
Cultural Assimilation and Hegemony: On the Translation of “Human Rights”

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Abstract: This essay intends to discuss the interaction in essence between translation and culture through the translation case of “human rights”. Since translation studies have many links with historical, political and cross-cultural research, an analysis of translation will be a powerful approach to exploring the cultural assimilation and hegemony hidden behind the term “human rights”. The term of “human rights” was translated as *renquan* in Chinese language in the 18th century when China was experiencing a period of impoverishment and long-standing debility. Because formal and dynamic equivalences could not be found in the target language, rewriting process is involved in *renquan*. Individualism is “missed” in *ren* and *quan* is very likely to be misunderstood by Chinese people as “power”. As a matter of fact, the idea of “human rights” has been assimilated into contemporary Chinese culture, unleashing a rush of power in China’s politics, legislation and education, so on and so forth. Those influences not only indicate a result of cultural blending, but also reveal the existence of cultural collisions. While this concept brings advances for the Chinese nation, it is often manipulated as a cultural hegemony weapon by some Western countries. Claims about human rights of hegemonic countries sometimes are ironically conflicted with the action they take. Cultural assimilation and cultural hegemony shown in the translation case of “human rights,” give rise to the enlightenments about the evaluation of a good translator. The role of translators is never static, mostly importing foreign cultures in hard times and exporting domestic cultures in taking-off times. Besides, the translating strategy of the term “human rights” is not the fundamental reason that leads Chinese indigenous ideologies to have been influenced by the West and the translators’ role in countering against cultural hegemony seems to be very tiny, but these does not mean they can do nothing. Translators should strengthen self-efficacy and they themselves should believe their roles are able to imperceptibly attract or block readers. Lastly, translators must be fully aware of cultural self-consciousness. Great translators should strengthen their sensitivity to inter-cultural communications, being neither cringing nor arrogant about different cultures and enhancing the technological literacy in this digital era.

Keywords: Human Rights, Rewriting Theories, Cultural Assimilation, Cultural Hegemony, Translators’ Role

1. Introduction

Academic areas of translation studies have been dramatically widened since the 1970s [1]. Instead of being regarded as a “mere technical activity”, translation has been more frequently connected with cultural studies [2]. This phenomenon was coined by Snell-Hornby [3] as a “cultural turn”, marking the movement from the translating to cultural perspective. Consequently, a variety of research focusing on the relations between translation and culture have sprung up in large numbers. As both culture and translation are very multi-faceted fields containing various investigations, this

essay intends to discuss the interaction in essence between translation and culture through a translation case in the term of “human rights”.

Human rights are a Western concept, an indispensable part in Western ideologies [4]. Promoted by globalization, the term of human rights has always been a controversial political topic as well as a heatedly debated issue in the international community. Introduction of this term of “human rights” to China has been unleashing a rush of power in politics, legislation and education, so on and so forth. Those influences not only indicate a result of cultural blending, but also reveal the existence of cultural collisions. Since translation studies

have many links with historical, political and cross-cultural research, an analysis of translation will be a powerful approach to exploring the cultural assimilation and hegemony hidden behind the term “human rights”.

Therefore, this essay will firstly analyze translational methods applied in translating “human rights” into *renquan*; secondly it intends to reveal the cultural phenomenon of assimilation and hegemony brought by human rights and lastly it is going to answer the question, “To what extent can the cross-cultural awareness of translators exert on the cultural assimilation and hegemony?” Plus, ideology in this text is described as “a conceptual grid that consists of opinions and attitudes deemed acceptable in a certain society at a certain time, and through which readers and translators approach texts” [1]. Assimilation means the process that a group resembles the culture of another group; hegemony will be defined as “political control or influence, especially by one country over other countries” [5].

2. The Translation of “Human Rights”

“Human rights”, deemed as a sort of cultural import, of which the translation in Chinese is *renquan*, being widely acknowledged as a popularly known concept in Western political ideologies. Freeman claims that the term of “human rights” means “rights of exceptional importance, designed to protect morally valid and fundamental human interests, in particular against the abuse of political power” [6]. It also attaches significant importance to civil rights and individualism [7]. In order to have a further analysis of the cultural hegemony shown by “human rights”, this section is going to explore issues about the origin and the development of human rights in the West, whether this term has its equivalence in Chinese cultural background, the introducing history of human rights to China and the translation strategy applied in this translation case.

2.1. Human Rights Concept in the West

Historically, in the West, the emergence of human rights was closely related with religions, believing in the idea that human rights are given by God [4]. Religions establish the definitions presupposed by the human rights regime, like shame, restraint, respect, responsibility and restitution [8]. Tremendously influenced by big events of American War for Independence, The French Revolution and World War II, have been reinforced by quite a few official authorized statements, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued by United Nations in 1948, Geneva Conventions, etc...[9], the concept of human rights has been further developed and spread widely throughout the West.

Seeing from the history, the idea of human rights originated from Western Religions and then it has been encouraged and spread by some powerful nations, like the United Kingdom, France, and the USA. Consequently, Western ideologies have put a heavy emphasis on individual liberty, personal freedom and equality under the law [10]. Nowadays, in Western

ideologies, human rights are regarded as very fundamental rights of individuals, serving as basic values of the public. Westerners usually highly value their personal rights.

2.2. No Equivalence in China

“Formal equivalence” and “dynamic equivalence” are important concepts in translation studies defined by Nida [11], which stimulate new insights into the question of whether translators should be receptor-oriented or reader-oriented. According to him, formal equivalence values the source language in both form and content while dynamic equivalence ought to be the equivalent that is naturally close to the source language. In the topic of the translational case of “human rights”, is there any formal or dynamic equivalence in Chinese language?

Unlike the West, religions or theology never exert reformative influence on the universal values of Chinese people. Throughout Chinese history, equivalently, the most powerful theory that forms the Chinese ideological mainstream is undoubtedly Confucianism. Because its core ideas accorded with needs of feudal ruling class in ancient times, Confucian philosophy was dominantly influencing the ideology of Chinese of all classes in multiple fields like economics and, politics. When dealing with interpersonal relationship, Confucius put forward “*three cardinal guides: ruler guides subjects, father guides son, and husband guides wife*”¹, which suggests and standardizes different duties of different social members. Moreover, it advocates human beings are an integral part of nature, which stresses harmony between people and the world. Taking a broad view of Confucianism, rarely does Confucianism discuss individualism or ordinary people’s rights, but it often invests Chinese people with strong consciousness of complying with corresponding obligations of each member from an angle of the interests of a whole society system.

Greatly influenced by Confucian ethical code, in ancient Chinese people’s minds, commanding obedience by three cardinal guides was a fertile part of being a true gentleman, which could make the society move forward in good order and harmony [7]. Modern Chinese people still insist that harmony is precious and overall interests outweigh individual interests. In one word, these ideological factors have led to a fact that the formal equivalent of “human rights” couldn’t be found in the Chinese language. To put it in another way, the most natural equivalent, the dynamic equivalence, is hardly found due to a lack of cultural equivalence either.

2.3. Ideological Differences Motivate Rewriting

The notion of “human rights” was introduced to China in the end of Qing Dynasty when China was descended from a closed society to a semi-colonial society. The Opium War, the Sino-British Treaty of Nanking, and The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 have all brought humiliation as well as self-reflection on Chinese people. Western theories shocked

¹ The author’ translation.

and stimulated Chinese people as China just opened its door to the world. Some then influential thinkers or progressives, such as He Qi, Gu Liyuan and Liang Qichao, described and explained the meaning of “human rights” in their works [12]. Usually, Chinese people refer to “human rights” as *minquan* or *renquan*. Contemporary Chinese speakers are more likely to use the latter one, *renquan*.

Unfortunately, neither formal nor dynamic equivalences of “human rights” in Chinese could be found, which created barriers in translating “human rights” into Chinese faithfully. Discrepancies in the translation were imminent. Consequently, “rewriting” is inevitably involved in the translation of “human rights”. The following part in this section will clarify why and how it was rewritten.

Firstly, key information about the definition of “human rights” needs to be elaborated. In Western history, the rising of Western Bourgeoisie was earlier than that in Chinese society. As European Bourgeoisie began to oppose Feudalism, they took advantage of human rights ideas and insisted in pursuing personal civil rights and political rights to resist monarchical power, divine rights, and privileges. Therefore, one compelling key word about “human rights” is individualism since the rights are about personal civil rights, that is, each person’s rights. Another unavoidable label of “human rights” is that the rights enjoyed by each individual have nothing to do with any power or privileges. Also, Westerners believe basic human rights include that the government has no right to violate personal freedom; instead, the government should take every measure to guarantee civil rights. As for “right” in the context of “human rights”, it refers to “something that you are morally, legally, or officially allowed to do or have” [13]. In summary, general Western understanding of “human rights” highlights individualism, freedom and equality endowed by nature. These are inner characteristics of “human rights”.

Secondly, Chinese translation *renquan* does not successfully convey key information about “human rights”. In Chinese, *ren* mainly refers to people, everybody, adults or manpower. Speaking of individuals, Chinese people usually say *geren* rather than *ren*. The word *ge* in here is an attribute to modify *ren*, signaling personal or individual. More controversially, Chinese word *quan* may produce cognitive troubles for Chinese people, especially those living in the colonial time. Dating back to the long history of Chinese feudal society, Confucianism believes everybody should be loyal to monarchy and in this way, the whole society could move forward more stably. Then the power of the ruling class was embodied in ordinary people’s minds. This can be demonstrated in Chinese language system. In ancient times, *quan* was a noun, being used as a weight to weigh things. And then, it has been used as a verb that means to assess disadvantages and disadvantages. Also, it can manifest beneficial situations. In terms of set phrases, *quan* often appears in the phrases of *junquan*, *quanshi*, *quanguai*, *quanmou*, *quanli*, etc., which literally mean “monarchical power”, “powerful officials”, “political tactics” and “power” [14]. On the other hand, “rights” and “power” have different

meanings but have the same pronunciation in Chinese language, both of which are articulated as *quanli*. These reasons are likely to enable Chinese people to associate rights with power, privilege, or profits [7].

Thirdly, rewriting has to be involved in the translation of “human rights” from English to Chinese. Combined with the comparison above, it is logical to accept that *renquan* in the target language literally means the power of people but without conveying the connotation of rights and human beings as individuals. Actually, this linguistic phenomenon is a consequence of different cultures and ideologies. The loss in this translation, in essence, is because individualism and civil rights were not authorized by the dominant Chinese culture. As Lefevere has already suggested, if the translation texts are outside the translators’ boundaries, translators tend to replace the texts [2]. Therefore, those different ideological constituents and Chinese translating ways would be the most compelling reasons to explain changes of “human rights” in Chinese rewriting as well as some Chinese misunderstanding. One finding of this research would be, since the term “human rights” came to China, it has been domesticated and incorporated with many Chinese ideological elements, being rewritten into a new term different from the original source.

Tracing back to different cultural origins, translating “human rights” into *renquan* manifests that “rewriting” is very likely to be involved in the translation process especially when the source and target culture differ from each other greatly in ideologies. According to Lefevere [2], ideological factors are the most important factors of motivating rewriting in translation and translation is the most discernible category of rewriting. He also claims that when the conflict occurs between the language and ideology, the latter wins. As can be seen from the analysis above, the translation of “human rights” into Chinese language is quite correspondent with this theory. In the meantime, what should be noted in this case just reveals the close relationship between rewriting and ideologies particularly under the circumstances of a lack of “cultural overlapping” [15].

3. Chinese Assimilation of Human Rights

In the end of 18th century, China was in an unprecedentedly depressing plight. In order to rescue the fate of Chinese nation, Chinese intellectuals were struggling to absorb and assimilate advanced Western civilization. Since then, Western culture has become a reservoir of new knowledge, allowing many Chinese people to see things differently. Nowadays, the term “human Rights” has already been assimilated into modern Chinese culture and many Chinese intellectuals are able to understand its hidden depths. The following part will show how Chinese society has been assimilating the notion of human rights throughout modern times.

While being half-colonized by powerful countries from the West, China was not only invaded by the imperialist powers but also was accessible to Western culture. The introduction of “human rights” is a kind of cultural import. In the

following centuries, this Western political ideological concept has retained increasing attention from Chinese society except from the Great Cultural Revolution Time. Especially since China’s reform and opening-up policy in the late 1970s, to respect and guarantee human rights has been an important governing principle for Chinese government [16]. Convincingly, respect and guarantees about human rights have been written into the Constitution of China in the year of 2004. In the Eleventh Five-year plan as well as the Twelfth Five-year Plan [16], Chairman Xi Jinping highlights the issue of human rights and has talked about this topic on many important formal occasions since the 18th CCPC in the year 2012.

Nowadays, more and more Chinese view Chinese social or political issues in the light of human rights. Although the translation result of *renquan*, as straight-translated, fails to reflect every individual as the basic unit and Chinese linguistic culture might be liable to associate *quan* with power, many Chinese people today are most assuredly and enthusiastically acquiring knowledge about Western culture, the history and the origin of “human rights” concept to tunnel through cultural barriers. Thus, this gains a profound understanding of human rights. By emulating strong aspects of Western culture, the Western import of human rights has harvested good development in Chinese societies. The guarantee of human rights in China has been gradually normalized, legalized and institutionalized, and Chinese people’s living standard has been promoted [16].

Many social changes can be strong evidence of the positive statement above. At the beginning of the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the economy was very weak. Solving the problem of food and clothing was the first objective at that time. The Chinese government now is making every effort to build a moderately well-off society in a well-rounded way, being lifted out of poverty and backwardness. Once poor people in China just asked for food for survival but contemporary Chinese people are eager for national rejuvenation. The rights of ordinary Chinese people have made huge progress.

Time also witnesses the improvement of the rights of Chinese females, which proves basic civil rights of women to draw much more attention than they have before. In the past, guided by the third of the cardinal guides of Confucianism, *husband guides wife*, Chinese people held the traditional opinion that ignorance was women’s virtue and have treated females as inferior to males, not to mention women could not participate in government. In contrast, in modern China, Chinese women just undertake the same tests of Civil Service Examination with men if they want to work in government. Additionally, it is reported by Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China [17], female full-time teachers occupied 49.83% of the total full-time teachers at Higher Education Institutions and female postgraduates made up for 48.42% of the total number of Chinese postgraduates. The statistics powerfully indicate ignorance is no longer seen as women’s virtues but knowledge and ability in current

society. These are distinct advantages brought by the awareness, absorption and assimilation of the civil rights of China.

4. Cultural Hegemony in Human Rights

As a matter of fact, translation phenomenon of “human rights” implies something ignominious; being the imbalance of power relations between the Western and Third World cultures is a cultural hegemony. Venuti [18] suggests that the dominant position of Anglo-American culture has given prominence to English language. As a result, the “disparity of power between languages” [18] leads the cultural effects produced by the translation from the dominant cultures to be more powerful and influential than other cultures. Venuti also states that the dominance of Anglo-Americanization brings about “the cultural marginality” [19]. In this sense, not denying that translation promotes communication, but translation is not always devoted to diversifying cultures. Asymmetric relations between the dominant cultures and other cultures contribute to the global prevalence of Anglo-American culture, which has been given impetus by English-language imports.

4.1. A Tool of Western Hegemony

Since 1840, Chinese people have begun to step out of the pipe dream of celestial Empire and realized how backward they were. Imperialist wars of aggression kept accumulating poverty and weakness of Chinese society, which in turn stimulate Chinese people to learn from the West and eventually resisting the West. Therefore, Chinese people imported “human rights” during the semi-colonial and semi-feudal period and it was a neologism to China at that time. This Western concept has not only helped the advancement of Chinese rights but also has acted as an invisible weapon to make developing countries be trapped into hegemony.

Jacquemond [20] has pointed out that cultural hegemony is largely related to economic hegemony. Even though the introduction of “human rights” has given China edges in certain respects, it unfortunately has always been an invisible weapon in the hands of hegemony countries. A series of undeniable facts are that, while exporting cultures to developing countries, under many circumstances, some Western countries make use of human rights as weapons to manipulate and take hegemony over other cultures, without respecting the equality laws of cultural exchanges. Much turmoil happened in history and at present has been offering convincing proof.

Taking a retrospective view of the past, once those Western countries were zealously advocating human rights, like Britain and France, they were guilty of the most heinous crimes in China, neglecting that one core of human rights is that everybody is equal. For example, in the end of Qing Dynasty, Britain trafficked in opium to China and initiated Opium Wars twice to plunder Chinese wealth and resources with no care of basic rights of Chinese people. Also,

Anglo-French Allied Force robbed and damaged the Old Summer Palace by fire in 1860. It is the countries of encouraging human rights that made appalling cultural lootings rarely seen in human history.

Similarly, the supremacy mentality of America in today is also abundantly clear. For example, proclaiming itself as a human rights defender, the U.S. has been submitting annual reports of Human Rights Practices on all countries since 1995. The reports often target at developing countries and criticize non-pro-American government for failing to fully protect and guarantee human rights and impeding the development of human rights. Since 1998, China's state council information office has regularly released *U.S. human rights records*, and the releasing time often occurs a few days after America's releasing of China's records. This is a counterattack response, resulting in cultural collisions.

Additionally, ironically speaking, the United States and United Kingdom forces launched the war in Iraq in 2003 and this war lasted for 7 years, which is a catastrophe to Iraqi. On January 27, 2017, U.S. President Donald Trump signed the executive order to bar "Radical Islamic Terrorists". In 2018, America withdrew from Iran's nuclear agreement and has forced European allies to stop importing Iranian oil, resulting in terrible economic recession on Iran's economy. In 2019, violent criminals in Hongkong hurt local innocent citizens, set fires and destroyed the transport, but the United States signed the *Hongkong Bill of Human Rights and Democracy* into law, openly supporting the criminals. These stories of doubling standards on human rights clearly reflect that the hegemony nation clearly regards different races differently and even shows no care about basic rights of common people in those countries. Seemingly, human rights are just politically right but ineffective in practice in the contemporary world.

4.2. Asymmetrical Influences

With time goes by, modern China has made remarkable achievements, being the world's second largest economy and being the leading role in 5G communications technology. The fact that China has become much stronger attracts globally rising attention. Many Chinese phrases directly go into English language without being translated like *Huawei*, *Gongfu*, *Dama*, *Jiaozi*, etc. And many Chinese cultural idioms have been directly translated into English like "*take out tigers, swat flies and hunt down foxes*" from the Report to the 19th NCCPC (tigers, flies, and foxes symbolize corrupt officials in political Chinese culture). Those translational styles that subtly demonstrate global needs for knowing authentic Chinese culture are growing with the growing economic speed of Chinese society.

Meanwhile, more Chinese people are likely to review and appreciate traditional Chinese culture. Many scholars propose that Chinese culture should "go out" and hold the belief that Chinese should never judge themselves solely by Western ideologies. Even though the equivalent term of "human rights" has never emerged throughout Chinese history,

this never proves that Chinese culture is less civilized or Chinese ideologies have no care about common people. Conversely, as a civilized ancient country with a five-thousand-year history, China is quite self-sufficient in gracious values and brilliant humane ideas.

In feudal hierarchical society of China, wise emperors had attached great importance to the equality of legislation, well-being, and livelihood of commoners. These can be manifested by many famous old Chinese sayings, such as "*if a prince violates the law, he must be punished like an ordinary person*", "*the benevolent loves others*", "*never do to others what you would not like them to do to you*" and "*A man of virtue learns extensively and restrains himself with etiquette. Thus it is unlikely for him to go astray*"². These anecdotes reveal great harmonic ideas, decent conduct, and importance of the respect while socializing. Although the ideal purpose in traditional China may not be an individual liberty or individualism, the ideal held by ancient Chinese thinkers is quite constructive because social order, harmony, and unity cannot be maintained well by individual efforts [21].

In 2004, the former Chairman Hu Jintao of China put forward the idea of "*building up the harmonious socialist society*"³. In 2014, Xi Jinping proposed the concept of "*cultural self-confidence*"⁴, calling for every Chinese person to be confident about Chinese culture and stressing that cultural confidence is the most fundamental power in a country's development. In 2015, Chairman Xi Jinping proposed "*a community of shared future for mankind*"⁵, explaining the goal of pursuing the worldly harmony, the harmony between different countries. By December of 2018, 548 Confucius institutes have been set up in 154 countries, which aim to transmit Chinese language and culture all over the world.

Nevertheless, still many facts show that Chinese culture heritage doesn't produce cultural effects as influential as Western concepts. The number of Confucius institutes in the world is so inconsiderable if compared with the countless number of English language training schools in the cities of Beijing or Shanghai. Between 1990 and 2006, the proportion of Overseas Publishing Translation from Chinese into other language had been fluctuating at around 0.44% of the whole volume's translation works in the world [22]. Despite the Chinese translation of the "State of the Union Address", *guoqingziwen*, is very exotic to Chinese people, the searching index of this term made by Chinese Internet users reached a high index of 3,000 on *Baidu Trend* (one of the biggest Chinese online search engines) in February, 2019 [23] (Baidu 2019). Compared with that, in Google Trend, there is no searching trend display of "building up a harmonious society" or "a community of shared future for mankind", due to insufficient searching data whereas the searching data of *renquan* can be shown on Google search [24]. These obviously show Western cultures are still very dominant in discourse power.

2 Yu Jian and Hou Pingping's translation.

3 Official translation in China.

4 official translation in China.

5 Official translation in China.

5. Enlightenment to the Role of Translators

Now, we may go back to the question raised in the introduction section, "What role does a translator play in the context of cultural blending and collision?" Some people argue that the role of a translator is so limited that they cannot radically resist the imbalance of economic development, which is the rudimental reason for unfair cultural communication. Admittedly, translators cannot eliminate the inequality from the root. However, translators' role makes sense to affect readers' choice. The role is not overwhelmingly influential but it is tactfully subtle and useful. When it comes to cultural communications, some translation strategies would win more readers while the others may weaken the interests of audiences. Even though the analysis in this essay is only based on a single translation case of one term, this still enlightens translators on big issues.

Firstly, internationally recognized principles regarding to rational cultural values among translators should be set up. Translators' sensitivity of imbalanced cross-cultural communication must be one of the pillars within the principles, which should be strengthened in their entry-level training. It should be widely acknowledged that great translators are highly required to acknowledge the importance of equality in cultural exchanges, respect other nations' cultures and be willing to acquire more background knowledge. Only when based on principles of equality and mutual benefits, could the cultural exchanges be truly meaningful, otherwise it would become cultural hegemony. When meeting cultural differences, a good translator is neither conceited nor overly modest about their own cultures, instead, they are supposed to endeavor to study cultural knowledge intensively but not to be restricted in literal meanings. What is worth noticing is that the Artificial Intelligence (AI) time has radically changed the requirements for current translators. In the past, traditional translators looked up words from dictionary, but modern translators usually choose appropriate words and edit the translation work offered by the technological translation tools facilitated by big data. However, the intercultural communication ability, awareness and sensitivity, that cannot be replaced with AI, are even more challenging to modern translators in this global village. Cultural values must be assessed before a translator is qualified to work.

Secondly, the roles of a qualifying translator are a cultural learner, and a cultural reflector as well as a communicator, who is always clear about the relationship between cultural export and import. The Chinese scholar, Fei Xiaotong, voiced "culture self-consciousness" in 1997, of which the core is: Find your beauty and that of others, and share the beauty and achieve harmony [25]. In this sense, translators with high degree culture self-consciousness need to take initiative to remove the cultural hegemony and promote the world peace. Speaking of translation strategies, it has been argued that the translating strategy or foreignization method, is able to curb the translation violence and resist the dominant cultural

values of the hegemony countries [18]. According to Venuti, the foreignizing method is resistance, which would add to ethnodeviant pressure on target-language cultures, making the reader feel difficult to comprehend the texts [18]. However, when it comes to learning from others' great achievements, "resistance" is not recommended as this strategy may block readers' understanding for advancement, thus lagging behind in time. In order to resist this, translators from the third world should take on responsibilities to preserve and spread local cultures and facilitate readers in developed countries to have better understandings of the disadvantaged nations' culture.

Last but not the least, modern translators should be equipped with an abundance of digital knowledge. This is not just because science and technology help translators saving time; more importantly, it is because mass media is an effective transmitting platform with distinctive advantages at a low cost and fast speed. Relying on manners of broadcasting, the Internet, movies, electronic magazines, television programs and smart phones, the rapid development of digital technology gives the disadvantaged group chances of influencing the dominant group. What we have to admit is, many developing countries are just at the beginning stage of disseminating their cultures, fair cultural exchanges like a dream hard to be realized. Based on the bridge of translation, Anglo-Americanized cultural penetration is more powerful than Chinese culture, at least with respect to the cultural phenomenon caused by the translation of "human rights". Thus, learning technical means and mass media skills of transmission is a silver bullet for modern translators to win more foreign readers on international communication.

6. Conclusion

Cultural studies and translation studies always promote each other. Moreover, translation activity itself is a communicative activity between ideologies. Recognizing the interaction between them will definitely benefit the understanding of translation practice and the role of translators. It can be clearly indicated from the translation phenomena of "human rights" that the ideological differences between cultures play a significant role in the rewriting process of translation. This situation would be more obvious if the cultural gap were to be larger. Translation is not only transferring linguistic information; rather it also covers recessive cultural elements, such as history, religion, politics, economics, ideology, etc. When formal and dynamic equivalences could not be found, rewriting can hardly be avoided.

The translation case of "human rights" typically shows, both cultural assimilation and cultural hegemony, or cultural imperialism, exist in cross-cultural exchanges, which are mostly due to the unbalanced economic and military development of different countries. Also, this case demonstrates the power imbalance imposing the dominated values into politically less powerful cultures and sometimes letting readers recognize their own culture from another cultural viewpoint [18]. Seen from the cultural phenomenon

triggered by “human rights”, some contradictions are visible in here. The concept of human rights proposes individual equality in China, but the global cultural exchanges are still unequal. Also, *ren* does not fully convey the implied information of individualism and *quan* in ancient Chinese language often means power, but Chinese people have been increasingly concerned about Western thoughts of human rights since its introduction. On one hand, “human rights” smoothly assimilates into Chinese culture, benefiting Chinese development in certain ways. On the other hand, flaunting the banner of “human rights”, Western countries have used human rights as a cultural hegemony tool to apply pressure on China.

As for the role of translators, this case inspires a lot. Fore and foremost, the translation work is mainly determined by political, economic and cultural needs of a country. The role of translators in impacting on both cultural assimilation and hegemony is tiny. Because of that, the role of translators is never static, mostly importing foreign cultures in hard times and exporting domestic cultures in taking-off times. Secondly, the finding that translator’s role is quite limited when confronting complex political situations does not mean the translation can only be done passively, the translation results can subtly publicize or protect certain cultures, indirectly influencing readers to absorb or resist foreign cultures. Although the translating strategy of the term “human rights” is not the fundamental reason that leads Chinese indigenous ideologies to have been influenced by the West, cultural hegemony would be debilitated by the foreignizing translating strategy to some extent. Translators should strengthen self-efficacy and they themselves should believe their roles imperceptibly attract or block readers. Lastly, translators should bear in mind that they are dedicating to the equality of cross-cultural activities and there are neither good nor bad cultures in the world, only differences between them. To arrive at this destination, great translators should strengthen their sensitivity to inter-cultural communications, be neither cringing nor arrogant about different cultures and embrace the assistance from the digital channels.

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