in a stringent sense and are relatively context-bound.

With regard to value judgements rather than any simple issue of comprehension or readability, the keyword in this question is *trust*: whether the readers *like* the start culture depends in the first place on whether they can *trust* the way the start-culture's image is presented. Seen in this light, the hypothesis does not seem to find much confirmation, since literalism is at times interpreted as a signal of a trustworthy, transparent result.

7.1.4 H3: The more literal the translation, the more acceptable it is to target-side receivers.

Here "familiarity" denotes the subject's knowledge of Chinese foreign-affairs discourse and Chinese language proficiency. The readers' knowledge of China has been tested by the familiarity survey and their language competence has been assessed during the interviews. The quantitative results show that there is a significant positive correlation between the readers' acceptance of the most literal translations (-INT) and their knowledge of China. That is, the more the readers know about China, the better they accept literalism and vice versa. In light of this, at the most general level the answer to the third research question (Q3) must surely be 'yes': rewritings or adaptations are required for some qudiences with meager
However, there was no significant correlation of the participants' familiarity with the start culture and their preferences for +INT and ++INT translations. It is not true that ignorance about China makes readers prefer high degrees of translator intervention.

7.1.3 H4: The more literal the translation, the more acceptable it is to official translators.

The hypothesis that official translators prefer literalism is far from universally applicable. The ranking results for the official translators on the production side show that the general average scores of the four tasks go from high to low as follows: +INT, -INT and ++INT. That is, moderate-intervention is preferred to low-intervention, which is in turn preferred to high-intervention. Although it is observed that literal translations are prevalent in translated Chinese foreign-affairs discourse, literalism thus does not appear to serve as a uniform casual explanation of translation acceptance on the production side, where outspoken criticism of the approach was voiced on the production side. Yet it is important to note that in Task 2 and Task 4, the official translators ranked the -INT translations as the highest. Given that each task has a different subject matter, this suggests that acceptance of literalism is sensitive to text types. This finding has also provided a tentative answer to the last research question (Q4): the quest for a one-size-fits-all translation is in essence futile; the production norms can indeed be adjusted in accordance with the diverse expectations of the audience in different communicative situation.

7.1.5 Summary of the hypothesis testing

In general, there is no easily decipherable relation of causality between translator intervention and translation acceptance. There is no guarantee that higher degrees of translator intervention necessarily increase actual acceptance by both production and reception sides. Other conditioning factors are observed in the qualitative analysis, which might reveal some fundamental aspects of the complex mechanisms of translation acceptance.

7.2 Major findings

In this section, the main arguments of this study are formulated as four key points and are illustrated in some detail.

7.2.1 The production side tends to simplify the reception side

The first key point concerns the overall discrepancy between how the translators assumed the translator interventions would be received and how the target-language readers actually engaged with the interventions. In general terms, the production side tends to oversimplify the *actual* receptions. This concerns three aspects.

First, most translators overestimated the target-language readers' ability to understand literal translations. The notion of "formal equivalence" was deemed indestructible in most cases on the production side. The low-intervention translations were favored by the translators in the hope that they would convey the tone of the start text "faithfully and accurately." However, this merely caused communicative suffering on the reception side, leading to huge misunderstandings. Literalism also affects the readers' perceptions of the translator's competence and credibility.

Second, the translators' view of intervention tends to be absolute and invariant. For example, the Chinese translators assumed that foreign elements are always undesired in the translation, whereas a certain degree of foreignness is fairly easily accepted by many target-language readers. Indeed, some cases of exoticism appear to produce positive values. Acceptance of the foreign elements in a translation depends on the way the text is translated.

Third, as noted above, the relationship between acceptance and intervention is not a simple linear one: a translation that intentionally conforms to target-culture ideological conventions and linguistic norms is not necessarily always accepted. A set of multifarious ethics-related factors (e.g., objectivity, transparency and consistency) is found to give primacy to reception. This might help somehow deconstruct a binary opposition between foreignization and domestication, since the communicative effects of each solution are affected by other conditioning factors. There should be some middle ground for negotiation.

To sum up, the various responses to translator intervention suggest that the communicative effect of a single translation solution is probabilistic rather than absolute. The readers' receptions are not determined by a simple dichotomy of low-intervention vs. high-intervention solutions. The gap between the production and reception sides also opens up spaces for exploring the underlying reasons for the very heterogeneous receptions of translations.

7.2.2 The diverse readership profiles lead to a redefinition of target readers.

This study shows that the heterogeneous readership gives rise to many varied expectations and frequently conflicting perspectives. This sounds like a truism. But it is of practical consequence that "the target reader" as a catch-all term should be defined more carefully than is normally done.

A description of the readers' profiles can be made from two angles. First, in terms of social role and cultural belonging, translation readership can be categorized into internal readers (in the start culture) and external readers (in the target culture). This new categorization attempts to go against the simple determinism of "a target reader should be in the target culture" amounted to a non-mechanical view that readers might also be on the start side.

In the case of Chinese institutional translation, the internal readers are the agents who are affiliated to the translation-producing institutions, including start-text authors, officials, reviewers, and in-house collogues. The role of internal readers in the institutional hierarchy deserve some attention. Within the hierarchical relationship, the expectations of the start-text authors or high-ranking officials usually determine how much creative license the translators can have and what kind of translation style prevails. This explains why higher-intervention translations were only preferred by the translators at one local office in this study, where the hierarchical relations were laxer. The question of specific administrative environments is not trivial: the expectations of the institutional readers are likely to be constrained by varying institutional norms.

On the other hand, external readers are those who are not engaged in the production of translations. Here the two main external groups are the experts and the general public. For pragmatic reasons, experts are liable to favor a linguistically faithful translation, as they can easily use a low-intervention version to refer back to when doing fact-checking. This seems to be a logical consequence of viewing translation as an instrument, albeit somewhat cavalier: the translator should not intervene to interpret the text, since a literal rendering of the original should be there to be interpreted and exploited for the benefit of the expert. This instrumental view unfortunately also implies that translators do not need to be creative. The gist of the experts' arguments is that the authentic start text is more reliable and authoritative than are second-hand translations. In contrast, the general public is more likely to be open to greater-intervention translations, although their receptions vary depending on text types. In this study, the external readers are found to be largely left out of the translators' considerations, whereas the internal readers are given more weight, since they are the first actual receivers, after all.

A second way to categorize the readership is in accordance with the different risks that the readers perceive. If the readers prioritize communicative effect, they might be more likely to prefer target-oriented higher-intervention translations that avoid the communicative risk caused by the servile adherence to the word. Otherwise, no matter which side they are on, the readers typically exhibit a conservative, mechanistic attitude when choosing a low-intervention literal translation, since the main risk is considered to be a betrayal of the original. This explains why it is customary for some reception-side Australian readers and the production-side interpreters to desire high-intervention translations (e.g., a radical rewriting), as they deemed "making sense" of a text as more important than fidelity to linguistic forms. More strikingly perhaps, the experts on the target side share the consensus regarding start-text loyalty with most Chinese translators, albeit with different risk-related intentions. For the experts, the main risk would be losing the power to interpret the text, since higher intervention implies the existence of multiple translations and visible interpretative work being done by translators. For the Chinese translators whose behaviors are largely regulated by overriding internal rules, not only the meaning but also the words of the original are semi-divine: to meddle with the original form is to risk blasphemy and could mean their loyalty to the start-culture ideology would be called into question. They thus also prefer literalism.

These two ways of categorizing the readership help go beyond the normative role of readers as a unified entity that squarely belongs in the one target-culture community. With different purposes and expectations, the participants who come under the broad heading of "readership" explicitly or implicitly exert influence on the production of translation.

7.2.3 When a translation is judged acceptable, ethical considerations override textual quality.

This study also challenges some generic expectations pertaining to "good" translations. Traditional discussions of the reader's expectations primarily focus on text-based, linguistic quality. As Chesterman (1993) argues, a good translation is a "good native" text (p. 10). Thus target-language proficiency comes to be seen as an overriding expectation. Chesterman (1993) also suggests that the "goodness of a text" is a norm of a higher order than any other expectancy norms. In this sense, linguistic sufficiency would be almost on a par with acceptance of a satisfactory translation. However, the elusive nature of target-side (or "native") norms needs to be clarified. First, this study has shown that the target-language readers can definitely accept a certain degree of the unknown through exoticism. On the other hand, the target readers might not always appreciate a translation that wholly imitates target conventions and completely erases traces of any foreign voice.

Second, textual and linguistic expectations are a set of fuzzy criteria, in which antagonistic contradictions abound. For example, both concision and explicitation are proposed by the readers and hence can be equally regarded as "good native" standards, even though they contradict each other. With different reading purposes, the preference for a shorter text or an informative text may well be tilted to either side.

Third, translations that conform to the target norms are rarely accepted without doubt or hesitation. The study shows that target-language proficiency is not a necessary or sufficient condition for a translation to be accepted. Rather, the ethical accountability of translations (and translators) is at stake: what readers desire is a "trustworthy" translation, which can be concise and fluent, or informative and well-explained, or even exotic but interesting to read.

What should be noted here is that simply adapting to target norms or producing a "native" text alone cannot solve all reception problems. Non-textual ethical expectations carry out a significant role in affecting the reader's acceptance. Once a translation is deemed unethical, either because the content is thought to betray the readers' pre-knowledge or because the reader suspects that the translation (usually a higher-intervention one) is intentionally manipulated, the reader's trust drops off sharply as one starts to question the legitimacy of the translation as such. It might be inferred that no single textual criterion could hope to compete with the reader's ethical considerations on this level. If the readers lose trust in the translation (or the translator), if they deem the purpose of the communicative event to be unethical, no matter how fluent or "native" the text sounds like, talking about its acceptance will be building utopian castles in the air.

On the reception side, the readers clearly indicated that their major concern with acceptance is *trust*: an acceptable translation should be viewed as objective, transparent and unbiased. Indeed, the readers believed that they were more or less able to tell whether a translation was (more) "ethical," as they compared the different alternatives and consciously or unconsciously sought the most trustworthy one. Trust has thus become the major gauge for determining the acceptance of translation: the different participants in the interaction need to agree that the information transfer is fair at some points.

However, neither the production nor the reception side of translation is value-free. First, translation is a purposeful activity. For institutional translation, the aim is to promote a positive image of the start culture. The translators are overtly constrained by ideology, power, value systems and their work conditions. The translators are not working *between* different parties, as is idealistically assumed by some readers; they are working *for* a side. Most pertinently, apart from having their own agenda, the translators reflect on their own roles in ways that are also affected by the hierarchical power structures of the institution.

Second, on top of predisposing factors like the readers' own purposes when reading translations, their own prior knowledge (of the situational context and of the subject matter as well) and their own perceptions of the start culture may push and pull them accept – or refuse – a given translation. All these factors work together and exert a strong influence on the way readers decide whether a translation can be qualified as "ethically objective." On the other hand, results show that the target readers are not always objective either: they claim to seek objectivity, but the way they deem a translation to be objective is based on their subjective, sensory perceptions. The readers also have their own agendas that are set by individual needs and desires. The ranking choices, preferences and judgements may conceal hidden ideologies, of which the readers on both sides may or may not have been conscious but that indeed underlie the actual receptions.

7.2.4 Conceptualize acceptance as a trade-off.

The conflicting expectations suggest that it may not be possible to arrive at a final optimal solution that wins out in all situations. Rather, the varying expectations imply that a trade-off model is at work, governing the reader's choices. The essence of "acceptance" is not that something remains invariant (the expectation is met) but that something changes (the expectation is not met), conditioned by different contexts. Say, if a text is read in terms of a referential function (e.g., a national statement or a trade agreement), readability or fluency are apparently less privileged than is completeness information in the sense of being close to the original.

As evidenced here, in the reception of a translation, a trade-off between risks and effort is obviously justified. If the readers deem the loss of pedagogical information on the start culture as the prime risk, they show higher tolerance of a word-for-word translation and are willing to invest more effort in understanding the literalism. Conversely, if a fluent and easy-to-read text is adequate for the reader's communicative needs, the higher-degree of translator intervention is fairly acceptable, albeit at the cost of formal equivalence.

Although readers might recognize deficiencies in translations, they are prepared to make compromise on one variable if there are gains to be made on another. By running more or less risks to gain trade-off benefits, readers ultimately choose one translation and justify it as "acceptable."

Here the idea of *trust* plays a key role in the trade-off model: a perceived high-risk communicative context (e.g. ideology-related content) may be less trusted by readers, making the readers invest more effort; but if the translator is recognized as trustworthy (e.g. in terms of credibility or qualification), the risk of being manipulated will be considered as lower, and less processing effort the readers need to make.

Admittedly, the ways people perceive and evaluate risks are less than "neutral," since participants in the translational communication can hardly be value-free. However, there is no reason why (successful) communication should be thwarted by such ideological differences. Communication in theory might aim to reduce undesired misunderstandings, but it is more fundamentally based on the signs of differences. We trust the other side not merely because we already have complete familiarity or fully agree with each other, but also because we need to trust each other in order to walk across the unknown territory in communication.

Perhaps paradoxically, this somewhat idealized idea is of relevance to the formulation of a realistic framework of translation acceptance. It helps us counterbalance the pessimistic idea that a comprehensive understanding of the start culture should be the *sine qua non* of possible communication. My argument posits that, regardless of the great many diverse and contradictory expectations that might be seen as impossible to meet simultaneously, it is still highly possible for readers to accept a flawed but useful translation. An absolutely perfect translation is practically unattainable and is often not needed. In other words, it might be assumed that an acceptable translation is, by nature, a "good enough" one (cf. Hönig, 1997). In this sense, a "good" translation should not be seen in a deterministic light. Rather than pursue pure excellence, what could be more interesting is to look at what makes readers be willing to accept an apparently flawed translation. The reasons underlying the trade-offs model not only tell us something about the fundamental risks underlying the translational communication but also prompts us to make a few constructive steps towards building trust.

7.3 Limitations and prospects

7.3.1 Limitations

Several limitations in this study must be acknowledged.

First, the reduced size of the samples of subjects on both the production and reception sides leaves plenty of room for improvement. On the production side, 14 professional Chinese translators from eight institutions at the municipal and provincial levels were engaged in the main experiment. The subjects affiliated to one local foreign-affairs office claimed that they had different production norms from their counterparts elsewhere, which suggests that a broader sample of translators from different institutions could have elicited various results. Only with a larger and more diverse sample (e.g., translators working at the state-level institutions) could we propose some general norm-related hypotheses.

On the reception side, the study also has limitations since most participants were university students and the number of subjects in each category of the readership is small. The sampling limitation is probably even more problematic in the expert group, where only two subjects are involved. Wider readership profiles could be more thoroughly investigated to provide alternative or complementary interpretations.
It might also be helpful to do a comparative study retesting the texts in this study being read in other countries, investigating whether the target readers' tolerance of intervention might vary according to different socio-cultural contexts. In order to further refine the findings of this research, it is desirable that similar reception

research on translated Chinese foreign-affairs discourse be undertaken on a wider subject population.

Second, one main methodological constraints should be noted. The subjects on both sides were provided with the start texts and the three translations together. That means the subjects consciously or unconsciously compared the translations, which is not a typical way of receiving translations and might also affect the readers' judgements about "fidelity." Say, since readers can compare three translations and notice the differences between them, they are more likely to distrust a translation that is shorter or summarized, since omission can be viewed as suspicious manipulation. Yet this method has enabled me to directly observe how the readers make compromises. This is an interesting phenomenon *per se* in that it tells about what readers expect a translation to be. The process of judging and weighing has provided evidence of expectancy norms.

Third, the fact that no "authentic" real-world translation was used may be regarded as a limitation, since the responses generated from the study cannot be viewed as the actual reception of China's foreign-affairs discourse. On the other hand, the quasi-experimental study moves beyond traditional quality assessment that conventionally seeks to determine an ideal translation on the language level. Rather, it focuses on the *possible* ways a translation can be accepted.

A further methodological issue is the fuzzy borderline between +INT and ++INT. Different solutions are used to design +INT and ++INT texts: for instance, in Task 1, M1+INT is an explicitation while M1++INT is a rewriting. Although syntactic/semantic tests were conducted to prove that the similarity between -INT and +INT is higher than -INT and ++INT in each task, the translations are not objectively formulated, making even ++INT texts rather less than an idealized maximum intervention. It is hard to say that ++INT in task 1 has the same intervention-level as that of ++INT in task 2. Future studies might consider testing more than three alternative translations simultaneously.

7.3.2 Avenues for future research

This exploratory investigation opens up numerous avenues for further research.

First, the issues of terminological diversity and conceptual relativity warrant special attention. Clear categorizations of translation readerships are scant in the literature, leaving plenty of room for conceptual innovation and improvement. In this study, some of these limitations have been addressed by adopting ethnographic surveys and semi-structured interviews to categorize the readers in accordance with their knowledge, socio-cultural identity and engagement with the start culture. Other classifications may illuminate different aspects of the readership's identity that could affect reception. As Chesterman (2018b) argues, creating new categories should have empirical consequences. Studies of reception with a view to new categories of readerships would be valuable to expand our understanding of what makes translation "acceptable" in a given situation of interaction.

The second avenue for further research concerns the theoretical framework of reception studies. The results show that intercultural communication is not possible without *trust*. By exploring reception with reference to ethical values such as trust we can reach a greater understanding of the nature of translation: that is, how information, image, intentions are transferred, comprehended, interpreted, received, accepted or refused between different cultures. Further work on trust may provide powerful tools to address the challenges and risks that appear in intercultural communication.

Third, the trust-based approach may offer a new way of addressing the ethical horizons of machine translation. A translation can be virtually rejected not simply because the readers *distrust* the content (they might *dislike* the content, but they can still accept the text as a useful, trustworthy reference), but because they suspect that the ways the human agents (here, the translators) have translated the start text are not trustworthy. So, if the start text is translated by machine, will the translation be regarded as more trustworthy? Sporadic discussions of translation technology have focused on the non-human virtues of machine translation. Will clients more trust machine translation than they trust human translators, since clients can directly produce a "translation" by using machine to reduce human manipulation to some extent? It seems that tapping the potential for this topic might enlarge our understanding of the role of human agents as a double-edged sword in intercultural communication. It prompts us to ponder more deeply how the role technology might play in offsetting this potential risk.

There is also the possibility of expanding our understanding of reception by capturing the cumulative effects of translation upon a target culture. This might be more complicated than Schleiermacher's ideal view of using foreignizing translation as the means to broaden the readers' mental and emotional horizons, as well as the target language. Rather, a certain degree of familiarity functions as a premise to comprehension. In this sense, the readers' receptions of translator intervention might develop over time if their familiarity with the start text has undergone changes. The current study is synchronic in nature, investigating Australian readers' receptions of translation over a very limited period of time. If a text is an open fabric of traces rather than a closed item (Derrida, 1982), so is its reception. Diachronic studies can be undertaken to test and refine the findings of how translation reception varies and develops with a historical perspective.

The last point is intertwined with the subjectivity-objectivity dichotomy that leads to blind spots in empirical research in Translation Studies. The observer's role is by no means completely objective here: the researcher's potential bias, individual position and her own implicit agenda might be embedded in the research design and can affect the ways the data are interpreted in this study. Since the researcher also acted as the interviewer, her identity and presence might also have exerted an influence on the subjects. For instance, is there counter-evidence in the data that has been neglected? It is important to adopt a reflexive view to question the declared aims of any research, in the sense that the hypotheses and methods under study should be refined and critiqued in order to take account many aspects of the translational phenomenon as possible. This echoes Dizdar's (2014) call for more fundamental work on the pre-constructed concepts and theoretical questions that guide our research.

Ultimately, this thesis hopes to serve as starting point and provide some future possibilities for the study of translation reception from an empirical perspective. My conclusion concurs with that of Chesterman (2000): we describe and predict translational phenomenon by proposing testable hypotheses in an empirical sense, striving to reach broader and relatively universal explanations for significant facts. It is hoped that this study will contribute to our ever-expanding discipline by providing interpretations and giving evidence-based answers to the engagement between translations, receptions, and surrounding socio-cultural conditions of various kinds.

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APPENDIX A: Translation tasks in the pilot study

The three translation tasks used in the pilot study are as follows:

Task 1:

P-ST$_1$	明确中国特色社会主义事业总体布局是"五位一体"、战略布局是"四个全面"，强调坚定道路自信、理论自信、制度自信、文化自信。
P-A-LIT	It makes clear that the overall plan for building socialism with Chinese characteristics is the five-sphere integrated plan, and the overall strategy is the four-pronged comprehensive strategy. It highlights the importance of fostering stronger confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics.
P-B-DOM	It makes clear that the overall blueprint for building China's socialism model focuses on five main areas: economic growth, political stability, social cohesion and environmental protection. The four aspects that the Chinese government outline in its strategic plan as essential to "national confidence" are: China's socialist development path, China's unique political ideologies, China's institutional structures and China's socialist culture.
P-C-RE	The Chinese government has delivered its comprehensive framework to address the economic, social, and environmental challenges it faces. The government will pursue its "national confidence" strategy focusing on development models, political systems, institutional structures and cultural capital to deliver prosperity and security for all Chinese.

Task 2:

P-ST$_2$	"桃李不言，下自成蹊。"4 年来，全球 100 多个国家和国际组织积极支持和参与"一带一路"建设。"一带一路"建设逐渐从理念转化为行动，从愿景转变为现实，建设成果丰硕。
P-D-LIT	As a Chinese saying goes, "Peaches and plums do not speak, but they are so attractive that a path is formed below the trees. " Four years on, over 100 countries and international organizations have supported and got involved in the construction of "The Belt and Road Initiative." The construction of the Belt and Road Initiative has moved from vision to reality and achieved rich fruits.
P-E-DOM	Actions speak louder than words. More than one hundred countries and international organizations have actively supported and engaged in the Belt and Road Initiative over the last four years. The Belt and Road Initiative has moved from vision to reality and achieved significant outcomes.
P-F-RE	Our initiative has received overwhelming international support. More than one hundred countries and international organizations have actively supported and engaged in the Belt and Road Initiative since it started four years ago. Moving from vision to realty, the initiative has achieved significant progress in international partnership.

Task 3:

P-ST_3	两队球员代表分别把各自球队的围巾送给李克强，热烈欢迎中国总理前来观赛。李克强特意把两队的围巾系在一起戴上，并风趣地说，虽然现在悉尼天气仍然有些热，但我还是把两队的围巾一起戴上，表明我对两支球队乃至澳大利亚所有球队都喜欢、都支持。不管今天的“强强对决”谁最终获胜，我都会欢呼喝彩。……赛场的气氛紧张激烈，中澳友好的气氛更是温馨热烈。
P-G-LIT	The players from the two teams presented their scarves to Li Keqiang, and warmly welcomed the Chinese Premier to watch the game. Li Keqiang specially tied the two scarves together, and said with humor: “Although it is still hot in Sydney, I still wear both scarves to show my love and support for the two teams and even all the teams in Australia. No matter who wins in today's great match, I will cheer and applaud for him.” …As the atmosphere of the stadium went intense, the friendly atmosphere between China and Australia went warmer and sweeter.
P-H-DOM	The Chinese premier Li Keqiang received a warm welcome from the players, with both teams handing their scarves to the premier before the game. Li Keqiang wore the two scarves together and said: “although the weather is hot in Sydney, I still wear both scarves to show my support for both sides and Australian football. No matter which team wins, I will cheer for them.” …In the end, the players from both sides gave a wonderful display for everyone’s enjoyment, cultivating a good atmosphere between the Chinese and the Australian audience.
P-I-RE	Wanting to stay impartial, Chinese premier Li Keqiang insisted on wearing the footy scarves of both teams. “Wearing two scarves in summer is a bit much, but I want to wish both teams the best of luck and extend congratulations to the AFL,” he said. Premier Li’s visit to the AFL match was a great success.

APPENDIX B: Translation tasks in main experiment

The four translation tasks used in the main experiment are as follows:

Task 1:

M-ST$_1$	中国政府统筹推进“五位一体”总体布局，协调推进“四个全面”战略布局，一心一意为实现“两个一百年”奋斗目标而努力工作。
M1-INT	The Chinese government has promoted the Five-sphere Integrated Plan, advanced the Four-pronged Comprehensive Strategy in a coordinated manner, and worked wholeheartedly to achieve the Two Centenary Goals.
M1+INT	The Chinese government has promoted its overall plan in five areas: economy, politics, culture, society and ecological environment. The government has thus implemented its strategic plan that outlines four goals: building a moderately prosperous society, deepening reform, striving to achieve the rule of law, and strengthening Party discipline. The government is committed to achieving its two key goals: creating a moderately prosperous society by 2021 and building China into a modernized socialist society by 2049.
M1++INT	The Chinese government has taken major steps to implement a strategic agenda that addresses the economic, political, social, cultural and environmental challenges it faces and champions prosperity and success for the Chinese people. The government has made great strides in past years and remains committed to policies that ensure the well-being of Chinese families and businesses for decades to come.

Task 2:

M-ST$_2$	“桃李不言，下自成蹊。” 4 年来，全球 100 多个国家和国际组织积极支持和参与“一带一路”建设。“一带一路”建设逐渐从理念转化为行动，从愿景转变为现实，建设成果丰硕。
M2-INT	As a Chinese saying goes, “Peaches and plums do not speak, but they are so attractive that a path is formed below the trees. ” More than one hundred countries and international organizations have actively supported and participated in the Belt and Road Initiative over the last four years. The construction of the Belt and Road Initiative has moved from vision to reality and started to bear real fruit.
M2+INT	Actions speak louder than words. More than one hundred countries and international organizations have actively supported and participated in the Belt and Road Initiative over the last four years. The initiative has moved from vision to reality and has achieved significant outcomes.
M2++INT	The Belt and Road Initiative has received overwhelming international support. More than one hundred countries and international organizations have actively supported and engaged in the initiative since it started four years ago. Moving from vision to reality, the initiative has achieved significant progress through international partnerships.

Task 3:

M-ST3	两队球员代表分别把各自球队的围巾送给李克强，热烈欢迎中国总理前来观赛。李克强特意把两队的围巾系在一起戴上，并风趣地说，虽然现在悉尼天气仍然有些热，但我还是把两队的围巾一起戴上，表明我对两支球队乃至澳大利亚所有球队都喜欢、都支持。不管今天的“强强对决”谁最终获胜，我都会欢呼喝彩。赛场的气氛紧张激烈，中澳友好的气氛更是温馨热烈。
M3-INT	The players from the two teams presented their scarves to Li Keqiang, and warmly welcomed the Chinese Premier to watch the game. Li Keqiang intentionally wore the two scarves together and said with humor: “Although it is still hot in Sydney, I still wear both scarves to show my love and support for the two teams and even all the teams in Australia. No matter who wins in today's match, I will cheer and applaud for them.” As the atmosphere of the stadium was getting exciting, the friendly atmosphere between China and Australia became warmer and sweeter.
M3+INT	The Chinese premier Li Keqiang received a warm welcome from the players, with both teams handing their scarves to the premier before the game. Li Keqiang wore the two scarves together and said: “although the weather is hot in Sydney, I still wear both scarves to show my support for both sides and congratulations to the AFL. Good luck and may the best team win!” In the end, the players from both sides gave a wonderful display for everyone’s enjoyment, demonstrating the close friendship that China and Australia share.
M3++INT	“Wearing two footy scarves in summer is a bit much, ” Chinese premier Li Keqiang said when he took time out from trade talks to watch the Sydney Swans and Port Adelaide at the SCG with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. Wanting to stay impartial, the Chinese premier insisted on wearing the scarves of both teams. “I want to wish both teams the best of luck and extend my best wishes to the entire AFL community,” the premier said. He invited Mr. Turnbull to China later in the year, promising there would be no shortage of scarves to keep the Aussie PM warm.

Task 4:

M4-ST_4	中澳自贸协定实现了全面、高质量和利益平衡的目标，具有十分重要的意义。中澳自贸协定是党中央、国务院实施对外开放战略的重要决策，是贯彻落实十八届三中全会部署，迈出的重要和坚实的一步。中澳自贸协定也将全面提升两国经贸合作关系，进一步促进两国资金、资源和人员流动，推动两国经济优势互补向持久和深入方向发展，使两国生产者和消费者都广泛获益。
M4-INT	The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) has achieved a goal of comprehensiveness, high quality, and balanced interests, which is of great significance. ChAFTA is an important decision of the Party Central Committee and the State Council to implement the strategy of opening up to the outside world. It is an important and solid step to implement the requirements of the Third and Fourth Plenary Sessions of the 18th CPC Central Committee. ChAFTA will also comprehensively enhance the economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, further promote the flow of funds, resources, and personnel between the two countries and promote the sustained and in-depth development of the two countries’ economic advantages. This will enable both producers and consumers in both countries to obtain extensive benefits.
M4+INT	The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) will comprehensively enhance economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, further promoting the flow of funds, resources, and people, and will promote the sustained in-depth development of the two countries’ economic advantages. This will enable both producers and consumers in both countries to obtain extensive benefits.
M4++INT	The Chinese government believes in the benefits of free trade, and it is committed to robust trade relationships with other nations that value fairness and reciprocity. The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) is an historic agreement that enhances trade cooperation, boosts economic growth and creates jobs. ChAFTA aims to promote the flow of funds, resources and people, and deliver enormous benefits for both producers and consumers in both countries.

APPENDIX C: Familiarity survey

The multiple-choice familiarity survey used in the pilot study is presented as follows:

Please choose ONE answer for each question.

1. Which one of the following defections best describes the **Communist Party of China (中国共产党)**?

A. A birthday party organized for Chinese communists
B. The sole governing party of China
C. A communist party founded by French socialists
D. A communized party formed by Chairman Mao Zedong

2. Which one of the following is correct regarding the **One-China principle ("一个中国"原则)**?

A. A Free Trade Agreement signed between the Nixon Administration and China
B. People from both sides of the Taiwan Straits follow the one-China principle
C. The United States agrees that Taiwan is part of the People's Republic of China
D. The principle states that Taiwan, Hon Kong and Macao are inalienable parts of China

3. Which one of the following is correct regarding the **Nanjing Massacre (南京大屠杀)**?

A. A mass murder happened at Tian'anmen Square
B. The Japanese General, called Nanjing, conducted massive killing in China in 1937
C. The widespread atrocities committed by Nazi Germany during the World War II
D. The widespread atrocities committed by the Imperial Japanese Army

4. Which one of the following is correct regarding the **Belt and Road Initiative (一带一路倡议)**?

A. The "Belt" in the Initiative refers to the Maritime Silk Road in the 21st century
B. The Initiative refers to an ancient network of trade routes connecting the East and West
C. The initiative is an economic strategy of China
D. China is the largest leather belts exporter in the global market

5. Which following area does China's **Reform and Opening up (改革开放)** strategy focus on?

A. Health care
B. Economy

C. Education
D. The Internet

6. The term **the Chinese Dream (中国梦)** refers to:

A. A Chinese idiom means "pipe dream"
B. The greatest dream for the Chinese nation in modern history
C. The ideal by which equality of opportunity is available to Chinese people
D. A National strategy proposed by Chairman Mao for economic growth, poverty reduction and social development

7. What is the **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (亚洲基础设施投资银行)?**
A. The first multi-national financial institution sponsored by China
B. China's largest commercial bank
C. China's largest investment bank
D. The central bank of China

8. In the term **"dealing with both 'tigers' and 'flies' (老虎苍蝇一起打)"**, the "tigers and flies" refer to:

A. China's major and minor environmental problems
B. China's high and low-level corrupted officials
C. China's severe and minor criminal offences
D. China's immediate and future economic, social and political challenges

9. When will China completely achieve its Two Centenary Goals (两个百年奋斗目标)?

A. By 2020
B. By 2049
C. By 2050
D. By 2200

10. Which one of the following is not included **in the Core Values of Chinese socialism (社会主义核心价值观)**?

A. Democracy
B. Freedom
C. Diversity
D. Patriotism

APPENDIX D: Familiarity survey (updated version)

I have made some textual improvements and corrections to the revised version of the multiple-choice familiarity survey below for any possible future use:

Please choose ONE answer for each question.

1. Which one of the following descriptions best describes the **Communist Party of China (中国共产党)**?

   A. A birthday party organized for Chinese communists
   B. The sole governing party of China
   C. A communist party founded by French socialists
   D. A communized party formed by Chairman Mao Zedong

2. Which one of the following is correct regarding the **One-China principle ("一个中国"原则)**?

   A. A Free Trade Agreement signed between the US Nixon Administration and China
   B. People from both sides of the Taiwan Straits follow the one-China principle
   C. The United States agrees that Taiwan is part of the People's Republic of China
   D. The principle states that Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao are inalienable parts of China

3. Which one of the following is correct regarding the **Nanjing Massacre (南京大屠杀)**?

   A. A mass murder happened at Tiananmen Square
   B. The Japanese General, named Nanjing, conducted massive bombing raids over China in 1937
   C. The widespread atrocities committed by Nazi Germany during the World War II
   D. The widespread atrocities committed by the Imperial Japanese Army

4. Which one of the following is correct regarding the **Belt and Road Initiative (一带一路倡议)**?

   A. The "Belt" in the Initiative refers to the Maritime Silk Road in the 21st century
   B. The Initiative refers to an ancient network of trade routes connecting the East and West
   C. The initiative is a Chinese economic strategy
   D. China is the largest leather belts exporter in the global market

5. In which of the following areas does China's **Reform and Opening up (改革开放)** strategy focus on?

A. Health care
B. Economy
C. Education
D. The Internet

6. The term **the Chinese Dream (中国梦)** refers to:

A. A Chinese idiom means "pipe dream"
B. The greatest dream for the Chinese nation in modern history
C. The ideal by which equality of opportunity is available to Chinese people
D. A national strategy proposed by Chairman Mao for economic growth, poverty reduction and social development

7. What is the **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (亚洲基础设施投资银行)?**
A. The first multi-national financial institution sponsored by China
B. China's largest commercial bank
C. China's largest investment bank
D. The central bank of China

8. In the term **"dealing with both 'tigers' and 'flies' (老虎苍蝇一起打)"**, the "tigers and flies" refer to:

E. China's major and minor environmental problems
A. China's high and low-level corrupt officials
B. China's severe and minor criminal offences
C. China's immediate and future economic, social and political challenges

9. When will China completely achieve its Two Centenary Goals (两个百年奋斗目标)?

A. By 2020
B. By 2049
C. By 2050
D. By 2200

10. Which one of the following is not included **in the Core Values of Chinese socialism (社会主义核心价值观)**?

E. Democracy
A. Freedom
B. Diversity
C. Patriotism