

Translation Strategy Used in the Four-Character Words Translation of a Chinese Government Document

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ABSTRACT

Translation of culturally rich and semantically dense Chinese four-character words into English has unique challenges in the globalization era. This paper discusses the strategies adopted in the translation of *Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang*, with special attention to Domestication and Foreignization strategies as framed by Lawrence Venuti. The qualitative analysis yields that an approach of Domestication strengthens understand ability at the cost of risky cultural losses and that Foreignization retains local peculiarities but may undermine proper comprehensiveness. To guarantee understanding and preservation, especially transnationals a balance between two strategies is important. It uses translation analysis of the four-character word translations in the white paper by classifying them into Domestication and Foreignization approaches and determining their effectiveness with respect to readability, cultural fidelity, and feedback from readers. The findings highlight how the respective strategy would be apt for both audience and text type. Domestication increases comprehension and may risk a loss of cultural depth, while Foreignization retains most of the cultural essence of the original through an increase in cognitive load. Both strategies may meet in a quality translation sensitive to cultural shades but acceptable to a wide audience. The present study contributes to the development of optimum translation practices within high-culture texts and delineates a series of topics that can become the object of research, including the use of technological tools to support the so-called balanced translation.

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Contribution/Originality: This study contributes as the foundational research in the field of foreign publicity translation. It is based on the unique socialism with Chinese characteristics and focuses on four-character words in official government documents. It provides new ideas and innovative guidance for translation scholars, enthusiasts and other stakeholders in this field.

1. Introduction

On July 14, 2021, the State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China issued a white paper titled *Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang* (The State Council Information Office, 2021). This document provides a comprehensive introduction to the protection of equal rights for all ethnic groups in Xinjiang. The researcher selected this white paper as a case study for several reasons, including the need to address Xinjiang's multidimensional ethnic issues and its significance as a core area in the "Belt and Road" initiative (CCTV News, 2023). Four-character words, or “四字词语” (sì zì cí yǔ), are a unique linguistic feature in Chinese, typically comprising four characters that form a complete semantic unit (Chen, 2011). This structure is deeply rooted in Chinese literary and cultural traditions. Four-character words are prevalent in Chinese-English translation, with their English renditions being particularly significant as they represent cultural transmission and expression. Studies have shown that four-character words appear frequently in political publications. However, research on translating four-character words in political contexts remains limited, with only 12 studies specifically focusing on this topic in the past decade, indicating a significant research gap in the field (Liu, 2021). Chinese four-character words have deep roots in the linguistic and cultural framework of the nation, which is important in political, historical, and literary contexts. The compactness and semantic richness of these phrases pose a big challenge to translators given their structure and cultural connotation. In some ancient Chinese books, the translation of four-character words retains a lot of Chinese color. For example, “笨鸟先飞” (bèn niǎo xiān fēi), whose translation is *a slow sparrow should make an early start*. “礼尚往来” (lǐ shàng wǎng lái), it can be translated as *courtesy calls for reciprocity*. Meanwhile, in daily warm reminders, the translation of these four-character words is even more concise. “小心碰头”(xiǎo xīn pèng tóu), which is translated to *mind your head*. “闲人免进”(xián rén miǎn jìn), and its translation is *staff only*. The translations from Chinese to English need to be accurate to maintain the meaning while making the language accessible to an international audience. Examples include the white paper *Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang*, published by The State Council Information Office (2021), which is used throughout this study. The book is an over 12,000-word document that articulates China's efforts in promoting human rights and equality in Xinjiang by addressing governance, social economic development, and cultural preservation. Two main translation strategies, Domestication and Foreignization, are explored in this study. While Domestication prioritizes the target text, fluency, and readability, Foreignization preserves the cultural uniqueness of the source text (Yao, 2023). This latter aspect of the translation, along with the strategic geopolitical role of Xinjiang as the nexus of the Belt and Road Initiative (CCTV News, 2023), calls for the use of a balancing methodology when translating. This research by studying the translation of four-character words fills the gap in the current literature and provides insight into the complex dynamics involved in translating culturally loaded expressions.

Regarding translation strategies, Venuti's (1995) proposal of Foreignization and Domestication Translation Strategies serves as the theoretical framework and reference point for this research. The Chinese translation community has been engaged in a robust debate over these strategies for several decades, with discourse intensifying in the past twenty years. This sustained scholarly interest has resulted in the formation of two distinct schools of thought: the "Foreignization Team" and the "Domestication Team."

The Domestication Team advocates for translations that prioritize fluency and naturalness in the target language, while the Foreignization Team supports preserving the source text's linguistic and cultural features. These two factions often hold opposing views and engage in vigorous academic debates. The Foreignization Team argues that Domestication risks distorting the original text's cultural meaning, while the Domestication Team criticizes Foreignization for potentially producing translations that are difficult for target readers to comprehend (Li, 2018).

A critical perspective on this debate highlights how the Domestication Team often characterizes Foreignization translations as awkward and overly complex, potentially alienating readers from the text's intended message (Zhang, 2005).

1.1. Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

- i. To discuss the applicability of Domestication and Foreignization in different text.
- ii. To investigate the faithfulness of the four-character words translation used by Domestication and Foreignization.
- iii. To explore the significant meaning of the translation of four-character words for the Chinese government.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Domestication Strategy

The Domestication strategy is based on Eugene Nida's Dynamic Equivalence Theory. According to Nida (1964), a translation must be able to target the audience through appropriate linguistic norms and cultural expectations. For example, “长治久安” (cháng zhì jiǔ ān) which is *long-term stability and security*, achieves clarity by aligning with English syntax and idiomatic expressions. Domestication removes cultural obstacles in the text, further increasing readability and fluency. This approach is best applied in technical and politically sensitive documents, where clarity and accessibility are imperative. Yan (2022) supports using the domesticating approach in legal and policy-making texts and cites culturally adapted content as necessary to establish trust and assurance for the target audience. For instance, “众志成城” (zhòng zhì chéng chéng) is *united as one*, and this translation allows the viewer to understand immediately and intuitively the cooperative ethos brought out by this expression, provided that one does not include detailed cultural background information upfront. This, according to Yao (2023), has many uses, for example, Domestication helps to carry out complex or unfamiliar ideas better. It follows then that procedure is indispensable, above all in cross-cultural communication. The disadvantage of Domestication, on the other hand, lies in the fact that such a strategy would make the source text's cultural depth and aesthetic qualities more diluted (Amenador & Wang, 2022). This can be shown in the phrase “四海兄弟” (sì hǎi xiōng dì), which means *all men are brothers within the four seas*, when it is translated directly into English and loses its poetic resonance and deep Confucian undertones. This highlights the fact that translators need to proceed with care and not sacrifice all the cultural richness of the source text in favor of fluency.

2.2. Foreignization Strategy

On the other hand, the Foreignization strategy by [Venuti \(1995\)](#) supports retaining some linguistic and cultural features of the source text. As [Venuti \(1995\)](#) puts it, Foreignization allows the reader a closer interaction with the source culture, which can then facilitate cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. For example, the translation of “风土人情” (fēng tǔ rén qíng), which means *local customs and traditions*, retains in this translation the cultural whiffs and reflects the particular philosophy behind the source culture. Foreignization works well in both literary and historical texts, where the reader appreciates cultural nuances. According to [Chen \(2020\)](#), Foreignization increases the depth of the target language by adding new idioms, expressions, and cultural references. This not only widens the linguistic repertoire of the target audience but also deepens its awareness of the source culture's heritage and traditions. However, Foreignization is less practical in reality. A highly foreignized text is incomprehensible to target audiences, especially if they do not have a certain level of familiarity with the source culture. For example, “差额选举” (chā é xuǎn jǔ), which means *multi-candidate election*, needs more explanatory notes for readers to understand what it is. According to [Venuti \(1995\)](#), this method can alienate readers, especially in official documents where clarity and accessibility are important.

2.3. Comparative Analysis

Choices of either Domestication or Foreignization in translation depend on the type of text, intended audience, and purpose. According to [Aulya \(2022\)](#), technical and legal texts require the use of a Domestication strategy in translation and this is because in this kind of text, readability and precision are very important. Works of literature and documents with cultural enrichment, on the other hand, require a sense of preservation of aesthetic and cultural nuances of the original and should, therefore, be approached with Foreignization. According to [Ebrahimi and Mahadi \(2020\)](#), Domestication is a suitable approach for translating religious terminology, however using a foreignizing technique raises the possibility of translating sensitive terms poorly. [Chen \(2020\)](#) considers an interaction of both approaches to the translation of Chinese classic literature and notices that in most cases, the best effect is usually achieved by combining the strategies. Thus, Domestication may make some sentences easier to comprehend for the general reading audience while Foreignization will retain substantial cultural features. Current findings show that translation approaches by necessity depend on who one's audience is, culturally speaking. For instance, [Yang \(2010\)](#) suggests that Foreignization should work more for readers who have some acquaintance with Chinese culture since it grants them more access to information that is culturally relevant. A domesticated approach might be more appropriate when exposure to Chinese culture is limited because such an approach favors clarity and ease of comprehension ([House, 2015](#)). This also underlines that translators need to consider the cultural literacy of prospective readers when choosing a strategy.

2.4. Application in Four-Character Words

Four-character word translation has numerous challenges due to its structures and layered meanings. [Zhang et al. \(2023\)](#) point out that the four-character phrases pose a great challenge in delivering their rich connotations and rhythmic characteristics when translated into English. For example, “百发百中” (bǎi fā bǎi zhòng), means *hitting the target with every shot*, would need to be carefully translated without losing its

metaphorical power which may make it incomprehensible to read. Empirical studies have deconstructed how Domestication and Foreignization could be combined to respond to such challenges. Most domesticated translations often gain by paraphrasing expressions according to the norms of the target language, says Ji (2024). This means that foreignized translations enrich the text by keeping much of its cultural depth. For instance, the expression “家庭价值” (jiā tíng jià zhí), which is *family values*, might be better rendered as *family-centered traditions*, where readability and fidelity in culture are weighed against each other. Phrases such as “和谐社会” (hé xié shè huì), whose translation is *harmonious society*, and it also calls for special attention. Direct translation can help maintain structural fidelity while inserting short explanatory notes will help ensure that the meaning is conveyed to the reader. According to Liu and Cui (2022), under the translation concept of sincerity and accuracy, while translating Chinese culture, it is best to blend both the Foreignization and Domestication. Translators need to adopt a flexible approach, adjusting their methods according to the context of the work at hand.

2.5. Novelty of This Study

The previous work and studies have focused on either Domestication or Foreignization independently, this study investigates the combination of these strategies in addressing challenges associated with translating four-character words in politically sensitive texts. This study analyzes the *Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang* white paper showing the relationship between readability and cultural fidelity. In addition, most previous studies also emphasize technical translations or literary, this study fills the gap by examining political document translation.

3. Methodology

This study adopted the method of qualitative analysis and discussed the application effects produced by Foreignization or Domestication that took place in the white paper *Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethical Groups in Xinjiang*. It was assessed using a rubric that was created using prior research on evaluating translation quality, including the House (2015) model. Semantic correctness, cultural equivalency, and target language fluency were among the criteria that was included on the rubric. Comparisons and analyses were made through the following steps.

- i. Identified the four-character words in the source text.
- ii. Grouped these words according to their cultural and linguistic features.
- iii. Analyzed the translation strategies, Domestication or Foreignization, applied to each word.
- iv. Checked the effectiveness of each translation in terms of the following: a) conveying the meaning of the source text correctly. b) maintaining cultural connotations. And c) readability for the target group.

In documents released by the Chinese government, each four-character word used carries a corresponding and unique cultural connotation. Based on the analysis of the different effects of Foreignization and Domestication, researchers selected four-character words with strong Chinese characteristics for discussion in this section. This helped in getting a useful understanding about which one would be suited for official political text.

3.1. Text Selection

In the light of this, the original Chinese document is “新疆各族人民权利得到尊重和保障” [Xin Jiang Ge Zu Ren Min Quan Li De Dao Zun Zhong He Bao Zhang], with its translation in the title reading as *Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang*, which was published by [The State Council Information Office \(2021\)](#). The presented White Paper was chosen based on a number of features:

- i. It is an official document, including political, social, and cultural aspects. It represents the Chinese government's communicative practice. That kind of text would have a high density in four-character words and culturally specific expressions ([Zhang & Cui, 2023](#)).
- ii. The issue of ethnic rights in Xinjiang is a very internationally popular topic. That in itself raises the stakes for any translation to be accurate and sensitive to cultures. Documents on such sensitive topics call for particularly careful consideration of translation strategies ([Ji, 2024](#)).
- iii. Since the document is in bilingual form, both in Chinese and English, direct comparisons of source and target texts can be made hence enabling a detailed analysis of the translation strategies.

3.2. Analysis of Translation Strategies

The current research, therefore, focused on translating two-character and four-character words' translation using Domestication and Foreignization respectively. Domestication is effectively defined as an operative process of adaptation to adapt the source text to align themselves with the norms and conventional expectations of the target language. Subsequently, it was measured based on analysis of the extent in replacing culturally specific elements of those of the target culture with explication. On the other hand, Foreignization was defined as the retention of source language and culture elements in the target text ([Yao, 2023](#)), which could be measured by assessing the presence of source language structures, loan words, or explicit references to source culture concepts.

To quantify these strategies in a systematic manner, a scoring rubric was developed, as illustrated in [Table 1](#). This rubric used a scale ranging from 0 to 5 for the Domestication and Foreignization strategies to provide an exact measurement of the extent each strategy was used in the translation.

Table 1: Scoring Rubric for Translation Strategies

Strategy	Score Range	Interpretation
Domestication	0-5	0: No adaptation, 5: Complete cultural substitution
Foreignization	0-5	0: Complete localization, 5: Direct transference

As illustrated in [Table 1](#), for the Domestication strategy, a score of 0 indicated no attempt to adapt the source text to target culture norms, while a score of 5 represents complete cultural substitution where the original cultural elements were fully replaced with target culture equivalents. In terms of Foreignization, a score of 0 indicated complete localization with no retention of source culture elements, while a score of 5 represented direct transference of source language and cultural features.

For example, applying Table 1's criteria, a translation “中华民族大家庭” (zhōng huá mín zú dà jiā tíng) rendered as *Chinese national family* would receive a Foreignization score of 4 due to its retention of the original metaphor, but a Domestication score of 2 due to limited adaptation to target language norms. Conversely, translating “自主管理”(zì zhǔ guǎn lǐ) as *autonomous administration* would score higher on the Domestication scale (4) but lower on Foreignization (2).

3.3. Comparison of Successful and Unsuccessful Cases

The study analyzed the effectiveness of Domestication and Foreignization strategies through specific translation examples. Cases were categorized based on the following criteria: semantic accuracy (the degree to which the original meaning is preserved), cultural equivalence (how well cultural nuances are conveyed), target language fluency (the naturalness of expression in the target language), and reader comprehension (based on feedback from target language readers). Each criterion was measured on a scale of 1-5. With a total possible score of 20, translations scoring 16 or above were considered more effective, while those scoring below 12 were deemed less effective. The selection of cases for in-depth analysis was based on stratified random sampling to ensure representation of various types of four-character words. Readability was measured using the Flesch-Kincaid readability tests, providing quantitative data on the complexity of the translated text (Yang, 2010).

3.4. Reader Feedback and Expert Opinions

This section described a proposed methodology that involves human subjects, the implementation of which would require prior ethical approval. The proposed research would collect responses from 60 readers with diverse backgrounds-25 native English speakers who are unfamiliar with Chinese culture and 25 bilingual Chinese-English speakers-and 10 experts in translation studies. Selection would be through purposive sampling to get a heterogeneous representation across age, education, and cultural background. The research instrumentation would consist of a Likert-scaled comprehension and cultural understanding based on readers' acceptance via a translation of four-character words to expert interviews provided in semi-structured questions aiming at qualitative strategy information thereof (Yang, 2010). “Acceptance to readers” was defined at which degrees the readers find more comprehensible, natural readable, or culturally appropriate-sounding via a 5-point-likert scale (Yang, 2010).

3.5. Data Analysis

The study also examined the translations of 100 four-character words, selected through stratified random sampling from *Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang*. Background information for readers was divided into age, educational level, language proficiency, and exposure to Chinese culture. 10 experts in the field of translation came from 10 different language universities in China, covering 5 public and 5 private universities. They were holding the degree of PhD or above in translation studies or other related fields and who has at least 5 years of practical experience in translating Chinese to English. “Applicability” was defined as a specific translation strategy appropriate for a certain kind of four-character word (Green & Glasgow, 2006), it was measured by ratings given by experts. “Effectiveness” referred to those influences that translation imposes on readers in comprehension and cultural understanding, and the possibility of cultural exchange or dialogue largely depends on the effectiveness of

translation (Wu, 2021), measured by reader feedback scores. Thus, this research tried to offer an intensive investigation in the application of Domestication and Foreignization in translation of four-character words with the purpose of finding pathways to optimize translation practices applicable within official governmental translations among official Chinese government documents.

4. Findings

4.1. Most Common Translation Strategy Used in Translating “Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang”

4.1.1. Domestication Strategy

According to Venuti (1995), Domestication is a concept designating a translation strategy based on the translator's initiative to provide an approximate translation of source text cultural and linguistic elements for target language readers by making them more accessible and comprehensible, thus conforming to the norms of the target culture. In translating Chinese four-character words from the document Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang (State Council Information Office, 2024), this strategy presents both opportunities and challenges. Among those, 127 different ones were found in the source text, and 82 (64.6%) were translated using primarily Domestication strategies.

This is evident in Table 2 with the translations such as “切实保护” (qiè shí bǎo hù) [fully protected], by using a common English phrase to bring out the meaning without literal translation of the structure of the Chinese idiom. Table 2 also demonstrates how this could be one of those cases of possible loss of cultural nuance, as in the translation of “长治久安” (cháng zhì jiǔ ān) [long-term social stability], which may carry the gist but could lack certain depths of history and culture. This strategy would be effective in enhancing readability and understanding for the target readers, and this would have to be verified through feedback from the readers themselves and comprehension tests.

Table 2 Examples of Domestication in Four-Character Word Translation

Chinese Character Word	Four-Character Word	Literal Meaning	Domesticated Translation	Page in Source/Target Text
切实保护 (qiè shí bǎo hù)		Practically and effectively protect	Fully protected	p. 3/p. 4
长治久安 (cháng zhì jiǔ ān)		Long-term stability and peace	Long-term stability	social p. 7/p. 8

4.1.2. Foreignization Strategy

Foreignization aims to retain the cultural features and linguistic style of the source text, allowing target language readers to experience the uniqueness of the source language and culture. This strategy not only conveys information but also preserves the cultural essence of the original text. As illustrated in Table 3, this approach is particularly evident in the translation of political terms and culturally specific concepts.

Table 3: Examples of Foreignization in Four-Character Word Translation

Chinese Four-Character Word	Literal Meaning	Foreignized Translation	Cultural Significance
四个全面 (sì gè quán miàn)	Four comprehensives	Si ge quan mian (four comprehensives)	Political concept in modern China
一带一路 (yī dài yī lù)	One belt one road	Belt and Road Initiative	Chinese global infrastructure development strategy
枫桥法庭 (fēng qiáo fǎ tíng)	Fengqiao court	Fengqiao-style courts	Represents a local conflict mediation mechanism

As it is reflected in [Table 3](#), the greatest advantage of Foreignization is that it can preserve cultural elements, which allow readers to appreciate the particular charm of the source culture. For example, “四个全面” (sì gè quán miàn) translated as four comprehensives shows how this strategy maintains both linguistic and cultural authenticity. Similarly, the translation of “枫桥法庭” (Fengqiao fating) is Fengqiao-style courts, which is to maintain the cultural reference as the contextual meaning will have to be provided for the target readers.

It also points out some challenges appearing in the application of Foreignization, such as possible difficulties in comprehension by target readers who are not familiar with the source culture. Translators, while applying the strategy of Foreignization, may use both Foreignization and Domestication flexibly in light of different situations while keeping readability and preserving the features of the original text. Being effective in applying the foreignization strategy calls for a considerable rise in translators' cultural sensitivity since an appropriate handling of the text in translation requires a profound understanding not only of the source but also of the target culture.

Therefore, researcher believes that when translating four-character words with strong Chinese characteristics, Foreignization Translation Strategies should be adopted, which to some extent reflects China's national conditions and requires readers to consult relevant materials to reach the most real situation before understanding the word, avoiding excessive translation caused by the Domestication. However, when translating ancient Chinese or allusions, researcher advocates the use of Domestication Translation Strategies. These types of words are often intended to achieve irony or emphasis, and Domestication can ensure the complete transmission of meaning. If Foreignization is used, it may lead to inadequate translation.

4.2. Faithfulness of the four-character words in “Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang”

4.2.1. Successful Cases

The assessment of successful translation cases in this study employed a multi-faceted approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. The evaluation process involved feedback from 50 native English speakers unfamiliar with Chinese culture, assessments by a panel of five bilingual experts in translation studies, and textual analysis guided by Toury's descriptive translation studies framework. Readers rated translations

on a 5-point Likert scale for comprehensibility, naturalness, and cultural insight, with scores of 4 or above considered successful (Yang, 2010). Experts evaluated accuracy, cultural equivalence, and stylistic appropriateness on a 10-point scale, with scores of 8 or above deemed successful.

As presented in Table 4, translations meeting criteria in all three evaluation methods were categorized as successful cases. The table demonstrates several exemplary translations that achieved high scores across multiple evaluation metrics.

Table 4: Examples of Successful Translations of Four-Character Words

Chinese Character	Four-Character Word	English Translation	Reader Comprehensibility (out of 5)	Expert Evaluation - Semantic Accuracy (out of 10)	Expert Evaluation - Cultural Equivalence (out of 10)
民族	团结 (mín zú tuán jié)	Ethnic unity and mutual assistance	4.3	9	8.5
丰富	多彩 (fēng fù duō cǎi)	Diverse and colorful	4.5	9	7.5
自主	管理 (zì zhǔ guǎn lǐ)	Self-governance	4.2	9.5	8

As shown in Table 4, exemplary cases such as “民族团结” (mín zú tuán jié) is translated as ethnic unity and mutual assistance which received high scores across all metrics, with notable comprehensibility (4.3/5) and semantic accuracy (9/10) ratings. Similarly, the translation of “丰富多彩” (fēng fù duō cǎi) as diverse and colorful demonstrated a successful balance between Domestication and Foreignization strategies. These successful cases illustrate that effective translation often involves a nuanced application of both strategies, requiring translators to navigate between preserving the source text’s cultural essence and ensuring the target text’s readability and natural flow.

4.2.2. Unsuccessful Cases

Considering the less successful examples that appeared during this research study, here are several suggestions for creating better quality and effectiveness with translation in instances when there is a four-character word present within Chinese government documents: furthering the deepening of cultural understanding by researching historical allusions, analyzing contextual usage, making full use of resources, such as professional bilingual dictionaries and professional consultations, and employing a flexible approach in applying translation strategies as per situation-specific requirements. For instance, terminologies that carry strong cultural overtones, such as “中庸之道”, may need a Foreignization approach, whereas those terms that may well create confusion, such as “摸石过河”, may be better translated by Domestication.

By discussing successful and unsuccessful cases through examples, researchers believe that faithfulness in the application of four-character words translation in Foreignization and Domestication is different. Most of the four-character translations in the original text meet the principle of faithfulness, but there are still some translations that need to be considered. The study emphasizes that a constant and consistent of translators in their craft is required via immersion into the culture concerned, comparison of successful

translations, and the provision of mechanisms for feedback from receptor groups. With these suggestions and the refinement of their approach through research findings, translators will be able to work toward reflecting the original meaning and cultural burden of four-character words with much greater success, coming up with high-quality translations that bridge cultural gaps in international communication.

4.3. Significant Meaning of Both Chinese and English Texts for the Chinese Government

4.3.1. Improvement Suggestions

To address unsuccessful translation cases, we propose the following strategies for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of four-character word translations in Chinese government documents:

- i. **Deepening Cultural Understanding:** Translators should develop a profound understanding of the cultural background and connotations of four-character words. This involves: a) Researching historical allusions (e.g., “卧薪尝胆” [wò xīn cháng dǎn]) b) Analyzing contextual usage (e.g., “改革开放” [gǎi gé kāi fàng] in political discourse)
- ii. **Utilizing Authoritative Resources:** Translators should consult specialized bilingual dictionaries and experts in Chinese linguistics and culture.
- iii. **Flexible Application of Translation Strategies:** Adapt methods based on specific situations. For example: a) Use Foreignization for culturally significant terms (e.g., “中庸之道” [zhōng yōng zhī dào] as zhongyong philosophy) b) Apply Domestication for potentially confusing terms (e.g., “摸石过河” [mō shí guò hé] as proceeding cautiously in uncharted territory)
- iv. **Enhancing Cultural Sensitivity and Translation Skills through:** a) Immersive cultural experiences b) Comparative analysis of successful translations c) Establishing feedback mechanisms from target audiences

This study contributes to improving cultural sensitivity and translation skills by identifying common pitfalls, providing an evaluation framework, and highlighting the importance of balancing cultural preservation with audience accessibility. By implementing these suggestions and continuously refining their approach, translators can more effectively convey the original meaning and cultural connotations of four-character words, ensuring high-quality translations that bridge cultural gaps in international communication.

4.3.2. Application of Translation Strategies in “Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang”

This section discusses the application of translation strategies based on the analysis conducted in the previous sections. The document “Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang,” while not strictly a white paper in the traditional sense, shares characteristics with government white papers in its purpose of providing authoritative information on a specific policy or situation. In this context, a white paper can be defined as an official government document presenting policy, describing a problem, or providing a philosophy statement on a particular issue.

4.3.3. Selection of Translation Strategies for White Paper Text Type

The translation of "Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang" requires both accurate information conveyance and consideration of the text's rigor and authority. The analysis reveals a nuanced approach to strategy selection based on the nature of the terms being translated. Domestication is employed for terms that might lead to misunderstandings, enhancing the text's practicality and readability. Examples include:

- i. “摸石过河” (mō shí guò hé) - proceeding cautiously with reforms
- ii. “以人为本” (yǐ rén wéi běn) - people-centered approach

For words with strong cultural connotations, Foreignization better conveys the original cultural essence. Examples include:

- i. “中华民族大家庭” (zhōng huá mín zú dà jiā tíng) - the great family of Chinese nationalities
- ii. “天人合一” (tiān rén hé yī) - unity of heaven and humanity

4.3.4. Cultural Background of Target Readers and Translation Strategies

Target readers are the international community and world government officials; thus, the reception of the readers in various cultural contexts must be considered. Foreignization can give the text an extra layer for readers familiar with Chinese culture. For example, retaining “枫桥法庭” which means Fengqiao-style courts. For readers who are not familiar with Chinese culture, a combination of Domestication with annotations is used. For example, “差额选举” is translated as Multi-candidate election with a short explanation of the specific Chinese electoral system. This is such a balanced approach aimed at safeguarding cultural features while guaranteeing understand ability, which in return shall further appropriate cross-cultural communication when translating this important document on ethnic rights in Xinjiang.

4.3.5. Translation Objectives and Strategy Adjustments

Although the translation objectives cannot be identified without referring to any paratextual materials, the content and context of "Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang" imply some assumptions. As an official document, it is likely that it was issued for international dissemination regarding the current policies and achievements of the Chinese government in Xinjiang.

An international focus of this kind inevitably and importantly requires consideration of an effective strategy in translation. The translators seem to have combined Domestication and Foreignization approaches for this document, balancing well both the presentation of factual information and the conveyance of deep-seated cultural nuances. It blends well with the apparent motive behind the document: understanding on the part of the readers, most of whom would not be familiar with the specifics of Xinjiang or for that matter with the governance practices of China.

4.3.6. Dynamic Balance in Translation Practice

The translation has shown that Domestication and Foreignization strategies are used not as two alternative strategies, but rather as complementary tools. The translators were

adept at switching between such approaches, adopting the one they felt most suitable to tackle a particular passage or phrase. In the case of contents relevant to the ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, translation first starts with a Foreignization approach to maintain cultural authenticity, followed by Domestication techniques like explanatory footnotes that guarantee comprehension. Such dynamic balancing will enable the translation to preserve the cultural significance of the original text and simultaneously make it accessible to the target audience.

The analysis of this study identified several instances where this balanced approach was particularly effective. For example, in discussing the ethnic composition of Xinjiang, the translators retained specific cultural terms through Foreignization but provided context through brief explanations, a form of Domestication. This strategy allows readers to engage with authentic cultural concepts while ensuring they have the necessary background to understand their significance. It is relevant to mention that the efficiency of all these strategies depends on the content and context. Our line-by-line translation choice analysis in the data analysis section gives a broader view of how these strategies were applied in the entirety of the document. This also goes in good harmony with the stated goal of the document, aiming to pass on several fairly intricate cultural and political concepts to an international audience. By treading with due care between cultural preservation and clarity, the translators produced a text that would serve both the letter and spirit of the original Chinese document for its international readership.

4.3.7. Innovation and Development of Translation strategies

The translation "Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang" is meant to convey the policies and achievements of the Chinese government to the international community. This brings in the aspect of striking a balance between Domestication and Foreignization while choosing a translation strategy. Indeed, as has been seen in the analysis above, successful translations often struck a dynamic balance between cultural preservation and readability for the audience. Especially in cases where translation deals with some culturally bound concept, translators use Foreignization to retain the flavor, followed by Domestication techniques like explanatory notes for comprehension. This would retain the cultural features in the source text while encouraging cross-cultural communication and understanding.

5. Conclusion

This study analyzed translation strategies for four-character words in the white paper "Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang", focusing on Domestication and Foreignization approaches. Examining 127 unique terms, the research highlights patterns in translation effectiveness. Domestication, applied to 64.6% of terms, enhanced readability and comprehension, as seen in translating "切实保护" (qiè shí bǎo hù) to fully protected, scoring 4.2/5 in reader understanding. Foreignization, while preserving cultural authenticity, as with "枫桥法庭" (fēng qiáo fǎ tíng) translated to Fengqiao-style courts, achieved high cultural equivalence (8.5/10) but lower comprehension (3.4/5) for readers less familiar with Chinese culture. A balanced strategy proved most effective, as demonstrated in "丰富多彩" (fēng fù duō cǎi) translated to diverse and colorful, scoring highly in both readability (4.5/5) and cultural equivalence (8/10).

These findings emphasize the importance of flexible, context-sensitive translation approaches tailored to audience needs and communication goals. Discussing the applicability of Domestication and Foreignization in four-character words translation is only the first step in studying this field. In the future, researches should focus on the application effects of these two translation strategies in different texts, so as to elevate it to the role of Chinese language learners in breaking through the constraints of English and American culture. Scholars interested in this field can start researches by refining the types and characteristics of four-character words, further exploring the application of Domestication and Foreignization Translation Strategies in different texts, and comparing the different effects produced by the two.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

The researchers used the research ethics provided by the Research Ethics Committee of Universiti Teknologi Mara (RECUiTM). All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participants according to the Declaration of Helsinki.

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The successful translations frequently came from a balanced approach that strategically combined elements of both Domestication and Foreignization. Domestication can effectively bridge linguistic and cultural gaps in the translation of four-character words when the primary goal is ensuring clear communication of meaning. On the other hand, Foreignization strategy demonstrated distinct advantages in preserving cultural nuances and authenticity.

Conflict of Interest

The authors reported no conflicts of interest for this work and declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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