
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Foreignization as A Cultural Expectation in the Context of Globalization: A Case Study of Chinese President Xi Jinping's 2025 New Year Message

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ABSTRACT

With China's deepening opening-up, its publicity translation has become increasingly important. Official English translations are essential for conveying China's policies to the world. This paper emphasizes foreignization in publicity translation, following Lawrence Venuti's foreignization and domestication theory. Foreignization helps preserve cultural uniqueness, especially in the context of globalization, where authentic cultural expression is valued. Using Chinese president Xi Jinping's 2025 New Year message as a case study, the paper examines the role of foreignization and domestication in translation, arguing that foreignization strengthens China's cultural influence.

KEYWORDS

Foreignization; Cultural Expectation; Globalization; Translation Strategy; Speech

ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 01 January 2025

PUBLISHED: 15 January 2025

DOI: 10.32996/ijels.2025.7.1.2

1. Introduction

As China continues to open up and deepen its international economic and cultural exchanges, the importance of publicity grows. The role of English translations of public materials is crucial, as official translations serve as key bridges for the world to understand China's policies and positions. Generally, publicity materials are full of distinct Chinese literary language, content, and style. As translation theory develops, it is proposed that publicity translation should combine "foreignization and domestication" rather than separating them. On this base, this paper emphasizes foreignization, to effectively express Chinese culture to the world. Foreignization preserves cultural identity the most. According to Li Guisheng and Zhang Defu (2011, cited in He Jinshan, Fu Huan, 2014), "Only translations that align with Chinese culture can meet this goal, while translations that alter content to cater to Western preferences or prejudices fail to achieve this." Emphasizing foreignization in publicity translation attracts greater cultural attention and improves China's global cultural influence.

2. Foreignization and Domestication Translation Strategy

Foreignization and domestication theories are generally contributed by American scholar Lawrence Venuti. He defines domestication and foreignization as follows: domestication is an ethnocentric approach that adapts the foreign text to the cultural values of the target language, effectively integrating the original into the target culture. In contrast, foreignization is a form of cultural deviation that embraces the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, immersing the reader in a foreign atmosphere.

Lawrence Venuti was one of the most influential scholars studying translation in the United States back in the 1980s and 1990s. He edited a groundbreaking papers collection: *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology* (1992); authored two books: *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (1995) and *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (1998); and compiled *The Translation Studies Reader* (2000). Venuti's contributions to translation studies are multifaceted, including his development of new terminology and methods for analyzing translation. (Gentzler, Fu Jingmin trans., 2021).

Venuti challenges the widely accepted belief that the best translators uncover a “universal meaning” and reflect it transparently in their work. He identifies two major issues: first, it marginalizes the translator, positioning their work as derivative and subordinate compared to creative writing and literary analysis; second and more importantly, it disregards the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text. To him, translation means bringing differences to the target language and culture. Rewriting original text in the target culture’s style, adjusting its imagery and metaphors to fit local conventions, limits the translator’s choice, and the original text to conform. This type of translation was termed as domestication. It makes the foreign seem familiar, allowing readers to recognize their own culture in the text. Venuti views it as cultural imperialism. He argues translation is inherently creative and transformative, never truly transparent (Venuti, 2004).

Venuti has consistently advocated foreignization strategy and/or “abusive fidelity” throughout his theoretical development. “Foreignization” refers to translation that resists transparency and domestication (Venuti, 1995, cited in Gentzler, 2021). “Abusive fidelity” is similar---the translator aims at reflecting features of foreign text that “abuse” or resist the prevalent forms and values of target culture, enabling the translator to remain faithful to the original text while also participating in the cultural transformation (Venuti, 1992, 1995, cited in Gentzler, Fu Jingmin trans., 2021). The original features Venuti suggests translators to reproduce are those indicate linguistic and cultural differences.

It is difficult for translators to break free from the traditional domestication strategy. However, publicity translators are deeply involved in the cultural construction of the country, so they need to consciously adopt foreignizing. Venuti reveals that, during the translation process, translators consciously or unconsciously express their “loyalty” to a particular culture---usually the target culture---through their stylistic choices. Venuti argues that powerful cultural forces caused these choices, although it is not individual translator’s “betrayal”, it is a desire to ensure that the text is accepted with the dominant target culture’s framework. In fact, translators contribute to the construction of discourse in the target language through their choices. Venuti views these choices as social and cultural mechanisms’ production, which the translator may not be so aware of. Although the general public don’t even pay attention to these criticizing publicity translation’s excessive domestication, identifying foreignizing style and when translators were overly constrained by the dominant style and value, still clarifies translation process and provides valuable insight.

3. A Case Study of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s 2025 New Year Message

In translating Chinese President Xi Jinping’s speeches, the foreignization strategy is predominantly used to preserve the distinctive language style and cultural essence of “Xi-isms”. By emphasizing the contrasts between Chinese and Western cultures, the translations aim to avoid conformity with foreign cultural conventions, instead focus on showing the identity of Chinese culture.

On 2025 New Year’s Eve, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered his New Year message through China Media Group and the Internet. The full text of the message is provided in Chinese and English here:

“大家好！时间过得很快，新的一年即将到来，我在北京向大家致以美好的祝福！”

Greetings to everybody! Time flies fast, and the new year will be with us shortly. I extend my best wishes to you all from Beijing.

2024年，我们一起走过春夏秋冬，一道经历风雨彩虹，一个个瞬间定格在这不平凡的一年，令人感慨、难以忘怀。

In 2024, we have journeyed through the four seasons together. Together, we have experienced winds and rains and seen rainbows. Those touching and unforgettable moments have been like still frames showing how extraordinary a year we have had.

我们积极应对国内外环境变化带来的影响，出台一系列政策“组合拳”，扎实推动高质量发展，我国经济回暖向好，国内生产总值预计超过130万亿元。粮食产量突破1.4万亿斤，中国碗装了更多中国粮。区域发展协同联动、积厚成势，新型城镇化和乡村振兴相互融合、同频共振。绿色低碳发展纵深推进，美丽中国画卷徐徐铺展。

We have proactively responded to the impacts of the changing environment at home and abroad. We have adopted a full range of policies to make solid gains in pursuing high-quality development. China's economy has rebounded and is on an upward trajectory, with its GDP for the year expected to pass the 130 trillion yuan mark. Grain output has surpassed 700 million tons, and China's bowls are now filled with more Chinese grain. Coordinated development across regions has gained stronger momentum, and mutually reinforcing advances have been made in both new urbanization and rural revitalization. Green and low-carbon development has been further enhanced. Indeed, a more beautiful China is unfolding before us.

我们因地制宜培育新质生产力，新产业新业态新模式竞相涌现，新能源汽车年产量首次突破1000万辆，集成电路、人工智能、量子通信等领域取得新成果。嫦娥六号首次月背采样，梦想号探秘大洋，深中通道踏浪海天，南极秦岭站崛起冰原，展现了中国人逐梦星辰大海的豪情壮志。

We have fostered new quality productive forces in light of actual conditions. New business sectors, forms and models have kept emerging. For the first time, China has produced more than 10 million new energy vehicles in a year. Breakthroughs have been made in integrated circuit, artificial intelligence, quantum communications and many other fields. Also, for the first time, the

Chang'e-6 lunar probe collected samples from the far side of the moon. The Mengxiang drilling vessel explored the mystery of the deep ocean. The Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link now connects the two cities across the sea. The Antarctic Qinling Station is now in operation on the frozen continent. All this epitomizes the lofty spirit and dreams of the Chinese people to explore stars and oceans.

今年，我到地方考察，看到大家生活多姿多彩。天水花牛苹果又大又红，东山澳角村渔获满舱。麦积山石窟“东方微笑”跨越千年，六尺巷礼让家风代代相传。天津古文化街人潮熙攘，银川多民族社区居民亲如一家。对大家关心的就业增收、“一老一小”、教育医疗等问题，我一直挂念。一年来，基础养老金提高了，房贷利率下调了，直接结算范围扩大方便了异地就医，消费品以旧换新提高了生活品质……大家的获得感又充实了许多。

This year, I have visited many places across the country and seen how our people enjoy their enriching lives. I saw the big, red Huanian apples in Tianshui, Gansu and the fishing boats in Aojiao Village, Fujian loaded with their catches. I watched the millenium-old "Eastern Smile" in the Maiji Mountain Grottoes, and I learned more about good-neighborliness passed from generation to generation in Liuchixiang Alley. I enjoyed the hustle and bustle in Tianjin's Ancient Culture Street, and I saw how the people in Yinchuan's mixed-ethnic residential communities live together as one family. The concerns of the people about jobs and incomes, elderly and child care, education and medical services are always on my mind. This year, the basic pension has been raised, and mortgage rates have dropped. Cross-province direct settlement of medical bills has been expanded, making it easier for people to seek medical treatment across the country. And consumer goods trade-in programs have improved people's lives... All these are real benefits to our people.

巴黎奥运赛场上，我国体育健儿奋勇争先，取得境外参赛最好成绩，彰显了青年一代的昂扬向上、自信阳光。海军、空军喜庆75岁生日，人民子弟兵展现新风貌。面对洪涝、台风等自然灾害，广大党员干部冲锋在前，大家众志成城、守望相助。无数劳动者、建设者、创业者，都在为梦想拼搏。我为国家勋章和国家荣誉称号获得者颁奖，光荣属于他们，也属于每一个挺膺担当的奋斗者。

In the Paris Olympics, Chinese athletes raced to the top and achieved their best performance in Olympic Games held overseas, fully demonstrating the vigor and confidence of young Chinese. The PLA Navy and Air Force celebrated their 75th birthdays, and our servicemen and women are full of drive. When floods, typhoons and other natural disasters struck, members of the Communist Party of China and officials stepped forward to lead disaster relief efforts, and our people were of one mind and reached out to each other. People in all fields -- workers, builders and entrepreneurs, among others -- are working hard to fulfill their dreams. I presented awards to recipients of national medals and honorary titles. The honor belongs to them; it also belongs to every hard-working person who has lived up to their responsibilities.

当今世界变乱交织，中国作为负责任大国，积极推动全球治理变革，深化全球南方团结合作。我们推进高质量共建“一带一路”走深走实，成功举办中非合作论坛北京峰会，在上合、金砖、亚太经合组织、二十国集团等双边多边场合，鲜明提出中国主张，为维护世界和平稳定注入更多正能量。

In a world of both transformation and turbulence, China, as a responsible major country, is actively promoting global governance reform and deepening solidarity and cooperation among the Global South. We are making deeper and more substantive advances in high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. The Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation was a full success. We put forward China's vision at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRICS, APEC, G20 and other bilateral and multilateral forums. We have contributed greatly to the maintenance of world peace and stability.

我们隆重庆祝新中国成立75周年，深情回望共和国的沧桑巨变。从五千多年中华文明的传承中一路走来，“中国”二字镌刻在“何尊”底部，更铭刻在每个华夏儿女心中。党的二十届三中全会胜利召开，吹响进一步全面深化改革的号角。我们乘着改革开放的时代大潮阔步前行，中国式现代化必将在改革开放中开辟更加广阔的前景。

We celebrated the 75th anniversary of the founding of New China. With deep affection, we looked back at the sea change that has taken place across China since the birth of the People's Republic. Nurtured by our 5,000-plus years of continuous civilization, our country, China, is engraved not only on the bottom of the ancient bronze ritual wine vessel of He Zun, but also in the heart of every Chinese. At its Third Plenary Session, the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China sounded a clarion call for further deepening all-round reform. We will march forward in great strides to advance reform and opening up as the trend of our times. We will surely embrace even broader prospects in pursuing Chinese modernization in the course of reform and opening up.

2025年，我们将全面完成“十四五”规划。要实施更加积极有为的政策，聚精会神抓好高质量发展，推动高水平科技自立自强，保持经济社会发展良好势头。当前经济运行面临一些新情况，有外部环境不确定性的挑战，有新旧动能转换的压力，但这些经过努力是可以克服的。我们从来都是在风雨洗礼中成长、在历经考验中壮大，大家要充满信心。

In 2025, we will fully complete the 14th Five-Year Plan. We will implement more proactive and effective policies, pursue high-quality development as a top priority, promote greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology, and maintain sound momentum in economic and social development. The Chinese economy now faces some new conditions, including challenges of

uncertainties in the external environment and pressure of transformation from old growth drivers into new ones. But we can prevail with our hard work. As always, we grow in the wind and rain, and we get stronger through hard times. We must be confident.

家事国事天下事，让人民过上幸福生活是头等大事。家家户户都盼着孩子能有好的教育，老人能有好的养老服务，年轻人能有更多发展机会。这些朴实的愿望，就是对美好生活的向往。我们要一起努力，不断提升社会建设和治理水平，持续营造和谐包容的氛围，把老百姓身边的大事小情解决好，让大家笑容更多、心里更暖。

Of all the jobs in front of us, the most important is to ensure a happy life for our people. Every family hopes that their children can have a good education, their seniors can enjoy good elderly services, and their youngsters can have more and better opportunities. These simple wishes are our people's aspirations for a better life. We should work together to steadily improve social undertakings and governance, build a harmonious and inclusive atmosphere, and settle real issues, big or small, for our people. We must bring more smiles to our people and greater warmth to their hearts.

在澳门回归祖国25周年之际，我再到濠江之畔，新发展新变化令人欣喜。我们将坚定不移贯彻“一国两制”方针，保持香港、澳门长期繁荣稳定。两岸同胞一家亲，谁也无法割断我们的血脉亲情，谁也不能阻挡祖国统一的历史大势！

On the eve of the 25th anniversary of Macao's return to the motherland, I visited the city again, and I was gratified to see the new progress and changes there. We will unswervingly implement the policy of One Country, Two Systems to maintain long-term prosperity and stability in Hong Kong and Macao. We Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one and the same family. No one can ever sever the bond of kinship between us, and no one can ever stop China's reunification, a trend of the times.

世界百年变局加速演进，需要以宽广胸襟超越隔阂冲突，以博大情怀关照人类命运。中国愿同各国一道，做友好合作的践行者、文明互鉴的推动者、构建人类命运共同体的参与者，共同开创世界的美好未来。

As changes unseen in a century accelerate across the world, it is important to rise above estrangement and conflict with a broad vision, and care for the future of humanity with great passion. China will work with all countries to promote friendship and cooperation, enhance mutual learning among different cultures, and build a community with a shared future for mankind. We must jointly create a better future for the world.

梦虽遥，追则能达；愿虽艰，持则可圆。中国式现代化的新征程上，每一个人都是主角，每一份付出都弥足珍贵，每一束光芒都熠熠生辉。

Dreams and wishes may be far, but they can be fulfilled with dedicated pursuit. On the new journey of Chinese modernization, everyone is a key actor, every effort counts, and every ray of light shines.

河山添锦绣，星光映万家。让我们满怀希望，迎接新的一年。祝祖国时和岁丰、繁荣昌盛！祝大家所愿皆所成，多喜乐、长安宁！

Splendor adorns our motherland, and starlight graces every home. Let us greet the new year with hope. May our great country enjoy harmony and prosperity! May all your dreams come true! May you all have a new year of happiness and peace!"

3.1 Foreignization in the Message

As China continues to develop rapidly and its political and economic standing on the international stage strengthens, Western readers have become more accepting of Chinese culture. Their attitude toward cultural exchange has grown friendlier, and their receptiveness and expectations for translations have evolved. They now prefer to experience the authentic essence of Chinese culture. Consequently, publicity translators have shifted from primarily using domestication strategy to more using foreignization strategy.

Among foreignization strategy, there're still literal, free approach, and additive, and lessened approach. And these four approaches also apply within domestication strategy. They will be explained each by each in the next part of this paper.

3.1.1 Specific Literal Foreignization

Literal foreignization approach means adhering to the original text's vocabulary order and sentence structure, preserving its metaphors and rhetorical techniques, maintaining its cultural essence without any modification. It prioritizes direct, literal translation to reflect the source text faithfully. The instances of specific literal foreignization are as follows:

(1) 春夏秋冬

Four seasons

(2) 风雨彩虹

Experienced winds and rains and seen rainbows

(3) 定格

Have been like still frames

- (4) 令人感慨
Touching
- (5) 难以忘怀
Unforgettable
- (6) 扎实
Solid
- (7) 高质量发展
High-quality development
- (8) 回暖向好
Has rebounded and is on an upward trajectory
- (9) 协同联动
Coordinated development across regions
- (10) 积厚成势
Has gained stronger momentum
- (11) 新型城镇化
New urbanization
- (12) 乡村振兴
Rural revitalization
- (13) 绿色低碳发展
Green and low-carbon development
- (14) 新质生产力
New quality productive forces
- (15) 新产业新业态新模式
New business sectors, forms and models
- (16) 竞相涌现
emerging
- (17) 探秘大洋
Explored the mystery of the deep ocean
- (18) 逐梦星辰大海
Explore stars and oceans
- (19) 豪情壮志
Lofty spirit and dreams
- (20) 渔获满舱
Loaded with their catches
- (21) “东方微笑”
“Eastern Smile”
- (22) 跨越千年
Millenium-old
- (23) 礼让家风
Good-neighborliness
- (24) 代代相传
Passed from generation to generation
- (25) 亲如一家
Live together as one family
- (26) 就业增收
Jobs and incomes
- (27) “一老一小”
Elderly and child care
- (28) 挂念
On my mind
- (29) 异地就医
Seek medical treatment across the country
- (30) 获得感充实了许多
Are real benefits
- (31) 奋勇争先

Raced to the top

(32)彰显

Fully demonstrating

(33)昂扬向上

vigor

(34)自信阳光

confidence

(35)人民子弟兵

Servicemen and women

(36)新风貌

Full of drive

(37)党员干部

Members of the Communist Party of China and officials

(38)冲锋在前

Stepped forward to lead efforts

(39)众志成城

Our people were of one mind

(40)守望相助

Reached out to each other

(41)劳动者、建设者、创业者

Workers, builders and entrepreneurs

(42)拼搏

Working hard

(43)挺膺担当

Lived up to their responsibilities

(44)变乱交织

Of both transformation and turbulence

(45)走深走实

Making deeper and more substantive advances

(46)注入正能量

Contributed greatly to

(47)深情回望

With deep affection, we looked back

(48)沧桑巨变

The sea change that has taken place

(49)传承

Continuous

(50)一路走来

Nurtured by

(51)镌刻

Engraved on

(52)铭刻

Engraved in

(53)华夏儿女

Every Chinese

(54)吹响号角

Sounded a clarion call for

(55)时代大潮

The trend of our times

(56)阔步前行

March forward in great strides

(57)积极有为

Proactive and effective

(58)自立自强

Self-reliance and strength

(59)良好势头

Sound momentum
(60)风雨洗礼
In the wind and rain
(61)历经考验
Through hard times
(62)壮大
Get stronger
(63)头等大事
The most important (job)
(64)盼着
Hopes
(65)朴实
Simple
(66)营造
Build
(67)大事小情
Real issues, big or small
(68)濠江之畔
The city
(69)令人欣喜
Was gratified to see
(70)坚定不移
Unswervingly
(71)贯彻
Implement
(72)血脉亲情
The bond of kinship
(73)历史大势
A trend of the times
(74)加速演进
Accelerate
(75)宽广胸襟
With a broad vision
(76)博大情怀
With great passion
(77)做友好合作的践行者
Promote friendship and cooperation
(78)文明互鉴
Mutual learning among different cultures
(79)新征程
New journey
(80)弥足珍贵
count
(81)每一束光芒
Every ray of light
(82)熠熠生辉
Shine
(83)时和岁丰
Enjoy harmony
(84)繁荣昌盛
Enjoy prosperity
(85)所愿皆所成
All dreams come true
(86) 中国碗装了更多中国粮
China's bowls are now filled with more Chinese grain

(87) 开辟更加广阔的前景

Embrace even broader prospects

(88) 家事国事天下事

All the jobs in front of us

(89) 两岸同胞一家亲

We Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one and the same family.

(90) 河山添锦绣，星光映万家

Splendor adorns our motherland, and starlight graces every home.

(91) 多喜乐、长安宁

Of happiness and peace

3.1.2 Specific Free Foreignization

Free approach of foreignization provides a larger space to create cultural-specific translations. Translator could use free foreignization to accomplish preciseness and abundance at the same time. Here is the one instance in the message:

(92) 梦虽遥，追则能达；愿虽艰，持则可圆

Dreams and wishes may be far, but they can be fulfilled with dedicated pursuit.

3.1.3 Specific Lessened Foreignization

There is no specific additive foreignization in this message; however, this paper still has to come up with some characteristics of additive foreignization, since they are important. Venuti argues that texts rich in the source culture's characteristics should strive to retain their linguistic and cultural essence during translation, rather than exhausting efforts to find equivalents. The aim is to expose target language readers to cultural differences and encourage them to learn from them, even if the translation can only be understood by a small, well-educated audience familiar with the source culture. But how can cultural characteristics of the original be preserved while enabling Western readers to grasp their meaning? This is where the additive foreignization strategy comes into play. This strategy builds upon the literal foreignization approach by adding words, phrases or sentences to supplement and interpret the text, allowing Western readers to both experience the unique cultural essence of China and understand its underlying meaning.

Meanwhile, lessened foreignization simplifies the text, clarifies the expression tone, omits unnecessary parts and reflects superb translation skills. The specific lessened instances are as follows:

(93) 鲜明提出

Put forward

(94) 胜利召开

(omitted)

(95) 聚精会神

(omitted)

3.2 Domestication in the Message

Meanwhile, there still are some domestications in the message. They provide Western readers with a more familiar perspective to see the development taking place in China. They are as follows:

(96) 组合拳

A full range of policies

(97) 同频共振

Mutually reinforcing advances have been made in both

(98) 纵深推进

Has been further enhanced

(99) 美丽中国画卷

A more beautiful China

(100) 徐徐铺展

Unfolding

(101) 因地制宜

In light of actual conditions

(102) 踏浪海天

Connects the two cities across the sea

(103)崛起冰原

In operation on the frozen continent

(104)多姿多彩

Enriching

(105)人潮熙攘

Hustle and bustle

(106)以旧换新

Trade-in

4. Conclusion

Venuti once argued that foreignizing translation embodies an ethical approach to translating foreign texts and cultures, resisting the dominant cultural values of the target language. He called for adopting foreignization as a means to promote cultural exchange.

Chinese President Xi Jinping's speeches, enriched with references and unique Chinese terms, serve as subtle carriers of Chinese cultural and political communication. Publicity translation should act as a bridge for global exchange, helping Chinese culture reach the world and enhancing China's international influence. The foreignization of "Xi-isms" highlights cultural and political differences, showcasing a true image of China as a country worthy of friendship, trust and respect while establishing its cultural position. Venuti's theory of foreignization, when applied to political publicity, reflects respect for and recognition of Chinese culture, contributing to cultural discourse power and symbolizing China's rising global status. It underscores the importance of valuing one's own culture.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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